

**Evaluating Key Informant Perspectives on Inuit Self-Determination and  
Economic Participation in Nunavut**

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## **Abstract**

The negotiation of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (1993) and subsequent creation of the territory of Nunavut in 1999 have been considered by some to be the beginning of the nation to nation reconciliation between the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic and Canada. The institutions of public government that were created through this agreement are intended in part to support Inuit in shaping their economic livelihoods in the territory on their terms. However, it is unclear how territorial and regional planners and decision-makers in positions of power conceptualize “successful economic development” in Nunavut and what implications this could have for Inuit self-determination. Key informants from the Government of Nunavut (GN) and several Inuit and Land Claims Organizations (ILCOs) were interviewed (n=17) to understand how they conceptualize successful development in the territory and what they think is needed to attain their vision. A framework for Indigenous nation building (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development), developed from three decades of research, is used to analyze the interview results. The results of this qualitative analysis indicate that key informants interpret their role toward Inuit self-determination as promoting Inuit participation in Nunavut’s market-based, wage-labour economy. This has important implications for possible GN and ILCO coordination and collaboration in their socio-economic efforts on behalf of Nunavummiut.

**Keywords:** Inuit; land claim; nation building; Nunavut; self-determination; wage-labour economy

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## **Acronyms**

GN – Government of Nunavut

IIBA – Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreement

ILCO – Inuit and Land Claims Organization

ITK – Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

NLCA – Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

NTI – Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

## **Ethics Statement**

Ethics approval for this research was obtained from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (#: 10-14-16) and the Nunavut Research Institute (#: 01 031 15N-M).

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Over the course of a few decades (1960-1999) the Inuit of northern Canada negotiated a land claim with the Canadian Government to create their own territory—Nunavut. Nunavut is sometimes referred to as an “experiment” or a “project,” due to the unique nature of the governance system as outlined in the *Nunavut Act* and the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, signed in 1993 and 1999 respectively (Henderson, 2007; Hicks & White, 2015). The political accord and land claim were imagined as mechanisms for advancing Inuit political, social, and economic aspirations in the area. The goal was to create a public government, governing both Inuit and non-Inuit, that would reflect and appropriately accommodate the demographics, culture, values, and geography (Henderson, 2007; Hicks & White, 2015). Dispersing government agencies among the 25 communities in the territory, otherwise known as decentralization, was seen as essential so as not to overwhelm the capital of Iqaluit with an in-migration of new government employees and their families (Hicks & White, 2015). Decentralization was intended to bring government operations and decision-making processes closer to the region they were influencing, since the Government of the Northwest Territories headquarters was in Yellowknife. The Agreement provided for a natural resource co-management system, through which Nunavummiut and the federal and territorial governments collaboratively make decisions on the conditions for and approval of development activities (Hicks & White, 2015). It also included provisions meant to: ensure that the Government of Nunavut would have a proportionately representative number of Inuit employees relative to the territory’s population (Article 23), encourage the procurement of Inuit-owned

businesses (Article 24), secure royalties from major projects (Article 25), and protect Inuit interests in development activities through the requirement of Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreements (IIBAs) for every major project (Article 26). The Nunavut Agreement, in short, is a legal instrument for Inuit self-determination. It marked the beginning of a “bilateral government-to-government relationship” (Rice, 2016, p. 2) between Canada and Inuit in the territory. As external investment rises in Nunavut (CBoC, 2018), there is a danger in continuing the colonial legacy of assimilation through economic justifications (Ritsema, *et al.*, 2015). Social and environmental implications for mega-project development in particular are abundant, and often times the economic benefits of resource development are not felt within the local communities (Ritsema, *et al.*, 2015; Carlson, *et al.*, 2017; Scobie & Rodgers, 2013).

## **1.2 Scope and Research Questions**

The focus of this thesis is on the perceptions of Inuit self-determination and participation in the wage-labour economy held by territorial government and Inuit and Land Claims Organization employees. These institutions, which were established through the NLCA or emerged as a result of the Agreement, were intended to be in line with the “attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviours of [the territory’s] electorate” (Henderson, 2007, p. 2) and they have responsibilities in the development process. The Government of Nunavut (GN) and the Inuit and Land Claims Organizations (ILCOs) play critical, yet differentiated roles in supporting Inuit so that they can participate fully in the political life and the wage-labour economy, if they wish (i.e. as self-determined actors). This study therefore seeks to answer:

**Question 1:** How do territorial and regional planners and decision-makers conceptualize “successful economic development” in the territory?

**Question 2:** What do these perceptions mean for Inuit self-determination in Nunavut?

**Question 3:** How do these perceptions align with or diverge from the Harvard Project’s definition of economic development and the Nation Building Framework?

### **1.3 Organization of Thesis**

This thesis consists of six chapters. *Chapter 2* frames the study by providing a short history of the formation of Nunavut, outlining the territory’s current governance structure and economic make-up and summarizing the socio-economic and environmental context. *Chapter 3* describes the academic theories and framework chosen to critique the results of the primary research conducted as a part of this thesis. *Chapter 4* describes the methodological approach taken in designing and executing said research. *Chapter 5* presents the results of the qualitative interviews conducted with the ILCOs and the GN, discussing what successful economic development means to them (looking ahead fifty years, or about two generations) (Question 1). *Chapter 6* is an assessment of the visions of successful development and implications for Inuit self-determination using the Harvard Project Nation Building Framework (Question 2 & Question 3). Finally, *Chapter 7* summarizes the theoretical contributions, as well as direction for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Framing the Study**

### **2.1 Comprehensive Land Claims and Co-management in Canada's North**

Canada has borne witness to groundbreaking precedents for Indigenous title through Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) rulings in the past 45 years, beginning with the Calder case. When Frank Calder and other elders of the Nisga'a First Nation declared title to their traditional, ancestral, unceded lands in 1967, the British Columbian Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal rejected the claim. The Nisga'a then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, known as *Calder v. Attorney-General of British Columbia*, where it was determined that Aboriginal (Indigenous) title had existed at the time of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which set out guidelines for the European settlement of North America. This decision, made in 1973, marked the first time that Aboriginal title to land was recognized in the Canadian courts. Although the Nisga'a did not win their case, this decision by the SCC ultimately led to changes in the way the government of Canada regarded and behaved in relation to Indigenous rights (Salomans, 2009).

The Government of Canada began to acknowledge previous specific and numbered treaties, and established the comprehensive land claims policy that has led to the signing of 26 agreements comprehensive land claims and four self-government agreements across the country, many of which are in the North (INAC, 2015; Salomans, 2009). These agreements, one of which is the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, effectively codify the rights and obligations of Indigenous nations, territorial/provincial governments, and the Canadian Government in the management of the land, resources, and development. Comprehensive land claims are based on the assertion of continuing Aboriginal rights and claims to land that have not been sorted through treaties or other

means. Through these agreements, Indigenous nations across the country developed the legal basis to challenge the Canadian Government's allocation of resources and decisions related to resource development and include conservation measures that protect Indigenous livelihoods and cultures, which are so tightly intertwined.

Key to comprehensive land claims is the concept of “joint management,” wherein the federal government and the territorial governments, and the Indigenous nation are be responsible for managing the land and resources outlined in the claim together. Today, this system of environmental governance is often referred to as “co-management” (Boudreau & Fanning, 2016; Porter & Barry, 2016; Rice, 2016). Institutions of public government known as co-management boards are provided for in the agreements in order to carry out important decision-making regarding resource management activities and the potential impacts they could have on the land, water, wildlife, and the people. These bodies are designed to have an equal composition of Indigenous and Canadian Government (federal, territorial and/or provincial) individuals and a Chairperson, who only votes in the case of a tie. Notably, the appointment composition for each body varies in practice, due to a range of special circumstances, such as the inability to fill a vacancy with a qualified board member. Some of these co-management bodies make direct recommendations to a responsible minister, while others feed relevant knowledge and data into the recommendation process, among other activities. The structure of the co-management regime intends that the perspectives, values, and knowledge of the Indigenous parties are “built into” the environmental, wildlife, and natural resource development decision-making in the region. The structures that were developed through the negotiation of the agreements that preceded the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*,

such as the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement: The Western Arctic Claim* (1984), provided a foundation for the creation of a similar agreement in the Eastern Arctic.

## **2.2 The Birth of Nunavut and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1999)**

Three decades of negotiations with the Canadian Government prior to the turn of the century resulted in Nunavut, what is geographically the largest land settlement in North America, including 350,000 square kilometres of land (35,000 of which also included subsurface mineral rights); hunting and fishing rights; federal funding that amounted to \$1.1 billion to be transferred during the first fourteen years of implementation; royalties from oil, gas and mineral development on Crown land, and resource management participation through the a co-management regime that was modeled after previous land claims agreements (Hicks & White, 2015). Decidedly different from previous comprehensive land claim agreements or a self-government agreement, however (Hicks & White, 2015), the NLCA would include provisions for a political accord that led to the addition of the newest territory in Canada: Nunavut (*Figure 1*). The NLCA was signed on May 25, 1993, although the territory was not officially formed until April 1, 1999. This settlement, and the negotiations that preceded it, is thought by some to be the beginning of ‘reconciliation’ for Inuit of the Eastern Arctic (Rondon, 1998; *Arena Journal*, 1999), and is said to have ensured the region is not filled with “triumphant material change as long predicted and proclaimed by Europeans, but with an Indigenous social and cultural renaissance” (*Arena Journal*, 1999).

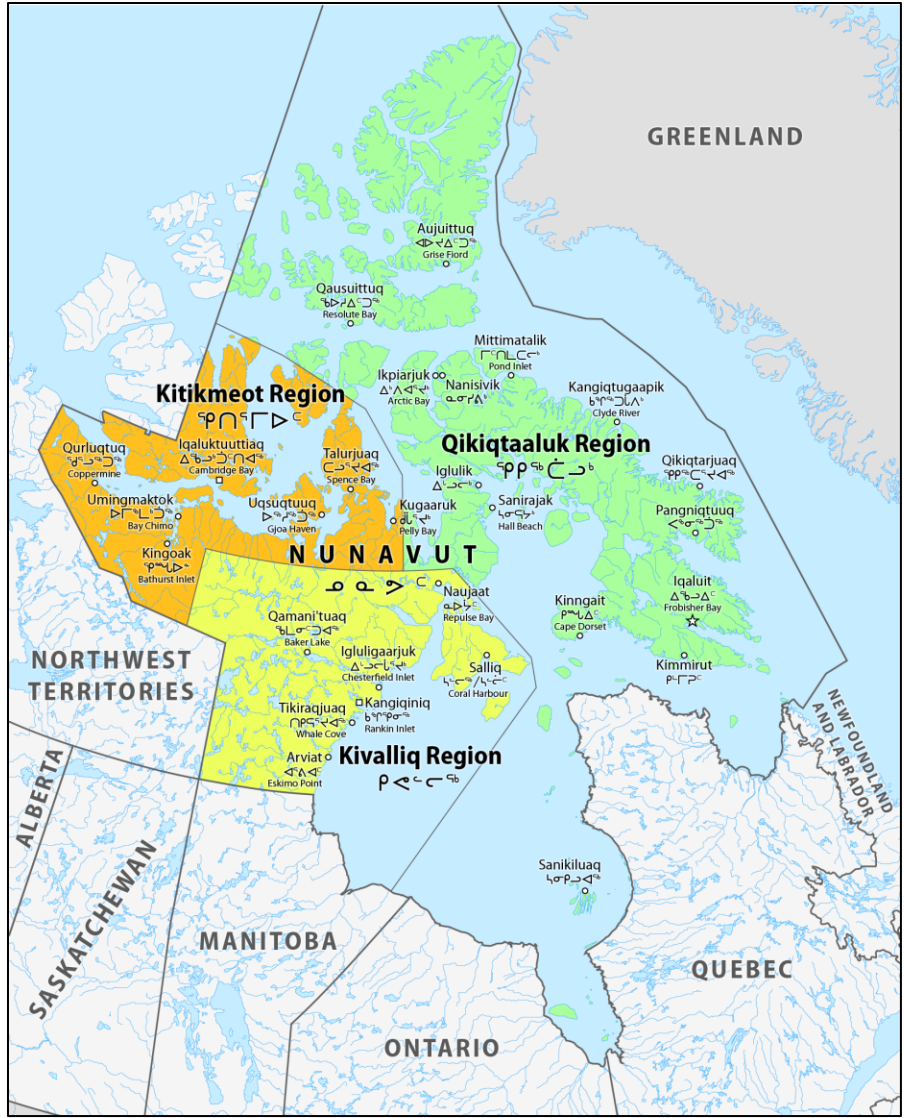


Figure 1: Map of Nunavut (Chumwa, 2016).

According to Hicks and White (2015), “the creation of the [Government of Nunavut] was as close to fashioning a government on a blank piece of paper as anyone is likely to see” (p. 4). Inuit felt alienated both politically and geographically from the Government of the Northwest Territories under which they had been governed since 1967, so they wanted something “different” and “better” than the conventional governance institutions of the other provinces and territories (Hicks & White, 2015). The Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC), established and funded by the federal

government, was mandated to determine “a timetable for service delivery, the legislative election process, the design of training programs, the selection of a capital, the method by which assets and liabilities would be divided, the identification of necessary public works, and the administrative design of the bureaucracy” (Henderson, 2007). The commission was composed of nine political figures and community leaders appointed from across the Northwest Territories: Meeka Kilabuk, David Alagalak, John Amagoalik, Clara O’Gorman, Mary Simon, Bill Lyall and Peter Irniq. Operating from 1993 to 1999, what emerged from the Commission was a relatively conventional territorial government. However, given the demographics of an approximately 85% Inuit population, spread out over 25 geographically dispersed communities, the NIC aimed to ensure that the structural and cultural nature of the government was appropriate (Hicks & White, 2015).

