



# **Arctic and International Relations Series**

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## Québec Policy on the Arctic: Challenges and Perspectives



**JACKSON SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**  
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON  
Canadian Studies Center

**Canadian Studies Center**  
**Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies**  
**University of Washington, Seattle**



# Contents

## PREFACE / PRÉFACE

pg. 5

## INTRODUCTION

### **Development of a Québec Arctic Policy in Partnership with the Inuit of Nunavik**

Nadine C. Fabbi and Vincent F. Gallucci

pg. 9

pg. 9

## PART I: QUÉBEC–NUNAVIK RELATIONS IN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

pg. 13

### **Federated States in Circumpolar Affairs: A Northern Dimension to Québec's International Policy?**

Joël Plouffe

pg. 14

### **Arctic Québec, Geopolitics, and the Arctic Council**

Robert Bone

pg. 18

### **Nunavik and the Evolution of Inuit Self-Government in Canada and the Circumpolar North**

Gary N. Wilson

pg. 22

## PART II: INUIT POLICY

pg. 27

### **Servir les Nunavimmiuts : des politiques et programmes mieux adaptés à la réalité du Nunavik**

Thierry Rodon

pg. 28

### **Serving Nunavimmiut: Policies and Programs Adapted to the Reality of Nunavik**

Thierry Rodon

pg. 32

### **Heading South: Bringing Urban Inuit Migration into Northern Policy Debates**

Mark K. Watson

pg. 35

## PART III: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES

pg. 39

### **Stewardship and Sustainable Northern Development in the Context of Overlapping Land Claims Agreements in South-East Hudson Bay**

Joel P. Heath and Lucassie Arragutainaq

pg. 40

### **Inuit Language Policy and Education and the Plan Nord: Situating Inuit Policy for Inuit Futures**

Donna Patrick

pg. 46

### **Ensuring Country Food Access for a Food Secure Future in Nunavik**

Elspeth Ready

pg. 50

### **Changing Contexts and Roles of Regional Public Health Knowledge and Surveys in Nunavik**

Christopher Fletcher

pg. 55

### **Teen Pregnancy in Nunavik: More Nuance, Less Stigma**

Morna McEachern

pg. 60

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

pg. 65



# Preface

Québec is an important part of the circumpolar world. It is the only province in Canada that has a vast Arctic territory where approximately 16 percent of the world's Inuit reside. Québec is a leader in Arctic affairs both in Canada and globally and has a unique relationship with the Inuit of Nunavik (Nunavimmiut). The Québec–Nunavik relationship is a model for a dynamic relationship between a subnational government and an Indigenous region. It provides a model for Arctic nation-states, subnational regions, the Arctic Council, and the Arctic Indigenous–Qallunaat (outsider) relationship globally. In this report, scholars and practitioners discuss the Québec–Nunavik relationship, including its history; current economic, environmental and social challenges; and considerations for the future.

In May 2015, fifteen scholars from Québec, Canada, Australia, and the United States were invited by the Canadian Studies Center at the University of Washington to participate in an all-day workshop called Québec Policy on the Arctic: Challenges and Perspectives. Several of the participants wrote short reports that contribute to a new dialogue on a possible future Québec Arctic policy. The workshop and report were made possible thanks to funding from a Québec Unit Grant, Québec Department of International Relations, and a Title VI grant from the Office of Postsecondary Education, International Education Program Services, U.S. Department of Education.

The editors wish to thank the workshop participants for their time and dedication to the workshop and report. A special note of appreciation also goes to Fritz Wagner for serving as PI for the Québec Unit grant that supported the workshop; Donat Savoie, Chevalier of the Ordre National du Québec (2010) and former Chief Federal Negotiator for Nunavik, and Joanne Muzak, copyeditor, for their advice throughout this project; Helge Dascher and Mylène Proulx for translation; and Monick Keo and Christine Tabadero, Center staff, for their arrangements for the workshop.

A partnership between the Canadian Studies Center/Arctic and International Relations and the Future of Ice initiative at the University of Washington is dedicated to translating scholarship into policy options to enhance international cooperation in the Arctic and the inclusion of Arctic Indigenous peoples in decision making for the region. The Center and Future of Ice host ongoing workshops, symposia, and conferences and produce *Arctic and International Affairs* to address issues that challenge cooperation in the Arctic and suggest policy options for the future.

The Canadian Studies Center was established in 1987 as a U.S. Department of Education National Resource Center on Canada with the Center for Canadian-American Studies at Western Washington University. The Canadian Studies Center is the hosting unit for the Canada Fulbright Chair in Arctic Studies, and for the interdisciplinary minor in Arctic Studies, a partnership between the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies and the School of Oceanography.

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## Préface

Le Québec est une composante importante du monde circumpolaire. Cette province canadienne est la seule à receler un vaste territoire en zone arctique qui abrite environ 16 p. 100 de la population inuite mondiale. Le Québec est un leader en ce qui concerne les affaires de l'Arctique, tant au Canada que dans le monde, et la province entretient des liens particuliers avec les Inuits du Nunavik (les Nunavimmiuts). La relation entre le Québec et le Nunavik est un modèle de dynamisme établi entre un ordre de gouvernement infranational et une région autochtone. Elle est un exemple en ce qu'elle favorise globalement les liens entre les États souverains de l'Arctique, les régions infranationales, le Conseil de l'Arctique et les Qallunaat (étrangers). Dans ce rapport, des chercheurs et des praticiens explorent la relation entre le Québec et le Nunavik sur le plan de l'histoire, de l'économie actuelle, des défis à relever en matière d'environnement ou de société et des éléments à prendre en considération pour l'avenir.

En mai 2015, quinze chercheurs du Québec, du Canada, de l'Australie et des États-Unis ont été invités par le Centre d'études canadiennes de l'Université de Washington à participer à un atelier d'une journée intitulé *Stratégie du Québec à l'égard de l'Arctique : Enjeux et perspectives* (Québec Policy on the Arctic: Challenges and Perspectives). Plusieurs participants ont rédigé de brefs rapports qui contribuent au dialogue sur l'avènement possible d'une stratégie québécoise de l'Arctique façonnée. Cet atelier ainsi que le rapport qui a suivi ont été réalisés grâce à une aide financière du ministère des Relations internationales du Québec et à une subvention relevant du titre VI du Bureau de l'éducation postsecondaire des Services des études internationales du ministère de l'Éducation des États-Unis.

La rédaction remercie les participants pour leur temps et leur dévouement à l'égard de cet atelier et de son rapport. Un mot de remerciement tout particulier est destiné à Donat Savoie, Chevalier (2010) de l'Ordre national du Québec et ex-négociateur en chef pour le Nunavik, ainsi qu'à Joanne Muzak, réviseure, pour les conseils prodigués tout au long du projet. Merci également à Helge Dascher et Mylène Proulx pour la traduction et à Monick Keo et Christine Tabadero, du Centre d'études canadiennes, pour leur aide dans l'organisation de l'atelier.

Un partenariat entre le Centre d'études canadiennes et les initiatives Arctic and International Relations et Future of Ice de l'Université de Washington s'efforce de traduire des bourses d'études en options politiques en vue d'accroître la coopération internationale dans l'Arctique et l'inclusion des Autochtones de cette région dans les décisions qui la concernent. En plus d'organiser régulièrement des ateliers, des colloques et des congrès, le Centre et l'initiative Future of Ice publient les *Actes du colloque sur l'Arctique et les relations internationales* des obstacles à la collaboration dans l'Arctique et de proposer des pistes de solutions stratégiques pour l'avenir.

Le Centre d'études canadiennes, fondé en 1987, est un centre national de ressources sur le Canada qui relève du ministère de l'Éducation des États-Unis. Il est chapeauté par le Centre des études canado-américaines de l'Université Western Washington. Le Centre d'études canadiennes est l'hôte de la chaire de recherche sur l'Arctique Fulbright Canada et offre une mineure interdisciplinaire en études sur l'Arctique, fruit d'un partenariat entre l'École d'études internationales Henry M. Jackson et l'École d'océanographie.

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# Introduction

## Development of a Québec Arctic Policy in Partnership with the Inuit of Nunavik



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**// In the Arctic, and in countries across the globe, we cannot discuss resource development without also considering what its human impacts will be."**

– Sheila Watt-Cloutier, *The Right to Be Cold*<sup>1</sup>

**// Inuit are seeking to engage the Québec government in the development of new policies to support change. As Inuit with special rights and privileges set out in the JBNQA and then elaborated in subsequent agreements, they must also be afforded every possibility to protect and promote their culture and way of life and be provided with every opportunity to participate in the economy of the region."**

– Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*<sup>2</sup>

**// In the view of the Government of Québec, northern development must take place as a collaborative effort with local and Aboriginal communities."**

– Philippe Couillard, Premier of Québec<sup>3</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

In the first epigraph above, excerpted from her recent book *The Right to be Cold*, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Inuit leader from Kuujuaq, Nunavik, and 2015 laureate for the Right Livelihood Award, speaks out about the vital connection between development and human impacts. Following, quotations from the *Parnasimautik Consultation Report* and Québec Premier Couillard insist on the importance of collaboration between the province and Inuit if such discussions are to be successful. In Canada today, a dynamic policy dialogue is occurring between the province of Québec and Inuit of Nunavik that promises to be unique in the country and internationally.

<sup>1</sup> Sheila Watt-Cloutier, *The Right to Be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and the Whole Planet* (Toronto: Penguin Canada Books, 2015), 305.

<sup>2</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, November 14, 2014, 35, [http://www.makivik.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Parnasimautik-consultation-report-v2014\\_12\\_15-eng\\_vf.pdf](http://www.makivik.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Parnasimautik-consultation-report-v2014_12_15-eng_vf.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, "The Representatives of the Inuit of Nunavik Present the *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*," press release, August 20, 2015, para. 2, <http://www.plan-nord.gouv.qc.ca/en/august-19-2015/>.

In the fall of 2014, the Government of Québec relaunched its northern development plan – *Plan Nord* – committing to an ethical approach to development that is respectful of Indigenous communities. In response, the Nunavimmiut, the Inuit in Nunavik, launched an extensive report entitled *Parnasimautik* (“We are preparing”) that claims Québec is entering a new historic era that the Inuit will “shape and benefit from.”<sup>4</sup> In August 2015, the Inuit presented their report to the *Plan Nord* Ministerial Committee. The President of the Makivik Corporation, Jobie Tukkiapik, asserted that Inuit are ready to shape their vision into reality and that “governments and industry must be prepared to commit and act as true partners.”<sup>5</sup> The Québec Premier responded by assuring the Inuit that “northern development must take place as a collaborative effort with local and Aboriginal communities.”<sup>6</sup> The question remains, how will the Government of Québec proceed with the implementation of *Plan Nord* given the subsequent goals identified by the Inuit? And, what will the role of the Nunavimmiut be, particularly now that there is a comprehensive Inuit vision for the region?

Québec is currently the only subnational jurisdiction where the government and Arctic Indigenous peoples are engaged in a dynamic policy dialogue concerning the Arctic. Although the goals of the two entities diverge in significant ways, the fact that a dynamic policy dialogue exists between a regional government and an Indigenous people is unique and worthy of closer analysis. What does the Québec–Nunavik relationship tell us about Arctic Indigenous involvement and influence in subnational politics? How can this policy dialogue shed light on, or even create a model for Indigenous internationalism and international relations in the circumpolar world broadly speaking? Finally, is it possible for the Government of Québec to go the next step and develop a truly integrated Arctic policy in collaboration with the Nunavimmiut?

In May 2015, the Canadian Studies Center in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington hosted a team of scholars to discuss the Québec–Nunavik relationship – its challenges and opportunities. Special guest Donat Savoie, former Chief Federal Negotiator for Nunavik and awardee of the Ordre national du Québec (2010) for his work in Nunavik, urged that Québec was perfectly positioned to consider and take on the challenge developing an integrated Arctic policy in collaboration with the Inuit of Nunavik. While this report does not directly suggest how such a policy might be developed or what it would include, the authors hope that the report begins a dialogue on an integrated Arctic policy for Québec. The following articles address the history of the Québec–Nunavik relationship, where this relationship fits into the Canadian and international context, and some of the key issues facing the Nunavimmiut today, including the impact of resource development, food security, education, health and social services, and challenges for Nunavimmiut living in urban centers. It is our hope that this report highlights some of the important aspects of the Québec–Nunavik relationship while providing insights into future policy development.

## BACKGROUND

Nunavik comprises fully one-third of the landmass of the entire province with a population of about twelve thousand (in a province of over eight million). The northern region is important economically. It produces three-quarters of Québec’s hydro and provides the majority of the province’s nickel, zinc, iron ore, and much of its gold. In 1975, the Cree, Inuit, and Québec government signed the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) to resolve disputes over hydroelectric development in the North. The JBNQA gave the Government of Québec the right to develop hydroelectric projects in exchange for title to territory, compensation monies for the lands and resources, and

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<sup>4</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, 185.

<sup>5</sup> Makivik Corporation, “*Parnasimautik* Consultation Report to the *Plan Nord* Ministerial Committee in Quebec City,” press release, August 25, 2015, para. 4, <http://www.makivik.org/parnasimautik-consultation-report-to-the-plan-nord-ministerial-committee-in-quebec-city/>.

<sup>6</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, “The Representatives of the Inuit of Nunavik Present the *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*,” para. 2.

self-governance for the Indigenous peoples. It is the first modern-day land claim in Canada. It was also a turning point in government–Indigenous legal relations in Canada.

In 1973, after extensive hearings involving 150 witnesses, Judge Malouf of the Superior Court of Québec handed down a landmark ruling that temporarily suspended all hydroelectric development in Northern Québec. The reasoning behind his ruling would change the way governments in Canada dealt with Indigenous peoples. He noted that Indigenous peoples had been in possessions of the lands in question from time immemorial and that their rights had never been extinguished. Malouf argued that the Government of Québec was obliged to recognize Indigenous rights and title to territory as outlined in the Québec Boundaries Extension Act of 1912. Billy Diamond, Cree Chief and key witness, considered Malouf’s ruling one of the most “significant judgments on aboriginal rights in modern times.”<sup>7</sup> As a consequence, the JBNQA became a turning point in government attitudes toward Indigenous rights.<sup>8</sup>

Pursuant to the JBNQA, the Inuit created the Makivik Corporation in 1978 – a legal entity designed to receive and administer compensation monies, oversee the implementation of the agreement, and ensure its integrity.

Since the signing of the JBNQA, the Government of Québec and the Makivik Corporation have signed the Sanarrutik Agreement (2002) to establish a nation-to-nation relationship concerning economic and community development as well as the Sivunirmut Agreement (2004) to “consolidate the relationship and seal a commitment to more adequate funding.”<sup>9</sup> The Government of Québec has noted that these two agreements mark the beginning of a new partnership with the Inuit and one that has international implications. In a commentary in the *2013 Arctic Yearbook*, the Government of Québec remarks, “These two agreements marked the start of a new era of partnership focused on creating wealth in Nunavik through a sustainable approach in harmony with Inuit culture.”<sup>10</sup> Finally, in 2014, the Government of Québec and now the Inuit of Nunavik have drafted parallel plans/reports.

In fall 2014, the Government of Québec released *Plan Nord*, which focused primarily on development. The Premier initially promised that the new version of *Plan Nord* would be “harmonious, ethical and respectful of the local and aboriginal communities.”<sup>11</sup> However, there was considerable concern that this would not be the case, and therefore the Inuit began to prepare their own report.



Used with the permission courtesy of the Makivik Corporation.

<sup>7</sup> Billy Diamond, “Aboriginal Rights: The James Bay Experience,” in *The Quest for Justice: Aboriginal Peoples and Aboriginal Rights*, ed.

<sup>8</sup> Marc-Adélaire Tremblay and Jules Dufour, “The Long Walk of Aboriginal Peoples: Achieving Rights, Freedom, and Self-Determination (1950–2005),” in *Power Struggles: Hydro Development and First Nations in Manitoba and Quebec*, ed. Martin Thibault and Steven M. Hoffman (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008), 75–94.

<sup>9</sup> Government of Québec, “The North and the Arctic: Québec’s Interest and Actions,” in *2013 Arctic Yearbook*, ed. Lassi Heininen (Akureyri, Iceland: Arctic Portal, 2012), para. 6, <http://www.arcticyearbook.com/index.php/2013-10-11-09-09-56>.

<sup>10</sup> Government of Québec, “The North and the Arctic,” para. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, Secrétariat au *Plan Nord*, *The Plan Nord toward 2035, 2015–2020 Action Plan*, accessed October 3, 2015, [http://plannord.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Synthese\\_PN\\_EN\\_IMP.pdf](http://plannord.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Synthese_PN_EN_IMP.pdf).

In response to the anticipated release of *Plan Nord*, and the growing international demand for northern natural resources, the Nunavimmiut worked to ensure their voices would be heard in future Québec–Nunavik negotiations on resource development. To this end, the Makivik Corporation undertook an extensive consultation process throughout 2013, including workshops and community discussions in all fourteen Nunavik communities, to establish a “blueprint for the region’s well-being and set the conditions for renewal.”<sup>12</sup> This was apparently the “most comprehensive community consultation ever carried out in the history of Nunavik.”<sup>13</sup> In November 2014, the Nunavimmiut released the *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, which describes the goals of the Inuit and establishes a basis for self-governance.

Following the release of *Parnasimautik*, in spring 2015, the Inuit of Nunavik drafted their first declaration to promote and protect the Nunavimmiut into the future. On March 26, 2015, the Nunavimmiut adopted the *Nunavik Inuit Declaration* at the annual general meeting of the Makivik Corporation in Kuujuaq, Nunavik. The *Nunavik Inuit Declaration* was drafted from the findings of *Parnasimautik*. The primary vision of the *Declaration* is to protect the language and culture of the Nunavimmiut and to increase Inuit autonomy. What the Inuit of Nunavik have accomplished is very similar to that of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). ICC has now drafted two declarations that serve as foreign policy for the Inuit and that have significantly enhanced the goals of the Inuit in international relations.<sup>14</sup> The *Nunavik Inuit Declaration* arguably serves as domestic policy for the Inuit furthering Inuit self-determination and enhancing the voice and interests of the Inuit with the Government of Québec.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

With the recent release of *Plan Nord*, *Parnasimautik*, and the *Nunavik Inuit Declaration*, the policy realm in Québec is rich in clearly articulated government and Indigenous visions for the Arctic. As outside interest in Arctic resources grows, the pressure to resolve development plans and socioeconomic issues will only increase in the province. Québec currently has a window of opportunity to work toward an integrated Arctic strategy and one that is developed in full collaboration and partnership with the Inuit of Nunavik. In *Parnasimautik*’s opening message, the core group of participating units affirms that this report will serve to renew the Nunavik relationship with “the governments of Québec and Canada, and industrial developers.”<sup>15</sup> A renewed relationship between the Inuit of Nunavik and Government of Québec could begin with a jointly developed and drafted Arctic policy. Such a policy would go beyond development issues and could be a model for nation-states, subnational regions, and Arctic Indigenous peoples globally. A jointly drafted policy would raise the visibility of Québec’s role in the Arctic internationally and strengthen the Inuit voice and interests at home and on the world stage.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank Barry Pottle for his insights concerning an earlier draft of this report.

