

Canadian Governmental Policy and Inuit Food (In)security:
Community Concerns from Baffin Island

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Abstract: This paper examines the impact of a government food subsidy program in different communities on Baffin Island, Nunavut, in order to understand their inefficiencies. It also reviews the concerns that are being expressed by community members via Facebook, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), and the blog website FeedingNunavut.com. The content and thematic analyses applied to this project derive information from established data sources, examined through the theoretical lens of political economy. These issues are framed by historical colonial influences of early European trading dynamics, and demonstrate the ongoing paternal influences of the Federal Government. The thesis argues that, in part because Inuit opinions were disregarded in the implementation of Federal subsidy programs, household food insecurity rates in Northern Canada remain at nearly 70%. With governmental restrictions put on hunting and fishing, Inuit are limited in the maintenance of traditional practices and are turning to store-bought food for sustenance. However, food prices are high and food quality is sometimes low. This study of Inuit food security within Baffin thus contributes to an understanding of power and inequalities in the North.

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Glossary

Aboriginal People: The use of the term Aboriginal people refers to “all the Aboriginal people in Canada collectively. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians (First Nations), Métis, and Inuit. They are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs” (Council of Canadian Academies, 2014; xxiv). The term Aboriginal people may also be used when referring to more than one Aboriginal person (AANDC, 2004). Please also refer to Indigenous people(s) and Inuit.

Food Security: Food security will be defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (herein after known as the FAO), it “exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (2015). This concept has three distinct aspects: food availability, food accessibility, and food quality. (Ford, 2009; 86).

Food Insecurity: Food insecurity has been described by the FAO as a time ‘when people must live with hunger and fear starvation’” (2015); whilst Reutlinger defines food insecurity as “lacking access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life” (1986; 1). Thus, food insecurity “denotes the prevalence of hunger in a society, emphasizing the structural factors affecting an individual, household, group, or country without guaranteed access to food” (Scanlan, 2004; 1808).

Healthy: Healthy, in the context of – eating and – food, will hold a South-centered definition in this thesis. Based on Southern standards, healthy eating “means eating a variety of foods from the four food groups to feel good and maintain your health” (Food and Nutrition, 2015). Healthy foods are considered to be those included in Canada’s Food Guide, as established by Health Canada (Food and Nutrition, 2015).

High Quality Foods: High quality foods will be defined as foods that have all the “characteristics of excellence that make it acceptable to the food buyer” (Ferree, 1973; 34). For Nunavummiut, that often includes – but is not limited to – cultural relevance, quality, price, appearance, colour, and texture.

Indian: Please note during the course of this paper the term Indian is only utilized in quotes. It will adopt the meaning of Indigenous, or Inuit.

Indigenous: For this thesis, the term “Indigenous peoples is similar to that of Aboriginal peoples. It is often used to refer to Aboriginal people internationally, denoting a collective history regardless of borders” (Council for Canadian Academies, 2014; xxv). Meaning “originating or occurring naturally in a particular place” (King & CIHR-IAPH, 2013), many academics are in agreement “that the word Indigenous also connotes the relationships that peoples have with their traditional territories, and that it is more uniting and less colonizing than the term Aboriginal” (Council for Canadian Academies, 2014; xxv). See also Aboriginal people and Inuit.

Inuit: Inuit are an Aboriginal people in Northern Canada from the main regions of Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec (Nunavik), and Northern Labrador (Nunatsiavut). This research has focused specifically on Inuit from Nunavut. The word means people in a major Inuit language (Inuktitut). The singular of Inuit is Inuk (AANDC, 2004).

Northern Communities: For this project, Northern communities refer to the settlements that occupy the “land and ocean-based territory that lies north of the southern limit of discontinuous permafrost from Northern British Columbia to Northern Labrador”. However, in most cases “the portion of Northern Canada served by the Nutrition North Canada program is emphasized” (Council of Canadian Academies, 2014; xxvi).

Sufficient Nutrition: Sufficient nutrition will be defined as the consumption of nutritional elements that are necessary for the body to protect and develop the health of an individual, with the intent of increasing the quality of life, and they will be consumed in sufficient amounts and at the appropriate moments (Baggott, 1998).

Traditional: The use of the word traditional in this research includes knowledge, culture, and history from the distant and recent past, knowledge that is being acquired in Northern communities currently as well as knowledge that will be acquired in the future (ITK, 2012). It is both a way of life for Inuit and a “systematic way of thinking applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural, and spiritual systems important to maintaining culture, livelihoods, and well-being” (Council of Canadian Academies, 2014; xxvi).

Introduction

The Arctic has been defined by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program as “a circumpolar [area]...that includes both High Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. In the marine environment, the 'AMAP area' includes northern seas that extend as far south as 51.1 degrees N (James Bay, Canada)”; this area represents a wider definition of the arctic than what is typically used, but allows for the benefits of more inclusive landscapes and territories from the North (2005; 1). It also encompasses “numerous and complex connections between the Arctic and lower latitudes”, which are often ignored by more strict definitions. This territory comprises parts of eight different countries, notably the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, the United States of America, Russia and Greenland (AMAP, 2005; 1). For the sake of this paper, I focus on the Canadian Arctic territory, and its Inuit populations.

The changes that are being seen through the impacts of global warming dramatically affect the Inuit communities who are located in Canada’s high Arctic. Food security is becoming an ever more present issue for Inuit populations throughout the North. Many individuals, and households alike, are lacking reliable access to food that is sufficiently nutritious and acceptable in quality (Action Canada Report, 2014). Contemporary Inuit populations have food systems that consist of an intricately balanced combination of both traditional foods and store-bought foods. Despite the diversification of their eating habits, nearly 70 percent of Inuit populations do not have access to affordable, high quality foods, and thus suffer from moderate to severe food insecurity¹

¹ High quality foods will be defined as foods that have all the “characteristics of excellence that make it acceptable to the food buyer” (Ferree, 1973; 34). For Nunavummiut, that often includes – but is not limited to – cultural relevance, quality, price, appearance, colour, and texture.

(Action Canada Report, 2014). These statistics are exponentially higher than the rest of Canada and show the extent to which Inuit food systems are failing to provide sufficient nutrition for their populations².

Inuit food security largely arose within the academic sphere in 2004 when the “Inuit Tuttarvingat (then known as the Ajunnginiq Centre) of the National Aboriginal Health Organization produced *Hunger in the Arctic: Food (In)Security in Inuit Communities, A Discussion Paper*” (Carry & Carrington, 2011; 1). The emergence of this paper peaked interest within both national and regional governments. These interests were translated into research through various fields revolving around food security, which facilitated the availability of a wide range of studies and papers regarding Inuit food systems, health, and food consumption trends (Carry & Carrington, 2011).

Although there is an existing body of literature regarding the Nutrition North Canada program (see Burnett, Skinner, & Leblanc; Lawn & Hill, Lawn *et al.*), there are also limitations to this research. With a heavy policy focus, there is a lack of insight from the Northerners’ perspective. In this project, I aim to highlight the voice of locals in remote Northern communities who have shared their opinions through the media and social media. These personal insights into the challenges of food security express an unexplored angle of these policy issues.

Food Security, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (herein after known as the FAO), “exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (2015). This

² Sufficient nutrition will be defined as the consumption of nutritional elements that are necessary for the body to protect and develop the health of an individual, with the intent of increasing the quality of life, and they will be consumed in sufficient amounts and at the appropriate moments (Baggott, 1998).

concept has three distinct aspects: food availability, food accessibility, and food quality. Availability refers to the “overall ability of the store and traditional food components of the food system to meet demand” for the population (Ford, 2009; 86). Accessibility includes the “ability of households and individuals to access adequate resources to acquire” both store-bought and traditional foods that comprise a nutritious diet. Lastly, quality refers to “the ability to obtain safe food of sufficient nutritional and cultural value” (Ford, 2009; 86). Food security results when these three aspects are met by local food systems.

Conversely, the FAO has also “described food insecurity as ‘when people must live with hunger and fear starvation’” (2015); whilst Reutlinger defines food insecurity as “lacking access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life” (1986; 1). Thus, food insecurity “denotes the prevalence of hunger in a society, emphasizing the structural factors affecting an individual, household, group, or country without guaranteed access to food” (Scanlan, 2004; 1808). For this reason, many different factors – economic, social, political, and environmental – must be taken into consideration when addressing policy implementations regarding food security.

Canada is recognized as a G8 country, placing among the most livable in the world. Ranked 8th, based on the Human Development Index, not many would believe that parts of Canada are facing the same problems as less developed nations. In terms of food security, most of Canada has very optimistic statistics. The provinces, along with Yukon and the Northwest Territories have food security under control, maintaining less than twenty percent of household food insecurity.

Conversely, Nunavut is rife with food security issues. According to the Inuit Health Survey taken by Statistics Canada, nearly seventy percent of all Nunavut households do not have access to affordable, or adequate quality food, resulting in these households suffering from moderate to severe food insecurity. It can be seen in the following table, that there are drastic differences between food security statistics in Northern Canada, as compared to Southern Canada. For Nunavummiut, a Statistics Canada study has shown that “one-third of households...lack access to safe and healthy food – a level that is four times the national average” (Freeman, 2015). These statistics clearly portray the importance of this study, which is discussed later in the paper.

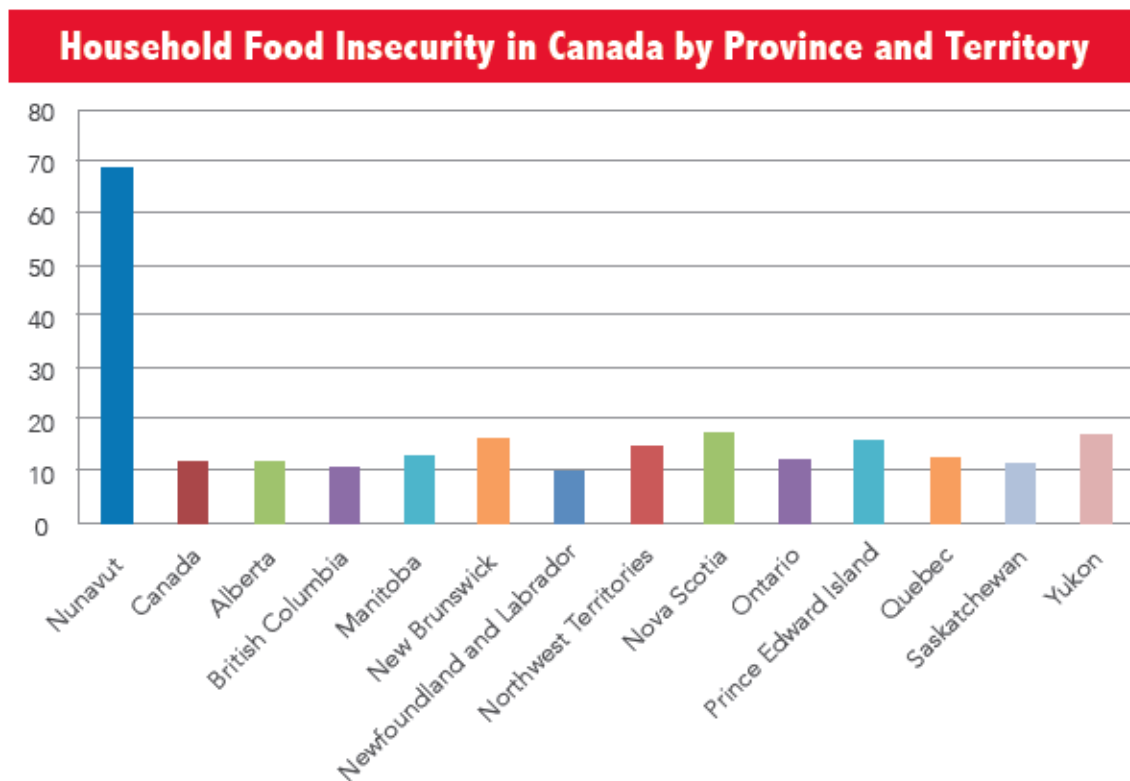


Table courtesy of: Action Canada Report (2014).

As noted in a recent Statistics Canada study, “in 2012, more than one-half (52 %) of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat [Inuit regions of Canada] aged 25 and over lived a in

household that experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months” (Arriagada, 2017; 3). This statistic can be contrasted with Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat, who reported only 14 % food insecurity rate. However, in Nunavut itself, 56 % of adults reported living in a food insecure household during the past twelve months. A major factor of food insecurity in Northern communities is simply a lack of money. Nearly one in three (32 %) of “Inuit adults in Inuit Nunangat ate less than they should have eaten because they could not afford to buy food. Furthermore, 27 % of Inuit adults reported that they had been hungry because they could not afford enough food” (Arriagada, 2017; 3). This lack of food affects family members disproportionately, with “women, those who had children, the unemployed, those who lived in a crowded dwelling, and those who had weaker extended family ties...[having] a higher probability of experiencing food insecurity” (Arriagada, 2017; 4).

There are many challenges when attempting to achieve food security in Inuit communities, and they are exacerbated by the fact that Canadian Inuit settlements are extremely isolated. Many are “accessible only by air, winter roads, and boat in the summer” (Ford, 2009; 83). Populations can range from less than 100 people to upwards of 7,000. Their economies are increasingly characterized by a combination of waged employment – wherein members of the community work in contemporary jobs (mostly in the public administration field and resource extraction) as well as subsistence-based resource harvesting, that is comprised of more traditional activities, in which the “consumption and procurement of locally harvested foods play an important role in supporting Inuit livelihoods”³ (Ford, 2009; 83).

³ The use of the word traditional in this research includes knowledge, culture, and history from the distant and recent past, knowledge that is being acquired in Northern communities currently as well as knowledge

This study encompasses the obstacles that Inuit populations have faced from the 1940's and persist to present day. This date was chosen, as it was the time when southern Canadian and American populations initiated the establishment settlements in the Arctic, which began affecting Inuit subsistence. This covers many different historical challenges for the Inuit, such as political shifts, economic changes, the establishment of permanent settlements, and forced relocation, all of which have had detrimental effects on their food security (Ford, 2009).

Although these communities have a nomadic history, the most Northern of these settlements were products of governmental 'experiments'. During August of 1953, "the Canadian Federal Government forced seven families from Inukjuak, Northern Quebec, and three from Pond Inlet – on the Northern tip of Baffin Island (a total of eighty-seven people) – to move to Grise Fiord on the southern tip of Ellesmere Island" (Porteous & Smith, 2001; 102). Described as an 'experiment' in a 1953 memorandum, these actions were "justified by the Federal Government on the basis of poor hunting in northern Quebec and the belief that Inuit should be assisted to return to their original lifestyles" (Porteous & Smith, 2001; 102).

Conversely, the Inuit believed "the Federal Government was moving them for political reasons so that their new settlements would assert Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago in the face of American pressure to have the region declared international waters" (Porteous & Smith, 2001; 103). The consequences of this move were immediate for the Inuit populations who had been relocated. The area was

that will be acquired in the future (ITK, 2012). It is both a way of life for Inuit and a "systematic way of thinking applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural, and spiritual systems important to maintaining culture, livelihoods, and well-being" (Council of Canadian Academies, 2014; xxvi).

untouched, bare and desolate; there were no immediate sources of food, nor shelter. This event has since been deemed the ‘High Arctic Exiles’, and in 1989, when the Government was pressured, they “paid for the return of forty Inuit to their former homes, causing a break up of families along generational lines” (Porteous & Smith, 2001; 103). These shifts caused many issues for Inuit food systems, which is mentioned later.

Due to the sensitivity of hunting and fishing practices to changing environments, there are increasing concerns that the food systems upon which Inuit populations rely, are particularly vulnerable to variations. The challenges that can be presented by ice cover and ice floes in these areas limit shipping accessibility to only the late summer months; however, as the effects of climate change increase, the shipping season has become longer (Jensen, 2008). This has allowed for the possibility of sending a second sealift to remote Northern communities during the late summer, to aid in re-stocking the non-perishable store-bought foods (Skura, 2016). While perishable foods need shorter travel times, they are flown into remote communities.

Changes such as these do not come without grave consequences. The increases in unpredictable weather and storm surges have made day-to-day operations – such as hunting and fishing – extremely dangerous (Jensen, 2008). It affects ice thickness, which also poses a multitude of safety concerns for Inuit communities. Sea ice travel is essential for their access to various wildlife resources, as well as their contact between Inuit groups (Furgal & Seguin, 2006). The variability in weather patterns also limits air travel to remote Northern communities, depriving them of nutritious and fresh produce. As environmental conditions are changing in the North, it is having a growing impact on

the daily life of Inuit communities; notably through its negative effects on their ability to achieve and maintain adequate levels of food security.

This project assesses aspects of Inuit food security and how they have been influenced and altered by Canadian governmental policy interventions. These policies were designed to enable Inuit to cope with the changes they are seeing in the availability, access, and quality of foods available in the North, but that does not seem to be the reality of the situation. The consistently high levels of food insecurity that are prevalent through Nunavut are having detrimental effects on nutrition and, consequently, the health of Inuit.

I examine the impact that governmental policies have had on food insecurity in Northern communities, and why they have been unsuccessful in achieving their goals. This also aids me in understanding the intricate dynamics and complexities of the Inuit food systems.

The questions informing this project are as follows:

- Why are governmental food subsidy programs an ineffective way to improve food security on Baffin Island?
- What concerns are being expressed through the media, and social media, by Inuit community members in relation to governmental food subsidy programs?

From these questions, it is hypothesized that the Federal Government and the government of Nunavut have different approaches when it comes to addressing food security. I believe the lack of collaboration between policy makers and Inuit communities has resulted in large disconnects between program mandates and their actual results. It is theorized that both levels of government will highlight different areas of food security, decreasing resources in all areas. I determine why these bodies have

generated ineffective food subsidy programs for Baffin Island communities, as well as the factors that influence these programs. I also examine community members' concerns with governmental policies within Baffin Island. I believe community members will be more concerned with local issues, such as the quality of food available, and the way this affects their health, as opposed to the broad programs and policies implemented by the governmental legislators.

I understand the complexities of this policy and the innumerable influences that are present in the creation and development of this program. Due to the intricacies of the food security problem that faces the North, there is no one solution or policy that can address the totality of these issues. Nutrition North Canada is the Federal governments' answer for these challenges. Although this policy has made some progress over its predecessor – the Food Mail Program – it remains an imperfect policy; one which the government continuously strives to improve.

This research does not aim to solve these food security issues, but showcase the challenges that are present and the limitations of the policy within a historical context. I aim to highlight the voices of northern community members who constantly face these problems, and examine the concerns they believe are prevalent, while calling attention to the injustices that are present in this country.

These issues are explored through the lens of political economy theory. This theoretical approach demonstrates how the Canadian government maintains a colonialist and patriarchal hold over the political and economic aspects of Inuit communities through their current policy goals and implementations⁴. This theory is invaluable insofar as it

⁴ To clarify, in this thesis the term 'patriarchy' is not to be taken in the sexist sense, but rather as the States' paternal authority.

“allows for a point of reflection about the power and dominance embedded in colonial legacies through which those who have been ‘colonized’ can challenge the ‘colonizer’” (Nicholls & Giles, 2007; 59). This is the power dynamic discourse from which my analysis is derived.

Within this project, it is insufficient to simply recognize the paternalistic undertones that persists from colonialism; there is a need to critically examine the perpetuating effects that these power dynamics are having on contemporary Inuit communities. In doing this, the hegemonic ideals that endure are being questioned. Through government documents, discussions, and policies, I demonstrate how this political, economic, and cultural domination persists through to Canada’s North. The enactment of policies is examined using a political economy school of thought.

Political economy examines the interface between various different arenas, including politics, economics, and society. It looks at how these different realms engage in power struggles, and how their relationships shift and change over time (OECD, 2001). I review decisions made by legislators in Ottawa and the effects they have had on Inuit communities thousands of kilometers away. This procedure provides me with a wider view upon the issues at hand, allowing a better approach to my analysis.

I use qualitative research methods in order to gather the information I desire, with the aim of examining, synthesizing, and contributing to the available data regarding government programs and policies that revolve around Inuit food security. Primary and secondary sources have both been utilized in this research. My analysis of secondary

sources has formulated the majority of this paper, providing many important findings upon which I reflect and build.

Both content analysis and thematic analysis are systematically implemented to examine the challenges of maintaining food security in Inuit communities in Nunavut, namely on Baffin Island. The documents I analyze, as seen in Appendix One, are a combination of Federal Government programs, policies, and legislation; in coalition with territorial government policies and programs. Lastly, I examine media and social media outlets, including the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network program APTN Investigates, focusing on the episode ‘Wasting Away’ and its follow up episode ‘Food for Thought’. As well, I look at the Facebook Group ‘*Feeding My Family*’ with the website that encouraged the creation of the group called FeedingNunavut.com. These community-based data sources provide me with information and opinions of those who deal with these issues on a day to day basis.

For Northerners, social media has become not only a way of communicating with friends and family, but a platform to have their issues heard on a much larger stage; it is also being used to buy and sell country food, post warnings about unsafe or spoiled foods, trade needed goods between families, track rising food costs, and communicate with the Canadian Government. As access to social media is available through any internet connection, it has become easier for more people to become involved, which has spurred the discussion about food security in Nunavut.

Although I discuss many challenges that Inuit face in this research, I wish to clarify that this information has come exclusively from my research. I myself am the product of a middle-class family who grew up in the Greater Toronto Area. As a mid-

twenties, Caucasian female from the South, my perspective was born there. I have been educated in field of International Development and Globalization, and now adopt a Sociological perspective on these issues.

Despite my Southern upbringing, I wanted to give a voice to those in the North who deal with food security issues on a daily basis. It is for this reason I focused my research on Northern communities in Baffin Island. I understand the distance between the perspective I hold and those of Inuit, but I have focused on multiple information sources to give well rounded views of the issues at play.

This approach and understanding allows me to achieve a well-rounded view of Canadian governmental policies' lack of impact on Inuit nutrition and food systems, as well as the reasons why they are an ineffective way to improve Northern food security.

Literature Review

Historic Inuit Food Systems

A food system is comprised of “dynamic interactions between and within biophysical and human environments which result in the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food” (Gregory *et al.*, 2005; 2141). For Inuit communities, these food systems have seen a shift away from fully traditional food sources towards more contemporary store-bought components over a relatively short period of time (Action Canada Report, 2014). Although there has been a noticeable change for many communities, traditional food still maintains a strong hold on Inuit food systems through its heavy cultural importance and nutritional benefits.

The term ‘traditional food system’ “is used to identify all food within a particular culture that is culturally accepted and available from [a community’s] local natural resources. It also includes the sociocultural meanings, acquisition/processing techniques, use, composition, and nutritional consequences for the people using the food” (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996; 418). There is a large diversity of species included in Inuit traditional food systems that derive from the local, natural environment. The combination of these plants and animals provide Inuit with “complete diets with ample amounts of fiber and micro-nutrients and limited saturated fat and refined carbohydrate”, providing a balanced and healthy food intake (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996; 427).

Another key quality to Inuit food systems is the technologies that have been developed to harvest and process these foods. Inuit often offer unique methods of food preparation, as cultural influences are still strong throughout the North. For Baffin Inuit, “traditional food systems [were] composed of sea mammals, land animals, fish, birds,

shellfish, and plants, with the majority of dietary energy coming from sea mammals” (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996; 432) largely based on their immediate surroundings and seasonal wildlife patterns. This is however, undergoing some changes as Canadian governmental policy is subsidizing market food throughout the North (Action Canada Report, 2014). Market, or store-bought food, consists of foodstuffs that have been purchased from the Northern stores that are present throughout the Canadian Arctic. Store-bought foods are often similar to goods that are available in southern Canadian communities, but can sometimes include traditional food sources that have been subsidized and shipped to Northern stores, from other Northern communities, as is discussed later in this project⁵.

Historically, Inuit have inhabited “the western and eastern arctic, northern Quebec and Labrador” living off what the land had to offer (Backhouse, 1999; 10). Although it is contentious, many academics believe they have been living, largely self-sufficiently off the land, for about one thousand years (Backhouse, 1999). European exploration of Canada’s east coast brought about the first encounters between Northern Inuit and the ‘modern’ outside world, starting with the voyage to Newfoundland by John Cabot in 1498 – however eastern Inuit had contact with Vikings sometime between 989 and 1020 A.D. (Pringle, 2012; 83). Martin Frobisher’s 1576 search for the Northwest Passage, and John Davis’ 1580 discovery of the Davis Strait – which later became “a significant location for commercial whale hunting in the late seventeenth century” – are the first recognized interactions between Inuit and Europeans (Birkit-Smith, 1959; 10). In the following century many more European explorers (Button [1612], Baffin [1615, 1622],

⁵ Some store-bought exceptions do exist, such as Pilot Biscuits.

James [1631]) attempted to map a passage through Arctic waters in hopes of getting to Asia, but without success (McGrath, 1984).

Through the eighteenth century the amount of contact Inuit were having with Europeans increased. Whaling ships from Basque and England had been hunting whales “off the coast of Labrador since the late sixteenth century, but the exploitation of whales increased throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the arrival of Dutch, Scottish, French and American whaling ships” (Jenness, 1964; 10). Although the Hudson Bay Company, (HBC), had not yet been involved in extensive trading relationships with Inuit, the American, English, and Scottish whalers had taken their operations as far north as Cumberland Sound and Pond Inlet (Mackinnon, 1965).

Trading relationships were established in the eighteenth century between Inuit and Europeans. “In exchange for European goods, such as metal knives and needles, rifles, tobacco, cloth and food, Inuit often bartered items obtained through their traditional subsistence procurement strategies. These items included caribou skins and meat, whalebone...dogs and fish” (AANDC, 2006; 2) among other things. Such readily available access to these various types of materials, which would not typically be obtainable in the North, made it increasingly difficult – as well as less desirable – for Inuit to subsist without access to these foreign resources (Fossett, 2001). These relationships fostered a dependence upon European goods, and interdependence upon trading, shifting away from self-sustaining lifestyles the Inuit had maintained for generations.

Before having contact with Europeans, Inuit were virtually self-sufficient. As associations increased with outsiders, traditional Inuit culture became heavily influenced

and affected by outside factors. Contact with non-Inuit populations provided Inuit the opportunity to trade traditional goods for European goods, which facilitated traditional activities – for example metal tools were more effective than bones, or rocks. This reliance on non-traditional supplies increased as relations with non-Inuit expanded.

The Canadian Government perpetuated an Inuit dependence on outside sources. This fostered a need for federal intervention, eventually resulting in food subsidy programs. With the implementation of these programs, the Federal Government maintains a colonial hold over Inuit communities with the ability to decide what will fall under their federal subsidy. Consequently, the reliance that developed between Inuit and modern goods is perpetuating the colonial holds that the government has over Inuit communities.

The mixed economy that is prevalent through Canada's Arctic grew from relations between the Inuit and Europeans. Defined as a type of economy that comprises waged employment as well as traditional harvesting activities, Abele argues that it served as a buffer for Inuit, providing some protection “to its participants from the boom and bust cycles of the resource frontier” (Abele, 2009; 45). When hunting and gathering activities do not provide sufficient food resources for families, they have the option to get involved in the wage economy in order to supplement income and purchase needed goods.

This type of economy exists in the Canadian North because as wage opportunities diminish, people can revert to “essential non-wage activities, such as hunting, fishing, gathering, food preservation or making products based on gifts from the land” (Abele, 2009; 45). Abele argues, for many Inuit, the mixed economy is a blessing; not only does

it provide a source of cash for consumer products, but it also subsidizes hunting and fishing practices. This type of economy is important in predominantly Aboriginal communities more so than the major wage centers, because “individuals and households within it rely for their livelihood not upon a single source, but rather upon several” (Abele, 2009; 44). Diversifying a family’s source of income provides them with support from different areas; a lack of big game needed to feed the family can be supplemented by a wage income used to purchase store-bought food⁶.