It became clear through the public consultation process that Inuit in the area that is now Nunavut wanted a democratic polity that was free of party politics, similar to the Government of the Northwest Territories. The result was a public government to serve both Inuit and non-Inuit, collectively termed Nunavummiut. However, Inuit insisted on one departure from the GNWT model: “an improvement in the proximity of politicians and policy making to the electorate” (Henderson, 2007, p. 34). The government was to be designed with three distinctions: 1) a decentralized bureaucracy that departed from the standard Canadian political structure to not only disperse government offices and occupational opportunities, but with the intent to involve Inuit in the decision-making that would ultimately impact them; 2) Inuktitut as the government’s main language by 2020; and 3) the intent to embed traditional knowledge and values into the government operations and public policy (Henderson, 2007; Hicks & White, 2015).

While Nunavut is a public government, its political structure is unique compared to that of the other Canadian provinces and territories. Alongside the territorial government, there are a collection of independent Inuit organizations, associations, corporations and institutions of public government that carry out the articles of the claim (Figure 2). Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) is the body at the top of this structure, which “coordinates and manages Inuit responsibilities set out in the Nunavut Agreement and ensures that the federal and territorial governments fulfill their obligations” (NTI, n.d.).

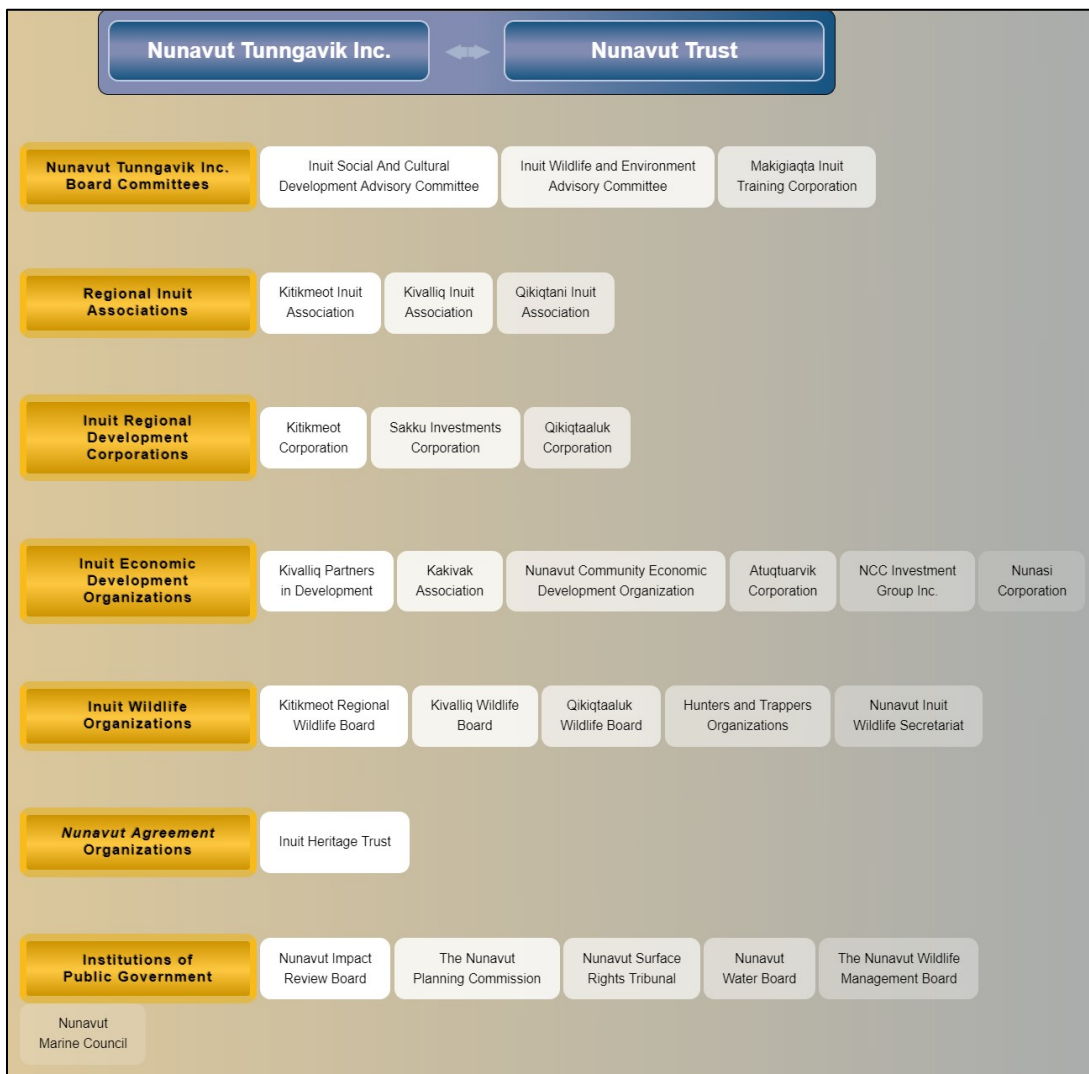


Figure 2: Chart depicting the Inuit organizations, associations, corporations, and institutions of public government that emerged from the NLCA (NTI, n.d.)

While having no political autonomy within the territory, the regions within Nunavut—the Kitikmeot region in the northwest, Kivalliq in the south, and Qikiqtaaluk in the northeast (*Figure 1*) have separate senses of identity, identifiable through the dialect, dress, or values in some cases (Henderson, 2007). Each region is represented by a designated regional Inuit association (*Figure 2*), which have corresponding regional economic development corporations or “arms.” A collection of Inuit economic development organizations have also emerged since the signing of the NLCA to support local capacity building and community development (NTI, n.d.). All recommendations about development in the territory are made through institutions of public government known as the “co-management boards,” comprised of an equal proportion of Inuit and federal and/or territorial government individuals. The boards make recommendations, commonly called decisions, to the appropriate minister, who may then approve or disapprove of the decision. Decisions are rarely overturned, but if they are, the appropriate minister must provide reasons within 30 to 60 days, depending on the board and the nature of the decision. The Inuit wildlife organizations feed into this decision-making process as well by conducting relevant research and providing their expert opinions to the boards (NLCA, 1999). This system of governance is meant to ensure that Inuit have control over decisions related to the environment, wildlife, and development in the territory.

NLCA (1999) includes a number of notable provisions targeted to ensure Inuit participate in the wage-labour economy. Articles 23 through 26 are especially important to Inuit participation. Article 23 – Inuit Employment Within Government calls for an ethnically proportionate public service. Since the territory is approximately 85% Inuit

(AHDRII, 2015), 85% of the public sector employees should be Inuit. As of March 2018, about 50% of the total GN positions had been filled by Inuit (GN, 2018). Article 24 – Government Contracts sets out the procurement requirements on the part of the territorial and federal governments, as they are required to implement “preferential contracting policies, procedures and approaches intended to maximize local, regional and northern employment and business opportunities” (NLCA, 1999, s. 24.9.2). A policy was first approved by Cabinet in 2000 entitled the Nunavummi Nangminiqqtunik Ikajuuti (NNI) policy, meaning “Assistance for Nunavut Businesses” in Inuktitut, which was designed to ensure that Inuit-owned businesses would have proper support and an advantage over other, non-Inuit businesses in competitive procurement processes (NTI, 2005). Article 25 – Resource Royalty Sharing, outlines the amount of money from resource extraction that Inuit should receive annually, relative to the federal government. For the first two million dollars of resource royalty received by the federal government, Inuit receive 50%; for any additional royalty, Inuit receive five percent (NLCA, 1999).

Lastly, Article 26 – Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreements outlines the parameters for the negotiation and arbitration of agreements required between industry and Inuit related to specific, major development projects (NLCA, 1999). IIBAs are an effective tool that Inuit have in securing local benefits from major development projects (Jones & Bradshaw, 2015). Industry has the opportunity through these agreements to form corporate investments in job training and hiring programs, support local businesses, build community infrastructure, and strengthen regional environmental stewardship efforts (Coates & Crowley, 2013; Jones & Bradshaw, 2015). This has been shown to result in significant returns, such as the development of a more cost effective, long-term local

labour force and ties with regional service and supply companies (Coates & Crowley, 2013). Through IIBAs and Articles 23 to 25, Inuit technically have the control over Nunavut's resources that is rightfully theirs under the NLCA and the Nunavut Act (Coates & Crowley, 2013).

The creation of Nunavut and this new governance arrangement has been said to have “deepened the nature of democracy itself” (Rice, 2006, p. 9) and represented a re-articulation of the relationship between Inuit and the Canadian Government (reconciliation). Technically, the Agreement secured *de jure* sovereignty for Inuit over the land and resources of their traditional territory. The co-management system for determining major project development is regarded as an exemplary regime, wherein Inuit are equal participants at the decision-making table. With provisions for Inuit economic participation, whether through public sector employment, preferential treatment for Inuit-owned businesses, resource revenue sharing, or as the recipient of benefits from an IIBA, the NLCA should support Inuit in attaining employment, if they so choose. Some of these provisions are being upheld, but it is unclear at this time as to how successfully they are being implemented or if they are being implemented in a timely manner. As developments in natural resources rise, there is a danger in perpetuating assimilation through economic justifications (Ritsema, 2014). Social and environmental implications for major project development are abundant, and often times the economic benefits of resource development are not felt within the local communities (Ritsema, *et al.*, 2015; Scobie & Rodgers, 2013).

### **2.3 The Composition of Nunavut's Wage-Labour Economy**

While some have said that Nunavut's economy is comprised of two streams, the subsistence economy and the wage-labour economy, this definition does not account for reproductive labour. The focus of this thesis is on Nunavut's wage-labour economy.

The Canadian North has been deemed the "land of opportunity," as government and industry have only recently begun to focus on the North's vast economic potential (Government of Canada, 2009). Nunavut receives significant funding from the federal government. While the majority of province and territories will receive about \$1,400 to \$4,000 per capita in funding allocated by the Canadian Government in the 2017-18 fiscal year, Nunavut will receive \$42,204 per capita (Department of Finance, 2017).

#### *Market Economy*

It may not be the case that every Inuk evaluates himself or herself based on Western ideas of economic success, nor is the relative success of a nation always determined by financial capital (Cornell & Kalt, 1998). However, these metrics can be helpful when considering Nunavut's wage-labour economy. In 2016, Nunavut's total real GDP contribution was 2,039.6 million chained 2007 dollars. About 41.4% (\$843.6 million) was provided through mining and oil and gas extraction, as well as supporting activities. Public administration generated 19.8% (\$403.1 million) of total real GDP, which accounts for defence services, federal government public administration (except defence), territorial public administration, and local public administration. These were followed by: construction (10.1%) and educational services (7.7%), and health services, including social assistance (5.8%). Other important economic markets in Nunavut include fisheries, tourism, and Inuit art (NBS, 2017).

Nunavut is expected to have the highest economic growth rate of the three territories over a 20-year timespan according to the Conference Board of Canada, partly due to major external investment (2018). Over the next five years, Nunavut's wage-labour economy is predicted to have an annual growth of almost 10% due to the expansion of the production at existing mines (Hope Bay, Meadowbank, Mary River) and extraction from new deposits like Meliadine and Amaruq (Fizzell, 2018) (*Figure 3*). Gold production is anticipated to quadruple by the early 2020s, shared between five functioning mines (CBoC, 2018). Nunavut's unemployment rate may drop to an all-time low of 12% as a result, although more than half of the 2,000 jobs that will be created will likely be taken by Southern fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workers (CBoC, 2018). This is due in part to the low levels of Inuit educational attainment and training opportunities (CBoC, 2018). The growth comes with a few challenges and risks. For example, some of the large mines will need transportation infrastructure and to be connected to the electricity grid. Commodity prices have been increasing alongside demand, reducing the potential vulnerability of Nunavut's resource sector to price swings (CBoC, 2018). Overall however, Nunavut's economic outlook is promising over the next 20 years and prospects could generate capital and jobs that could in turn improve socio-economic conditions for Inuit.



Figure 3: Mineral exploration and development projects in Nunavut, Canada as of July 2018 (adapted from NRCan, 2018)<sup>1</sup>

## 2.4 Neocolonialism in Nunavut

While the NLCA and the formation of Nunavut technically secured legal autonomy for Inuit in Nunavut, some researchers have said that the settlement facilitates rapid assimilation (Henderson, 2007; Legare, 2002, Merezic, 2000). The self-government that was intended by Inuit may be undermined by the selection of a Western-style of

<sup>1</sup> On this map, the red circles indicate exploration activity. Hope Bay and Meadowbank are gold mines, whereas Mary River is an iron ore mine.

government that governs both Inuit and non-Inuit in the territory (Henderson, 2007). According to the definition of neocolonialism provided by Sukarno (as cited in Hodgkins, 2009), a colonial regime cannot be isolated to legal control over land; it permeates governance structures, culture, social life, and control over economic resources. In this sense, Nunavut is ruled by a colonial regime with Western, normative views and policies on economic development—for example, the government is designed to encourage and facilitate wage-labour employment on behalf of Inuit. The thoughts of territorial and regional planners and decision-makers on matters such as these may shed light on potential implications for Inuit self-determination.