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<sup>12</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Makivik Corporation, “*Parnasimautik Consultation Report* to the *Plan Nord* Ministerial Committee in Quebec City,” press release, para. 1.

<sup>14</sup> In my chapter “Inuit Foreign Policy and International Relations in the Arctic,” in *Handbook of the Politics of the Arctic*, ed. Leif Christian Jensen and Geir Hønneland (Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015), 482–500, I argue that *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic* (2009) and *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat* (2011) serve as foreign policy for the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

<sup>15</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, 2.



# **Part I: Québec–Nunavik Relations in Domestic and International Context**



# Federated States in Circumpolar Affairs: A Northern Dimension to Québec's International Policy?

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**// We are part of a vast northern [or Nordic] community that has only begun to work together."**

**– Philippe Couillard, Premier of Québec, Arctic Circle Assembly, October 2015**

## SUMMARY

Since launching *Plan Nord* in 2011, Québec has become more assertive on the international stage in order to attract foreign capital for economic development projects in Northern Québec. The steps it has taken to promote *Plan Nord* have also allowed Québec to expand its ties with many state and non-governmental stakeholders in the circumpolar world. Since Philippe Couillard's election as premier, Québec has, through the Department of International Relations and *Plan Nord*, clearly been establishing closer relations with a region of the world in which previous governments traditionally showed little interest. This report aims to put into perspective the public diplomacy process that has led Québec to forge new ties with the Republic of Iceland and the Euro-Arctic world. If Québec is now more interested in the Arctic world, when did this shift occur, and what are its implications for Québec's new international policy, to be unveiled in 2017, whose traditional pillars are the United States and la Francophonie? Is Québec seeking to integrate a Nordic dimension into its international policy?

## RÉSUMÉ

Depuis son lancement en 2011, le *Plan Nord* amène le Québec à s'affirmer davantage sur la scène internationale afin d'attirer des capitaux étrangers vers des projets de développement économique dans le Nord du Québec. En même temps, la démarche autour de la promotion du *Plan Nord* a aussi permis au Québec d'élargir ses relations avec plusieurs acteurs étatiques et non gouvernementaux du monde circumpolaire. Ainsi, depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir de Philippe Couillard, force est de constater que le Québec, par l'entremise de son ministère des Relations internationales et son *Plan Nord*, se rapproche davantage d'une région du monde envers laquelle ses prédécesseurs portaient peu d'intérêt traditionnellement. Cette étude cherche ainsi à mettre en perspective le processus de diplomatie publique qui a incité le Québec à tisser de nouvelles relations avec la République d'Islande et le monde euro-arctique. Si le Québec s'intéresse davantage au monde arctique, à quel moment ce virage s'est-il dessiné ? Que signifie-t-il pour la nouvelle politique internationale du Québec qui sera dévoilée en 2017 dont les principaux piliers traditionnels sont les États-Unis et la Francophonie? Le Québec cherche-t-il à intégrer une dimension nordique à sa politique internationale?

## INTRODUCTION

In early October 2015, at the third meeting of the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavík, Iceland, Alice Rogoff, Alaskan chair of the Assembly's Advisory Board and publisher of the Alaska Dispatch, remarked that Alaska and Québec "have

a great deal in common in that we think that we have special relations with the Arctic that our nations do not representatively share with the same intensity.” In her view, Québec is a “formidable leader,” who, like Alaska and other subnational actors of the circumpolar world, has a “desire to forge its own policy regarding Arctic affairs.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Québec has been doing just that over the last few years: crafting a northern dimension to its international policy, which was established fifty years ago by the Gérin-Lajoie Doctrine.

Traditionally, Québec governments have looked away from continental Arctic affairs and the circumpolar North as a zone of interest and influence for Québec’s *politique internationale*. Until recently,<sup>2</sup> Québec refrained from even addressing national Arctic affairs formally, considering the Arctic, in Canadian federal jurisdictional and foreign policy terms, outside of Québec’s area of competencies – even though, geographically and culturally, Québec is a northern place with a large chunk of its territory, Nunavik, lying within the Arctic circle.

This report argues that a northern dimension to Québec’s international policy has emerged and could become a third pillar of its international policy, joining the United States and la Francophonie (the French world) as the first and second pillars, respectively. The report explores how Québec’s *Plan Nord* has become a political driver and facilitator of this process. Given that *Plan Nord* was arguably intended for global investors with an interest in investing in Québec’s domestic northern development, how and when did the Plan develop as a lever for international (circumpolar) public diplomacy?

## QUÉBEC’S INTERNATIONAL POLICY

As a federated state, Québec exercises its internal areas of competencies outside its provincial borders and is “probably the most advanced case of international involvement for a non-sovereign state.”<sup>3</sup> Established in 1967, the Ministère des relations internationales du Québec et de la Francophonie (Québec’s Department of International Relations, or MRIF) develops and implements Québec’s international policy. While the name and scope of the department has changed over the years, its international policy has remained coherent with the line of thought and structure for international relations offered by the Gérin-Lajoie Doctrine of 1965, which established the principle that “Québec is responsible for the international extension of its domestic areas of jurisdiction.”<sup>4</sup> Through the MRIF and its international policy, Québec has institutionalized its own approach to public diplomacy, while respecting the federal government’s exclusive areas of competencies, and cooperating with Ottawa when competencies and/or interests overlap.<sup>5</sup>

## QUÉBEC TURNS NORTH

Since taking office in 2014, the Liberal government of Philippe Couillard has undertaken a number of initiatives to promote its interests as an Arctic actor, with a particular focus on the Euro-Arctic region (BEAR) via the Nordic Council of Ministers (Norden), and Iceland.<sup>6</sup> This interest in northern affairs was arguably ignited and later sustained by what is widely known as former Québec Premier Jean Charest’s *Plan Nord, Building Northern Québec Together: The Project of a Generation*. While the guiding principles of *Plan Nord* were first presented in 2009, the Charest government released

<sup>1</sup> Arctic Circle, video of Premier Philippe Couillard’s Arctic Circle Statement, October 16–18, 2015, <http://arcticcircle.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Ryan Hicks, “Quebec Calls For ‘Urgent’ Extension Of Northern Border,” *CBC News*, October 8, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-calls-for-urgent-extension-of-northern-border-1.3261668>.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Balthazar, “The Québec Experience: Success or Failure?,” *Regional and Federal Studies* 9, no. 1 (1999): 153.

<sup>4</sup> Hugo Cyr, *Canadian Federalism and Treaty Powers – Organic Constitutionalism at Work* (Brussels: P.I.E./Peter Lang, 2009), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Lucas McMillan, *The Involvement of State Governments in US Foreign Relations* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 93.

<sup>6</sup> The Nordic states are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Nordics (as a political area) include associated territories, which are Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the Åland Islands.

its official Plan in 2011, which sought to articulate “a shared vision that [could] be implemented collaboratively and would ensure community well-being and development,” as well as a plan over twenty-five years (and with C\$80 billion in investments) “to harness the economic potential of the region, improving accessibility through transportation and communications, protecting the environment, and presenting a financial framework for investment.”<sup>7</sup> In April 2015, Premier Couillard relaunched a modified *Plan Nord* toward 2035, which is being promoted abroad by the MRIF through “a broad, sustained and original international campaign.”<sup>8</sup>

## BRANDING QUÉBEC’S NORDICITY GLOBALLY

In 2011, Québec’s then Premier Jean Charest embarked on a world tour to promote his *Plan Nord* and attract global capital for economic development of Northern Québec.<sup>9</sup> Premier Charest brought images, ideas, and narratives of its nordicity to various parts of the world where interests in mining opportunities were strongest. Premier Charest’s world tour not only promoted Québec as a northern economic frontier, it also branded Québec as a northern actor that has vested interests in the (changing) circumpolar region.

## QUÉBEC AS A NORTHERN ACTOR

In 2010, Québec decided to join the Northern Forum, an international organization established in 1991 that enjoys observer status at the Arctic Council – a high-level forum established in 1996 to promote state-to-state collaboration on environmental protection and sustainable development. The Northern Forum is composed of subnational and regional governments from northern countries that have particular northern traits that set them apart from other regions of the globe. Although Québec chose to leave that organization in 2012, it transferred its attention (and public diplomacy resources) toward the Nordic countries. This shift towards the Euro-Arctic led to the signing of a declaration of intent with the Nordic Council of Ministers (Norden) in 2013. The declaration between Québec and Norden asserts that both actors – a federated state and a regional grouping of sovereign states – will seek closer collaboration for responsible northern development, knowledge sharing on mutual northern policies, (renewable) energy supplies in northern environments, and scientific research and innovation.

While this historical declaration of intent can be seen as an innovative tool for knowledge sharing between two particular geographical areas of the circumpolar world, it is also reflective of the Québec government’s willingness to (institutionally) identify with the Euro-Arctic. Both actors reaffirmed their interest to pursue their cooperation through the joint organization of a major symposium on sustainable and northern development in Québec City in February 2015. As a result of that meeting, the research council of Québec (FRQSC) and its new Nordic partner, NordForsk, signed a memorandum of understanding in October 2015 that seeks to foster stronger bilateral relations between both actors on northern scientific research.

## SEEKING LEADERSHIP

The Government of Québec has also recently reinforced its approach towards the circumpolar North through the Arctic Circle Assembly (AC) in Iceland. The AC, founded in 2013 by President Grímsson of Iceland, was established as a platform for different Arctic and non-Arctic actors “to increase participation in Arctic dialogue and strengthen the

<sup>8</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, Secrétariat au *Plan Nord*, *The Plan Nord toward 2035, 2015–2020 Action Plan*, accessed October 3, 2015, [http://plannord.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Synthese\\_PN\\_EN\\_IMP.pdf](http://plannord.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Synthese_PN_EN_IMP.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Jocelyne Richer, “Les tours du monde de Jean Charest,” *L’Actualité*, July 11, 2011, <http://www.lactualite.com/actualites/politique/les-tours-du-monde-de-jean-charest/>.

<sup>10</sup> “About,” Arctic Circle Assembly, accessed October 29, 2015, <http://arcticcircle.org/about>.





international focus on the future of the Arctic.”<sup>10</sup> Québec has invested significant resources to be present and heard at this forum and also promote *Plan Nord* and reinforce its identity as an Arctic federated state. Indeed, in 2014 and 2015, Premier Couillard – alongside other heads of state – has led two Québec governmental delegations to the AC in Reykjavík to promote its *Plan Nord*. The premier has decided to take advantage of this international forum to reveal Québec’s future Arctic policy priorities. In 2014, he announced the creation of the Institut Nordique du Québec (Québec’s Northern Institute), a research center that will seek to become “a major factor of attraction for the best talent on the scientific and technological level and a source of social innovation” in circumpolar affairs.<sup>11</sup> Through its international policy, Québec is reinforcing its image as a leader in Arctic science.

During his second visit to AC in 2015, Premier Couillard announced that he has agreed with President Grímsson of Iceland to host future AC “forums” in Québec (i.e., smaller regional AC meetings outside Iceland). The first one will take place in Québec City in March 2016. The *raison d’être* of such a forum is to reunite various state and non-governmental actors in the eastern part of North America to discuss common (geographical, social, scientific, and economical) Arctic-related concerns and opportunities. Québec has therefore found its strategic platform for playing a significant role in circumpolar affairs, which could have implications for its updated international policy to be released in 2017. Indeed, as of 2015, the Premier of Québec has been named a member of the AC Honorary Board, and the MRIF is also member to the AC Advisory Board.

For Premier Couillard, the AC – unlike the Northern Forum – appears to be more attractive for Québec’s international policy. As a high-level, Arctic-specific venue for governmental and non-governmental actors, AC seems to provide Québec with a regional and global voice. Premier Couillard’s international approach on Arctic affairs is different than his Liberal Party predecessor Jean Charest’s approach in that he has focused specifically on developing Arctic relations as part of the *Plan Nord*. Although he has embarked on a tour to promote the Plan abroad, he has also brought Québec closer to various circumpolar actors and stakeholders on different issues and levels, from climate change to economic development and scientific research; all of these competencies fall under Québec’s jurisdiction and therefore do not compete with Ottawa’s foreign policy areas of intervention.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Québec has added the Arctic to its international policy’s area of interest. Following the AC in Iceland in 2015, Premier Couillard invited fourteen ambassadors and consuls from EU and non-EU states to visit Québec’s North for two days, accompanied by Québec’s Minister of International Relations. This is another testimony of the Québec government’s attempt to promote its nordicity to foreign stakeholders who, arguably since the launch of *Plan Nord* in 2011, are attracted to Québec as a northern place (economically, scientifically, and culturally).

In a short time, Québec has forged its Arctic identity through *Plan Nord*. It has used the global climate change and economic narratives and contexts to shift its attention North and draw attention to Québec’s northern and Arctic interests. Consequently, it has also realized that it has a role as an Arctic federated state to try to influence Arctic governance. While all of this is recent, and while we await the updated international policy that is said to be released in 2017, there is reason to believe that Québec is seeking to make the circumpolar North a third pillar to its public di-

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<sup>7</sup> David F. Brown and Ginette Lamontagne, “What’s Next for Québec’s Northern Frontier?” *Planning* (August/September 2012), 24.

<sup>11</sup> “Québec to Launch New Northern Research Center,” *Nunatsiaq News*, October 28, 2014, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674quebec\\_to\\_launch\\_new\\_northern\\_research\\_centre/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674quebec_to_launch_new_northern_research_centre/).

plomacy. As Premier Couillard said at AC in 2015, and as is consistent with Québec's international policy, in a changing Arctic, "all governments can act."

Conversely, Québec has also chosen to focus all of its attention toward the AC as an ultimate area of influence. This platform is certainly an attractive forum in that it draws attention to Québec as an actor in the region. But further questions need to be asked regarding Québec's intention to narrow its scope to this forum and the Euro-Arctic. While these initiatives should be recognized as practical policy orientations that do benefit Québec, it remains that Québec's disengagement from the Northern Forum (and its related northern-focused issues and subnational actors), and the absence of any rapprochement with the Canadian provinces and territories to work together on a common approach to influence Canada's (foreign) Arctic policy, represents a gray zone in its Arctic policy. Québec's circumpolar approach should be circumpolar focused, not only Euro-Arctic centered. Regionally, Québec has much to contribute to the North American Arctic while making this region a stronger actor in international affairs. A rapprochement could also be made with other American Arctic subnational actors. International relations with Arctic areas northeast of Québec (including Alaska and Russia) should not be undermined but rather reinforced as these regions of the circumpolar world share similar cultural, social, and economic traits with Québec and its North. These concerns should be addressed in Québec's updated 2017 international policy.

# Arctic Québec, Geopolitics, and the Arctic Council

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## SUMMARY

Nunavik, which comprises the northern third of the province of Québec, and its people are a key component of the Canadian Arctic. Yet Québec does not have a presence at the Arctic Council. Given the large number of Inuit residing in Arctic Québec, plus the geographic size of Arctic Québec, there is a strong geopolitical argument for Québec to have a place at the table. Discussions with the federal government might open the door to a more substantial role for the province in Arctic international affairs as expressed by the Arctic Council. One possibility is Observer Status, while the other would be to ensure that the Inuit Circumpolar Council represents Nunavimmiut's views at the various hearings of the Arctic Council.

## RÉSUMÉ

Le Nunavik, qui couvre le tiers du Nord du Québec, et ses habitants sont une composante essentielle de l'Arctique canadien. Malgré tout, le Québec ne siège pas au Conseil de l'Arctique. Sur le plan géopolitique, le grand nombre d'Inuits vivant dans la région arctique du Québec de même que l'envergure géographique de cette région constituent un solide argument en faveur de la présence du Québec au Conseil. Des échanges avec le gouvernement fédéral pourraient ouvrir la voie à un rôle plus significatif du Québec dans la sphère des affaires internationales de l'Arctique comme l'a exprimé le Conseil. Le Québec pourrait agir en tant qu'observateur ou avoir un statut lui assurant que le Conseil circumpolaire inuit représente le point de vue des Nunavimmiuts aux différentes audiences du Conseil de l'Arctique.

## BACKGROUND

Nunavik, which comprises the northern third of the province of Québec, and its people are a key component of the Canadian Arctic. Yet Québec does not have a presence at the Arctic Council. The problem here is that Québec's geography and political boundaries are mismatched.

The large number of Inuit in Arctic Québec is another part of the picture. As Mary Simon, who was born in Arctic Québec and who has represented Canada and its Inuit peoples at international events, remarked at a 2009 conference called Our Arctic, Our Canada,

**Government of Canada policy for the Arctic must be built around the idea of a core partnership relationship with Inuit. The need for partnership with Inuit is even more compelling in the domestic policy context and this partnership must be more than tokenism or lip service. Any Arctic strategy worth pursuing must put working with Inuit at its heart, not at the periphery.<sup>1</sup>**

In short, Simon's statement forms the basis of a geopolitical argument for Québec to have a place at the table.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Simon, "Symons Lecture on the State of Canadian Confederation," presented at Our Arctic, Our Canada conference, November 3, 2009, PEI, <https://www.itk.ca/media/speech/symons-lecture-state-canadian-confederation-our-arctic-our-canada-tuesday-november-3>.

## KEY ISSUE: THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

Canada played a key role in the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996. The Council serves as a means of expressing Canada's foreign policy in the Arctic.

Back in the 1980s, Mary Simon, as first Canadian Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs, took a lead role in pressing the eight Arctic countries to support the formation of the Arctic Council and to create space in that organization for the active participation of Indigenous peoples. Canada's second term as chair took place from 2013 to 2015 under the direction of Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Arctic Council.<sup>2</sup>

The Council's key outcomes during Canada's two-year term as chair included

- setting a course to more consistently use traditional and local knowledge of Arctic communities in the work of the Council;
- sharing best practices to improve mental wellness, particularly among youth, for the benefit of Arctic communities;
- creating the Arctic Economic Council to promote business, trade, and investment opportunities in the region;
- developing a framework for action to help reduce climate pollutants, such as black carbon and methane; and,
- developing an action plan to prevent marine oil pollution in the Arctic.<sup>3</sup>

While the federal government concentrates its efforts on the three territories, a large part of Canada's Arctic is left on the outside looking in at the affairs of the Arctic Council. What are the obstacles to Québec having a place at the table of the Arctic Council?

First of all, membership of permanent members is restricted to sovereign states. The Ottawa Declaration lists the following countries as members of the Arctic Council: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States.<sup>4</sup>

However, categories of non-sovereign memberships exist, including Observer Status and Permanent Participants.<sup>5</sup> The six organizations that represent Arctic Indigenous peoples have status on the Council as Permanent Participants. This category was created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic Indigenous peoples within the Council. These six groups include the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Saami Council.<sup>6</sup>

Observer Status and Permanent Participant categories open the door for other forms of membership for non-sovereign states, including a province of Canada with such a large area of the Arctic and a large proportion of the Inuit population.

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<sup>2</sup> Canada's Arctic Council Chairmanship," Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, last modified September 16, 2015. <http://www.international.gc.ca/arctic-arctique/chairmanship-presidence.aspx?lang=eng>.

<sup>3</sup> "Canada's Northern Strategy," Canada, last modified May 13, 2015, <http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> "Member States," Arctic Council, last updated September 10, 2015, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/member-states>.