As the mixed economy expanded, whaling operations increased throughout the Arctic, in turn, employment opportunities for Inuit families increased, as they were often taken as family units aboard whaling ships to act as guides as well as complete other activities, such as cooking and sewing (AANDC, 2006). After the peak of the whaling industry in the 1860s and 1870s, whaling crews supplemented their incomes through the hunting of other Inuit food sources including caribou, seal, walrus, fish, and foxes. The over-exploitation of these populations severely depleted Inuit subsistence resources, making typically traditional activities more challenging (Fossett, 2001).

The development of whaling, and later fur trading industries, in the Canadian Arctic developed economic opportunities for Inuit, largely at the cost of their natural environment. The connections that were established between the Europeans and Inuit were built on a system of trade relationships, engrained with colonial influence, which resulted in profound shifts to traditional Inuit ways of life (Goldring, 1989; Clancy, 1985). Not only did Europeans introduce alcohol and tobacco to Inuit populations, but

⁶ Two types of waged activities exist in Northern communities, complementary and contradictory. Complementary activities include such activities as whaling, where families can act as a guide, while maintaining traditional activities. Contradictory wage activities are the nine-to-five type jobs that take Inuit away from traditional activities such as hunting. Because they must be at work Monday to Friday, they are only able to hunt in their immediate environment on the weekends.

diseases as well, which had severe repercussions due to their lack of immunity (Ford, 2009).

As the fur trade began to expand northward through the Arctic with the HBC, Inuit were persuaded to begin trapping foxes. Many were willing to take part in new mixed economy opportunities, as they needed furs to trade for the consumer goods that they had grown accustomed to (Crowe, 1974). During the height of the whaling industry, Inuit were still able to supplement their acquisition of consumer goods with traditional food sources, as they would hunt for both their families and the whalers that had employed them. However, the fur trade was a much more demanding industry which “diverted attention from subsistence-oriented to fur-procuring activities, thereby increasing Inuit reliance on foods obtained from the HBC to supplement their diets” (AANDC, 2006; 4).

By the mid 1920s the fur trade had peaked, and subsequently declined sharply after 1930 due to over trapping, the decreasing prices for furs, and establishment of legislation that was developed to protect Arctic wildlife (Clancy, 1985). Through the establishment of relationships between Inuit and Europeans, Inuit subsistence “became increasingly and irrevocably tied to European economic forces and foreign consumer goods, contributing to widespread starvation after the collapse of fur process in the 1930s” (AANDC, 2006; 4). In the subsequent decades, the Canadian Government developed relief programs designed to mitigate destitution of Inuit throughout the Arctic; however, until 1950 the policy implementations “advocated a traditional, self-sufficient way of life, insofar as that was possible” (Diubaldo, 1992; 20).

Outside Influences in the North

Although the policy implementations of the Federal Government encouraged a self-sufficient way of life for Inuit communities, their approach to encourage that self-sufficiency was deeply rooted in paternalism. In 1947, the Canadian government produced *The Book for Wisdom for Eskimo*. Its creation stemmed from a fear that “material benefits made available through family allowances would create economic dependency, [so] federal civil servants devised an educational tool to educate Inuit about their proper use” (McNioll, *et al.*, 1999; 201). The responsibility of compiling, producing, and later translating this work was given to Alex Stevenson, who was an assistant to the Superintendent of the Eastern Arctic at the time.

Stevenson had a highly paternalistic attitude, and this translated into the writing. *The Book of Wisdom* “is a compendium of health and hygiene advice, information on governmental benefits, and directions on the care of hunting tools and game conservation” (McNioll, *et al.*, 1999; 205). It contained simplistic language and explanatory sketches to ensure its message was understood. It was stressed that the “family allowances were not a universal right of all Inuit to be received in regular instalments, but as a supplement available in times of crisis”; available only to children under the age of sixteen, it was strictly controlled and only to be used by a mother or father to help their child in dire situations (McNioll, *et al.*, 1999; 211).

This *Book of Wisdom* encouraged parents to register their children with the local police, so the child is eligible to receive aid when it is necessary, but with the advent of residential school, it forced “Inuit parents to send their child to school, for fear of losing the benefit” (McNioll, *et al.*, 1999; 213). However, these allowances were most often

paid “as credit for goods available from traders...withheld when fox-trapping was profitable so as to not interfere with the development of an Inuit work ethic, and used instead of social assistance when times were hard – thereby reducing the costs of welfare” for the Federal Government (McNioll, *et al.*, 1999; 213). This book was successful in doing two things, it brought attention to the cultivation of dependence that Inuit had developed on Southern technology, as well as simultaneously promoting their self-reliance. It was successful in encouraging Inuit to participate in the modern wage economy, but also restricted the responsibility of the Government as a source of support when these activities were no longer profitable (McNioll, *et al.*, 1999).

Traditionally, Inuit thrived from a semi-nomadic subsistence oriented way of life, however, with the development of the whaling and fur trading industries, Inuit interests shifted from subsistence hunting to commercial trapping. This led to a desire to be close to trading posts, resulting in Inuit spending prolonged periods of the year in one place (AANDC, 2006; 9). Most Inuit maintained at least a semi-nomadic lifestyle until 1945 (AANDC, 2006). With the construction of the Distant Early Warning System, also known as the DEW line, centers were established where Inuit could acquire fixed employment thus leading to the development of sedentary communities (Nixon, 1983).

In the early 1950's construction began on the DEW line, which included 63 radar stations (43 of which were in Canadian territory) that spanned 3000 miles through the Canadian Arctic from western Alaska. This was an American defense project that was established and built very quickly. The speed at which these stations were constructed led to the employment of many members of Inuit communities because they were a close and readily available source of labour (Sauve, 1963). Instead of shipping Southerners to

the Arctic to aid in the construction of these sites, Inuit were employed at lower costs (Sauve, 1963). However, by the late 1950's intercontinental thermonuclear warheads became the biggest threat to North America, rendering the DEW line relatively obsolete (Sauve, 1963).

After the North American Air Defense Agreement (NORAD) was established in 1957, it had created a continental system of defense for the North (Sauve, 1963). Thus, by the early 1960's NORAD had "provided employment for 14, 700 Canadians (including Inuit) at stations in the North and throughout Canada" (AANDC, 2006; 15). These defense project sites in the North, including areas like Iqaluit and Broughton Island (currently Qikiqtarjuaq) "attracted Inuit to congregate nearby for access to employment opportunities and medical services" which created sedentary communities over time, as Inuit became more involved in the wage economy (AANDC, 2006; 15). These communities were home to the families who were employed in the DEW Line sites, pulling them from their semi-nomadic ways of life.

Although these sites were anticipated to create jobs for many Inuit, cultural differences such as work hours and necessary training created many barriers to successful partnerships. The lifestyle differences between Inuit and Southerners perpetuated the challenges in employing Inuit in wage opportunities through Southern companies; training and learning styles differ greatly for Inuit employees (Thomas & Thompson, 1972). Despite the lack of success in that instance, the long-term effects of these sites became evident for Inuit, including housing standards.

American criticism prompted Canadian governmental responses, resulting in the development of a construction and home rental program in multiple Arctic communities

(Thomas & Thompson, 1972). While the DEW line and housing programs developed in many communities, they aided in the improvement of Inuit employment; however, the creation and expansion of programs such as the Canadian Rangers were more successful wage opportunities, as Inuit were able to maintain an increasingly traditional lifestyle whilst aiding Canadian and American defense personnel with their traditional survival skills and knowledge (Duffy, 1988).

The issues that manifest from the mixed economy emerge wherein neither sector is guaranteed to fully support the lifestyle of Inuit. Because of hunting tags, quotas, moratoriums, and shifting ecological trends, hunting has become an unreliable source of traditional food, or income – as some hunters sell big game to supplement other wages – for Inuit communities. This is why wage opportunities have been helpful for many families. However, these wage jobs are often short contracts, unreliable, or low paying (Ford, 2008). Although the mixed economy provides different options for Inuit to supplement their income, it does not provide communities with reliable or dependable long-term employment opportunities.

High Arctic Relocations

Until the early twentieth century, as mentioned above, the Canadian Federal Government had policy implementations that largely advocated for “the maintenance of a traditional way of life for all Inuit” (AANDC, 2006; 10). In order to aid in the realization of these policies, the Government relocated Inuit families and communities “to areas with a supposed abundance of natural resources [however] most of these projects failed because resources in the new location were not sufficient and Inuit continued to go

hungry” (AANDC, 2006; 10).

As arctic sovereignty became an increasingly large issue for the Canadian government in the late nineteenth century, legislators decided it would be beneficial if Canada asserted a physical presence in the Arctic Archipelago. Thus, in the 1920’s, the idea of Inuit relocations became a popular idea among Southern governmental agencies, as well as a logical way for the Canadian Government to gain a human presence throughout the Canadian Arctic Archipelago (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994). Although these moves “were primarily motivated by subsistence needs...on several occasions ...[they] were motivated by sovereignty concerns” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

Institutionally, there was a consensus that believed relocation would solve many of the economic and social problems in the North. The Hudson’s Bay Company, government departments, RCMP, and Anglican and Roman Catholic churches all had interest in Arctic affairs. For example, the HBC largely supported this idea as it would provide them with the ability to open trading posts across the Arctic. Governmental agencies relished in the thought of a Canadian presence in the high Arctic and believed they were providing a helping hand encouraging Inuit to get back to traditional hunting practices (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

These relocations, according to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, were provided to Inuit with the opportunity to return home if they were unsatisfied with their new locations – but only after they had remained in the High Arctic for two full years. Despite the fact that “relocations of Inuit families were supposedly conducted to areas of resource abundance where Inuit could live self-sufficiently, the Federal

Government also had a *de facto* concern for sovereignty of the Canadian Arctic” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994).

The communities wherein Inuit were moved to, were not formerly inhabited lands. These areas were new territory for all, resulting in a lack of knowledge in terms of how to live in these locations. Seasonal wildlife patterns, weather, and climatic conditions, as well as the land itself were all unknown. This resulted in deeply detrimental health effects – up to and including death – for the Inuit who had been forced to make the shift to the new territories (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994). The original relocation destination was almost immediately replaced with what is now Grise Fiord, due to the uninhabitable conditions it exhibited.

The 1953 relocations caused an increasing amount of controversy due to the fact that the reasoning behind the move was not made clear to Inuit families. These relocations were also more challenging for Inuit as weather and atmospheric conditions were more extreme in the new destinations (AANDC, 2006; 29). As the growth of the fur trade peaked, and disease epidemics swept through Northern communities, dependence on non-Inuit ways of life became more crucial. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the HBC and missionaries all provided Inuit with resources they were unable to procure themselves. This inspired fear in many communities, as they were no longer self-reliant (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

Contemporary Food Systems

The Baffin region of Nunavut is considered to be one of the most traditional areas throughout Canada’s Arctic; for this reason, traditional foods maintain a central impact

on Inuit life. The Council of Canadian Academics, Expert Panel on the state of Knowledge on Food Security in Northern Canada (2014) identified seventy-nine different foods being consumed in the Baffin region as part of the traditional food system. These foods have been divided into various distinct groups, including, but not limited to, sea mammals, land mammals, fish, and berries (28).

Not only does country food provide a wide range of necessary vitamins and minerals for Inuit health, but it also improves cultural morale for communities resulting in stronger beliefs, higher self-confidence, and improved happiness (Sheehy *et al.*, 2013). The harvesting, processing, and consumption of country food is associated with culturally specific activities that provide Inuit with more active lifestyles, which leads to greater food diversity (Nancarrow, 2007). These activities also improve food security for Inuit families who are able to successfully procure country foods and encourage the transfer of skills to younger generations.

Passing on knowledge of hunting and trapping is becoming a growing concern based on the trends that are shifting away from traditional practices and the consumption of country foods (Damman *et al.*, 2008). Because hunting is no longer an everyday part of Inuit life, store-bought food is becoming an increasingly large portion of Inuit diets. As a result, this has taken away from time that used to be spent teaching younger generations the knowledge of acquiring traditional food sources (Action Canada Report, 2014). Practicing these skills is the principle manner in which Inuit improve their abilities. With higher involvement in the wage labour force, there is less time available to hone these skills, or participate in multi-day hunting voyages.

This lack of skill transference has been exacerbated by the desire to participate in

the wage labour market, which has resulted in hunting becoming a more individualized activity; thus it has become more difficult resulting in a focus on the ‘easy’ game such as caribou (Damman *et al.*, 2008). A recent (2012) survey funded by the Department of Environment and conducted by a team of Government of Nunavut members has shown that caribou herds are being decimated by the focus on ‘easy game’ hunting (CBC News, 2013a). Although the survey data was still being analyzed, in 2014 “the Nunavut Government’s environment department is reporting that the numbers of caribou on Baffin Island are so low, serious conservation measures ... might be necessary to allow herds to recover” (Nunatsiaq News, 2014). In response to this study the GN implemented a moratorium on caribou hunting across Baffin Island, indefinitely, whose effects are noted later in the paper.

These types of challenges have led to non-directed dietary change as well as the nutrition transition seen in Inuit communities. A nutrition transition is characterized by changes in diets, patterns of work, as well as leisure, occurring with urbanization, economic development, and the globalization of markets. It is also largely influenced by climate change, infrastructure development, and delocalization⁷ (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996). As the animals that would typically represent the traditional food systems are disappearing, food selection is dependent on income and the opportunity cost of hunting (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996). Because resource exploitation has hindered Inuit’s local food sources, traditional means of transportation are not adequate to cover vast amounts of land needed to supply sufficient quantity of traditional foods (Damman *et al.*, 2008) which has resulted in the reliance on ski-dos and four-wheelers, developing a need for

⁷ These changes are largely seen in Iqaluit, due to its size in comparison to the smaller communities in this project, but changes such as these are developing in other Northern communities as well.

monetary income to pay for gasoline. These types of challenges in acquiring country foods result in dependencies on market food, despite its quality, cost, and nutritional value.

This ‘Southernization’ of Indigenous diets has reduced consumption levels of traditional foods as well as decreased physical activity, which has led to the development of very unhealthy trends throughout northern Canada (Damman *et al.*, 2008). Major consequences of diminishing traditional food systems are: traditional knowledge will not be passed to the next generations; less culturally specific foods are consumed, which in turn has caused lower cultural morale and self-esteem; as well as sedentary lifestyles associated with the purchase of market food⁸ (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 1996).

One of the major problems being seen throughout the Canadian Arctic is the cost of market food. On average, a grocery bill throughout Baffin Island would be 140 times higher than its counterpart in a southern Canadian city (Action Canada Report, 2014). Food prices are exponentially higher due to the cost of shipping into Arctic communities. Non-perishable foods, such as canned goods, are typically sent northward on the annual sealift during the summer, or ice free months. Shipping via sealift and/or barges is the most economical manner to send non-perishable foods to Northern communities (Nutrition North Canada: Cost of revised Northern food basket, 2013a).

However, due to the amount of time needed for the sealift to reach its destination it is an unrealistic means of transportation for perishable foods such as fruits, vegetables,

⁸ For Inuit, country foods are an asset for balanced meals, and healthy eating. They are “rich in protein, vitamins and minerals, which are important for a healthy diet, especially for children”. They also “have many good nutrients, like healthy fats, and are low in sugar” (Country Foods and People, 2004). The inclusion of traditional foods in an Inuit diet not only help with nutritional intake, but cultural morale as well. They can help prevent some diet related diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, alongside increasing harvesting and hunting skills for younger generations (Country Foods and People, 2004).

and meats. This problem is now being exacerbated by the fact that market food is becoming a larger portion of Inuit diets (Action Canada Report, 2014). The high cost of these food options has resulted in people purchasing lesser quality, higher fat alternatives, which are typically the more processed foods. The lack of healthy choices has resulted in unbalanced diets, which has led to increased obesity, and other diet related chronic diseases through Inuit communities (Action Canada Report, 2014).

Government Intervention in Northern Food Systems

In an attempt improve the food situation for Inuit throughout the Canadian Arctic, the Federal Government established programs that were designed to subsidize the cost of market food. The first program of this nature, the Food Mail Program (FMP), was developed by the Federal Government in the early 1960's and it was administered by the Canadian Post Corporation. The principal objective of the program was “to reduce the cost of nutritious and non-perishable food and other essential items, thereby improving nutrition, health and well-being in isolated communities that do not have year-round surface transportation by road, rail or marine service.” (Dargo, 2008; 7).

The department of Indian and Northern Affairs was responsible for identifying which communities were eligible for the subsidy, designated entry points where the subsidy began as well as establishing which foods were going to be part of the program. Broadly speaking, the goods that were eligible fall into four categories: “nutritious perishable foods (includes fresh and frozen), non-perishable food, priority perishable food (pilot project communities only), [and] essential non-food items” (Dargo, 2008; 7).

Provided by means of a freight subsidy through Canada Post, the FMP covered part of the cost of transporting these goods to Northern communities.

Each category of goods that had been established as part of the program had an individual Food Mail subsidy rate, for example in 2008 the “Food Mail subsidy rate for nutritious perishable foods [was] harmonized at \$0.80 per kilogram across all Provinces and Territories” however “non-perishable and non-food Food Mail subsidy rates [were] set at \$1.00 per kilogram in the provinces and \$2.15 per kilogram in the Territories” (Dargo, 2008; 7). Eligible communities were picked based on their year-round access, or lack thereof, by road, rail, or sea (AANDC, 2009).

Although this program aided in shipping 18 million kilograms of Food Mail to all eligible communities in 2007-2008, many concerns developed in regards to the initiative. The program and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs provided short lists that contained both items that were eligible for subsidies as well as those that were not. There were a large number of items that were not listed, causing confusion for suppliers and consumers alike. For example, when suppliers confirmed that toasters and coffee makers were considered essential non-food items, there was an increase in their numbers being shipped to the North due to the higher subsidy rates (Dargo, 2008). This confusion revolved around the lack of written criteria as to how items were designated eligible or not. For this reason, suppliers could ship anything from men’s socks, to designer baby clothes, to jeans to Northern communities, which raised questions as to how these goods met the goals and mandate of the program.

Another concern tabled by both Northern participants and Southern suppliers were the non-perishable list of items included in the program. Popular Southern items

“such as ready dinners, pizza and ice cream...may contain some nutritional content...[but] these are not on the top of the list of nutritional foods that Canada wants to influence consumers to purchase” (Dargo, 2008; 9). Conversely Northerners are very unlikely to purchase “avocados, whole wheat flour, organic red leaf lettuce or soya protein meat” as they are more likely to stick to the staples – such as butter, lard, and white flour, bringing into question the extensive list of items that are available.

Many Northern stakeholders mirror these concerns as well. Based on their traditions and lifestyles they are far less likely to follow the governmentally established nutritional guidelines such as Canada’s Food Guide – or even the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis version of the food guide – and do not believe the program should be heavily influenced to include those foods. This resistance stems largely from cultural differences between Northern and Southern populations. For example, lard is not considered a nutritional item but it is a top seller in Northern communities “as a key ingredient required to make bannock, a staple [traditional] food item” for many Northern families (Dargo; 2008, 9). Another key concern is the subsidy available on meat from the South, as Northerners largely prefer traditional country meats, and the lifestyle that surrounds them.

Between November 2006 and March 2009, the FMP underwent many reviews and evaluations initiated by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada under the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. The findings that emerged from these assessments, as well as communication with Northerners, raised many red flags in regards to the programs’ success in meeting its mandate. Discussions that had taken place across the country during over 80 engagements with stakeholders, community

leaders, and residents in eligible communities aided in the development of a new food subsidy program. In May 2010 “the government of Canada introduced the planned phase-in of the [Nutrition North Canada Program] as a replacement for the existing Food Mail Program” (Stanton, 2011; 1). The purpose of the new program “is to make nutritious and perishable food more accessible and affordable to Canadians living in isolated Northern communities” (Stanton, 2011; 1).

The Nutrition North Program was fully launched on the 1st of April 2011, with largely restricted eligibility lists. This cut out a massive amount of non-food items as well as many non-perishable items that were deemed a burden to the program. With the new program came new subsidy rates that varied by community and food category; these rates were also subject to changes based on community pricing and item costs as they became available (Stanton, 2011). With a budget of \$53.9M a year, subsidy rates were set to allocate these ‘limited’ funds in an equitable manner, resulting in larger subsidies for more remote communities. To set subsidy rates “the program considers retailers’ shipping costs, the volume of eligible goods they anticipate shipping by plane throughout the year as well as the number of eligible communities”; these rates are also periodically reviewed and are subject to changes during the year based on market fluctuations (Nutrition North FactSheet, 2013).

These changes shifted the program away from the transportation subsidy to more of a retail model, wherein their goal was to “shorten the supply chain and reduce the handling of fresh foods destined for the North”, enabling faster transportation to Northern communities (INAC “backgrounder” news releases, 2010). In order to make this program more of a success, the “government [planned] on providing funding directly to

retailers and wholesalers who already [shipped] large volumes of food and goods to the North, based on weight of eligible foods shipped to each participating community” (Stanton, 2011; 2). Shifting to this retail subsidy allowed retailers to negotiate for the best possible prices that they can pass onto consumers in the North.

The Nutrition North Canada Program has noticeable changes over its predecessoring initiative, such as “revised food eligibility that gives priority to subsidizing the most nutritious perishable food at a higher rate, including commercially-produced country foods...[and] revised community eligibility lists that will be based on shipments in prior years, adjusted for seasonal use” (Stanton, 2011; 2; Lawn, 1998). In determining subsidy lists “Health Canada employ[ed] a fairly narrow and evolving definition of what constitutes nutritious food, which rarely reflects local preferences or culture” (Lawn, 1998). These changes were supposed to allow for the most efficient use of the program’s budget in its aim to promote nutritious market foods to Inuit communities, however, many decisions in regards to ‘nutritious foods’ were seen as confusing for Northern locals (Burnett, Skinner, & Leblanc, 2015).

Another alteration to the NNC program was the increased involvement of Health Canada, who supposedly worked alongside Northern communities and in partnership with retailers to inspire a culturally-appropriate, community-based nutrition education component. This was to be used to “improve consumption of healthy foods by improving the quality of food available in stores and increasing those skills which influence the demands for a consumption of healthy foods” (INAC “backgrounder” news releases, 2010). These changes came alongside the heightened governance of the Nutrition North Program, which was designed to monitor and regularly evaluate the success and

challenges that the program faced, such as how the country food component of the program could be expanded in order to maximize its potential (Stanton, 2011).

Country foods are eligible for one of two subsidies in the Nutrition North program, depending on the city wherein their shipping originated. If country foods are “shipped by plane from the South by a registered retailer or supplier [they] are eligible for the higher-level subsidy similar to other store-bought meat” (and for the NNC program, any city or community that is not eligible for the program subsidy is considered the South) (Nutrition North Canada, 2014). The other lower subsidy is provided for “country foods shipped by plane from Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet or Pangnirtung, Nunavut, to other surrounding eligible communities...the customized subsidy rate applies to country foods processed in the federally-registered processing plants located in these three communities”⁹ (Nutrition North Factsheet, 2013).

To encourage communities to take part in these country food subsidies the Government “decided to focus initial efforts on commercial facilities as a first step to enhancing the availability of country food” (Stanton, 2011; 27-28). These facilities would provide hunters a place to prepare, package, and consequently ship country food to neighbouring communities. However, with fewer hunters, these facilities could remain unused for weeks at a time (Stanton, 2011). Although there was a rapid transition between the FMP and Nutrition North Canada, the general trends demonstrated that the new program was improving food costs for Northern food baskets, which was a desired

⁹ As previously mentioned, many Northerners utilize Facebook as an area to buy and sell country food between other members of Northern communities. Posts typically contain the type of country food available, its cost, and its originating location; once sold the food is packaged and shipped to the buyer. This showcases the importance of country food, and the mixed economy as Inuit are looking to find good deals on food (CBC, 2016a).

outcome. However, there was a strong belief that even though food costs were decreasing, the consumption of healthy food was not increasing (Stanton, 2011).

A shortfall with the existing academic research regarding Nutrition North has been its focus on the program itself, and lack of focused analysis on the lived experiences of Northern community members. Their interactions with this program are of equal importance to the policy development, because if they are unable to take advantage of the initiatives put in place, or are having challenges with aspects of the program it will not be running as efficiently or successfully as possible. These insights are provided in this work.

Government Legislation & Policies Affecting Food Systems

As the balance between country and store-bought food continued to waver throughout Inuit communities on Baffin Island, there were many outside influences that affected these trends, including hunting quotas, commercial fishing, and mining sites.

Governmental influence in hunting affairs of Inuit is not new to these communities. After extensive campaigning by Greenpeace and celebrity endorsements, in 1987, the Government of Canada placed bans on the hunting of whitecoat seals across the country. This led many nations to ban seal products – such as fur or meat – including the United States as well as the European Union. Although the activism was focused mostly on the large scale commercial hunting operations that were present in Newfoundland and Labrador, the ban had dire effects for Canada's Inuit communities.

As the government targeted the commercial seal hunt, traditional practices were caught in the crossfire. With legislation implementing bans on the hunting of whitecoat

seals, there was a failure to consider how this would affect Indigenous populations, where seals were a key source of income and/or food sources (Gregoire, 2014). The effects of these bans are still pertinent, as from 2006 to 2010, the seal industry in Canada plummeted from \$46 million dollars annually, to \$6 million dollars annually. This left Northern communities, like Clyde River, severely disadvantaged economically.

Because Clyde River was one of those communities that actively participated in seal hunts, the implementation of bans on this practice affected not only the food sources for the community, but also their traditional activities. The seal's skin and bones – used in many different facets, such as tools and clothing – were no longer available to these populations (Gregoire, 2014). From 1970 to 1980, hunters in Clyde River sold over 2,500 sealskins, for a profit of nearly \$60,000. Five years later, under the influence of the Federal Government's new policies, they were only able to sell 532 sealskins; their profits dropped to just \$3,719 (Gregoire, 2014).

Likewise, for Canadian Indigenous peoples, polar bear harvesting has been fundamental in Northern living for generations; it was only in the 1970's when the management of polar bear hunting began. It is the Wildlife Management Boards – which were established under the Land Claims Agreement – who are in charge of the overseeing of polar bear hunting (Environment Canada, 2009). Harvesting of polar bears in Canada “is limited to Aboriginal peoples...with the exemption of polar bears taken in defence of life and property...although in some jurisdictions a portion of the quota may be assigned to non-aboriginal peoples for sport hunting purposes” so long as the hunt is being done using traditional practices with an aboriginal guide (Environment Canada, 2009; 5).

In order to manage polar bear hunts, “plans are developed by each jurisdiction and may include a voluntary code of practice, annual quotas systems, Ministerial permit systems, harvest restricted to Aboriginal peoples or no allowable harvest” (Environment Canada, 2009; 5). The legal context outline for polar bear management has been put in place by Wildlife Acts individualized for each respective province and territory wherein polar bears reside. For all areas – excluding Ontario and Quebec – the annual harvesting system is based around quotas; these quotas are typically divided between communities (Environment Canada, 2009).

The Wildlife Management Boards that oversee the harvest of polar bears have noted that “the majority of the harvest occurs in areas where there is strong control by Aboriginal peoples” and within areas that have no local control, such as off-shore waters, hunting is not permitted and any harvested bears must immediately be reported to jurisdictional conservation officers (Environment Canada, 2009; 8). Due to the shared interests in all of Canada’s territories for ensuring the sustainability of the polar bear populations, “compliance and quality of reporting of harvest is high” (Environment Canada, 2009; 7). However, there are still many disagreements regarding whether or not these numbers are at risk; Inuit elders are unconvinced that polar bear populations are dropping (CBC News, 2007).

