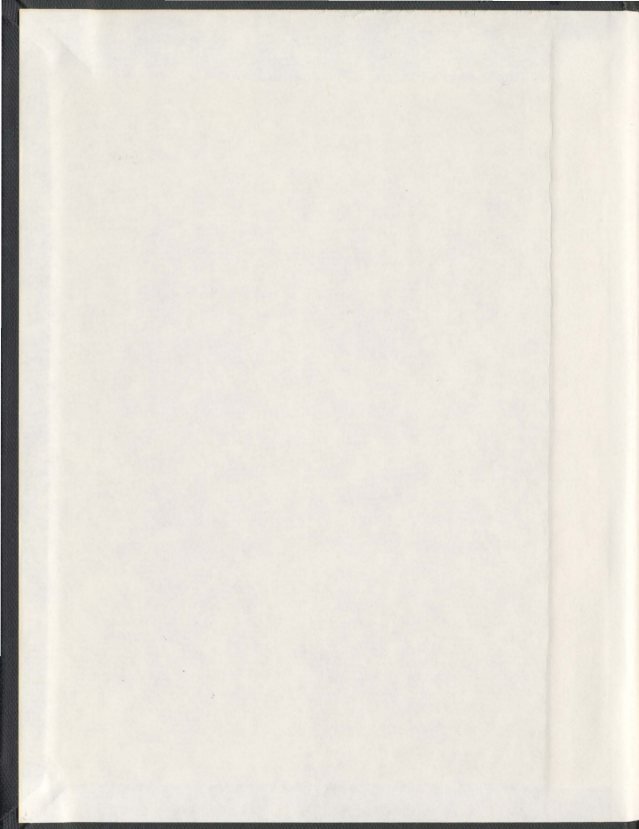


THE PROSPECTS OF CULTURE:  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND THE PRODUCTION  
OF DIFFERENCE IN MUNATSIYVUT, LABRADOR

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**THE PROSPECTS OF CULTURE:  
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By

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines how concepts of culture and cultural difference have been created, maintained, mobilized, and engaged in the struggle for political and economic control in Nunatsiavut over the past two hundred and fifty years, and how they have come to have material effect. From the Moravian Mission's attempts in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to isolate and contain Labrador Inuit, to the pursuit of the region's nickel and uranium deposits over the last thirty years, ideas about Inuit cultural difference and indigeneity have played fundamental roles in both resource dispossession and the achievement of self-government. Culture has proven to be both socially constituted and a creative force in Nunatsiavut, intricately related to the creation of political and economic inequalities and to the struggles to rectify these disparities. In examining the historical development and use of certain cultural constructs, the codification of these constructs in the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, and the resulting political and economic implications in the post-land claims context, this thesis explores how Inuit, state powers, and industry have mobilized various productions of difference, and how these concepts perform new roles in current neoliberal governance situations.

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## Chapter One:

### Introduction

*We therefore freely adopt the Labrador Inuit Constitution for the governance of the Inuit of Labrador, our ancestral territory and our communities so as to:*

*Reaffirm our relationship to our ancestral territory;*

*Re-commit ourselves to a Labrador Inuit society based on Labrador Inuit culture, customs and traditions, Labrador Inuit democratic values, social justice for Labrador Inuit and the inherent human and aboriginal rights of the Inuit of Labrador;*

*Halt and reverse the erosion of Inuttut, our society, our culture and our dignity;*

*Heal the wounds of the dispossession and discrimination we have been subjected to through our history of colonization.*

*[from Preamble to the Nunatsiavut Constitution (LIA 2002a)]*

#### 1.1 The birth of Nunatsiavut

The celebration in Nain on January 22, 2005, at the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, was a spectacle of Labrador Inuit culture. Drum dancers and throat singers performing for the crowd, officials wearing silapait (traditional white canvas coats) and giving speeches in Inuttitut<sup>1</sup>, and the ubiquitous official Nunatsiavut symbol of an inuksuk demonstrated what the agreement signified – that Nunatsiavut, the

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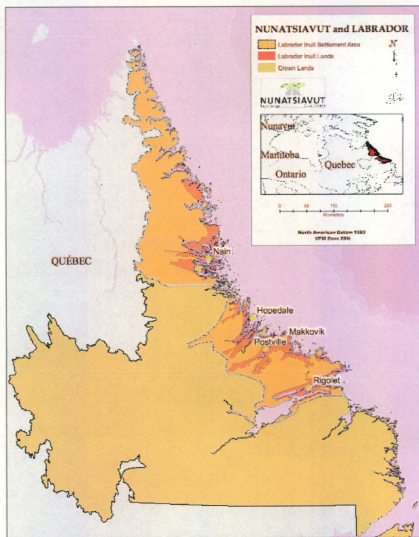
<sup>1</sup> The Inuit language is called either “Inuttitut” or “Inuttut” in Labrador. It is called “Inuktitut” in other regions of the Canadian Arctic.

region created under the agreement, was now officially recognized and celebrated as the homeland of the Labrador Inuit.

The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement outlines the negotiated rights of Inuit to harvest wildlife, to use and own land, to be involved in resource management, education, social programs, and governance, and to benefit economically from developments in the land claim area. It lays out who can be considered a "beneficiary" of the agreement, including detailed descriptions of recognition criteria for both Inuit and Kabloonangajuit (those of mixed Inuit ancestry), and describes the privileges and rights of beneficiaries who live outside the land claim area. The agreement also maps out the Settlement Area and the various categories of land and sea, each involving different jurisdictions (see Map 1.1).

The path to the agreement began in the late 1960s, when many Aboriginal Peoples in Canada adopted a 'rights-based' argument for restitution for historical injustices, and started to make claims for recognition. As a result of growing public support for Aboriginal political struggles in the 1960s and 1970s, and pressure from a series of court cases concerning Aboriginal rights, the federal government developed the modern comprehensive land claims process to address, contain, and neutralize claims for unceded Aboriginal rights to land, resources, and self-government. The land claims process offered some Aboriginal groups the possibility of political and economic restitution based on Canada's recognition of Aboriginal rights, distinctiveness within society, and historical injustices, but it offered this restitution in a restricted manner, dictated by the limits and the definitions that the courts and government bureaucracy deemed acceptable.





**Map 1.1: Nunatsiavut: The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Settlement Area** (courtesy of Bryn Wood, Nunatsiavut Government, 2009)

Still, it offered something, and many Aboriginal leaders argued that land claims and the recognition that went with them were worth pursuing.

In the early 1970s, amid debate about who could be considered “Inuit” among the diversity of people living in the region, the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) was founded, and it submitted a land claim to the federal government in 1977. Basing their claim on the grievances of years of colonial domination, dispossession of land, attempted cultural assimilation, and official interference and indifference, the LIA fought to convince provincial and federal authorities of the validity and pressing importance of Inuit concerns and rights. Thirty years later, after enduring many difficult negotiations and experiencing continued suffering associated with persistent poverty, dispossession, and political exclusion, the Labrador Inuit voted to ratify a final agreement that recognized many of their rights and offered a significant degree of control and autonomy (INAC 2005). Hopes were high that a new era of Inuit resurgence had begun. The Nunatsiavut flag was designed and waved proudly during the signing ceremony in Nain’s school gym on that day in early 2005.

In the midst of the signing ceremony’s euphoria, the provincial premier, Danny Williams, issued an apology for the government’s role in the forced relocation of Hebron, a community north of Nain, in the 1960s. The jubilant flag wavers were subdued for an instant, as everyone focused their attention on the group of fifty or so Hebron relocatees, who were seated together on one side of the gym. They were middle-aged and older Inuit, dressed in silapait and head scarves, huddled together and keening now as they listened to the apology, softly moaning their pain – a striking reminder of the trauma and the years

of social suffering caused by the relocations. The apology was the ceremony's only hint that the Labrador Inuit were not, perhaps, a homogenous and cohesive group that had always lived in Nunatsiavut as they do now, but instead had endured relocations, dispossession, and social rupture as a result of government and colonial interference.

Since the late 1700s, the Moravian Mission and other authorities had imposed strategies to contain certain Inuit within the lands that were now Nunatsiavut, and in doing so, had created social and geographical boundaries in the effort to keep away those they deemed to be "un-Inuit" or unacceptable. Because of this history, there were many people who were not at this ceremony, including the descendents of Inuit who had spurned the Moravians' controlling grasp and had either moved northwest to Quebec or had remained in southern Labrador. Authorities had relied on increasingly formalized boundaries of cultural difference in their attempts to further control Inuit society, but, with the land claim, Inuit had appropriated and engaged many of these cultural constructs for their own political goals (as will be discussed in this dissertation). With the settlement of the land claim, it was now up to Inuit themselves to maintain the official definitions of who was Inuit and what that entailed.

But this celebration in 2005 had no place for the history of how the physical and social boundaries of Nunatsiavut had come to be decided upon, or the complexities and discrepancies involved in including some and excluding others. It is in the interest of those who benefit from the agreement that the boundaries and definitions required by the structure of the land claims process be accepted – and better yet, celebrated – by beneficiaries and the general public. So the LIA and government officials gathered

people together in Nain to celebrate new empowerment for those lucky enough to be included under the LIA's slogan, "Together We Are Stronger."

The divisional tensions among Inuit in Labrador that are alluded to in this slogan point to the potential problems associated with the production of cultural difference. The attempt to render definite and unequivocal something that is fluid and complex is a problem associated with every land claim agreement and, indeed, with many situations in which the rallying call of culture is invoked. People, their actions, and their histories are not often amenable to static definitions. Despite all attempts to present Nunatsiavut as the natural homeland of the Labrador Inuit, and the agreement's provisions for harvesting and economic benefits as reflecting customary Inuit practices, some people, some places, and some practices, some of the time, are excluded.

The current configuration of Inuit recognition criteria, as specified by the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, is just the latest and perhaps the most formal legacy of the political use of cultural constructs. In Labrador, the production of Inuit cultural difference has occupied many people throughout the past two hundred years, and has created a situation unique in Canada. Numerous outside groups and governments have created and modified various constructions of Inuit cultural difference in their attempts to exert economic and political control. From the late 1700s to the early 1900s, Moravians attempted to isolate one group of Inuit in northern communities and strictly control their trade, economic activities, and interactions with others. In doing so, they created the idea of the 'Moravian Eskimos,' a territorialized cultural group with specific economic and social practices that the Moravians differentiated from other people in the

region. The missionaries also caused many, but by no means all, Inuit cultural practices to be abandoned. In the mid-1900s, other non-governmental organizations focused their efforts on providing services to those who met their standards of displaying an 'Inuit way of life,' which often meant no or minimal involvement in wage labour. The federal and provincial governments also outlined criteria for recipients of their funding based on community and perceived degrees of Inuit ancestry.

In the 1970s, Inuit and people with Inuit ancestry began to engage these ideas about 'Inuit-ness' – I call them 'cultural constructs' – in their demands for redress for historical injustices. The federal and provincial governments, in reaction to these demands, eventually acknowledged the validity of the Inuit claim, but attempted to limit the claim's scope by establishing criteria that Inuit had to meet in order for their rights to be recognized. In the 1990s, governments began to embrace neoliberal<sup>2</sup> policies of decentralization, and Inuit began to align their claims with the state's interest in promoting self-sufficiency and a stable environment for global investment. The land claim that was finally signed gave Nunatsiavut Inuit considerable political and economic power, and it also realized the state's goal of legal certainty for economic development – significant achievements that were precipitated by the production of Inuit cultural difference as an historically productive tool in the struggle for political and economic control.

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<sup>2</sup> Neoliberalism is defined here as the prioritization of the free market in political and economic contexts, which often gives rise to policies of decentralization, privatization, and deregulation, as well as the blurring of boundaries between the state and industry, and the encouragement of the ethic of self-sufficiency among individuals and communities (Castree 2010; Harvey 2005).



The initiation of the Aboriginal rights movement and the land claims process in Labrador therefore introduced a new function for the production of Inuit cultural difference. Inuit appropriated and mobilized colonial and historical constructions of difference, once used to control and contain subjects, in a process – the “formation of indigeneity,” as some scholars describe it – in their struggle for social justice and historical restitution (Starn 2011: 196). On the strength of their claims for cultural recognition, and by aligning their assertions with changing global movements, Labrador Inuit transformed the political structure of the region and regained partial control of Nunatsiavut governance and resources. But assertions of cultural difference have had a complex history in Labrador, as this thesis will examine, and the political and economic implications of the production of cultural difference have been varied.

My aim in this dissertation is to explore how ideas about Inuit cultural difference in Labrador have been and continue to be produced and used, and how these ideas or constructs come to have material effect. In looking at how cultural constructs have been produced, I am not denying that the constructs contain real or true characteristics; instead, I am exploring how it comes to pass that particular cultural constructs are emphasized or given more authority than others (Merlan 2007; Dombrowski 2002). I have also chosen to use the term “Inuit” for all people of Inuit ancestry, in contrast to the social categories that I discuss in further chapters, but in order to emphasize the act of differentiation.

## **1.2 Thesis outline**

In this thesis, I explore the production of Inuit cultural difference and the consequences of the manipulation of cultural constructs by focusing on resource

management issues in the region. As a project first of colonization, and then of both regional self-governance and jurisdictional certitude, the creation of Nunatsiavut has always centred on economic issues, and development projects have often acted as catalysts for an increased interest in cultural differentiation. Development projects in the 1970s, such as a proposed uranium mine near the communities of Makkovik and Postville, helped to unify Inuit, and to build resolve for the settlement of their land claim. Similarly, exploration work for a nickel mine in the Voisey's Bay area of the coast in the mid-1990s and the lucrative royalties that it promised influenced the provincial government to push for a resolution of the Inuit claim. The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, finalized in the shadow of the Voisey's Bay project, codifies some of the cultural constructs used in negotiations. In the current post-land claims environment, struggles over these constructs and their use continue. How, then, does the manipulation of cultural difference in resource management through the implementation of the Nunatsiavut land claim agreement affect political and economic inequality? How have colonial productions of difference persisted in current representations, and how do these genealogies affect their current material influence? Does this emphasis put constraints on the act of imagining alternative forms of governance by relying on unproblematic cultural concepts and categories?

This dissertation explores these questions by exploring the development and political use of Inuit cultural constructs in Labrador, and by examining how they are influencing political and economic realities during the current agreement implementation stage. I begin in Chapter Two by outlining my theoretical context and methods, and then

continue in Chapter Three to examine the historical production of Inuit cultural categories, focusing on the Moravian Mission's work in Labrador from the mid-1700s to 1926. Chapters Four and Five continue into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from the perspectives of modernization policy and of the Aboriginal rights movement and government-led land claims process, respectively, exploring how cultural differentiation has produced and engaged with political, social, geographical, and economic factors. Chapter Six uses the Brinex uranium exploration of the 1970s to closely examine the changing dynamics between cultural differentiation and economic and political inequality. This development helped to build momentum for Labrador Inuit political activism, which continued to develop in conjunction with changing government policy through the 1980s and 1990s (Chapter Seven). In the 1990s, the Voisey's Bay nickel exploration was a major catalyst for revitalized negotiations, as discussed in Chapter Eight, and the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement was signed, consolidating some of the ideas and constructs concerning Labrador Inuit into law (Chapter Nine). Chapter Ten further explores the manipulation and impact of these constructs in the post-land claims neoliberal context of the uranium exploration near Makkovik and Postville of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century by Inuit, government, and industry actors. In Chapter Eleven, I examine the current impact of cultural differentiation in the context of land use planning co-management between the provincial and Nunatsiavut Governments. The conclusion then outlines the historical patterns and the impact of the production and denial of Inuit cultural difference in Labrador, and probes the contradictory effects of various conceptualizations of culture – the prospects of culture in Nunatsiavut resource management.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Theoretical context and methods**

In this chapter, I examine how various anthropological understandings of culture and cultural difference have developed, how the concept of culture has been articulated with power, and how a critical and historical analysis is necessary to understand how cultural constructs can exert such material influence. I look at how the concept of culture has been used in various situations and to various ends, and then how I approached my research in Labrador.

#### **2.1 The 'culture' concept**

In exploring connections between the production of cultural difference and political and economic inequality, this research employs an understanding of culture as socially constituted and an on-going project. Depending on political and historical context, the concept of culture has been used in various ways, and anthropology has developed and employed very different conceptualizations of culture at different times and in different circumstances. Anthropologists in the Counter-Enlightenment tradition, following Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt, envisioned an inner unifying spirit, or *Volksgeist*, that serves to contain a static culture within a stable and unchanging core, lending a form of coherence and order to the system (Bunzl 1996; Wolf 2001). For political reasons of their own, many branches of anthropology have historically focused on bounded cultures, each "naturally" associated with a territory or culture area (Boas

1896; Bunzl 1996; Buckley 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1992). This understanding of culture as order has then been variously understood as "functionalist glue," as underlying structural and abstract codes, and as shared symbolic meanings (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 4; Wolf 1999). In some cases, anthropologists would ignore historical processes and would instead envision uncontaminated, isolated, and static situations. In Labrador in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Moravian Mission relied on these concepts to create and maintain ideas about Inuit and their 'proper' place.

More recently, this perception of culture has been widely criticized within anthropological circles. "Concepts like 'nation,' 'society,' and 'culture' name bits and threaten to turn names into things," Eric Wolf argues, and in so doing, "create false models of reality" (Wolf 1997: 3). "By endowing nations, societies, or cultures with the qualities of internally homogenous and externally distinctive and bounded objects, we create a model of the world as a global pool hall in which the entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls" (Wolf 1997: 6). Instead, he argues, the world "constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes" (Wolf 1997: 3). In assuming that cultural groups are "naturally" associated with a certain territory (as the Labrador Inuit were), "space itself becomes a kind of neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory, and societal organization are inscribed. It is in this way that space functions as a central organizing principle in the social sciences at the same time that it disappears from analytical purview" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 7). Analysis based on the anthropological concept of culture as a reified, totalizing, and self-generating system often ignores the role of power in how culture is created, maintained,



or modified (Wolf 1999; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Clifford 1988; Dombrowski 2001, 2002; Sider 2006). By critiquing these reifying tendencies within the concept of culture, scholars can reveal “the apparent boundedness and coherence of ‘a culture’ as something made rather than found,” and can begin to better understand the social processes involved in the creation and maintenance of cultural constructs, as well as their material force (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 2; Gupta 2004; James and Toren 2010).