<sup>5</sup> Twelve non-Arctic countries have Observer Status on the Arctic Council: France, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom, People's Republic of China, Italian Republic, State of Japan, Republic of Korea, Republic of Singapore, Republic of India. See "Observers," Arctic Council, last updated September 16, 2015, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/arctic-council/observers>.

<sup>6</sup> "Permanent Participants," Arctic Council, last updated September 10, 2015, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/permanent-participants>.

and Arctic people, the Nunavut  
become an important internation-  
a nickel mine in Arctic Québec  
the Arctic Council.

Climate change adds another dimension to the case. The Northwest Passage may become an important international marine route affecting Arctic Québec. In 2014, a cargo ship transported ore from a nickel mine in Arctic Québec through the Northwest Passage to China. China, by the way, has Observer Status at the Arctic Council.

A map of Nunavut, a territory in northern Canada. The map shows the coastline of Nunavut, which is shaded in purple. It is bordered by the Hudson Bay to the west, the Ungava Bay to the north, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the east. The map includes latitude and longitude lines. Major cities and towns are marked with orange dots and labeled: Inuvik, Repulse, Etah, Kugluktuk, Repulse, Etah, Kugluktuk, Repulse, Etah, Kugluktuk, Repulse, Etah. The map also shows the names of the surrounding bodies of water: Hudson Bay, Ungava Bay, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The names of the provinces and territories are also shown: Q U E B E C, O N T A R I O, and N U N A V U T.

**Nunavik map 1997. Used with the permission courtesy of the Makivik Corporation.**

## WAY FORWARD

Two possibilities are: (1) ensuring that the Nunavimmiut's views are represented at the Arctic Council meetings by the representative of the Inuit Circumpolar Council. (One possibility is for consultations with the Nunavimmiut prior to Arctic Council meetings by Canadian members of ICC); and (2) giving Québec Observer Status. As explained on the Arctic Council's website, Observer Status is open to "inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, global and regional";<sup>9</sup> this qualification opens the door for Québec to apply for Observer Status.

Discussions with the federal government might well explore these two options and, if successful, would allow a more substantial role for the province in Arctic international affairs as expressed by the Arctic Council.

<sup>8</sup> Gérard Duhaime, André Caron, and Sébastien Lévesque, Table 1.2, "Population, Area and Economy," in Nunavik in Figures 2015: Pocket Edition (Québec City: Nunavik Statistics Program, 2015), <http://www.chaireconditionautochtone.fss.ulaval.ca/documents/pdf/Nunavik-en-chiffres-vf-eng.pdf>; Duhaime, Caron, and Lévesque, Table 2.1, "Population by Community, 2001, 2006, and 2011," in Nunavik in Figures 2015.

<sup>9</sup> "Observers." Arctic Council, last updated September 16, 2015. <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/arctic-council/observers>.

# Nunavik and the Evolution of Inuit Self-Government in Canada and the Circumpolar North

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## SUMMARY

Over the last four decades, the region of Nunavik has been at the forefront of political change in the Canadian and circumpolar Arctic. As one of the signatories to the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975, the Nunavimmiut (Inuit of Nunavik) broke new ground in the development of Indigenous–state relations in Québec and Canada. Since 1975, Nunavik has evolved as a region within Québec, developing capacity and emerging as a model for other Indigenous peoples in the province and throughout Canada.

While the emergence of Nunavik as a nested region within Québec has garnered much interest, it is also important to situate developments in this region within a broader context of change that has been taking place throughout the Inuit regions of Canada and the circumpolar North. The Inuit political community to which Nunavik belongs spans four countries and includes a variety of governance models. It is connected by national organizations such as the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and international organizations such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

Despite the difficult challenges associated with governance and development in a northern and remote region, Nunavik occupies an important place in this broader multilevel context. As the region and its people look to the future, it can draw on its experiences and connections to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead.

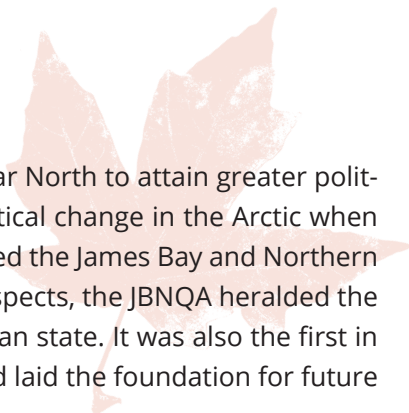
## RÉSUMÉ

Au cours des quatre dernières décennies, la région du Nunavik a été aux premières lignes des changements politiques dans la région Arctique canadienne et circumpolaire. À titre de signataires de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois en 1975, les Nunavimmiuts (les Inuits du Nunavik) ont établi un précédent quant au développement de relations entre les Autochtones et l'État au Québec et au Canada. Depuis 1975, le Nunavik a évolué pour devenir une région du Québec, développant ses capacités et émergeant à titre de modèle pour les autres populations autochtones de la province et du Canada.

L'émergence du Nunavik en tant que région imbriquée dans le Québec a suscité beaucoup d'intérêt. Aussi important-il de situer l'évolution de cette région dans le contexte plus vaste du changement qui s'est imposé dans les régions inuites du Canada et du Nord circumpolaire. La communauté politique inuite à laquelle appartient le Nunavik couvre quatre pays et inclut divers modèles de gouvernance. Il est lié par des organismes nationaux tels que l'Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami et des organismes internationaux tels que le Conseil circumpolaire inuit.

En dépit des enjeux de taille associés à la gouvernance et au développement de cette région éloignée du Nord, le Nunavik occupe une place importante dans un contexte multiniveaux plus vaste. La région, de concert avec sa population, est tournée vers l'avenir et elle peut miser sur son expérience et ses relations pour se préparer à affronter les difficultés qui s'annoncent.





## INTRODUCTION

Nunavik is one of a number of Inuit regions in Canada and throughout the circumpolar North to attain greater political and economic autonomy since the 1970s. The region was at the forefront of political change in the Arctic when the Nunavimmiut (the Inuit of Nunavik), along with the Cree of Northern Québec, signed the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA),<sup>1</sup> the first “modern” treaty in Canada, in 1975. In many respects, the JBNQA heralded the beginning of a new era in treaty-making between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state. It was also the first in a number of political and economic settlements involving Inuit peoples in Canada, and laid the foundation for future agreements in other parts of the Canadian Arctic.

At about the same time that the Nunavummiut were negotiating the JBNQA with the Québec and federal governments, Inuit peoples in Alaska and Greenland were also taking significant steps towards self-government within their respective jurisdictions. While it would be at least another decade before the Inuit of Chukotka, in northeastern Russia, could start to break free of the shackles imposed by the Soviet state, already by the late 1970s, we were starting to witness the beginnings of international collaboration among the diverse Inuit peoples of the circumpolar North, through the establishment of organizations such as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (later renamed the Inuit Circumpolar Council).

This paper situates Nunavik and its development over the last several decades within a broader multilevel context of Inuit self-government and political mobilization at both the domestic and international levels. The first part briefly reviews the evolution of Inuit self-governing regions in Canada, including Nunavik, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, and Nunatsiavut. The second part examines the circumpolar and international dimensions of Inuit self-government, autonomy, and collaboration, and the important role that these developments have played in supporting Indigenous self-government in Canada.

## INUIT POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN CANADA

One of the most significant developments in the Canadian Arctic in recent decades has been the political mobilization of Inuit peoples across this vast region. This mobilization has given rise to a number of groundbreaking treaties and self-government agreements that serve as models for Indigenous communities in other parts of Canada and around the world. There are four recognized Inuit regions in Canada: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) in the western part of the Northwest Territories; the Territory of Nunavut in the eastern Arctic; Nunavik in northern Québec; and Nunatsiavut in the northern part of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. All four regions have achieved varying levels of political autonomy, either within the Canadian federation or within the provinces and territories where they are located. Moreover, these regions have developed their own distinct models of self-government, which in part are designed to respond to their particular circumstances, conditions, and capacity challenges.

Nunavik has been at the forefront of the self-government movement in Canada. Since the mid-1970s, the region and its people have built a comprehensive institutional foundation for self-government within Québec.<sup>2</sup> In the process, they have navigated the difficult political environment in Québec, making progress under both federalist and separatist provincial governments. When the JBNQA was negotiated, the federal government did not allow for the inclusion

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<sup>1</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (Sainte-Foy, QC: Les Publications du Québec, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Gary N. Wilson, “Nested Federalism in Arctic Quebec: A Comparative Perspective,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 1 (2008): 71–92; Thierry Rodon and Minnie Grey, “The Long and Winding Road to Self-Government: The Nunavik and Nunatsiavut Experiences,” in *Northern Exposure: Peoples, Powers and Prospects in Canada’s North*, ed. Frances Abele, Thomas Courchene, F. Leslie Seidle, and France St. Hilaire (Montréal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2009), 317–41.



of self-government chapters in land claims agreements. Despite this restriction, several regional institutions were created to take on administrative responsibilities in Nunavik. These included: the Kativik Regional Government, a supra-municipal entity responsible for representing communities and coordinating basic public services; the Kativik School Board, which is responsible for the delivery of primary and secondary education; and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, which provides healthcare and social services. While each of these institutions is responsible for managing programs in Nunavik, they are connected to the provincial departments that are constitutionally responsible for these policy areas, as well as certain federal departments. In addition to these public institutions of government, the Makivik Corporation, an Inuit economic development corporation (IEDC), oversees the management and investment of the funds obtained from the JBNQA on behalf of the Inuit beneficiaries to the agreement.<sup>3</sup>

In a referendum in 2011, the people of Nunavik rejected a proposal to amalgamate these regional institutions into a single regional government structure. This rejection prompted the region to conduct a series of consultations with communities and stakeholders, the result of which was *Parnasimautik*, a detailed report that provides a comprehensive overview of the issues, challenges, and opportunities confronting Nunavik at the start of the twenty-first century.<sup>4</sup> It remains to be seen whether this consultation process and report will lead to renewed attempts to create a single regional government. In the past, however, such consultation processes in Nunavik have provided a foundation for political mobilization and change.<sup>5</sup>

Jurisdictionally, Nunavik is nested within a province and a country, but culturally and, in some respects, politically, it is connected to other Inuit regions, inside and outside Canada. For the past four decades, the Inuit of Nunavik have influenced and have been influenced by political developments taking place outside their region. In 1984, the Inuit of the western Arctic signed the Inuvialuit Final Agreement with the governments of the Northwest Territories and Canada.<sup>6</sup> In 1993, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement was signed by the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut and the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories. 1999 saw the creation of Nunavut, Canada's newest territory.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut in northern Labrador signed the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement with the governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada in 2005.<sup>8</sup>

Collectively, the territories included in these agreements cover a huge part of northern and Arctic Canada. More importantly, by breaking new ground in the era of modern treaty-making, these agreements and the political institutions they created represent a significant step forward for Inuit peoples specifically and Indigenous peoples more generally in Canada and around the world.

## INUIT POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OUTSIDE CANADA

Concurrently, similar political developments in other Inuit regions in Greenland and Alaska have contributed to and reinforced the trends we see happening in regions such as Nunavik. In 1971, Indigenous peoples in Alaska, including

<sup>3</sup> Gary N. Wilson and Christopher Alcantara, "Mixing Politics and Business in the Canadian Arctic: Inuit Corporate Governance in Nunavik and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 4: 781–804.

<sup>4</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, November 14, 2014, <http://www.parnasimautik.com/2014-consultation-report/>.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, "Nested Federalism in Arctic Quebec."

<sup>6</sup> James Saku and Robert Bone, "Modern Treaties in Canada: The Case of Northern Quebec Agreements and the Inuvialuit Final Agreements," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 20, no. 2 (2000): 283–307.

<sup>7</sup> Graham White, "Nunavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region: Differing Models of Northern Governance," in *Northern Exposure: Peoples, Powers and Prospects in Canada's North*, ed. Frances Abele, Thomas Courchene, F. Leslie Seidle, and France St. Hilaire (Montréal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2009), 283–316.

<sup>8</sup> Rodon and Grey, "The Long and Winding Road to Self-Government"; David C. Natcher, Lawrence Felt, and Andrea Proctor, eds., *Settlement, Subsistence and Change Among the Labrador Inuit: The Nunatsiavummiut Experience* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012).

the Iñupiat (Inuit), signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), a comprehensive land claims agreement that transferred land titles to both regional and village corporations.<sup>9</sup> Like the Makivik Corporation in Nunavik, these corporations have provided a basis for economic development in predominantly Inuit regions such as the North Slope Borough and the Northwest Arctic Borough.

In 1979, the Inuit of Greenland achieved home rule within the Kingdom of Denmark, which created a public government that exercised autonomy over most domestic matters.<sup>10</sup> In 2008, Greenlanders voted in favour of self-rule, which expanded the powers and autonomy of the Greenlandic government, providing the former colony with de facto independence.<sup>11</sup> As in many Inuit regions across the circumpolar North, Greenland is still financially dependent on government subsidies from Denmark. Self-rule, however, does give Greenland greater control over its natural resources and, like Alaska and Nunavik, it is the development of these resources that dominates political discussions about the future.

Another important development among the circumpolar Inuit was the re-engagement with Inuit communities in Russia. Geographically separated from Alaska by the narrow Bering Strait, the Yupik (Inuit) of Chukotka were politically isolated from Inuit in other circumpolar countries by the geopolitical constraints of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ushered in a new era of international collaboration where the Russian Inuit formally engaged with other circumpolar Inuit, mainly through organizations like the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).<sup>12</sup>

The Inuit of Alaska and Greenland, along with their counterparts in Canada, played an important role in the creation of the ICC in 1977. Since its inception, the ICC has served to link the Inuit peoples of the circumpolar North and provide regular opportunities for the sharing of information and best practices.<sup>13</sup> While many Inuit regions such as Nunavik are clearly focused on building regional capacity and linkages with non-Inuit governments in their own regions and countries,<sup>14</sup> the ICC has established critical cross-cutting relationships, connections, and networking opportunities. Nunavik Inuit such as Sheila Watt-Cloutier and Mary Simon have been leaders within this international organization.

## CONCLUSIONS

For more than forty years, the Inuit have been at the forefront of political change and mobilization in the Arctic. As the first region in Canada to sign a comprehensive land claims agreement, Nunavik has been a leader in the development of regional autonomy and Indigenous rights. As one of a number of Inuit regions across the circumpolar North, Nunavik and its leaders have played an important part in international collaboration and the sharing of best practices among a diverse yet united community of people. As the other papers in this volume will no doubt demonstrate, Nunavik faces many challenges and opportunities at the start of the twenty-first century. As it confronts these challenges, however, it is important to remember that Nunavik is not alone; it is part of a much broader circumpolar Inuit community that it can continually draw on for support.

<sup>9</sup> Fae L. Korsmo, "The Alaska Natives," in *Polar Peoples: Self-Determination and Development*, ed. Minority Rights Group (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1994), 81–104.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Nuttall, "Greenland: Emergence of an Inuit Homeland," in *Polar Peoples: Self-Determination and Development*, ed. Minority Rights Group (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1994), 1–28.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Nuttall, "Self-Rule in Greenland: Towards the World's First Independent Inuit State," *Indigenous Affairs* 3, no. 4 (2008): 64–70.

<sup>12</sup> Patty A. Gray, *The Predicament of Chukotka's Indigenous Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Gary N. Wilson, "Inuit Diplomacy in the Circumpolar North," *Canadian Foreign Policy* 13, no. 3 (2007): 65–80.

<sup>14</sup> In Canada, for example, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), a non-governmental organization, "represents and promotes the interests of Inuit on a wide variety of environmental, social, cultural, and political, issues and challenges facing Inuit on the national level." See Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, accessed October 5, 2015, <https://www.itk.ca/about-itk>.



## Part II: Inuit Policy



# Servir les Nunavimmiuts : des politiques et programmes mieux adaptés à la réalité du Nunavik

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## RÉSUMÉ

Le Nunavik fait face à de nombreux défis sociaux, se compare très défavorablement aux autres régions du Québec quant à de nombreux indicateurs socio-économiques et traduit le peu d'efficacité des politiques publiques. Pourtant, de nombreuses initiatives régionales et locales tentent de mettre en place des programmes mieux adaptés à la culture et aux besoins des communautés. On trouve ainsi, sur le plan régional, des services de garderie et de sages-femmes soutenus par le Québec, qui fonctionnent très bien et qui améliorent la situation des Nunavimmiuts. D'autres initiatives de portée locale, telles celles de la Unaaq Men's Association et le projet Innalik, sont très innovatrices et s'efforcent de répondre aux besoins locaux. Elles sont toutefois souvent peu soutenues par les gouvernements bien qu'elles contribuent effectivement au bien-être des communautés.

## INTRODUCTION

Le Nunavik est considéré comme une région du Québec; cependant, à maints égards, cette région fait exception. Elle est habitée par une très forte majorité d'Inuits répartis dans quatorze communautés isolées du reste du Québec. L'inuktitut est la langue parlée par 98 % des habitants et la culture inuite est encore très vivante. Dans cette note de recherche, nous exposerons une série d'initiatives régionales et locales qui offrent des programmes et des services mieux adaptés à la réalité du Nunavik.

## ENJEUX DE POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES AU NUNAVIK

Le Nunavik fait face à de nombreux défis sociaux et se compare très défavorablement aux autres régions du Québec quant à de nombreux indicateurs socio-économiques :

- Espérance de vie plus courte de quinze ans<sup>1</sup>
- Taux de suicide très élevé (en 2006, on a dénombré 106 suicides pour 100 000 habitants dans cette communauté contre 14 pour 100 000 dans l'ensemble du Québec)<sup>2</sup>
- Écart de 39,52 % dans la diplomation postsecondaire (en 2011, 68,5 % de la population de 15 ans et plus n'avait pas de diplôme d'études secondaires contre 22,18 % pour l'ensemble du Québec)<sup>3</sup>
- Manque de logement qui induit un fort taux de surpeuplement dans les logements (26 % contre 1,3 %)<sup>4</sup>
- Taux de chômage deux fois plus élevé que celui du Québec (14,1 % contre 7,2% en 2011)<sup>5</sup>
- Important écart de revenus (le revenu moyen des particuliers du Nunavik avant impôt, en 2011, était de 29 617 \$ contre 36 352 \$ dans l'ensemble du Québec)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Données d'éco-santé compilées par l'auteur : <http://www.ecosante.fr>.

<sup>2</sup> Statistique Canada, « Statistique de l'état civil, base de donnée sur les décès, » [Ottawa], 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Statistique Canada, « Profil de la population autochtone de l'Enquête nationale auprès des ménages de 2011, » date de modification 16 janvier 2014, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/aprof/index.cfm?Lang=F>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Ces problèmes ont pour cause la perte de contrôle des Inuits sur leur propre vie et les effets néfastes de certaines politiques publiques ayant causé un traumatisme transgénérationnel (sédentarisation, abattage des chiens, pensionnats, etc.). Les solutions doivent prendre en compte ces éléments.

Il faut toutefois éviter de dresser un tableau sombre de la vie sociale au Nunavik : la vigueur de la langue et de la culture ainsi que la volonté de se prendre en main sont manifestement l'une des forces de cette région comme le montrent les initiatives que nous décrivons ci-dessous.