In Canada, there has been a general trend of stability in the number of polar bears harvested annually, and the final jurisdictional counts are often below the designated limits. These numbers are tracked by conservation officers with hunting permits and quota tags (Environment Canada, 2009). In order to ensure these quotas are acceptable, “periodic population estimates are used to monitor subpopulation status and trends” but

due to the high costs of these cyclical evaluations, subpopulations only get evaluated every fifteen to twenty-five years (Environment Canada, 2009; 8).

Although the Wildlife Management Board and Inuit stakeholders often get along and agree on necessary restrictions on harvesting polar bears, in early 2010 the Government of Nunavut released a statement announcing the quota of polar bears will be cut by ten each year for four years (CBC News, 2010). This caused problems as biologists and the Inuit in Baffin Bay had conflicting opinions. The former was concerned about the perceived decline of polar bear populations due to over hunting and climate variation, as the latter claimed polar bear populations were on the rise. The main concern raised by the Inuit organizations in this context was that biologists were using out-dated and inaccurate information for their quota numbers, as they had not completed a comprehensive survey in over ten years (CBC News, 2010).

Similarly, concern over caribou hunting practices had come to the attention of the Government of Nunavut. In order to cope with these issues, they have developed the Nunavut Caribou Strategy, which had “been created to address the needs of caribou and people whose lives are affected by caribou. The strategy touches on numerous areas of the [Government of Nunavut’s] mandate including wildlife management, land-use and planning, environmental protection...and human health and well-being” (Nunavut Department of Environment, 2010; 4).

As a broad framework, this strategy encompasses all twenty-three known caribou herds that are found in Nunavut and “supports the fundamental role and rights of Inuit with respect to caribou harvesting and management as set forth in the” Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (Nunavut Department of Environment, 2010; 4). As a result, the

success of these types of strategies is seen through the cooperation of communities and organizations to ensure the sustainable harvest of these animals across the territory.

Another major food source for Baffin Island populations is arctic char. As the most northern, freshwater fish, they have been an important source of nutrients for Inuit populations. As they are “highly nutritious, abundant, cheap and relatively easy to catch the arctic char is indispensable to the Inuit lifestyle” (ITK, 2006; 3). Due to the fact that arctic char is an important aspect of cultural Inuit livelihoods, there is a need to ensure the stability of the populations against commercial fishing practices. The very “first commercial fishing effort of arctic char began in Cambridge Bay with a gillnet operation in 1960 at Freshwater Creek...[and] a number of fisheries today also take place around Cumberland Sound” which could pose a threat to Inuit communities on Baffin Island (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2014).

These concerns are also mirrored by the effects that climate change is having on the Arctic eco-systems. A 2013 statement by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada had expressed concerns that revolve around the changes being seen in arctic char trends. As the Northern waters get warmer, char surrounding Baffin Island are losing ground to Atlantic salmon and brook trout, thus shrinking the distribution of the cold-water species (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2013). It is projected that climate change will have more negative impacts on the char as “both populations and biodiversity will decline” which is bad news for both the species and the Inuit. Scientists are calling for a precautionary approach to commercial and sustainable fishing practices of char in the North, as they are unsure exactly what they should be expecting in the coming years (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2013; 2).

Thirdly, as resource development continues to expand through the Canadian Arctic, mining sites are going to pose larger threats to traditional food sources that Inuit have relied on for generations; as well, employment opportunities will bring Inuit further into the wage economy, as I discuss below.

Baffinland is a Canadian mining company that has equally shared ownership between ArcelorMittal and Nunavut Iron Ore. A growing portion of the company's employees work and live north of the Arctic circle, as their key mining property is at Mary River, in the Qikiqtani Region of Nunavut on Baffin Island (Baffinland, 2015a). Baffinland is focused on the Mary River Property because "it is one of the largest and richest undeveloped iron ore projects in the world" (Baffinland, 2015b).

They are driving to efficiently develop these resources while "contributing to the development of infrastructure, skills training, and employment and business opportunities of the people of Nunavut" (Baffinland, 2015a). This project is also providing royalty payments to other Inuit organizations like Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and the Government of Nunavut. In their mandate, Baffinland states that they are "committed to careful stewardship of the environment, enriching communities around us, and caring for the health and well-being of our employees, contractors, and the people who live in the neighbouring region" (Baffinland, 2015a).

In the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, there is a clause that requires an 'Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement' before any major development project gets underway in Nunavut. This ensures that the developer has taken into consideration the impact their project will have on Inuit communities, and the Inuit agree with the project before it begins. It also has to be approved by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern

Development, to guarantee that they “shall contribute to achieving an equal standard of living and working in the Nunavut Settlement Area” (Baffinland, 2015b).

With the growth of the wage labour sector in Nunavut, employment opportunities have shifted for those living in the Northern communities – and it seems as though the trends are continuing to further Inuit populations from the traditional lifestyles that once thrived.

Northern Economies

As mentioned above, Nunavut’s economy is one that comprises both a wage economy and a traditional economy. Its dynamics have been shifting since Inuit began trading traditionally acquired materials, such as furs, for non-traditional items. Currently, the economy of Nunavut is projected to grow at a rate of over nine percent for the next five years – however the development of more wage jobs is not a guarantee (Government of Nunavut, 2013). In 2010 the territory’s gross domestic product (GDP) reached \$1.75 billion, with government expenditures comprising the largest portion of GDP at 71 percent (Government of Nunavut, 2013).

Three main sectors have been identified as the key economic drivers of the territory: mineral exploration and mining, fisheries, and tourism (Government of Nunavut, 2013; The Sivummut Economic Development Strategy Group, 2003). The government of Nunavut has also noted traditional activities, such as harvesting and Inuit art, as economic sub-sectors that have grown out of the traditional economy, but on a smaller scale. As exports on goods and services from Nunavut continue to grow – from

\$222 billion in 2009 to \$555 billion in 2010 – these three main economic sectors are expected to undergo rapid development as well (Government of Nunavut, 2013).

Resource exploitation is the main realm wherein economic growth is expected. Mining in Nunavut reached an annual all-time high in 2008 with \$432.6 million dollars being spent on exploration and appraisals for mining sites. These expenditures were largely the result of mining work that was being done at six sites across the territory: Meadowbank, Izok Lake, Mary River, Hope Bay, Meliadine, and Kiggavik (Impact Economies, 2010). After being hit fairly hard by the 2009 recession, the mining industry is projecting further increases in spending as metal prices continue to rise. This should lead to further exploration of mining possibilities across the territory and the development of more wage jobs (Impact Economies, 2010).

The Government of Nunavut is investing a growing amount of money in their fisheries industry and fishery science, including commercial fisheries for turbot, shrimp, and arctic char (Government of Nunavut, 2013). In 2009, an inshore exploratory fishery was funded and developed in Cumberland Sound by Pangnirtung Fisheries, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, and Kakivak Association. This investment quickly grew into a more extensive fishery operation in 2010, employing many Inuit in the wage economy (Impact Economies, 2010). Another area that has seen extensive growth in the realm of fisheries is coastal resource inventory, funded by the GN Fisheries and Selling Division. Gathering information through interviews, research, reporting, and mapping, the agency can follow trends in fish stock through various regions in order to maintain sustainable and economical use of their resources (Impact Economies, 2010).

As Nunavut is an extremely unique area, their tourism industry is on the rise. It is estimated that 14, 000 people visit the territory annually for a variety of tourism activities including eco-tourism, sport hunting, fishing, cultural, and educational activities (Government of Nunavut, 2013). Camping in the four national parks and fifteen territorial parks has become a major tourist attraction, which has resulted in explicit investments for tourism related activities. In 2010, the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. invested in three communities to develop specific tourism areas including an eco-tourism center, a tourist center for cruise ships, and an arts center (Impact Economies, 2010). It is expected that most growth within this industry will come through cruise ships, conferences, and other niche markets interested in the North (Impact Economies, 2010).

As the wage economy continues to flourish, the traditional economy still plays an important role in Nunavut. This sector of the economy has grown from the harvesting traditions of Inuit; it “provides meat for food; fur and skin for clothing; and bones for tools, games and art” (Government of Nunavut, 2013). It is estimated that this sector is worth \$40 million annually, with an additional \$6 million provided by hunting seal (Government of Nunavut, 2013). Not only are these activities economically relevant, but culturally significant as well. It has been widely accepted that the harvesting and consumption of traditional foods provides many social and cultural benefits to Inuit populations (Damman *et al.*, 2008; Nancarrow, 2007; Action Canada Report, 2014).

Following alongside the harvesting activities of Inuit, the art industry remains highly important for many communities. Studies have shown that the art sector contributes \$33 million to the territories’ annual GDP. As traditional soapstone carvings, prints, and tapestries are the keys to this sector, Inuit are rapidly “making a name for

themselves in film, broadcasting and new media” highlighting the skills of the Inuit as well as the visually captivating landscapes found across Nunavut (The Sivummut Economic Development Strategy Group, 2003; Government of Nunavut, 2013).

Although there are many policies put in place to ensure the most successful strategies aimed at the development of the North, there remains a need to maintain sustainable environments and eco-systems. The real impacts of wage economies, such as commercial fisheries or mining sites, cannot be predicted and will only emerge as the programs advance.

Community Profiles

Nunavut is Canada’s newest and largest territory, home to 29, 474 people. It officially separated from the Northwest Territories on April 1st 1999 through the Nunavut Act and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2010). It is a massive expanse of land that combines hundreds of islands in the Arctic Archipelago. Baffin Island, located north of the mouth of Hudson’s Bay, is Canada’s largest island. It is home to the following communities wherein I plan to focus my studies: Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Cape Dorset, and Iqaluit; all part of the Baffin Region, which receives some of the highest food subsidy rates in the nation (Nutrition North Canada, 2013b).

These four communities located in Baffin all have unique challenges when facing food security. As they all have different wage opportunities individual challenges are presented to these communities, however they are all still struggling with the same food security issues. The involvement of these specific communities in my research has

provided meso-level insights into problems that are encountered all across the territory. This community information paints a picture of the differences as well as the similarities between these communities as they come up against food security issues. Many indicators are discussed in order to present a well-rounded view of these areas.

Three of the four communities – all excluding Iqaluit – are hamlets, because they are so small. These communities were chosen because they are all located on Baffin Island. As food subsidy rates are so high in the Baffin region, it was logical to focus on this area for my research. The higher subsidy rates as determined by the Federal Government means less access, or more challenging access to these communities. Although they are all located in the same region, they have varying characteristics that differentiate them from the others. Clyde River, Pont Inlet, and Cape Dorset are all small communities, but they are home to mining organizations, tourist sites, and natural wonders. Meanwhile, Iqaluit is the territory's capital and largest city. It possesses interesting differences to the much smaller, more remote communities.

The differences that exist between each community are what made them relevant for this research. Pond Inlet is close to the Baffinland mining site, which affects the traditional economy as well as jobs, as it is a main hamlet where mining companies search for labourers. Clyde River is an entrance point into the Sam Ford Fiord, a growing tourist destination in Nunavut. Cape Dorset has a large art industry, claiming itself to be the “capital of Inuit art” (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2010). Lastly, Iqaluit is Nunavut's capital, and largest community. It is home to the most populated area in the territory and many of the government offices. As you will come to

read, the make-up of Iqaluit is very unique to the Canadian North, and that is why it is included in the study.

One of the more contentious measures that is mentioned is the unemployment rate of each community, gathered from Statistics Canada. By definition, unemployment is the unutilized supply of labour;

“the operational definition of unemployment is based primarily on the activity of job search and the availability to take a job, thus unemployed persons are those who, during reference week:

- a. were on temporary layoff during the reference week with an expectation of recall and were available for work, or
- b. were without work, had looked for work in the past four weeks, and were available for work, or
- c. had a new job to start within four weeks from reference week, and were available for work” (Statistics Canada, 2014)

This definition poses many challenges in representing the Inuit population. The first major concern arises as unemployment is based on the action of searching for a job. For Inuit, hunting or providing for their family or extended families can be a full-time job in itself. This then takes these members of a society out of the unemployment rate, despite the fact that they do not have paid employment in the wage economy.

The use of this definition is very ‘South-centered’, meaning it represents largely the interests of the population of southern Canada. Due to the vast differences in lifestyle, the definition is more beneficial to Southern populations as they could in theory be constantly available for work, yet for Inuit, if they were spending their time hunting in order to provide for their families, they would not qualify as unemployed, yet are not generating any monetary income. The implications of the use of this definition are

troublesome due to the fact that it cannot accurately track the unemployment rates in Nunavut.

Through the extensive use of the mixed economy in Northern communities, Inuit may have wage jobs for a portion of the year, but become unemployed during the ‘off-season’ (Ford, 2009). Consequently, it complicates the ability to measure Inuit relationships to paid employment. Because of the South-centred nature of this definition, it excludes a large portion of Northern populations, giving inaccurate representations of important statistics.

Pond Inlet

Pond Inlet is a hamlet on the northern edge of Baffin Island, accessible only via ship and air. The community has a population of 1,315 people, wherein 52.9 % is male and 47.1 % is female. Of this population, 95 % are Inuit, and the languages spoken in the hamlet are Inuktitut and English. Between the Statistics Canada census in 2001 and 2006, the community had a population growth rate of 7.8 % – as compared to Canada’s population growth rate of 1.1 %. Due to this high birth rate, the population of Nunavut consists largely of younger members, as the median age of the population is 20.8 years old. This fact can be reinforced by the statistic that over half of the population of Pond Inlet is under the age of twenty-four.

The housing situation of Pond Inlet is typical to that of Nunavut. There are 315 private occupied dwellings; of those, 55 are owned and 250 are rented. These dwellings have an average of just over five rooms each, which includes bedrooms, kitchens, dining rooms, and living rooms. In Pond Inlet there are, on average, 3.9 people per-family, resulting in nearly a quarter of all people being forced to share their room with another

family member. To put this into perspective, the Ottawa housing market averages 6.6 rooms per dwelling, 3 people per census family, only 1.3 percent of people have to share their sleeping space.

In terms of employment, according to the Nunavut Economic Development Association (NEDA), Pond Inlet has an employment rate of 46.7 percent and an unemployment rate of 22 percent. The three biggest employment sectors in Pond Inlet are retail/wholesale, resource development, and social service/non-government jobs, accounting for 16.5, 8.2, and 7.2 percent of employment respectively. As wage jobs are not as common in the community, the average income for the area is \$18, 176. For most members of Pond Inlet, income can be broken down into three sections: earnings, government transfers, and other money sources. As a breakdown of 100 percent of income, typically 83.1 % is earnings, 13.6 % is government transfers and 2.7 % is generated from other money sources.

As for education, of the population over the age of fifteen (835 people), 510 of them have no certificate, diploma, or degree. This statistic sees 270 men without educational attainments compared to 240 women. Sixty people have their high school certificate, 35 are trained in a trade, and 150 have a college, CEGEP, or non-university degree. Only ten people have a university degree.

Clyde River

Clyde River is another hamlet in north Baffin, accessible via air and ship. According to Statistics Canada, it has a population of 820 people (95 % Inuit); 52.4 % male and 47.6 % female. The languages spoken in this hamlet are Inuktitut and English. Between the two census years, the community has seen a growth rate of 4.5 %, still

higher than the Canadian average, but not quite as high as Pond Inlet. Typical of Nunavut trends, Clyde River also has a very young population, wherein over half of the population is under the age of twenty-four, and their median age is 20.8 years old, identical to that of Pond Inlet.

As for housing in Clyde River, there are 170 privately occupied dwellings, wherein 35 are privately owned and 135 are rented. Houses in the community average 5.2 rooms each, with 3.8 persons per census family; again, extremely similar to that of Pond Inlet. However, based on the lack of dwellings, more people have to share their room with another person, as 35.3 percent of occupants share living space.

According to NEDA, the employment rate of Clyde River is only 50 percent. The unemployment rate is 24.2 %, resulting in basically a quarter of the population who are not involved in the community's workforce. Similar to Pond Inlet, the three major employment sectors in Clyde River are retail/wholesale, social services/non-government jobs, and resource development accounting for 18.3, 10, and 6.7 percent of jobs respectively. Due to the low employment and high unemployment statistics in the community, average income is only \$13, 744 annually. The breakdown of this income is as follows: 76.1 % is earnings, 22.5 % is government transfers, and 2.7 % of income is provided through other money sources.

In terms of education, 505 people are over the age of fifteen in the community. Of those people, 335 have no certificate, diploma, or degree. Fifty people have achieved their high school certificate, fifteen have mastered a trade, and seventy have a college, CEGEP, or non-university degree. Lastly, 70 people have a university degree, bettering educational attainments of Pond Inlet.

Cape Dorset

Cape Dorset is a hamlet located in South Baffin, on the coast. It is accessible year round via air and ship only, and is home to 1, 236 people, 91% Inuit. The population is 49.8 % male to 50.2 % female, and languages spoken are Inuktitut and English. The growth rate of the community's population is 7.7 %, seven times as high as the national average. Similar to the two previous communities, Cape Dorset has a very young population, wherein over half of it under the age of twenty-four. However, their median age is slightly higher at 22.1 years old.

The housing situation in Cape Dorset is very similar to that of Pond Inlet. There are 325 privately occupied dwellings. Of these, forty are privately owned and 375 are rented. With the census families averaging four people each and dwellings averaging 5.1 rooms per household, sharing a room is a necessity for 23.1 % of people living in Cape Dorset. Although this rate of sharing is much higher than southern Canada, as previously mentioned, it is also higher than the rest of Nunavut wherein on average, eighteen percent of people have to share a room.

Employment rates in Cape Dorset are similar to those in the previous communities with a 48.1 % employment rate and a 21 % unemployment rate. Retail/wholesale employment opportunities as well as social services/non-governmental services each account for 12.1 % of employment. Unlike the other communities, resource development has been surpassed by finance and real estate as the third biggest sector in Cape Dorset. With a 61.7 % participation rate in the workforce, the average annual income is \$14, 805. The make-up of this income is 80.5 % earnings, 17 % government transfers, and 3.2 % comes from other money sources.

As for education, 810 people in the community are over the age of fifteen. Of these, 515 have no certificate, diploma, or degree, 90 have their high school certificate, 60 are certified in a trade, and 75 have a college, CGEP, or other non-university diploma. Unlike the other two communities, Cape Dorset has thirty people who have achieved a university certificate or diploma below the undergrad level. They also have 45 people who have completed a university diploma or degree.

Iqaluit

Iqaluit is Nunavut's capital, and biggest settlement. Located on Baffin Island's southern coast in Frobisher Bay, Iqaluit is home to 6, 085 people where 60 % are Inuit. Inuktitut, English, and French are all spoken in Iqaluit. From 2001 to 2006 the community had a growth rate of 18.1 percent. The population is composed of 51.3 % males and 48.7 % females. Unlike the pervious communities, Iqaluit has a slightly older population. Their median age is 28.8 years old, however over half the population is still younger than thirty years of age; largely due to the influx of Southerners in the community. It should be noted that Iqaluit is the only community in this study where direct flights to the South are available; from the other hamlets, you must travel to Iqaluit, as it is one of only three entry-points to the South.

These statistics are evidentially different from the other areas of Baffin Island, and that is predominantly caused by the influx of non-indigenous populations to Iqaluit. Of the total population, 3, 650 identify as part of the Indigenous population; this leaves 2, 435 non-indigenous peoples in the city. Because there was such an increase in non-indigenous populations, the statistics seen in Iqaluit are closer to those of southern Canada, in terms of age, education, and income.

The housing market in Iqaluit is also quite different from the aforementioned communities. There are 2, 075 private occupied dwellings; 480 are privately owned whilst 1, 595 are rented. Similar to the other communities, Iqaluit's dwellings have an average of five rooms per household. The grand difference is seen with the size of census families. Because the families are, on average, smaller than the aforementioned communities – at only 3.2 people per family – the rate of room sharing is also much lower at 6.7 percent. These numbers can be correlated more with southern Canada's statistics, as Iqaluit has more urban development than other communities on Baffin Island.

Employment rates in Iqaluit are also closer to southern Canada's statistics, as their employment rate is 71.9 percent. Unemployment rates are only 7.8 % resulting in a 78.1 % participation rate in the labour force, the highest of all studied communities. Iqaluit also has different employment sectors, with business, finance, and administration jobs account for nearly 21 % of the community's jobs. Sales and service as well as management occupations account for 20.2 % and 15.6 % of the workforce respectively. The difference in available jobs in this community has resulted in an exponentially higher average annual income of \$44, 885. As many government buildings were established in the Territory's capital, it possesses higher paying wage opportunities in comparison to the other communities. Earnings as a total percent of income are also higher at 93.8 %, while government transfers have fallen drastically to only 4.1 percent. There is still 2.1 % of income coming from other money sources.

Of the 4, 535 people in the city who are over the age of fifteen, only 1, 615 of them do not have a certificate or diploma. When you look at the rest of Iqaluit, 775

people have their high school certificate, 265 are qualified in the trades industry, 955 have a college, CEGEP, or an equivalent diploma, and 105 people have a university certificate below the bachelors' level. Lastly, 815 people have a university degree.

These communities all showcase different influences of Northern living, from the Territory's capital, to mining, art, and tourism, the diversity of these communities is clear. However, they are all subject to the same food security challenges.

Theory

People are the basic element of every social structure. Their place within these social spheres is subject to innumerable influences, experiences, authorities, and attributes. Where individuals are placed within this social structure can have a large effect over the social and power relations they will be subject to during their lifetime. These relations also influence the social policies that Inuit will endure, as implemented by the State.

Within this chapter, I define and discuss Canadian political economy within the context of exploring how it affects social policies in Northern communities. I examine the relationships between political actors, the economy, and civil society, I also explain how they are interconnected. I discuss how the environment has been pulled into the interplay between these sectors and the impacts that has had on Northern communities.

I discuss the impact of political economy on power relations in the North and explain how the domination of Northern communities began, with entrenched racism and oppression, and how they evolved from European dominance to dependence upon the Canadian Government. This is followed by an explanation of how the historical power influences of the government transfer into modern social policies of Northern communities, which has led to the North being viewed as an 'internal colony' of the Canadian state.

Following this, is a discussion on Northern communities and the effects of Neoliberalism. I explore historical changes in these communities, how Neoliberalism was applied to the North, and what effects this had on the authority of the Government over these populations and their Northern territory.

Lastly, I apply a political economy framework to the Nutrition North Program. I examine how this program has entrenched and ensured a continued dependence on the Canadian Government, resulting in a colonialist and paternalistic relationship¹⁰. I illustrate how this type of program has caused poverty within Northern communities, and perpetuates inequalities in the North. These theories applied to this research aid in the illustration of how Canadian governmental policies have detrimental impacts on food security in Northern communities.

What is Political Economy?

Political economy is a rapidly developing field that is gaining traction among historians, economists, and social scientists alike. This growing interest is a reflection of “appreciation that the worlds of politics and economics, once thought as separate fields...do in fact importantly affect one another” (Gilpin, 2001; 25). Interrelationships have been recognized “between the two spheres [which] has led to increased attention from historians and social scientists” (Gilpin, 2001; 25). Over the course of the last few decades, many different definitions of political economy have emerged, many focusing on either the economic or political aspects, but they have failed to successfully amalgamate the two in a balanced and comprehensive definition (Gilpin, 2001).

¹⁰ For the sake of this paper, paternalism will be defined through the actions of the Canadian Government. The use of two different, but necessary conditions, when utilized together will be used as the definition of paternalism. Firstly, as noted by Hershey, the paternalistic action is originally intended to benefit the recipient. Secondly, the consent and acceptance of the recipient is not necessary (Hershey, 1985). The combination of these two facets generates the South-centered attitude of superiority in judgement that is held by the Federal Government. Along with this attitude, there is an assumption that Southern governmental agencies know how to improve the lives of Inuit without in-depth knowledge of the way they live.

According to Wallace Clement, political economy theory is an all-encompassing explanation of how power relations are derived within society. For Clement, “the political includes the comprehensive ‘state’ of political and civil society; that is, not only government but governance. The economic encompasses the social, political and cultural constitution of markets, institutions and actors” (Clement, 2001; 406). Together, it incorporates all influences within society, explaining why and how decisions are made; as well as their ultimate impact on Northern communities.

Canadian political economy has embodied a universal undertaking in order to illuminate Canadian society from a materialist perspective. The materialistic view is derived from “the sense of placing at the forefront the way a society creates and sustains itself. It is fundamentally historical and dynamic in the sense of seeking understandings of social transformation, including the agents and forces of change” (Clement, 2001; 406). Political economy theory is helpful in examining the entrenched social and cultural domination of Inuit in Canada’s North.

Once Inuit communities began to interact with ‘outsiders’ their way of life was forever changed. Although this was not the way Inuit societies had originally been created, it became the way they sustained themselves – through outside influence and dependence¹¹. With tensions and contradictions inherently embodied within society, struggles are produced, enticing resistance to established relations and practices. As such, “material relations are basic to the unfolding of social and technical changes in the

¹¹ Controversial research exists in regards to Inuit trade with Vikings, around the year 1300. Patricia Sutherland believes there was a mutually beneficial trade relationship between the people of Dorset and the Norse; this claim is based on artifacts found in the Canadian Arctic that reflect Viking technologies (Pfeiff, 2013; see also, Pringle, 2012 & Armstrong, 2012). However, the Director of the Arctic Studies Centre at the Smithsonian Institution, William Fitzhugh, believes there is a lack of published evidence to support Sutherland’s claims (Armstrong, 2012).

labour force, households and institutions of the state and economy” (Clement, 2001; 407).

Gaining significance recently has been the concept of ‘space’. This idea of space “has been expanded to include the natural environment and a greater awareness of the place of ecology in the quality of social life” (Clement, 2001; 407). With heightened recognition of the importance of the physical environment within the realm of political economy, the impact of different policies and procedures are heightened in Northern communities due to their reliance on the environment. Influencing their food supply, traditional activities, and generation of wage incomes, among other things, ecology is intrinsically linked to Northern political economy.

Alongside space, is the cultural or ideological area within political economy. This includes “the meaning that people attach to their lives, especially what is now popularly referred to as ‘identities’. The way they understand and justify what they do and who they are including guidelines they use for their behavior” (Clement, 1997; 4). These actions are both “inherited and created, covering religion, cultural traditions, sexism, racism, class consciousness, values, attitudes, interests, and ideals” (Clement, 1997; 4). These facets are integral aspects of political and economic realities. They have been built out of, and consistently influence, peoples’ material existence (Clement, 1997). For Inuit, these ideological areas are often influenced by the ecological world. Whether it is the animals and their offerings or the land itself, Inuit recognize the importance of the physical environment and what it gifts to them. Not only does it provide food and clothing to Inuit, but also shelter and tools. Moreover, Inuit have strong cultural and spiritual connections with the land and animals alike.

Since the realm of political economy regards politics as much broader than government offices, encompassing all power relations, it is concerned with democratic practices that extend to all features of social life, giving it a strong social justice underpinning. This spurs political economy's inherent interest in social change. Clement states that "materialism is never static, uniform, or timeless, so there is always a historical dimension", thus as the social and technical worlds change, so too do the political and cultural (1997; 5).

Also, since human agency is a basic feature in the dynamic of political economy, the manner in which people explain and account for their lives matters in the sense of propelling social movements and creating systems of consent and legitimization. As political economy has spatial importance, it is "located in particular territories, which are themselves relationally specified by both domestic and international relations" (Clement, 1997; 5).