In this thesis, I look at how different variations of the culture concept have been used in Labrador and how they continue to play an important role in cultural politics. In order to understand the current situation, it is necessary to understand how cultural constructs were developed and mobilized over the past 250 years ago. Although the Moravian Mission made some very substantial changes to Inuit cultural life, missionaries developed their own static and territorialized concepts of Inuit difference, and used these concepts in an attempt to control Inuit society. These cultural constructs have had an enduring legacy and impact, as later chapters show. By looking at the ways in which ideas about Inuit cultural difference have been constructed and employed, I aim to better understand the material and political consequences of the various forms of cultural constructs that have been created in Labrador, and the ways in which this production of cultural difference continues to impact daily life.

Culture provides the means by which people imagine, organize, and act on the linkages between everyday life and the wider world, and it is widely accepted in current anthropology that culture be viewed as an on-going struggle. This idea of culture as a creative and constitutive force has been used recently to analyze the productive ways in

which culture is involved in imagining and creating new social and material configurations. Instead of viewing culture as a given, some anthropologists now focus on how people manipulate cultural categories of differentiation and how this use of cultural constructs can affect material change (Wolf 2001; Li 2001a; Sivaramakrishnan 2004; Valdivia 2005). Despite the change in anthropological thinking, however, others (such as the Labrador Inuit Association in this thesis) have employed cultural constructs that rely on the bounded and static version of culture that anthropologists have themselves recently abandoned. The consequences of using ideas of reified culture (as Spivak's "strategic essentialism," for instance) and the ramifications of anthropology's legacy in developing such concepts in the first place have been bitterly debated (Kuper 2003, 2004; Spivak 1987; Asch and Samson 2004; Kenrick and Lewis 2004a, 2004b; Turner 2004).

The structure of cultural constructs can have certain effects when the constructs are employed, as I will further explore in later chapters, but it is the broader context in which these constructs are created and engaged that I argue should be the focus of analysis, instead of scrutiny about the validity of the constructs themselves. As a number of anthropologists argue, it is important to look at culture's shifting political meanings, and to examine the social processes through which concepts of culture come to exist, are utilized, and, perhaps most importantly, as this aspect is often overlooked, come to have material force (Cowan et al. 2001; James and Toren 2010; Lee 2006).

## **2.2 Understanding culture's articulations with power**

Eric Wolf, Antonio Gramsci, and Michel Foucault have all transformed our understandings of power in related but different ways. Wolf and Gramsci offer processual understandings of culture's articulations with power, and provide ways in which to analyze the role of power in how culture is developed, maintained, modified, and dismantled (Wolf 1999, 2001; Foucault [1975] 1995, 1991; Gramsci 1988). Eric Wolf illustrates the dynamic between cultural ideas and relations of power by examining how people respond ideationally to perceived crises, and how ideas are embedded in material processes of ecology, economics, social organization, and political struggles (Wolf 1999). Wolf's insights are especially useful in outlining the role of ideas in political and economic conflicts in Labrador.

Foucault, on the other hand, focuses on the fixed installation of power structures. His ideas about governmentality and his examination of how various techniques work to structure certain governable subjects and objects are useful in exploring the production and material effect of cultural constructs, especially, in this case, in the context of colonial and provincial development projects in Labrador and in the recent creation of Nunatsiavut (Watts 2003). The construction of self-regulating subjects and the role of discourse in naturalization and everyday disciplinary power are particularly applicable in looking at how the federal, provincial and Nunatsiavut governments, as well as industry actors, manufacture consent, form citizens, and work to produce acceptable cultural and economic subjects (Shore and Wright 1997; Gledhill 2000; Nugent 2004; Inda 2005).

Gramsci's concept of hegemony adds a more explicit economic analysis and an emphasis on practice to these perspectives. Hegemony constructs "a common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination" (Roseberry 1994: 361). This framework is constantly in flux, as it is never either total or exclusive. As Raymond Williams argues, "it has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own" (Williams 1977: 112). The concept of hegemony also offers analytical room for exploring ways in which subalterns (such as the various Inuit actors in this thesis) deflect, resist, and appropriate these hegemonic techniques, an area in which Foucault's work is somewhat lacking (Cooper 2005; Li 2007). Because hegemonic power is so pervasive, and subaltern ways of thinking are often denied public legitimacy, attention needs to be given to the ways in which subalterns frame their opposition in dominant terms, and the ways in which resistance can also be appropriated (Gramsci 1988; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Roseberry 1996), although, as Escobar suggests, "subaltern strategies are neither the creation of hegemonic models nor direct and pure resistance to them" (Escobar 2004: 256; Barnett 2005). Analysis that focuses on the creative manipulation and appropriation of symbols and categories for political purposes thus helps to illustrate the configurations of structural power by connecting cultural differentiation with economic and political inequality (Li 2001a, 2001b; Roseberry 1996; Magubane 2004; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). In this thesis, I analyze how government officials, individual Inuit, Inuit leaders,

and industry actors create, manipulate, and mobilize cultural constructs in political and economic conflicts.

### **2.3 Political uses of culture**

The idea of culture has been used in many different contexts. Colonial interests have long used cultural constructs to consolidate their authority over subaltern populations by essentializing, codifying, and controlling cultural practices in order to maintain stability and continuity (Said 1979; Gilroy 2004; Li 2007; Memmi 1965; Sider 2006; Moore 2005). Nation-states (including, as we shall examine, in Labrador) often use the notion of a bounded and static culture to promote a national conscience and unity, and encourage certain forms of self-identification and subject formation in nation-building and governance projects (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Anderson 1991; Corrigan and Sayer 1985). The on-going process of maintaining, renewing, and reaffirming an idea of a national community through ideological and material struggles can thus illuminate relations of power, as well as the fragmentation and inherent contradictions within the state project (Roseberry 1996; Nugent 2004; Gupta 2004; Williams 1977; Gledhill 2000; Kaplan 2002; Li 2007). State efforts to classify and constitute subjects and objects that are amenable to state and capitalist interests often use cultural constructs to encourage people to act in particular ways, although the removal or erasure of cultural difference is also sometimes a component of projects that rely on the supposedly inevitable modern demise of cultural diversity and the rise of “universal” and homogenizing norms (Li 2007; Postero 2007; Inda 2005; Watts 2005; Comaroff 1996). Even within these attempts

to erase or deny cultural difference, however, often lie particular cultural constructs that are framed as universal and have political and economic outcomes (Harvey 2005). Although they may be presented as non-political or non-economic, cultural constructs employed in political situations invariably have both political and economic ramifications. Whether it is colonial interests using ideas about appropriate or deficient economic behaviour specific to a cultural group (such as the Labrador Inuit), or subaltern groups employing these ideas to forward their own goals (such as the Labrador Inuit Association), or industry encouraging individual choice and appropriate family values (such as Brinex and Aurora – see chapters six and ten), cultural concepts often mask attempts to govern economic life (Li 2007; Foucault and Senellart 2008; Miller and Rose 1990).

In various situations in Labrador, as this thesis will explore, dispossession, marginalization, and exploitation have all been justified, consented to, and confronted through the use of ideas about cultural difference. Although cultural categories are often presented as non-political or non-economic, as Pamela Stern argues,

“An emphasis on ‘the inviolable distinctiveness of each culture’... almost inevitably reinforces stereotypes and existing hierarchies and allows those in power (and the public in general) to treat disparities in health, social benefits, and economic status as the consequences of that cultural difference” (Stern 2006: 263).

Analysis of the use of concepts of cultural difference within “wars of position,” in which concepts are imposed, manipulated, and transformed by various interests can therefore illustrate the political and economic impacts, limitations, and possibilities of employing

cultural differentiation in situations of inequality (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Adelson 2001; James 2001; Tsing 2005).

Ideas about Aboriginal cultural difference, especially, have long been used to justify colonization, and many scholars have outlined the close relationship between representations of Aboriginal Peoples as "Others" and the material process of colonialism (Pearce 1988; Francis 1992). As Emma LaRocque (2010: 68) argues, "the essence of the colonial relationship is that the colonized are unilaterally defined by the other." More recently, scholars have also focused on how mainstream society sees idealized virtues in these images of Aboriginal Peoples that have been lost elsewhere (Deloria 1998; Huhndorf 2001; Francis 1992; LaRocque 2010). The upheaval created by modernity has compelled some to search for alternative ways of being, and to view with nostalgia – and to claim for themselves – representations of Aboriginal cultures (Deloria 1998, 2004).

In post-colonial times, the invocation of culture in social and political rights movements has been used since the 1960s to address inequality, representing what Nancy Fraser calls a "shift in the grammar of political claims-making" from claims of social equality to claims of group difference (Fraser 1997:2). The current discourse of indigeneity – the articulation of indigenous difference specifically – has its roots in the same "rights revolution" (Ignatieff 2007), and combines claims of cultural difference with historical grievances and subaltern status (Maaka and Fleras 2005; Niezen 2003, 2009; de la Cadena and Starn 2007; Barnard 2010; Blaser 2004). A "moral economy" has emerged globally in the last fifty years, as indigenous peoples and other oppressed groups have engaged neo-Enlightenment principles of human rights, social justice, and equality

within multicultural states in their struggles to regain some degree of political, cultural, and economic autonomy that was lost in the course of historical exploitation (Barkan 2000). As many theorists have argued, the use of Enlightenment rationalism and concepts of modernity for political struggle may run the risk of replicating the power inequities of colonialism, but their use can also be seen as a method of engaging rationalism “as an oppositional force that validates tradition and serves the oppressed” (Barkan 2000:163). As Orin Starn describes, some anthropologists are now focusing on these “*formations of indigeneity*, namely the particular relationships of history, power, and meaning between native peoples and others that define what it means to be white, black, Indian or something else” (original emphasis, Starn 2011: 196; James and Toren 2010; Hamilton 2009; Dombrowski 2002). Indigenous peoples and others have engaged ideas about culture and about cultural difference in their social movements and, in doing so, have significantly transformed the relationships between states and indigenous peoples.

Many anthropologists have recently explored how people use and adapt “universal” concepts strategically for political goals, and manipulate cultural difference by transforming local identities in order to join the wider conversation about human rights, environmentalism, or sustainability (Tsing 2005, 1993; Morrow and Hensel 1992; McDermott 2001; Li 1996, 2000, 2001a; Sivaramakrishnan 2004; Barkan 2000; Martello 2008; Blaser et al. 2004; Nuttall 1998). The indigeneity discourse, for example, relies on the concepts of locality and “community,” and on utopian ideals about the betterment of civilization (Niezen 2009: 16; Agrawal and Gibson 2001; Howitt 2001). As Robert Niezen argues, ideas used in the production of indigeneity often combine the possibilities



of utopian modernities with ideas of stability that were once used in the Counter-Enlightenment: "A central paradox of modernity can be seen in the fact that strategic assertions of cultural difference and permanence derive strength from politically resonant cosmopolitan imaginings of a world made new" (Niezen 2009: 16). In a similar vein, other anthropologists explore how neoliberal and multicultural reforms can offer the space to frame cultural concerns within broader agendas (Povinelli 2002; Li 2000; Postero 2007; Valdivia 2005; Feit 2010). Claims of cultural difference within this "moral economy" have enjoyed much recent success in convincing states, industry, and the general public of the value and moral legitimacy of appearing as fair and just societies, and of the need to support political and economic reconfigurations for social justice.

Despite the success, the assertion of cultural difference in rights movements can also encounter a number of contradictions and difficulties. A reliance on the legal system to deal with rights issues means that grievances must conform to the confines of legal positivism and the requirement to essentialize social categories and identities, as I discuss further in chapter seven (Cowan et al. 2001; Niezen 2009; Hamilton 2009; Otis 1997). Ideas about culture that are used in legal contexts thus tend to become static, bounded, and primordial – reminiscent of past anthropological formations of the concept. Claims of cultural difference within multicultural frameworks also tend towards the billiard ball analogy, with the perspective that all differences are equally different (Maaka and Fleras 2005). Multicultural logic, when seen as a practice of governance, tends to erase or ignore the spectre of political or economic inequality, and instead encourages the performance of cultural difference that is compatible with state interests in reconciling

social conflicts without real political consequences (Povinelli 2002; Alfred 2005; Valdivia 2005; Hale 2002). The category of "traditional," for instance, often is contained within a complex network of ideas in the production of cultural difference (Williams 1977; Hobsbawm 1983; Tsing 1993; McDermott 2001). Cultural constructs that are represented as non-political, such as an idea of a small-scale and self-sufficient community, can often mask real economic and political aspects and consequences, such as the historical processes of colonialism, marginalization, and the historical interactions with broader economic processes that helped to create these circumstances in the first place (Li 2001b: 159; Stern 2006; Searles 2006). Official state recognition of cultural difference, in particular, creates certain definitions of identities and political outcomes, as I will explore further in chapters seven and nine, which can confine and control people's possibilities (Sider 2006; Coulthard 2006, 2007, 2008; Dombrowski 2002, 2007; Blaser 2004; LaRocque 2010). The production or denial of cultural difference within colonial contexts and the more recent engagement and re-appropriation of cultural constructs by both subaltern groups and dominant interests influence political and economic inequalities, but often in unanticipated or indirect ways. I aim to explore this process here, using Nunatsiavut as a case study, in order to better understand the consequences and the potential of a constitutive and creative concept of culture.

## **2.4 Research methods**

My research originated as one component of a larger Nunatsiavut Government-MUN research project entitled "From the Minds of Elders to the Policies of Government." The

project was developed jointly by officials in Nunatsiavut's Renewable Resources division and researchers at MUN (Larry Felt and David Natcher) in 2006 to explore the issues that the new government of Nunatsiavut was facing in natural resource management. My role in the project was initially to focus on how Inuit knowledge could be used in co-management, but I expanded this focus (as I have described above) in order to articulate this question with current theoretical and regional issues.

In this research, I examined three interrelated broad issues (the impacts of the finalized land claims agreement, the uranium debate, and the land use planning experience) in order to analyze the relationships between the production and denial of cultural difference and political and economic inequalities. I also created an historical context for understanding these current issues and for tracing the development of the production of difference. For each issue, I used a variety of means to understand the connections between cultural, political, and economic processes, but my primary methods were archival and media analysis, participant observation, interviews, and discourse and text analysis tools. I lived with my husband and infant daughter in the administrative centre of Goose Bay from September 2007 to August 2008, traveling periodically to Nunatsiavut for one or two week trips.

#### **2.4.1 Archival and media analysis**

While I was in Goose Bay, and continuing when I returned to St. John's, I started by examining archival and historical documents and research concerning the historical and regional contexts of cultural differentiation during the struggle for the land claim

agreement over the past thirty years and since the signing through archival and media analysis. I started with Paine's (1977) collection of research on identity in Labrador, and extended into other research that had been done on the issue of cultural differentiation in Labrador in the extensive collections and media archives of the Labrador Institute. I was interested in exploring the following questions: How have various groups within Labrador negotiated and organized cultural and economic difference? How has the representation of Labrador Inuit emerged, and under what circumstances, and what contradictions exist? How have cultural terms euphemized economic categories or inequalities? I focused on how the concepts of "Inuit," "subsistence," "traditional," "wildlife management," and other related concepts and processes have been presented and negotiated within changing political and economic contexts (Wolf 2001; Cruikshank 1998; Morrow and Hensel 1992).

Given the current (2007-2008) and fiery debate about uranium development in Nunatsiavut while I was in Goose Bay, I explored the last uranium rush in the region of the 1970s in order to provide context for the current situation. The Labrador Institute archives had extensive documents from the time, including Labrador Resources Advisory Committee reports, meeting videos, and notes. I also looked at the debate leading up to the Voisey's Bay mine development, including Environmental Assessment hearings transcripts, media pieces, and stakeholder reports. Part of my focus on Voisey's Bay was based on the importance of Voisey's Bay to the land claims settlement, but it was also the result of my changing focus on co-management. At the beginning of my research, I had planned to look at the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board, a body

established by the final land claims agreement. This board, however, was not fully up and running when I was in Goose Bay, and therefore was not a suitable topic for my research. A bureaucrat in the Environmental office of the Nunatsiavut Government suggested that I look instead at the Voisey's Bay Environmental Management Board, which had been established in 2002 as suggested by the Environmental Assessment process for Voisey's Bay, and which was one of the first co-management boards to consist of Inuit, Innu, provincial, and federal representatives. Because it had existed for a number of years already, this board had a lot of background material, so I spent much time familiarizing myself with it (before, of course, I changed my focus again to the Regional Planning Authority).

The historical scope of my dissertation also changed as my understanding of the issues developed. My initial range of focus was on the last 30 years, but I eventually realized that much of the context for the production of cultural difference originated with the Moravian Mission's project of the mid-1700s to the early 1900s. I relied mainly on the work of other historians and anthropologists for this historical context, much of it found in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies archives at Memorial's St. John's campus.

#### **2.4.2 Participant Observation**

Much of the context and finer detail of this research was gained and developed through participant observation (Dewalt and Dewalt 1998; Fife 2005). While living in Goose Bay, I participated in community life as fully as I could, in order to better understand the development and dynamics of the Nunatsiavut Government within

Labrador. I had chosen Goose Bay mainly because I was acting as the co-ordinator of a Nunatsiavut Government harvest survey from September 2007 to January 2008 (as part of the wider research project with NG, of which my research on co-management was a component), and the main offices of the NG Department of Renewable Resources are there. As survey co-ordinator, I met and interacted with government bureaucrats, officials, and community residents throughout Nunatsiavut on a daily basis, and saw how policy decisions are made and implemented within the new government, as well as issues surrounding governance in the communities. I also traveled for short periods of time (one or two weeks at a time) to the coastal Nunatsiavut communities of Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet on a number of occasions, and had the opportunity to observe resource management issues in different settings and situations, and to meet potential interview participants. Most of the research took place in Goose Bay, however, both because most of the co-ordinator work was there and because the town offers an interesting perspective on Nunatsiavut. Almost a third of Inuit beneficiaries live in Goose Bay, which lies outside of Nunatsiavut but contains many of the new government jobs and offices associated with the land claims agreement. The Upper Lake Melville region (consisting of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River, and Mud Lake, as well as the Innu community of Sheshatshiu) has a strained relationship with the communities inside Nunatsiavut. As I discuss in this dissertation, levels of perceived Inuit authenticity are higher within Nunatsiavut, but many of the material benefits of the land claims agreement were first apparent in Upper Lake Melville. Inuit, Innu, Metis, non-Aboriginal Labradorians, Newfoundlanders, and other individuals also live together in Goose Bay,

thus providing an interesting forum for cultural politics. As part of my attempts to move away from the stereotypical small-scale setting for anthropological fieldwork, living in Happy Valley-Goose Bay allowed me to learn more about the cultural politics and life experiences of Inuit outside of Nunatsiavut.