## Chapter 3: Theoretical Context

### 3.1 The Standard Development Approach

While investment increases and industry expands across Nunavut, there is a concern that these activities may not be chosen by, or serve, the Inuit majority. What Cornell and Kalt (2007) refer to as the “standard development approach” may harm rather than support Inuit self-determination and economic participation. This conclusion has been made after over 30 years of research embodied in the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, henceforth known as the Harvard Project. Researchers have studied hundreds of Indigenous nations who are performing well economically, by their own definition (HPAIED, 2018). They wanted to understand: “Is there an approach to economic, social, and political development that offers promise throughout Indian Country?” (Cornell & Kalt, 2007, p. 6). The standard approach to economic development, as defined by Cornell and Kalt (2007), is associated with several factors: short term, nonstrategic thinking and decision-making, development controlled by outsiders, a focus only on economic outcomes, a negative or indifferent attitude toward Indigenous culture, and concentrated power over the development agenda at the top of a society (*Figure 4*).

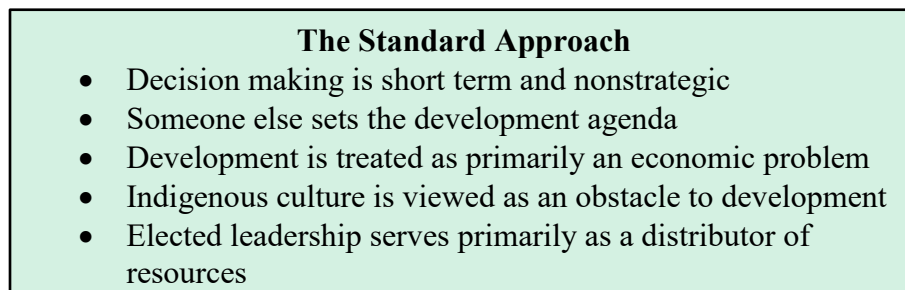


Figure 4: The standard approach to development (adapted from Cornell and Kalt, 2007)

### 3.1.1 Thinking is Short Term and Nonstrategic

Many Indigenous nations are struggling with socio-economic issues, so they feel pressure to accept the opportunities that are presented to them. As a result, there is little space for strategic thinking about the kind of future they want for their nation and the cumulative impacts and benefits of each economic opportunity. Terms in office often so short that politicians have no incentives to propose long-term strategies. Nations tend to look for “home run” economic opportunities, such as large-scale mineral development, as they can create a great number of jobs. It is difficult for the leaders of Indigenous nations to dedicate the time to think strategically when they are often overburdened with responsibilities and responding to “fires” like resource or infrastructural shortages (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

### 3.1.2 Development is Externally-driven

In some instances, it is non-Indigenous leaders who are controlling decision-making. This leads to a “top-down, imposed-from-outside development approach” (Cornell & Kalt, 2007, p. 10). When nations are reliant on federal funding, particularly for social and economic programs, this also creates a power imbalance in favour of the state. If a nation’s reliance on federal funding is too severe, it limits the nation’s *de facto*, or practical, sovereignty and places control over the strategic visioning in the hands of outsiders. Since the 1960s, however, many nations are approaching the federal government with proposed projects that they have self-identified and defined (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

### 3.1.3 Non-Economic Factors are Excluded

The standard development approach also excludes strategic, societal goals and political goals, which are critical to Nation Building. In attempting to bring in as much capital as possible and provide urgently-needed employment opportunities, strategic, society-level goals tend to be cast aside. This approach also has a tendency to overlook political goals, such as the development of effective and legitimate institutions that can facilitate Nation Building. It is important that the citizens of a nation feel as though their government institutions are especially fair and stable. Stable institutions, in turn, also lead to stronger investment by those within the nation or outside of it, such as industry (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

### 3.1.4 Culture and Traditions are Ignored or Resisted

Governments or industry may view a nation's cultural accommodations as a nuisance or a barrier to the success of the projects they want to develop, rather than part of the solution to successful economic development. The tangible products or elements of a nation's culture, such as arts and crafts or "on-the-land" tourism activities are considered valuable because they can be monetized. However, traditional relationships and behaviours are often discouraged, ignoring a key determinant of successful economic development. Culture can be an asset to the way in which a nation organizes itself economically (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

### 3.1.5 Decision-making Power is Exclusively Held by Elected Officials

In many cases, most of the funding for a nation is provided by the federal government, most of the employment is in the public sector, and most of the decisions about resource allocation happen at the level of the elected officials. As nations are

stretched for resources—jobs, money, infrastructure, etc.—there is intense pressure on those in power to distribute resources in quick order. This kind of access to scarce resources can lead to political favouritism, patronage, and/or corrupt institutions. For example, elected officials are sometimes tempted to give “gifts” in order to win the political support of their electorate (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

### **3.2 Indigenous Nation Building**

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, founded by Professors Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt in 1987, shares many of the concepts described by inclusive economic growth theorists in an Indigenous context. In association with the University of Arizona Native Nations Institute, the Project seeks to understand the conditions and factors that lead to the successful development of Indigenous nations, particularly in the United States. Its purpose is “to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved” (HPAIED, 2018). According to Cornell, Kalt, and other Harvard Project experts, economic development is defined as “the process by which a community or nation improves its economic ability to sustain its citizens, achieve its socio-cultural goals, and support its sovereignty and governing processes” (Begay, *et al.*, 2007). A dynamic set of thematic determinants has emerged over the course of 30 years of research, termed the “Nation Building Framework” (*Figure 5*). Fundamental to the Nation Building Framework is the ability of an Indigenous nation to self-govern. The success factors they have identified include: self-determination, strategic thinking, effective governing institutions, cultural match, and public-spirited leadership (Cornell & Kalt, 1992; 1998; 2007).

<b>The Nation Building Framework</b>	
<b>Public-spirited Leadership</b> Formal and informal leaders establish foundations for sustained community development	
<b>Strategic Vision &amp; Thinking</b> Community sets long-term priorities and links its decisions to them	
<b>Effective Institutions</b> Stable, effective, and fair	<b>Legitimate Institutions</b> Match the community's political culture
<b>Self-determination</b> Practical decision-making power in the hands of the community; this is a political matter, not simply an organizational issue	

Figure 5: The Harvard Project Nation Building Framework (Ritsema, 2015, as adapted from Cornell & Kalt, 2007)

### 3.2.1 Self-determination

The sovereignty of Indigenous nations can be dissected into four stages in North America: original, legal, policy, and practical. In Canada, the federal government has assumed

*Indigenous nations are in control of practical decision-making.*

control over Indigenous communities and lands through the creation of laws, implementation of programs, and distribution of resources. There has, however, been an evolution in some Indigenous nations from simply having *de jure* sovereignty in the law and in policies, to exercising *de facto*, or practical, sovereignty. It is most important that a nation has the capacity to exercise practical or *de facto* sovereignty. The highest performing Indigenous nations—by their own definition—have been those where the nation is in control of its own resource management and development agenda. When decisions are made at the community level, they tend to lead to development that is “tuned to local conditions, needs and values” (p. 21). Local-level decision-making, particularly about resource allocation, also leads to a greater sense of responsibility and accountability within the nation. Indigenous nations “are better decision makers about

their own affairs, resources, and futures because they have the largest stake in the outcomes” (Cornell & Kalt, 2007, p. 21). This kind of control over decision-making ensures that the nation is working toward its own objectives and leads to greater accountability in the public service (Berry, 2009; Cornell & Kalt, 2007; Goldberg & Champagne, 2012; Wakeling, *et al.*, 2001).

### 3.2.2 Effective Institutions

Practical sovereignty must be backed by effective institutions. Institutions are the vehicles through which a nation implements its self-determined vision. What makes governing institutions a necessity to the success of a nation is the fact that they dictate how important societal interactions occur, such as how decisions are made, how organizations and individuals cooperate, how disputes are resolved, and how they work together toward a common societal vision. These institutions must be stable, fair, effective, and reliable from the perspective of the electorate. They must be stable in the sense that the rules and procedures are not constantly evolving or in flux. To be fair, strategic-level decisions should be made by elected officials and methods of dispute resolution should be independent and unbiased, not informed by local politics. They must be capable and effective in delivering on administrative matters, dispute resolution, and systems separating day-to-day business and program management from politics (Cornell & Kalt, 1998, 2007; Jorgensen & Taylor, 2000).

*Decisions are made and acted upon through stable, fair, effective, and reliable institutions.*

### 3.2.3 Legitimate Institutions

As Indigenous nations escape the standard development approach, they often recognize their “dependence on institutions that they did not design and that reflect another society’s ideas about how decision making and dispute resolution should be organized and exercised” (Cornell & Kalt, 2007, p. 4). Nations may view these institutions as foreign and illegitimate because Westerners have imposed a different political culture. Contemporary Indigenous political cultures are diverse; they evolved from many generations to solve societal challenges in a manner appropriate to each nation. Greater cultural match has been associated with more successful economic development outcomes because individuals are more likely to respect and use the institutions to advance their societal goals. A low degree of cultural match, however, is often accompanied with illegitimate and ineffective institutions, and patterns of economic failure (Cornell and Kalt, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2007). This does not necessarily mean the nation must organize itself as it had traditionally, but that the institutions in place must resonate with the nation’s contemporary political culture (Trosper, 1995; Jorgensen & Taylor, 2000; Cornell & Kalt, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2007).

*Governing institutions resonate with contemporary Indigenous political culture*

### 3.2.4 Strategic Thinking

Nation Building involves having a strategic vision and then acting upon it in cooperation with governing institutions. To move toward the kind of society a nation wants for itself, there must first be a clear understanding of what that vision is. When a nation is lacking a vision and is under socio-economic distress, it may concentrate too many of its resources

*Strategic thinking is institutionalized to achieve a nation’s vision of success.*

on reacting to crises as opposed to on development that leads to long-term, sustainable outcomes (Cornell & Kalt, 2007; Zaferatos, 2015). This kind of strategic thinking requires Indigenous nations to shift their approach to decision-making from:

- *Reactive to proactive*, wherein nations are planning for the future instead of reacting to crises
- *Short-term to long-term*, wherein nations are thinking about the eventual society they want for themselves
- *Opportunistic to systemic*, wherein nations value development strategies that are aligned with their society over one-off funding opportunities
- *Narrow focus to societal focus*, wherein the focus is not exclusively on economic outcomes, but on the social, cultural, and political aspirations of the nation (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

### 3.2.5 Public-spirited Leadership

Nation Building leaders must concentrate their efforts on “institutional and strategic foundations for sustained development and enhanced community welfare”

*Good leaders mobilize individuals and drive institutional effectiveness and development.*

(Cornell and Kalt, 2007, p. 26) as opposed to purely the distribution of resources. In shifting away from the standard approach to economic development, nations must replace a top-down decision-making process with solutions that they themselves generate.

Leadership has been shown to lead to stronger Nation Building, as respected Indigenous leaders have the power to inspire and motivate people to work toward socio-economic change. These leaders do not necessarily have to be elected or appointed; they may also be hereditary, grassroots, or spiritual, for example. They act as educators, creating an

environment that facilitates information sharing amongst the citizens of the nation. Features successful Nation Building leadership include their public-spirited nature and “conviction that empowering the nation as a whole is more important than empowering factions or individuals” (Cornell and Kalt, 2007). Notably, a positive feedback loop has been observed between Nation Building leaders and effective institutions, as one encourages the other. They support the development of effective institutions and understand how to use them to maximise Indigenous self-determination and improve self-governance. (Begay, *et al.*, 2007; Cornell, *et al.*, 2007; Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

Little research has been conducted on the potential application of the Nation Building Framework in the Canadian Arctic context, with the exception of Carlson, 2015; Carlson, *et al.*, 2016; Ritsema, 2014; and Ritsema, *et al.*, 2015. Ritsema argues that the Nation Building Framework is a useful tool for in the context of development in Canada’s North (2014). The nimble, thematic nature of the Framework lends itself to a potential exploratory conversation in the context of Nunavut’s wage-labour economy.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1 Methodological Approach

This research was conducted using an adapted version of the grounded theory methodology, due to the context of the study. Traditional grounded theory allows for participants to shape the results of the research as opposed to imposing potentially inappropriate theories from the start. Grounded theory was originally discovered by sociologists Glaser and Strauss in 1967 and then further refined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), who have identified specific procedures for data collection and analysis that will be referred to throughout this chapter. A formal grounded theory study would not involve a literature review, as it is intended to be an inductive exercise whereby the researcher systematically collects and analyzes primary data until a theory emerges (Bowen, 2006; Charmaz, 2006). However, some qualitative researchers have challenged this approach, such as Patton (2002), Padgett (2004), and Bowen (2006), who claim that a small literature review can help to develop *sensitizing concepts*; sensitizing concepts are non-definitive ideas that provide preliminary direction for the research. The term was originally described by Blumer (1954), in contrast to definitive concepts:

A sensitizing concept...does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. (p. 7)

For this study, a preliminary literature review was conducted prior to primary data collection, as this approach has been recommended in cases where time and funding are limited (Bowen, 2006). The factors of the Harvard Project Nation Building Framework

(self-determination, effective and legitimate institutions, strategic vision and thinking, and public-spirited leadership) were used as sensitizing concepts since they are informed by over 30 years of economic development research in an Indigenous context (HPAIED, 2018). In addition to the utilization of a literature review prior to engaging in the data collection process, the adapted grounded theory approach used in this study focused on better understanding the utility of the Nation Building framework in the context of Arctic Canada versus developing a new theory or concept as is often the case with traditional grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

## **4.2 Primary Data Collection**

In grounded theory, “data collection and analysis are interrelated processes” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 6), in contrast to other qualitative methods which may involve analysis only after all data have been collected. Analyzing data while simultaneously continuing to collect it allows the researcher to feed his or her relevant perceptions into the ongoing theory development process as they occur, thus leading to what Strauss and Corbin call “theory-observation congruence” (1990, p. 7). For the purposes of this study, the method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were developed in alignment with the Nation Building Framework (sensitizing concepts). However, in order to mitigate the risk of dictating the content of the interview, the questions were kept relatively open-ended and prompts were only used when absolutely required (*Table 1*). Regardless of the form of contact (email, phone, or in person), a brief description of the project was provided. The ethics and confidentiality form were provided on the second point of contact if the potential interviewee was curious to learn more about the project.