In terms of Northern territories, the Inuit have travelled a transient path from self-sustaining economies to reliance on public transfers. Although there is widespread reliance on public transfers, Inuit are vocal about issues with both the Government as well as their local Northern stores. Through the CBC, APTN, and many other news sources, Inuit in Nunavut were able to make their voices heard as high up as federal politics. This drives the involvement in social movements, such as those that were held to boycott local stores for their incredibly high food prices¹². However, these regions remain incredibly dependent on the government economically, which perpetuates colonialist practices (Rodon, 2014).

¹² For Northern communities, these boycotts are short lived. Because many communities only have one Northern store they are unable to sustain the boycotts for extended periods of time, as many people are reliant on the food products that are sold in these stores.

As communities in Nunavut have such “small population[s] living in isolated communities scattered across a vast territory, the lack of communication infrastructures, and the distance from markets makes it difficult to develop a thriving economy” (Rodon, 2014; 108). The largely land based economy is hard to put a value on monetarily, but for Inuit it is invaluable (Rodon, 2014).

As most of the development of Northern territories came from the outside through trading trends, to DEW line construction, the Inuit did not have a chance to shape their own fate. They were guided into the areas where they were wanted by the governmental or other economic powers. This leads to questions about continued colonial influence in the North, and the effects it is having on these communities.

Power Relations & Colonialism

As previously discussed, political economy is an all-encompassing theoretical explanation of how power relations are derived within society. For Clement, “the political includes the comprehensive ‘state’ of political and civil society; that is, not only government but governance. The economic encompasses the social, political and cultural constitution of markets, institutions and actors” (Clement, 2001; 406). There are many stakeholders present in Nunavut’s economy: not only the community members themselves, but Inuit organizations, the Territorial and Federal Governments, Southern companies, as well as those from abroad. These stakeholders all have different interests, spurring diverse relations between these groups. The interactions between groups within Canada were established with colonization and perpetuated through to the present, resulting in the intertwined nature of the nation’s groups.

Alongside the arrival of Europeans in Northern Canada, came Euro-centric ideals. In Europe, in order to accumulate capital growth, it required a free labour market, and the European settlers who came to the North found that in Northern communities. “The Indians' class position in the production of fur came to be the basis of their economic exploitation and racial oppression [and became] the basis of the colonialism and colonial relations that developed” (Bourgeault, 1983; 48). Although the Northern communities existed within a form of feudal relations under European ‘merchants capital’ they “were still formally within the emerging capitalist system as a whole because what they were producing was a commodity for the developing capitalist market” (Bourgeault, 1983; 49).

However, as Inuit became involved in the capitalist market, they came in at the bottom. The colonizers took advantage of the Inuit’s lower class position, forcing them to become the ‘free labour market’. Europeans held a ‘superior’ attitude in regards to Inuit. When they were introduced to Inuit communities, they believed Inuit needed their help to be able to ‘advance’ and ‘modernize’ their way of life. Because of this European attitude, relations with colonialist underpinnings were inevitable (Bourgeault, 1983). The more Inuit became involved in the capitalist market, the stronger the colonial ties became.

The process of transforming the Northern populations to produce what was needed by European settlers, was the process of imposing one mode of production upon another. In order to accomplish this, “it was necessary to conquer the communal society economically so as to change the Indians' productive mechanisms from producing goods for internal use to producing goods for commodity exchange” (Bourgeault, 1983; 50). For Inuit, “when whalers first came to the Arctic, [their] ancestors did not object to them

because [their] way was to share...the wildlife did not belong to [them] but it existed for [their] benefit” (Wright, 2014; 180). Because of this approach to wildlife Inuit “shared [their] wildlife willingly with these visitors and welcomed them because they brought trade, excitement, and more security” (Wright, 2014; 180). However, Europeans also brought diseases for which Inuit had no immunity nor a cure, and the “whalers hunted the animals [they] depend on for clothing and shelter until they were on the verge of extinction. Consequently, many Inuit starved” (Wright, 2014; 181).

When whalers left and traders established themselves in Inuit territory, they introduced the barter system using tokens in exchange for food supplies¹³. As Inuit traditionally relied on sharing and exchanging meat, skins, and other necessities, this system was completely new for Inuit and they “quickly fell afoul of it, incurring debts, making up late payments and leaving themselves short of tokens to buy food and new equipment” eventually becoming indebted to the system that controlled them (Wright, 2014; 181). Once this occurred, the “communal appropriation of surplus-labour and the governing egalitarian relations of production were terminated or ruptured” (Bourgeault, 1983; 50).

During these changes, the social structure and relations among those in Northern communities was altered. “Inequalities were created between women and men, and unequal external relations were created between Indians and Europeans. The fact of a foreign economic system imposing itself upon another national or aboriginal grouping

¹³ There are notable differences between trade and interactions with whalers and those with traders. The whalers who travelled to the Arctic were interested mainly in the hunt and capture of whales; other consequences of their presence in the North was unintentional. Conversely, traders wanted to change – or colonize – the North (AANDC, 2006). With the imposition of the token system and changes to Inuit social structure the traders were evidently aiming to assimilate or take over the Inuit communities that had been established around their trading posts.

became the basis of colonialism and colonial relations” (Bourgeault, 1983; 51). As communal society slowly became undermined by trade goods and commodity production, women began to lose the decision-making powers they had over their labour and the use of the goods they produced.

This created a basic division between European settlers’ labour and Northerners’ labour. This division was primarily based on maintaining the Northern populations as ‘peasants’ to the European ‘rulers’. Any changes in “productive relations, such as allowing Indians access to wage labour jobs around the posts, was forbidden, since such change would contribute to the breakdown of the peasantry” (Bourgeault, 1983; 54).

The entrenched colonial nature of power relations between Inuit and ‘outsiders’ was established from the very first European interactions. With Europeans instantly taking over the economic and social realms of Inuit lifestyles, there was very little that could be done to improve the Inuit’s standings. As the Northern economic markets shifted towards capitalism, the Inuit became dependent on the Europeans connections to the outside markets. The capitalist market's "imperatives of competition, accumulation, profit maximization, and increasing labor productivity have greatly intensified the unevenness existing throughout the world and the rate at which it is being combined, regulating not only all economic transactions but social relations in general" (Widdowson, 2005; 6). This has resulted in shifts to the social structure. Not only were the Inuit men considered more important than the Inuit women, but the European men were superior to everyone.

The change in social hierarchy saw women begin to lose influence within their communities. Opinions became insignificant, and decision making powers became

irrelevant. This encouraged a shift towards the dependence on Europeans for economic well-being due to the benefits of the new economic system; however, with European reliance on the sale of natural resources, the physical world was quickly pulled into the mix. The Inuit's first interactions in the wage economy were based on the exploitation of their natural resources, which led them down a path of misuse of the natural environment, largely for the benefit of others. As the Europeans were the ones with connections to the economic markets, they were the ones who had the decision-making powers. Because Inuit were looking for 'wages' in the form of tokens, they were exploiting their natural environment for economic gains – which contested their moral relationships with the environment that had been present in the past (see Wright, 2014).

This lack of influence in their own territory has resulted in widespread dependence within the Inuit population in Northern Canada. Canadian social policies are driven by the Federal Government, with a distorted regard to Inuit needs, challenges, or the outcomes of these policies in the North (Coates, 2008). The Federal Government, as the Europeans did, have taken control over both the economic welfare of Northerners, as well as the social sphere of the Territory.

It is common in the political science literature to view the Northern communities in Canada as "internal colonies" (Watkins, 1977; Coates & Powell, 1989). These comparisons have been drawn between the subordination of Canadian Indigenous peoples and circumstances that are present in the Third World. As the Federal Government implemented changes within the Canadian North – such as settled communities, residential schools, and food subsidy programs – there was a cultural discontinuity for the Inuit.

Because assimilation became the Government's goal, "Northern aboriginal groups have been oppressed by a 'foreign' power, it is argued, they constitute 'internal colonies' of the Canadian state" (Hicks, 2004; 1). The designation of Inuit communities as 'internal colonies' has been especially prevalent, as the internal colonization model argues that "the Arctic is home to societies that have been profoundly impacted by varying processes of colonization by – and incorporation into – 'southern' capitalist states" and this "involves economic, political and cultural dimensions" (Hicks, 2004; 20).

Prattis & Chartrand maintain that there are three major factors that are included in Inuit colonization:

- “1) Inuit societies' loss of 'ownership and /or control of the means of production' through contact with Europeans;
- 2) Inuit incorporation into the Canadian state, resulting in the 'loci of political and economic control' being transferred to authorities external to the territory; and
- 3) Inuit incorporation into 'a core-periphery relation', whereby they become 'instrumental to the economic growth' of southern Canada. Through this process, a 'system of stratification' develops and cultural distinctions between Inuit and 'Whites' are 'superimposed upon class lines'" (1990; 53).

From this, Inuit colonization, is generally "perceived to have occurred through three interrelated processes – the undermining of traditional economic practices, the compromising of Inuit political autonomy with foreign government structures, and the destruction of Inuit cultures – so as to facilitate economic growth in southern Canada"¹⁴ (McLean, 1997; 1 & Widdowson, 2005).

¹⁴ Broadly defined in the context of Northern Canada, economics is not only the exchange of products for money, but also goods and services provided by Inuit. Recognising that trade and productive activities that are related to self-subsistence are also considered part of Northern economics broadens the scope of Northern economics. All of these subsistence and traditional activities underline Inuit contributions to economic productivity in the North.

As the needs of the Europeans shifted, so too did the resources Inuit had to procure for trade. Reliance on these trading practices ensured Inuit would find whatever it was that Europeans needed, disregarding their traditional economic practices, even adopting a 'monetary' coin system – which often resulted in mismanaged funds and Inuit debt to the European traders (Rodon, 2014). Being new to the 'monetary' economy posed new challenges for Inuit. As previously mentioned, Inuit traditionally shared or exchanged goods for what they needed. With the token barter system Inuit were unsure how to manage their tokens and quickly accumulated debts with traders (Wright, 2014). As these tokens were a new and abstract concept to Inuit, they were unable to recognize their value. Falling behind in payments and gathering debts meant they owed more to the traders. This solidified Inuit second class status and the control that traders had.

Once Inuit became heavily involved with outside trading, they relied on these sources, especially in hard times, when traders provided them relief. Although the relief was provided by the fur traders, it was billed to the Government. This led to debates between federal and provincial governments as to who was responsible for Inuit wellbeing (Tester & Kulchyski, 1994). With the responsibility eventually falling on the Federal Government, they became the new political power in the North. The overall effects of these influences had hugely detrimental effects on Inuit culture in both social and economic aspects, effectively altering the way they were to live on their own land.

Northern Communities & Neoliberalism

As Inuit became further marginalized from production after the fur trade, it resulted in both a geographic and economic isolation of Northern communities. This

spurred the interest in developing Nunavut as a Territory of its own; however, it was understood that large external transfers were needed to ‘build’ an economy within the region. Political actors noted that Nunavut had the ability to advance the Southern capitalist system, namely through the extraction of natural resources (Widdowson, 2005; 2). This prompted the interjection of Southern governmental agencies.

Evidentially, Northern communities were already heavily affected by the presence and influence of Southern governmental agencies. The economic reality of Aboriginal economies has been influenced by three main factors “the specific evolutionary heritage of each community; the extent to which individuals were drawn into the money market and wage economy; and the Federal Government’s role in the support and administration of Aboriginal economies” (Lang *et al.*, 2011).

As these communities became intertwined in the money market and wage economy, they shifted away from traditional cultural and social practices. For example, if Inuit stopped hunting because they had acquired a wage labour position they, in turn, would have no traditional country food coming into their household for their family on a regular basis. Because food goods from the Northern stores are extremely expensive, they are unable to maintain the same levels of caloric intake for their household. However, it has now become exceedingly challenging to leave the wage economy because they have no traditional food stores, nor the financial capacity to feed their family while they begin to re-implement traditional hunting practices. Due to these restrictions, many Inuit are ‘trapped’ in their current lifestyle.

The contemporary reality is that existing Indigenous self-government structures and models are largely grounded on principles of global capitalism, such as economic

development based on large-scale resource extraction, privatization, and commodification of the land (Kuokkanen, 2011; 275). This brings together the facets of political economy that emphasize the importance of the natural environment in the North, but predominantly as an economic asset, instead of one that holds major social or cultural importance.

One of the key reasons for contemporary Indigenous advocacy of their traditional systems of governance, as well as traditional forms of economy, is the destructive effects of global capitalism. This has been characterized by trade liberalization and export-oriented development involving exploitation of natural resources by multinational corporations, such as mining, logging, hydroelectric construction, or oil exploration on Indigenous peoples' territories (Kuokkanen, 2011; 276).

Exemplifying these concerns was the deregulation of national resource extraction laws and regulations, which has “resulted in a serious undermining of international instruments, constitutional provisions, national laws and policies safeguarding Indigenous rights” (for examples, see Mander and Tauli-Corpuz, 2006 & United Nations, 2009). This has caused the central right – Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination – too “often be questioned and undermined as national governments bind themselves to new global economic treaties” (Kuokkanen, 2011; 276).

The world of global capitalism is growing to:

“drive not only colonial governments, but, increasingly, Aboriginal ones. Some pursue profits and capitalist methods like union-busting. Some seek an accommodation with capitalist development that might benefit Indigenous communities... Those who would choose non-capitalist alternatives are at odds with the dominant culture, political ideology and economic structure.” (Green, 32; 2002)

Pitting the traditional modes of government and economic structures against those

of the global capital market cause tension in Northern communities. As locals wish to maintain traditional lifestyles, the Federal Government does not take into account their desires as decisions about their land are made (AANDC, 2006).

The approach taken in Inuit communities on Baffin Island has largely steered away from the neoliberal ideas, characterized by a scaling back of state economic involvement as well as state support for marginalized groups in favour of market solutions and competitiveness. Despite this fact, it is believed by some that neoliberalism may have positive consequences for certain Indigenous communities in Canada because it can help them distance themselves from constant government intervention and foster greater prosperity through participation in the market system (Slowey, 2008).

However, as neoliberalism began to take hold of Canada in the late twentieth century, Northern communities did not feel anywhere near the full force of the shift. During the privatization and deregulation of markets, Northern communities still felt the influence of the government as they saw the implementation of the FMP in the early 1960s. The Federal Government maintained its stronghold in the North, perpetuating the subordination of these populations. As the FMP developed, it encouraged the undermining of both traditional Inuit economic practices, and the political autonomy of the communities, as well as continued the destruction of Inuit cultures. The South was seeing less involvement of the Federal Government, while the North was seeing new federal program and policy implementations. They had quickly become reliant on the government transfers and subsidies, to maintain their standard of living.

It seems to be unrecognized that “building a Nunavut economy with government transfers and additional administrative structures does not make the territory more

productive and "self-reliant"; it just amounts to distributing funds that have been supplied by external economic processes” (Widdowson, 2005; 4). The territory is unable to sustain itself through transfer payments, nor with the exploitation of natural resources. Neither of those sources of ‘income’ are controlled or driven exclusively by the Inuit population; they are dependent on the Government for transfer payments, or the economic profitability of their resources. As a result, incomes are unpredictable and unreliable causing instability in Nunavut’s finances as a Territory, as well as within Inuit households’ financing.

Political Economy & Northern Policies

As noted in Rea’s 1976 “*Political Economy of Northern Development Study*” there was a belief that historically the position of private enterprises in the Canadian North “emphasized the monopolistic, large-scale, and externally-directed character of the businesses which have shaped the economic history of this area” (75). Many believed the Government that represented Northern communities has shared many of these same characteristics. From Rea’s perspective, governmental institutions “have been monopolistic in the sense that policy has been made through a highly-centralized system of public decision making in which only a few interested groups had a direct influence on policy outcomes” (Rea, 1976; 75). Likewise, on the administrative side, the structures “through which these policies were applied were also typically highly centralized organizations” and they were often noted for their insensitivity towards local influences (Rea, 1976; 76). The scope of these political structures was also vast, and “the centres of

these systems of control were outside the North, just as were the centres from which commercial enterprises were conducted” (Rea, 1976; 76).

While these similarities are evident, they may have been a byproduct of “specific business influence being brought to bear on politicians, it was more often simply the consequence of business and political leaders in the outside centres of industrial and political power sharing the same points of view” (Rea, 1976; 76). Governance of the North has always been the ‘hard frontier’, but “the role of the state in its development has been consistent from the earliest years of whaling in the arctic to the mega-developments of recent mining and exploitation of energy resources” (Rea, 1976; 76-77). This role has been the exploitation of natural resources, for the benefit of the industrial and political center: the South. If for any reason the private enterprise was incapable of meeting requirements for Northern economic responsibilities “the state has intervened directly by entering into partnership with business firms, or by establishing marketing monopolies, or even by establishing public corporations to do the job” (Rea, 1976; 77). Consequently, “so far as the export-base economy of the North is concerned, then, the role of the state has been a positive one carried out by means of policies designed to support and sometimes to lead large-scale enterprises to exploit the land resources of the area” (Rea, 1976; 77).

These intrinsic links between political economy and policies in Northern Canada have persisted to present day politics, as there is a centralized government in the South, with only few groups having power over the policies that are enacted. There is also a lack of cultural sensitivity in these policy implementations, since they do not consider what would be most culturally relevant for Inuit. Lastly, as the political power that

governs the North is centralized in the South they are constantly reminded of the economic enterprises that are conducted across the country. This close proximity facilitates communication and dependencies between politics and business, strengthening their bond at the expense of the North.

Colonialism in the Nutrition North Program

The Nutrition North Canada program has been in practice since April of 2011. As previously mentioned it is a government subsidy program implemented by the Federal Government in Ottawa, influencing the way of life for Inuit in the Canadian Arctic. It is highly intertwined in the political economy of the nation due to the immense power struggle revolving around virtually all aspects of its implementation.

Originally, the Government determined that Inuit would maintain their traditional hunting, trapping, and fishing activities, while receiving annual payments from the Government. These communities were not designed to be static settlements, that survive solely on government-funded welfare. However, this policy that was created to give Indigenous populations a 'helping hand' became responsible for the poor living conditions, depressed economies, and poor infrastructure. To 'best assist' Inuit communities, the Federal Government implemented strategies and legislation that required Inuit to establish static settlements, and attend residential schools, for the purpose of assimilating them with the rest of Canada. However, because this was not the traditional nature of these communities, and materials were hard to come by in the North, they encountered rough living conditions and inadequate infrastructure (Gracey & King, 2009). As their traditional activities were traded for an attempt at wage jobs, their

economies suffered as well; which has resulted largely in economic dependence and unfavorable power relations for Inuit.

In the NNC program mandates, the Government of Canada had outlined the desire to “make nutritious foods more accessible and affordable to residents of isolated Northern communities” through its horizontal initiative¹⁵. From the perspective of the Government, this subsidy is seen as support payments for the communities in order to establish an affordable baseline for nutritious foods, however for many in isolated communities they are reliant on these programs, resulting in a transformation of the program into social assistance. Numerous Northern communities have populations who are dependent on these subsidies to reduce their weekly grocery bills.

The population growth rate in northern Canada is drastically higher than that in the South. Between the four communities studied in this project, the average growth rate between 2001 and 2006 was 9.5 percent; nearly nine times higher than the rest of Canada during the same period (Population Size and Growth in Canada, 2017). This rapid

¹⁵ The word nutrition can mean vastly different things for different communities. In the context of this research, Southern concepts of nutrition differ sharply from those of the North. Guided by Health Canada, Southern communities are encouraged to eat fresh fruits and vegetables and they have Canada’s Food Guide to help them make healthy choices at mealtime. This is the sense of ‘nutritious’ that has been implemented in the NNC program. The challenge with this implementation is its Southern and paternalistic nature.

For Northern communities, the word nutritious is quite often associated with traditional foods. These traditional foods for “Arctic and subarctic communities largely consists of meat and fat and is nutrient dense” (Egeland, 2011; 1750). Fruits and vegetables are not the ‘nutritious’ staples that community members in the North are craving. Studies have shown not only that “small amounts of [traditional food] consumption have been noted to increase nutrient intakes among Inuit” but the ongoing transition that is happening “away from [traditional food] and food insecurity represents a multifaceted burden on nutritional status and diet quality among Inuit in Canada, with potential implications for long-term risk for poor nutritional health and nutritionally related diseases and conditions” (Egeland, 2011; 1751).

What is considered nutritious in the South is acutely different from nutrition standards in the North, and this disconnect has caused many challenges with the NNC program. As Health Canada was responsible for generating the ‘healthy’ food subsidy lists, this South-centered idea of nutritious eating is now being forced upon Northern communities.

population growth has put strain on the programs that aimed to curb food insecurity for Northern populations. In order to aid with the challenges in Inuit communities, the Federal Government has attempted to reduce the cost of shipping food to the North through monetary subsidies given to Northern retailers.

In the eyes of the Federal Government, the bigger communities that are easier to access are deemed more capable of feeding themselves and thus needed less help from the NNC program, resulting in lower subsidy rates. It is believed that even the most generous interpretations of the development of food aid to the North would not be considered sufficient to make accessibility to food equal between all Northern communities, let alone Northern and Southern communities. As previously mentioned, the different communities in this project receive different subsidy rates, (see Appendix Two). As Iqaluit is one of the largest communities in the Canadian Territories, it has one of the lowest subsidy rates for the area. This, however, has detrimental effects on the lower income members of the community as subsidies on store-bought goods are much lower, making grocery bills a higher portion of a family's income.

Porter believed these types of government grants remain largely a subsidy for the middle class, as the underclass was incapable of taking advantage of these programs (Porter, 1970; 333). Due to the high cost of store-bought goods, low income families in the North have less access to them, and their wage incomes were mandated to other areas such as housing. The middle-income families were the ones who benefit from the program as they have enough money to take advantage of the subsidies on store-bought foods throughout the North.

Although the majority of Indigenous people engage in paid work, and earnings

constitute a significant portion of the percentage of total income received by Indigenous peoples, there exists a complex relationship with government dependence. This dependence is “rooted in the dislocation and dispossession of Aboriginal communities as a result of the settler economy, which rendered Aboriginal people increasingly marginal and economically vulnerable” (Lang *et al.*, 2011).

Inuit need to be a part of the wage economy in order to generate income to pay for the basic necessities of life. However, a wage job makes it difficult for Inuit to participate in seasonal hunting, trapping, or fishing trips, increasing their dependence on store-bought food, which is extremely expensive, generating a need for more monetary income¹⁶. Conversely, those who participate in traditional hunting, or fishing trips need monetary income to pay for supplies (for example, guns, fuel, boats, snowmobiles, etc.).

The Government has created a dependence on monetary revenues for Inuit to participate in their formerly traditional activities. This has produced widespread poverty, because the wage economy is restricted in size, limiting the number of people who can be gainfully employed. Moreover, it has cut people off from former ways of life, or traditional trading practices; perpetuating the cyclical transfer payment dependence rhythm which sustains the current lifestyles and challenges that Inuit face in Northern communities.

¹⁶ With a wage position that has nine-to-five type hours, the only hunting opportunities wage earners are able to take advantage of, without taking time off work, are weekend hunting excursions when migrating animals pass close to home communities and/or opportunities to hunt or fish when the floe edge is accessible.

Methodology & Methods

This thesis is exploratory in nature, and adopts content analysis as well as thematic analysis as its qualitative research methods in order to gather the information desired, with the aim of examining, synthesizing, and contributing to the available data regarding government programs and policies that influence Inuit food security. Primary and secondary sources have both been utilized in this research. My analysis of secondary sources has formulated the majority of this paper, providing many important findings upon which I reflect and build.

This has involved a comprehensive analysis of relevant books, scholarly websites, theses, dissertations, and journal articles from various disciplines; primarily sociology, history, and political sciences, but also biology, health sciences, political geography, and law. The information that I chose to analyze derives from the evaluations of government programs and policies, as well as popular media and social media sources that help explain the food security challenges to which Inuit communities are subject. This list was compiled through exhaustive searches of databases at the University of Ottawa, governmental websites, and news sources.

The importance of these documents derives from the information they provide in regards to governmental food subsidy programs. With documents from both the Federal and Territorial Governments, it is easy to note their different approaches in attempting to improve food security. While these documents are able to highlight the mandate, implementation, and growth of governmental subsidy programs, they also demonstrate how these programs are ineffective in reaching their goals.

These sources were found mostly through the University of Ottawa library. I searched through the following databases: Proquest Social Sciences, JSTOR, Canadian Public Policy Collection, Canadian Periodical Index, and PAIS International. The key words used to retrieve these documents included “food security”, “Nutrition North Canada”, “Food Mail Program”, paired with, “traditional food”, “store-bought food”, “quotas”, and “effectiveness” in addition to “Northern communities”, “Baffin Island”, and “Canadian Arctic” – or any combination thereof.

From here, I accumulated an extensive list of potential documents that could be utilized as data for my thesis, and from reading through these documents, I was able to refine the list to the most relevant works that would showcase the issues I wished to discuss. (Refer to Appendix One for this list of documents.)

Along with these governmental sources, I have included two social media sites and a media source. The first social media site is a blog by the name of FeedingNunavut.com. The creator of this site has also developed a complementary Facebook page, under the name ‘*Feeding My Family*’, as is discussed below. The website posts articles relating to Northern food security, how the government has fallen short of achieving their stated program mandates, and information regarding food security statistics in the territory. Similarly, the Facebook group contains community members’ concerns in relation to the Governments’ inability to achieve their program mandates. The posts that I have included in my research were from people who regularly post within the Facebook Group (by regularly I mean to say they post on average one to two times a week). Many of these people also live within one of the communities on

which I have focused my research. The ethics of their involvement in this research is addressed later in the chapter.

In relation to these social media sources, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network program 'APTN Investigates' provides useful information regarding opinions of the Inuit who face these challenges on a daily basis. The two episodes included in my analysis are, 'Wasting Away' and its follow-up episode 'Food for Thought'. These programs focus on how ineffective governmental policies are at providing affordable and healthy food options for Northern communities. It is a first-hand account of the disconnect that is seen between Southern implemented policies and their Northern consequences.

The primary sources that I chose to include were retrieved through internet searches, mostly via Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and on the Government of Canada, as well as the Government of Nunavut websites. Keywords for these searches included "Nutrition North", "Food Mail Program", "Species at Risk" coupled with "efficiency", "evaluations", and "effectiveness" along with "Baffin", and "Inuit Communities". There was also information gathered from the Statistics Canada website through community profiles page, in combination with census data. This information was gathered with the use of the community names used in this research: Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Cape Dorset, and Iqaluit.

All four of these communities are located on Baffin Island. Three of these communities are hamlets, with populations that fall below 2,500 residents (Pond Inlet 1, 663; Clyde River 1, 127; and Cape Dorset 1, 481) (Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, 2017). These communities were chosen because they have similar attributes; they are all eligible

for food subsidies under the Federal Government, as noted in the literature review, yet subsidy rates vary by community. For a list of these communities' subsidy rates, see Appendix Two. Iqaluit was also included in the analysis because it is the capital city of Nunavut, and the headquarters for many governmental departments in the North – such as the Government of Nunavut – which provided a different view on Northern living.

These governmental documents were chosen due to their direct links to Inuit food security issues. The FMP and NNC documents were evidentially included as these programs directly relate(d) to the cost of food in the Canadian Arctic. As these policies have been developed, implemented, and governed by the Federal Government, a paternalistic pressure is rife. The Territorial Government documents also relate very closely to the betterment of Inuit food security, and overall well-being. With closer links to Inuit communities, territorial government programs are a step in the right direction, but have been ineffective in improving food security needs. Many other documents were more concerned with other facets of Northern living, rendering them futile for this research.