Based on my experience in Goose Bay, I eventually chose three main issues of analytical relevance on which to focus: the impacts of the finalized land claims agreement, the uranium debate, and the land use planning experience (Roseberry 1996; Tsing 2005; Wolf 2001; Nuijten 2006; Nugent 2004; Corrigan and Sayer 1985). I chose these three main issues because they seemed to be connected to issues that were of great importance to the people I talked to. The land claims agreement had been a focus of my analysis from the start, although in talking with Inuit during fieldwork, I realized that my focus on only the resource management components of the agreement was limiting, and that it was necessary to take a larger perspective in looking at the impacts of the production of culture. Interrelated issues of territorialization, membership, authenticity, and economic activity all had significant ramifications on the post-land claims situation, and were affecting the people that I talked to. In similar fashion, I decided to focus on the uranium debate because it was the single most talked-about issue during my fieldwork, and it had potentially serious implications for the future of Nunatsiavut. The land use planning process was also uppermost in people's minds at the time, because, although it was most often carried out in closed meetings, many Inuit saw the land use plan as the final answer on the uranium issue.

I focused on the following questions in my informal discussions and interactions with people: How do people employ the concepts of difference, sameness, and equality within resource management? What conflicts or attempts at consensus help to illustrate cultural politics? What contradictions and inconsistencies exist between community-level practices and material realities and Nunatsiavut Government policies and pronouncements? Throughout this research, I followed all required ethical guidelines through MUN and my SSHRC fellowship, and, in doing so, I obtained informed consent, addressed issues of harms and benefits, and ensured measures of privacy and confidentiality in all interactions.

I found Goose Bay a difficult community in which to immerse myself, especially in comparison to my experiences of working before I started my Ph.D. studies as an environmental educator for a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the smaller and more compact communities of Nain and Hopedale. Happy Valley-Goose Bay, because of its history as a military base, is spread out between the base and the mouth of the Churchill River, and the lack of a central social place made it difficult to initially connect with people, especially during the car-bound winter months. My husband, Jamie, who was looking after our baby for much of the time, and I joined various community play groups for children, became active in the local theatre scene, attended the Moravian Church, visited people, and spent a great deal of time in Tim Horton's in the effort to meet people and to get our baby out of our dark and snow-covered basement apartment. I also sifted through the Labrador Institute library and archives, visited the local Nunatsiavut Government offices, and relied on my network of friends from my NGO



work to connect with people living in the area and on the coast. I traveled to the communities of Nunatsiavut – Rigolet, Postville, Makkovik, Hopedale, and Nain – on six occasions with my daughter for short trips during the year as well, visiting people, attending public meetings on resource management issues, undertaking participant observation, and interviewing community members, politicians, and bureaucrats. Traveling with my baby daughter helped me to have more meaningful social interactions with people, but it made it more difficult to sit still during public meetings or to interview people in their offices if she was fussy or suddenly interested in chewing on the pile of maps in the corner.

Throughout my time, I kept journals and made notes on my experiences and observations, mixing my journal entries with notes from books or documents I was reading at the time. I relied on informal discussions with people for much of my contextual information, and for some of my research into the impacts of the final agreement and the uranium debate. While some people were comfortable in a formal interview session, I found that many others felt more at ease to discuss often sensitive issues about internal Nunatsiavut politics in a café setting, as we played with our children, or as we walked together. The on-line social networking site Facebook also played an important role in Nunatsiavut politics, especially during the uranium moratorium debate of 2007-2008 and during the Nunatsiavut Presidential elections of spring 2008. High numbers of Inuit throughout Nunatsiavut, Upper Lake Melville, and beyond connected with each other through discussion forums in Facebook about these issues, and most Presidential candidates used the social network and the internet in

general to generate discussion and garner support. I read the discussions on Facebook to get an idea of what people were talking about, and to connect directly with discussion participants if I didn't already know them personally. The number of Nunatsiavut beneficiaries is small enough that I was often familiar with these Facebook participants, or at least know of them or their family. I interviewed a number of people that I met through Facebook pages, and I continue to discuss on-going issues with some of them. I was always upfront about my role as researcher when I talked to participants directly, and I did not offer comments in any of these forums. I was a bit apprehensive about using Facebook as a part of my research because the social networking scene was relatively new at the time, and I was unsure of the ethical implications. The use of Facebook in Labrador was so pervasive, however, that I found it was an important way to keep up-to-date with local politics, and the public nature of these on-line discussions seemed to be well accepted by participants.

I also examined the production and denial of cultural difference in meetings of the Regional Planning Authority, although, as I mentioned, this was not the first co-management board that I looked at. With the inaction of the Torngat Wildlife and Plants board, I looked at the Voisey's Bay Environmental Management Board by reviewing documents at the Board's office in Goose Bay, and by talking with current and former members of the board and the board's chair. With little chance that the board would actually meet any time soon, however, I changed my focus again to a new co-management authority that had a strict deadline to meet. Keith Chaulk, the Director of the Labrador Institute, and a biologist of Inuit descent, suggested that I follow the Regional

Planning Authority (RPA), of which he had been appointed a member. With Keith's help, I met with the RPA and gained observer status to attend meetings. I sat in on RPA meetings in Goose Bay in February 2008, and then in five subsequent meetings in Goose Bay or in St. John's between March 2008 and September 2009. I also attended public consultations about the draft plan in St. John's in early 2010, and acted as moderator for a session on the Nunatsiavut plan during a Canadian Institute of Planners conference in July 2011. These meetings provided me with the opportunity to observe how an Inuit-based governance process unfolded between the two appointees of the Nunatsiavut Government and the two appointees of the provincial government, how the public and other stakeholders were involved, and how the political context of the planning process developed. Board meetings provided a forum for conflict and social learning, both of which proved useful in illuminating boundaries and narratives about cultural differentiation. As an observer, I took notes during meetings and analyzed interactions and performances through a mix of coding analysis (Fife 2005) and discourse analysis tools (see below). I looked at the following questions: How is cultural differentiation used, produced, or denied during meeting discussions of planning policy? How are cultural, economic, and environmental concepts and categories manipulated, and to what material consequence?

#### **2.4.3 Interviews**

I interviewed a range of people: Nunatsiavut, provincial, and federal government bureaucrats and politicians, community residents, industry employees, co-management

participants, and community leaders. Depending on the interview participant and the interview setting (semi-structured or informal), I focused on particular events and experiences, or on a broader range of topics. Using a combination of respondent and informant-style questions (Levy and Hollan 1998) to solicit both narratives and analytical responses (Chase 2003), I tried to elucidate personal narratives and descriptions of decision-making processes or experiences in order to explore how individuals construct and manipulate concepts of cultural differentiation, and how these concepts relate to inequalities. I recorded nine interviews, but I found that, with a few exceptions, the participants who were recorded were not comfortable in front of a microphone. For the vast majority of my interviews, therefore, I relied on note-taking both during and after the interviews, and had much better discussions. In three of the semi-formal interviews, I interviewed people two or more times, and the depth of our conversations improved immensely.

#### **2.4.4 Discourse and text analysis tools**

As Tania Li argues, cultural difference is “formed and inscribed ‘symbolically as well as instrumentally, discursively as well as forcefully’ in the relations of rule, trade, and everyday interaction” (Coombe 1991 quoted in Li 2001a). Some of my analysis therefore relied on discourse and text analysis tools that illuminate classifications, boundaries, oppositions, incongruencies, and logics by focusing on the processes through which people, concepts, and knowledge are socially constructed (Madison 2005; Roseberry 1996). I coded and analyzed texts (government documents, speeches, media

pieces, videos, hearing transcripts, visuals, historical documents, etc.), my fieldnotes, meetings notes, interview notes and transcriptions, and language used in everyday interactions for narrative form, use of metaphors, symbols, logic, and images, grammatical structures, conversational dynamics, underlying assumptions and silences, and discourse formation (Farnell and Graham 1998; Fife 2005; Bernard and Ryan 1998; Chase 2003; Procter 1999). In my coding, I looked initially for broad categories that corresponded with different representations of Inuit or issues relating to resource management, and then I did more fine-toothed coding within each example (Brinex, Voisey's Bay, the final land claim, the uranium debate, and land use planning). I tried to look at how conflict or consensus was negotiated within these examples, and how cultural and economic categories ("traditional" and "subsistence," for instance) were created and manipulated. I focused particularly on inconsistencies between policy, public representations, and daily life, and how these inconsistencies were rectified or ignored. How is cultural or economic power euphemized (Scott 1985; Wolf 1999)? How is resistance framed, and how is it appropriated (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Roseberry 1996; Escobar 2004)? How do these conceptual manipulations of cultural difference relate to economic contexts and inequalities?

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Cultural differentiation in historical context**

For over 250 years, Labrador Inuit and various outside institutions have been producing or challenging ideas about cultural difference, many of which were used to create or excuse dispossessions and inequalities among and between colonizers and colonized. This chapter examines the existing literature about the initial period of this process, from the mid-1700s to 1926, in order to explore the early connections that were made between cultural difference and economic and political inequality. The historical development of these ideas and the actions that were based on them provide important context to current circumstances, because they had widespread territorial, economic, political, and social impacts that eventually played a fundamental role in the development of the modern Nunatsiavut. Ideas about a territorialized Inuit identity and economic, political, and social self-containment eventually influenced the category and the territorial boundaries of Nunatsiavut, as I will discuss in later chapters, but the complexity of this early period has resulted in many ongoing contradictions in the current production of difference.

#### **3.1 Inuit Territorial and Economic Expanse**

Inuit in Labrador were historically based in a region that extends far beyond the modern boundaries of Nunatsiavut. Paleo-Eskimo groups moved into different areas of

the Ungava Peninsula and Labrador at various times (Kaplan 1983; Taylor 1974; Fitzhugh 1977). According to archaeological and historical research, the ancestors of today's Inuit probably moved into coastal Labrador about 1300 A.D., and lived on the north and eventually the south coast, as well as on what is now the Quebec Lower North Shore and the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland (Kennedy 2009; NunatuKavut Community Council 2010). Inuit lived in small and mobile groups, and referred to themselves generally as "-miut" or "the people of..." – for instance, "Napartumiut" were the people who lived around Napartok Bay, and "Netcetumiut" were the those who lived in Sandwich Bay (Netsbucktoke) (Brice-Bennett 1977; Fitzhugh 1999). Historians describe their livelihood as being based predominantly on hunting and trading products from whales, seals, and caribou, although the European and American whaling industry soon caused whale stocks to plummet (Brice-Bennett 1977).

Inuit interactions with Europeans occurred much earlier than previously thought. Some archaeologists suggest that "Inuit were accustomed to obtaining articles of European manufacture long before moving to Labrador (and, in archaeological terms, before they became the Inuit)" (Ramsden in NunatuKavut Community Council 2010: 198). When early European whalers, fishermen, and traders began to visit Labrador in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Labrador Inuit continued to use and adapt European tools and material gained through trade. In the early and mid-1700s, Inuit traded with mainly French and British whalers, fishermen, and merchants in the Strait of Belle Isle, northern Newfoundland, and the Lower North Shore of Quebec (Zimmerly 1975; Taylor 2009, 1974). Inuit were involved in a number of disputes over resources and trade, and

developed deep mistrust of the Europeans because, as some told a missionary in 1765, “they are afraid of their irregularities with respect to their Women &c” (NunatuKavut Community Council 2010: 50). The Inuit came to be regarded as aggressive by the Europeans and Newfoundlanders, so were left much alone on the north and central coast (Hiller 1971, 2009). The violence caused the European fishery to be “confined to a small part of the Southern Coast, and always precarious,” as a Moravian missionary wrote in 1772 (Davey 1910: 137).

The extent of Inuit settlement in Labrador in the 1700s is currently under discussion, as a result of the NunatuKavut land claim (formerly the Labrador Metis Nation) to central and southern Labrador (Kennedy 2009; NunatuKavut Community Council 2010). Opinions have historically been varied about the range of Inuit settlement and land use, and have been influenced by masculine biases, as I will discuss farther on. According to some Europeans in the 1700s, Cape Charles (just south of Mary’s Harbour) was the unofficial southern coastal boundary of Inuit territory, north of which many Europeans at the time did not wish to venture due to the strong and aggressive Inuit presence in the region (Hiller 2009; Fitzhugh 1999). Some academics maintain that Hamilton Inlet was the “southern stronghold” of the Inuit, as the area near present-day Rigolet was a major settlement area of Inuit who traded whale baleen, seal oil, furs, and walrus ivory for iron tools, boats, and other goods from Europeans (Zimmerly 1975: 48; Maggo 1999). Archaeologists debate the southern extent of Labrador Inuit and the permanence of Inuit land use from south of Cartwright to the Quebec Lower North Shore (Fitzhugh 2002, 2009; Taylor 1980; Stopp 2002). Some scholars argue that the Inuit of



the 1700s could be divided into southern Inuit who acted as trading middlemen (those living in the Nain area and south to the Straits of Belle Isle), and northern Inuit who relied mainly on whaling for their livelihoods (those living north of the Nain area) (Kaplan 1983; Kennedy 2009). The NunatuKavut Community Council's (2010) land claim research outlines historical evidence of a distinct Inuit society throughout central and southern Labrador in the mid-1700s, despite European efforts to oust them from the lucrative fishing area. Regardless of these distinctions, it is increasingly accepted that Inuit lived throughout coastal Labrador when Europeans first came to the area, and continued to live throughout the region, despite the ideas about the "traditional Inuit territory" that were later created and maintained by European colonial interests.

### **3.2 British economic interests and the Moravian Mission: The dispossession of lands and resources**

The dispossession of Inuit lands and resources in Labrador by European interests began in earnest in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After 1763, with the end of the Seven Years' War between France and Britain, Britain placed Labrador under the responsibility of the Governor of Newfoundland in order to promote the British fishery in Labrador in the face of both French competition and Inuit violence (Hiller 2009). To claim full sovereignty of Labrador, and to fully exploit its resources, Britain had to establish permanent settlement, but this was impossible when interactions with the Inuit were so tense. The British colonial government therefore sought to improve relations between Inuit and Europeans in Labrador, and to persuade the Inuit (who were "notorious plunderers and pirates") to

stop disrupting the profitable British fishery in southern Labrador (Fornel 1793 in Brice-Bennett 1981: 3). Moravian missionaries, fresh from experience in Greenland, approached the government with a plan to isolate the Inuit on large Mission-controlled land grants, from which they could protect them from unscrupulous traders and convert them to Christianity (Hiller 1977). As Moravian James Hutton argued in 1765, land grants would help to "civilize" the Inuit:

"An entire property in the land, as the lords of the soil, was really necessary; as, in order to reclaim the converted from their vagabond way of life, they must be separated from their heathen countrymen, and formed into societies"  
(Hutton in Hiller 1977: 83).

From the Moravian point of view, land grants would also allow the missionaries to maintain independence from governments and to ensure that their trade existed as a monopoly (Brice-Bennett 1990). Governor Palliser felt that the Moravians' goals would help to further his own, and recommended in 1764 that the missionaries establish a "trucking place...where these Savages may be stopt from coming further Southward...and we may procure what we want of them and thus keep the rest of the Coast open and free for our Adventurers" (Palliser 1764 quoted in Hiller 1967: 42). In August, 1765, the Governor and Moravian missionaries met with Inuit in Chateau Bay, and agreed to a treaty of peace and friendship. Palliser issued "passports" for Inuit in the hope of establishing the sort of "friendly intercourse" that had previously been lacking, "owing in great measure to the imprudent, treacherous, or cruel conduct of some people who have resorted to that coast, by plundering and killing some of them" (Palliser in Gosling 1910: 255). The British colonial government also eventually agreed to issue land grants to the Moravians, as long as they agreed to "in no respect interrupt or annoy the

fisheries carried on upon the said coast of Labrador" (Williamson 1964: 33). The Moravians were to use "every fair and gentle means in their power, to prevent the said Esquimaux Savages from going Southward without first obtaining their permission in writing for so doing" (Governor Shuldham 1772 quoted in Hiller 1971: 78). Although they were instructed to use "fair and gentle means," and, to a limited extent, endeavoured to obtain some level of Inuit consent, colonial powers were nonetheless moving to further dispossess Inuit of their lands and resources.

### **3.3 Moravian constructs about Inuit cultural difference**

The Mission's relationship with Inuit from the late 1700s to the early 1900s profoundly affected both material aspects and cultural concepts about Inuit territory, economic behaviour, political organization, and society. Many of these conceptions and material outcomes were the result of specific historical circumstances and decisions, and represent an incomplete colonial project to contain and to characterize all Labrador Inuit. Moravian missionaries worked to develop the idea of a Moravian Inuit homeland by isolating Christian Inuit on tracts of land that the Mission had claimed, and by trying to control all economic and political activities. The Mission's "containment policy," as historian James Hiller describes it, however, ultimately failed to encompass all Inuit on all Inuit territory (Hiller 1971). Many Inuit continued to live outside of the Moravian Mission's influence, and many others refused to conform to the missionaries' cultural, geographical, and economic restrictions and categorizations.