Table 1: Key informant semi-structured interview guide

Interview Questions and Prompts	Objectives
Please briefly describe yourself, your position, and your responsibilities within your agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build rapport</li> <li>• Understand demographics</li> </ul>
<b>PART I. What does successful development look like?</b>	
<p>Think about the ideal Nunavut about 50 years or two generations from now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What does successful development look like?</i></li> <li>- <i>What images come to mind?</i></li> </ul> <p>Please draw or write them on this sheet of paper and feel free to walk me through your thought process as you draw.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build rapport</li> <li>• Capture the informant’s vision of ideal development in Nunavut</li> <li>• Gain insights into opportunities and challenges they envision</li> <li>• Elicit non-verbally accessible responses</li> <li>• Provide a unique medium to prompt memory</li> </ul>
<b>PART II. How do we get there?</b>	
<p>How does your vision compare to the current Nunavut?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What factors are driving development now (environmental change, social development, education, industry)?</i></li> <li>- <i>Are there any communities that presently meet your definition of success?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discover how respondents view current development processes</li> <li>• Understand what the informant thinks is currently driving Nunavut’s wage-labour economy</li> <li>• Take note of potentially successful communities or projects for further research</li> </ul>
<p>How do you get to the ideal Nunavut?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What are some of the strategic development priorities today?</i></li> <li>- <i>Are they agreed upon?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify solutions to current development challenges</li> <li>• Identify the informant’s priorities</li> <li>• Identify potential priority disagreement among agencies</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have the resources and institutional foundation to achieve your vision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Are there enough human and financial resources?</i></li> <li>- <i>Are the institutions in place effective and legitimate?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify resource gaps</li> <li>• Identify ways to strengthen institutional effectiveness if necessary</li> <li>• Identify ways to strengthen legitimacy if necessary</li> </ul>
<p>Do you feel like you have the control to guide Nunavut toward an ideal future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an understanding of the severity of powerlessness felt by key informants, if any</li> </ul>
<p>Is there anything you would like to discuss that we have not yet covered over the course of this interview?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build rapport</li> <li>• Give informants the opportunity to highlight any new topics that were not considered throughout the interview</li> </ul>

Key informants were selected from four of Nunavut's Inuit and Land Claims Organizations (n=7, 31% response rate) as well as the Economic Development and Transportation (ED&T) department of the Government of Nunavut (n=10, 38% response rate), based on the relevance of their position to economic development and their willingness to participate. The decision to consult these bodies was made in consultation with the research team. Efforts were made to specifically contact Inuit in the GN and ILCOs, but their participation was limited, as outlined in *Section 4.4* and *Section 4.5*. Potential interviewees were contacted by email, phone, as well as in person in the case of those organizations/institutions based in Iqaluit. Interviews were conducted between September 2015 and February 2016. In order to protect the identities of the ILCO employees that were interviewed, the specific organizations cannot be identified; however, they included designated Inuit associations, Inuit development corporations, and other Inuit development organizations. When consulted, the ILCO participants agreed that they were the appropriate individual to speak with in their organization regarding matters of economic development. Of the 17 key informant interviews, 14 took place in person in Iqaluit and the other 3 were conducted by phone. 5 of 17 informants were Inuit (N2, N8, N10, N16, N17), 2 of 17 were female (N1, N2), and ages ranged from 20s to 70s. Interviews were primarily conducted with residents of the Qikiqtaaluk region (n=14), as research funding limited travel to Iqaluit. Phone interviews were more challenging to secure with informants from the Kivalliq (n=3) and the Kitikmeot (n=0) regions. The limited participation of Inuit is discussed in *Section 4.4* and *Section 4.5*.

The interviews were conducted confidentially, in two parts (*Table 1*). Part I involved a futuring exercise using visual elicitation (Firth, *et al.*, 2005; Guillemin, 2004;

Harper, 2002). Subjects were asked to describe their thought process while drawing their vision of successful development 50 years (or two generations) into an ideal future. This novel medium technique had three-fold benefits, including: encouraging participants to reflect on the topic in a different way (Harper, 2002), eliciting responses that were not verbally expressed (Bagnoli, 2009), and providing a change of pace that helps to prompt memory and build rapport between the researcher and the respondents (Bagnoli, 2009; Harper, 2002). Part II of the interviews consisted of a series of semi-structured questions concentrating on the current state of development in Nunavut and how to attain the informants' visions (Appendix).

Transcription was done as soon as possible following an interview, typically the day of the interview or within a few days. As interviews were conducted, a constant comparison method guided further sampling and analysis. This iterative methodological process of building upon information learned from interview to interview aided in developing a theory of how successful development could be attained Nunavut according to the informants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The constant comparison approach guards researchers against bias, “for he or she is then challenging concepts with fresh data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As a part of theoretical development process, memos were also drafted to record potential patterns in the observed phenomena. Several of these memos have been integrated into the narrative and discussion included in this thesis so as not to lose conceptual detail (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Grounded theorists are not concerned with specific day-to-day activities, incidents, or events described in raw data. Rather, they look at what phenomena may be leading to those outcomes; those phenomena are then given conceptual labels (Strauss &

Corbin, 1990). Following interview transcription, 100% of the data were open coded with conceptual labels allow for the identification of data groupings and casual relationships between the data, which is essential to the grounded theory methodology (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A total of 16 codes emerged throughout the constant compassion process (*Table 2*). The codes were then grouped into categories where appropriate. For example, in the case of this research, the conceptual labels “infrastructure,” “human resources,” and “financial resources” were grouped under the category of “territorial capacity.” Once all the data were coded and three categories were grouped, a theory of successful development in Nunavut emerged from the visions and challenges that key informants shared. The results of this grounded theory analysis are included in *Chapter 5, 5.2: Territorial Visions*.

Table 2: The terms used as codes for the primary analysis

<b>Primary Analysis Codes</b>			
<i>Categories</i>	Territorial Capacity	Inuit Self-determination	Economic Diversification
<i>Codes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional dysfunction</li> <li>• Human resources</li> <li>• Financial resources</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision-making control</li> <li>• Workforce participation</li> <li>• Education and training</li> <li>• Accessibility to financial support</li> <li>• Accessibility to social support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed economy/balance</li> <li>• Traditional economy</li> <li>• Major resource development</li> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Service sector</li> <li>• Tourism</li> </ul>

### 4.3 Secondary Analysis

Following the development of a theory of what successful development could look like, a deeper literature review was conducted on the body of literature previously

described in *Chapter 3*: the Harvard Project Nation Building Framework. The Harvard Project was chosen because it reflects decades of research with Indigenous nations. This secondary analysis was done for two reasons. Firstly, it further validated the results of the grounded theory analysis. Secondly, in order to understand perceptions of Inuit self-determination and wage-labour participation in Nunavut, both a pragmatic understanding of the issues as described by interviewees and a strong theoretical foundation was determined to be ideal (Star, 2007). Thus, the interview results were re-coded (*Table 3*) and the codes were categorized again until all of the data were used, allowing for a critique of the primary results and the application of the Nation Building Framework in the context of Nunavut. The results of this analysis are found in *Chapter 6*.

Table 3: The terms used as codes for the secondary analysis

Secondary Analysis Codes
Harvard Project Nation Building Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-determination</li> <li>• Effective institutions</li> <li>• Legitimate institutions</li> <li>• Strategic thinking</li> <li>• Public-spirited leadership</li> </ul>

#### 4.4 Methodological Limitations and Study Challenges

In conducting this study, some methodological limitations and challenges were experienced. One could state that limited funding and capacity were limitations, as they restricted the ability to travel and gather input from key informants across Nunavut. One of the greatest challenges was securing interviews, especially with individuals within the ILCOs. This could be for a variety of reasons. The people of Nunavut, as in several

locations in Inuit Nunangat, have been consulted without necessarily witnessing the benefits of research for generations (ITK, 2018). Individuals in the GN and the ILCOs are also extremely busy and often do not have the funding or capacity to comfortably fulfill their duties (Henderson, 2007; Hicks & White, 2015), let alone be interviewed by a non-Inuit, young, and inexperienced researcher from Southern Ontario (see also: *Section 4.5*).

Some key informants did not want to participate in part because they felt that they could not contribute valuable insights, despite being in relevant positions within their organization. One of the interviewees, an Inuk, preferred to be interviewed with two colleagues, for example. While this presents challenges for data analysis in terms of ensuring that the views of informants are independent, a decision was made that the inclusion of Inuit voices in this study takes precedence over that methodological concern. If the study had the support of a local, Inuit research assistant, the sampling size may have improved, as one month is not nearly long enough to build rapport conducting this kind of research in a Northern community. Some potential informants were hesitant to participate because it was not community-driven, and/or an Inuit researcher was not conducting the study. The topic of Inuit-led and Inuit-owned research is expanded upon in *Chapter 7, Section 7.2: Areas for Future Research*.

Another methodological limitation was an inability on the part of the researcher to encourage participation in the visual elicitation exercise, the results of which are included in the Appendix. Only 9 out of 17 informants participated in the exercise, one of whom drew a picture of his or her vision. Some drew a map or web of their vision, while most used the paper to jot down their thoughts and ideas as the interview progressed. The greatest benefits of this exercise may have been the ability to build rapport with key

informants (Bagnoli, 2009; Harper, 2002) and to invite them to think about Nunavut's future from a unique perspective (Harper, 2002). In addition, those who did participate provided valuable input, as their visions were examined alongside their interview transcripts. To protect the identities of the interviewees, however, no labels have been given to these visuals as presented in *Chapter 5: Results and Discussion* and in the *Appendix*. The visual elicitation exercise, while challenging to execute, was valuable to the overall research process as a result.

#### **4.5 Acknowledging Bias, Positionality, and Subjectivity**

My personal bias, positionality, and subjectivity permeates this entire thesis. As a non-Inuit, non-Nunavummiut researcher, my worldviews, Western paradigms, and opinions have undeniably influenced the design and conduct of this research, including the analysis representation of my findings. I am a white female from Southern Ontario and at the time I designed and led the interviews involved in this research, I was 23 years old. I am one of several, similarly positioned researchers in this field who thought: I want to learn from and 'help' Inuit, a traditionally sustainable people, through research because they seem to be struggling (by my Western statistics). I was encouraged and guided by my research team to speak with GN and ILCO employees about their perceptions of "what successful economic development looks like," which was intended to be tested at the community level by other researchers in the future. The purpose of this study was to inform those future studies. This was in part due to the objectives of my research team and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant available to us. Despite all the reading I had done about Canada's role in directly or indirectly advancing

colonialism and assimilation through research and other means, nothing could have prepared me for what I experienced in my trip to Iqaluit.

Who I was and how I communicated the research project to potential informants limited the number of Inuit respondents I was able to secure and potentially the nature of the information I was provided. There was a somewhat accurate perception of me already framed out before I arrived in Nunavut—that I was like any other white, Southern researcher, with my own questions, serving my own agenda (e.g. to get a Master's degree, to potentially publish a paper). To potential Inuit informants, I expressed a desire to learn, but in most cases, there was no interest for them in my work. Those Inuit who did take time to speak to me may not have felt comfortable to express their thoughts and concerns because of a lack of trust stemming from my positionality as a white researcher. This research contributes to a larger, SSHRC-funded project called, "Change and Economic Development in Arctic Canada" (CEDAC). CEDAC emerged from several engagement sessions that were led by Inuit and regional partners in the territory of Nunavut. However, this specific master's project was not carried out by Inuit or in direct partnership with Inuit, which likely led to low Inuit participation, limiting the inclusion of Inuit voices in the results.