The historical documents that are used to explain the history of Inuit communities, and the challenges they face with food security between the 1940's and today were both governmental and academic. I believe this has provided the most important information in order to accurately address my research questions. It has also demonstrated trends in governmental programs and priorities, as policies shifted and adapted to further the government's agenda. In terms of contemporary works, I have looked at documents, and committees from both Northern and Southern governmental agencies to ensure a balanced view of the issues at play.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is “the process of organizing information in categories related to central questions of the research...it entails a first-pass document review, in which meaningful and relevant passages of text or other data are identified.” (Bowen, 2009; 32). The term content analysis describes “a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; 1277). Three different approaches have been identified in contextual research: conventional, directed, and summative. All three can be used for the interpretation of data, but for this study I implement the conventional context analysis.

Content analysis is one of many methods used to analyze textual data in order to provide an understanding of the phenomenon under study. Research that uses “qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text...[it] goes beyond merely counting words, to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; 1278).

For conventional content analysis “researchers avoid using preconceived categories, instead allowing the categories and names for the categories to flow from the data. Researchers immerse themselves in the data to allow new insights to emerge, also described as inductive category development” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; 1279). This means “putting aside preconceived notions about what the researcher expects to find in the research, and letting the data and interpretation of it guide analysis” (Corbin &

Strauss, 2008; 160). Data analysis begins when the researcher reads and often re-reads all data in order to achieve immersion and attain a sense of the whole issue.

The inferences that are extracted from the research material can be “about the sender(s) of the message, the message itself, or the audience of the message” (Weber, 1990; 9). This aspect of content analysis is important in this research as it can showcase the different presumptions or assumptions that the Government holds about those from Northern communities, and vice versa. Because communication is a central aspect of human interaction, content analysis operates directly upon these transmissions to extract themes and inferences in the text (Weber, 1990).

As the researcher filters through the data, they make notes of initial impressions, thoughts, and a primary analysis. This approach has been a useful technique for my research as it has allowed for an understanding of the governmental approach to food subsidy programs and the social opposition to those concepts. It has also provided me with the ability to corroborate my initial thoughts through the analysis of other data that I have collected.

Thematic Analysis

Similarly, “thematic analysis is a form of pattern recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis. This process involves a careful, more focused re-reading and review of the data...and performs coding and category construction, based on the data’s characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon” (Bowen, 2009; 32). It also “minimally organizes and describes your data

set in (rich) detail” and often “goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 79).

Despite the fact that thematic analysis is a widely-used method of research “there is no clear argument about what thematic analysis is and how you go about doing it (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 79; see also Boyatzis, 1998; Tuckett, 2005; Attride-Stirling, 2001). It also “does not appear to exist as a ‘named’ analysis...It is often not explicitly claimed as the method of analysis, when, in actuality, [it is] argued that a lot of analysis is essentially thematic – but is either claimed as something else (such as discourse analysis)” (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 79-80).

In terms of this method, the theme(s) that are derived from the documents “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 84). This is useful in the exploratory nature of this project as codes and analytic categories are not predetermined, thus allowing the data to generate its own themes.

This research has seen both a ‘top-down’ analytic approach, as well as a ‘bottom-up’ method. The top down tactic was noted wherein I began my research with government documents. This strategy allowed me to see how, and where, decisions were made that affect Inuit lifestyles, and daily eating habits. I was able to see the themes that are present in governmental policy making, and how they influence the decisions that are made in relation to Northern affairs. Conversely, I also looked at the bottom up initiatives. These contrasting views offered me the opportunity to see how these governmental policies were being implemented on the ground, thousands of kilometers

away. From the bottom, working my way up I learned what the locals desired, and advocated for. I was able to see the differences in themes that emerged from the Federal policies, and those that were present in the Northern communities' drive for change.

These two strategies combined showed me both why the Federal subsidy programs were ineffective in improving food security, as well as the concerns that Northerners have in relation to the governmental food subsidy programs. Utilizing both analytic processes has offered me the most well rounded view of the data I have accumulated.

When conducting this thematic analysis of my research I took an inductive approach. This was due to the fact that my data had been collected specifically for this research; inductive analysis allowed me to develop a coding scheme as I processed the data, instead of attempting to fit my data into a pre-existing coding framework. This resulted in data-driven research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The primary concern with inductive theoretical analysis is “presenting stories and experiences...as accurately and comprehensively as possible” (Guest *et al.*, 2012; 9). This system allowed me to see the implicit and explicit ideas in my data, it was most useful in representing the complexities of the texts.

The combination of content analysis and thematic analysis in this project, has provided me with a complete record of governmental programs and policies, producing a well-rounded supply of information. The amalgamation of top-down and bottom-up thematic analysis has drawn out the themes in the policies and programs of Federal Government as well as the protests of Northern communities. This allowed me to systematically evaluate and identify important data.

The combination of these methods has helped with a development of the themes that underscore this research. With the use of content analysis, I am able to discern the inferences in the text, be it about the food security issues at hand, or those who are experiencing these challenges. Coupled with thematic analysis, it guided the formation of patterns in the research, allowing me to capture the necessary and important information from the data. Using these methods, allows me to explore both the text itself and the power influences behind the policies. I was able to consistently pull out the relevant information that was needed for the analysis of my research, while seeing farther into the complex challenges that Inuit face in terms of Federal policies, paternalistic control, and food insecurity.

Rationale for The Research

The Nutrition North Program has gained a lot of exposure in recent news. With the release of the Auditor General's Report in late November 2014, as well as many discussions that have arisen in the House of Commons, the challenges that Inuit are facing in the North are shifting to the forefront of the political media scene.

The CBC North, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, the Globe and Mail, as well as the Toronto Star, among others, have published multiple articles and/or television segments which have displayed the ongoing food security issues that are currently taking place in the Canadian Arctic (see Appendix Three). The journalists that are at the forefront of these articles are the ones who can be held responsible for raising awareness of these challenges. It is important for this topic to maintain its hold on the media, as it is a key inequality issue in Canada. For years, Inuit have been living with

food prices that are often double, if not triple, what they are in southern Canada. This has caused widespread hunger and poverty across the North. Southerners need to be more aware of these issues in order to have the knowledge needed to begin bettering the situation.

From an academic standpoint, there is a lack of critical analysis of these governmental food subsidy programs, some of which aim to reduce food costs in the North. Although journalists have been critiquing governmental choices for years, it is now time for academics to do the same. I have studied and analyzed these documents in order to contribute to the literature regarding these issues, as well as contributing a critical viewpoint to the current Nutrition North Canada program. It is time for the academic world to catch up to the media's concerns, and this paper contributes largely to that end.

In order to achieve my research goals, I have implemented a qualitative research method, as it was the preferable method for exploring the issues I researched. Quantitative measures would not do justice to the matters that have presented themselves in my research. The ability to quantify Inuit hunger, or government's priorities, is a challenge, thus approaching this data from a qualitative standpoint has provided research with a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Overall this method was more appropriate for the research I have conducted, as well as to answer the aforementioned research questions.

The third reason I chose to follow a qualitative methodological approach is a result of my undergraduate background in social sciences. Having studied extensively in this faculty this issue would be better represented with a qualitative methodological

approach. Although a quantitative approach could have boasted different information, and statistics regarding nutritional trends and food security in the North, the paternalistic nature of Federal policies need to be explored. Northern community members need to express their concerns with these policies and these issues need to be researched in a qualitative manner to broaden the perspective of academic literature on this topic.

Fieldwork & Northern Resistance to Research

This project could have lent itself to fieldwork in Northern communities. However, for practical reasons, and out of respect for those in the North, I chose to focus my research on existing government documents, media reports, and social media posts. Although fieldwork is an important aspect of academic work, highlighting the voices of its participants, Indigenous people have been exhausted by researchers who visit Northern communities. Many of these studies have been conducted through government initiatives, “and have rarely included members of the Aboriginal communities in the decision-making process. Over time, resistance has developed among Aboriginal peoples” (Brunger & Bull, 2011; 131. See also Humphrey, 2007).

For Brunger and Bull, it was evident from

“conversations with community members, that such resistance is an effect, and not merely a cause, of the way in which academic and government research is perceived. Their words—‘We are sick of being studied to death’—echo the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), a Maori scholar who emphasizes the need for decolonization in all aspects of research” (2011; 131).

Information is often collected, and subsequently removed from Inuit communities, as the Southern based organizations or academics return to the South to finalize their findings. These sentiments of research exhaustion have also been mirrored

by Indigenous students at the University of Ottawa. Because there is so much existing research on Northern communities, I was inspired to focus on the information that has already been gathered and the policies that exist regarding this topic.

As such, this project respects the feelings of Northern community members in regards to research exhaustion and instead focuses on information that has already been presented on these topics.

The Ethics of Facebook Research

A growing ethical concern for researchers is held in the realm of Internet technologies, notably social networking sites. Doing research via Facebook can raise issues in terms of privacy and informed consent. Informed consent “covers a range of procedures that must be implemented when your study contains human subjects. Human subjects in your study must be informed about the nature of your research project, and you must obtain their consent prior to their participation in your study” (Bulmer, 2001; 63).

However, an important debate has emerged revolving around “whether research on Facebook constitutes research with human subjects” (Wilson *et al.*, 2012; 215). As Zimmer (2010) stated in regards to the ethics of Facebook research, “concerns over consent, privacy and anonymity do not disappear simply because subjects participate in online social networks; rather, they become even more important”, and he believes that “it is our responsibility as scholars to ensure our research methods and processes remain rooted in long-standing ethical practices” (324).

Almost anyone “can access information (in the form of user profiles, for example)

from social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook” (Bulmer, 2001; 81). As argued by many researchers (Moreno, Fost, & Christakis, 2008) this information is considered fair game as part of a research study because it is presented via a public domain wherein anyone in the social networking community can find it. For this reason, researchers do not need to obtain consent to use the information as it is presented (Bulmer, 2001). However, it is recognized “that just because personal information is made available in some fashion on a social network, does not mean it is fair game for capture and release to all” (Zimmer, 2010; 234).

Many ethics scholars agree that harvesting publicly available data via Facebook does “not meet the regulatory definition of human subjects research, and therefore researchers should not have to gain approval” or consent from participants (Wilson *et al.*, 2012; 215-216; see also Schrag, 2010 & Solberg, 2010). However, this argument applies exclusively to the data that is publicly available and not that which is protected with privacy settings.

As three different types of Facebook groups exist (public, closed, and secret – regulations regarding who can join these groups and what information can be seen in them is outlined in Appendix Four), the American Educational Research Association (AERA) has determined that research conducted in solely ‘public’ Facebook groups does not need negotiated group consent (Perryman *et al.*, 2014; 4). It is argued that data in public Facebook groups falls into the category of information in a public setting. The precedent set by Perryman *et al.* shows that accessing public Facebook groups with the intention to do research does not need the consent of all the group members (Perryman *et al.*, 2014).

That being said, my approach to the analysis of the data presented in the '*Feeding My Family*' Facebook group was slightly different. Out of courtesy I contacted the members of the group who have provided photographs, stories, or other information about food prices in the North. I have informed them that I am a Master's student at the University of Ottawa and I wished to include their photographs, stories, etc. in my thesis paper in hopes that they would agree. If they did not wish to be involved in my research, or I did not receive any response from them, I ensured that their contributions to the Facebook group were not included in my research.

Data

It is clear to see disparities between policy implementations enacted by the Federal Government and those of the Territorial government. The Federal Government has been concentrating on providing aid to Northern communities, because the economy of the territory has largely become reliant on the distribution of transfers from the Canadian South (Widdowson, 2005). Although the Territorial government would like to aid in the establishment of self-sustaining economies, they recognize that the small economies of scale and traditional ways of life are unable to compete on a level beyond these local communities (Hicks, 2004).

Within this chapter I present the programs and policies that I have analyzed, highlighting paternalistic undertones within the Federal policies, as well as their influence in eroding traditional Inuit culture. I also showcase the differences between the top down policies of the Federal Government and the bottom up implementations the Territorial Government has enacted. Following that, are community concerns and reactions, demonstrating the differences in approaching food security between the governments and Nunavummiut, as documented through social media as well as the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.

Federal Subsidies for Food Shipments

The first full-fledged program that was put in place by the Federal Government that influenced food security issues for Northern populations was the Food Mail Program (FMP). Created in the late 1960's, the FMP was taken over by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada in 1991 – then referred to as Indian and Northern Affairs

Canada (INAC) – to subsidize the shipment of products to remote Northern communities. This program ran until it was replaced with the Nutrition North Canada Program in 2011, as is discussed later.

The FMP was designed to make nutritious, perishable food and other essential items, more accessible and affordable in isolated Northern communities. Eligible communities were those that did not have year-round rail, road, or marine access. The limited access to these communities contributes to the high cost of items such as food, fuel, as well as housing.

With a budget of \$26.7 million in 2008, this program was managed by the INAC, who implemented subsidies through the funding of partial shipping costs of eligible items through the Canada Post Corporation (CPC) (Dargo, 2008). The CPC was provided with funding to cover some of the shipping related costs of sending eligible items to the North. This was done through the contracting of air carriers by the CPC to ship goods to designated food entry points. The postage rates are depicted in the table below; an additional charge of \$0.75 per package was also applied to goods being shipped northward, “regardless of size, contents or destination” (AANDC, 2009; 9). These FMP rates had not been raised since July of 1993.

Destination	Eligible FMP Items	
	Perishable Food	Non-perishable Food and Non-food
Provinces	\$0.80 per kg	\$1.00 per kg
Territories	\$0.80 per kg	\$2.15 per kg
Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk (served from Inuvik)	\$0.30 per kg	\$2.15 per kg

Table courtesy of: The Summative Evaluation of INAC’s Food Mail Program

The FMP would cover some of the costs associated with the transportation of these items with the intent of increasing access to affordable perishable foods, and other essential items that would otherwise be too expensive for community members to purchase. This enabled the retailers to sell eligible goods at a reduced postage rate as the Federal Government and Health Canada were of the opinion “fresh and affordable food from the south is important...with lower-cost nutritious food shipped by Food Mail, a healthy diet becomes more affordable” (AANDC, 2009). This program served approximately 140 communities across Northern Canada, “located in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta”, representing a population of over 100, 000 people – the majority of whom were Indigenous; yet the restrictions were designed by Health Canada, without Indigenous insight (AANDC, 2009; 9).

Health Canada also “provides guidance in INAC on issues of food security and nutrition...Health Canada also contributes financially to certain components of the Food Mail pilot projects (e.g. Health Canada nutritional surveys conducted in isolated Northern communities) undertaken to support FMP modifications” (AANDC, 2009; 9). Eligible items include: “nutritious perishable food such as canned food, cereal, pasta and baking supplies; and essential non-food items such as clothing, household supplies and personal care products” (AANDC, 2009; 10). Anyone who resides within an eligible community is entitled to receive food mail, including retailers, individuals, and designated institutions – such as schools or day care centers. However, food mail was most often accessed by community members through the Northern retailers. Program audits have also noted many policy issues corresponding with the program, for example no explicit

policy context was ever developed for the program causing questions in regards to its effectiveness.

Differences with the Nutrition North Program

On April 1, 2011, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada introduced the NNC program, to replace the aforementioned FMP. Its objective was similar in the sense that it was designed to make “healthy foods more accessible and affordable to residents of isolated Northern communities. The Program sought to increase the consumption of healthy foods and contribute to better overall health of the population”, very similar to the FMP (AANDC, 2009; 1-2). The department of AANDC also contacted Health Canada to produce food eligibility lists for NNC based on nutritional value. The eligibility criteria were largely based on their consistency with recommendations from Canada’s Food Guide.

Contrary to the FMP, NNC was a transfer payment program based on a market-driven model; however, it still provided a transportation subsidy that covered part of the transportation costs of eligible foods to Northern communities. For 2014, NNC had a fixed budget of \$60 million dollars. Of this, \$53.9 million annually is allocated solely to the subsidy component of the program. As decided by the Liberal government in 2016, this budget is to be increased to “\$68.5 million, with a 5 % annual increase to allow for demand and population growth in the North” (Nutrition North Canada: A Discussion Guide, 2016). However, this budget also provides \$2.9 million a year to Health Canada for their contributions to the program; and with the new engagement implementations

(which is addressed below) the budget is being distributed to many different beneficiaries.

Retailers and suppliers can apply to the program and once they are selected subsidies are transferred to them when eligible items are shipped to eligible communities. Due to the extreme distances perishable foods had to travel from location of growth to the North, the only way “to alleviate the costs of nutritious foods purchased in isolated communities, and to encourage nutritious eating...[necessitates] perishable food [to] be flown into these [areas]” encouraging the use of these subsidies (AANDC, 2014; 4). The subsidies are “provided directly to Northern retailers, food suppliers and distributors, and Northern food processors through contribution agreements to help lower the price of nutritious foods” (AANDC, 2014; 2). Contribution agreements were “a transfer payment subject to performance conditions specified in a finding agreement. A contribution payment is to be accounted for and is subject to audit” by the Department (AANDC, 2014; 2). Northerners would benefit from the program when they purchased subsidized food and non-food items from their local stores.

Subsidy rates vary by community, and the “Department considered communities eligible if they lacked year-round surface transportation and if they had used the Food Mail Program extensively” (AANDC, 2014; 4). As implemented by the Federal Government, usage levels of each community “were determined from an examination of the Canada Post shipping data from the 2009-2010 fiscal year”¹⁷ (AANDC, 2014; 5). Depending on location, population, access and other factors, some were eligible for full subsidies while others were only eligible for partial subsidies. Communities that required

¹⁷ This criteria was finally revised in 2016, with the addition or subsidy upgrade of 37 Northern communities – most of them being First Nations communities – to the Nutrition North Program. These changes are discussed later in this chapter.

more than 15, 000 kilograms of perishable food shipments through the FMP were eligible for the higher of two subsidies. Communities that received between 100 and 14, 999 kilograms of shipments through the FMP were eligible for the lower subsidy.

These two rates differed by eligible community, based on location, need, and population (Nutrition North Canada, 2013b). The two different subsidy levels within the eligible communities differentiate products based on perishability and nutritional value. “The higher subsidy level is applied to the most nutritious perishable foods, including fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, bread, milk, meat, and eggs. The lower subsidy level is applied to other perishable foods, such as salad dressing, flour, and crackers” because they have a marginally longer shelf life (Nutrition North Canada, 2013b). The full and partial subsidy rates for the communities in this research are depicted in Appendix Two.

Northern Stores

There were originally 103 communities eligible for either full or partial subsidy rates under NNC. Their population was approximately 93,700 people, as of the 2011 Statistics Canada Census, and they were located in small communities across approximately 4.3 million square kilometers of the Canadian North (Nutrition North Canada, 2015). Based on information from the 2011 Household Survey, 90 % of this population identifies as Indigenous. All 103 of these communities lack year round road, rail, or marine access, as required to participate in the program. Many are served by year-round air transportation, and either road or marine access at various times of year, depending on weather conditions (Nutrition North Canada, 2015). Sealift serves 50 of

these communities mainly located in Nunavut, Nunavik, and Northwest Territories. This information can be summarized in the table below:

Attribute	
Total Northern population	229,822
Total pop. NNC-eligible (103)	93,700
Single retailer community	48 out 103
Transportation Access	
NNC Comm.'s served by Ship/Ferry	60 out of 103
NNC Comm.'s served by Winter Road	50 out of 103
Air Service Frequency	
Air service 4 or more times a week	56 out of 103
Airport not in community 3	5 out 103

Table courtesy of: Nutrition North Canada, 2015

One of the key factors outlined in this table is the “Single retailer community”. Only 131 grocery retailers were identified as operating within NNC-eligible communities. These retailers who operate in the North “may be categorized several ways...based on their corporate structure as follows:

- Private corporation (The North West Company (NWC)) – 67 Northern or NorthMart stores
- Co-operatives (Arctic Co-op Limited (ACL); La Federation des Co-operatives du Nouveau Quebec (FCNQ) and Stanton’s) – 46 stores
- Independents – 18 stores” (Nutrition North Canada, 2015).

This leaves 48 communities with only one grocery retailer, eliminating any motivation for these retailers to reduce prices, or apply NNC subsidies to the best of their

abilities because they have no competition driving them to lower prices. The monopolies that these retailers hold in communities is mirrored by the monopolies that a few companies have over the entire territory itself. North West company is one of two major retail chains that operate in the North. Alongside Arctic Co-op Limited, the two account for 97 stores, well over half the number of stores in NNC-eligible communities (Nutrition North Canada, 2015).

As of October 1st 2016, 37 new communities were added to the eligibility list for the NNC program. This community expansion resulted from updates to the community eligibility requirements, wherein they were no longer reliant on FMP participation. New eligibility requirements for the program state a community must:

- a lack of year-round surface transportation (no permanent road, rail or marine access), excluding isolation caused by freeze-up and break-up that normally lasts less than four weeks at a time
- meet territorial or provincial definition of a Northern community
- have an airport, post office or grocery store
- have a year-round population according to the national census” (Nutrition North Canada, 2017b).

These criteria are currently solely based on isolation of these communities, which allowed for a broadening of the program. This came alongside forecasted increases in the NNC budget to cover the new communities which will all receive the higher of the two-subsidies as the partial subsidy will be eliminated (Nutrition North Canada, 2017b).

However, this budget increase will have little effect if Northern stores are not held accountable by the Department to pass along subsidies to consumers.

The Problems with Reporting

Northern stores are making their money based on the amount of food they are bringing into the eligible communities, and in turn, according to NNC mandates, they will lower the cost of this food for consumers. However, if they have already benefitted from the transaction just by shipping in foods that fall under this subsidy – even if they are not sold – they have no need to ensure the freshness, or quality of the food. Nor do they need to prioritize the items that people desire the most. They are free to ship NNC subsidized goods into their stores, and receive their portion of the subsidy, regardless if the food is sold or sent to the local dump, which highlights major disparities in the program.

The businesses that register with NNC are responsible for passing along the full extent of these subsidies to consumers. The majority of the subsidies given by the Federal Government go towards lowering the cost of healthy food that is being shipped to stores across the North. As the program's success depends on the retailers passing along subsidies, transparency is a crucial feature, and in this program, there is a clear lack of transparency. Key information that proves the subsidies are being passed along to consumers is missing from the AANDC records.

For example, the profit margin of Northern retailers was not being shown to the Department up until the Auditor General's Report called it into question. Information including: operating costs, food spoilage, labour/wages, and utilities are not involved in a retailers' report, providing no way for the AANDC to calculate their profit margins, or how much of the subsidy is being passed onto consumers. Displayed in the table below is

the information needed by the Department to evaluate profit margins, in comparison to the information that they were provided in the last compliance review:

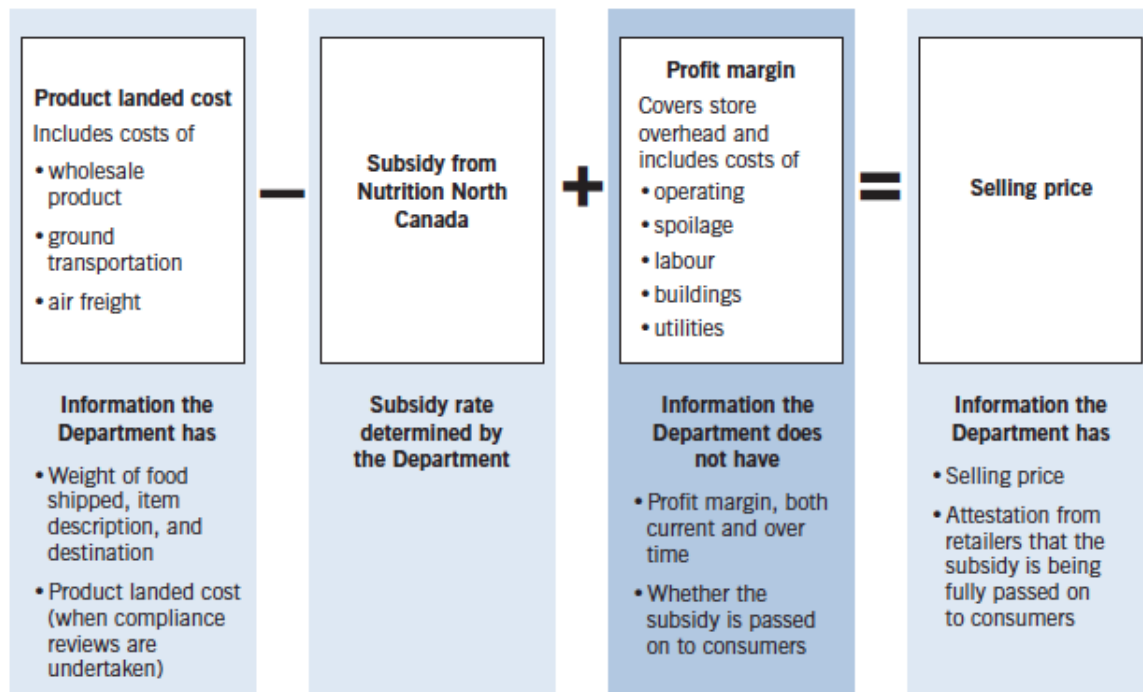


Table courtesy of: AANDC, 2014.

Without requiring retailers to provide current profit margins, and profit margins over time, the Department is unable to gauge the effectiveness of the NNC program. As this is a Federal Government program, they should be held responsible to ensure retailers are actually implementing the subsidies they are being paid for, in the most efficient capacity.

Through the changes to the reporting process that have been implemented since the release of the Auditor General’s Report, the AANDC has published more thorough documents regarding how they spend their subsidies. However, these documents still fail to inform the public about certain aspects of the program. As an example, for reporting purposes, the Department selects a retailer’s monthly claims, then chooses two communities from the monthly claims, followed by 75 specific items that are sub-

selected to ensure the shipping company is abiding by subsidy regulations. In the case of the North West company, the Department verified the prices, the weight, and the subsidy rates of the items that had been chosen for the report.

They also “recalculated the profit margin reported by the recipient prior to the introduction and obtained explanations for significant changes” (Compliance Assessment Report North West Company, 2015). However nowhere in this report did the Department publish profit margins, or store overhead costs. They outline that there seem to be no discrepancies between the report and the mandated procedures of the subsidy, but also make a point of differentiating these annual program reports from actual program audits (Compliance Assessment Report North West Company, 2015).

Through these reports, it is clear to see how much money companies are receiving for shipping subsidized foods northward. For example, in the 2015 fiscal year North West Company received \$33, 189, 914 for shipping 15, 129, 926 kilograms of subsidized goods to Northern communities. This represented 49 % of the total NNC spending on subsidized items, and was the largest share that went to one company (Nutrition North Canada, 2017c). To put it into perspective, Arctic Co-op was the second highest subsidy recipient shipping 3, 730, 539 kilograms worth of goods to the North representing \$12, 962, 699 of the subsidy (Nutrition North Canada, 2017c).

Despite these high subsidy amounts, the AANDC has not provided the public with a breakdown of costs through every step of the subsidy implantation process, which could be used to ensure the Northern retailers are passing along the subsidy to consumers as they should be.

This lack of transparency will continue to make the governmental programs an ineffective way to improve food security. As nearly half of the Northern stores that qualify for the program are single retailer communities, they have no competition, and thus no drive to lower their prices; they will not optimize consumers' savings if they could increase their own profits.

Contradictory to the Governments' trends with transparency are the private corporations that manage Northern stores. As stores under the umbrella of The North West Company are publicly traded, they have shareholders to answer to. In their 2015 fiscal year, they saw a sixteenth year of consecutive sales growth. Sales for the company "increased to \$1.796 billion"; Canadian operation sales on their own "increased \$47.7 million or 4.6 % to \$1.090 billion" representing net earnings of \$69.8 million (North West Company, 2016; 11). For individual stores, same-store sales increased by 3.8 %, up nearly one and a half percent from the year before. The North West Company says this growth in same-store numbers was driven by strong food sales, for example, "food sales increased by 5.8 % from 2014...and same store food sales had quarterly increases of 3.4 %, 5.6 %, 3.4 %, and 3.6 %" (North West Company, 2016; 11). Because the North West Company is beholden to its shareholders, they also require transparency within this community, as evident in their annual reports.