## **QUELQUES EXEMPLES D'INITIATIVES RÉGIONALES ET LOCALES**

Les politiques publiques du Québec ne semblent pas avoir réussi à combler l'écart sur le plan des conditions socio-économiques. Les politiques sur le logement, la santé et l'éducation créent peu d'améliorations. Pourtant, certaines initiatives, tant locales que régionales, présentent un plus grand potentiel de succès en ce qui a trait aux conditions de vie des Nunavimmiuts. Dans cette section, nous donnons une brève description de ces différentes initiatives.

### **PROGRAMME DES SAGES-FEMMES : REPRENDRE LE CONTRÔLE DE SON CORPS**

Le programme des sages-femmes existe depuis 1986. D'abord entrepris à Puvirnituq, il est maintenant offert à Inukjuak et Salluit. Il faut savoir que depuis la mise en place des services de santé, la plupart des femmes inuites étaient envoyées dans le Sud pour accoucher. Cela posait de nombreux problèmes : coûts élevés, isolement des mères extraites de leur milieu de vie et médicalisation d'un acte naturel. Ce programme vise donc à renouer avec la tradition inuite des sages-femmes tout en assurant une surveillance médicale. Il s'avère un franc succès, 85 % des femmes inuites ayant donné naissance au Nunavik en 2011.<sup>7</sup>

### **SERVICES DE GARDERIE DU NUNAVIK : TRANSMETTRE LA CULTURE ET LES VALEURS INUITES AUX NOUVELLES GÉNÉRATIONS**

Un service de garderie a été mis en place par l'Administration régionale Kativik (ARK) à la demande d'un regroupement d'aînés. Ce service s'inspire de celui des centres de la petite enfance mis en place au Québec. Chaque communauté s'est dotée d'un conseil d'administration et l'ARK a mis en place un programme de formation d'éducateurs en service de garde. Il y a maintenant 815 places et 220 travailleurs à plein temps. Le curriculum a été développé pour le territoire, on parle Inuktitut dans les garderies et celles-ci servent des aliments locaux provenant de la chasse, la pêche et la cueillette.<sup>8</sup>

Ce service, inspiré du programme universel du Québec, constitue un bon exemple de renforcement de la culture inuite. Il est complètement adapté aux besoins des Nunavimmiuts et géré par la communauté.

### **UNAAQ MEN'S ASSOCIATION : LUTTER CONTRE LE SUICIDE CHEZ LES JEUNES PAR LA TRANSMISSION DES VALEURS ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE**

La Unaaq's Men's Association a été créée en 2001 par suite d'une vague de suicides dans la communauté. Cette association s'est donné pour objectif de s'occuper des jeunes en leur enseignant les activités traditionnelles et en favorisant la transmission des savoirs entre les générations. L'Association, incorporée en 2006, a depuis lors beaucoup diversifié ses activités.

<sup>7</sup> Brenda Epoo, Jennie Stonier, Vicki Van Wagner, and Evelyn Harney, "Learning Midwifery in Nunavik: Community-Based Education for Inuit Midwives," *Pimatisiwin: a Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 10, no. 3 (2012): 283–300, <http://www.pimatisiwin.com/online/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/03EpooStonier.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Gauvin, « The Child Care Network in Nunavik, » (communication présentée au Symposium du Nunavik sur l'économie sociale, SERNoCA, Kuujuaq, 6 février 2012).



L'Association offre des formations en mécanique et a exploité un atelier de réparation de motoneiges et de petits moteurs. Elle a également mis sur pied un atelier de travail du bois où les jeunes construisent chaque année des kayaks traditionnels ainsi que des kometiks.. De plus, l'Association a mis sur pied, avec la collaboration de l'ARK, un programme de formation récréotouristique qui se déroule chaque été à Inukjuak. Elle a également construit un camp destiné aux échanges entre les jeunes et les aînés. Enfin, elle met actuellement sur pied un programme de recyclage dans la communauté. À la suite de ce succès, d'autres communautés du Nunavik s'inspirent de cette expérience pour mettre en place des associations similaires.<sup>9</sup>



**Introduction to climbing for the Inukjuak kids, organized by Unaaq, Inukjuak.** Photo: Thierry Rodon.



**Traditional Inukjuak qajaq build by Unaaq.** Photo: Thierry Rodon.

## PROJET INNAVIK : ASSURER L'AUTONOMIE ÉNERGÉTIQUE ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE

Le projet Innavik est né de la volonté de la corporation foncière Pituvik d'Inukjuak d'assurer l'autonomie énergétique et le développement économique de la communauté. La question de l'énergie est en effet un enjeu important au Nunavik. Toutes les communautés sont approvisionnées par des centrales au diesel qui sont polluantes et coûteuses à opérer.

Le projet Innavik propose de construire une mini centrale hydro-électrique sur la rivière Inukjuak qui permettrait de fournir de l'énergie renouvelable à la communauté.

Avant de chercher du financement pour le projet, la corporation foncière a consulté les Inukjuamiut pour s'assurer de son acceptabilité sociale. Le projet fut approuvé à 82,6 % lors d'un référendum. Le projet avait reçu l'appui financier de Pituvik et du gouvernement fédéral par l'intermédiaire du programme des « 3P » mais les discussions avec le troisième partenaire, Hydro-Québec, ont échoué sur des questions de prix du kWh et de propriété de l'ouvrage. Cela a entraîné, à l'automne 2012, l'annulation du projet qui dépendait d'un financement tripartite.<sup>10</sup> Les discussions ont repris récemment pour essayer de relancer le projet.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Lucille Villaseñor-Caron, "Unaaq Men's Association of Inukjuak," in *Care, Cooperation and Activism: Cases from the Northern Social Economy*, ed. F. Abele and C. Southcott (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press/CCI Press, sous presse); Tommy Palliser, communication personnelle, 9 octobre 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Tania Gibéryen, Tommy Palliser et Thierry Rodon, *Community vs State Based Development : The Innavik Hydro-Project. Présenté à la Northern Governance and Economy Conference: Pathway to Prosperity*, Yellowknife, 12 octobre 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Tommy Palliser, communication personnelle, 9 octobre 2015.



## ÉCOLE ARSANIQ DE KANGIQSUJUAQ : AMÉLIORER LES CHANCES AU NIVEAU POSTSECONDAIRE

Le passage au niveau postsecondaire est un important défi pour les Nunavimmiuts, ceux-ci devant se déplacer au Sud. Très souvent, ils sont mal préparés pour effectuer ce grand changement. De plus, les niveaux scolaires sont plus faibles au Nunavik et la transition au cégep est extrêmement difficile. On le constate face aux faibles taux de diplomation dans le programme géré par les cégeps Marie-Victorin et Dawson.<sup>12</sup>

Pour améliorer le succès scolaire de ses étudiants, la communauté de Kangiqsujaq, en collaboration avec la Commission scolaire Kativik, a mis en place une classe de préparation aux études postsecondaires. La formation dure un an et assure que les étudiants aient le niveau adéquat pour réussir leurs études collégiales. Cette initiative a remporté un franc succès et la classe accueille maintenant des étudiants de tout le Nunavik. Il est encore trop tôt pour mesurer le succès de cette initiative mais, compte tenu de l'état de l'éducation postsecondaire au Nunavik, cela ne peut que contribuer à améliorer la situation.

### EN GUISE DE CONCLUSION

Ces initiatives montrent la vitalité des organismes locaux et régionaux du Nunavik. Elles ont l'avantage d'être mieux adaptées à la réalité des Inuits du Nunavik et répondent mieux à leurs besoins. Elles redonnent également aux Inuits le sens de l'initiative et permettent ainsi de transcender les traumatismes causés par les politiques du passé. Certaines d'entre elles, tels les services de sages-femmes et de garderie, sont soutenues par le gouvernement du Québec. D'autres, tels les projets Innavik et de l'Unaaq Men's Association, méritent un soutien plus actif.



**Tinukjuak beach.** Photo: Thierry Rodon.

<sup>12</sup> Thierry Rodon et Francis Lévesque, "Improving Access to University Education in the Canadian Arctic: Learning from Past Experiences and Listening to Inuit Student Experiences" (Kuujjuaq Workshop, novembre 2011; Chaire de recherche sur le développement durable, Québec, 2012).

# Serving Nunavimmiut: Policies and Programs Adapted to the Reality of Nunavik

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## SUMMARY

Nunavik faces many social challenges, compares poorly with other Québec regions on many socioeconomic indicators, and reflects the limited effectiveness of public policies. However, numerous regional and local initiatives are attempting to establish programs better suited to the culture and needs of its communities. Examples at the regional level include child care and midwifery services supported by Québec that function extremely well and improve the situation of Nunavimmiut. At the local level, initiatives such as the Unaaq Men's Association and the Innalik Project are making an effort to address local needs. Programs like these, however, often receive little government support, despite their effective contribution to the well-being of communities.

## INTRODUCTION

Although Nunavik is considered a region of Québec, it is an atypical region in many respects. Its predominantly Inuit population is spread across fourteen communities that are isolated from the rest of Québec. Inuktitut is the language spoken by 98 percent of its inhabitants, and Inuit culture is still very much alive. This policy brief highlights a number of regional and local initiatives that offer programs and services adapted to the reality of Nunavik.

## PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES IN NUNAVIK

Nunavik faces many social challenges and compares poorly with other Québec regions on many socioeconomic indicators:

- Life expectancy is lower by fifteen years.<sup>1</sup>
- The suicide rate is very high. In 2006, Nunavik had a suicide rate of 106 per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to 14 per 100,000 for Québec as a whole.<sup>2</sup>
- There is a 39.52 percent gap in post-secondary qualification rates. In 2011, 68.5 percent of the population aged 15 and older had no high school certificate, compared to 22.18 percent for Québec as a whole.<sup>3</sup>
- A housing shortage is resulting in high level of crowding (26 percent compared to 1.3 percent).<sup>4</sup>
- The unemployment rate is double that of Québec (14.1 percent compared to 7.2 percent in 2011).<sup>5</sup>
- There is a significant income gap. In 2011, the average individual income before tax in Nunavik was \$29,617, compared to \$36,352 for Québec as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eco-health data compiled by the author: <http://www.ecosante.fr>.

<sup>2</sup> Statistique Canada, "Statistique de l'état civil, base de donnée sur les décès," [Ottawa], 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Statistique Canada, "Profil de la population autochtone de l'Enquête nationale auprès des ménages de 2011," last modified January 16, 2014, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/aprof/index.cfm?Lang=F>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

These problems are the result of a loss of control by Inuit over their lives and of the intergenerational trauma caused by public policies such as those related to sedentarization, dog killing, and the residential school system. Solutions need to take these elements into consideration.

We should not, however, paint too bleak a picture of social conditions in Nunavik. The vitality of the language and culture and a desire to take matters in hand are clearly among the region's strengths, as reflected in the initiatives described below.

## **EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL INITIATIVES**

Québec public policy appears to have failed to close the gap in socioeconomic conditions. Housing, health, and education policies have generated few improvements. A number of local and regional initiatives, however, have a greater potential for success with regard to the living conditions of Nunavimmiut. This section briefly describes these initiatives.

### **MIDWIFERY PROGRAM: HELPING MOTHERS RECLAIM CONTROL OVER THEIR BODIES**

The midwifery program has been in operation since 1986. Originally established in Puvirnituq, it is now offered in Inukjuak and Salluit. Previously, dating back to the introduction of healthcare services in the region, most Inuit women were sent south to give birth. This created numerous problems, including high costs, the isolation of mothers from their communities, and the medicalization of a natural process. The midwifery program set out to restore the Inuit tradition of midwifery while ensuring medical supervision. It has been a resounding success: in 2011, 85 percent of Inuit women gave birth in Nunavik.<sup>7</sup>

### **NUNAVIK CHILD-CARE SERVICES: TRANSMITTING INUIT CULTURE AND VALUES TO NEW GENERATIONS**

A child-care service was established by the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) at the request of a group of elders. The service is based on the model of child-care centers established in Québec. Each community formed a board of directors and the KRG set up a training program for child-care educators. There are now 815 child-care places and 220 full-time staff. The curriculum was developed for the territory, the language spoken in the daycares is Inuktitut, and the meals served by the centers include local food obtained through hunting, fishing, and gathering.<sup>8</sup>

Inspired by Québec's universal child-care program, this service is a good example of the promotion of Inuit culture. It is fully adapted to the needs of Nunavimmiut and managed by the community.

### **UNAAQ MEN'S ASSOCIATION: PREVENTING YOUTH SUICIDE THROUGH THE TRANSMISSION OF TRADITIONAL VALUES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Unaaq Men's Association was created in 2001 following a series of suicides in the community. The association is devoted to supporting youth by teaching them traditional skills and promoting intergenerational knowledge sharing. Incorporated in 2006, the association has since considerably diversified its activities.

The Unaaq Men's Association offers mechanical training and runs a snowmobile and small engine repair shop. It has also established a carpentry shop where youth build traditional kayaks and kometiks every year. In addition, the association, in partnership with the KRG, has launched a tourism training program, offered every summer in Inukjuak.

<sup>7</sup> Brenda Epoo, Jennie Stonier, Vicki Van Wagner, and Evelyn Harney, "Learning Midwifery in Nunavik: Community-Based Education for Inuit Midwives," *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 10, no. 3 (2012): 283–300, <http://www.pimatisiwin.com/online/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/03EpooStonier.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Gauvin, "The Child Care Network in Nunavik" (presentation, Nunavik Symposium on the Social Economy, SERNNOCa, Kuujuaq, February 6, 2012).

It has also built a camp intended to bring youth and elders together. As well, it is currently introducing a community recycling program. Its success has made it a model for other Nunavik communities seeking to create similar associations.<sup>9</sup>

### **INNAVIK PROJECT: ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Innalik Project was developed by the Pituvik Landholding Corporation in Inukjuak as an opportunity to achieve energy self-sufficiency for the community and stimulate economic development. Energy supply is a major issue in Nunavik, where all communities are powered by diesel generators, which pollute and are costly to operate.

The project proposes to build a small hydroelectric generating station on Inukjuak River to supply the community with renewable energy. Before seeking funding for the project, the Landholding Corporation consulted with Inukjuarmiut to ensure community acceptance. The project was approved by 82.6 percent of voters in a referendum. It went on to receive financial support from Pituvik and the federal government under the P3 program, but discussions with the third partner, Hydro-Québec, broke down over questions regarding kWh pricing and ownership of the facility. The project, which required tripartite funding, was thus cancelled in fall 2012.<sup>10</sup> Talks have recently resumed in an attempt to relaunch the project.<sup>11</sup>

### **ARSANIQ SCHOOL IN KANGISUJUAQ: IMPROVING CHANCES FOR POST-SECONDARY SUCCESS**

The transition to post-secondary education is a major challenge for Nunavimmiut students, who have to move south to continue their schooling and are often poorly prepared for this big change. Lower education levels in Nunavik also contribute to making the transition to CEGEP extremely difficult, as reflected by the low graduation rates in the program run by Cégep Marie-Victorin and Dawson College.<sup>12</sup>

To help its students succeed in school, the community of Kangisujuaq, in partnership with the Kativik School Board, established a pre-college course. The one-year program ensures that students are adequately prepared for college. This initiative has proven extremely popular, and the course now welcomes students from all over Nunavik. It is too early to measure the impact of the program, but given the state of post-secondary education in Nunavik, it can only contribute to improving the situation.

### **CONCLUSION**

These initiatives reflect the vitality of Nunavik's local and regional organizations. They have the advantage of being better suited to the reality of Nunavik's Inuit and are more responsive to their needs. They also allow Inuit to reclaim a sense of initiative, thus helping individuals overcome the trauma caused by past policies. Some initiatives, such as the midwifery and child-care services, are supported by the Québec government. Others, such as the Innalik project and the Unaaq Men's Association, deserve more active support.

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<sup>9</sup> Lucille Villaseñor-Caron, "Unaaq Men's Association of Inukjuak," in *Care, Cooperation and Activism: Cases from the Northern Social Economy*, ed. F. Abele and C. Southcott (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press/CCI Press, forthcoming); Tommy Palliser, personal communication with the author, October 9, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Tania Gibéryen, Tommy Palliser, and Thierry Rodon, "Community vs State Based Development: The Innalik Hydro-Project" (presentation, Northern Governance and Economy Conference: Pathway to Prosperity, Yellowknife, October 12, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Tommy Palliser, personal communication with the author, October 9, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Thierry Rodon and Francis Lévesque, "Improving Access to University Education in the Canadian Arctic: Learning from Past Experiences and Listening to Inuit Student Experiences" (Kuujuaq Workshop, November 2011; Chaire de recherche sur le développement durable, Québec, 2012).

# Heading South: Bringing Urban Inuit Migration into Northern Policy Debates

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## SUMMARY

Urban Inuit issues are public issues with significant policy implications. Today one in four Inuit live outside of their land claims region. Of these, an increasing number reside in southern cities. In Québec, Montréal exerts a significant impact on the Nunavik Inuit population. Set against the deep social crises in housing, health, and employment affecting Nunavik, Inuit recognize Montréal as a center for service access; as a hub for social, economic, and educational opportunities; and as a place of refuge. Inadequate access to healthcare in Nunavik means that annually over 30 per cent of the Inuit population has to travel through Montréal for medical appointments and treatments. Consequently, the city is now “home” for many Inuit, including an emergent middle class but also a burgeoning homeless population. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 900 Inuit live in the Census Metropolitan Area<sup>1</sup> although community organizations, mindful of undercounting, put that number closer to 1,500. In the coming decades, this urban demographic is projected to expand rapidly. This fact underscores two main points: (1) the necessity for policy to address the root causes of out-migration from Nunavik; (2) the need for multi-stakeholders to support strategies to improve the well-being of Montréal Inuit and for government partners to view such interventions as opportunities to invest in the health and diversity of the city of Montréal itself.

## RÉSUMÉ

L'attrait des centres urbains pour les Inuits devient un enjeu public dont les implications stratégiques sont importantes. Aujourd'hui, un Inuit sur quatre vit hors de la région visée par les revendications territoriales. Au Québec, l'attrait de Montréal a des répercussions significatives sur la population inuite du Nunavik. De profondes crises sociales associées au logement, à la santé et aux emplois affectent la population du Nunavik, celle-ci voyant en Montréal un centre où il devient possible de recevoir des services, s'épanouir sur le plan social, économique et éducatif ou trouver refuge. Au Nunavik, l'accès inadéquat aux services de santé fait en sorte que plus de 30 p. 100 de la population inuite se déplace à Montréal pour rencontrer un professionnel de la santé ou recevoir des traitements. Ainsi, la ville compte désormais de nombreux citoyens inuits, certains formant une nouvelle classe moyenne, d'autres intégrant une population croissante en situation d'itinérance. *L'Enquête nationale auprès des ménages* de 2011 a dénombré 900 Inuits vivant dans la région métropolitaine de recensement. Des organismes locaux estiment cependant que ce nombre se rapproche davantage de 1500 en raison du sous-dénombrement. On prévoit qu'au cours des prochaines décennies, ce portrait démographique urbain prendra rapidement de l'expansion. Ce phénomène met en évidence deux points essentiels : (1) les orientations stratégiques doivent tenir compte des causes profondes de la migration de la population du Nunavik et (2) les multiples acteurs doivent soutenir les stratégies destinées à améliorer le bien-être de la population inuite de Montréal et les partenaires publics doivent considérer ces interventions comme des occasions d'investir dans la santé et la diversité de ce centre urbain.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, “Montréal, CMA,” NHS Focus on Geography series – Montréal, 2011, last modified April 17, 2014, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=3&GeoCode=462>.