The modern boundaries of Nunatsiavut are currently framed as the natural Inuit homeland, but these boundaries are instead the result of specific events and circumstances. The Moravians' choice of location for these mission stations, for instance, was often a result of strategic positioning, and did not necessarily reflect existing Inuit settlements (Rollmann 2009). The missionaries originally intended the Hamilton Inlet area ("Esquimaux Bay") to be the location of the first land grant, but Nain was ultimately chosen with the help of Mikak, an Inuk woman who had befriended Moravian missionaries in Europe, and Tuglavina, her husband. As Hiller describes, the missionaries set out in 1770 for Hamilton Inlet "which they understood – erroneously – to be the centre of the native population. They appear to have missed the entrance, however, and their Eskimo guides, probably thinking the missionaries were asking for 'the place where many Eskimos are assembled' ...took them north to Nuneingoak" (Hiller 1971: 842). The Moravians obtained a land grant of 100,000 acres (with British and Inuit consent)<sup>3</sup> around Nain in 1771. The Nain location turned out to be a poor area for year-round subsistence, but was a central location for Inuit from both the north and the south. Okak was decided upon as the location for the next settlement in 1776 through the Moravian practice of casting lots, a lottery system that was seen as a way of allowing God to make important decisions. Hopedale was established in 1782, partly as an attempt to establish a Moravian presence farther south, as European traders moved north – in particular, George Cartwright, who had established furring and fishing posts at Cape Charles in 1770 and at

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<sup>3</sup> Moravian missionaries met with Inuit near Nain, Okak, and Hopedale to obtain Inuit approval for the purchase of land, for missionaries to live at the stations and to control who else lived there (Rollmann 2009; footprints chapter).

Sandwich Bay in 1775 (Rollmann 2009; Zimmerly 1975). According to the Moravians, land grants were to be established “the sooner the better, so that we are already in possession, when the English establish their settlements” (quoted in Rollmann 2009: 120). Choices about the location of further mission stations involved issues of resource scarcity, the desire to reach unconverted Inuit farther north, the eventual need to minister to the Kablunângajuit and settlers in the area, and competition with other traders.

Settlements were eventually built at Hebron (1830 – 1959), Zoar (1865 - 1890), Ramah (1871-1907), Makkovik (1895), and Killinek (1904 – 1924) (Brice-Bennett 1977). Some of these stations were later closed, for reasons relating to trade or relocation (see chapter four), but the remaining Moravian mission stations and the territory historically claimed as “Moravian” form the basis of today’s Nunatsiavut and most of its Inuit communities. I will continue to examine the assumptions underlying this geographical containment of Inuit later in this chapter, but first I will explore some of the cultural and economic implications of Moravian involvement on the north coast.

### **3.4 ‘Appropriate’ Inuit economic activity: Moravian Eskimos**

The Moravian efforts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries centred on interrelated territorial, economic, and social goals that involved Christian conversion, controlled trade, and protection from harmful influences. A number of researchers have explored the social and economic impact of the Moravians’ trade and religious relationship with Inuit in great depth, and have illustrated how the dynamics between Moravian and Inuit interests caused the relationship between the two groups to develop in diverse ways (cf.,

Hiller 1967, 1971, 2009; Brice-Bennett 1981, 1986, 1990; Whiteley 1964; Williamson 1964; Peacock 1947). The Moravians envisioned their enclaves in northern Labrador to be cultural and economic sanctuaries for the Inuit, modeled on Christian values. In practice, their religious instruction often comprised of instilling certain types of economic behaviour: "Although to the Moravians to be civilised meant to be Christian, it also implied the observation of certain rules which created and maintained regularity and conformity in economic as in other conduct" (Hiller 1967: 128). "Rational" or "productive" economic behaviour, according to the missionaries, included the individual accumulation of goods for future use, a strong work ethic, and an assumption that services or products should be paid for instead of given. A Moravian pamphlet of 1772 extols the benefits of the Mission to the British public: "They learn also to be industrious. They learn that every convenience that we enjoy above them is the production of industry. Before the Mission was settled among them they took no care for the morrow – they considered labour as the worst of evils. If ever they acquired European articles it was by violence and rapine. They are now taught that there is no situation on earth, however uncomfortable, that might not be amended by honest industry" (cited in Davey 1910: 144). The Mission therefore attempted to create communities of "hard working, thrifty Moravian Eskimos," and demanded that Inuit conform to their strict code of behaviour (Hiller 1971: 89). Missionaries criticized the fundamental value of sharing in Inuit society, and they often interpreted Inuit harvesting taboos that discouraged constant and uncontrolled hunting as causing unproductive behaviour, promoting idleness, and conflicting with the Mission's model of a six-day workweek. The Inuit practice of

abstaining from hunting for three days after a successful seal hunt, for example, and the custom of separating women from whales – which influenced Inuit in 1788 to refuse the missionaries' offer of their boat for whaling, as they would need women to row – initially frustrated the Mission's ambitions for increased productivity and resource exploitation (Hiller 1967: 153-154).

The Moravians' idea of productivity often conflicted with Inuit self-sufficiency. The missionaries had originally hoped that Inuit would live permanently in the communities, but they struggled to reconcile this hope with the economic and cultural realities of Labrador. They refused to participate in the Inuit concept of proper social conduct by refusing to freely share their food resources, although they demanded that Inuit remain at the settlements, where they were not able to support themselves through harvesting (Hiller 1967). The Moravians also initially avoided supplying foodstuffs or trade goods that they felt were not useful, as they did not wish to introduce Inuit to "a bad custom, making them feel a want, which they never did before, and could not always satisfy" (Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, 1799, quoted in Brice-Bennett 1990: 225). In the first decades of the Mission, many Inuit demonstrated their dissatisfaction with this approach by continuing to do business with other traders, and by spending only minimal amounts of time at the mission stations. The missionaries soon realized that they could not stifle Inuit self-sufficiency by requiring that converts live at the villages year-round, if the mission stations were to be financially viable – both because they could not afford to feed everyone in the settlements, and because they would be thereby reducing their supply of animal products for the trade that supported the Mission (Hiller 1971).

The missionaries therefore revised their tactics and instead encouraged Inuit to continue to support themselves (and the Mission) by harvesting food (and trade products), but to minimize their movements by spending some of the year at the missions.

Inuit continued to use the vast sea ice area and the inland regions for fishing, trapping, berry picking, and hunting, although some key species, such as whales, were being quickly depleted by European commercial industries (Brice-Bennett 1977). Most Inuit of the region in the late 1700s also continued to travel, trade, and have strong social ties with other Inuit and traders in southern and central Labrador, and throughout the Ungava peninsula (Hiller 1971). Connections with other Inuit remained of fundamental importance, and the Moravians did not initially attract the kind of exclusive loyalty that they hoped for. The Inuit perception of all Europeans, as recorded in a Moravian report in 1773, was that they "have a very mercenary, greedy and slavish mind or they would not come so far to bring them such things as they want or like" (Report of the Station of the Brethrens' Mission 1773, quoted in Hiller 1967:128). Many Inuit felt that it was therefore not crucial to differentiate between different groups of Europeans, despite the Moravians' attempts to distinguish themselves from southern traders as the "protectors" of Inuit interests. Most Inuit continued to divide their loyalties among numerous traders, and large numbers of Inuit migrated south from the Mission region in 1783, 1788, and 1791, as a result of the Moravians' restrictions on Inuit who lived at the mission stations, as well as the wider trading opportunities that merchants on the south coast offered (Brice-Bennett 1990). Eventually, competition with southern traders (both Inuit and non-Inuit)



influenced the Moravians to expand their trading goods to include, by 1799, a small assortment of foodstuffs, guns, knives, tobacco, and clothing (ibid.).

In the early 1800s, more and more Inuit in northern Labrador began to gravitate to the Moravian communities. Driven by harvest shortages, environmental impacts of climate change and commercial over-harvesting, infectious disease epidemics, and by a spiritual revival movement (the "Great Awakening") in 1804-5 that was initiated mainly by women, Inuit increasingly congregated at the missions (Hiller 1967; Brice-Bennett 1981). Some, especially groups living to the north of the missions, resisted the increasing pressures to convert to the new religion until the early 1900s, but most eventually agreed to participate to some extent in the church (Kennedy 1977a). Over the next century, many Inuit began to strongly identify as Moravians, although they maintained many of their own strong cultural values by combining Inuit and Christian ideology and practices (Brice-Bennett 1981, 1994, Tanner et al., 1994; Maggo 1999).

By the mid-1800s, two to three hundred Inuit were wintering at mission stations such as Nain, Hopedale, and Okak (Kennedy 1977). Moravian missionaries wanted to keep Inuit even closer to the mission stations and to improve Mission trade, and so they searched for ways to make resource harvesting more efficient (Hiller 1967). They encouraged Inuit to start fishing commercially for cod, an activity that provided them with the income needed to pay off their debts incurred from the fall and winter seasons of seal netting and trapping (Peacock 1947). Cod fishing was traditionally women's work, and dried cod was a winter staple for Inuit at the time. Moravians reported that commercial cod fishing was initially unpopular among Inuit men, as the fish were an

inferior food to seal and other sought-after meat, and the intensive season needed for fishing conflicted with the important summer caribou hunt (Gosling 1910). Missionaries reported many families who were "too proud to fish," but the industry gradually took hold in the 1860s and 1870s, due to the need for trade goods (Kleivan 1966: 55; Hiller 1967). Most Inuit jigged for cod, while others were hired by the Moravians to form crews to operate mission cod traps (Brice-Bennett 1977). By the late nineteenth century, the summer cod fishery provided much of the annual income earned by families on the north coast.

The Moravians also introduced seal nets to increase the efficiency of the commercial seal harvest, which provided both food and trade products. In most cases, the Mission owned the nets, as few Inuit could afford to buy one, and so, like the cod fishery, the missionaries controlled the process by hiring Inuit to use their nets. Inuit received seal meat as payment for their work and kept the meat, skins, and oil for domestic purposes. The lucrative profit from the trade of seal products allowed the Moravians to fund Mission work elsewhere in the world until prices fell in the late 1920s (Kleivan 1966). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, for instance, the Mission exported cargoes of seal products worth more than \$25,000 annually (Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry in Canada 1986: 21).

Inuit continued to hunt, gather, and fish other species for their own sustenance in addition to participating in these commercial harvesting activities, and the missionaries encouraged a diverse economy by providing equipment and a market for a wide variety of Inuit goods (Brice-Bennett 1990; Kennedy 1977). However, resource harvesting was

increasingly driven by the commercial needs of the Mission and the missionaries' ideas of productivity and efficiency rather than by subsistence needs (Richling 1978; Kleivan 1966).

The missionaries became increasingly concerned about Inuit dependence on Mission relief and credit, and this fear fueled many internal discussions and disputes with Inuit about how to manage their economic and social relationship, including issues such as gift-giving, credit, compassion during times of famine, debt forgiveness, and Inuit idleness (Brice-Bennett 1990; Kleivan 1966). The Mission constantly struggled with the contradictory situation that it had helped to create: it had encouraged Inuit to settle in the villages and to become involved in commercial harvesting, but this had resulted in the Inuit being vulnerable to global market fluctuations and therefore sometimes forced them to rely on Mission relief. This relief was relatively liberal for the times, especially in comparison to the relief and credit policies of traders such as the Hudson's Bay Company, but the missionaries often demanded some degree of reciprocal payment, often in the form of wage labour, and frequently refused to simply give food away (Richling 1978; Jenness 1965). In cases that involved able-bodied Inuit, the Mission viewed relief as something that should be earned instead of freely given, and used it to create obligatory relationships. They disagreed with the Inuit ethic of sharing as being irrational and wasteful (as well as bad for the trading business), but Inuit within the settlements have continued to share among themselves (Hiller 1967; Kennedy 1977; Kleivan 1966; Brice-Bennett 1990; Natcher et al. 2012). During times of scarcity, the Moravians sometimes refused to help Inuit whom they deemed unworthy of charity, "expecting

people to be content in their poverty, said to be intended for their enlightenment" (Brice-Bennett 1990: 226). The Inuit perspective, on the other hand, challenged this approach, as they believed "the rich should support the poor...when they have abundance" (*Periodical Accounts* 1843 quoted in Brice-Bennett 1990: 236). Changes in Moravian credit policy, such as the tightening of credit in the 1870s and 1880s, caused often-violent Inuit criticism of both the Mission's economic and religious roles (Kleivan 1966). The relative degree of overall social support offered by the Mission, however, did often manage to attract and keep Inuit in the settlements for a portion of the year in times of hardship.

### **3.5 Cultural community and differentiation**

The Moravian Mission manipulated a number of ideas about cultural difference in order to assert social and economic dominance in 'its territory.' In establishing their land grants, the Moravians attempted to control economic and social interactions between mission Inuit and non-Inuit settlers, non-Christian Inuit, and *Kablunāngajuit* (the Inuititut term for those of mixed Inuit ancestry) who lived in the vicinity of the Moravian enclaves. Moravians attempted to control the movements of those who lived in the area, and engaged in a number of conflicts with traders and fishermen who threatened to compete with the Moravian trade. The missionaries saw these outsiders as dangerous influences, and they actively worked to promote the idea of Inuit identity and cultural purity by developing community cohesiveness and by highlighting cultural differentiation (Kennedy 1977; Hiller 1967). They attempted to create cohesion among Mission Inuit by both creating an experience of Christian communal life and by enforcing isolation from

outside temptations. Religious meetings, festivals, choirs, and, after 1901, elders' committees provided opportunities for community involvement and attachment (Hiller 1967, 1971; Kleivan 1966). The missionaries also attempted to control who could live in the villages, and even with whom Inuit converts associated, although Inuit often challenged or simply disregarded these efforts.

The Moravian Mission promoted its own definition of Inuit identity, both in order to differentiate its converts from others, but also to justify some of its actions.

"The Eskimo must remain an Eskimo if he is to win his livelihood as a hunter in the frozen climate of his land; and while they have instilled habits of morality and clean living, and have weeded out habits that are bad and harmful, they have urged the people to keep closely to their native foods and habits of life, and clothing; in a word, their policy has been to make the Eskimo a better Eskimo. The natural isolation of Labrador has helped them in this, and has helped them, too, to stand between the people and the vices that civilization might bring if it were not grafted on their nature by careful hands" (Hutton 1912:337).

In the attempt to "make the Eskimo a better Eskimo" (focusing on only the male role of hunting), the missionaries encouraged some characteristics over others, often for reasons that can be framed as self-serving. Missionaries "endeavoured as far as possible, to encourage the Eskimos to pursue their natural mode of life and to hunt seals," as Rev. Peacock observed (Peacock 1947: 77). As discussed previously, this "natural mode of life" was encouraged partly in order to avoid Mission bankruptcy, and was altered through the use of seal nets and trade incentives to better suit the Mission's goals of efficiency and Inuit settlement. Missionaries perhaps did not choose to see other pursuits, such as the caribou hunt, for instance, as fundamental to the "natural mode of life," as the hunt drew Inuit away from the communities, and did not provide valuable trade products.

The Mission also encouraged Inuit "not to change what is good in their own mode of life, and, thus, in principle not seek to further the sale of clothing, provisions, or of many other articles 'which may be necessities of European life but are luxuries to our Eskimos'" (*Periodical Accounts* 1904 quoted in Kleivan 1966: 86). Missionaries encouraged moderation and the limitation of desire as characteristics that were necessary to preserve Inuit culture in the face of modern influences: "At present there is not a family that is content to live as their ancestors did. They profess to be unable to subsist any longer on fish, seal's flesh and other products of the country. We do not object to their enjoying...such articles of diet as flour, biscuit, molasses...if they would do so moderately" (*Periodical Accounts* 1863, quoted in Richling 1978: 183).

Missionaries later lauded the Mission's trade policies as resulting in cultural protection: "The Moravians tried to preserve the Eskimos in their old mode of living and not to introduce trade goods which would lead to the downfall of the Eskimos...It seems certain that had the brethren not established trade upon the northern part of the coast, the Eskimos would have shared the fate of their brethren and sisters on Southern Labrador, who to-day are practically extinct" (Peacock 1947: 63). The pressures of trade competition and internal economic considerations, however, often resulted in an inconsistent approach to policies of controlled trade.

The missionaries used their idea of cultural protection as justification for their work among the Inuit, but the Mission worked to erase many Inuit cultural practices, especially the visible manifestations of spiritual or ceremonial life. Drumming, throat-singing, the telling of myths, and dancing were forbidden, as was anything that the

missionaries felt was related to shamanism or the heathen way of life (Hiller 1967; Williamson 1964). They promoted Christian values and practices among the Inuit within the mission stations, to the detriment of much Inuit intellectual culture, which one missionary dismissed as being "too tedious to mention" (Williamson 1964: 35). In recent times, it has been much of this performative and visual culture that Inuit in Labrador have been working to recover, and which were displayed at the opening ceremonies for Nunatsiavut in 2005.

Another aspect closely tied to the Mission's version of cultural protection was language. The use of Inuttitut in all aspects of community life, including education and religion, was maintained through the Moravian adoption of the language. The missionaries' proficiency in Inuttitut had initially provided them with unique skills among Europeans, and had served them well in convincing the British Government to give them the land grants and in developing religious and trading relationships with Inuit. As long as Inuit were unilingual, it could be argued, the Moravians would have a unique niche as middlemen between Inuit and the "outside world." Missionaries also justified decisions not to train individuals to become ministers, because "an attempt should not be made to advance single individuals farther than the rest; one shall work to raise the niveau of the entire population" (Lindow 1924 quoted in Kleivan 1966: 81). In similar fashion, the Mission aimed to maintain as much isolation from outside influences as possible: "When they first set foot on the remote Labrador coast they had expected its Eskimos to remain isolated and undisturbed in their backwater for...generations....The missions...would keep the people Eskimos, [and] would prepare the children to play their

part on a purely Eskimo stage, not to participate in the ruthless struggles of western civilization" (Jenness 1965: 55). Moravian attempts to control the Inuit population, often couched in benevolent paternalism, relied on the social and geographical boundaries that the missionaries worked so hard to create and maintain.

The Moravian Mission, in trying to prevent "the downfall of the Eskimos" by preserving (some aspects of) their culture, relied on the Counter-Enlightenment's static, bounded, and uncontaminated concept of culture (Wolf 1999). The missionaries tried to maintain a geographically isolated region for Moravian Inuit that would also act to culturally and economically isolate Inuit from the wider world, and encouraged their "old mode of living" and their "natural mode of life." Even the cultural changes that the Mission initiated were intended to "make the Eskimo a better Eskimo," and were not seen as changes that would lead to the "downfall" of the Inuit. The missionaries' conception of culture, and their perception of the value of their work with the Inuit were rooted in the idea that cultural authenticity was a result of 'natural' – or at least 'old' – ways of living in uncontaminated isolation, and was thus something that could be polluted and corrupted if it changed.