As these stores are responsible for the growth of investments for their shareholders, there is little motivation for them to sell goods for cheap. If they are able to sell products at a higher cost, they will push for the increase in profit margins that "are aligned and on track to deliver more top results in 2016" (North West Company, 2016; 3).

As for ACL, they reported \$172 million in sales in 2015. This amounted to a \$7.9 million in Patronage Refunds back to co-ops and their communities. This represented an 8.6 % increase for ACL from the previous year. The Federation “also reported net earnings of \$10.4M for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2015” (ACL History, 2007). Since 1986, ACL “has returned more than \$91.3M to its Members in patronage refunds” (ACL History, 2007).

As the Government of Canada is not subject to the same pressures from taxpayers, they are not as transparent as those companies who operate in the North. Ultimately, the entirety of this program is very South-centered and paternalistic. The idea of Inuit communities being internal colonies persists through political, cultural, and economic dimensions. The NNC program was designed to be supplementary to the pre-existing Inuit diet, facilitating the purchase of store-bought foods to make up for lowered consumption of traditional foods. With federal and territorial limitations constricting Inuit’s ability to hunt – through the encouragement of wage employment and the restrictions placed on hunting by the Species at Risk Act and the caribou moratorium – many became dependent on store-bought foods (Action Canada Report, 2014).

Contemporary Colonialist Policies in Northern Communities

Beginning May 30th, 2016, the Canadian Government implemented a new ‘Engagement’ aspect of the NNC program. In an attempt to improve the program, “the Government of Canada [was] seeking input from community members and other stakeholders on how the program can be more transparent, cost-effective, and culturally appropriate in the face of growing demand for healthy food in the North” (Nutrition

North Canada, 2017a). The GOC gathered input and discussed these issues with residents of isolated Northern communities, retailers, suppliers, Northern transportation companies, Indigenous communities and organizations, as well as local, regional, and territorial governments. Alongside these engagement initiatives, experts in food security, Northern transportation, and Northern infrastructure were consulted to implement necessary changes to the program.

However, the engagement activities were led by consultants from the Southern consulting company Interis Consulting, with support from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and Health Canada. Meetings were originally planned to be held in 20 isolated Northern communities in May, June, September, October, and November of 2016; communities were chosen “based on recommendations from the NNC Advisory Board” (Nutrition North Canada, 2017a). These sessions focused on five key themes, that have all been developed by the Federal Government, to guide the discussions during these engagement meetings:

- “- program sustainability/cost effectiveness
- fairness and consistency
- transparency
- visibility: communications/outreach engagement
- innovation” (Nutrition North Canada, 2017a).

Communities for these meetings were established in seventeen of the potential 20 locations. Three of which were in Nunavut, including Iqaluit and Pond Inlet¹⁸. All locations were published on the NNC website with information regarding meeting venues, times, and were followed up by posting community meeting notes online. However, the website also posted information regarding changes to any previously

¹⁸ There were four meetings slated for Nunavut, however one of them was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances (Nutrition North Canada, 2017a).

established plans. As of June, 2016 in the Engagement Initiative, two meetings had been postponed, and one had been cancelled “due to weather issues affecting transportation” (Nutrition North Canada, 2017a).

From the outset, the FMP was developed and executed by the Federal Government, without much communication or influence from the Northern communities it would be affecting. It covered partial transportation costs of getting eligible foods to the North, perpetuating the reliance of Inuit communities on government transfers. This followed through to the NNC program, which is distributed through select Northern retailers who were largely unable to influence prices, as economic power had been concentrated in the South. It has been said that Inuit communities are seen as internal colonies of the Canadian state, and these food subsidy policies reinforce those ideas (Hicks, 2004). Not only has the implementation of this program solidified political control over Inuit communities through the designation of what policies they are subject to, but the Government has also inserted itself into the cultural dimensions of Northern living.

Deciding what foods will be subsidized and what does not qualify designates largely what many people will be able to afford. A trend towards wage labour has encouraged a move away from traditional lifestyles. This was followed by a shift in consumption patterns of traditional foods (decreased dependence on traditional food and increased dependence on store-bought food); but limited knowledge about what constitutes a healthy, nutritious diet, has now resulted in poor food choices.

One of the key suggestions or desires that has come about during the NNC engagement meetings with Northerners is the ability to provide their families pop, chips,

candy, and chocolate. Many people are advocating for these items to be covered under the NNC subsidy. The challenge that arises with this scenario stems from Health Canada's regulations. In order to be considered for the subsidy, eligible foods need to be considered healthy; the afore mentioned snack food items are not. If these items were to be subsidized their low costs would encourage unhealthy consumption trends, further challenging health and nutrition in the North. This begs the question: what is the Government subsidizing, the cost of food in the North, or the health of those in Northern communities?

This leads to another challenge with this type of program design: the Southern nature of the food eligibility lists. With the majority of foods that fall under the subsidy being 'nutritious' by Southern standards, Northerners have different interpretations of what healthy foods are. This South-centered idea of what is good for you has now been imposed upon Inuit, limiting their subsidized food choices to what Health Canada considers to be nutritious.

For many Indigenous people, culture – which is considered a determinant of health – is intricately linked to traditional food sources. Not only are they valued for their spiritual and health perspectives but,

“traditional food consumption is associated with other measures of culture such as speaking a Native language, using traditional medicine and participating in traditional events. At the community level, traditional food systems may contribute to health via other economic and social pathways such as forming the basis of non-cash economies” (Earle, 2011; 2).

There is a belief among Inuit hunters “that human and animal spirits cycle between the spiritual and physical world” and for Clyde River Inuit, it parallels a belief “that the cycling of animal blood and human blood creates a healthy human body and

soul, as well as an ecological balance between human and seal populations” (Borre, 1991; 52). Inuit health is assured when there is a maintenance of the relationship between “properly hunting animals, providing shares of the animals to others, and consuming all of the meat” (Borre, 1991; 52). By following these practices Inuit are assured health, and maintained cultural identity.

For the Clyde Inuit, “to decide on the proper food, an individual must consider the state of his health and what his [or her] needs are. Young Inuit, if feeling well and strong, can eat store food without problems. But if they are ill or depressed, store food will make them worse, not better” (Borre, 1991; 55). Their health is tied to the foods they consume, not only when they are growing, but also when they are grown. For example, “if an Inuk is cold or must endure long exposure to outdoor living, as in winter hunting, he must eat seal and other country foods. If an Inuk has grown up eating only country foods, then she must have these foods regularly to survive” (Borre, 1991; 55). For Inuit, their culture does not demand they eat traditional foods to maintain their identity, however Inuit “evaluate dietary behavior in the context of the cultural model” and how their foods affect their well-being (Borre, 1991; 55).

Moreover, activities that are related to the acquisition of country food also confer health benefits through increased physical activity. For the Inuit “it may be impossible...to define the complex nutritional benefits of traditional foods” separate from the store-bought diets consumed by most Northerners; however, “emerging information suggests that traditional diets are able to supply a healthier pattern of fats and a greater amount of vitamins and minerals than Indigenous peoples’ current consumption patterns”

(Earle, 2011; 2). Thus, the Southern nature of the food eligibility list is not necessarily benefitting the nutritional intake of Inuit to the extent it was originally designed.

Now, where does country food fit into the subsidy? With the changes that the NNC program has undergone in 2016, country food processors/distributors are finally eligible for a part of the subsidy as well. The subsidy for country food is based on the location of the country food retailer/distributor, however as of April 2017 there remain only two country food suppliers for all eligible communities. These subsidy rates range from \$0.50, to nearly \$6, depending on the distance they have to travel from their point of origin to the eligible community. However, only commercially produced country food is subsidized.

The country food retailers/distributors are government-regulated establishments. They are required to apply, and “meet the program’s requirements and enter into agreements with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), and are accountable for passing on the full subsidy to consumers by reducing the price of subsidized food” (Nutrition North Canada, 2013c). These centers produce country food that has been “approved for export and are located in a community eligible for a subsidy under the program” (Nutrition North Canada, 2013c).

These goods can be subsidized, and can be available through the local stores or co-ops when they have been purchased from the approved distributors who are associated with the program. However, this leads to similar challenges as those associated with the other foods that have been subsidized: there is uncertainty in regards to if the subsidy is being passed along to the consumer.

Erosion of Inuit Hunting Culture

The Species at Risk Act was established by the Government of Canada in December of 2002, as a key commitment to the International Convention on Biological Diversity. The purpose of this Act was to prevent wildlife species from being extirpated or becoming extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered or threatened as a result of human activity and/or to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened. Not only does the Species at Risk Act manage animal species that are threatened, but it also protects the existence of their habitats.

Within this act, it defines methods to determine what steps need to be taken to aid in the protection of currently healthy environments, as well as steps to encourage the recovery of threatened habitats. It also discusses penalties that can be – and are – implemented for a failure to obey these laws. Through designations in this Act, The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), has been tasked to identify threatened species and assess various conservation statuses. This independent committee of wildlife experts and scientists then issue reports to the Government, wherein the Minister of the Environment evaluates their decisions, and recommendations, when considering the addition of the species to the list of species at risk.

The major impact this policy has on Inuit is in terms of endangered, or threatened species. With the implementation of quotas on animals, such as polar bears, and bowhead whales, Inuit need to be strategic and aware of hunting practices in their communities. The acknowledgement of hunting practices is important because, in the

realm of polar bears, quotas account for all human caused mortalities of polar bears – including but not limited to guided hunts, subsistence harvesting, and kills in defense of life and property. If a person does not abide by these regulations they could be subject to a prison term of up to five years, a fine of up to \$250, 000, or both. Although there are a few exceptions written into the Species at Risk act for some Northern communities – such as hunting provisions that have been outlined in land claims agreements – the Inuit on Baffin Island do not have such provisions in their land claims agreement, as is discussed below¹⁹.

This is a bureaucratic document produced by the Government, which directly affects traditional lifestyles of Inuit. Disregarding this policy can result in legal action carried out by enforcement officers, resulting in very serious fines for convicted persons, corporations, or organizations. The Federal Minister is responsible for preparing a report on the annual progress and success of the Act. Every two years he convenes a round table to discuss the protection of species.

There are many discrepancies that arise between the Government or governing bodies that declare species endangered and the opinions of Nunavummiut who live off the land. Often a species will be added to the endangered list, as a result the hunting season would be limited (by way of hunting tags) or abolished entirely. This can cause disagreements between community members and government officials regarding animal population trends and knowledge; as the scientific knowledge of the Government says populations are dropping, traditional knowledge presents a case of stagnant, or increased, populations (CBC News, 2007). This causes rifts between the legality of hunting and

¹⁹ There are four Land Claims Agreements across Inuit Nunangat, this research is focused on that of the Nunavut Inuit.

traditional Inuit practices, but Inuit effectively have little to no say in the implementation of these policies.

With influences from the Federal Government through what foods are subsidized, and what animals they are legally allowed to hunt, Inuit have faced many challenges in maintaining food security as well as upholding their traditional culture. A moratorium on a specific animal, such as caribou, cause an abundance of challenges as caribou have a multitude of uses for Inuit communities. Not only are they a source of food, but their bones and antlers are used for tools, goggles and art, their skin is used as drumheads in ceremonies, and their hide is used for clothing, such as parkas, boots, and gloves (McClellan, & Birckel, 1997). Affecting their ability to procure these animals has intense influence on multiple areas of Inuit life, not solely their ability to meet food needs; meanwhile, the Federal Government is applauded for their work in protecting various species from endangerment of extinction.

Differences with Territorial Policies

In order to improve the overall well-being of Nunavut communities, the Government of Nunavut: Department of Health and Social Services has established many programs aimed at bettering public health. One of these programs is the Nutrition in Nunavut Framework for Action. The objective of this program is to ensure that all Nunavummiut will have access to an adequate supply of safe, culturally preferable, affordable, nutritious food through a food system that promotes Inuit Societal Values, self-reliance, and environmental sustainability. This development was the result of a push

to create a proactive services delivery model that addressed public health nutrition, clinical nutrition, and food services by the Inuit themselves.

As previously mentioned Nunavut has a food insecurity rate seven times that of the Canadian average. Nearly half of the territory reported not having enough to eat due to a lack of money, which has had negative impacts on chronic health conditions as well as social and psychological distress. As heart disease, obesity, and diabetes are becoming more prevalent, the Nutrition in Nunavut framework is aiming to present and target ways to improve nutrition and food security for its communities. In order to have an all-encompassing strategy to encourage healthy eating, the priorities of this program were defined to better “nutritional issues...service delivery priorities...[as well as] strategies and approaches [to] community development including capacity building and strengthening leadership & education and skills, development of relevant policies...collaboration and partnerships” (Government of Nunavut, 2007; 6).

The framework for action established in this policy presents ten goals, each with one to five objectives that identify areas within the territory where work can be done. Some of the most relevant capacities which these goals target are: strengthening collaboration (within communities, between organizations, and with the GN); increased access to traditional and market foods for those most in need (pregnant women, single parent families, and young children); development of healthy nutritious and culturally relevant public policies, and standards and; ongoing support of the Inuit Employment Plan (through increased training in food management, and the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program) (Government of Nunavut, 2007; 7).

This nutrition program had many human and financial resources from the Department of Health and Social Services that were focused on supporting and “maintaining the nutritional health and well-being of Nunavummiut through three key areas of service...[that] provide leadership in nutrition, and support a coordinated team approach that extends across disciplines and departments to maintain relevant partnerships” (Government of Nunavut, 2007; 13). These three areas are: public health and nutrition, clinical nutrition services, and foodservice management. The focus of services through this program range from the individual through to the broader population, with the ultimate goal of healthy eating for all Nunavummiut.

It was an attempt to pull away from the Federal Government and establish policies that had more grassroots initiatives. However, the problem persists that in a holistic approach to addressing nutritional needs in the territory, optimizing the resources they have available, many of these resources are directly correlated to Federal Government subsidies. There was a hope to close the gap between household food insecurity rates in Nunavut with the overall household food insecurity rates in the rest of Canada. With a realization that food insecurity has been a consequence of the cultural changes that have taken place since Inuit communities began moving to settlements, the Territorial Government is striving to establish a baseline for nutritional improvement.

This program addresses the fact that food has become ‘big business’ in the North, as the Federal Government is trying to shift responsibility of subsidy implementation to retailers through the market-driven NNC subsidy, they still hope to encourage a healthy collaboration with these types of programs. It seems that they are aware of a dependency on Federal subsidies, but aim to achieve food security through the use of traditional

practices and store-bought food alike. This holistic approach and involvement of different areas is known to produce more effective and efficient programs, which is lacking in the Federal initiatives.

The Makimaniq Plan: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction was developed from the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. It was a co-sponsored, public engagement approach, by the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., to facing poverty reduction challenges in Nunavut. It was recognized that the complexity of the challenges faced by Nunavummiut could only be tackled through collaboration. The public engagement aspect of this program allows for community voices to be heard as ideas build from community, to regional, to territorial levels. This approach mandated the establishment of a Nunavut Food Security Coalition, in order to produce an action plan on food security.

The Nunavut Food Security Strategy and Action Plan was first discussed in 2012, when the Nunavut Food Security Coalition first met with eleven participants; since then, this group has grown to over twenty participants. It is an exclusively voluntary group that is constantly open to new members who share their vision for a food secure Nunavut. This document has brought together many different views, strategies, and ideas that have resulted in six areas for action designed to improve food security. The driving force behind this strategy is “to close the gap between household food insecurity rates in Nunavut with overall household food insecurity rates in the rest of Canada” (Government of Nunavut & Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., 2011; 13). The vision for the Nunavut Food Security Strategy is that all Nunavummiut will have access to an adequate supply of safe,

culturally preferable, affordable, nutritious food through a food system that promotes Inuit societal values, self-reliance, and environmental sustainability.

This action plan is the result of a territorial poverty reduction program, which aimed to understand food security challenges for Nunavummiut. With nearly 70 percent of the territory facing food insecurity – 34 percent of which classified as severely food insecure – the action plan uses wellness programs to achieve their goals. Each goal has a mission and four to seven subsidiary objectives. These objectives can be discussed with the Food Security Coalition, as they act as a roundtable for all the organizations involved. This program pushes largely for Inuit populations to reduce their reliance on store-bought foods, and work together in their communities to improve food security. Through collective visions and common agendas, efforts to improve food security can be better coordinated and sustained over time.

The six areas for action that have been developed in the Nunavut Food Security Strategy are: country food, store-bought food, local food production, life skills, programs and community initiatives, and policy and legislation. Through these six areas, four main components of food security arise. Availability, which encompasses a suitable amount of wildlife on the land or options in the grocery stores; accessibility, families having adequate money to purchase hunting equipment or store-bought food, as well as the ability to obtain it; quality, wherein store-bought food is healthy, fresh, and culturally valued; and lastly use, being the knowledge about how to obtain, store, prepare, and consume food for an individual, family, or community. The challenge lies wherein “these components must be fulfilled simultaneously for food security to exist, yet are influenced

by many complex factors in Nunavut” (Government of Nunavut & Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., 2011; 3).

They are hoping to maintain and encourage participation in cultural practices, such as hunting, to increase the share of traditional foods in Northern diets. However, without the subsidies given to hunters to mitigate the cost of hunting equipment and associated travel expenses these goals will be extremely difficult to achieve.

The Makimaniq Plan recognized that poverty in Nunavut had grown from the distinct differences between Inuit forms of governance and the governance structure that is currently used in the Territory. Although these two systems came together in modern community settlements, they have not reconciled their differences fully. For this reason, there was a push for cooperative planning and collaboration that will establish more effective governance structures. The six themes that emerged during consultations with the public were all associated in some way with food security, however approaching this issue from a holistic perspective is believed to be more effective in improving food security through the improvement of education, economic development, health, and collaboration. A successful aspect of this program was the development of the Food Security Coalition.

This Coalition has worked hard to ensure their efforts have translated into progress towards achieving the collective vision of a food secure territory. The implementation of ideas from the local level was important to ensure the involvement of community members. However, they are still very much reliant on Federal Government allocations. To put it into perspective, the Government of Nunavut received \$1.5 billion in major transfers from the Federal Government in 2014-2015; this accounted for

approximately 85 percent of their revenues for that year (Department of Finance Canada, 2017). Education in terms of traditional skills, healthy food choices, as well as life skills would not be possible without the federal funding. For these approaches to be successful there needs to be collaboration between Federal and Territorial Government policy and legislation, and acceptance of Inuit culture within the legislation, so everyone is aiming to achieve the same goals, with Inuit traditions and lifestyles in mind.

Mismatch in Federal and Territorial Programs

Alongside the Federal regulations are the Territorial programs that have been developed by Northerners to cope with the challenges they face on a daily basis. They utilize the funds that have been procured from the Federal Government and are able to allocate these assets as they see fit. This difference is key to the potential success of Territorial Government programs, as Inuit are able to employ the funds in areas they designate necessary. The ‘bottom up’ nature of policy that this entails brings communities together in partnerships, such as the Food Security Coalition, to discuss the challenges they face and decide on methods that will be best in beginning to aid the problem. Conversely, the ‘top down’ nature of the Federal Government policies have not had the intended consequences because there is little to no input from the Northern communities themselves, and no one is being held responsible for the ineffectiveness of these programs.

Over the course of this research, many people have asked why the Government is spending so much money to enable Inuit to live in such remote areas. They often argue that it would be cheaper for the Government to move members of these communities to

the South, in place of paying perpetual subsidy fees, and transfer payments. However, both the Government of Canada as well as Inuit communities have their reasons for wanting to maintain their settlements in the North.

Northerners have come to accept the way of life that has developed around their settled communities. They are no longer semi-nomadic peoples following different animal herds, they have established houses, schools, stores, and communities that they call home. This was first recognized when the Government of Canada forced Inuit to move from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Grise Fiord and Resolute. As was previously discussed, these experiences were very controversial for the Inuit as well as the Government. It was argued that at the time of the High Arctic relocations, the Government was facing many concerns revolving around the sovereignty of the Arctic, and that human settlements would contribute to the Canadian sovereignty of the area (Gail, 2015).

A Canadian Human Rights Commission Report from 1991 also concluded that the Government had lied to the relocated communities, denying them the chance to return to Inukjuak after two years if they so desired (Makivik Corporation, 1996). The challenges that the relocates faced upon their move, and the backlash that has been caused by the forced relocation begin to explain the difficulties of moving the entirety of the Inuit population south. Their entire culture, lineage, and system of beliefs are tied to the land and their location.

Conversely, for the Canadian Government, there are significant benefits to maintaining settlements throughout the Arctic. The importance of these lands can be noted by the United States Geological Survey; they estimated twenty-two percent of the

world's natural gas and oil is under the Arctic. The Arctic is also home to many large deposits of minerals, including phosphate, bauxite, iron ore, copper, nickel, and uranium ore (US Congressional Hearing, 2009). With such natural resource rich territory, the Government of Canada wants to maintain the sovereignty of the Canadian Arctic. With settlements present, the Government has a stronger claim to those lands.

Through the NNC engagement meeting notes, there have been some important revelations in regards to the federal program. There are four stakeholders in this process: (1) the Federal Government, who supply the funds, (2) the companies who ship products from southern jump-off points to the North, (3) the Northern retailer, and (4) the Northern consumer. Over the course of the research, it is clear to see that only one of these stakeholders has any complaints – the consumer.

The Federal Government oversees the amount of money that is being contributed to the program. Evidentially the shipping companies are receiving their fair share. They can calculate their costs and their profits allocated to each shipment, thus ensuring they benefit financially from their work. The retailers are receiving these goods, and 'applying the subsidy' to their products, however, due to the lack of requirements for providing profit margins to the Federal Government, they are able to determine prices that will increase their revenues.

Lastly, the consumers. As the Federal Government is able to decide how much money they will contribute to the program, the shipping companies can calculate their profits, and the retailers are able to decide what they will sell their goods for, the consumer is the one who has no say in the program. They are not able to pick the foods that are subsidized, the rate at which they are subsidized, or influence the profit margins

of the shippers and retailers. In the end, it is the consumers who are subject to the high prices of store-bought food with few, if any, other options; thus they are the only ones who voice complaints about the program.

Northerners' Concerns About Food

Through social media sites and the Internet, Nunavummiut are able to express concerns and raise awareness for issues they are facing on a daily basis. Food security is a large worry for many community members throughout Nunavut, and it can be seen through the dependence on social assistance. Nunavut has the lowest median income of census families for all provinces and territories, at \$65, 190; this is nearly fourteen thousand dollars lower than the median for all Canadian families (Statistics Canada, 2016). Forty-five percent – or more – of the residents in three of the four communities included in this study rely on social assistance to make ends meet [Pond Inlet 45.5 %; Cape Dorset 55.5 %; Clyde River 67.5 %] (Action Canada Report, 2014). Despite the distance between these communities, they are able to express their unease and opinions through the Facebook group '*Feeding My Family*'. This group was established in 2013 by Leese Papatsie, an Iqaluit resident and food security activist on popular social media site Facebook and has had up to approximately 24, 200 members from across the country – inhabiting both Northern and Southern communities. Through the development and growth of the group, they aim to raise “awareness about the high cost of food in the North” and are hoping to achieve this goal through knowledge of the issues facing Northern communities. They plan to do this through educating locals about what they can achieve themselves. The group recognizes that they cannot rely on the Government

or Inuit organizations to solve their problems and advocates for grassroots change (Feeding My Family Facebook Group, 2013).

The Facebook group considers progress as bettering their situation through community cooperation, education, innovation, and resiliency. They are hoping to progress without the help of the Government, Inuit organizations, or other non-governmental organizations (Feeding My Family Facebook Group, 2013). The site itself was created to connect Northerners who are enduring the same challenges and may be able to help each other in finding common solutions. It is understood that food security or lowering the cost of food in the North is a slow-going process; but for community members, more awareness means more coverage and more progress.

Going through the comments on the Facebook group 'wall', it is clear to see many people are expressing similar concerns, and they can be designated into four main groups regarding food security: availability, accessibility, quality, and use, which is discussed below. These four categories cover the main issues expressed by Northern populations.

Availability incorporates many challenges such as the increase in human populations in the North, changing wildlife stocks and migration patterns, variances in store-bought food and shifting environmental conditions, such as reduced ice cover. In terms of availability, most concerns expressed via the Facebook group revolve around the food that is available to them in Northern communities. The foods currently in Nunavut stores are largely those that are covered through the Nutrition North Program subsidies. For this reason, there is a very limited selection for consumers, as fresh produce, dairy, and meats need to be air freighted from southern communities. One of the postings on the group page is a donations list; items that are needed by many members of Northern

communities. Topping this list are flour and baking ingredients such as baking powder, baking soda, and yeast. Flour in itself is subsidized under the Nutrition North program, however it only qualifies for the lower subsidy rate, as described in the literature review, resulting in a five-kilogram bag of flour that costs over thirty dollars (photo 5.1).



Photo 5.1 courtesy of: Josh Kalluk

Accessibility takes into account issues such as high cost of food and low household incomes, transportation delays, weakened sharing networks, changing access to hunting grounds and hunting quotas. This seems to be one of the main issues presented in the Facebook group. Their primary drive is to showcase how expensive food can be in the North, despite the subsidies that have been provided by the Government. This is mainly exemplified through the photos posted on the group that showcase North West Company's stores or the Arctic Co-op's food prices. Some of the most noticeable include: 24 bottles of water for \$104.99 (photo 5.2), or Tropicana apple juice at \$15.39 (photo 5.3), or \$29.59 for a case of 24 cans of Coke (photo 5.4).



Photo 5.2 courtesy of: Matt Hall (In comparison to prices listed in Ottawa, ON, on the right)



Photo 5.3 courtesy of: Jonasié Sou Kilabuk



Photo 5.4 courtesy of: Murdock Jude

Concerns are being expressed as subsidies are being applied but are not having a noticeable difference on many food items. For example, red peppers fall under the higher subsidy rate as they are fresh vegetables, however the Nutrition North program made very little impact on consumers' accessibility (photo 5.5).



Photo 5.5 courtesy of: Daniel Kulluruqtuq

Many people are conveying frustration and concern as 'subsidized' foods are incredibly expensive still, stating "how [can we] be healthy when a chocolate bar is \$2 and one pack of cherries is \$7?" (Feeding my Family Facebook Group, 2016). When

both food items provide the same feeling of being ‘full’, why would you spend over three times the money on the option the Southern government has considers ‘healthier’?

Quality encompasses limited nutritional knowledge, food spoilage, unhealthy nature of many store-bought foods, and poor wildlife health. The quality of food that is available to Northern consumers is a huge concern for many in the Facebook group. Along with freshness and quality “the decision of northern retailers to sell food that is expired continues to be a major problem in many northern communities in Canada” (Lawn *et al.*, 1994). It has been reported that “eighty-two percent stated that their store often or sometimes sold expired food and 57% of respondents reported perishable food was not usually in good condition” (Burnett & Skinner, 2015).

There have been instances where retailers have covered best before dates with new stickers in order to keep products on their shelves for longer. An explanation of date labeling guidelines can be found in Appendix Five. Other issues revolve around children’s food items that have spoiled before they have even been open, such as pudding (photo 5.6) and toddler food packages (photo 5.7). For many these are real health concerns, as the toddler who consumed spoiled food had to spend time in the hospital.