It was also difficult as an outsider to fully understand the political and cultural nuances and complexities of the GN and ILCOs before I arrived (e.g. the power dynamics of planning and decision-making). As I entered the GN and ILCO offices to make connections for potential interviews, most of the people in positions of power in the territory who I planned to interview, particularly in the GN, were white too. This fact complicated the design of my research further, as I thought I was travelling to Iqaluit to

speak with a more even mix of Inuit and white people, to compare and contrast perspectives. However, most of the people who were receptive to my outreach for an interview were white men. This could be due to the description I provided either verbally, by email, or in my ethics form, which would have been crafted in line with my Western, normative perspectives. I put measures in place so that the research would be more culturally appropriate for Inuit, such as offering visual elicitation as an option for respondents to relay information to me; however, since most of my respondents were also white and not born in Nunavut, this small addition to my methodology felt like a feeble effort.

Not only did I feel that I was lacking Inuit perspectives on the topics of discussion (Inuit self-determination and economic participation), but what I heard from some of my interviewees could, in some cases, be perceived to be racist. In this sense, the perception of who I was worked in my favour in terms of soliciting honest and striking comments from my white respondents. Some white participants thought the most “efficient” path forward regarding development would be to establish community “hubs” in each region of Nunavut (in Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, and Iqaluit). For example, they suggested that Grise Fjord, a community that was created by force of the Canadian Government to assert sovereignty in the High Arctic, is “too expensive” to maintain and that people in the community should be “encouraged” or “incentivized” to move South. Yet one Inuit participant raised that Iqaluit receives the majority of the resources from the federal government, at a disadvantage to the other communities. One white participant also expressed that they felt that Inuit should be essentially conditioned to support mining development from an early age. Little regard was given by the same respondent to the

“boom and bust” nature of mining projects and the environmental destruction that can occur from such activities. These comments, which were troubling to me, are further evaluated in *Chapter 6: Discussion*.

Finally, as someone who grew up in a lower-middle class family, I have a bias toward the wage-economy, which has provided me with the education and experience I have and value today. Through this thesis, I have been invited to challenge my basic assumptions and how they may have shaped my research. I have tried to very clearly identify the scope of this study, which excludes discussions of other types of economic activity, such as subsistence hunting/gathering and reproductive labour. These efforts have been made to limit the influence of my personal bias in the discussion of the topic and research results to the extent possible.

## **Chapter 5: Results**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will present the results of key informant interviews with individuals from the ILCOs and the GN, answering the research questions that are central to this study. *Section 5.2: Territorial Visions* describes how territorial and regional planners and decision-makers conceptualize “successful economic development” in the territory (Question 1).

#### 5.1.1 A Note on the Profile of the Interviewees

Note that the visions described in this chapter are from key informants in positions of power with planning or decision-making authority, who are mostly white (71%) and male (88%). Further detail on the informants is provided in *Section 4.2* and *Section 4.5*. The themes presented in *Section 5.2* are drawn from my primary analysis of the interview results.

### **5.2 Territorial Visions**

The Inuit and Land Claims Organizations and the Government of Nunavut had very similar visions of what successful development would look like in the territory over the next 50 years. While one is focused on beneficiaries, the other has a public focus; as one respondent said, the ILCOs have “a mandate to the Inuit people, whereas [the Government of Nunavut’s] mandate... is more generally focused on the territory. But I think obviously that goes hand in hand with each other. Inuit people are the territory really” (N9). Respondent N9 was referring to the fact that most communities have Inuit population percentages above 97%. Key informants envisioned a territory that, in 50 years, would have less reliance on Southern Canada for labour and resources, more Inuit

feeling in control of their destinies, and an economy that is diverse enough to meet the needs of individual communities. They also identified pathways that could lead Nunavut towards their ideal Nunavut.

Central to many of the visions provided by key informants was the idea that Nunavut would exemplify “a cross between traditional and emerging” (N1) economies. As one informant said, a 60-year old Inuk at one time “might have been born and lived as a child on the land, in a tent. And now, the person can work here with a cell phone, a computer...” (N1). This rapid change, exacerbated by increased percentage of in-migration since the territory’s conception, has left a more obvious divide in both Nunavut’s culture and economic structure than elsewhere in Canada. While all informants said they would like to see greater Inuit representation in the wage economy, many also stressed that it should not overshadow the importance of Inuit continuing to embrace their collective, traditional identity and practices. This balance was the foundation for every vision, and respondents suggested that increased territorial capacity, Inuit economic participation, and economic diversification would help to achieve it.

### 5.2.1 Territorial Capacity

Fundamentally, Nunavut needs “more boots on the ground” (N4) and “more investment by the federal government” (N3, N4) in infrastructure and communications technologies according to the key informants. One individual described Nunavut as “such a new territory [wherein] the institutions are new, and people are still finding their feet” (N3). Riddled with “all sorts of institutional failings,” (N3) key informants were concerned mostly about the lack of human resources and institutional memory in their agency. The turnover rate was identified as a large barrier to organizational efficiency.

The infrastructure across the territory is also “very meager,” (N4) which had several informants concerned about the operational capacity of the territory and its ability to welcome new investment. Overall, key informants wanted to see a “more capable” territory in the future, governed by well-educated, long-term, predominantly local individuals, and with the basic infrastructure to support development.

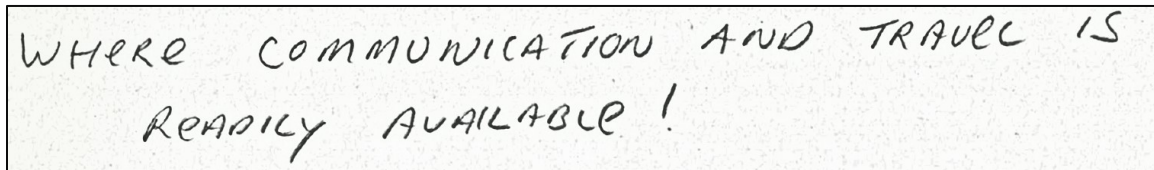


Figure 6: A vision as expressed through the visual elicitation exercise

Due to the lack of a local workforce, both the public and private sectors in Nunavut hire mostly from outside of the territory. There is a “revolving stock of southerners who come up to work for a couple years” (N7) and then return home, spending little of their capital within the territory. Many hires are “fresh out of school” (N7) and one informant even expressed that the “people who are making the decisions [in the territory] are not of a proper caliber for the decisions they are making” (N7). Furthermore, record keeping is not common practice. Combined with a large turnover rate, several individuals felt that there was a lack of institutional knowledge and memory, particularly within the GN. Informants envisioned a “much smaller transient population” (N3). They recommended the creation of an incentive program to “make life [in Nunavut] as comfortable as you can for people so that [they] will choose to live here.” (N3) This would be a temporary solution until there are enough local Inuit with the required education, training, and desire to work in governing institutions. An increase in coordination and collaboration between agencies would also help to identify program overlap and reduce resource exhaustion. This is because the GN and the Inuit

organizations currently “do most of their thinking in isolation from each other.” (N11) Moreover, investments in “dependable and reliable” (N6) communications technologies, such as highspeed Internet, would facilitate stronger territory-wide communication and reduce the amount money spent on travel.

As one informant stated, “the infrastructure deficit... in Nunavut is complex” (N11). However, all informants agreed that Nunavut is in “a Nation Building mode” (N11) wherein, “there needs to be a little bit of a leap of faith on the infrastructure but mostly it should grow in tandem with the maturing of the economy” (N11). Since the shipping season only lasts three to four months, one informant pointed out that “it is a logistical nightmare” (N3) to get the materials needed to tackle the current infrastructure deficit. One individual said that “it’s kind of life and death,” (N3) when unreliable energy generators lead to power losses in the communities in the winter. Where reasonable and feasible, informants wanted to see sufficient and reliable energy sources, paved airports, ports, road connections between communities, and any connection to “the rest of Canada” (N3). Kivalliq was identified as the best place to potentially place road connections. Informants suggested that “some kind of [federal] support system that recognizes [Nunavut’s] infrastructure deficit and addresses it” (N4) would be a good starting point to support future development. Several interviewees said that they would like to see the territory less reliant on federal subsidy since, “at some point, that growth becomes self-sustaining once you get prosperous communities” (N3) Many then pointed to devolution, which would secure territorial control over decision-making and the royalties from resource extraction, as the final step to having full territorial independence.

### 5.2.2 Inuit Economic Participation

The ideal Nunavut in 50 years would have more “Inuit feeling in control of their own destinies” (N8) and the future of their territory, according to the respondents. They would like to see a greater population of “modern Inuit individuals capable of functioning in the wage economy but, at the same time, practicing their culture” (N2). Beyond jobs in the workforce, some respondents wanted to see “stronger participation” (N2) to ensure that Inuit have “a clear understanding at the community level [of] what their rights are and what the process is...if they have concerns about the development in their communities” (N2). Key informants identified institutional barriers, time, education, and mental health as the major factors that could enable or hinder the ability of Inuit to exercise self-determination.

Some informants expressed that a balance of institutional change and community-level initiative will best support Inuit in exercising their land claim rights. For example, one individual said, “There has been too much emphasis on central agencies to lead and devise plans” (N11) for Inuit employment. The proportional representation clause of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is currently “nowhere near” (N7) being met. The informant elaborated, “People who are sort of just doing the things to keep the government moving are stretched so thin and the task of thoughtfully devising and implementing Inuit training and development strategies is so big” (N11). Some considered the lack of human resources a barrier to training Inuit because they felt that their workload was already too large. Another informant stated, “There are lots of success stories in Inuit employment but they all took work on the part of the Inuit and on the part of the organization” (N11). Furthermore, another individual said that Inuit have the chance to “develop their own programs and do what they can to take advantage” (N7) of

the opportunities. This was the case for the Arviat Diamond Drill Training Program that was developed by Arviat's economic development officer and prepared many Inuit to work in the Nanisivik Mine.

While local leadership was identified as a significant factor for Inuit self-determination, so was institutional support. Federal funding is "divvied up between organizations and it's not always entirely clear how you go about getting it" (N3), which could hinder Inuit access. One interviewee pointed to the Strategic Investment Program through the GN, wherein Inuit can apply for priority funding, as an example of a great initiative with some flaws. One such flaw is that non-Inuit businessmen take advantage of a loophole in the program, making their business appear Inuit-owned by compensating an Inuit individual to allow them to put their name on the application. There is also limited legal support for Inuit who need assistance with the application process. Institutional loopholes or flaws that are difficult to identify could be preventing Inuit from accessing the full benefit of the programs and services that supposed to be in place to support them.

While there are many opportunities for Inuit leadership and participation in future developments, most interviewees said that they felt "it's going to take generations" (N3) before the territory is successful in that regard. Some interviewees felt as though employment is not yet "normalized" (N11) in communities, and that with time and exposure, more Inuit youth may grow up wanting to work in the wage economy. As a result of trauma caused, in part, by relocation experiences and the residential school system (Chansonneuve, 2005), one Inuit interviewee said, "Many Nunavut Inuit have a bit of a 'victim mentality' ... where people are just complaining and laying blame on everybody but themselves" (N2). The informant said that this is a barrier to successful

development and that “there’s a role here for individual people to play a leadership in their own right, as well, to make positive change” (N2). While trauma has affected and continues to afflict some Inuit homes, another informant expressed that it is “a disservice to say that it gives everyone permission to defect from the labour force” (N11) because opportunities will be missed. Some informants saw potential for the Inuit identity to “be the vehicle for some kind of viral thinking” (N11) to change the mentality of communities and motivate individuals to take leadership in their communities. According to another interviewee, if you build capacity “from a young age and there's a strong sense of community and being and self-worth” (N12), then Inuit will be more likely to feel supported and in control.