## INTRODUCTION

Inuit migration to southern urban centers, like Montréal, represents one of the most complex and yet least understood aspects of Inuit society. In 2011, the NHS reported that 27 percent of Inuit live outside of their northern land claims regions. Most strikingly, among this group over 40 percent live in major cities. The urban population is set to increase exponentially in the coming decades as strong demographic growth in the North puts added pressure on ailing community infrastructures and more people view southern migration as an essential resource.

## QUÉBEC CONTEXT

In Québec, Montréal is a key hub for Inuit migration. At the Montréal engagement session of the 2013 *Parnasimautik* consultation process, Inuit community members strongly emphasized how Inuit life in the city is inextricably linked to the fundamental challenges facing Inuit communities in Nunavik.<sup>2</sup> Faced with acute housing shortages, barriers to education, food insecurity, and high unemployment, as well as other familiar factors contributing to health inequalities in the North, Inuit regard the city as a primary location for hospital care, post-secondary education, and employment, especially with major Inuit organizations like Makivik Corporation, Avataq Cultural Institute, and the Kativik School Board.<sup>3</sup> Montréal's infrastructure has served an important function in helping to build the capacity of Nunavik Inuit and thereby contribute to the collective ambition to empower communities to self-determine their social, cultural, economic, and political development. Indeed, over the last forty years, Montréal has become "home" for a diverse Inuit population, including white- and blue-collar employees, artists, CEGEP and university students, and entrepreneurs.

However, as highlighted by the Québec Commission on Human Rights and Rights of Youth, over the same time period, Inuit have brought the problems they face in Nunavik communities with them on to city streets.<sup>4</sup> Montréal, for example, has a growing population of Inuit in situations of homelessness, an issue further complicated by the effects of substance abuse and social alienation.<sup>5</sup> The greater Montréal region is also where many adult Inuit offenders from Nunavik are brought to serve their prison sentences. It is also where an increasing number of Inuit youth are brought – and, according to recent reports, sometimes poorly served – under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.<sup>6</sup>

While Inuit may only comprise 10 percent of Montréal's Indigenous demographic, evidence indicates disproportionately high incidences of poverty afflicting the community. Statistics show that Inuit can account for at least 45 percent of Montréal's homeless Aboriginal population at any one time.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, urban Inuit in need of healthcare and addictions support have access to federally, provincially, and municipally funded programs in Montréal, and they are entitled to Non-Insured Health Benefits under the direction of the federal First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. However, Inuit can often find it difficult to obtain the necessary identification documents to access such services.<sup>8</sup> Also, these programs do nothing to help Inuit adapt to city life.

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<sup>2</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, November 14, 2014, 109, 120–21, <http://www.parnasimautik.com/2014-consultation-report/>.

<sup>3</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, *Investigation into Child and Youth Protection Services in Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay: Nunavik: Report, Conclusions and Recommendations* (Québec City: Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, Gouvernement du Québec, 2007), [http://www.cdpcj.qc.ca/Publications/rapport\\_Nunavik\\_anglais.pdf](http://www.cdpcj.qc.ca/Publications/rapport_Nunavik_anglais.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Nobuhiro Kishigami, "Low-income and Homeless Inuit in Montreal, Canada: Report of a 2012 Research," [sic] *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology* 39, no. 4 (2015): 575–624, [http://ir.minpaku.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10502/5675/1/KH\\_039\\_4\\_03.pdf](http://ir.minpaku.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10502/5675/1/KH_039_4_03.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Jane George, "Nunavik Young Offenders Sometimes Housed in Montreal Hotels: MNA," *Nunatsiaq News*, April 18, 2013, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik\\_young\\_offenders\\_sometimes\\_housed\\_in\\_montreal\\_hotels\\_mna/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik_young_offenders_sometimes_housed_in_montreal_hotels_mna/).

<sup>7</sup> Makivik Corporation, *Montreal Inuit Strategic Community Plan, Presented to the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec* (Montréal: Makivik Corporation, February 2015), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Makivik Corporation, *Montreal Inuit Strategic Community Plan*, 14.

Notwithstanding the distinct socioeconomic and educational disadvantages Inuit face in northern communities, the lack of a viable support network upon arrival in Montréal only makes service access more difficult for newcomers and prevents many from securing employment. Without a source of reliable income, Inuit are known to opt to move between shelters and access food banks instead of finding stable housing.

## RESPONSES AND STRATEGIES: FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS

In debates about Inuit life in Arctic regions, migration is usually overlooked for established topics of the environment or land claims. Admittedly, in light of recent census data, perspectives on migration are starting to change, but policy awareness is not evolving quickly enough. A first step for policymakers must be clear acknowledgment of migration as a prominent social issue based on a stronger understanding of how it informs and reflects more established policy priorities within Nunavik. Building on the voices of urban Inuit in the *Parnasimautik* Consultation Report (2014), such a commitment underscores the pressing need to address the structural causes and social determinants to Inuit out-migration. A new focus on migration will provide fresh perspectives on the key issues that Inuit leaders and organizations consistently identify as weighing heavily on efforts to improve the social, cultural, and economic well-being of Nunavik Inuit.

At the same time, it is important that stakeholders support and participate in the integrated formulation and implementation of plans in Montréal aimed at improving the quality of life for Inuit. Montréal Inuit affairs present a pivotal opportunity for governmental agencies to strategically invest in the health and diversity of the city itself and, in the process, build (or reinforce) strong and equitable partnerships with Inuit organizations in both Nunavik and the Greater Montréal region in order to engage directly and effectively with the range of issues community members face. What recommendations for policy change can be made with regard to urban Inuit migration? Drawing on the findings of the *Parnasimautik* process but also in consultation with other key documents, including the report of the National Urban Inuit One Voice Workshop,<sup>9</sup> Makivik Corporation's Montréal Inuit Community Strategy Plan,<sup>10</sup> and Tungasuvvingat Inuit's current proposal for a National Urban Inuit Strategy,<sup>11</sup> four broad themes emerge:

### (1) Support Inuit Self-Determination in Cities

To ensure the sustainability of a plan to deliver client-centered services to Inuit in Montréal, it is vital that the knowledge and experience of Inuit as well as Inuit cultural values and institutions are located at the heart of any strategic initiative. Evidence clearly demonstrates that Inuit are better served by culturally relevant services provided by Inuit organizations. In learning from the work of Tungasuvvingat Inuit in Ottawa, investment in developing the capacity of Inuit stakeholders and significant others is a crucial tool in affirming Inuit authority in finding solutions to problems in the city.

### (2) Improve Understanding of Migration Choices and Contexts

Effective policymaking requires practical insight and evidence-based research into the process of migration and the context of social action. Such understanding is sorely lacking within Montréal. More studies are needed that can provide fundamental answers to questions such as: What are the decision-making processes of potential migrants?

<sup>9</sup> Tungasuvvingat Inuit, *National Urban Inuit One Voice Workshop, Ottawa, October 26–27, 2005* (Ottawa: Tungasuvvingat Inuit).

<sup>10</sup> Makivik Corporation, *Montreal Inuit Strategic Community Plan*.

<sup>11</sup> Tungasuvvingat Inuit, "Urban Partnerships: Increasing Inuit Participation in Urban Economies, Project Background – Phase I," 2015, [http://www.manitobainuit.ca/wcm-docs/docs/ti\\_project\\_background\\_-\\_phase\\_i.pdf](http://www.manitobainuit.ca/wcm-docs/docs/ti_project_background_-_phase_i.pdf).



What are the choices people make that most affect their decision to migrate, or not? To what extent do social networks that extend into cities from northern communities motivate people to move? Do such networks enhance an individual's integration into the city?

### **(3) Prioritize Access to Inuit-Specific Services**

Based on significant research and clinical experience, it is generally understood that Inuit respond better to services that integrate the traditional principles and values of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), the Inuit way of “knowing,” into their practice. Health services that are grounded in IQ support individual wellness but also contribute to the collective and communal sense of well-being.<sup>12</sup> Within Montréal, attention must be drawn to Makivik Corporation's community strategy plan for Montréal (published in February 2015). The plan – the most comprehensive document of its kind in the city – includes a number of concrete recommendations for community development via the promotion of an Inuit-specific service model.

### **(4) Increase Knowledge of Best Practices for Inuit in Montréal**

To increase their effectiveness, efforts to improve Inuit employability in the city as well as to increase positive health and educational outcomes amongst urban Inuit, particularly youth, must draw on the strategies and initiatives implemented in other cities like Ottawa and Winnipeg.<sup>13</sup> Investments must be made in supporting initiatives like the proposed National Urban Inuit Strategy that can better coordinate communication between urban Inuit organizations. Greater collaboration between municipal agencies, civic groups, and Inuit organizations must also occur in order to improve the efficiency of service delivery and guard against the duplication of programs.

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<sup>12</sup> Shirley Tagalik, “*Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Supporting Wellness in Inuit Communities in Nunavut, 2009–2010*,” National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, [http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/6/Indigenous%20Knowledge%20in%20Inuit%20Communities%20\(Engilsh%20-%20web\).pdf](http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/6/Indigenous%20Knowledge%20in%20Inuit%20Communities%20(Engilsh%20-%20web).pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Makivik Corporation, *Montreal Inuit Strategic Community Plan*, 22.



## **Part III: Social and Political Issues**

# Stewardship and Sustainable Northern Development in the Context of Overlapping Land Claims Agreements in South-East Hudson Bay

**JOEL P. HEATH AND LUCASSIE ARRAGUTAINAQ**

Arctic Eider Society

## SUMMARY

South-east Hudson Bay is one of the most complex regions of jurisdictional overlap in the Canadian North. This particularly affects Sanikiluaq in Nunavut, Inukjuak, Umiujaq, and Kuujjuaraapik in Nunavik and Chisasibi in the Eeyou Marine Region, who share the marine ecosystem and access to its resources for local subsistence. Sustainable development in any one of these regions therefore requires careful consideration of not only local impacts but also cumulative and downstream impacts on the sea ice and marine ecosystems and the ecological services they provide. It is therefore critical that stakeholders from each region work closely together when planning for sustainable development, particularly when it includes consideration of a wide variety of issues that have been identified as priorities across the region, including polar bear and beluga co-management, contaminants monitoring, and assessing cumulative impacts of existing hydroelectric development projects. The Arctic Eider Society is a registered Canadian charity working with these communities across jurisdictional boundaries to provide training and education, and to facilitate capacity building for Inuit and Cree youth as the next generation of environmental researchers and community leaders. Based on a long history of consultation in the region, this report makes recommendations towards key steps for sustainable northern development, including (1) meaningfully engaging communities; (2) providing capacity for culturally relevant education and training in environmental monitoring and assessment; (3) combining traditional knowledge and Western science towards assessing cumulative impacts of existing development projects; (4) developing energy strategies that work both regionally and locally for northern communities; and (5) building a strong network of communications, cross-regional planning, and collaboration towards environmental stewardship and sustainable development for the region.

## RÉSUMÉ

Le secteur sud-est de la baie d'Hudson est l'une des régions les plus complexes du Nord canadien en raison du chevauchement des compétences administratives. Sanikiluaq, au Nunavut, Inukjuak, Umiujaq et Kuujjuaraapik, au Nunavik, et Chisasibi, dans la région marine d'Eeyou, sont particulièrement affectées, ces collectivités partageant un même écosystème marin et l'accès à ses ressources à des fins de subsistance à l'échelle locale. Le développement durable dans l'une ou l'autre de ces collectivités requiert donc un examen attentif, non seulement sur le plan des répercussions locales mais aussi sur celui de l'incidence cumulative et en aval sur les glaces de mer et les écosystèmes marins ainsi que sur les services écologiques fournis. Il est essentiel que les parties prenantes de chaque région travaillent de concert au moment de la planification du développement durable, particulièrement quand celui-ci tient intègre une diversité de questions jugées prioritaires pour l'ensemble de la région, notamment la cogestion de l'ours polaire et des bélugas, la surveillance des contaminants et l'évaluation des effets cumulatifs des projets hydroélectriques actuels. La Société des Eiders de l'Arctique est un organisme de bienfaisance canadien enregistré qui collabore avec ces collectivités, au-delà des limites administratives, pour former ou sensibiliser et pour contribuer au développement

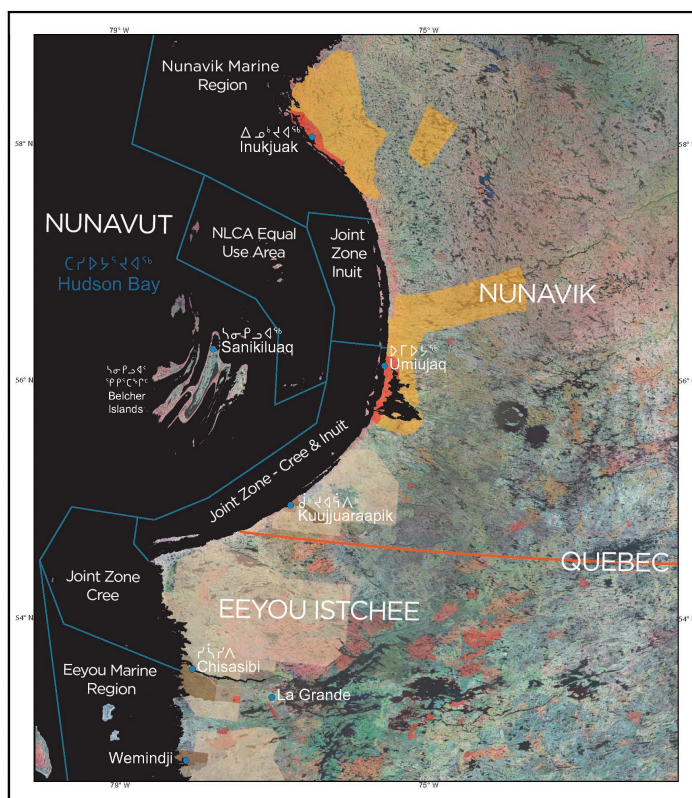
des compétences chez les jeunes Inuits et Cris qui représentent la prochaine génération de chercheurs en environnement et de leaders dans les collectivités. Ce rapport, issu d'un long processus de consultation mené dans la région, avance des recommandations fondées sur des mesures essentielles visant le développement durable dans le Nord, notamment (1) assurer la participation active des collectivités, (2) offrir des moyens permettant de former et de sensibiliser en matière de surveillance et d'évaluation environnementale en tenant compte des particularités culturelles, (3) combiner les connaissances traditionnelles et la science dans le cadre de l'évaluation des effets cumulatifs des projets de développement, (4) mettre au point des stratégies énergétiques efficaces tant sur le plan régional que local pour les collectivités du Nord, et (5) mettre en place un solide réseau de communication, effectuer une planification transrégionale et favoriser la collaboration aux fins de la réglementation et du développement durable de la région en matière d'environnement.

## INTRODUCTION

The Arctic Eider Society is a registered Canadian Charity working with Inuit and Cree in the Hudson Bay region. Our mandate is to provide meaningful opportunities and employment that integrate traditional skills and knowledge with scientific research to address environmental change in sea ice ecosystems, through training, capacity building, education, outreach, and environmental stewardship.

Hudson Bay has played a formative role in Canada's history. As the country's largest drainage basin, it provides critical sea ice habitats for wildlife and the Aboriginal communities that depend on them. Despite long-standing concerns of Inuit and Cree about cumulative impacts of climate change and development projects on sea ice ecosystems, it remains one of the least studied and underfunded Arctic regions, due in part to inter-jurisdictional challenges that have impeded coordinated environmental stewardship. To address these issues, the Arctic Eider Society has established a network of community-driven research and training/education/outreach programs with a goal of turning scientific and traditional knowledge into meaningful action, empowering communities to conduct their own environmental research, and developing the collaborative structure and communications/networking capacity needed to address long-standing concerns and build sustainable solutions for regional stewardship.

The Arctic Eider Society has been following the development of the *Plan Nord* in Québec through participation in the Arctic Circle Conference, an invited presentation at the Symposium on Northern Development in Québec City, and participation in a workshop fund-



**This map of northeast James Bay and southeast Hudson Bay demonstrates the most complex region of inter-jurisdictional overlap in the Canadian Arctic. This includes Nunavut (Nunavut Land Claims Agreement [NLCA]), Québec, Nunavik, Eeyou Istchee, and the regions where various Inuit and Cree overlap agreements are in place between the NLCA, Nunavik Marine Region, and Eeyou Marine Region. This rendering is based on the Nunavik Offshore Claim map, used with permission courtesy of the Makivik Corporation.**

ed by the Government of Québec held at the Canadian Studies Center of the University of Washington, in which our executive director participated as a part of his tenure as the 2014–15 Canada Fulbright Chair in Arctic Studies.

Incorporating insights from these experiences, this report examines details of the proposed *Plan Nord* as well as responses to the plan by Inuit in Nunavik (*Parnasimautik*) and Cree (*Cree Vision of Plan Nord*) of Northern Québec. We interpret these communications in the context of existing knowledge compiled across communities in the Arctic's most complex region of jurisdictional overlap – east Hudson Bay (Nunavik, Eeyou Marine Region, Nunavut, and several overlapping federal jurisdictions), assess potential challenges and opportunities of *Plan Nord*, and make a series of recommendations that strike a balance between sustainable northern development and meeting the needs of Aboriginal communities in the region.

## TRAINING

In addition to suggested training in trades associated with northern development industries, sustainable northern development strategies should incorporate more training opportunities for Inuit and Cree in environmental research and assessment that makes the most of existing skill sets and facilitates use and preservation of traditional and local knowledge about the region.

*Plan Nord* and Inuit and Cree responses share a common goal of providing training opportunities for northerners and building locally meaningful employment and economic opportunities. This is a vision shared by the Arctic Eider Society as well. While *Plan Nord* currently emphasizes training in trades, particularly as it relates to mining and other northern development industries,

we would like to suggest that training in environmental monitoring and research would make the most of existing skill sets and local knowledge and that employment in environmental consulting, review, planning, and assessment will allow for more meaningful engagement of Aboriginal communities in sustainable northern development strategies.

## EDUCATION

Training for careers related to sustainable northern development requires providing a strong education program for northern students and generating interest in future career opportunities and training following graduation. To address these challenges and increase high school retention, Arctic Eider Society is working to develop culturally relevant curriculum for northern schools, in partnership with the Kativik School Board, Youth Fusion, and curriculum developers. Funding is being sought to complete an ambitious Arctic Sea Ice Educational Package that focuses on key fields of math and science lesson plans that build on local interest and skills and knowledge about sea ice, marine, and terrestrial ecosystems. Providing lesson plans in physics, geography, biology, and history that use local examples and are linked to traditional knowledge of sea ice and marine ecosystems provides a compelling way to engage students. Results of local community-driven research programs are being incorporated into lesson plans, allowing students to work with data collected by individuals in their community. Interactive multimedia is critical for visual learners,



**Hunters and youth conducting oceanographic sampling during winter in sea ice habitat.** Photo: Joel Heath.





and providing opportunities for youth to be involved firsthand in ongoing community research programs generates strong interest and relevance for lesson plans. Providing culturally relevant tools for education that engage youth in local initiatives contributes to a strong basis for future training and career development. Additional funding should be made available for youth to participate in ongoing community-driven research projects, so they can see firsthand the possibilities for future careers and the relevance of understanding high school curriculum learning outcomes. This approach is required to generate interest among youth in being the next generation of environmental researchers and community leaders and should be a primary goal of sustainable northern development strategies.