Despite the Mission's attempts to maintain their goal of contained cultural purity, however, these attempts were always incomplete. In the late 1700s, non-Christian Inuit were often antagonistic to the missionaries, and many would frequently visit the Moravian communities to encourage their family and friends to trade with southern merchants (Brice-Bennett 1990: 234). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the diversity of people, economic practices, and cultures in the region became increasingly complex. Inuit



continued to live throughout Labrador, despite Moravian attempts to gather and unify Inuit in communities along the north coast. The Mission's attempts at pacifying the Inuit had resulted in more European and Newfoundland settlement of the Labrador south coast; after the early 1800s, the population of European, Canadian, Newfoundlander, and Inuit residents rapidly increased in the Hamilton Inlet and Lake Melville area, and at Kaipokok Bay on the north coast (Hiller 2009; Brice-Bennett 1990; Zimmerly 1975). Large numbers of fishermen from Europe, the United States, and Newfoundland fished for cod in northern Labrador each summer in the mid-1800s, and some married local Inuit women or brought their families with them to live permanently in the area. Other settlers were Hudson Bay Company servants or other traders who married Inuit women and, with their wives' guidance, learned to survive in Labrador by fishing, trapping, hunting, and, for some, private trading (Brody 1977; Campbell 1980). These settler men relied on the skills, social network, and knowledge of their Inuit wives in harvesting, preparing food, sewing the clothing needed to survive in the region, and cleaning and processing skins, and the Inuit women exerted extensive economic and cultural influence (Cabak 1991; NunatuKavut Community Council 2010). Although it is sometimes these Inuit women (such as Lydia Campbell) whom their descendants see as the dominant historical figure, it is more often the memory of the men (such as Torsten Andersen, the 'founder' of Makkovik) and the male surnames that survive in historical memory (Campbell 1980; fn July 2008). Masculine assumptions have rendered many of these Inuit women almost invisible in the history of the region, and, in many accounts (see Complexities and

contradictions section, below), Inuit culture and identity was not recognized as enduring through the women's line.

The Hudson's Bay Company and independent traders competed with the Moravian Mission during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the establishment of both trading posts and missions throughout central and coastal Labrador often involved political dynamics between the two groups. Despite all Moravian attempts to prevent traders from building posts in the region, many were built in relatively close proximity to the Mission stations. In the 1830s, the Hudson's Bay Company expanded to many locations on the northern Labrador coast by establishing new posts or by buying out existing traders, including at Kaipokok Bay (where traders had established posts since 1792), Ailik (near Makkovik), and Davis Inlet, where a private trader ran a trading post that attracted both Innu and Inuit. In the 1860s and 1870s, the Company tried to compete with the Moravian Mission's trade by building posts at Nachvak, Saglek, and Killinek (Richling 1978). In central Labrador, the Hudson's Bay Company took over the trading posts at Rigolet and North West River in 1837, both of which had been originally founded by French trader Louis Fornel in 1743. North West River became an important Hudson's Bay post after 1836 for trappers in central Labrador, especially for trappers who were former employees of trading companies and had married Inuit women and settled in the region. A settler, mixed-ancestry Inuit, and Inuit society developed in the Lake Melville and Groswater Bay area in the mid-1800s, and people traded at posts at North West River, Mulligan, Rigolet, Kenemish, Kenemu, Grand River, and the central Hudson's Bay post at Cartwright (Zimmerly 1975; Plaice 1990; Kennedy 1995).

The boundaries of the "Moravian Inuit territory" were determined by the location of the mission stations, but these boundaries were changeable through time. In the mid-1800s, the Moravians considered expanding their scope of influence south. At the encouragement of Donald Smith, the chief trader for the Hudson's Bay Company in the "Esquimaux Bay District," the Moravians sent a missionary to North West River in 1857 to explore the possibility of establishing a mission there. They eventually decided against it because of the scattered population and their inability to maintain a trading monopoly (Zimmerly 1975). The missionaries considered Cape Harrison, fifty miles south of Hopedale, to be the southern boundary of their territory, but Inuit encouraged the Moravians to explore the possibility of establishing a mission at Rigolet or Ailik (Kleivan 1966). Mission officials felt that at Rigolet, the "number of natives in the locality was fast decreasing," and the Inuit families were becoming more proficient in English, which allowed the Methodist minister to serve them (Davey 1910). They eventually decided on Makkovik in 1895, where a settler family lived (Kennedy 1977; Schwartz 1977).

The northward movement of non-Inuit and mixed-ancestry families was not the only direction of migration. Inuit who had lived at the missions did not always choose to remain there, and instead moved south and away from the missionaries' influence. They then passed along the religious training and education that they had received from the Mission to their families in central and southern Labrador, introducing literacy to a society that had little opportunity for education (Kleivan 1966). By 1873, most settler and mixed-ancestry Inuit families lived south of the Hopedale area, in the Groswater Bay-Lake Melville region, and on the south coast, in homesteads near salmon rivers and

trapping grounds, and often isolated from mission settlements and trading posts (Kennedy 1977).

Moravian efforts to emphasize cultural difference through the control of the land grants, community membership, and trading relationships promoted a general awareness of ethnic identity in the region, but these efforts were constantly and increasingly confronted with the inconsistencies inherent in daily life. Widespread marriage and interaction between Inuit and Europeans resulted in shared families, livelihood traditions, and experiences, and the distinctions between individuals were often ambiguous. Mixed-ancestry Inuit families were often bilingual, followed many Inuit cultural practices and values, and engaged in many of the same livelihood pursuits as their Inuit neighbours. As Carol Brice-Bennett argues, in the vicinity of the Moravian Missions, "The Euro-Inuit population was distinct, not so much for its lifestyle or ethnic status, but for its dissociation from the Moravian Church which gave identity to the Inuit communities" (Brice-Bennett 1990: 239). By the 1850s, as a result of trading conflicts and social pressures, the Moravians finally agreed to include these families in their community activities, but they tried to maintain separation between the two groups by offering separate educational and religious services (Kennedy 1982). As Richling (1978) has documented, the missionaries also fostered economic differentiations between Moravian Inuit and mixed-ancestry families by providing Inuit with preferential trading and harvesting opportunities and equipment. Elsewhere in Labrador, this degree of cultural differentiation was not fostered to such an extent, but it had significant and enduring social and economic impacts on people within the Moravian-affiliated territory.

Anthropologists have developed a substantial body of work that describes the complexities of the ethnic politics originally promoted by the Moravian Mission and often maintained by both Inuit and Kablunângajuit / Settlers (cf., Kennedy 1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1987, 1988, 1995, 1996, 1997; Brantenberg 1977a, 1977b; Paine 1977; Ben-Dor 1966; Brody 1977; Richling 1978; Kleivan 1966).

### **3.6 Complexities and contradictions**

The Moravian project to improve and shield its version of uncontaminated Inuit culture had many contradictions, but the missionaries' ideas about cultural difference have had a hegemonic effect on the ways in which many people have thought about Labrador Inuit. Many accounts describe the Moravian initiatives to create religious and trading enclaves for Inuit in the mid- to late-1700s as the main historical event concerning Labrador Inuit, but a heavy focus on this episode often creates the impression that other Inuit eventually ceased to exist elsewhere in Labrador. The mass of Moravian documentation has spawned much academic interest in the Mission, and the missionaries' self-promotion of their proselytizing work has, in turn, amplified attention on the Moravians' attempts to 'protect' Inuit in Labrador (as well as, later, the land claims process of the 1970s) (cf., Hiller 1967, 1971; Williamson 1964; Brice-Bennett 1981, 1990; Richling 1978; Rollmann 2009). The Moravians themselves kept detailed journals and mission accounts, and they often justified their work in Labrador to their funders and to the general public by claiming that they were defending and isolating the 'uncorrupted' Inuit from the harsh new realities of the global economy. They emphasized their success

in this endeavour by describing how Inuit living beyond their protective shield were eventually assimilated to such a degree that they were unrecognizable as Inuit: "Southlanders," as the missionaries called them, were "'degenerate Esquimaux,' since they lived almost entirely on imported foods and rarely hunted seals" (Brice-Bennett 1990: 236). The characteristics attributed to "genuine" Inuit are articulated in the many descriptions of the "less" Inuit, including diet, economic activity, and way of life. "As fast as [Settlers] increased the Eskimos decreased, not through destruction by whites (although diseases continued to take a heavy toll), but through absorption by them" (Jenness 1965: 56). "Their number has been gradually declining," wrote Rev. Davey in 1910. "In the early days, according to Jens Haven's calculation, there were three thousand of them. Now it is estimated there are scarcely thirteen hundred. This decline is attributed mainly to assimilation with European settlers, and the adoption of their habits and mode of life" (Davey 1910: 24). With the establishment of Killinek (in northernmost Labrador), argues anthropologist Diamond Jenness, "the Moravians controlled the entire Eskimo population of Newfoundland-Labrador, since the natives from Hamilton Inlet south had already merged with whites and could no longer be distinguished as a separate people" (Jenness 1965: 17). Other observers were more blatant: "It was at this period [1829-1848] that the Eskimos practically died out in southern Labrador," suggests Arminius Young (1931: 45). Sir William MacGregor, Governor of Newfoundland from 1904 to 1909, argued that "Natives have ceased to exist on the several hundred miles of the Labrador coast that lies south of the Moravian establishments," and Jenness described the "extinction of the Eskimos in southern Labrador" (MacGregor 1910: 110; Jenness

1965: 9). The Moravians' hegemonic definition of Labrador Inuit as Moravian Inuit continues to be echoed in recent times: "A final station, opened at Killinek in 1905 on the tip of the Labrador peninsula, achieved the Moravians' objective of containing the entire Inuit population in their Christian mission" (Brice-Bennett in Maggo 1999: 23).

More recent research, changes in identity politics, and the continuing efforts by NunatuKavut (formerly called the Labrador Metis Nation) to highlight the continued existence of Inuit society south of the Moravian settlements have encouraged new public and academic interest in questioning the established claim that Inuit disappeared from areas not under Moravian influence (cf., Kennedy 1995, 1996, 2009; Fitzhugh 1980; Martijn 1980a, 1980b; Clermont 1980; Dorais 1980; Taylor 1980; Jackson 1982; NunatuKavut Community Council 2010; Rankin et al. 2012). Historical and archaeological evidence of an enduring Inuit presence in southern Labrador is building, and it is increasingly accepted that Inuit did continue to live on the south coast of Labrador and in areas south of the Moravian missions, although epidemics likely reduced their numbers significantly as more Europeans moved to the region after 1763 and into the 1800s (Hiller 2009; Rankin et al. 2012; Zimmerly 1975). These Inuit continued to trade with and to coexist with Europeans and Newfoundlanders, and were integral to the development of communities throughout Labrador. In 1851, for instance, Bishop Feild reported that all but one of the resident women on the south coast were Inuit, Innu or of mixed ancestry (Fitzhugh 1999). Trader Lambert De Boileu wrote of his time "among the Esquimaux" in St. Lewis on the south coast in the 1860s, and describes an Inuit way of life that had not been influenced by Moravian prohibitions (such as those forbidding

polygamy, for instance) (De Boilieu 1969 [1861]). Because women took on their husbands' surnames or were assigned surnames by missionaries, and because it was predominantly male Europeans and Newfoundlanders that Inuit married, the historical record of ethnicity is difficult to discern, and the visibility of the role of Inuit women has been largely erased. Despite these masculine biases, Inuit women played a central role in society throughout the region (Cabak 1991). Predominantly Inuit communities were known to have existed at various locations in southeastern Labrador, including St. Lewis, Domino, Dumpling Island, Snooks Cove, Fox Harbour, Seal Islands, and Sandwich Bay (Kennedy 1988; NunatuKavut Community Council 2010). The NunatuKavut land claim research documents many other examples of non-Moravian Inuit society in southern Labrador (NunatuKavut Community Council 2010). Two groups of Inuit thus developed in Labrador, one under Moravian influence, and one not, although the distinction has never been clear-cut (Hiller 2009). Even today, Inuit on the north and south coasts and in the Lake Melville-Groswater Bay region continue to have strong family and social connections with each other, as well as with Inuit living elsewhere in Labrador and Quebec (LIA 1983).

Historians are also questioning the assertion that northern Inuit had limited previous experience with the global economy by arguing that Inuit from the Nain area and south had been trading with Europeans for generations before the Moravians arrived, and had been acting as trade middlemen for Inuit who lived farther north (Kennedy 1995, 2009). As John Kennedy argues, "Rather than considering Inuit traders of the mid-eighteenth century as primitive isolates then, I suggest that they were linked (however



tangentially) to the global economy, supplying baleen, sea mammal oil, animal pelts, and other local products to European and American consumers” (Kennedy 2009: 33).

The isolation and containment of Inuit within a circumscribed territory and set of appropriate economic practices was therefore not a natural fact when the missionaries arrived in Labrador, but was something that they had to first create. Inuit controlled much of their relationship with the missionaries by maintaining important practices and by forcing the Mission to alter its approach in many situations, so the Mission’s project was always incomplete and constantly contested. From the late 1700s, the Mission created and maintained cultural constructs that it used to produce the territorial, social, and economic isolation of Inuit in northern Labrador, and to attempt to control many aspects of life in the settlements. These cultural constructs about Inuit difference were based on ideas about a territorial culture familiar to many anthropologists (Gupta and Ferguson 1992), appropriate economic behaviour, which involved ideals about cultural segregation through economic isolation, productivity, efficiency, and dependence (as well as the failure to achieve these ideals), and a “natural” Inuit way of life, which included male-dominated seal hunting, a diet of country foods, and the Inuttitut language. Developed out of specific historical processes, these cultural constructs assumed the hegemonic appearance of being natural instead of constructed, and the idea of an Inuit homeland in northern Labrador where a certain definition of Inuit culture had been preserved was used to create social difference and economic disparities among and between various groups in Labrador (Wolf 1999; Gupta and Ferguson 1992). The historical development of these

cultural constructs laid the foundation for the creation of Nunatsiavut in the years to come, as the following chapters shall discuss.

The Moravian church and its approach in defining and 'protecting' Inuit society had widespread influence on Labrador's north coast. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Newfoundland Government had minimal presence in the region, and left the northern coast largely to the control of the Moravian missionaries. Newfoundland Governor MacGregor, after an inspection tour of northern Labrador in 1909, reported that "the Esquimaux race...cannot be in better hands than those of the Moravian mission, to which it undoubtedly owes its survival to the present day. The more completely the Esquimaux are left to these teachers and benefactors, so much the better it will be for the race" (MacGregor 1910: 182). However, this situation was soon to change. The Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918-19, brought to the mission stations by the Moravian supply ship *Harmony*, devastated the people of Okak, where it killed all but 59 of the 266 residents (Brice-Bennett 1977). In 1924, financial difficulties caused the Moravians to end their system of credit, thus forcing Inuit to live away from the mission stations during the winter, and to hunt and trap from houses on outer islands or in river valleys (Maggo 1999:49). In 1926, continued financial problems compelled the Moravians to lease their trading operations to the Hudson's Bay Company, ending 125 years of pursuing a trade monopoly and cultural containment in northern Labrador.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **Cultural difference and economic inequalities, 1927 – 1970s**

The Moravian Mission's strong presence in northern Labrador was waning by the early 1900s, but other institutions were preparing to step in. This new set of players involved in Inuit life in Labrador brought with them new approaches to imagining and producing (or denying) cultural difference, based on commercial interests and the goals of government. This chapter explores the involvement of the Newfoundland Government and other institutions in Labrador from 1927 to the 1970s, and examines the impact of their interactions with Inuit within changing contexts of modernization, development, and bureaucratization.

#### **4.1 Labrador resources and government ownership**

The Moravian Mission had worked with the British government in the 1700s to remove Inuit from areas that were of economic interest to British industry. These colonial-era dispossessions and displacements prefigured the ways that Newfoundland and Canadian authorities would deal with the Inuit and their resources from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on, as the value of the region's resources became increasingly obvious. In 1896, the prospector A.P. Low of the Canadian Geological Survey created a stir when he published an article outlining the huge potential economic value of Labrador's natural resources (Low 1896). The attention of the Newfoundland Government was piqued. The

Quebec Government was also suddenly interested in the region's mineral, hydro-electric, and timber resources. In 1902, a dispute between Newfoundland and Quebec over a pulp-cutting licence for forests near Mud Lake in central Labrador fueled the on-going debate over the exact location of the Labrador boundary. As the Moravian missionaries had commented in 1886, "The borders of the country styled 'Labrador' are apparently exceedingly elastic, as the word is sometimes taken to mean only the East Coast, between the 55th and 60th degree of North Latitude, sometimes a tract of country stretching south to the 50th degree N. L., and extending far inland" (*Periodical Accounts* 1886: 4179). Once the potential economic value of the region was better appreciated, the boundary became a matter of some interest. The quarrel between Newfoundland and Quebec eventually resulted in an inquiry and a 1927 decision about the boundary by the British Privy Council, which the Quebec government disputed long afterwards (Budgel and Staveley 1987; Tanner et al. 1994).

Given this potentially vast resource wealth, the financially strapped Newfoundland Government viewed Labrador with more interest than ever before. Newfoundland Governor William MacGregor traveled to Labrador in 1905 and 1909 to explore this administratively unknown region. In an early (and rare) acknowledgement of Aboriginal land rights, and on the advice of the Moravian missionaries, MacGregor advised the Department of Agriculture and Mines to cease granting timber concessions in northern Labrador because of the Inuit reliance on the forest: "To grant any timber concession north of Cape Harrison, the point that is recognized as the southern limit of the Moravian Mission-field, would be a great injustice to the Esquimaux. Such grants

would not only reduce their supplies of timber and fuel, but would most seriously diminish the available game and fur which hitherto have been of such great importance to them" (MacGregor 1910: 183). This recognition of rights was the exception, however. Most officials of the Newfoundland Government had no desire to acknowledge any sort of Aboriginal rights in Labrador, and insisted on treating Inuit in the same manner as it did other citizens.