According to Health Canada, there are persistent gaps between Inuit health and the health of those in Southern Canadian communities; their weakened immune systems are unable to fight off germs resulting in longer and more severe sicknesses in the North, as “an increase in disease is often directly related to diet” (Action Canada Report, 2014; 8). Problems of “mental health, obesity, diabetes, and dental health are at strikingly higher levels” in Nunavummiut in comparison to the rest of Canada. It is believed that essential nutrients “play an important role in reducing resistance against disorders such as

suicide, depression, attention deficit disorder, anxiety, and learning difficulties” and many of these nutrients are lacking in the diets of Northerners (Action Canada Report, 2014; 8).



Photo 5.6 courtesy of: Lala Derulo



Photo 5.7 courtesy of: Pillipuusi Paniaq

Finally, use covers the limited food preparation skills, limited budgeting skills, and lack of traditional knowledge, as they are becoming increasingly more important in Northern communities. Northern consumers struggle with the use of store-bought foods. Often on the Facebook group, people will post recipes, links, or articles that contain information that can be used to make more educated and healthy decisions about store-bought food.

Another trend in the group is taking pictures to showcase how expensive a trip to the grocery store can be. When you take into account that a family in Nunavut will spend nearly \$15,000 on food annually, but half of Inuit adults earn less than \$20,000 a year, the concerns discussed above become very evident. Due to such high food prices, if budgeting is not a possessed and refined skill, families can find themselves falling short of meeting financial and/or food needs. Furthermore, as wage labour has increased, hunting has often become a weekend or part-time activity, hunters are unable to cover vast distances to follow wildlife migratory patterns, and thus are not provided the opportunities to hone their hunting skills. As a result, younger generations do not have as many occasions to learn from their elders and develop their own set of skills (Action Canada Report, 2014; 10).

The group also has a corresponding website and blog with the same core values, which goes by the name FeedingNunavut.com. The website and group have a lot of overlapping information, such as their mandate as well as pictures; however, the website also has information regarding how you can help Northern communities, donation links, food-insecurity statistics and information, as well as consolidated research regarding Inuit living in the North and food insecurity across Canada. It has been designed to help

initiate conversations between locals and Southerners alike about the challenges Inuit have faced, and difficulties they have encountered with the RCMP and Canadian Government.

The site is a good source of information for both Northern communities as well as those from the South, to raise awareness of events that are currently unfolding, but also to increase knowledge of how Inuit communities have come to be, as well as how many of their problems originated from government mismanagement of their lifestyles. The website has a more political focus, while the Facebook group is focused on the voices and concerns of Northern residents.

Media Attention on Northern Food Insecurity

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is a Canadian broadcasting and cable television network that produces and airs programs and newscasts that are made for, by, and about Aboriginal peoples across Canada. Its roots stretch back to 1978, when the Federal Government began the Anik B experiments “to test communications satellites in the applications such as TV broadcasting, community communications, tele-education and tele-health” with the participation of Inuit organizations in Nunavut and Northern Quebec (APTN About, 2015). By 1980, the CRTC had established the Committee on the Extension of Service to Northern and Remote Communities. They released a report that supported “the development of broadcast initiatives that would assist Aboriginal Peoples to preserve their language and foster their culture” (APTN About, 2015).

Come 1983, the Canadian government announced the Northern Broadcasting Policy, as well as the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program. These initiatives had public funds allocated to the production of television and radio programs by various different communities across the North. This led to the CRTC licensing Television Northern Canada (TVNC) in 1991, and within the year the network was launched in the North. The overall “success and growth of the TVNC in the 1990s convinced the network’s Board of Directors that a national Aboriginal television network would be a positive and important addition to Canadian broadcasting” (APTN About, 2015).

With the popularity and growth of the TVNC and the support of Aboriginal Canada – alongside the public recognition regarding the importance of a national Aboriginal channel – the “TVNC submitted an application to the CRTC for a broadcast license for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network” (APTN About, 2015). The overwhelming public support that followed this application led to the approval of the submission for the national broadcast license.

The APTN was launched on September 1st, 1999, and was “the first time in broadcast history, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples [had] the opportunity to share their stories with the rest of the world on a national television network dedicated to Aboriginal programming” (APTN About, 2015). The network produces “documentaries, news magazines, dramas, entertainment specials, children’s series, cooking shows and educational programs” geared towards offering Canadians as well as people from around the world a diverse view into the realm of Aboriginal Peoples.

One of the segments produced by the network is ‘APTN Investigates’. In this program “APTN’s current affairs unit digs deep into the most complex issues of the day,

asking the questions and getting the answers [in relation to Aboriginal Peoples] you won't see anywhere else" (APTN Investigates, 2015). This in depth investigative journalism results in programs that describe Aboriginal issues and the contexts that surround them.

For this paper, I have focused on two episodes of APTN Investigates, the first is called 'Wasting Away' which aired in November of 2014, and a follow-up episode called 'Food for Thought', which aired in April of 2015. Broadcast originally on November 21st, 2014, 'Wasting Away' tackles the issue of high food prices in Canada's North. Focused on Rankin Inlet, it displays how Northern stores' food is too expensive for community members' incomes and as a result many are digging through the local dumps in hopes of finding something they can take home to feed their family (APTN Investigates, 2014).

This episode of APTN's Wasting Away caused enough commotion to be a topic of discussion in the House of Commons for days. In early December 2014 members of parliament discussed the food crisis in Nunavut, citing a recent Aboriginal People Television Network (APTN) investigative report that showed 50 to 100 people scavenging the landfill in Rankin Inlet for food to eat; the Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and representative for that constituency – Leona Aglukkaq – ignored questions from her peers related to this report and read the daily newspaper (CBC News, 2014b & Lum, 2014). It was also revealed that she had threatened the local authorities and community members with legal action for daring to express the truth from their community (CBC, 2014c).

After the airing of this episode, Leese Papatsie – the creator of the ‘*Feeding my Family*’ – claimed on the Facebook group that the video “has put a lot of ‘Holy crap is this for real?’ ...not everyone goes to the dump, but you do hear a lot about people going there to find food” (Feeding My Family Facebook Group, 2014). It will also be mentioned again in the follow up segment of ‘Food for Thought’.

With such widespread attention brought to issues in Canada’s North, the APTN felt it necessary to do a follow-up story to share Inuit perspectives on the high cost of food in their communities. The episode ‘Food for Thought’ begins in Arctic Bay, with a grandmother who was attempting to feed four generations of her family. As the Inuit elder lives with nine of her children and grand-children, she is spending nearly one thousand dollars on groceries each week, which is a staggering amount for a territory with widespread poverty (APTN Investigates, 2015).

In order to make ends meet, the Elder often passes on eating meals herself to ensure the younger members of her family have eaten; she eventually admits to skipping meals for up to three consecutive days when money is in short supply. For this family there is no alternative, when the money runs out, the children go to bed hungry, and a grandchild of the Elder claims “they are used to it...we tell them we will eat tomorrow” (APTN Investigates, 2015). Despite a family members holding one of the few wage jobs in the community, food is just too expensive; she explains “if I get paid today we’ll have food for a week, and then I’ll ask my parents or my sister, and if they don’t have any I’ll ask for money through radio” (APTN Investigates, 2015).

Just as members of Rankin Inlet scavenge in the local dump, as mentioned in the ‘Wasting Away’ episode, members of the Arctic Bay community do the same in search

of food. Even if the food is frozen, they will take it home, try it, and eat it if it's still good. Any undamaged and unopened cans are quickly gathered from the dump for consumption, despite the subsidies that are in place. As APTN was talking to Arctic Bay locals, no one seemed to be fond of the NNC subsidy, claiming the dairy and produce that is largely subsidized is not a huge part of their diet. They would much prefer a direct subsidy that they could use to order food directly from Southern stores, much like the old FMP (APTN Investigates, 2015).

This episode also showcases the challenges that food banks face in remote Northern communities. Ester, a local in Arctic Bay, runs the food bank directly out of her own house. Despite her work, she feels she is still not providing enough help to her community. She was grateful for having receiving hundreds of dollars' worth of canned goods from the local Co-op, until she realized that the donations had all passed their 'best before' dates – in some instances by over two years. Fearing for the health of her community members, she felt as though she could not give these goods to locals as she worried that they would get sick.

In Nunavut there is a law which protects those who work in food banks from these scenarios. Called the Donation of Food Act. It states:

“Liability of donor

1. A person who donates food, or who distributes donated food, to another person is not liable for damages resulting from disease, injury, death or other harm caused by the consumption of the food, unless

- (a) the food was adulterated, rotten or otherwise unfit for human consumption; and
- (b) in donating or distributing the food, the person either
 - (i) intended to harm the recipient of the food, or
 - (ii) acted with reckless disregard for the safety of others”

(Donation of Food Act, 2013; c 8).

This law was largely used to divert edible food from the dumps and get it to locals via food banks. It was also a good way to push stores and restaurants that share over \$60 million worth of the NNC subsidies to give back to the communities they serve (APTN Investigates, 2015). However, this impertinent regulation solidifies distressing ideas that food deemed no longer good enough to be sold in stores – and was destined for the local dump – can now be your family’s dinner. For food aid to be likened to dump-worthy items, Northern food subsidy programs are not achieving mandates in increasing access to perishable nutritious food.

In March 2016, Food Banks Canada reported the territories had seen a spike of 24.9 % in food bank usage from the year before; the largest jump in the entire country. In Northern communities, Inuit, along with Metis and First Nations made up more than 70 % of those who used food banks (CBC News, 2016d). To cope with the food bank needs in the North, the ITK has produced an interactive map to direct people to the closest food banks, and food security initiatives to their communities. The presence of such infrastructure and need for handouts proves that the NNC program is failing to meet its mandate. If food was affordable in Northern communities, they would not have food insecurity rates four times that of Southern Canada. They would not have food banks running out of food or relying on expired goods that are no longer to be sold in stores.

It is clear to see that the Federal and Territorial programs and policies that have been developed have their own faults. These deficiencies have been made evident through the use of Facebook, as Northerners are voicing their issues and concerns for everyone to hear. Government insufficiencies have also been noted through the news

outlet APTN. With their coverage of food and nutrition issues in the North, it is clear to see that store-bought food is still too expensive for many to afford.

This data shows the fundamental challenges to the efficiency of government food subsidy programs, and the concerns community members have in the North regarding these policies.

Analysis

Northern territories in Canada hold unique possibilities for research within the country. However, their populations are distinct in the manner that all aspects of social, cultural, and economic interactions are delicately interlinked. It is for this reason that any analysis of specific phenomenon in the North must always be understood within the context of a greater analysis. The interdependence between different facets of Northern living is rooted in the historical evolution of the Territory and its people. As a result, Northern events cannot be understood in a vacuum, but rather need to be recognized as an absolute entity.

Canadian Governmental Policy is Continued Colonialism

The Inuit of Canada's Northern territories have seen the entanglement of many different outsiders in their everyday lives for decades. From the Government of the Northwest Territories, to the Federal Government, to the Government of Nunavut, many of their policy implementations have had detrimental effects on multiple facets of northern living.

The creation of *The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo* saw massive paternalistic attitudes distributed to Inuit communities as 'aid'. This was soon followed by the High Arctic Exiles, when the Government forced relocations to the far North. These implementations reveal historic imperialist and colonialist attitudes that the Government held towards Inuit, and undertones of these ideas persist through their food subsidy programs. From the FMP, to NNC, the Federal Government decided which communities were eligible for the subsidy, what items were to be subsidized, how they would be

subsidized, and at what rates. The Federal Government also implemented policies affecting the traditional hunting behavior of Inuit communities, which had negative ramifications on both food sources as well as cultural and economic wellbeing. These nuanced colonial ideas are the reason why government food subsidy programs have been ineffective in improving food security on Baffin Island.

The Book of Wisdom for Eskimo, was a highly ironic piece of work distributed in the late 1940's. Its words depict a policy of encouraging self-sufficiency in Northern communities – leaving Inuit to their own devices – however the production of a text to inform Inuit how to do that explicitly implies that they are unable to figure it out on their own, despite the fact that they have lived in this region for thousands of years. Thus, the very “production of the text begins to imply intervention” (McNicoll, *et al.*, 1999; 206). The first production of the book in 1947 was written entirely in English, with no Inuktitut translations, however they were later added to the 1949 edition. There was substantial effort put into this piece of work to ensure the understanding of instructions by Inuit, with simple pictures and the addition of the Inuktitut syllabic translations “though the fact that [the Inuktitut syllabics] are placed after the English version marks the priority given to English language” (McNicoll, *et al.*, 1999; 207).

Moreover, the producers of this work made the assumption “that one Inuktitut dialect version would serve for all Inuit. Here the colonial State demonstrates it can understand a cultural gap, but not a cultural variation; it universalizes as a mechanism of totalization” (McNicoll, *et al.*, 1999; 207). The producer of the work, Stevenson, “clearly knew something about Inuit culture. The text is not produced out of cultural blindness, but rather out of limited cultural insight” (McNicoll, *et al.*, 1999; 209). However, for

Inuit this book was largely likened to the only other book that many families had encountered at the time – the Bible. This second ‘Book of Wisdom’ perpetuated the importance of the written word. It “inaugurates a process where Inuit will come to see that knowledge must take this new form to be knowledge”, which completely displaces the oral culture and history whereby they have lived (McNicoll, *et al.*, 1999; 208).

Shortly after the re-release of *The Book of Wisdom*, the Federal Government decided they needed a physical human presence in the Canadian High Arctic to claim it as Canadian soil in light of sovereignty concerns during the Cold War. Known as the High Arctic Exiles, families were told they would be moved northward, to locations with abundant wildlife, encouraging a shift back to traditional hunting practices – as the Government did not want Northerners to become dependent on government handouts. To solve the Government’s perceived problems, the ‘welfare cases’ in Northern communities were chosen for the relocations (Wright, 2014; 157). These families were taken to the High Arctic by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with few resources and abandoned in an area with which they were unfamiliar more than two thousand kilometers north of where they formerly resided.

There was a massive absence in preparation by the Federal Government for these moves. The original location that was chosen lacked the ability to support human life. This negligence by the Government resulted in Inuit having little to no access to traditional game and few opportunities to establish a successful community. After multiple deaths within the first year at the newly relocated camp, the Government decided it was uninhabitable; they forced families to pack up again and moved them eight kilometers away to what is now known as Grise Fiord (Tester & Kulchyski, 1994).

As the Canadian Government decided that they needed human ‘flagpoles’ in the High Arctic, they moved Inuit families based on the idea they could revert to living on the land, however many of these families depended heavily on their “local dump to supplement their diet” (Wright, 2014; 161). The involvement of the Government in these forced moves shows the contradictions embedded within their reasoning. To ensure Inuit are ‘self-sufficient’, the Government intervenes in where they live – causing them to relocate their entire lives, twice. The moment the Federal Government officials decided Inuit were to move to the High Arctic they demonstrated their intervention in Northern affairs. If they wished for Inuit to be self-sufficient, they should have never become so involved with their way of life in the beginning.

These historic colonial undertones resulted in Inuit communities that had become increasingly dependent on the Federal Government, as a result they established a food subsidy program to replace family allowances – hoping to shift the dependence of families away from the government handouts. From the Government’s perspective, the family allowances were direct cash transfers to families in need, which typically focused on those with little to no monetary income. However, food subsidies were available to all Northern populations in communities that the Government deemed eligible for the program regardless of income levels, which, for the Federal Government equated to more of a ‘hand-up’ than a ‘handout’. However, these new policies were established in the South, which just perpetuated colonialist ideals in the Northern territories.

The Food Mail Program served over 100 000 people in Canada’s North, the greater majority being Indigenous populations, over an area that is nearly four million

square kilometers. Over the course of this program, the Federal Government had a strong hold over its implementations and the list of subsidized foods²⁰. The Government decided which communities were eligible for subsidies, and which were not. They decided how the subsidies were to be applied as they believed Inuit were unable to make decisions for themselves based on their interpretation of the utilization of former allowances given to them by the Government. Consequently, the items that were eligible for subsidy lists had a strong Southern bias, which did not reflect the needs or wants of Northern populations. When the Government decided that too many ‘non-essential’ items were being shipped northward, and Northerners were taking advantage of the program, they enacted a change.

With a redesign and many ‘improvements’ the Federal Government implemented the new Nutrition North Canada program in 2011. These revisions did nothing to reduce the paternalistic nature of the program and greatly increased limitations on what Northerners could and could not have shipped to the North. Furthermore, upon the implementation of the new NNC program, only the communities who accessed the FMP were eligible to be included. This did not change until late 2016, when 37 communities were added or upgraded to being eligible for the full subsidy rates (CBC News, 2016b).

Through the different subsidy levels, the Federal Government, with influences from other southern based governmental departments, such as Health Canada, decided what would be subsidized, how it would be subsidized, and at which rate. These decisions had profound effects on the eating habits and nutrition of Inuit throughout the North. As the Federal Government decided what was considered ‘healthy’ and what was considered ‘unhealthy’ they did not take into account traditional Inuit needs, differences

²⁰ A full list of subsidized foods can be found in Appendix Six.

in lifestyles, or the fact that seemingly ‘unhealthy’ foods were available to the rest of the nation at much lower costs. They also failed to consider Inuit culture; as it is intrinsically linked to traditional food sources, the south-centered nature of these lists have broad impacts on Inuit lifestyles.

The subsidy lists for the NNC program were largely based on Health Canada’s Canadian Food Guide – which has been designed for southern Canada. Shortly before the implementation of the NNC program Health Canada produced an “*Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide: First Nations, Inuit, Metis*” outline for Northern communities. However, this document was heavily based on the original Canadian Food Guide. It had no impact on encouraging traditional foods to be involved in NNC food subsidy lists and is comparable to *The Book of Wisdom* with simple drawings and directions on what Inuit should and, more importantly, should not be eating.

The emphasis on the provision of nutritious food to Northern communities just perpetuates the paternalistic hold the Government has over Inuit, as it is the Southerners who decide what is most affordable to those in Northern communities. With nearly three million dollars specifically designated for Health Canada from the NNC budget there is little opportunity for Inuit to add their input into what foods they want covered under the subsidy lists. This resulted in undesirable items being subsidized and wasted once they had been shipped to the North, as well as a lack of important items under the subsidy, as is discussed below.

From the Government’s perspective, a stepping stone for advancement was the implementation of the “NNC Engagement Sessions” in Northern communities. During these engagement meetings, Northerners were invited to discuss their feelings about the

NNC program. However, these meetings were run by a Southern company that was given a pre-determined list of topics to discuss during the sessions. The designated topics established by the Government guided conversations and limited the feedback of Inuit community members who attended the sessions.

Of the voices that were heard, many advocated for different foods on the subsidy list. This demonstrated the frustration that Northerners have with the subsidy program as they are unable to make their own decisions or see the benefits of the program for themselves.

Although the engagement meetings took place in late 2016, their full impact will not be known for some time. A trending theme that has emerged in these meetings has been community members' concerns in regards to the foods subsidized NNC program. However, a lack of communication or attention to community members' opinions is not new for the Canadian North. As mentioned above, Northerners wanted a wider variety of foods covered under the subsidy, such as pop, chips, and cookies. However, because these foods were not deemed healthy by Health Canada they are not eligible for the subsidy. As such, the Government is limiting what Northerners can and cannot purchase at a subsidized rate.

Recently on the Facebook group *Feeding My Family*, a member posted about purchasing three cans of Ginger Ale to help with a stomach bug he was fighting. Those three cans cost just under ten dollars, which is a luxury not everyone can afford in Northern communities. Because these items are not considered healthy they did not qualify for either of the subsidies, in spite of recognition for the benefits of Ginger Ale to settle a stomach. Health Canada, therefore, applies the subsidy ban to all pop.

Similar complaints were raised in regards to chips, candy, cake, and other ‘luxury’ foods. When parents throw birthday parties for their children and want to have these luxury foods at the party, for example, the steep prices compromise the affordability of these ‘treats’. Policy makers should not have the ability to influence what foods can or cannot be consumed by kids at a birthday party thousands of kilometers away.

The sentiment that cuts across the Engagement Sessions, APTN reporting, and *Feeding My Family* is that Inuit perspectives are ignored by Southern governments and organizations. A significant example of this challenge has been the way that the Species at Risk Act has been implemented since 2002. Although it was enacted to prevent wildlife species from being extirpated or becoming extinct, as well as to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered, or threatened as a result of human activity, and/or to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened, there are serious concerns for Indigenous populations. In principle, the Species at Risk Act manages activities related to animal species that are threatened and the protection of their habitats, this has created many challenges for Inuit communities who relied on these animals.

The most substantial impact that this policy has on Inuit has been the implementation of quotas on animals, such as polar bears, and bowhead whales and the requirement of the coordination on the part of community members in terms of hunting practices within their communities and strategic use of their tags.

For instance, polar bear sport hunting has become a popular and economically important form of Eco-tourism in Nunavut, in such areas as Pond Inlet. When

communities are allocated hunting tags, they are able to decide if, and for how much, they will sell the tag. A “sport-hunt provides [the community with] nearly twenty times the monetary value of a polar bear taken in a subsistence hunt” (Dowsley, 2008; 162). It also provides the population with meat to be shared through traditional networks and revives Inuit culture such as dog mushing, traditional sewing, and traditional hunting skills. For such activities to be successful communities need to coordinate the sale of their hunting tag, as well as outfitting and guiding the sport hunt (Dowsley, 2008). Bowhead whales require a different sort of coordination as is discussed below.

The acknowledgement of hunting practices is important because polar bear quotas account for all human-caused mortalities of polar bears – including but not limited to guided hunts, subsistence harvesting, and kills in defense of life and property. If a person does not abide by these regulations they could be subject to a prison term of up to five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both. Although there are a few special exceptions written into the Species at Risk act for some Northern communities – such as hunting provisions that have been outlined in land claims agreements – the Inuit on Baffin Island do not have such provisions in their land claims agreement (NLCA 5.6.1, 2009).

These types of restrictions are hard on coastal communities. For example, the community of Clyde River is highly dependent on local marine wildlife, such as bowhead whales, and seals, for both nutritional subsistence as well as cultural resources. With the implementation of the Species at Risk Act, these sources of food have been restricted by the Federal Government, resulting in very serious ramifications for locals. In 2016, five bowhead whale hunting tags were distributed to five different communities in Nunavut: Kugaaruk, Coral Harbour, Arviat, Pangnirtung and Igloodik. The number of tags was

consistent from the previous year and the recipient communities change annually. That year, for example, Kugaaruk received the first tag they have seen since 2002, when the Species at Risk Act came into effect (Ducharme, 2016).

Although the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada identifies bowheads as a species of special concern, locals have claimed the population has rebounded very well over the past decades. They were originally listed when the population was decimated by commercial harvesting on an industrial scale (Ducharme, 2016). Frustrations are expressed by locals when only five tags to hunt bowheads are distributed annually, despite the fact that it is their belief that the bowhead population is thriving, and because of the Species at Risk Act restrictions, their community can miss out on these hunts for over a decade.

For bowhead whale hunts, communities need to coordinate between members to get enough hunters out on the water to ensure a successful hunt. That number can range up to nearly thirty hunters, as seen with Iqaluit's successful bowhead hunt in 2011, which required 26 hunters (Rodgers, 2011). With such few tags being distributed in late summer, when Clyde River received their last bowhead tag in 2014 they wanted to ensure a successful hunt, which took hunters on the water for four days. The knowledge of whale patterns, potential weather threats, hunting skills, and community organization provided the community their first whale in over a century (Wernick, 2014). This management of community members is needed not only on the water, but also once the animal was brought on land. It can take nearly a dozen people over an hour to remove the muktuk, skin, and blubber from a nine-meter whale to ensure none of the animal goes to waste (Dawson, 2012).



The hunting party celebrates its successful catch of a Bowhead whale

Photo courtesy of: Wernick, 2014.

Similar challenges were seen with the Caribou Moratorium. Beginning January 1st 2014, the Government of Nunavut placed a moratorium on caribou hunting, citing extremely low population numbers as the cause. The challenge for many Inuit stems from the fact that caribou was a source of both food and income, among other things. Being able to sell caribou meat to locals, or online, generates income for hunters to be able to afford hunting supplies, as well as store-bought food to supplement their diets. With the Government implementing the moratorium, frustrations were rife with locals as there was a belief that the populations remained strong. This short-term pain for long term gain strategy was difficult as the Government offered no compensation for the loss of income or food sources incurred by the moratorium. The Government argued that “there have been too few caribou in recent years to provide meaningful sustenance to more than a handful of people” (CBC News, 2014a).

Not only do these restrictions affect food sources, but Inuit culture as well. I argue that this has historically been low on the Federal Government's list of priorities, which is addressed later in this chapter.

Existing alongside the animal populations in the North are the mineral, oil, and gas deposits buried deep underground (within the Territory and at sea). Nunavut is home to one of the largest and richest stores of iron ore in the world (Baffinland, 2015b), for example. This has led to the development of sites at Mary River on Baffin Island and others. With other precious metals in the ground – including lead, gold, zinc, and diamonds – it is unsurprising that the Government of Canada was motivated to settle the Nunavut Land Claim and facilitate exploration and extraction of lucrative projects. For example, a former mining site, nearly one hundred kilometers north of Resolute produced lead-zinc ore for over twenty years. The royalty revenue for that one mining site over the course of its existence to the Canadian Government was over \$1.5 billion dollars (Spitzer, 2001).

The challenge with such extraction activities in the North is their effect on local wildlife. Nunavummiut and those living closest to these sites in particular have a lot of concerns, not only with the operation of mines, for example, but also with what happens upon their closure. There is always a fear that exploration (CBC News, 2016c) and/or extraction will negatively affect land or marine life. This could in turn affect the hunting and trapping practices of community members (Nunatsiaq News, 2016). However, the implementation of their veto power over extraction projects in Nunavut (CBC News, 2017) demonstrates the power and priority that the Federal Government holds in relation to development in the Territory. Arguing that the effects of the gold mine on caribou

populations are “manageable” (CBC News, 2017) the Federal Government reveals its hypocrisy: their own chances at financial gain outweigh the cultural concerns of the Inuit and their concerns about caribou population numbers.

Linking *The Book of Wisdom*, with High Arctic Relocations, the FMP, and NNC shows a pattern of colonialist policies in the Canadian North. These ‘internal colonies’ are being utilized for the benefit of the Federal Government, either as a claim to Northern lands, or to assert ownership of the lands’ vast natural resources. They have been incorporated into the Canadian State, and in the process, have had their political and economic control over the lands as well as their wildlife significantly restricted. They are told what they can and cannot hunt, as well as what they can and cannot afford to purchase. Their reliance on the Federal Government comes at the expense of self-sufficiency as this government assistance developed from a history that colonized Northern communities.

Colonialism Disguised as Government Assistance

As mentioned above, it is not new for the Government to become involved in Northern affairs. The colonial presence of non-Inuit in the Canadian Arctic has had detrimental effects on Inuit lands and wildlife over the course of history. With the introduction of Europeans and further involvement in ‘outsider’ trading during the Eighteenth century, Inuit were supported with “European goods, such as metal knives and needles, rifles, tobacco, cloth and food, Inuit often bartered items obtained through their traditional subsistence procurement strategies. These items included caribou skins and meat, whalebone...dogs and fish”, among other things (AANDC, 2006; 2).

Such readily available access to these various types of materials, which would not typically be available in the North, made it increasingly difficult – as well as less desirable – for Inuit to subsist without access to these foreign resources (Fossett, 2001). These relationships initially fostered trade, but then Inuit were forced into dependent relationships, pushed out of the self-sustaining lifestyles they had maintained for generations. These colonial influences developed into a mixed economy in Canada's North, as Inuit participated in trading relations (for goods procured using traditional practices), as well as the wage economy. When hunting and gathering activities did not provide sufficient food resources for families they were forced to become involved in the wage economy in order to supplement income and purchase needed goods.