## ENERGY

Bringing renewable energy solutions to northern communities and developments is an important part of planning for sustainable northern development. The majority of northern communities currently burn diesel to generate electricity and heat their homes at considerable economic and environmental costs. Demonstrations of the possibilities for renewable energy such as wind-hydrogen fuel integration at the Raglin Mine are encouraging. *Plan Nord* also indicates that additional hydroelectric developments may be considered. Given outstanding concerns by Inuit and Cree about water management strategies at existing hydroelectric facilities, and how this affects downstream marine and sea ice ecosystems, it will be particularly important to consider the needs and suggestions of communities in planning for renewable energy solutions as a part of sustainable northern development.

It is recommended that extensive consultation and engagement with northern communities and organizations in each jurisdiction be conducted in planning for the transition from diesel power to renewable energy solutions that make sense both locally and regionally.

Serious consideration must be given to concerns of Inuit and Cree communities about existing large-scale hydroelectric facilities and how water management policies can be improved to reduce cumulative impacts on marine and sea ice ecosystems downstream. Possibilities of integrating new energy storage and distribution strategies at existing hydroelectric facilities, such as hydrogen fuel storage/distribution, Advanced Rail Energy Storage (ARES), and other solutions that can facilitate improved water management strategies and reduce the environmental impacts of mid-winter peak demand (which is currently reversing the seasonality of the hydrological cycle) should be considered. These possibilities will also provide infrastructure that will allow greater flexibility for future renewable energy markets and opportunities for more sustainable northern development.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

In addition to climate change, significant economic and industrial developments have increased in the Hudson Bay region, including shipping, mining, and hydroelectric mega-projects. Despite longstanding concerns expressed by Inuit and Cree communities about cumulative impacts and environmental changes, Hudson Bay is one of the least funded and understudied regions of Canada, and the only large ocean system still lacking an integrated governance structure.

A consideration of existing knowledge gaps and outstanding assessment of cumulative impacts in the region is required before planning can begin to assess the sustainability of future northern development.

The challenges facing Hudson Bay are due in part to a lack of infrastructure for coordinated communications and planning. Multiple agencies, provinces, and territories share jurisdiction over Hudson Bay, leading to a lack of cross-re-



gional funding opportunities and making it challenging to coordinate decision making and stewardship. Consensus around the urgency and importance of implementing a stewardship action plan is based on traditional and scientific knowledge compiled through the Hudson Bay Programme (1991–95), Voices from the Bay (1997), the Nunavut Hudson Bay Inter-Agency Working Group/ NTK (2004–09), International Polar Year (IPY) programs (2008–10), and the registered charity established as a legacy to these programs, The Arctic Eider Society (2011–present). This accumulated knowledge provides direct guidance for addressing the source of these issues. Key priorities and indicators have been identified, which include developing capacity for stewardship, communications, knowledge sharing, and networked community-driven research that will facilitate inter-jurisdictional collaboration in Hudson Bay.

Currently, Hudson Bay stewardship has been drifting, and extensive work is needed towards addressing key gaps, building capacity for community networking, and addressing inter-jurisdictional challenges. This is a priority identified specifically as the first course of action needed to “make tangible progress toward sound, ecosystem-based integrated management of the Hudson Bay Inland Sea.”<sup>1</sup>

The necessity of forming an inter-jurisdictional consortium for research and environmental governance in Hudson Bay has arisen many times but has yet to be addressed. Most recently, both provincial and federal review panels outlined this necessity in Condition 8.1 of the Certificate of Authorization for the Rupert River Eastmain 1-A Hydroelectric project in Northern Québec. This Condition and series of Recommendations indicated that a consortium for Hudson Bay be formed based on a structure akin to the International Joint Commission; that primary responsibilities fall to the various government agencies involved (i.e., federal, Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, and Nunavut, as well as Nunavik and the Eeyou Marine Region); that industry would be obliged to participate; and that it would include significant participation by academic researchers and communities, with an emphasis on including traditional knowledge in the process. The lack of specification of any single responsible government agency has to date impeded progress, and as a result Condition 8.1 has not been fulfilled.

In December 2014, the Arctic Eider Society, in partnership with the Government of Nunavut and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, brought together over one hundred stakeholders to plan for the future of environmental stewardship in the region, indicating broad support for forming a Hudson Bay Consortium.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of the meeting, a detailed report was generated, over twelve individuals have joined the Arctic Eider Society Steering Committee, organizations such as the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board and Nunavut Impact Review Board have provided letters of support, and NGOs have offered to help provide matching funds for a secretariat to help leverage funding from regional organizations and governments.

A Hudson Bay Consortium will provide significant capacity to facilitate coordinated planning for sustainable development in this complex region of overlapping jurisdictions. It will provide a forum to work with communities concerned about potential downstream and cumulative impacts of development and will allow consideration of James Bay and Hudson Bay as an integrated ecosystem that provides important ecological services for northern communities. Participation in the development of a Hudson Bay Consortium by the *Plan Nord* Secretariat, Québec government, and regional organizations, including Makivik and the Cree Nation Government, will demonstrate a strong commitment to

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<sup>1</sup> Nunavummi Tasiujarjuamiuguqatigiit Katutjiqatigiingit (NTK), “A Life Vest for Hudson Bay’s Drifting Stewardship,” *Arctic* 61, Suppl. 1 (2008): 35–47.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.hudsonbayconsortium.com](http://www.hudsonbayconsortium.com).

working together to overcome jurisdictional challenges and build sustainable northern development strategies and environmental stewardship for the region.

For more information on the Arctic Eider Society and our initiatives in Hudson Bay, visit [www.arcticeider.com](http://www.arcticeider.com) or contact us at [info@arcticeider.com](mailto:info@arcticeider.com)



# Inuit Language Policy and Education and the Plan Nord: Situating Inuit Policy for Inuit Futures

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## SUMMARY

Nunavik educational policy needs reworking to address the region's poor student outcomes. Any such reworking should address three compatible educational goals: goals: (1) creating greater Inuit employment in the extractive resource industries; (2) producing a more informed, engaged, and critical Inuit public; and (3) ensuring food security and local economic sustainability. These goals can be achieved by (1) providing Inuktitut-medium instruction after grade 3; (2) introducing more experiential learning and intergenerational learning and teaching, with a greater emphasis on Inuit language, culture, and knowledge; and (3) providing for the training and hiring of more Inuit teachers in the years beyond grade 3. Although Nunavut has not historically been an inspiration for Nunavik language and education policy, language policy in Nunavut has made significant advances in recent years and thus now provides useful models for policy development and implementation.

## RÉSUMÉ

Les politiques du Nunavik en matière d'éducation doivent être revues en raison de la faiblesse des résultats scolaires. Une telle refonte doit viser trois objectifs compatibles liés à l'éducation : (1) favoriser l'emploi de la population inuite dans l'industrie de l'extraction des ressources, (2) faire en sorte que cette population soit plus informée, engagée et critique, et (3) assurer la sécurité alimentaire et la viabilité de l'économie locale. Ces objectifs peuvent être atteints par les moyens suivants : (1) offrir une formation en Inuktitut postérieure à la troisième année du primaire, (2) enchâsser davantage d'occasions d'apprentissage et d'enseignement axés sur l'expérience et les échanges intergénérationnels qui accordent une plus grande importance à la langue, à la culture et au savoir inuit, et (3) former et embaucher plus d'enseignants inuits pour les années postérieures à la troisième année du primaire. Bien que le Nunavut ne constitue pas un exemple à suivre pour le Nunavik en ce qui concerne les politiques sur la langue et l'éducation, sa politique linguistique a considérablement progressé au cours des dernières années, si bien qu'il fournit dorénavant des modèles utiles à l'élaboration et à la mise en œuvre de politiques.

## INTRODUCTION

A pressing concern for Nunavik is its poor student outcomes. As *La Presse* reported in 2012, the graduation rate for Nunavik high school students was only 17.8 percent, far lower than the 72.3 percent rate for the rest of Québec.<sup>1</sup> This stark difference highlights the need to spur discussion of Nunavik educational policy, particularly given the Arctic's changing economic and environmental conditions and the initiatives underway to renew the Québec-Nunavik relationship.

Framing language policy and education in historical, political, economic, and cultural terms suggests a number of ways to pursue educational goals in Nunavik. Most importantly, improving educational outcomes requires attending

<sup>1</sup> Pascale Breton, "The Inuit Tragedy: Nunavik Drops Out," *Nunatsiaq News*, March 2, 2012, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674the\\_inuit\\_tragedy\\_nunavik\\_drops\\_out/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674the_inuit_tragedy_nunavik_drops_out/). This is an English translation of "La tragédie inuite: Le Nunavik décroche," *La Presse*, February 26, 2012.

to the needs of an increasingly diverse Inuit population. This diversity lies not only in individual goals and ambitions, but in the social and psychological diversity, home life experiences, cognitive aptitudes, and special needs that prompt a broader conception of how best to deliver classroom pedagogy and curriculum.

## BACKGROUND: GOALS FOR NUNAVIK EDUCATION

Arguably, the key question for guiding this policy is how it can take into account the need not only for greater Inuit participation in the market economy but also for Inuit-centered language learning and teaching, community integration and well-being, and cultural and economic sustainability. This suggests the following three goals for education:

- **Creating greater Inuit employment in the extractive resource industries.** Improved secondary and post-secondary outcomes are necessary for Inuit to obtain higher paying and sustainable jobs in the resource industries.
- **Producing a more informed, engaged, and critical Inuit public.** Improved education in both Inuit and non-Inuit ways is necessary for Inuit to speak to and negotiate more effectively with industry and governments, particularly in regard to changing economic and environmental conditions. Improved post-secondary education is crucial for producing an Inuit leadership that is both informed and skilled at communicating, in order to represent and advance Inuit interests in environmental reviews and other negotiations in the face of new developments.
- **Ensuring food security and local economic sustainability.** This goal, which includes maintaining Inuit subsistence knowledge and practices, is crucial for maintaining Inuit language and culture, health, and social well-being.

These three goals are not incompatible. As Louis-Jacques Dorais notes, there are two contrasting but co-existing conceptions of modern Inuit life, captured by the Inuit terms *maqainniq* (“going on the land”) and *kiinaujaliurutiit* (“means for making money”). These two conceptions involve, on the one hand, activities essential to Inuit identity and, on the other, activities using skills “introduced, taught, and controlled by White people.”<sup>2</sup> Both knowledge systems could be taught in schools.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NUNAVIK EDUCATIONAL POLICY

In order to improve outcomes, Nunavik educational policy needs reworking.

- Providing Inuktitut-medium instruction after grade 3 and introducing more experiential learning and intergenerational learning and teaching, with a greater emphasis on Inuit language, culture, and knowledge would be important means of providing pedagogically sound ways to involve families, children, and the community in learning by doing.
- The training and hiring of more Inuit teachers in the years beyond grade 3 would also address the current imbalance between Inuit (Inuktitut) and southern (English and French) approaches to teaching and learning.

This policy position also meshes with recent ones taken in Québec’s *Plan Nord* and the Inuit-driven *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*. According to the former, money is to be devoted to education and training for northern and Indigenous residents – although *Plan Nord* raises questions about how much money will actually flow to Inuit, what kinds of

<sup>2</sup> Louis-Jacques Dorais, “Language, Identity and Integration in the Canadian Arctic,” *North Atlantic Studies* 3, no. 1 (1991): 23, cited in Donna Patrick, *Language, Politics, and Social Interaction in an Inuit Community* (Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter Press, 2003).

education and training programs are envisioned, and whether it takes into account issues such as the sustainability of Inuit language, culture, and values. *Parnasimautik*, by contrast, addresses the question of Inuktitut's vitality and how it can be promoted. The report suggests looking to Nunavut, where an Inuktitut "place of learning" is being created.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, Nunavut has not historically been a model for Nunavik language and education policy, as it was Nunavik that drove Inuktitut education initiatives. In particular, Inuktitut-medium schooling was introduced in Northern Québec as early as 1964 and a push for more Inuit teacher-training began in the 1970s,<sup>4</sup> with the Kativik School Board (KSB) playing a key role in both developments. Yet current policy has been in place since the KSB's beginnings, and seems to require some rethinking.

In Nunavut, language policy has made significant advances in recent years, largely in response to the 2006 Berger Report, which played a prominent role in the negotiation of a contract to ensure proper implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement for the period 2003 to 2013, and, in particular, highlighted the need both for more Inuit in the territory's civil service, and for greater efforts to be made to maintain and use Inuktitut.<sup>5</sup> A key recommendation of this report was to increase Inuktitut-medium education beyond grades 2 or 3.

The result of this call for increased "official" Inuktitut use has been the introduction of laws and policies such as the 2008 Official Languages Act and Inuit Language Protection Act and the 2012 Uqausivut, a comprehensive plan to coordinate various government language programs and services.<sup>6</sup> Ongoing projects include a proposed Arctic university and language standardization.<sup>7</sup> As regards the latter, consultations by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) in 2015 have been aimed at establishing a common writing system for Inuktitut.<sup>8</sup> Such a system is seen as crucial for sharing texts across Inuit-speaking regions and for increasing the availability of written resources in curricula development, which would benefit Inuktitut language teaching and learning.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

More resources, including human resources, are needed to improve educational outcomes in Nunavik, to better address student needs and to spur improved curriculum development and delivery. However, attention first needs to be made at the policy level. This poses many challenges, in large part because of the many factors involved in achieving successful educational outcomes, such as students' socioeconomic background, schools' financial resources and respect for local cultures and languages, teachers' and administrators' leadership, and parental and community schooling experiences and involvement in the school. Challenges also arise from the dynamics of the Arctic, including the troubling legacies of settlement and colonization and the complex issues associated with resource extraction and climate change, and their impact on Inuit social relations, culture, health, housing, and social well-being.

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<sup>3</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, November 14, 2014, 20, <http://www.parnasimautik.com/2014-consultation-report/>.

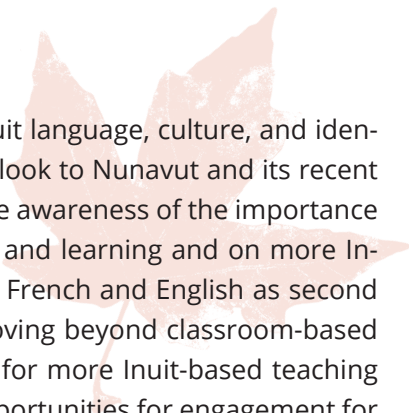
<sup>4</sup> See Donna Patrick and Perry Shearwood, "The Roots of Inuktitut Bilingual Education," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 19 (1999): 249–62; and Donna Patrick, "Women and Work in Arctic Quebec: Inuktitut Language Programmes and Inuit Education," *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien: Arbeit und Arbeitswelt* 35, no. 1 (1999): 163–74.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Berger, *Conciliator's Final Report, 1 March 2006, "The Nunavut Project,"* Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100030982/1100100030985>.

<sup>6</sup> Stéphane Cloutier, *Uqausivut: Our Language Implementing Made-in-Nunavut Language Legislation*, Proceedings from the XVII Foundation of Endangered Languages Conference, Carleton University, Ottawa, 2013, 12–15.

<sup>7</sup> On the university proposal, see "Talks Continue on Nunavut University, Plans Expected in Spring" CBC, March 12, 2015; <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/talks-continue-on-nunavut-university-plans-expected-in-spring-1.2992074?cmp=rss>. On language standardization, see, e.g., Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, *The Standardization of Inuktitut in the Education System in Nunavut* (MA thesis, University of Prince Edward Island, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> See Sarah Rogers, "ITK Gears up for Iqaluit Language Summit," *Nunatsiaq Online*, August 12, 2015, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674itk\\_gears\\_up\\_for\\_iqaluit\\_language\\_summit/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674itk_gears_up_for_iqaluit_language_summit/).



The goal of increased employment of Inuit, on the one hand, and the retention of Inuit language, culture, and identity, on the other, need not be incompatible. One way to meet policy challenges is to look to Nunavut and its recent language and education policy developments. Nunavik Inuit have been seeking to raise awareness of the importance of the Inuit language.<sup>9</sup> Yet a greater focus on increasing Inuktitut language teaching and learning and on more Inuit-centered pedagogies would serve to build a stronger foundation for education in French and English as second and third languages. Such a move makes both pedagogical and economic sense. Moving beyond classroom-based learning dominated by English and French would mean hiring more Inuit educators for more Inuit-based teaching and learning. Ultimately, it would mean more community involvement and greater opportunities for engagement for those disadvantaged by the current system.

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<sup>9</sup> See Avataq, *Illirijavut: That Which We Treasure*. Inuktitut Stakeholders' Document, Inuktituurniup Saturtaugasuarininga, Avataq Cultural Institute, June 2012, [http://www.krg.ca/images/stories/docs/Parnasimautik/Additional%20Documentation/Illirijavut\\_That\\_Which\\_We\\_Treasure.pdf](http://www.krg.ca/images/stories/docs/Parnasimautik/Additional%20Documentation/Illirijavut_That_Which_We_Treasure.pdf).



# Ensuring Country Food Access for a Food Secure Future in Nunavik

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## SUMMARY

Food insecurity, or inadequate food access, remains prevalent throughout the Canadian Arctic, and Nunavik is no exception. According to a recent study, in one community in Nunavik, fully 41 percent of households are food insecure, with 21 percent of households having very low food security. Food insecurity in Nunavik, as measured by standard survey modules, is closely associated with poverty. However, these standard methods do not adequately account for the importance of traditional wild caught or gathered “country” foods for the well-being of Nunavimmiut (the Inuit of Nunavik), or for the non-monetary determinants of access to traditional foods. Moving towards a solution of this issue will not only require poverty reduction measures but holistic, community-based initiatives that recognize the importance of country food and traditional knowledge in creating Inuit food security.

## RÉSUMÉ

L'insécurité alimentaire, soit l'accès inadéquat aux aliments, continue de sévir sur tout le territoire arctique canadien, le Nunavik ne faisant pas exception. Selon une étude récente, l'insécurité alimentaire absolue affecte 41 p. 100 des ménages d'une collectivité du Nunavik et une très faible sécurité alimentaire caractérise 21 p. 100 des ménages. L'insécurité alimentaire au Nunavik, telle que mesurée par des enquêtes de recherche standard, est étroitement liée à la pauvreté. Cependant, ces méthodes ne rendent pas adéquatement compte de l'importance des captures résultant des activités traditionnelles de chasse et de cueillette dans le bien-être des Nunavimmiuts (Inuits du Nunavik) ni des déterminants non monétaires de l'accès aux aliments traditionnels. La recherche d'une solution au problème de l'insécurité alimentaire chez les Inuits exige plus que des mesures de réduction de la pauvreté : il faut aussi mettre en œuvre des initiatives holistiques issues des collectivités qui reconnaissent l'importance des aliments locaux et des savoirs traditionnels.