Inuit cultural difference was identified and acclaimed by the Moravian Mission at the turn of the century, but the Newfoundland Government showed little interest in differentiating Inuit, especially if doing so had material consequences. As Newfoundland and Labrador were not part of Canada until the province joined Confederation in 1949, the Labrador Inuit did not have the same fiduciary relationship with the Crown that Inuit in other parts of Canada had, and the Newfoundland Government denied having any similar relationship of obligation (Tanner et al. 1994). In contrast with the huge number of Aboriginal-specific laws existing in Canada, only two laws specific to Aboriginal peoples were passed in Newfoundland before 1949: the 1882 law that prohibited any Aboriginal person from possessing alcohol, and the 1911 law that prohibited anyone from taking an Aboriginal person out of Labrador (passed in reaction to an incident in which some Labrador Inuit were taken to Chicago for the World's Fair and eventually returned, spreading infectious diseases) (Jenness 1965; Tanner et al. 1994). According to the Government, the land and resources of Labrador belonged to the state, and the Government could do with them as it pleased (which, in 1925, and again in 1933,

involved offering to sell Labrador to Quebec, in the attempt to avoid the bankruptcy of Newfoundland) (Rompkey 2003).

Newfoundland's increasing interest in Labrador had little visible effect in much of the region, especially on the north coast where the Moravian Mission still held powerful authority. Nonetheless, the global markets for Labrador fish and fur had been fluctuating, and the Moravian Mission was in financial difficulties. In 1926, the Mission leased its trading rights for northern Labrador to the Hudson's Bay Company. Unlike the Moravians, the Company had no interest in promoting a diversified economy, and instead encouraged the Inuit to increase their white fox trapping activities, as global prices for fur were on the rise. This enhanced trapping effort left little time for subsistence harvesting, and left Inuit susceptible to market fluctuations. One missionary at Hopedale criticized the Hudson's Bay Company's approach to trade in 1937 as harmful to Inuit survival:

"Present-day traders do not encourage the natives to devote too much time to sealing. Fur is the article in demand, and time given to hunting seals in the late autumn is time taken from fox-hunting, consequently 'never mind the seals'... Where open hostility to sealing is not shown it is shown passively, viz. in making it almost impossible for the native to pursue the seal hunt. Put as low a price as possible on seal blubber, sealskin boots, etc., cut down the supply of twine for making and mending seal nets, and the industry will soon die a natural death, but such policy is also hastening the death of the Eskimo race in Labrador" (*Periodical Accounts* 1936-7 quoted in Brice-Bennett 1986: 9).

Fox are unlike seals or cod in that they do not also provide domestic food, and so when the fox pelt markets dropped in the 1930s, many Inuit were left without a source of income or food, and without the equipment needed to pursue other species (Brice-Bennett 1986).

#### 4.2 Government policy: Self-sufficiency

The government, like the Moravians, soon employed techniques aimed at producing economic subjects who were ideally self-sufficient, despite the continuing dispossessions of their resources. When financial difficulties forced the Hudson's Bay Company to close many of its stores in northern Labrador in 1942, the Newfoundland government took over trade on the coast. Newfoundland was facing dire financial problems itself, and the government agency responsible for trade on the north coast – the Northern Labrador Trading Operations (NLTO) – was therefore primarily concerned with economic viability and a minimal budget for relief assistance. NLTO initiated a program of economic rehabilitation and a new era of renewed support for a diversified economy through increased cod fishing and seal netting, and by encouraging families to stay on the land (Jenness 1965; Brice-Bennett 1986). "If we intend to make a serious attempt to rehabilitate this portion of Labrador," argued a Departmental official in 1942, "it is essential that we should keep control in our own hands and our efforts should be directed toward seeing that the native population is encouraged to become self-supporting" (quoted in Richling 1978:321). "We have abundant evidence of the Government's desire to see the natives living and working under good conditions," reported a Moravian missionary. "One might almost say that the Government is accomplishing an economic revolution in N. Labrador, for to a people without economic hope has been given new hope which promises them some security for the future" (*Periodical Accounts* 1942 quoted in Flanagan 1984: 86). The government's rehabilitation attempts succeeded in

increasing earnings and reducing relief payments until the end of World War II, when dropping prices for cod and diminished markets for seal products and fur pelts hampered these efforts and left many Labrador families in severe economic straits (Jenness 1965).

At the same time as the Newfoundland Government assumed responsibility for trade on the north coast, the American and Canadian Governments were building an airbase at Goose Bay. Many Labradorians moved to the area to work on the base, or to the new lumber camps in Hamilton Inlet and in Kaipokok Bay (Jenness 1965). Economic opportunities, social interactions, and population movements in Labrador were changing rapidly. In 1949, another fundamental change occurred with Confederation, although its impact was not immediately apparent.

#### **4.3 Official Inuit status and redistributive justice**

When Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949, many Labradorians saw Confederation as a way to finally access government support and services (Rompkey 2003). Federal transfer payments, such as Family Allowance, Disability Pension, and Old Age Pension substantially increased family incomes. For many Inuit, however, as Rose Pamack-Jeddore commented in 1974, Confederation initially meant very little: "The Inuit became Canadian and yet how many Inuit are aware that they are Canadian? We have not been indoctrinated into feeling Canadian as others have been through the mass media [which] is not accessible to us. The Inuit mind conjures up the image of 'outsider' when he hears the word, Canadian" (Pamack-Jeddore 1974:6).



The negotiated Terms of Union between Canada and Newfoundland made no mention of the newest province's Aboriginal peoples – in fact, conditions concerning Aboriginal peoples in earlier drafts of the document had been omitted (Tanner et al. 1994; Tompkins 1988; Hanrahan 2003). Premier Smallwood argued that the province contained only Canadians, and in fact had no “natives” (Plaice 2003: 396). The fact that Aboriginal peoples in the province were enfranchised to vote and to participate as full citizens – the end goal of much of Canada's Aboriginal policy at that time – was enough to justify their exclusion from special treatment (Tompkins 1988; Tanner et al. 1994). To recognize them as a federal responsibility, it was argued, would be a step backwards. The Terms therefore left the extent or existence of federal responsibility for Aboriginal peoples unclear, and the provincial government was left to administer services and programs (Hanrahan 2003). However, debate about responsibility for Aboriginal peoples continued. In 1951, the federal government admitted some degree of moral and fiduciary responsibility, and, in 1954, negotiated with the provincial government a cost-sharing agreement for health services and social and economic development expenditures for Labrador Inuit and Innu (Royal Commission on Labrador 1974: 1171).

The cost-sharing agreement represents the first time that Labrador Inuit were officially constituted as a bureaucratic entity. It was also the first time that arguments based on government recognition of Inuit cultural difference had direct material ramifications. These economic consequences have had an uneven distribution among Inuit, however. Legal and administrative practices required that, in order for Inuit to be recognized and resources allocated, they must first be identified and counted (Niezen

2009). State officials attempted a number of surveys, but the governments struggled with how exactly to determine who was Inuit, given the long history of intermarriage and the lack of ethnic-specific census numbers. They ultimately concluded that they would identify Inuit by community instead of by individual (Tanner et al. 1994; Jenness 1965). The first federal-provincial agreements therefore included Hebron, Nutak, Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, and Postville, and specified that the province would contribute one-third of the expenses, as "such a portion...reflected the percentage of non-Eskimo residents in these communities" (Royal Commission on Labrador 1974: 1177). These communities were chosen because they were within what the government recognized as Moravian territory, thus continuing the Moravian project of confining and defining Inuit (Kennedy 1982). This perception of Inuit communities changed slightly in subsequent years, as Rigolet was added to this list in 1967, Black Tickle was added in 1972 (although it was later excluded), and Mud Lake was added in 1975 (also later excluded) (Royal Commission on Labrador 1974; Brice-Bennett 1986).

The administrative definition of Inuit as those living within certain communities was based on the idea, as generated by the Moravian Mission, that the Inuit culture is naturally associated with a certain territory – and a territory around which the missionaries had a hand in imposing boundaries. As the last chapter described, the act of imposing these boundaries was not always directly related to where Inuit lived in Labrador, but instead was more often a result of the Moravian colonial project. The territorial boundaries always had social and economic ramifications, but in the federal-

provincial administrative framework, these boundaries around cultural difference exerted even more material effect.

The direct connection between cultural identity and material benefits made through these funding agreements created tensions and socio-economic disparities among many people in Labrador. The agreement was responsible for a new dynamic of cultural differentiation, as one Inuk commented in 1980: "Because of the designated communities idea, people have begun to suffer from an identity crisis. Thus, instead of feeling unity as a people, there is an outside force that dictates who you are or are not!" (Watts in LINS 1980: 13). Created out of bureaucratic necessity, the official recognition of Aboriginal status was flawed in its static and seemingly arbitrary nature.

Fixing Inuit identity on residence in a designated community failed to incorporate population movements and regional social connections. The area containing the designated Inuit communities (which has similarities to the modern boundaries of Nunatsiavut) was strongly influenced by the historical boundaries developed by the Moravian mission, but, like the Moravian project, the designated communities did not contain all Inuit in Labrador. Many Inuit had always lived elsewhere in Labrador and beyond, as discussed in the previous chapter, including outside the designated communities in the Groswater Bay-Lake Melville area and on the south coast.

Many Inuit who were originally from categorized "Inuit" communities had also moved to other communities for economic or other reasons. The designated communities approach was based on the assumption that Inuit lived permanently in one community. Although this assumption made administration of the agreement easier, it failed to reflect

Inuit reality. For generations, Inuit had moved around the region of northern Labrador, Lake Melville, and southern Labrador for economic and social reasons. Families moved with the seasons for different harvesting opportunities, to find good hunting and trapping areas, to live with family, and in search of better economic opportunities. After the 1919 Spanish Flu epidemic, Inuit from Hebron and northern Labrador moved to the resource-rich but now de-populated Okak Bay region. Others from Saglek, Nain, and Okak moved to Hebron, as well as some from the Killinek station, which was closed in 1924 (Kennedy 1977). As Elizabeth Goudie describes in her autobiography, her family (of mixed Inuit ancestry) moved from Lake Melville to the Hopedale area and back south to Mud Lake in the 1920 and 30s in order to find good harvesting areas and to access other economic opportunities (Goudie 1973).

In 1941, when the U.S. Army began construction of an air force base at Goose Bay, many individuals and families moved from the coast to work at the base (Zimmerly: 234). Some stayed, while many eventually chose to return to the coast. By 1959, approximately 450 people from the north coast had moved to Happy Valley-Goose Bay or North West River (DNLA 1959: 123). People began a pattern of moving back and forth between the Upper Lake Melville area and the coast for jobs and education and health services in the regional centre (Brice-Bennett 1986). These movements, common to many families, caused family members who were living in different communities to be treated as having different Aboriginal status under the designated community approach (Kennedy 1995).

None of the Inuit who lived outside of designated Inuit communities was provided for in the Federal-Provincial Agreements. As the Royal Commission on Labrador commented in 1974, the community approach of identifying Inuit excluded many and caused much hardship:

"This provision of the Agreement is responsible for forcing deprivation on Indians and Eskimos of Labrador who leave their communities in order to live in other Labrador communities not named in the Agreement. It has an especially pernicious effect on the ignored Eskimos who live in wretched and intolerable conditions in Happy Valley. The same lack of access to programs applies also to Eskimos living on the north side of North West River because these communities are not named under the Agreement. Eskimo citizens elsewhere in Canada continue to have access to Government aid, development and rehabilitation programs after they leave their home communities" (Royal Commission on Labrador 1974: 1182).

The justification for this exclusion was that Inuit who lived in areas where wage labour opportunities were higher than on the coast did not therefore need the benefits from the cost-sharing agreement, although, as the Royal Commission on Labrador argues, this was not necessarily true (Royal Commission on Labrador 1974).

In this case, the production of cultural difference and its deployment by government resulted in uneven economic ramifications. For those people within the designated communities, this way of connecting difference with economic benefits provided some much needed financial assistance and health services. For Inuit who found themselves outside the confines of this administrative definition of Inuit-ness, the production of cultural difference offered no material benefit. It created only the

frustration of “suffering from an identity crisis” and feelings – and the real consequences – of social and economic inequality.

#### **4.4 ‘Appropriate’ Inuit economic activity: Government perspectives**

The Federal-Provincial Agreement was based on an acknowledgement of Aboriginal rights, but government officials envisioned and treated the Aboriginal-specific funding as linked to poverty and the need to redistribute wealth rather than political rights: Inuit were identified by economic characteristics, and often that of economic hardship. As one federal bureaucrat argued in 1948, any grants or subsidies offered to Aboriginal Peoples of the province should not be made in perpetuity, because “in time, the need for any special assistance to Indians [and Inuit] in Newfoundland including Labrador may disappear as they become fully self-supporting members of the community” (Tompkins 1988: 23). The Inuit funding was therefore aimed at improving conditions of poverty, which was characterized as Inuit. Once Inuit moved to communities where they could engage in wage labour and therefore improve their own economic situation (from the perspective of policy makers), they were no longer identified as Inuit and therefore not eligible for funding. This logic is illustrated in the governments’ decision to include the community of Black Tickle, on Labrador’s south coast, in the agreement in 1972. As John Kennedy argues, this decision was based more on the “community’s tarnished (although undeserved) reputation among bureaucrats and other outsiders as an inbred hell-hole than on the ethnicity of its people. After all, Black Tickle’s English-speaking Settler population had no more (or less) ‘native blood’ than was present in such

southeastern Labrador communities as Fox Harbour, Williams Harbour, and Cartwright" (Kennedy 1995: 201). The people of Black Tickle faced such economic difficulties in Black Tickle that it was this dire need rather than their Aboriginal background that prompted officials to identify them as Inuit and include them in the agreement.

Other institutions in Labrador connected Inuit identity to economic characteristics in a fashion similar to the justifications used to include Black Tickle in the cost-sharing agreements. The International Grenfell Association, for instance, a health-care provider in the region during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, required that in order for people to be recognized as Inuit, they must demonstrate that they were of "Eskimo cultural orientation – inclined to lead the traditional Eskimo way of life (economic) and use of Eskimo language" (Brantenberg 1977: 402). However, they would lose "Eskimo" status "if relocated to wage-earning communities and independent means of employment" (ibid.). The requirement that Inuit be confined to a "traditional economic way of life" and not participate in wage labour if they are to be recognized as Inuit (and therefore presumably receive some special benefit) has much the same end result as recognizing the Inuit status of only those who lived on the north coast, where opportunities for wage labour were often limited.

The motivation behind much of the official recognition of Aboriginal status in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century thus appears to be mainly based in a moral obligation to raise the Inuit standard of living, and does not represent the acknowledgement of Aboriginal rights as political or inherent, as the Aboriginal status of the cost-sharing agreements would be revoked if Inuit moved away to engage in wage labour. Inuit were identified as a

disadvantaged group with needs, rather than as a political group with rights (Humpage 2005). The poor economic situation in coastal communities was a major justification for recognition, and the health and infrastructure funding that the agreement brought were undoubtedly much needed. But the recognition also involved judgments based on economic behaviour: if Inuit were involved in wage labour – an ‘un-Inuit’ activity – most of which was available only in Goose Bay or North West River, they would not be granted official status. The traditional harvesting activities that officials identified as so intrinsic to Inuit recognition occurred mainly in coastal communities during the 1950s. Prices for animal products were low, while the wages offered by the military and lumber industries were higher than those offered by any previous employers in Labrador. According to one Moravian minister, the majority of those who moved to Upper Lake Melville or who lived there already therefore dedicated much of their effort to lucrative wage labour, and often lacked both the equipment and the time to harvest when they were not working (Peacock 1963). This may not have been the case for many Inuit who had lived in North West River for generations, and who would have been more familiar with the harvesting possibilities in the area, but in many cases would not have been identified (or self-identified) as Inuit at the time.

Inuit were thus administratively identified by cultural constructs whose genealogy can be traced back to the Moravian Mission and the Counter-Enlightenment concepts of static culture that the missionaries adopted (Wolf 2001; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). The government funding agreement recognized Inuit cultural difference through geographic location and economic characteristics. When either of these criteria were not met – when



Inuit moved out of the territory, or when they participated in 'un-Inuit' economic activities – their cultural difference was no longer bureaucratically recognized. The funding agreement had a different purpose than the Moravian Mission in connecting Inuit cultural difference with economic implications, however. While the Mission emphasized Inuit culture in order to preserve it and their own proselytizing purposes, the governments identified Inuit cultural (economic) difference in order to change, improve, and eventually eradicate it.

Many of the disputes and struggles between governmental agencies and Inuit over appropriate governance and socio-economic conditions relied on conflicting ideas about suitable Inuit economic activity. The uncertainty and the hardships created by a reliance on turbulent global markets for fish and fur led many people in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to view the wage labour opportunities from the region's new industrial developments as potential alternatives to participation in the renewable resources economy. Governments and other organizations debated, with the paternalism of the time, how Inuit should be incorporated into "modern" Canadian society and provided with a more stable economic basis than the harvesting economy had afforded (Jenness 1965). The new policies were in some ways similar to the Moravian project of pressuring Inuit to live permanently in settlements; in other ways, they broke from the Moravian policy to contain Inuit to the north coast, and instead encouraged a movement away from land-based activities and, ultimately, perhaps away from the north coast entirely. The process of Inuit dispossession thus continued: the Moravian-British Crown arrangements had first aimed to move Inuit away from southern and central areas of Labrador, and the provincial government was

now moving to deprive northern Inuit of what control they still had over their mode of production and resources (Wolf 1982; Harvey 2003).

Many policy makers in this era saw many aspects of Inuit economic life as remnants of 'pre-modern' times in Labrador (Hefferton 1959; Rockwood 1955). Although the Moravians and, for a time, the provincial government had supported a diverse economy of harvesting for both food and commercial products, modernization ambitions in Labrador in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century resulted in increased attempts to provide Inuit with wage labour opportunities that would keep them in settlements where they could also be provided with education and health services. "Both the Eskimos and the Indians have been encouraged and assisted in hunting and fishing," wrote the Minister of Public Welfare in 1959, "but we regard these activities as 'holding operations' until the economy in the area becomes more diversified. However, with the development of the mineral resources of Labrador, there is hope that some progress in this direction will be possible" (Hefferton 1959: 97-98). As the Director of the provincial Department of Northern Labrador Affairs argued in 1955, "For the Eskimos, Indians, and half-breeds of Northern Labrador, the days of the primitive hunting economy are numbered" (Rockwood 1955:10). An industrial, modern economy would provide Inuit with better opportunities: "It appears, therefore, that the main problem and the one most difficult of solution, is the attainment of a solid economic base on which a better society can be built....It is to be expected that the people of the North as well as the South will gradually drain into whichever area offers the best opportunity for modern, high standards of living,

and this foreshadows the need for development of industry, whether it be mining, lumbering, or others" (Rockwood 1955: 3, 5).