*Figure 7 shows a key informant vision. The informant described a scene depicting a family, where the father and son are practicing traditional activities and the mother is running a business with ties across the world from her laptop at home. The home in this vision is powered by solar energy.*

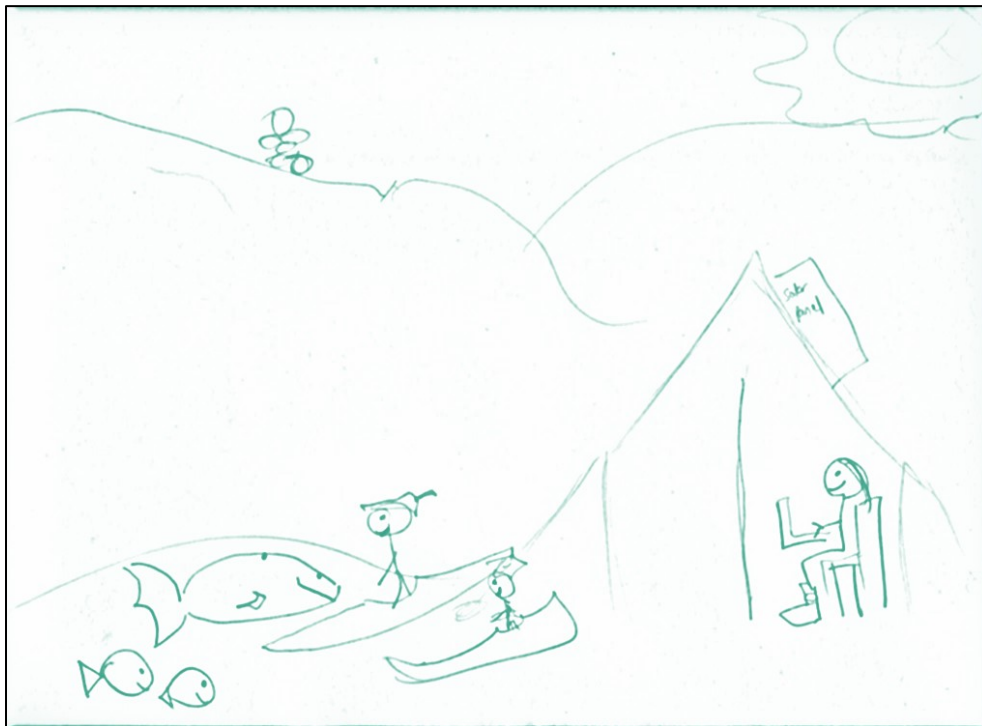


Figure 7: A vision as expressed through the visual elicitation exercise

All key informants found it hard to see how abstract systemic challenges could be addressed without a stronger education system in the territory. Several individuals said they would like to see a standardized system that is “on par with Southern education” (N4) so that Inuit have a chance at competing in the job market. Some were also concerned about the lack of mental health facilities, considering education and mental health to be “the biggest barriers on a more human level to achieving...success” (N2) in the territory. The Ilisaqsivik Society in Clyde River was mentioned as an excellent example of an empowering, locally driven, and culturally relevant approach to mental health, since the services are offered by Inuit in Inuktitut and English. In an ideal future, interviewees wanted to see more Inuit “graduate high school..., go on to further education and then to take the jobs that are there” (N3). Some Inuit have “don’t have the academic qualifications that open the doors” (N3) to jobs that interest them. Although Nunavut’s population is small now, many informants said that they would like to see a university in Nunavut in 50 years so that they could train all the people they need “to live and run a prosperous, successful territory” (N3). Ensuring that Inuit have access to strong, culturally relevant education and mental health facilities could potentially foster new generations of successful, self-determined Inuit.

### 5.2.3 Economic Diversification

While government and resource extraction currently represent the most significant economic markets Nunavut, many key informants expressed that they may not provide the greatest local benefit. The word “balance” was central to many interviews in terms of traditional economic practices, such as hunting and fishing, and the wage economy. As one interviewee stated, Nunavut needs “both resource development and the traditional

activities, ensuring culture is preserved” (N7). “It is impossible to say one is more important than the other” (N12) another informant said. While all interviewees felt that traditional practices should continue to play a role in Nunavut’s economy, some warned that development needs to be aligned with the future that Inuit see for the territory. Interviewees showed concern for the boom and bust cycle that accompanies mining operations and stressed that “if Nunavut is too dependent on government and resource extraction, that’s not a terribly resilient economy” (N11). They recommended encouraging a local goods and services workforce and expanding support for cultural tourism, handicrafts, small businesses, and domestic energy development.

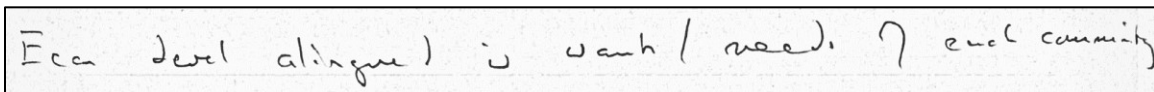
A rectangular box containing handwritten text in black ink on a light-colored background. The text reads: "Econ devel aligned w wants / needs of each community". The handwriting is cursive and somewhat informal.

Figure 8: An excerpt from one visual elicitation exercise

Most consistently, key informants wanted to see “economic development that was in alignment and attuned with the wants and needs of each community” (N3), which they did not think was presently the case in any community. Although the maintenance of traditional practices was considered crucial by most, one interviewee expressed that “the current levels of employment clearly are not adequate to supply people with the goods and services they want” (N11). The informant explained that many Inuit “have bought into the modern industrial lifestyle” (N11) and therefore “change will have to come at the expense of the traditional side of the mixed economy” (N11). All informants agreed with the point that they would like to see more Inuit employed in the territory, claiming that it could lead to greater personal satisfaction and a stronger economy. As stated by one informant, “If employment levels reach a certain level, employment will be more

normalized and the labour market will begin to function more normally” (N11). On the one hand, Inuit employment was clearly identified as a priority.

However, “not everyone wants to work in a mine” (N3) or in government. All interviewees agreed that the territory needs greater economic diversification. Almost all informants saw Nunavut as “quite focused on resource development” (N3). “Climate change is definitely going to be an influence” (N4), said one informant, and industry is “licking their chops” (N4) in preparation to capitalize on Nunavut’s vast wealth of resources. The informant continued, “...iron ore, gold, diamonds, oil and gas, offshore...a lot of big companies realize there is a chance for profit and that’s what’s driving the development” (N4). Interviewees stated that there are a lot of opportunities for local people to be involved in those developments and that they saw resource exploration and extraction as “the gateway” (N7) to a successful economy. However, many also agreed that Nunavut needs “a more diverse market and a more diverse economy right now” (N7). They expressed concerns for the fragility of their economy if they continue to put “too many eggs in two baskets” (N11), government and mining.

So many saw a future with a greater number of Inuit in senior positions, but they also identified options for those who might not wish to pursue jobs in government or resource extraction. For example, some interviewees mentioned that they would like to see Nunavut’s service sector “entirely dominated by the Indigenous population” (N3) instead of outsider hires. It was hard for many to understand why people from the South or other countries occupied most of the unskilled positions in the territory. “We need a service sector here that is based around employing local people,” (N3) one interviewee said. That would potentially provide jobs for those with criminal records or little to no

education. Most saw great opportunities in cultural tourism and handicrafts. One individual stated that it would be ideal if Nunavut was the “new showcase place for tourism” (N1). The same informant also stated that a sizeable tourism industry would only be possible if the territory became “more accessible for tourists” (N1), meaning that the airlines would likely have to reduce flight costs. Inuit small businesses were also identified as a sector that should be supported; an increase in communications technology would make this easier to operate the businesses from the territory. One such business could be in the procurement of domestic solar energy, which some identified as a potentially successful initiative that could provide individuals with a cheaper energy and a sense of goodwill. Regardless of the means, all informants agreed that government and mining is not enough to sustain a prosperous territory.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Not one of the key informants from the Inuit and Land Claims Organizations or the Government of Nunavut could point to a single community that they felt was developing successfully on their own terms. As one interviewee stated, “it would be difficult to find a model that today, that you could classify as a community success” (N5). Another informant explained that, currently, “there are a lot of people...who earn huge sums of money and then there are people living with nothing” (N3). Beyond the income gap between the elite (Southern and Inuit) and those in poverty, informants were concerned about systemic issues that they felt were widening that gap, such as insufficient education and training, mental health challenges, and a decline in traditional cultural practices. “It’s a lot of work and I don’t think we’ve begun to really tackle it,” said one informant (N2). While some of these views and others presented in *Chapter 5* are echoed at the community level, others are not. This chapter seeks to present those opposing views and analyze the interview results using the “success factors” identified in the Harvard Project Nation Building Framework (Question 2, Question 3).

### **6.2 Contrasting Views**

Development projects in the wage-labour economy can lead to opportunities that some Inuit, including those interviewed, believe are beneficial, such as increases in employment, income, and infrastructure and public services. However, these kinds of development, namely in resource extraction and shipping, have negative impacts as well. Some of these negative impacts include impacts to water quality and marine mammals, changes in community power dynamics, increased abuse of alcohol, drugs, and crime, a

reduction in family closeness with fly-in-fly-out operations, and a loss of cultural activity/traditions (Peterson, 2012; Pauktuutit, 2014). However, local perceptions about the balance between positive and negative impacts vary widely. Below are two contrasting examples that demonstrate the diversity in these perspectives.

In the first example, the community of Clyde River, led by Mayor Jerry Natanine, “lost a bid to block seismic testing” on their shoreline at the Federal Court of Appeal, which was subsequently won in the Supreme Court (SCC, 2017; Weber, 2015). The community requested a judicial review of a permit allowing the National Energy Board (NEB) to conduct the seismic tests in search of offshore oil. The tests were having negative impacts on marine mammals such as whales, walrus, and seals. This review was rejected by the Federal Court of Appeal before the community decided to take it to the Supreme Court of Canada. All communities on Baffin Island, regional and territorial Inuit groups, the Nunavut Marine Council, as well as Southern activists and many non-governmental groups, supported Clyde River in this case (Weber, 2015). The Supreme Court Judge weighed in favour of the community and set a precedent for future consultation practices. The decision stated that, “No one benefits — not project proponents, not Indigenous peoples, and not non-Indigenous members of affected communities — when projects are prematurely approved only to be subjected to litigation” (SCC, 2017).

In a recent Pond Inlet case, however, Inuit lobbied in favour of development. In 2017/18, the company Baffinland, which owns the Mary River Iron Ore Mine, proposed to extend the shipping season to haul more ore from the mine year-to-year. Nunavut Impact Review Board determined that the company of Baffinland’s proposal would have

significant environmental impacts and recommended to the Minister that the proposal be declined. The NTI and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, however, requested that the Minister weigh the socio-economic benefits higher than the environmental drawbacks. QIA's president, PJ Akeeagok, said that he sees the benefits of the increase in production as "enablers for the community to feel confident," now that Baffinland has agreed to additional monitoring and mitigation measures regarding dust and marine mammals (Frizzell, 2018).

As noted, these two cases highlight the varying opinions on market-based development projects, as well as differences in the terms and conditions by which development projects are allowed to occur (i.e. Baffinland agreed to additional mitigation and monitoring measures, whereas the NEB could not agree to the same). Opinions on these matters vary by region, community, and individual and over time. As such, the results and discussion presented in this paper should be understood to be primarily the views of white men, primarily in Iqaluit, and any generic comments made based on these views should be tested in consultation with Inuit at a local level.

### **6.3 Analysis of the Findings**

In order for a nation to build or rebuild itself, it must have self-determination (Cornell, *et al.*, 2007). It may be that, by design, Nunavut cannot enable Inuit self-determination. If one considers a land claim to be colonial, then the governance model and structures that are established within it are also colonial. The GN was designed to be a public government, in the Western tradition, and people in the top decision-making positions within this government are more than two-thirds non-Inuit (GN, 2015). The ILCOs, either established through or as a result of the claim, are also implicitly tied to

colonial influence. Nunavut is currently operating in a way that more relates to the standard development approach (*Section 3.1*) than the Nation Building approach (*Section 3.2*). Decision-making is short term and nonstrategic, although most informants said that this is due to being understaffed and overworked. Development is externally driven, currently by investments from the federal government and mining companies, which territorial government and ILCOs are inviting (albeit on their terms). Non-economic factors, such as the role of other forms of labour and education, are discounted. Culture and traditions, while not ignored in the interviews by any means, appeared to be poorly understood or generalized by most participants, whose worldviews have not been shaped within those understandings or practices. The next section of this thesis evaluates the views of the participants based on the Nation Building Framework, which postulates that effective and self-determined economic development in Indigenous contexts requires five factors: self-determination, effective institutions, legitimate institutions, strategic thinking, and public-spirited leadership.

### 6.3.1 Self-determination

Self-determined economic development involves the control over resources and decision-making required to advance a nation's goals. Ultimately, "to see people who live up here making the key choices and employing people who live up here" (N17), the informants felt that more must be done to make Inuit aware of the processes and mechanisms that are intended to support Inuit, including their rights in the land claim. To the participants of this study, self-determination means more Inuit participating in government and other decision-making positions. Articles 23 to 26 of the NLCA provide a strong legal foundation for Inuit economic participation, if they so choose. As one

informant aptly stated, the NLCA “is one of the mechanisms [to support Inuit economic participation]. There are many mechanisms in place, like family services, trade programs, apprenticeship programs, and social assistance. But no matter how many of mechanisms you have, they cannot magically transform [Nunavut]. The transformation will take generations” (N13). Whether or not those mechanisms are appropriate and wanted in the views of local community members remains to be evaluated. While these mechanisms are intended to support Inuit, they were not designed by Inuit in many cases; the GN only had 50% Inuit employees overall in the months before the interviews took place, and even fewer in executive positions (37%) (GN, 2015). As understood in the Nation Building Framework, economic self-determination can only be exercised if control belongs to the members of the nation.

Most of the key informants of this study understood self-determination to mean economic participation in government, as well as other sectors of the wage economy as well. If an Inuk wishes to participate in the wage economy, there are barriers preventing this. N2 expressed that the territory is working toward a situation where “the majority of the employment and contracting and that level of economic benefit goes to Inuit... as a result of developing on Inuit owned land.” As of right now, the population of transient workers in the North outnumber those who are Inuit (Hicks & White, 2015). According to N3, developing a service sector “that is based around employing local people” could foster greater Inuit employment. Major development projects provide a higher number of employment opportunities, yet, “not everyone wants to work in a mine” (N3) and these kinds of development have their own negative impacts, environmentally, socially, and culturally. Investing in Inuit-owned businesses and other industries with the potential to

provide work on Inuit terms supports the visions that key informants shared for a more diverse economy. With the improvement and expansion of telecommunications technologies, especially, the potential for Inuit-owned businesses is limitless. As one informant expressed, there should be a focus on increasing the “capacity of Inuit firms to compete for government contracts, and increased participation by Inuit companies in business opportunities” (N13).