## INTRODUCTION

Food security is defined as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life,” while its corollary, food insecurity, is generally defined as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in culturally appropriate ways.”<sup>1</sup> This definition of food security, along with a set of survey tools originally designed by the USDA, has been widely used as the basis for cross-cultural assessments of the adequacy of food access, including among Inuit in Nunavik. This report examines the current state of food security in Nunavik, describes distinctive aspects of the problem specific to the region, and offers insights that reflect the regional socioeconomic context.

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Bickel et al., *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000* (Alexandria, VA: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2000), 6.

## CURRENT STATE OF FOOD SECURITY IN NUNAVIK

According to the 2004 region-wide Nunavik Health Survey, 24 percent of Nunavimmiut households surveyed did not have enough to eat in the house during the month before the survey.<sup>2</sup> A more recent study conducted in Kangiqsujuaq in 2013–14 found that 20 percent of Kangiqsujuaq households had “low food security,” meaning they had been worried about their ability to access food during the twelve months preceding the survey, while 21 percent of households had “very low food security,” meaning that in at least three or four of the past twelve months, adults in the household had reduced their food intake because they could not obtain the food they needed.<sup>3</sup> In comparison, a 2002 survey conducted in Kangiqsujuaq concluded that 33 percent of households had “low food security,” while 7 percent were classified as “very low food security.”<sup>4</sup> Consequently, while the overall rate of food insecurity in Kangiqsujuaq has not changed substantially over the past decade, the severity of the problem among food insecure households may have increased. The next Nunavik health survey, planned for 2017, will provide information on changes in the prevalence of food security throughout the region over the last decade.

## FACTORS AFFECTING FOOD SECURITY IN NUNAVIK

According to the aforementioned studies, food insecurity among Nunavimmiut is associated with lower household income, as well as with larger household size. Single female-headed households tend to have lower food security, and more educated households tend to have higher food security. However, the recent data for Kangiqsujuaq suggest that these trends can be attributed to differences in household income. Improving education and training to enable Nunavimmiut to fill existing local jobs in education, health services, and government should be a priority for poverty reduction.<sup>5</sup> The high cost of food in Nunavik is another important contributing factor to the prevalence of food insecurity among lower-income Nunavimmiut. A broad range of cost-of-living reduction measures implemented by the Kativik Regional Government in April 2014 may help address this issue, and studies to evaluate their effectiveness are in progress.<sup>6</sup>

However, cost-of-living and income represent only one dimension of food security in Nunavik. Other critical factors affecting the food security of Nunavimmiut may include substance abuse behaviours, which are an important determinant of food security among Inuit in Nunavut.<sup>7</sup> The role of substance abuse behaviours in affecting food security in Nunavik has been inadequately examined. Limited knowledge of cooking techniques and budgeting skills may also be a barrier to food security for some Inuit families, by making it difficult to choose and prepare affordable foods.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, food access in Nunavik differs in fundamental ways from southern Québec because of the continued importance of traditional subsistence harvesting in northern settlements.<sup>9</sup> Traditional or “country” foods represent-

<sup>2</sup> Carole Blanchet and Louis Rochette, *Nutrition and Food Consumption among the Inuit of Nunavik. Nunavik Inuit Health Survey 2004, Qanuipitaa? How Are We?* (Québec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec and Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, 2008), 71.

<sup>3</sup> Elspeth Ready, unpublished data.

<sup>4</sup> Judith Lawn and Dan Harvey, *Nutrition and Food Security in Kangiqsujuaq, Nunavik. Baseline Survey for the Food Mail Pilot Project* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2004), 23.

<sup>5</sup> Miaji Pilurttut, telephone interview with author, September 21, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> “Nunavik Cost-of-living Reduction Measures,” Kativik Regional Government, accessed September 18, 2015, <http://www.krg.ca/en/cost-of-living-program>; “Update, April–June 2015: Nunivaat – Nunavik Statistics Program,” Kativik Regional Government, accessed September 23, 2015, <http://www.krg.ca/en/news/1699-update-apriljune-2015-nunivaat-nunavik-statistics-program>.

<sup>7</sup> James D. Ford and Maude Beaumier, “Feeding the Family during Times of Stress: Experience and Determinants of Food Insecurity in an Inuit Community,” *Geographical Journal* 177, no. 1 (2011): 54.

<sup>8</sup> Léa Laflamme, “La sécurité alimentaire selon la perspective d’Inuit du Nunavik” (master’s thesis, Université Laval, 2014), 68.

<sup>9</sup> Miriam T. Harder and George W. Wenzel, “Inuit Subsistence, Social Economy and Food Security in Clyde River, Nunavut,” *Arctic* 65, no. 3 (2012): 305.

ed an average of 16 percent of the daily calories consumed by participants in the 2004 Nunavik Health Survey. In 2013–14, 61 percent of Inuit households surveyed in Kangiqsujuaq reported consuming country food at least three times a week, with 20 percent of households reporting that they ate country food daily.<sup>10</sup> However, 52 percent of Kangiqsujuarmit indicated that “the country food they had did not last,” and 53 percent indicated that “they could not get the foods they wanted to eat because they lacked the resources needed to hunt, fish, gather or buy food.”<sup>11</sup> Consequently, concern about access to country foods is even more prevalent among Kangiqsujuarmit than concern about access to store foods. Access to country foods is important not only for their significant contribution to Inuit nutrition,<sup>12</sup> but also for their freshness and quality relative to imported foods, and for their social and cultural value.

Despite some assistance from local hunter support programs, country food harvesters in Nunavik are typically not remunerated for their work or for the food they produce, which means that the ability of many harvesters to provide country food is constrained by their need to support themselves financially through employment in the community. Conversely, unemployed harvesters often cannot afford the equipment and supplies necessary for harvesting, such as snowmobiles and gasoline. Providing harvesters with better financial support will be necessary to ensure continued access to country foods for Nunavimmiut. Compensation for harvesters, and the development of harvesting as a viable career path for Nunavimmiut, in fact represents an unfulfilled goal of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA).<sup>13</sup>



**Crowds of people wait for shares of meat and *mattaq* (whale skin) and help butcher the whales after a beluga hunt in Kangiqsujuaq. Photo: Elspeth Ready, 2012.**



**Arctic char drying at a summer camp near Kangiqsujuaq. Arctic char, whether fresh, frozen, or dried, is a staple for Inuit families year round. Photo: Elspeth Ready, 2013.**

<sup>10</sup> Elspeth Ready, unpublished data.

<sup>11</sup> Ready, “Problems in the Assessment of Inuit Food Security.”

<sup>12</sup> Harriet V. Kuhnlein et al., “Unique Patterns of Dietary Adequacy in Three Cultures of Canadian Arctic Indigenous Peoples,” *Public Health Nutrition* 11, no. 4 (2007): 352.

<sup>13</sup> Adam Gardner, “Inuit Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Support Program. Program Evaluation,” report presented at the Kativik Regional Government Council Meeting, September 2015.



Several non-economic factors also affect country food access. These include environmental variability and unpredictability, the knowledge and skill of hunters, and food sharing networks. Environmental changes affecting country food access, such as changed ice conditions, have been observed by Inuit throughout Nunavik.<sup>14</sup> For example, unusual weather patterns in Kangiqsujuaq resulted in poor berry harvests in 2015.<sup>15</sup> While environmental variability cannot be controlled, knowledgeable harvesters may be more likely to be successful (and to remain safe) even in challenging conditions.<sup>16</sup> However, the demands of formal education and wage labour, the availability of alternative forms of recreation, and changing family life mean that traditional knowledge is eroding among younger generations of Inuit.<sup>17</sup> To ensure continued availability of traditional foods, communities in Nunavik will have to be proactive in helping young Inuit acquire traditional land skills. New cultural programs piloted by the Kativik School Board in Kangiqsujuaq, Quaqtaq, Akulivik, and Umiujaq in 2014–15 represent an important step forwards in better integrating traditional knowledge into formal schooling. However, more intensive training opportunities for young Nunavimmiut interested in pursuing harvesting as a vocation are also necessary.



**A traditional meal of *mattaq* (whale skin), *pitsiq* (dried fish), and *nikku* (dried meat, in this case beluga), accompanied by soy sauce and seasoning salt. While some Inuit families eat these foods regularly, others are only able to have some country foods, particularly beluga, a couple times a year.**

*Photo: Elspeth Ready, 2013.*

## UNDERSTANDING NORTHERN FOOD SECURITY

So, what defines food security for Nunavimmiut? Because several diverse factors affect access to store and country food in northern settlements, the experience of food insecurity is not the same for all Nunavimmiut.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, country food access represents a critical dimension of food security for Inuit. However, country food access is not measured by standard household food security assessment tools.<sup>19</sup> For Nunavimmiut, food security not only requires adequate financial resources relative to the cost of living, knowledge about store foods, and healthy lifestyles, but it also requires traditional knowledge, social support networks, and the ability to use these physical, human, and social resources to successfully manage the uncertainty of subsistence harvesting. Food security and access to country food are a major focus of the recent *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, which outlines the development priorities of Nunavimmiut, but do not figure prominently in the 2015–2020 *Plan Nord Action Plan*.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The Communities of Ivujivik, Puvirnituq and Kangiqsujuaq et al., *Unikkaaqatigiit. Putting the Human Face on Climate Change: Perspectives from Nunavik* (Ottawa: Joint Publications of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Nasivik Centre for Inuit Health and Changing Environments at Université Laval and the Ajunnginiq Centre at the National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2005); Martin Tremblay et al., "Climate Change in Northern Quebec: Adaptation Strategies from Community-Based Research," *Arctic* 61, Suppl. 1 (2008): 27–34.

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Philie, email message to author, September 3, 2015; Yaaka Yaaka, telephone interview with author, September 22, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> James D. Ford et al., "Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change in the Arctic: The Case of Nunavut, Canada," *Arctic* 60, no. 2 (2007): 155–57.

<sup>17</sup> Richard G. Condon, Peter Collings, and George Wenzel, "The Best Part of Life: Subsistence Hunting, Ethnicity, and Economic Adaptation among Young Adult Inuit Males," *Arctic* 48, no. 1 (1995): 31–46; Tristan Pearce et al., "Transmission of Environmental Knowledge and Land Skills among Inuit Men in Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories, Canada," *Human Ecology* 39 (2011): 271–88.

<sup>18</sup> Laflamme, "Sécurité alimentaire," 86.

<sup>19</sup> Elspeth Ready, unpublished data.

<sup>20</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report: On the Consultations Carried Out with Nunavik Inuit in 2013*, November 14, 2014, [http://www.parnasimautik.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Parnasimautik-consultation-report-v2014\\_11\\_14-eng.pdf](http://www.parnasimautik.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Parnasimautik-consultation-report-v2014_11_14-eng.pdf); Gouvernement du Québec, Secrétariat au *Plan Nord*, *The Plan Nord toward 2035, 2015–2020 Action Plan*, accessed October 3, 2015, [http://plannord.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Synthese\\_PN\\_EN\\_IMP.pdf](http://plannord.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Synthese_PN_EN_IMP.pdf).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Poverty reduction, through improved training and employment opportunities and cost of living reductions, is a priority for improving access to store food and to hunting equipment and supplies. However, because of the importance of country food for Inuit nutrition and cultural well-being, these economic measures alone will not guarantee a food-secure future for Nunavimmiut. To address this issue, we will first of all require more rigorous, quantitative assessments of access to country foods to better establish a baseline of measurement. Recent research on food security and subsistence assessments by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game may provide practical guidance on this issue.<sup>21</sup> Improving financial support for hunters, and developing opportunities for young Nunavimmiut to learn traditional harvesting skills, including a more central role for traditional skills in the school curriculum, will be essential for ensuring continued access to country foods in the future. Given the importance of local knowledge and relationships to these issues, community-based initiatives that reflect local priorities and that encourage self-determination may be most likely to meet the needs of Nunavimmiut.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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<sup>21</sup> James S. Magdanz et al., "Subsistence harvests in Northwest Alaska, Kivalina and Noatak, 2007," technical paper no. 354, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence, Kotzebue, 2007.

# Changing Contexts and Roles of Regional Public Health Knowledge and Surveys in Nunavik

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## SUMMARY

This brief policy note presents the broad strokes of the history of knowledge of Inuit health and well-being since the 1950s in Nunavik. Partial knowledge of Inuit population health by outside agencies, coupled with a lack of avenues for Inuit to assert their interests in policy, allowed decisions deleterious to Inuit families and communities to be made. With the signing of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975, Inuit leadership and decision making has increased, and health infrastructure has been put in place. The three health surveys undertaken in the post-JBNQA era have progressively become more responsive to Inuit needs and are more directly controlled by Inuit organizations. This history is relevant to the implementation of *Plan Nord*, which, while it addresses in the conditions of health in Indigenous communities in a general way, does not offer a fully realized health policy framework. The upcoming Qanuillirpita<sup>1</sup> 2017 regional health survey offers an unprecedented chance to understand Inuit health in all its complexity and to develop local capacity to monitor change related to development and adapt accordingly. Further, drawing from recent recommendations put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this report argues that linking northern economic development to measurable community health outcomes is a laudable and logical outgrowth of the history of health surveys.

## RÉSUMÉ

Cette brève note d'orientation dépeint, sur un plan général, l'histoire des connaissances sur la santé et le bien-être de la population inuite du Nunavik depuis les années 1950. La connaissance partielle de la santé de cette population par les entités externes, jumelée à l'insuffisance des possibilités des Inuits de faire valoir leurs intérêts quant aux politiques, a donné lieu à des décisions préjudiciables pour les familles et communautés inuites. La ratification de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois (CBJNQ) en 1975 a favorisé la prééminence et le rôle de décideur des Inuits et a entraîné la mise en place d'une infrastructure de la santé. Progressivement, les trois enquêtes sur la santé menées après la ratification de la Convention sont devenues plus à l'écoute des besoins de la population et passées sous la gouverne directe d'organismes inuits. Ce pan de l'histoire est pertinent à la mise en œuvre du Plan Nord qui – bien qu'il tienne compte des conditions sanitaires des communautés autochtones dans une perspective globale – n'offre aucun cadre stratégique pleinement réalisé en matière de santé. L'enquête Qanuillirpita<sup>2</sup> de 2017, dont le rapport est à venir, offre une occasion sans précédent de comprendre la santé des Inuits dans toute sa complexité et d'accroître les capacités locales pour assurer la surveillance des changements associés au développement et ainsi les adapter en conséquence. Par ailleurs, sur la base des recommandations récemment avancées par la Commission de vérité et de réconciliation, ce rapport soutient que les enquêtes sur la santé établissent depuis longtemps un lien louable et logique entre le développement économique du Nord et l'état de santé mesurable dans les communautés.

<sup>1</sup> Qanuillirpita roughly translates to "How are we doing now?" in Inuktitut. This study is a follow-up to the Qanuipita of 2004, which means, logically, "How are we doing?"

<sup>2</sup> Qanuillirpita signifie « Comment allons-nous maintenant? » en Inuktitut. Cette enquête fait suite à l'enquête Qanuipita rendue publique en 2004, laquelle signifie « Comment allons-nous? ».



## INTRODUCTION

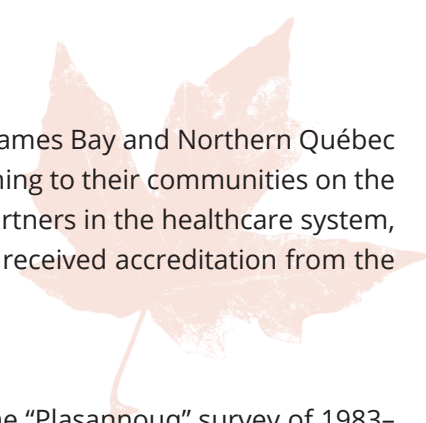
Research unequivocally demonstrates that, compared to Canadians generally, Inuit suffer disproportionately from a range of chronic and communicable diseases that result from a number of conditions particular to northern communities, including overcrowded housing, social exclusion, poverty, historical displacement, and disempowerment. Problems as diverse as suicide, nutritional insecurity, interpersonal violence, tuberculosis, and sexual abuse emerge from these conditions and exact a heavy toll. Despite these major challenges, Inuit lives today are also marked by self-reliance, strength of family, resilience in the face of hardship, pride in culture and traditions, linguistic vitality, faith, generosity, and love. The health of Inuit communities is a dialogue between the challenges people face and the human, physical, material, cultural, and social resources at their disposal to mitigate these challenges. This report presents a brief overview of population and community health information and policy in Northern Québec from the 1950s until today. As we look to the future of health research in Nunavik, it is possible to envision a system of community-based health and well-being monitoring that is linked to economic development in the North and beyond.

## CONTEXT OF POPULATION HEALTH STUDIES

The living conditions, health, and social situation of Inuit have been an ongoing, if occasional, concern of the federal and Québec governments for many years. Inuit health status has been a source of national concern and, at times, shame for close to a century. That Inuit could live in such a seemingly unforgiving environment has long driven a scientific interest in their physiology, cultural ecology, lifestyle, diet, kinship, and so on. In the post-Second World War era, authority over Inuit health and environmental conditions came under the purview of provincial and federal governments.

Concerns about the environment fueled government decisions that impacted Inuit lives in quite profound ways. In the mid-1950s, for example, several families from the Hudson Bay coast of Québec were relocated to Grise Fiord, a decision motivated by questions about the availability of country food in Northern Québec. In the 1950s and 1960s, concerns about rabies in nascent communities were said to be behind the decision to kill many of the dogs that people depended upon for transportation. This action reduced mobility and hunting efficiency, encouraged sedentarization in informal communities, and increased dependency on centralized services. Finally, concerns for maternal and infant health were the basis for a program of near universal evacuation of pregnant women to southern hospitals for birth in the 1970s and 1980s – an experience that isolated them from their families at a critical moment and undermined the social support that existed in Inuit families. Each of these examples resulted in significant and unforeseen social repercussions. These interventions in fact worsened individual and collective health. Together, these examples speak to the need for coherent and engaged processes of health information-gathering and decision making that involves the Inuit. In retrospect, the thirty or so years following the Second World War seem to be characterized by uncoordinated and poorly informed decisions that reflected the general lack of infrastructure in Northern Québec and the marginalization of Inuit perspectives in decision making that affected their lives.

These examples highlight the importance of having systematic data on Inuit health status available in order to orient policy and programming in a way that does more than simply respond to crisis. The examples also show that, while objective health data is required to make broad comparisons between populations, responses to the disparities must be generated from within an Inuit cultural and social context if the actions taken are to be effective. This is the overarching logic for the development of institutions of governance at a regional level and for development of public health research, program, and evaluation capacity, specifically. One need only look to the growth of midwifery programs in Nunavik to see the positive effects of empowerment. One of the first health initiatives that emerged out of the de-



velopment of regional health infrastructure following the structure provided by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement involved Inuit women and families repatriating the responsibility for birthing to their communities on the Hudson Bay coast.<sup>3</sup> They did this in conjunction with supportive and collaborative partners in the healthcare system, and today birthing centers exist in four communities, and nine Inuit midwives have received accreditation from the Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec.<sup>4</sup>

## HEALTH INFORMATION IN THE POST-JBNQA PERIOD

Three health surveys have been undertaken in Nunavik since the 1980s. First was the “Plasannouq” survey of 1983–84, conducted by researchers at the Université de Montréal. Summary results of the survey were released in 1992.<sup>5</sup> Second, known as the “Santé Québec” survey, was undertaken by Santé Québec, the Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ), Nunavik Board of Health and Social Services (NBHSS), Université Laval, and other academic partners in 1992.<sup>6</sup> The Qanuipitaa survey, conducted by many of the same partners as the 1992 survey, followed in 2004.<sup>7</sup> With each iteration, the surveys have grown in scope and logistical complexity. They require years of planning, fundraising, and instrument development. While each survey involved Inuit organizations in different ways, the Qanuipitaa survey marked a turning point in collaboration between Inuit organizations, universities, and federal and provincial governments. Beginning with Nunavik, the Qanuipitaa survey was ultimately conducted in all Inuit regions of Canada through the auspices of the International Polar Year, and provided an unparalleled assessment of health throughout the Arctic.