Modernization would provide the government with the dual benefits of creating "productive" and sedentary citizens, as well as potentially the continuation of the process of removing people from land, thus making it available for development (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Harvey 2003; Watts 2003). If one abided by criteria that recognized Inuit as "inclined to lead the traditional Eskimo way of life (economic)" and as losing that Inuit status "if relocated to wage-earning communities," then modernization schemes that saw Inuit moving south into industrial centres would also result in the end of 'recognizable' Inuit (Brantenberg 1977: 402; Flanagan 1984). The cultural difference embodied by Inuit would thus be erased in the wave of cultural homogeneity created by modernization.

The teleology towards erasure of all cultural differences was a widely accepted concept in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s. Many researchers have described how modernization theory, in the broader Canadian context of the time, envisioned Aboriginal society's inevitable progress from traditional to transitional and, finally, to modern (Brody 1975, 1987; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Damas 2002; Paine 1977). The Canadian government's administrative goal of the era was therefore to incorporate "traditional" Inuit into "modern" Canadian society, and to ensure a smooth transition into the capitalist mode of production. In other parts of the Canadian north, federal government policy shifted from what Damas (2002) calls the "policy of dispersal" of the 1940s and 50s, which encouraged Inuit to disperse in order to prevent dependence on trading posts, to

the "policy of centralization" of the late 1950s and 60s, which encouraged Inuit to move into settlements. Like the policies of the Moravian Mission and the Newfoundland Government in Labrador, these policies illustrate governmental concerns about fiscal responsibility towards Inuit and Inuit self-reliance. In the Canadian north, as Hugh Brody argues, this was superficially a change in policy from exploitative to humanitarian, but underneath remained the colonialist drive to achieve the moral, economic, ideological, national, and political incorporation of Inuit into Canadian society (Brody 1975: 31). Tester and Kulchyski assert that the state's goal is "the establishment of a material and social reality conducive to the accumulation of capital....This implies a process of dispossession: of separating people from their means of subsistence, which...is the land" (Tester and Kulchyski 1994: 5-6). The impact of government policies and global movements based in goals of modernization have greatly affected the connections between Labrador Inuit and their land, and none so traumatically, perhaps, as the vast relocations of the 1950s.

#### **4.5 Relocations and centralizations: Further dispossession**

Questions of suitable economic activity were closely related to the question of where Inuit lived. In the late 1950s, the provincial government, the Moravians, and the International Grenfell Association, which had responsibility for medical care in the region, forcibly relocated communities north of Nain. Without consulting Inuit, the agencies argued that all citizens should receive health and education services and should have the opportunity to access wage labour. Relocation to larger centres, regardless of

differences in cultural or land use practices, was therefore necessary. As Brice-Bennett (1994) argues, the incentive for relocation was also that of cost-cutting measures on the part of the Moravian Mission and the International Grenfell Association. Following Foucault, the relocations could also be seen as an attempt to put bodies into their correct place – that is, away from areas where they were beyond the influence of the state, and into places where authorities could enforce correct health-related, cultural, and economic practices (Sandercock 1998; Foucault 1991; Foucault and Senellart 2008).

In 1956, Nutak was closed, and the 171 residents of Okak Bay/Nutak area moved to Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, North West River, and Hebron. In 1959, Hebron was closed, and its 247 residents were moved to Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik, where they lived in separate neighbourhoods consisting of new housing, tents, and improvised dwellings. The government saw this movement south as inevitable and economically necessary, and characterized the Inuit as adaptable:

“Under present conditions the local industries (fisheries, seal hunting and fur-trapping) are incapable of providing the bare necessities of life, much less a reasonable standard of living for the Eskimo and other residents of northern Labrador.... The Eskimos are adaptable.... They want jobs like other citizens and may be expected to move to employment centres as they develop; in fact a considerable number have already done so.... It is to be expected that as industry develops more and more Eskimos as well as settlers (English speaking natives of Northern Labrador) will move to employment centres” (Government of Newfoundland 1956: 18-19).

The relocations from northern Labrador were seen as only the first step in a larger process of population movement towards growth centres. The Superintendent of the

Moravian Mission at the time argued, in a move away from the traditional Moravian position, that Inuit must be given a wide range of economic opportunities elsewhere:

"In order to properly rehabilitate the Eskimo it is necessary to provide them with work which will give them an honest and satisfactory livelihood. But how is this to be done, when the resources are not present on the Coast to provide them with adequate income? The obvious answer is that they must be trained, helped through education to take advantage of job opportunities in other parts of Labrador and Canada....No one had the right to attempt to keep the Eskimos as 'museum pieces.'...The Eskimos are entitled, as citizens of the Dominion, to all the benefits enjoyed by other citizens, including the right to work, whether in Labrador or any other part of Canada" (Peacock, n.d.: 2).

The Hebron and Nutak char fishery was the strongest on the coast at the time, and the only fishery not subsidized by the government, but even this fact was not enough to dissuade the authorities from moving people into communities with better access to social services. Despite the intentions behind the relocations, they did not result in the economic and social improvements that the agencies had hoped for; in fact, relocation caused widespread social disintegration that is still felt today (Evans 2012; Brice-Bennett 1994).

The people who were relocated experienced massive upheaval. No new economic developments provided them with jobs, and they were often unable to support themselves in their new communities. As William Onalik says about his relocation from Hebron to Hopedale, "When we began to move, I thought to myself, 'We are moving to people to whom we are not accustomed and to a land we are not used to'" (Onalik in Brody 1977). Nick Menzil, also in Hopedale from Hebron, commented, "Some of them were separated from their relatives. That is why it seems some of us are poor here. We are also hungry for seal meat, caribou meat, and trout. In the winter, we are always hungry now, when we

always had these foods in Hebron. Now we are living like nothing – like a void” (*Labrador North* 1973). These relocations brought people into environments that were often very different from where they originated, and into communities where land and resource use was already allocated. The relocatees were therefore at a real disadvantage when it came to organizing their often separated families into harvesting teams, learning how and where to hunt, fish, and gather wood in the new environment, and finding areas where others were not already harvesting. Although they could make a fair living from the arctic char fishery in Nutak and Hebron, the relocatees now found themselves suddenly unable to support their families through harvesting, and many hunters were killed in accidents that occurred as a result of their unfamiliarity with the local environment (Brice-Bennett 1994).

The situation created a second class of community residents who struggled to harvest successfully in the local area, but who were now too far removed from the region that they knew best to travel there frequently, except in the summer to fish. As many researchers have noted, the different history and combination of Inuit and mixed-ancestry Inuit land uses and governance practices in each community also created tensions and misunderstandings between the newcomers and the residents around harvesting issues and perceived resource rights, as did the fact that the newcomers were initially placed in substandard housing in areas isolated from the rest of the community – areas known as “Eskimo” or “Hebron villages” (Richling 1978; Brice-Bennett 1986, 1994; Ben-Dor 1966; Kennedy 1977, 1985; Brantenberg 1977). As a result, many of the relocatees could not provide for themselves as they were accustomed to in the north. Their social networks

disrupted, they were drawn into village-based dependencies (Brice-Bennett 1994). Rose Pamack-Jeddore of Nain describes the relocations from an Inuit perspective:

“Resettlement is one of the gems of Confederation. Hebron and Nutak became non-existent in the rush for centralization. The rationale for resettlement was improvement of services. To the Inuit, resettlement meant living in tents while waiting for accommodation, leaving behind personal belongings, adjusting to a different hunting environment, the inconvenience of returning to fishing grounds in open boats and living in tents in the summer, and it led to an increase in community conflicts. The ensuing insecurity of relocation and the futility of attempting to adjust to depleted hunting, fishing, and wooding grounds drove the Inuit to the escape mechanism of drunkenness. Their powerlessness and insignificance in the dominant society had been made all too clear to them” (Pamack-Jeddore 1974: 7).

Dispossessed of their resources and control over their livelihoods, the relocated Inuit found it largely impossible to transform into the ‘acceptable,’ governable, and productive subjects that the government had hoped for (Li 2007; Foucault and Senellart 2008).

#### **4.6 Institutional attacks on Inuit harvesting**

Modernization schemes aimed to transform and eradicate one of the main characteristics of Inuit cultural difference that had been used by colonizers and governments for years: wildlife harvesting. By replacing harvesting with wage labour – an ‘un-Inuit’ economic activity – the government also aimed to rid itself of what it saw at the time as the relevance of Inuit cultural difference: the moral obligation to address the economic disparities between Inuit and non-Inuit citizens. Once Inuit were self-supporting, productive citizens, the government would no longer need to recognize them and redress the dispossession of Inuit resources.



The relocation and centralization policies were partly justified by the conviction that people could support themselves better through wage labour than through harvesting. The increased availability of government transfer payments after Confederation also worked to encourage less harvesting. As one Inuk commented in 1980, "Inuit...are being colonized, and adapted to another way of life. If welfare and Unemployment Insurance benefits are so readily available, why depend on the land?" (Palliser quoted in LINS 1980: 9). This effect on harvesting was especially strong when policies, such as that for Unemployment Insurance, stated that these payments were only to be made to people who remained in the communities in order to be "available for work" (Brice-Bennett 1986). Those who left the community to cut wood or to harvest food risked being penalized through reduced payments. Nonetheless, low prices, uncertain markets for animal products, and transportation equipment often made harvesting an expensive endeavour, and, while government subsidization assisted in the cod fishery especially, Inuit needed to subsidize other harvesting activities themselves through wage labour, transfer payments, or by pooling resources. Government policies related to licensing and quotas also worked to criminalize many aspects of Inuit harvesting (Ames 1977; Usher 1982). The move to communities often increased access to cash, but it also created and accentuated social stratifications that resulted in differentiated access to resources, as a number of researchers have described (cf., Richling 1978; Flanagan 1984; Brice-Bennett 1994, 1986; Kennedy 1982, 1995). In their focus to establish access to wage labour and social services, modernization policies aimed to sever Inuit communal ties to the land and resources.

The policies did not break these ties, though. Despite institutional support for a move towards wage labour, it was not an immediate or obvious choice over harvesting activities for many Inuit. Many of the people who had moved to Goose Bay for work in the 1940s and 1950s later returned to the coast, often for reasons related to harvesting, as Carol Brice-Bennett argues: "Inuit missed the freedom and independence of the coast lifestyle, being 'their own boss' as fishermen and hunters, and the sense of belonging and integrity gained from living in their 'own land.' ...As people became unemployed, they realized that they had a better chance of making a living on the coast where they would be assisted by their relatives and they could hunt, fish, and collect wood to supplement their available income" (Brice-Bennett 1986: 46). Government officials often highlighted instances when Inuit chose wage labour over fishing, but these instances were often short-lived. The Division of Northern Labrador Affairs reported in 1956: "The decision of the majority of the fishermen to seek other employment (e.g., base construction) rather than to continue at the codfishery reveals more clearly than words, their dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs, and a determination to strive for better conditions. This ambition can only be realized as remunerative employment becomes available and the people concerned are fully prepared for the duties and responsibilities the new conditions will demand" (quoted in Kennedy 1977: 286). This observation was nevertheless reversed the next year, when the government extended Unemployment Insurance to fishing, and a large number of fishermen returned to the industry (Kennedy 1977).

As a number of scholars have argued, government perceptions of "work" did not involve harvesting (or were late to include it, as in the case of employment benefits for

fishing), and various policies often had negative impacts on harvesting (Brice-Bennett 1986; Usher 1982; Ames 1977). Increasing levels of government regulation in Labrador after Confederation meant that the cost for licences and the limitations placed on harvesting activities presented Inuit with significant barriers to making a living (Ames 1977). Some Labradorians connected the government's relocation and centralization policies with its development initiatives. "They're developing our resources and not our people," one man commented in 1971: "Maybe that's what they're trying to do; put all the Labradorians in one or two areas and then hack away at the rest" (Jackson and Jackson 1971: 50, emphasis in original). Many residents saw the economic development programs of the province as "a systematic erosion of their way of life" (ibid.).

Despite all attempts to "modernize" Labrador, and all policies that overlooked or undermined harvesting, the fundamental importance of subsistence and commercial harvesting to Inuit endured. People adapted hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering activities to the changing circumstances. The choice and intensity of harvesting activities depended on a number of factors previously mentioned, as well as species availability and global markets. In the early 1970s, although the cod fishery was in decline, the market price of sealskins reached an all-time high, and harvesting was, for a while, a self-sufficient way of life. However, by the late 1970s and 1980s, the animal rights movement had caused the sealskin markets to collapse, and the price of equipment and fuel had risen to levels that made it almost impossible for someone without a source of cash income to hunt or fish (Williamson 1997; Brice-Bennett 1986). Many populations of important species were declining, including cod, char, salmon, and seals, although the number of

sports hunting and fishing camps in the area was growing.<sup>4</sup> As the next chapter will describe, the incessant governmental interference with Inuit harvesting added to the building momentum among Inuit to organize politically and to regain control over their own lives.

The production and denial of Inuit cultural difference described in this chapter underwent many transformations and challenges – from the attempts of the Moravian missionaries to encourage the ‘inherently Inuit’ practice of seal hunting in the face of encouragement from the Hudson’s Bay Company for fox trapping, to the initial provincial government denial of any Aboriginal rights, and from the formalization of Inuit community identity based on poverty, to the many official attempts made to both characterize and modify Inuit livelihoods. Cultural difference has long been connected with economic inequality, as I described in chapters two and three, and this connection was intensified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the economic potential of Labrador’s natural resources was increasingly appreciated, and as governments began to face the economic and social consequences of the dispossession of land and of resources that colonialism had wrought. The late acknowledgement of government responsibility towards Aboriginal Peoples in Labrador was based more on the moral responsibility to address the economic inequalities created by dispossessions than on inherent Aboriginal rights to self-governance and to land. Many policies, including the economic redistribution focus of Aboriginal funding, the relocations, and harvesting policy all connected Inuit cultural

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<sup>4</sup> In 1976, Bill Edmunds of the Labrador Inuit Association reported that there were 43 sports fishing camps in Labrador at the time, and that fewer than six of them were run by Labradorians (LRAC 1976).

difference with valuations of 'appropriate' Inuit economic behaviour, productivity, and self-sufficiency. In creating conditions that would change that economic behaviour, these policies attempted to ultimately erase Inuit cultural difference as well. The policies of modernization had tremendous impact through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but they were incomplete and strongly contested by Inuit themselves. I will continue to look at this in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Aboriginal rights and political inequalities, 1927 – 1970s**

The manipulation of ideas about Inuit cultural difference discussed so far has been driven mainly, although not completely, by colonial and administrative interests. In this chapter, I analyze how Inuit begin to assert themselves politically by tapping into the power of these cultural constructs and by beginning to mobilize them for their own purposes. The Newfoundland Government was content to leave the control and the administration of the Labrador Inuit to the Moravian Mission as long as it was in the government's best interest. As the potential value of Labrador's resources became apparent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the government assumed more of a role. This chapter examines the political relationship between Inuit and the Newfoundland government in this period as increasing resource exploitation and government attempts at control led to the beginnings of Inuit political activism. The Labrador Inuit, like many Labradorians of the time, experienced much political awakening in the 1970s, as frustration with their subordinate position in provincial affairs increased. Inuit began to engage the cultural constructs that had been used to control and contain them for centuries, and to adapt them to their own political needs and ambitions.

#### **5.1 Colonialism and dispossession**

For centuries, the relationship between Labrador and Newfoundland (and, of course, Britain) was one of political and economic colonialism. The government in St.

John's treated Labrador as an exploitable resource, and offered very little in return, as Henry Gordon, the Anglican priest for Cartwright, commented in 1918: "The attitude of the Newfoundland Government towards Labrador was always a scandal...Labrador pays at the very least \$10,000 a year in taxes to the Newfoundland Government; she has not one single representative in the House of Assembly, she has no resident Magistrates, Police, Relieving Officers, no roads, no winter wire or wireless communications, no railway, nothing that any people need for the advantages of life" (quoted in Buckle 1998:80-81). Newfoundland also provided no funding for education or health care in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, relying instead on the churches and on the privately funded International Grenfell Association.

Newfoundland's approach to Labrador affairs began to change in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it provided increasingly more services, programs, and, in 1946, political representation (Kennedy 1995). However, as the last chapter described, this increased attention also involved many new government schemes to attract industrial development and create wage labour opportunities. In order to facilitate this development, the provincial government maintained that it was the sole owner of Labrador's lands and resources, and often demonstrated a flagrant dismissal of Aboriginal rights. Despite the fact that the federal government had acknowledged some responsibility towards Aboriginal Peoples in Labrador, and had allocated some federal funds through the cost-sharing agreements, the provincial government staunchly denied that it shared any such responsibility, and administered the federal funding, while continuing to appropriate Aboriginal lands. The province granted generous timber, hydro-

electric, and mineral concessions in Labrador to industry in the 1950s and 1960s, asking for minimal royalties in return. Premier Smallwood offered British industrial investors "the biggest real estate deal of the present century" and gave the newly-formed British Newfoundland Corporation (Brinco) a 24-year lease with mineral rights to much of Labrador and the rights to all potential hydro-electric projects (Smith 1975: 3).