Recognizing that education comes in many forms, particularly in Inuit tradition, an assumption was made by me and my informants that institutions of education can have positive impacts on Inuit if they support Inuit culture and personal desires. Some Inuit who may wish to participate in the economy cannot because they “don’t have the academic qualifications” (N3) or proper certifications by Western standards, or they have criminal records that prevent them from securing the employment they want. According to one informant, increased “access to higher education... will make Nunavut more self-sustaining, [enabling Inuit] to make their own decisions so it’s not the federal government deciding how to do things but Nunavut deciding how to do it” (N17). N10 was particularly concerned about the education system and thought that educational reform could play a very big role in making sure that local people are benefiting from new economic opportunities in the territory. “I don’t have faith in our education system for my kids,” N10 said, “I’m terrified what they’re going to end up with when they’re supposed to have finish grade 12” (N10). For N11, it was hard to see how abstract, systemic challenges preventing Inuit economic participation “will ever be fixed until the education question is addressed.” According to N5, any education must be targeted toward future opportunities, as they stated that “education is fundamental, but not just

education for education’s sake—education with a determined approach to provide people an opportunity to have career paths because of the economic opportunity that is being simultaneously developed and implemented” (N5). While most informants were highly critical of Nunavut’s education system, N13 thought that it has been “evolving and that the success level will [continue to] evolve and increase.”

Key informants also thought that training programs should be designed to “give the local folks a better shot” (N4) at new employment opportunities in the territory, if they so desire. Inuit “are hands on people” (N10). Not every Inuk will necessarily choose post-secondary education, however, in which case N10 suggested to “put those kids into a trade, whether it’s carpentry trade, or mechanic trade.” Training programs could be designed to introduce Inuit to the trades that interest them. However, one informant signaled that “there are incentives to give the money [for training programs out] quickly, without a good plan and not everything figured out.” In this sense, institutions need to be more strategic in the way they design and deliver training programs.

Notably, the ILCOs and the GN have a “vested interest in seeing adequate education and training so that Inuit can actually take advantage of the opportunities that arise from mining” (N2) and other development activities. In an ideal future Nunavut, “if somebody wants the job, they should be able to get the job; if somebody wants to get trained, they should be able to get trained” (N7).

### 6.3.2 Effective Institutions

Since the government is “stretched so thin” (N11), it was the view of a couple of participants that industry has a responsibility to innovatively solve some of the challenges related to Inuit participation. N17 agreed that “the private sector is willing to invest more

[than the public sector] and can.” Given the collaborative nature of Inuit traditional economic practices, one informant felt that the “partnership model can therefore be... specifically groomed to Inuit historical approach to working together to solving community problems” (N5). This assumption would need to be challenged at the local level.

Lessons learned from the Harvard Project indicate that a nation’s ability to advance its own objectives is constrained if it is in a state of reacting to immediate crises (Cornell & Kalt, 2007). The topics of social and infrastructural crises dominated discussions with the key informants. This could partly be the result of ED&T’s mandate at the time. It seems as though the ILCOs and the GN feel that a self-determined Nunavut unattainable in short order. According to N11, “from an infrastructure perspective, we should be in a Nation Building mode” and infrastructure should grow “in tandem with the economy.” Yet, Nunavut’s infrastructure deficit “is complex. There’re some self-fulfilling, circular chicken-egg problems with it” (N11). Economic development activities tend to lead to an increase in built infrastructure (for example, the All-Weather Access Road outside Rankin Inlet, which resulted from the development of Agnico Eagle’s Meliadine Mine), yet built infrastructure also attracts investment. According to one interviewee, the price of addressing this deficit, the territory would “need federal government commitment to increase the budget of the GN for capital investment by 10% a year over the next 20 years.” However, “it is really hard to justify billion-dollar infrastructure projects” (N7) for a territory with a population under 40,000. One informant suggested that if Nunavut were “centralized into regional hubs...that would address a lot of the resource capacity issues” (N9). This concept was dismissed by other

interviewees, one of whom stated that “it would be impossible to say: Oh, we're moving you again. Because people have built ties in their community” (N12).

Nunavut’s infrastructural and social challenges are the greatest barriers to successful territorial development and the ability for Inuit to drive and participate in it. The March 2018 announcement by the federal government and the GN to invest in \$566 million in infrastructure could represent a significant shift toward the kind of Nunavut the interviewees described in their visions (Hwang, 2018). A similar investment in the socio-cultural health of Inuit is required to further support the territory in improving Inuit economic participation. In the meantime, “the government doesn't have the capacity to have long-term planning” (N13), which is a symptom of an ineffective development and governance model according to the Harvard Project (Cornell & Kalt, 2007).

Effective and legitimate institutions are the vehicles through which a nation achieves its self-determined goals (Cornell & Kalt, 2007). Yet, several interviewees showed concern that the institutions in place to support the territory are not operating effectively and, in some cases, represent a hinderance to Inuit self-determination and economic participation. Since Nunavut is “such a new territory..., the institutions are new, and people are still finding their feet” (N3), and as a result, “there’re all sorts of institutional failings” (N3) in the Government of Nunavut. N9 described their experience as a GN employee: “You see a lot of waste and kind of nonsensical stuff going on and you kind of question whether or not that is enough to kind of justify more funding.” The legitimacy of the Government of Nunavut “is questioned from time to time” (N11) as well.

The main issues captured in the interview results related to the quality of employees in the Government of Nunavut, a lack of institutional memory, and technical barriers for Inuit-owned businesses. According to N7 when referring to the high number of transient employees in the GN, Nunavut is “generally managed by people who were not successful at managing people elsewhere.” Many of the employees are “fresh out of school” and “people who are making the decisions around here are not of a proper caliber for the decisions they are making” (N7). As a result of high turnover rates, the “GN in particular suffers from a lack of institutional memory and knowledge, and that is just because people leave and record keeping probably isn't how it should be.” In order to address this challenge, the GN should institute “standards of practice” (N7) that ensure that the knowledge and experience gained through an employee’s time with the GN is not lost. This is particularly important given the limited resources in the territory. In terms of barriers to Inuit-owned business development, N17 admitted that “there are policies that are harming business development,” and suggested “more program reforms on that front.” N17 provided a few examples: “If a business gets 500 000 dollars they need to give it away by March 31st. If they don't they might get less in the future.” “There are a lot of projects, especially government projects, preference will go to Inuit-owned firms...[Then] there are businesses that are joint venture or Inuit partnered, but the Inuk does not end up actually working and engaged in the business and that disempowers them.” Another example, provided by N13, demonstrates the institutional barriers that an Inuk carpenter may experience when attempting to establish a business:

“In some community, there is an Inuk man who is good at carpentry and he’s built a house for his family. He says to his wife: We should build a company and then bid on Nunavut Housing Corporation contracts. So he and his wife form this company. The tender document comes out—a

complex one is about 2,000 pages. Typically, even if... you have an Inuk man who is good at carpentry, his ability to read this contract and understand and then write a proposal that will get the government's attention for it is limited. You can give him some lumber and a bunch of tools and he will build you a house, but understanding all the legal gibberish in a 2,000-page contract? No. Nevertheless, he writes up a proposal and he hands it off to the Housing Corporation because he wants to win the contract to build these houses. Then, a firm that's either in Ottawa, or Winnipeg, or Toronto, who have engineers and lawyers and architects and accountants working for them, they also read this 2,000-page contract and they bid on it. Their bid is very polished... They win the contract. The formula used to give the Inuk bid an advantage—it doesn't compensate for these competing firms... So, the project evaluation officer notices some Section G was missing from the Inuk's submission, but it was required. They toss that proposal, and [the Inuk] didn't even understand Section G."

While the GN was criticized by both its employees and the ILCOs, N3, N9, and N11 emphasized the power of hamlet governments and community members in generating solutions to their specific challenges. According to N3, "a big part of [successful development] is facilitating and enabling municipal government to do a better job." Similarly, N11 felt that "there has been too much emphasis on central agencies to lead and to devise plans and that's part of the reason it's stagnated...[:] too much faith has been put in the ability of central agencies to do this." N7 agreed that "The GN is not in a great position to lead the territory." Considering the Nation Building Framework calls for locally-driven development, it seems that there needs to be a shift in thinking from a top-down development approach to the creation of bottom-up solutions for community challenges.

### 6.3.3 Legitimate Institutions

Inuit technically have the right to participate in decisions related to the environment, natural resources, and development as outlined in the NLCA. Technically,

the Nunavut Impact Review Board is supposed to provide “opportunities for nominees of Inuit organizations and the government to realize, together, policy decisions relating to particular sectors of the economy and environment” (Henderson, 2007, p. 33). One informant felt as though Inuit are not necessarily aware of the mechanisms available to them to voice their concerns around or approval of major development projects (N2). They can become a decision-maker in the regulatory regime, such as a board member on the Nunavut Impact Review Board, or make their views known through public consultation processes; however, the effectiveness of these processes in responding to community feedback has recently been called into question in the Supreme Court with the case of *Clyde River (Hamlet) v. Petroleum Geo-Services Inc* (SCC, 2017), as discussed in *Section 6.2* of this thesis. Inuit communities can also participate in decisions related to major development through the negotiation of IIBAs, which are a requirement for industry under Article 26 of the NLCA. According to a few informants, industry-community partnerships broadly have the potential to improve Inuit participation in Nunavut’s economy. If developers build “trust with governments and Inuit organizations [they] may have a real opportunity to change the direction [of Inuit socio-economic outcomes] and tackle some of these big issues in creative fashions” (N5).

#### 6.3.4 Strategic Thinking

The ultimate outcome that key informants wanted for Nunavut was “modern Inuit individuals capable of functioning in the wage economy but at the same time still practicing their culture” (N2). This balance implies a more wholistic perception of the factors that will lead to successful development in the territory. Informants stressed the importance of “balance” between economic growth and socio-cultural health. Informants

saw a successful economic future for Nunavut as one that embraces “traditional and emerging” (N1) opportunities on Inuit terms. Aside from government and mineral development opportunities, for example, some informants pointed to tourism as having the potential to “demonstrate the culture” and be an “innovative niche market” because Nunavut has “the extreme of everything” (N1). Another interviewee wanted to see an “abundance of Inuit language and culture” and the emergence of more “world-renowned Inuit artists and musicians” (N2). Another focus of potential economic diversification the informants pointed to was Inuit-owned businesses. For developers, an inclusive economy in Nunavut means “[doing] business in [the] territory on very clear terms and conditions” (N8) and “a real feel of partnership in developing... resources” (N5). In turn, communities would have “the capacity to monitor that and mitigate some of the impacts, whether they be positive or negative” because, as N8 acknowledged, this kind of control over development is “what empowers... communities.” Inclusive, self-determined community development in Nunavut was perhaps most appropriately described by N3, who imagined a Nunavut where “economic development that was in alignment and attuned with the wants and needs of specific communities, of each community.”

Given Nunavut’s geographic and environmental context, human and financial resources are “stretched” among its institutions. Key informants especially thought human resources were “the constraining variable” (N11), considering the high turnover rate. One interviewee did not think that the ILCOs and the GN have “really learned to work together to the extent that [they] could” and said, “there needs to be a bit more prioritization and better collaboration” (N2). Currently, “both the GN and the Inuit organizations do most of their thinking in isolation from each other” (N11). Since no one

organization has control over the development of the territory and there is a “big interplay” of federal government, territorial government, and ILCOs, “the determination to get to [a successful vision] is what the collaborative approach would take to get there” (N5). If both the ILCOs and the GN are working toward the same future for Nunavut, as is suggested through the key informant interviews, it logically follows that they should coordinate and collaborate their socio-economic efforts on behalf of Nunavummiut. This would lead to more effective implementation of programs and reduce resource waste.

### 6.3.5 Public-spirited Leadership

In line with the Nation Building Framework, some key informants emphasized the importance of both formal and informal leadership in attaining self-determined development. The ILCOs and the GN appear to have a clear vision for the territory in terms of Inuit economic participation and inclusive development, but “it needs leadership” (N11) and political will to be actualized. In part because of the education and training programs already in place, “a higher proportion of Inuit youth coming out of schools are becoming more self-aware” and “feel they have integrity” (N13), which should in turn result in stronger Inuit leaders who can inspire Nunavummiut to make change through the institutions and other mechanisms available to them.

N2 understood the importance of informal leadership in stating, “There’s a role here for individual people to play a leadership too in their own right, as well, to make positive change.” The participant also expressed that they would like to see “Inuit having a better land management system,” which can only be realized with, “stronger participation in the communities to make sure that everyone understands what the process is from start to finish.” At a practical level, N2 stressed that in order to fully participate in

the development of the territory, Inuit must “know what their rights are..., what the process is and know the tools to use if they have concerns about the development in their communities.” Inuit youth are the future leaders of the territory and if leadership capacity is encouraged “from a young age..., there's a strong sense of community and being and self-worth” (N12). In turn, evidence from the Harvard Project suggests that development outcomes will improve in the territory.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

The current and future challenges Nunavut faces are extremely complex and systemic, driven in part by injustices on behalf of colonizers. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement “doesn't solve everything but it is one of the mechanisms” (N13) that can support Inuit in actualizing their self-determined goals. According to some informants, the greatest resource Nunavut needs cannot be fabricated or purchased: time. “It’s going to take generations to actually change things” (N3) in Nunavut. As stated by N17, “some people are expecting changes too quickly. Some people think one month of training will make them set for the rest of their life. Or one policy change will fix everything” (p. 5). This chapter summarizes the theoretical contributions and areas for further research in support of an inclusive wage-labour economy in Nunavut.