The issues that manifest from the mixed economy emerge wherein neither the wage labour sector, nor the subsistence hunting sector is guaranteed to fully support the lifestyles of Inuit. Because of hunting tags, quotas, moratoriums, and a changing landscape, hunting has become an unreliable source of traditional food or income (as some hunters work as guides or sell the meat and/or fish they harvest) for Inuit communities. For this reason, Inuit have been forced to turn to wage opportunities. However, these wage jobs are often short contracts, unreliable, or low paying (Ford, 2008). Members of these Northern communities are being forced into market oriented relations with their land, often only finding work as laborers or misusing their natural environment. The over-exploitation of animal populations severely depleted Inuit subsistence resources, making their typically traditional activities increasingly challenging (Fossett, 2001).

Once the whaling industry had collapsed, trading posts created a demand for the

fur-trade, and the Inuit saw many shifts as these furs were the only items that could be traded for the European goods they now needed. The fur trade being much more demanding, “diverted attention from subsistence-oriented to fur-procuring activities, thereby increasing Inuit reliance on foods obtained from the HBC to supplement their diets” (AANDC ,2006; 4). By the mid 1920s the fur trade had peaked, and subsequently declined sharply after 1930 due to over trapping, the decreasing prices for furs, and establishment of legislation that was developed to protect Arctic wildlife (Clancy, 1985).

For Europeans, with the collapse of the fur trade they were able to move on, find new work and maintain their lifestyles. Meanwhile Inuit communities had decimated their wildlife populations in order to participate in the monetary economy. The establishment of these relationships between Inuit and Europeans saw Inuit subsistence become “increasingly and irrevocably tied to European economic forces and foreign consumer goods contributing to widespread starvation after the collapse of fur process in the 1930s” (AANDC, 2006; 4). Inuit autonomy had already begun to diminish before the collapse of the fur-trade, and all but disappeared as colonialist relations grew.

This dependence on outside sources for materials and tools developed their ‘under-class’ status during the fur trade. As the Europeans conquered their communal societies, Inuit began producing for commercial and monetary means instead of internal, communal use. Once markets shifted towards capitalism, they became reliant on Southerners to connect them with outside markets. This developed a dependence on the sale of natural resources and the exploitation of their land. However, with shifting markets and economic trends, monetary incomes based on sale of the natural world were incredibly unpredictable, and unreliable. This led to unstable incomes for the Territory

and households alike. As a result, government subsidy programs shifted from aid, to social assistance, perpetuating Inuit reliance on the Federal Government for handouts.

As Inuit communities became intertwined in the money market, colonial influences guided their actions. With the development of the whaling industry Inuit became whaling guides. Once that collapsed, they were told that fur trading would get them what they needed, so they began to hunt foxes. Once the fur-trade crumbled, wage opportunities were the only way to acquire necessary items. Those who could not find wage jobs were then deemed unemployed. They were constantly told what they were to be doing, which fostered their dependence on outsiders and consequently the Federal Government.

Wage jobs in the Canadian Arctic produced economic opportunities for Inuit, largely at the cost of their natural environment. It saw community members shift from a communal mindset – where a hunt would be shared with anyone who was in need – to an individualist mindset – where a hunt can be traded or sold for other goods. They shifted away from a community mentality and were more concerned with their own families and wealth. This was caused by the monetization of the natural world by the Europeans, and later the Canadian Government. For instance, caribou was no longer an animal you can bring back and share with the community, but a resource you can sell on the internet for hundreds of dollars.

As the world of global capitalism was growing, the Federal Government forced Northern communities to participate. They had established wage labour as the new necessity in order to provide food, clothing, hunting materials, and housing, among other things. They had forced Inuit to become involved in the wage economy, yet did not

support the development of an infrastructure that would provide sufficient wages or enough jobs to get by on their own, ensuring their continued reliance on government assistance. These historic colonialist decisions have interfered with the Inuit's ability to be self-sufficient in the North. The Government is making crucial decisions that have drastic impacts on Inuit lifestyles from Ottawa, determining what jobs they will have, if any, and which goods they can and cannot afford from their Northern stores.

The ecological world is seen as an economic asset for the Federal Government, largely at the expense of local Inuit culture. This pull from the traditional world to the monetary, wage economy is just the first of many examples of how the Government has undermined traditional Inuit activities and culture. However, due to the developed dependence on these government assistance programs, Inuit have few options to help them return to their traditional lifestyles, and the Government does not offer much support along this line. There are clear historic colonial implications, yet the actions of the Government represent a sort of paternalism that wishes to maintain power over a Territory and group of people for whom it has a particular agenda.

Insensitivity Towards Traditional Inuit Cultures

For Inuit, traditional activities are a necessity for well-being, so far as to be included as a determinant of health. As such, hunting not only provides food, but it also aids in the fulfillment of cultural needs. With so much of their culture being tied to the land, animals have incredible influence over Inuit. With the implementation of the Species at Risk Act, as discussed above, the Government took from Inuit their ability to live off the land. Communities were unable to participate in traditional hunts, which

brought back food, as well as cultural items such as material for clothing, tools, and art. The implementation of a hunting tag system ensured Inuit were severely constrained when it came to hunting for those materials. They had to plan hunts more carefully, as a community, to ensure no negative legal consequences from the Government.

Moreover, the Government, hand in hand with international organizations such as Greenpeace, have also had devastating impacts on Northern communities. One example is Clyde River. The protests and widespread antipathy of northern seal hunts were a key feature that led to Federal rulings such as the 1987 ban of hunting ‘whitecoat’ seals; which were targeted largely at the commercial hunt off the eastern coast of Canada, but had many ramifications in small communities as seal were a crucial source of both food and income (Holland, 2016).

Without the commercial seal hunt, Clyde River experienced major economic troubles. The Toronto Star reported that “from 2006 to 2012, the per-pelt price dropped from \$105 to \$30, and the overall industry shrank from \$46-million in 2006 to just \$6-million in 2010” (Wallace, 2012). Not only did this negatively impact economic opportunities of the region, it also demonized local Inuit traditions. The governmental support of the Southern organizations that have such harsh consequences in the Canadian North further challenge Northern communities’ traditional culture and values.

Another issue that has been prevalent through the NNC Engagement meetings is the lack of subsidies for hunting and trapping, or traditional food procurement in general. Many Inuit are unable to hunt due to the extreme cost of hunting supplies, notably gasoline, snowmobiles, guns, and ammunition. It is thought that since the Government

subsidizes the cost of shipping food to the North, they should also subsidize the shipment of hunting and trapping materials. Locals believe it would offer them more opportunities to get out on the land and attempt to provide for their families in a more traditional and culturally relevant manner (Nutrition North Canada, 2017a).

Locals in Northern communities who express their frustrations and concerns via social media mirror these sentiments. The newsfeed on the Facebook group *Feeding my Family* contains an outpouring of complaints regarding: the types of food items that are covered under the full NNC subsidy, persistently high food prices, as well as items that are not covered but are desired ingredients for traditional country foods. People are increasingly frustrated with a lack of transparency with the program, fuelled by the unclear explanation of how foods have been subsidized.

With a budget of \$68.5 million – \$53.9 million allocated solely to the subsidy component of the program, \$2.9 million to Health Canada – there is still nearly \$12 million that is ‘unaccounted’ for in the program’s budget. Perhaps this money is going towards activities such as the Engagement meetings. However, those meetings are run by a Southern consulting company that travels northward, gathers information, and returns to the South to assess the information they have collected. For a subsidy that is geared towards improving food security in the North, there is a need to direct those funds to the people most in need, and best positioned to fix the issues.

Northerners are concerned about the types of foods that are being subsidized. Store-bought goods that are used in the preparation of traditional foods, like flour, or lard, are not covered under the full subsidy. They are frustrated with the Southern nature of the food subsidy lists, as many have expressed irritation with the fact that red peppers are

subsidized, because that is not a food that would typically be consumed in the North. Yet, even if someone wanted to try a new recipe including the peppers, they are over \$17 per pound. This price is after the NNC subsidy has been applied, lowering the price by over two dollars. This helps to put into perspective the ineffective Federal policies, as the post-subsidy price is still incredibly high, especially compared to southern costs. Meanwhile, lard, a staple ingredient used to produce bannock, is not covered by the full subsidies as it is not considered to be a nutritious food according to Health Canada's standards. It is double standards such as these that perpetuate the food insecurity problems in the Canadian North.

Recently implemented with the 2016 changes to the NNC program was the 'subsidization' of country foods. Once they have applied and been accepted by the Federal Government into the program, specific producers are able to ship their country foods to other Northern communities under subsidized shipment rates. This addition came about as a response to queries from community members about the absence of NNC subsidies on country food. As many participants in NNC Engagement Sessions inquired about the lack of food subsidies on country food, their issues were rooted in concerns that the Government did not think country food was important enough to subsidise (Nutrition North Canada, 2017a). These actions by the Government call into the question the cultural integrity of these policies, as they were developed by Southern organizations, they clearly lack cultural insight into Inuit food systems.

Not only does the Federal Government hold power over the political state, but also the cultural and social one. They have their hand in every aspect of Northern living, from jobs, to meals, to recreation; the Government can decide what is acceptable and

what is not. The Government is the force of change in Canada's North. This geographic and economic isolation perpetuates the reliance of Inuit communities on the Federal Government because they have no access to other sources of income. This brings about the question whether the Government is striving for continued dependence or autonomy for these Northern communities?

With nearly a \$70 million stake in Northern communities, food has become big business. The Government aims to minimize their role within the market-oriented program, but they are the ones who have the final say as to what will be subsidised. They work alongside northern stores, who for years did not have to provide essential information regarding profit margins. The North West Company and ACL stores have monopolies, not only over Northern communities, but over the entire Territory of Nunavut. With millions of dollars in growth noted in the 2016 fiscal year, these companies operating in the North have near endless opportunities, as another \$53.9 million is annually designated for their stores.

Conclusion

Over the course of this project, I aimed to establish why government food subsidy programs are an ineffective way to improve food security on Baffin Island, and what concerns are being expressed through media and social media, by Inuit community members in relation to the food subsidy programs that affect their communities.

In regards to the first question, there are many reasons behind the inefficiencies of these programs, but three major areas are prevalent: store-bought food continues to be too expensive, despite subsidy rates; there has been a major lack of consultation with Inuit or Northern populations regarding their problems; and Inuit culture has not been prioritized by the Federal Government when attempting to solve these problems. As such, these subsidy programs are widely South-centered, with highly paternalistic and colonial undertones that perpetuate an erosion of Inuit culture. Northern community members are expressing concerns over the high cost of store-bought food, as well as its low quality via social media and through the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).

As interactions between Inuit and non-Inuit became more recurrent, the transition from a fully traditional food system to a more hybrid store-bought lifestyle brought about many new challenges for Inuit communities. From trade structures, through the construction of the DEW line, and Arctic relocations, food systems became permanently altered, resulting in Inuit dependence on expensive ‘outside’ sources to provide them tools, foodstuffs, and other items that Inuit could not produce locally. With the diminishment of traditional food consumption, cultural morale, and traditional skills, overall Inuit health has also seen setbacks. This Westernization of Indigenous diets has

produced major challenges to achieving food security, as economically store-bought food is extremely expensive. Shipped to the North via sealift or aircraft, the resulting prices are often much higher than families can afford.

This has resulted in the intervention by the Federal Government in Inuit food systems. With programs designed to subsidize the cost of shipping food to the North, the Food Mail Program and Nutrition North Canada are interventions that are narrow and specific. As the FMP lacked comprehensive policy planning and integrated approaches to addressing food security issues for Northern communities, it compromised the ability of the program to achieve its stated objectives. Because there was no background policy to contextualize the food security issues for Inuit, there were no advancements to improving these problems - just a 'band-aid' approach to cover up the concerns that were being presented (Summative Evaluation, 2009).

In an attempt to make a more efficient program, NNC replaced the FMP in 2011. The main requirement of the then \$60 million NNC program was that the retailers pass subsidies onto their consumers. However, the 2014 audit revealed that AANDC had not verified this information. The Department did not require retailers to provide them with all the information that was needed to analyze profit margins (landing costs, profit margins, selling process, etc.). Due to this lack of information from Northern retailers and lack of compliance reviews by the Federal Government, there was no way to show that full, or even partial subsidies were being passed on. Consequently, the audits completed by the Government were ineffective in demonstrating that subsidy rates had been passed onto consumers, and in turn could not prove they had met mandates.

As the Federal Government decided what was considered ‘healthy’ and what was considered ‘unhealthy’ they did not take into account traditional Inuit needs, differences in lifestyles, or the fact that seemingly ‘unhealthy’ foods were available to the rest of the nation at much lower costs. They also failed to consider Inuit culture; as it is intrinsically linked to traditional food sources, the South-centered nature of these lists have broad impacts on Inuit lifestyles.

As Inuit were pulled off the land and pushed into wage positions, they had no choice but to rely on store-bought food for sustenance. However, because perishable foods need to be flown into these remote communities, it is decidedly expensive. To make store-bought foods more reasonably priced, the Federal Government needed to get involved to reduce the cost of foods they deem ‘healthy’. As a result, Inuit in these communities have lost all autonomy of self. They are told what they can and cannot eat, hunt, fish, and afford from local stores.

Inuit have travelled an abrupt path from self-sustaining economies, to reliance on public transfers. With such large portions of income going directly to purchasing food, many families in Northern communities struggle to make ends meet. Upwards of 45 % of community members in Pond Inlet rely on social assistance. In Cape Dorset that number grows to 55 % and in Clyde River it jumps to more than 67 %. These figures show the dire situation for many Northerners; especially as nearly half the population of Nunavut has reported not being able to eat due to lack of money.

A major issue with these policies is a lack of consultations with Northern populations in regards to implementations or changes to policies that come into being. This historic development that enabled the colonialist and paternalistic approach to food

security, wherein the Federal Government is able to decide what is covered under the subsidy and what is not – and at what level each item is subsidized – is at the core of ineffective Northern policy implementations. There are immense power struggles revolving around all aspects of the program’s implementation. Although they were aiming to subsidize the healthiest food options for Inuit, the foodstuffs essential to traditional Inuit meals were not covered, because they had been deemed ‘unhealthy’ by the Federal Government.

A prime example of this is lard and/or shortening. Used in a staple country food, bannock, lard is often extremely expensive as it is only covered by the lower subsidy rate found in Appendix Two. Because NNC was developed by Southern organizations, namely Health Canada, it is aimed at reducing the cost of ‘healthy’ food options for Inuit communities. This came at the cost of Inuit culture. They did not take into account what the Inuit would need or want for culturally relevant food preparation. It is clear to see the lack of cultural insight in the program.

This cultural domination was the result of lacking consultations with Inuit populations and the paternalistic attitude the Federal Government holds over the Inuit. This makes the procurement of traditional cultural foods harder for these communities because the price of store-bought items is often too high for many consumers to afford. This demonstrates how the Federal Government is able to make decisions of major importance for others, largely disregarding their cultural needs.

With the media and official reports citing drastic health statistics for Nunavut, the GN and Inuit organizations developed programs aimed to bring these statistics closer to those of the rest of Canada. Their aim was to accomplish this through educating

populations about food insecurity concerns, including them in the development of food security strategies, and pushing for healthier eating. These types of grassroots programs are important aspects of the GN's desire to improve overall health within the territory. Although these numbers are important, prioritizing the universal improvement of statistics above what each community could benefit from, resulted in another failed attempt at delivering food security to Inuit.

With a desire to increase consultations with Northern populations, the Government of Canada implemented NNC Engagement Sessions. These meetings were held in Northern communities, to discuss Northern problems. However, they were executed by a Southern consultation company, and the discussion topics and themes were outlined by the Federal Government. This is a common theme in Northern communities, as the power is held in the hands of the Federal Government. Because these meetings were run by a Southern consulting company that travels northward, gathers information, and returns to the South to assess the information they have collected, power and knowledge are not being retained in the North. For a subsidy that is geared towards improving food security in the North, there is a need to direct those funds to the people most in need, and best positioned to fix the issues.

So long as the Federal Government holds the power over Northern subsidies, Inuit culture will be low on the priority list. This has been noted in many policy implementations that have detrimental effects on traditional Inuit practices.

The Federal Government has limited the hunting of traditional food sources for Northern communities. The Species at Risk Act of 2002 limited their ability to hunt big

game. With mandatory tags on animals, such as walrus, bowhead whales, and polar bears, Inuit are limited in their ability to hunt these animals, as they had in the past, by Federal decisions. In addition to that, the GN implemented an indefinite moratorium on caribou hunting on January 1, 2015. This ban was an attempt to protect the sustainability of the caribou herds on Baffin Island; however, these decisions come at the expense of Inuit being able to procure and produce traditional goods of supplementary income to purchase store-bought foods, as they were not provided any compensation for this elimination of traditional food source.

Likewise, bans on the hunting of other animals, such as whitecoat seals have had similar effects. When Greenpeace interfered in the commercial seal hunts on Canada's east coast, it affected Inuit communities in the Baffin region. Clyde River saw drastic decreases in seal hunt profits, falling \$40 million in four years (Holland, 2016). Not only did this affect food sources, but also traditional practices, which had detrimental effects on household income in the community. With multiple policies and restrictions, the Government has not only supported the Southern organizations, or researchers, but they have implemented harsh consequences for Northerners who break the rules. This embodies the legacy of colonialism that is still strong through the North, as Inuit have been cut off both culturally and economically from their natural environment.

This multi-faceted issue embodies the challenges of political economy as there are strong connections between the social, the economic, and the cultural realms of Northern living. I have examined the interactions that have occurred between the Government's political realm, the political economy of food prices, and the impact that it has been having on this society. As power is in the hands of the Government, their decisions

directly influence Inuit communities in the North. However, these influences retain their historic colonialist and patriarchal undertones. As policies and programs come from the Federal Government, they hold strong paternalistic overtones, for example a very South-centered view of 'good' or 'healthy' food. Items that are subsidized are chosen by Health Canada and the Federal Government, based on what they have deemed 'healthy'. These actions do not take into account Inuit culture, traditions, or needs, which is causing the erosion of Inuit culture in Canada.

The challenges that Northern community members are facing in terms of food security were showcased by the media attention from APTN in regards to Rankin Inuit families and elders scavenging in the local dump for food scraps, and showcasing the extremely high prices for store-bought food in the area. In the House of Commons, Leona Aglukkaq was targeted for reprimanding her constituents for their openness to media involvement in these issues (CBC News, 2014c). She denied that their actions were a concern, when evidentially there are many Inuit communities who struggle to meet their food security needs. Reactions such as these in the Federal Government display a lack of concern, and a lack of desire for the truth to be told. Northern community members are being silenced and threatened by their own representative in the House of Commons.

By way of media and social media, Northern community members are able to express their concerns to a wider audience. These issues often revolve around the implemented government subsidy programs, and fall into two broad categories: concerns regarding food quality and concerns regarding food prices.

They are worried about the high cost and low quality foods that are forced upon them. For many, it was expressed that food takes up most of their modest budgets. Despite the fact that these community members should have access to fresh, healthy food through NNC, they do not. They have expressed their priorities in lowering food prices through boycotts of Northern stores, such as the one that took place on January 31st 2015, wherein many communities refused to purchase food from their local stores, and urged Southerners to boycott stores owned and operated by the same companies. The challenge with these types of demonstrations lies within the fact that many communities – nearly half who qualify for the original NNC subsidies – only have one store to purchase food from, thus boycotts can only be short lived.

Many Northerners expressed confusion regarding the NNC program. They were unaware how the subsidies were being applied to the foods in the Northern store and often could not see the monetary benefit from the subsidy. These concerns came about via the Facebook group alongside the NNC Engagement meetings throughout the North. It was clear to locals that there was a lack of transparency in the program, and that resulted in questionable practices by retailers and impossibly high food prices in their stores.

Along with the prioritization of lower food costs, Northerners' desire safe food for their families. The members that posted in the *Feeding My Family* group did so to raise awareness in their communities and for other parents, so they can attempt to avoid the same issues. They have expressed a desire that raising awareness could help solve these problems, and elevate food standards in the North. Concerns expressed through this social media site are beginning to do their part in increasing recognition of these

issues within the Territory. With these priorities in mind, and a little help from the media, as these concerns become more widespread, their voices will be heard.

The effects of media's influence have been seen through the APTN Investigates episodes 'Wasting Away' and 'Food for Thought'. They brought about apprehensions regarding the health concerns of these communities that stem from a lack of affordable food, despite the governmental policies that are in place. It also brought about new concerns regarding aid that these communities were receiving, such as expired food donations. The program by APTN was capable of demonstrating the severity and persistence of food security issues in Nunavut. Without this sort of media coverage, problems would go unknown or unnoticed. However, with the help of the APTN, community members were able to express their concerns about the cost of food as well as food quality, to a larger audience, with more coverage, and managed to make their issues known as high up as the House of Commons.

As noted previously, Frances Abele has demonstrated in Northern Exposure (2009) that people in Nunavut have been eating, or scavenging, in local dumps for many years. The issues present in Rankin Inlet are not new; they have just recently been covered by the media and brought to peoples' attention. Seeing that these sorts of activities is not surprising within the territory, it is safe to assume that such concerns could apply to all of Nunavut. If members of Rankin – with mid-range subsidy coverage rates – are unable to meet food needs, what is to say other communities are not doing the same things? If food banks are receiving expired food from one company, who is to say others will not follow suit? As a result, governmental policies and program strategies are being brought into question, because it is clear to see they are not adequately lowering the

price of food. If people have to scavenge in the local dumps for sources of food, or go three days without a meal, the government food subsidy programs are clearly not achieving their mandates.

The Federal budget, in 2016, proposed “to provide funding starting in 2016-2017 to expand NNC to support all Northern isolated communities” (Government of Canada, 2016). The challenge that comes along with this increase is a marginally larger budget for a nearly fifty percent increase in eligible communities. How will this budget maintain the levels of aid that it has provided for the 103 original communities, while simultaneously helping the 37 new ones? This will cause the budget to be spread thin throughout the communities that are already relying heavily on food banks.

As the political authority of the region is demonstrated through major policy implementations, it is clear to see how the thoughts of Northerners were overlooked by the Federal Government.

Decisions being made in Ottawa, were causing an erosion of Inuit culture via the subsidized food list as well as the Species at Risk Act, representing strong colonial and economic control shown through eligible community lists and subsidy rates decided by the Federal Government. As a result, Inuit have very little influence on the policies that affect their communities. The power is not in the hands of the Inuit; they are continually subjected to the strong paternal underpinnings of the Southern government and the quiet colonialism that persists through their development.

Although the Territorial Government has some evolving policy implementations they did not take into consideration Northern populations’ needs, strengthening the Federal Government as the one with decision making power. Territorial programs were

beneficial in showcasing the difference between the ‘top down’ Federal policies against their ‘bottom up’ or grassroots ideas. The more local organizations or programs were increasingly focused on what is needed at the community level, as opposed to large-scale band-aid solutions for the widespread Northern populations.

With such extensive concern about food prices and food quality in Northern communities, it is evident that Federal policies and programs are embedded within historic colonialist ideas, and are an ineffective way to improve food security. The central issue is that they do not begin from the needs, preferences, or desires of those affected by these dynamics. The question remains: how would Nunavummiut like to feed their families?

Appendices

Appendix One: Data Documents

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. (2009). *Summative Evaluation of INAC's Food Mail Program*.

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Appendix Two: Subsidy Rates in Nunavut Communities Studied in this Project

	Full Subsidy Rate	Partial Subsidy Rate
Pond Inlet	\$ 8.10	\$ 6.30
Cape Dorset	\$ 4.60	\$ 2.80
Clyde River	\$ 6.60	\$ 4.80
Iqaluit	\$ 2.30	\$ 0.50

(Nutrition North Canada, 2017b).

Appendix Three: Media Articles Regarding Food Security Issues in Canada's North

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Appendix Four: Regulations Regarding Facebook Group Privacy Settings

	Public	Closed	Secret
Who can join?	Anyone can join or <u>be added or invited</u> by a member	Anyone can ask to join or be added or invited by a member	Anyone, but they have to be added or invited by a member
Who can see the group's name?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see who's in the group?	Anyone	Anyone	Only current members
Who can see the group description?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see the group tags?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see what members post in the group?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members

Who can find the group in search?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see stories about the group on Facebook (ex: News Feed and search)?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members

Table courtesy of: Facebook, 2017.

Appendix Five: Nutritional Information and Date Labeling Guidelines

An issue presented within the context of Inuit and store-bought food has been the inability to use nutritional guidelines on packages to make healthy food choices (Action Canada Report, 2014).

The ‘best before’ label on food packaging is also referred to as its ‘durable life’. This information is required on food products that will remain “fresh for 90 days or less, and are packaged at a place other than the retail store from which they are sold” (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2014). The term durable life refers to the “anticipated amount of time that an unopened food product, when stored under appropriate conditions, will retain its: freshness, taste, nutritional value, or any other qualities claimed by the manufacturer” (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2014). These dates obviously do not guarantee product safety, but they provide consumers with information regarding freshness and prospective shelf life of their products.

Foods with a durable life of fewer than 90 days must be labeled with a ‘packaged on’ date as well as the durable life date. These guidelines differ from the ‘expiration date’, which are only mandatory on products such as meal replacements, nutritional supplements, and infant formula. Conversely, foods that have a “shelf life greater than 90 days are not required to be labeled with a ‘best before’ date or storage information” (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2014). It is a manufacturer's choice to provide the consumer with that information, if they so desire.

It is still possible to purchase and consume foods after the ‘best before’ date has passed, though the product “may lose some of its freshness and flavor, or its texture may have changed” or nutritional value may have been compromised (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2014). These regulations have been put in place by Health Canada to ensure the safety and nutritional value of foods sold in the country; and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for ensuring that these requirements are met.

Appendix Six: Full List of Subsidized Foods Under the Nutrition North Canada Program

Food Group	Higher Subsidy Level	Lower Subsidy Level
Vegetables and Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh and frozen vegetables and fruit • Dried vegetables and fruit (unseasoned or unsweetened) • Frozen unsweetened juice concentrate • Unsweetened juice in individual containers of 250 ml or less, except cans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsweetened juice in containers larger than 250 ml, except cans
Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread and bread products without filling or coating • Ready-to-eat cereals • Cook-type cereals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flour • Crackers, dry crisp breads and Pilot biscuits • Arrowroot and social tea cookies • Fresh pasta, without sauce
Milk and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk (e.g., fresh, UHT, powdered, canned evaporated) • Buttermilk • Fortified soy beverages • Cheese and processed cheese slices • Cottage cheese • Yogurt and yogurt drinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream • Sour cream • Cream cheese • Processed cheese spread • Ice cream and ice milk, sherbet and sorbet, and frozen yogurt
Meat and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh and frozen meat, poultry, fish and seafood • Eggs and egg substitutes • Unsweetened nuts and seeds • Peanut butter and other nut or seed based spreads • "Vegetarian" products (e.g., tofu, vegetable-based) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side bacon

Food Group	Higher Subsidy Level	Lower Subsidy Level
	patties)	
Country or Traditional Foods	<p>These food items may be subsidized.</p> <p>Country or traditional foods when available through local stores or when purchased from processing plants that are registered with the program.</p>	
Other Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant formula, infant cereals and other infant foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margarine, butter, lard and shortening • Salad dressing, mayonnaise and dips • Fresh, frozen and refrigerated combination foods, <i>except</i> items that are breaded, battered or in pastry, desserts, poutine, prepared sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs, prepared salads. • Cooking oils (e.g., canola, olive, peanut)
Non-food items		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-prescription drugs

Table courtesy of: Nutrition North Canada, 2014.

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