The surveys have identified a number of critical health issues specific to the North – environmental contaminants, dietary shifts, and housing overcrowding among them. The surveys guide the development of health infrastructure, programming and planning, and provide immediate access to some screening tools that are otherwise unavailable in most communities. With each iteration, the health of the Nunavik Inuit population has been described with increased detail and sophistication. The survey results have clearly demonstrated the unique health issues and burdens that Inuit communities face and point to the very significant and growing health disparities between Inuit and non-Inuit populations of Québec. For example, the impacts of primary resource extraction industries on communities and individuals have been shown to be complex and serious. Areas impacted include food harvesting, traditional lifestyle, family dynamics, intra- and inter-family resource sharing, and a host of other issues.

## HEALTH SURVEY INFORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

With the advent of a renewed *Plan Nord*, the health status of Inuit stands out as a major policy and practice issue that will require concerted effort to begin to address. As a framework document, *Plan Nord* provides general direction that includes aspects of health and well-being but, because the geography of the *Plan Nord* region is so physically vast and culturally diverse, the Plan cannot take into account the variation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations and differences between the Indigenous communities involved, much less the variation within the Inuit population.

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<sup>3</sup> Brenda Epoo, Jennie Stonier, Vicki Van Wagner, and Evelyn Harney, “Learning Midwifery in Nunavik: Community Based Education for Inuit Midwives,” *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 10, no. 3 (2012): 283–300, <http://www.pimatisiwin.com/online/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/03EpooStonier.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> *Nunatsiqa News*, “Quebec Order Certifies Three Nunavik Midwives,” October 14, 2015, [http://www.nunatsiqaonline.ca/stories/article/65674quebec\\_order\\_certifies\\_three\\_nunavim-miut\\_midwives/](http://www.nunatsiqaonline.ca/stories/article/65674quebec_order_certifies_three_nunavim-miut_midwives/).

<sup>5</sup> Carole Blanchet, Daniel Cousineau, Peter M. Foggin, and Pierre Lafontaine, *Highlights of the Health Survey Conducted among the Inuit of Northern Quebec 1983–84* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Mireille Jetté, ed. *A Health Profile of the Inuit: Report of the Santé Québec Health Survey among the Inuit of Nunavik* (Montréal: Santé Québec, Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux, gouvernement du Québec, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> M. Ancil, *Survey Highlights. Nunavik Inuit Health Survey 2004, Qanuipitaa? How Are We?* (Québec: INSPQ and NRBHSS, 2008).

In contrast to the broad scale of the *Plan Nord*, the *Parnasimautik Consultation Report* details many of the health and social well-being issues facing Inuit, and places them within a regional political development and Inuit control framework.<sup>8</sup> The *Parnasimautik* report is also quite clear that improvements in health can result when the benefits of economic development are shared equitably. The challenge, then, is to find ways to evaluate the impact of development on Inuit health and well-being, and to do so in a way that makes sense in the Inuit experience of health. It is within this context that a new regional health survey has been initiated. The Qanuilirpitaa 2017 survey departs in a number of very significant ways from the previous surveys; it was initiated and is being led by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS). Established in the 1980s, the NRBHSS has steadily built operational capacity, taken responsibility for administering provincial health programming, and developed unique, culturally specific initiatives tailored to the population. While the early surveys could be characterized as researcher-driven, Qanuipitaa had a shared administrative structure, and the upcoming Qanuilirpitaa is being undertaken as a full partnership of equals between the regional board, the INSPQ, and the academic research community. Among the first innovations of the upcoming survey will be the development of an entirely new community well-being component. This will be attempted using multiple methods of inquiry – qualitative, quantitative, and Indigenous – to document the quality of community life from an Inuit perspective. The challenge of the Qanuilirpitaa survey is to build a research agenda, tools, and process that reflect Inuit conceptions and experiences of health and community while also providing the potential for cross-cultural comprehension and comparability over time. The study will have to negotiate a path through unique situations of Nunavik Inuit communities and the aspects of community well-being that are common to all people.

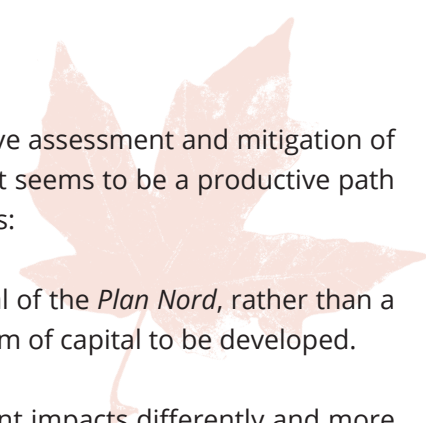
## **CONCLUSION: BEYOND MEASURING DISPARITY AND TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

The relationship between knowledge and policy has evolved over time from a haphazard approach of mixed federal and provincial responsibilities, to a science-driven agenda led by provincial authorities with Inuit collaboration, to a partnership engagement model where Inuit institutions control the research agenda. This is not to say that policy and programming now flows effortlessly from data. Far from it. There are many constraints on the development of policy and its implementation. Nonetheless, in the documents reviewed here, there is an emerging sense that development needs to be situated within the framework of Inuit experience so that impacts on local well-being may be measurable. In thinking about the real impact that monitoring of collective health can have on Inuit lives, we look to the recently released Commission on Truth and Reconciliation report. Among its ninety-four recommendations, two directly address the situation we are in at this time:

18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
19. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Makivik Corporation et al., *Parnasimautik Consultation Report*, November 14, 2014, <http://www.parnasimautik.com/2014-consultation-report/>.

<sup>9</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (Winnipeg, MB: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 2–3, [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf).



While the appeal to the federal government is moot in Nunavik, the spirit of proactive assessment and mitigation of health disparities in the context of acknowledged mistakes and injustices of the past seems to be a productive path forward. With this in mind, this report calls for the following policy recommendations:

- (1) Integrate improvement in community health and well-being as an integral goal of the *Plan Nord*, rather than a presumed byproduct of economy. In this light, health may be considered a form of capital to be developed.
- (2) The *Parnasimautik* report is quite specific on how Inuit may suffer development impacts differently and more intensively than non-Inuit. Consequently, any health development goals should reflect Inuit experience.
- (3) Work with regional and community level organizations to develop the mechanisms and tools to undertake continuous and proactive community health monitoring that reflects the unique geographic, cultural, and historical situation of Nunavik.
- (4) Continue to foster the development of local capacity and autonomy in health research, evaluation, promotion, and prevention in Nunavik.

Together these recommendations will help communities develop greater autonomy and mastery over the conditions that may bring people to live well.

# Teen Pregnancy in Nunavik: More Nuance, Less Stigma

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## SUMMARY

Teen pregnancy in Nunavik needs to be treated with more nuance and less stigma. This includes recognizing culturally specific concepts of motherhood, particularly for young Inuit women, and unlinking teen pregnancy from serious social issues such as suicide and substance abuse. Dominant discourse suggests that teen pregnancy leads to poverty. However, research indicates that the opposite is true: poverty leads to teen pregnancy. Pregnancy can also be a protective factor against suicide and substance abuse as well as a culturally adaptive mechanism in which the healthiest women are bearing the children. Inuit childbearing practices and traditions differ from the dominant culture and include early childbearing and communal child rearing. To be more culturally appropriate and support the health of all mothers, the Québec government has the capacity to reduce the stigma attached to teen pregnancy in Nunavik by: (1) changing data reporting, specifically by separating eighteen- and nineteen-year-old mothers from their younger counterparts; (2) enhancing and expanding birth-related health services in Nunavik; and (3) developing rigorous education programs that will support young mothers, including academic and technical programs that help young mothers develop future-oriented goals, education that reflects Inuit cultural history, and subsidized day care or family care.

## RÉSUMÉ

La grossesse chez les adolescentes du Nunavik doit être abordée avec davantage de nuance et produire moins d'effets stigmatisants. Il faut entre autres reconnaître la particularité du concept de la maternité sur le plan culturel, surtout chez les jeunes Inuites, et éviter d'associer la grossesse chez les adolescentes à des problèmes sociaux graves tels que le suicide et la consommation de substances psychotropes. Le discours dominant laisse supposer que la grossesse chez les adolescentes entraîne la pauvreté. Or les études suggèrent plutôt le contraire : la pauvreté est à la source du phénomène. La grossesse sert aussi de rempart contre le suicide et la consommation de substances psychotropes, en plus d'être un mécanisme d'adaptation culturel en vertu duquel ce sont les femmes en meilleure santé qui procréent. Chez les Inuits, les coutumes et les traditions associées à la grossesse diffèrent de celles de la culture dominante; elles favorisent la maternité précoce et l'éducation collective de l'enfant. Pour que ses interventions soient plus appropriées sur le plan culturel et favorables à la santé de toutes les mères, le gouvernement du Québec doit mettre en œuvre sa capacité d'éradiquer la stigmatisation associée à la grossesse chez les adolescentes du Nunavik par les moyens suivants : (1) modifier la déclaration des données, notamment en dissociant les mères de dix-huit et de dix-neuf ans de la population féminine plus jeune, (2) améliorer et élargir les services de santé prénatale au Nunavik, et (3) mettre au point des programmes d'éducation rigoureux qui aident les jeunes mères, dont des programmes scolaires et techniques qui permettent aux jeunes mères de se fixer des objectifs pour l'avenir, et qui reflètent les particularités culturelles historiques des Inuits, en plus de déployer des services de garderie ou familiaux subventionnés.



## INTRODUCTION

Teen pregnancy rates are often used as an indicator of social well-being and as such influence policy decisions and practices in modern welfare states. Teen pregnancy in Nunavik needs to be considered and treated with more nuance and less stigma than the current policy and practice afford.

First, teen pregnancy must be unlinked from tragic social ills such as substance abuse and suicide. Social discourse and policies about teen pregnancy would be more effective if they were to focus on solving the underlying factors such as poverty, historical trauma, and internalized stigma while supporting cultural renewal and development. One element is supporting healthy, culturally rich family structures, including recognizing some of the advantages of young motherhood, which enhance the human right of cultural preservation through having children.

Second, eighteen- to nineteen-year-old women need to be recognized differently in health policies and social structures than thirteen- to seventeen-year olds. Collecting census data and other statistics, designing educational and health services, and distinguishing between standard categories of “under 17 years old” and “between 18 and 24 years old” would be a service to the health of the women of Nunavik.

Labeling and focusing on teen pregnancy and parenting as a social ill puts the blame on a disfranchised, usually poor group of women. The focus needs to shift to the economic, political, racial, and gender structures that maintain power relationships and, by extension, the status quo of who defines social problems and creates policies in modern welfare states. This phenomenon is only exacerbated by the Canadian nation-state history and policies toward the Inuit, who are 90 percent of the population of Nunavik.<sup>1</sup> Through study of sexual health education policies, via publically available data, stories, and research, Québec emerges as unique in its history of reform and independence, which makes it an exciting jurisdiction to propose policy changes for teen pregnancy.

## CREATE A MORE NUANCED, CULTURALLY RELEVANT UNDERSTANDING OF TEEN PREGNANCY

Traditional childbearing norms for the Inuit have been very different from the dominant culture. For example, in one community, the three ways a girl could change her status to a woman were to go to university, get married, or have a baby.<sup>2</sup> Childbearing and parenting were fluid; a child was often given to a community member. For instance, a child might be given to a grandparent either because the mother was not in a good position to raise the child and/or that the child would be a help-mate to the grandparent as s/he became frail.<sup>3</sup> The



**“Eskimo Mothers,” *Popular Science Monthly* 47 (1894).**

Source: Wikimedia Commons (public domain), [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3APSM\\_V47\\_D107\\_Eskimo\\_mothers.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3APSM_V47_D107_Eskimo_mothers.jpg).

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, Table 2, “Age Distribution of Inuit and Non-Aboriginal Populations, Canada and Inuit regions, 1996 and 2006,” 2006 Census Inuit Tables, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89-636-X, reproduced at Nunivaat, Nunavik Statistics Program, <http://www.nunivaat.org/TableViewer.aspx?S=2&ID=12684>.

<sup>2</sup> Sheila Burnford, *One Woman's Arctic* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972), 72–74, 84–86.



concept of teen pregnancy and parenting, as conceived of in modern welfare states, does not apply to Inuit cultural norms and practices.

Dominant discourse of teen pregnancy posits that teen pregnancy causes poverty. In fact, research suggests the inverse: that poverty leads to teen pregnancy. With disproportionate rates of chronic illnesses, substance abuse, and mental health issues among poor populations, it has been found that it is a culturally adaptive practice for the younger women to bear the children. In addition, research has found that in poor communities, by the time they are in their late twenties, women who postpone childbearing later than their teens are no better off than the teen mothers. Indeed, forty years later, they are among the revered elders.<sup>4</sup>

The following proposals would lead to more nuance in policy for healthy childbearing in Nunavik, including to the youngest mothers.

First, data reporting would be more in line with lived experience if eighteen- and nineteen-year-old mothers were disaggregated from mothers who are seventeen and younger. Indeed, two-thirds of children born to teens are born to eighteen and nineteen year olds. If they were included in an eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old bracket, the statistics would look very different. In Canada, an eighteen year old is legally an adult, and it makes no sense to report births to the fifteen to nineteen year olds as a group when so many privileges and responsibilities begin at eighteen.

Second, enhance and expand health services: prenatal, birthing, family planning in Nunavik communities. Births and their concomitant stories, which are so important in Inuit culture, would be part of the community rather than lost due to the isolation of southern hospitals (except for real emergencies). The community aspect of birth and babies could be reclaimed for the health of the whole community.

## REDUCE THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH TEEN PREGNANCY

Stigma is two-faced: one is the face of the dominant population marking certain behaviors as disgraceful; the other is the internalization of that disgrace, or internalized stigma. In the dominant discourse, teen pregnancy is often linked and stigmatized as a social ill, alongside suicide and substance abuse. While all three are disproportionately found in Inuit communities, along with extreme poverty, interpersonal violence, and the “disappearance” of women and girls, the similarity ends there. Pregnancy and birth are, by their nature, life affirming and contribute to cultural preservation. The others are serious social problems. There is research indicating that being pregnant or a young mother can be a determining factor in not committing suicide (there is a future with a child) or abusing substances (the health of the baby is more important than partying).<sup>5</sup> Teen pregnancy must be unlinked from suicide and substance abuse.

After many, many years of trauma, teens and whole Inuit communities have internalized the stigma of teen pregnancy.<sup>6</sup> To reverse this trend, education that recognizes history and supports the future is key. First, programs need to be developed about the history of teen pregnancy, traditional Inuit childbearing practices, and how stigmatization is part of the historical trauma experienced by Indigenous populations.

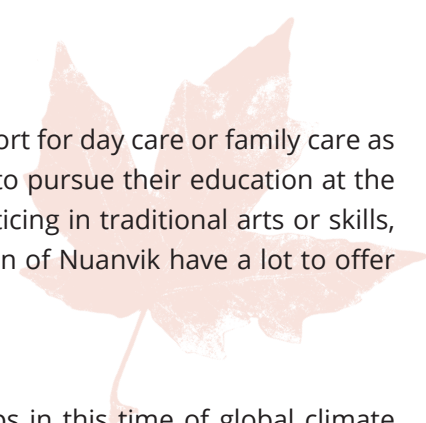
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<sup>3</sup> Janet Mancini Billson and Kyra Mancini, *Inuit Women: Their Powerful Spirit in a Century of Change*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman, Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 265–72.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Furstenberg, *Destinies of the Disadvantaged: The Politics of Teen Childbearing* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007); Arline Geronimus, “Damned if You Do: Cultural Identity, Privilege and Teenage Childbearing in the United States,” *Social Science and Medicine* 57, no. 5 (2003): 881–89.

<sup>5</sup> Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalis, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Lisa Wexler, “Identifying Colonial Discourses in Inupiat Young People’s Narrative as a Way to Understand the No Future of Inupiat Youth Suicide,” *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health* 16, no. 1 (2005): 1–24, [http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/centers/CAIANH/journal/Documents/Volume%2016/16\(1\)\\_Wexler\\_Inupiat\\_Youth\\_Narratives\\_1-24.pdf](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/centers/CAIANH/journal/Documents/Volume%2016/16(1)_Wexler_Inupiat_Youth_Narratives_1-24.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Roberta Stout, *Kiskayitamawin Miyo-Mamitonecidan: Urban Aboriginal Women and Mental Health*, (Winnipeg, MB: Prairie Women’s Health, Centre of Excellence, 2010), <http://pwhce.ca/pdf/urbanAboriginalWomenMentalHealth.pdf>.



Second, education for the future needs to include education for teen mothers. Support for day care or family care as a part of the education system is first. Care for the children allows young mothers to pursue their education at the most rigorous level. Whether it is finishing a high school or college degree, apprenticing in traditional arts or skills, developing a digital communication technology or a video game, young Inuit women of Nuanvik have a lot to offer regardless of whether they are mothers or not.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Inuit women, girls, and babies are essential to how the circumpolar Arctic develops in this time of global climate change. The world needs Inuit wisdom and leadership. Policies in Québec and Nunavik must support the growth, health, and culture of all Inuit.

Indeed, the Ministry of Education in Québec has shown its ability to be flexible and independent with a topic that is closely related to teen pregnancy: sex education. In 2005, when the rest of Canada was using national comprehensive sexual health education guidelines, Québec began a program of including sex education as an embedded aspect of biology, health, literature, history, and other classes, but without a dedicated sex education curriculum. By 2008, it was evident that this approach was not sufficient, and since then a great deal of research and community involvement has led to a unique pre-school, elementary, and high school sex education curriculum being required for all students in Québec. Pilot programs began in the fall of 2015.<sup>7</sup>

While sex education is essential in Nunavik, a critical part of sex education is to support healthy, culturally appropriate childbearing practices. In many Inuit communities, the younger women are the healthiest and thus the best ones to bear the children. To support this vital population, the Québec government has the capacity to change data reporting, enhance and expand health programs, and develop education policies to reduce the stigma attached to teen pregnancy in Nuanvik.

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<sup>7</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Sex Education in Schools: Yes, But How?: Guide for the Implementation of a Process for Sex Education in Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary School* (Québec: Government of Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2008), [http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/dpse/adaptation\\_serv\\_compl/EducationSexualite\\_Oui-mais-comment\\_EN.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/EducationSexualite_Oui-mais-comment_EN.pdf).



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