### **7.1 Theoretical Contributions**

The theoretical contributions of this study relate to the type of information collected and the questions it raised about the Nation Building Framework. Firstly, using an adapted grounded theory methodology, this research examines the results of interviews with territorial and regional planners and decision-makers and presents a theory of what successful development looks like in Nunavut over the next fifty years. This study also examines Nunavut through the Harvard Project Nation Building Framework. It expands upon the work of Ritsema (2014), who argued the applicability of the Framework in a case study of the Mary River Mine in Pond Inlet (see also: Ritsema, *et al.*, 2015), by evaluating the visions provided by territorial and regional-level officials.

The Nation Building Framework was challenging to apply in Nunavut, for a few reasons. Firstly, the Framework includes implicit assumptions that are based on how

Western society has advanced, which may or may not align with the specific goals of Nunavummiut—for example, the very notion that development is “good” and that institutions are necessary to achieve this “good” development. While these assumptions are embedded in the operations of many nations (Begay, *et al.*, 2007), they may not resonate with Nunavummiut communities. This research cannot confirm this either way, due to the nature of the participants that were interviewed, whom were mostly white men. The geography of the territory and the decentralized nature of the institutions and organizations consulted also made it challenging to apply the Framework, given the Framework’s intended focus on local level, public-spirited leadership and the fact that there are 25, dispersed communities. Most of this study’s interviewees expressed that they rarely left Iqaluit, certainly not enough to deeply understand the leadership at the community level. This disconnection and the lack of local-level voices also made it difficult to determine whether Inuit at the local level or who are not in positions of power see the GN and ILCOs as legitimate. Another learning in the context of Nunavut is that the Framework might be better applied to a region where the government is wholly Indigenous. Being a public government, the GN is not designed in accordance with Inuit political culture and therefore, regardless of how effective or legitimate the institutions might seem, they may be working against the grain of the political society that local community members want for themselves.

## **7.2 Areas for Further Research**

Further research could be conducted in direct response to some of the limitations of this study. The nature of the participation in this study limited the dialogue to discussions of the wage economy, as opposed to development from a more holistic

perspective (i.e. including social, cultural, and environmental aspects). Further research should be conducted at a more local level to gain an understanding of what communities want for their futures, without the use of Western, normative terms like “development” and “employment.” Secondly, due to funding limitations, only a few Kivalliq voices and no Kitikmeot perspectives were included in this research. The Kivalliq respondents felt as though the Qikiqtaaluk region, and Iqaluit specifically, receives the majority of funding and economic opportunities; as a result, they expressed concern that Inuit in the other communities were disproportionately disadvantaged. To depict an accurate representation of what successful development looks like according to territorial and regional planners and decision-makers in Nunavut, officials from all three regions should be consulted. Furthermore, Nunavut’s governance structure is very complex – including federal, territorial, and hamlet-level governments, Inuit organizations, and various other stakeholders and agencies. Inuit helped to create the system of governance in Nunavut; however, it was created in the colonial, hierarchical tradition as opposed to traditional Inuit political culture (Henderson, 2007). This complexity and cultural mismatch could be problematic in that Inuit community members may be less likely to trust and use the institutions to fulfill their self-determined goals (Cornell & Kalt, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2000; Jorgensen & Taylor, 2000; Trosper, 1995; Ritsema, 2015). Further research is needed to understand the complexity and potential cultural mismatch, as this study emphasizes the importance of institutions to Inuit self-determination and economic participation. Above all else, it is also recommended that future research results in direct benefits for Inuit.

The process by which this research is conducted is equally as important as the results. It is critical that this research is led by Inuit and/or in partnership with Inuit. In

March, 2018, ITK published the *National Inuit Strategy on Research*, which outlines the importance of Inuit self-determination in research, the Inuit vision for research done in their homeland, and the steps and actions required to achieve this vision. It states that, “The primary benefactors of Inuit Nunangat research have for far too long been researchers themselves rather than Inuit families and communities” (p. 35). *Figure 9* illustrates the priority areas of the *Strategy*. Future research in Nunavut must advance these priorities, leading to research that is “efficacious, impactful, and useful for [Inuit] people and communities” (p. 35).

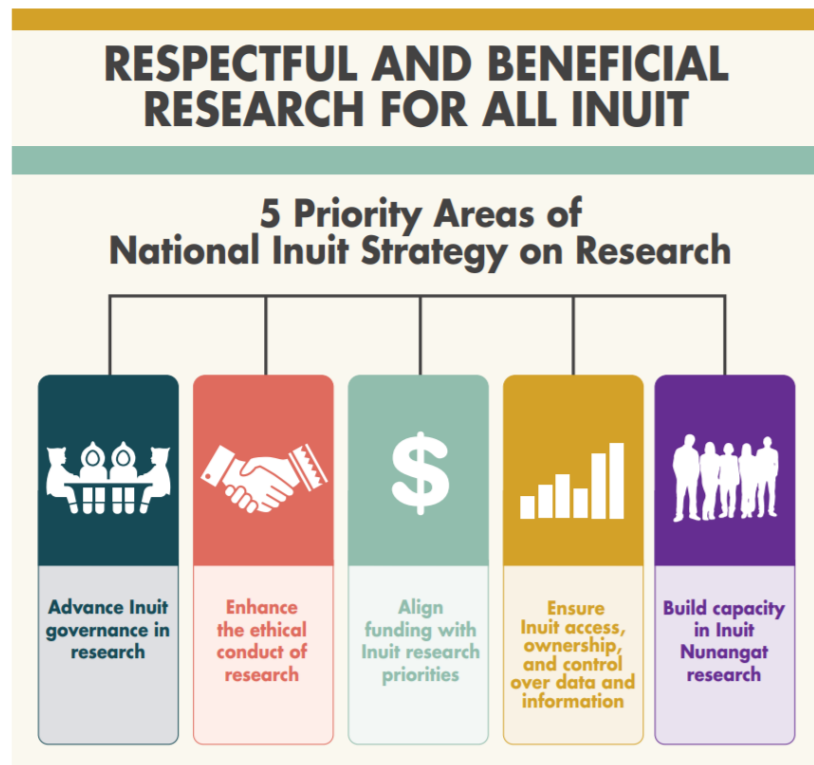


Figure 9: Priority areas of the National Inuit Strategy on Research (ITK, 2018)

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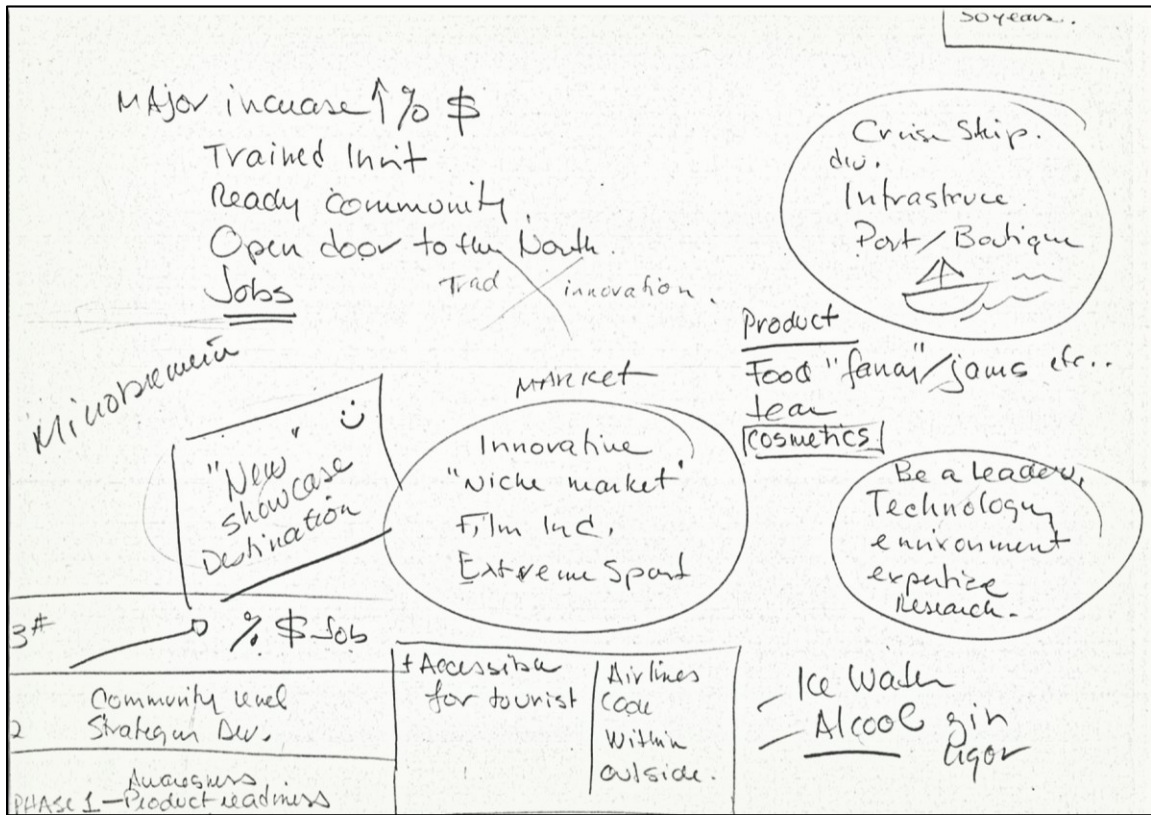
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# Appendix

Included in this appendix are the results of the visual elicitation exercise, Part 1 of the interviews with key informants from the ILCOs and the GN. Names and labels are not provided to protect the identities of the interviewees.



50 yrs or 2 generations

What would we like to see?

- Employment in balance with demand for cash economy goods + services
- More diverse economy
- Development of Infrastructure

Full Employment → Inuit trained appropriately  
& able to access jobs that are available

Smaller transient pop. → People are here to live rather than  
merry, here temporarily for jobs.

Econ devel aligned w/ want / needs of each community

Internet - fast & cheap.

Entrepreneur

Houses for all.

Road system - NHS

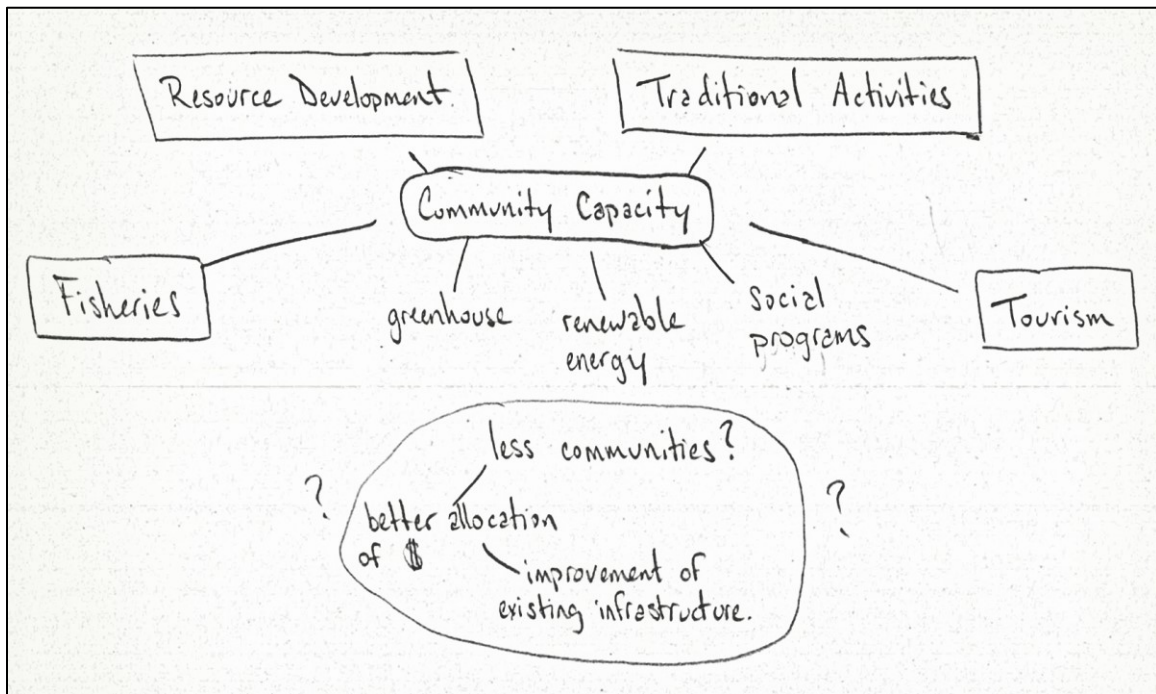
Communities

AIRPORTS -

MARINE -

HOSPITALS -

MENTAL



WHERE COMMUNICATION AND TRAVEL IS  
 READILY AVAILABLE!

- less communities → centralized into hubs

- infrastructure

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

4. 5. 10. 100