Labrador was, in Smallwood's words, "God's greatest gift to Newfoundland," and the government was doing everything in its power to promote development (Smith 1975: 74). Any competing claims to the land and resources were dismissed. Both Inuit and Innu experienced the continued dispossession of their lands and resources as the province allocated Aboriginal lands to industry. In northern Labrador, the provincial government was also becoming increasingly concerned about the extent of the Moravian Mission's land tenure and the possibility of conflict with the government's development ambitions. In 1941, a Newfoundland company had received permission from the provincial department to work a graphite mining claim within the Moravian land grant around Nain, and had triggered a dispute between the Mission and the government. The dispute was still ongoing in 1955, as the Director of Northern Labrador Affairs commented: "The basis on which the Mission secured such large tracts of land in the early days, namely the protection of their stations and their converts from unwholesome influences, was sound and up to a point the same arguments might be valid today. However, there appears to be evidence of a certain amount of business acumen on the part of the Mission, witness the attempt to secure mineral rights and profits which might accrue therefrom" (quoted in Flanagan 1984: 101). In the 1950s, the government ignored Innu land use and rights as it



facilitated the development of the iron ore mines and railway in western Labrador (Tanner et al. 1994). In 1969, the province again neither consulted nor compensated the Innu when Brinco dammed the Upper Churchill Falls, flooding a vast area of land that the Innu had used for generations. All land and resources in Labrador, according to the provincial government, should be the property of the state, and therefore available for state-driven development.

The long history of exploitation and neglect created deep-seated resentment among many Labradorians. As one resident commented in 1971, "For as long as we've been here, they've taken millions of tons of fish from our coast, and left us the heads and the guts and the bones. Now they're taking iron ore and leaving us nothing for it. They're taking all the power from the Churchill and they're not leaving us enough for a light bulb" (quoted in Jackson and Jackson 1971: 14). Another argued, "To date, development has been an extractive, exploitation process, with little or no benefit for the people of Labrador to whom the resources should rightfully belong....Our land and resources are being developed and controlled by outside sources – either through government or private companies. This external management is not always acceptable by, or in the best interests of, the people of Labrador....My feeling, being an Inuk, is that the ancient values of the Inuit culture should not be sacrificed. They should be retained, along with the traditional way of life" (Palliser in LINS 1980: 9).

## 5.2 Political movements and new identities

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Labradorians alike felt a sense of betrayal by the Newfoundland government, and in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a separatist movement of sorts built momentum through the creation of the New Labrador Party (Burke 2003; Kennedy 1995). The movement was short-lived, but it created a surge of regionalism and a new sense of a Labrador identity (Jackson et al. 1977). It also created fear on the part of the provincial government that Labrador might echo the Quebec separatist movement of the time, and, in 1972, the provincial government responded by appointing a royal commission to investigate Labrador concerns (see Royal Commission on Labrador, 1974).

The growing Aboriginal movement in the rest of Canada, influenced by the civil rights and Red Power movements (Weaver 1981), also inspired many Labradorians. The Trudeau Government's White Paper of 1969, which advocated for the abolishment of Aboriginal special status, illustrated the idea of equality of all minority groups (Frideres and Gadacz 2008). The liberal commitment to universality, as promoted by the White Paper, states that all citizens have equal rights under the same laws, and no one should be denied full and equal participation because of their differences (Maaka and Fleras 2005). The Carrothers report of 1966 (*Report of the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories*) echoed this sentiment, and translated the idea of political equality into economic terms: "It is not conceivable that the central government would convey title in the mineral and petroleum resources of one-third of the land mass of Canada to a government of less than 0.2% of the total Canadian population,

three-fifths of whom are indigenous peoples who, however great their potential, are at the present time politically unsophisticated and economically depressed" (Northwest Territories 1966: 148). The idea of political equality (or homogeneity) therefore was closely connected with economic equality -- development would ideally provide resource benefits to all Canadians instead of having too much of the country's wealth resting in the hands of Aboriginal peoples, on whose lands the development would occur. "The public interest" used to justify much resource development included the involvement of Aboriginal peoples only as far as they were equal (or homogenous) citizens of Canada.

The White Paper and its philosophy towards social homogeneity initiated a backlash against federal government policies regarding Aboriginal Peoples in other parts of Canada.<sup>5</sup> Aboriginal Peoples argued vehemently that they deserved more recognition for their rights rather than less, and began to organize politically. Major resource development proposals in the early 1970s on Aboriginal lands in James Bay and in the Mackenzie Valley acted as rallying points for the rising Aboriginal rights movement (Weaver 1981). The Supreme Court of Canada rejected the Nisga'a claim in 1973 (known as the Calder case), but the dissenting minority raised important questions about Aboriginal rights. The pressure on the federal government forced it to announce in 1973 that, contrary to its former position, it would accept, fund, and negotiate comprehensive land claims from Aboriginal groups who had not signed treaties.

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<sup>5</sup> The Trudeau government's 1969 White Paper suggested that the Indian Act be abolished, thereby severing all ties between the Aboriginal Peoples under the Act and the federal government. Aboriginal Peoples in Labrador were not under the Indian Act at the time, and so they were not directly affected (Tanner et al. 1994).

Inuit across Canada began to organize politically. In the Canadian north, as Marybelle Mitchell describes it, "Inuit did not perceive themselves to be a distinct ethnic group, nor were they officially recognized as such until the 1970s when the necessity of signing treaties made definition of the category urgent" (Mitchell in Stevenson 2006: 176). By invoking cultural difference, Inuit politicians in the Canadian Arctic created an imagined regional Inuit community that projected a united Inuit identity and political voice (Niezen 2003; Anderson 1991). The creation of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada in 1971 fostered a new pan-Arctic Inuit identity among Inuit in different provinces and territories, and had a major role in encouraging Inuit political organization.

### **5.3 Land claims and the politics of recognition**

In the early years of the land claims process, governments and Aboriginal organizations worked to articulate what they envisioned to be a suitable framework for understanding and negotiating Aboriginal rights. It was a time of much hope, and much creative energy was committed to imagining a better future. As government policy developed and increasingly controlled the process, a "politics of recognition" emerged, whereby Aboriginal organizations had to satisfy policy requirements in order to be recognized as an Aboriginal group with rights (Coulthard 2008; Alfred 2005). Governments thus endeavoured to control the Aboriginal rights movement by defining the participants and the scope of topics that it would negotiate concerning land claims. Of course, as the rest of the dissertation will show, this endeavour was only partially successful, as Aboriginal Peoples, including the Labrador Inuit, used the land claims

process and the discussion of Aboriginal rights to challenge the state's attempts at control, and to reconfigure the dynamics and the implications of cultural differentiation.

In Labrador, centuries of interaction with Europeans, Americans, and Newfoundlanders had created a situation that was in many ways different from the rest of the Canadian Arctic. The Moravian Mission's manipulation of cultural categories and influence in eliminating many Inuit cultural practices created unique dynamics, and years of intermarriage and shared society between Inuit and non-Inuit had formed a variety of different cultural identifications throughout Labrador. The Mission also had a central role in constructing the idea that Inuit in Labrador lived only in certain communities on the north coast. After two hundred years of the Moravian 'containment policy,' the 'natural' and proper place for Labrador Inuit was widely accepted as the north coast, despite the long and contradictory process described in Chapter Three in constructing this idea and in marginalizing many other Inuit in Labrador.

In participating in the land claims process, the Inuit appropriated and engaged some of the ideas developed through the Mission's contested project to contain and define Inuit cultural difference, such as a territorialized culture and ideas about 'appropriate' economic behaviour; however, the historical differentiation of some (but not all) mixed-ancestry Inuit caused some complexity in the new land claims context, as I discuss below. The distinct history in Labrador therefore played an important role in influencing Aboriginal politics, and created many competing factions in the early years of organizing.

In 1973, a number of Aboriginal political organizations were created in the province. The Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador initially included Inuit, Kablunângajuit from northern Labrador, Innu, and Mi'kmaq in its membership (Tanner et al., 1994). The Inuit, Kablunângajuit, and Innu soon split from this Association, and formed their own organizations. At the encouragement of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Inuit formed the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) in Nain. At first, the LIA was focused directly on the Inuit in Nain and Hopedale, and especially the northern relocatees. The government land claims process, however, judged the validity of claims partly on the number of claimants involved, and so the various Aboriginal organizations competed for the membership of the Kablunângajuit, many of whom were considering joining the Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association (Kennedy 1997). The LIA, therefore, had to emphasize the inclusivity of their cultural definition of Inuit in order to promote unity between Inuit and Kablunângajuit. The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada maintained its own exclusive definition of 'Inuit,' and disapproved of the LIA including Inuit of mixed ancestry within the category of Inuit. In 1974, however, the Labrador Inuit Association stated that it would recognize Kablunângajuit as having equal rights in all land claims settlements, and in 1975, it granted Kablunângajuit full membership (Brantenberg 1977; Paine 1977; Kennedy 1987).

The Moravian-encouraged distinction between Inuit and Kablunângajuit had been adopted and maintained to some degree by people in northern Labrador, and therefore created a complex situation when governmental policies required that definite ethnic membership boundaries be drawn. Much of the academic literature from the early days of

the Aboriginal movement in Labrador focuses on this ethnic differentiation and how the production of Inuit cultural difference began to take on a fiercely political air (Kleivan 1966; Ben-Dor 1966; Brice-Bennett 1977; Brantenberg 1977; Kennedy 1977, 1982, 1987, 1988, 1995, 1997; Paine 1977; Richling 1978; Flanagan 1984). The inclusion of Kablunângajuit into the Labrador Inuit Association therefore created new ethno-political dynamics that have impacted the organization's trajectory.

The Aboriginal rights movement increased the contact between Labrador Inuit and Inuit in other regions of Canada, and generated new dynamics and relationships within the emerging pan-Inuit society. Inuit from northern Labrador had always had strong social and family ties with Inuit in Quebec, but many other Inuit and Kablunângajuit had few links with other Inuit. The uniqueness of the situation in Labrador often resulted in some Labrador Inuit feeling that they were of secondary status or somehow less authentically Inuit in relation to Inuit in other regions of Canada. As one LIA employee commented in 1996, Labrador Inuit have been treated as "less Inuit than Inuit north of 60" (C. Andersen in CEAA 1998 [6]:139). The history of colonialism in Labrador, the decline of Inuttitut since Confederation and the introduction of English-only schooling, the economic focus on the fishery, the adoption of many Moravian traditions, and the loss of many of the spiritual, cosmological, and visual aspects of Inuit culture all contributed to unequal comparisons within the new pan-Inuit community. The federal government's reluctance to treat Labrador Inuit the same way as other Inuit only fueled the feelings of inequality. In addition to initially ignoring its responsibility to Labrador Inuit after Confederation, the federal government also provided funding for

Labrador Inuit at lower per-capita levels than it funded other Canadian Inuit (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1974).

The inclusion of Kablunângajuit within the LIA only added to the perception of Labrador Inuit being somehow 'less Inuit.' Both the pan-Arctic Inuit movement and the governments questioned, at some point, the legitimacy of the LIA claims to cultural distinctiveness because of its mixed membership. However, the Kablunângajuit component of the LIA gained significant political influence with the organization in the 1980s and 1990s. Some observers have argued that the relatively greater exposure of the Kablunângajuit in the 1970s to outside institutions, and their greater proficiency in English (as well as those Inuit who attended high school in North West River or who had worked temporarily in the Upper Lake Melville area) allowed them to act as "middlemen" between the majority of Inuit and outside administrators (Brantenberg 1977: 381). Government-driven community councils gradually overshadowed the authority of the Moravian-inspired political institutions of the Inuit such as the Elders' Councils, and more Kablunângajuit and young Inuit stepped into political positions in Inuit communities (Brantenberg 1977; Kennedy 1977; Flanagan 1984). Although the LIA included Kablunângajuit membership, it was nonetheless predicated on Inuit involvement and, initially at least, was particularly focused on the northern relocatees. The injustice of the Hebron and Nutak relocations of the 1950s, and hopes for the creation of a new northern community as a result of a land claim propelled much of the early LIA's work, but the organization's focus eventually shifted with the increase of Kablunângajuit and southern Inuit officials. The ability of the relocatees from Hebron and Nutak to organize



politically, already confounded by the relocations, was further diminished by the dynamics of the new organizations, and the “northerners” became even more disenfranchised and marginalized. The relationship between the various groups, so often a source of tension and differentiation, also became, in the context of Inuit rights, an often uncomfortably symbiotic one, as many who were deemed culturally marginal to the process – those of mixed Inuit ancestry – increasingly gained political power within the Aboriginal organization (Brantenberg 1977).

#### **5.4 Labrador Inuit land claims**

In their pursuit of a land claim, the Labrador Inuit worked to align the frameworks laid out by the governments with their own interests and goals, which were solidly focused on harvesting rights and a restructured resource regime. The LIA nonetheless entered into the land claims process with an awareness of its limitations and potential impact: “Land claims settlements are a government process. The government makes the rules....The government is willing to make this deal so that companies can exploit the resources of the land” (LIA 1980b: 19). The federal government’s “rules” for recognition required that Aboriginal Peoples prove that they were an organized society at the time of British sovereignty, and that they continue to follow traditional pursuits in the claim area (INAC 1991; Asch 2007). The LIA, therefore, in following these rules in defining the Inuit interest, endeavoured “to prove that the Inuit’s land use and occupancy is systematic because it forms a coherent and intelligible adaptation to the land and its resources” (LIA 1980a: 1-2).

The Labrador Inuit Association was incorporated on March 26, 1975, and in 1977, it submitted a Statement of Claim to the north coast of Labrador. The land use and occupancy study for the land claim, *Our Footprints are Everywhere*, documented the extent of continuing traditional land use, the depth of Inuit knowledge about the environment, as well as the proven success of Inuit management of the harvest through cultural governance (Brice-Bennett 1977). The land and sea that the LIA claimed were delineated around both Inuit land use and wildlife habitat: "This [claimed] land stretches from the George River to the Smallwood Reservoir, from the Churchill River to Meale Bay. This is both land that is used by Labrador Inuit and land that is an important habitat for wildlife harvested by the Inuit. The claim stretches out on the sea ice to the furthest island. When claiming land it is important to protect wildlife habitat as well as the land that is actually used" (LIA 1980b: 7).

The claim roughly followed the territorial and social boundaries developed by the Moravians over the past two hundred years. The claimed land traces an outline around the Moravian communities, and extends the area south to Hamilton Inlet and west to Lake Melville. The Inuit and "Native Settlers" described in the land use and occupancy study include those living in Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet, as well as those who were resettled from the Nutak and Hebron regions (Brice-Bennett 1977). Inuit living in the Upper Lake Melville area were not included, nor were Inuit living in the Sandwich Bay area and south. Like government agreements before it, the land claim tied Inuit identity to place of residence, and abided by the hegemonic assumptions that 'real' Inuit were those who had not been 'corrupted' by life in southern and central Labrador.

The Labrador Inuit Association's focus on harvesting, although of absolute importance to Inuit, also served to cohere with dominant definitions of the Inuit as harvesters. Most people at the time would have accepted both of these aspects of Inuit identity – territorial location and the principal economic activity – as common sense, but, as I have been trying to argue, these cultural constructs have achieved their hegemonic strength from very specific political and economic processes, and it is only by dissecting these processes that their specificity and constructed-ness can be seen.

The Inuit relied on the strength of some hegemonic constructs about Inuit identity to build their case, but they also modified the use of cultural difference itself. While the governments envisioned Inuit cultural difference to signify economic disparities, the LIA asserted that Inuit cultural difference had significant political ramifications. The LIA wanted both control and ownership of this land: "The Labrador Inuit want full control of their land. This is not for sale. It is not the private ownership of the land that is wanted but the recognition of the Labrador Inuit as a nation and their sovereignty over their land" (LIA 1980b: 22). Despite all the contradictions and complexities of cultural difference in Labrador, the LIA was attempting to unite Inuit through a sense of shared experiences, and to use Inuit cultural difference as a tool to regain self-governance. "What is important in the long run is not that which divides us but that which unites us: a shared sense of fear and confusion over the future of our way of life, and a commitment to acquire control over our own lives" (LIA 1977a: 16).

Unlike the federal (and, administratively, the provincial) governments' approach to Inuit status in the cost-sharing agreements as something that is a result of economic

inequalities, the LIA's claim was firmly based on political rights to self-government and self-determination, in the form of control over economic activities, land ownership, and land management. In the LIA's view, Inuit rights were based on their historical presence, and their traditional and continued dependence on the land, and not on the economic disparities that were seen by governments as somehow a characteristic of Inuit society.

### **5.5 Government reaction to Inuit claims**

The provincial government dismissed all demands that it recognize Aboriginal rights, and immediately rejected the LIA's 1977 Statement of Claim. Before even reading the claim, Premier Frank Moores declared, "The provincial government would not recognize the claim by Inuit and settlers to aboriginal rights to land in Labrador until the claim is proven. The land in Labrador belongs to the Province and all of its people" (LIA 1977b: 3). The provincial Minister of Mines and Energy, William Doody, echoed this sentiment when he stated that land claims could not be allowed to hold up development in Labrador. Development, he said, is for the benefit of the people living there and for the benefit of the province. If land claims "are legitimate they will be resolved through the legal system. Meanwhile he says we cannot just stop the world until the land claims question is settled" (KI Vol3(13): 6 April 1979, p1).

Most provincial politicians focused on the aspects of the land claim that related to economic and political redistribution of power, such as land rights and control over

development. Many emphasized the maintenance of the settler-state<sup>6</sup>, and focused on public ownership of resources, disavowing any claims to political and economic rights based on cultural difference: "It doesn't matter if your ancestors came to the Valley twenty years ago or to Labrador 300 years ago. We all have these resources to share" (Ed Roberts in LRAC 1977, p21). This had long been the province's position. In 1973, the Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador had asked the provincial government to freeze all further industrial development until the land rights question was settled. The government had answered that "on the Island there were no land rights to discuss, and in Labrador, development would be to the benefit of all" (Williamson in LRAC 1977: 14-15). LIA staff member Amos Maggo brought historical inequalities and injustice into the debate by arguing, "You say it's not fair to freeze development till we settle our claims. Do you think it's fair to come in as intruders on our land, to come in with your next-to-God attitude and mess up our landscape, our livelihood?" Ed Maynard, the provincial Minister of Forestry and Agriculture, dismissed the idea of historical wrong-doing in his reply: "It was part of human history that groups of people shifted around and settled on land already occupied by others" (Maynard in LRAC 1977: 22). Other Aboriginal people raised the same questions about land rights. In 1977, at a meeting on resource development in the region, an Innu leader posed the question, "Who owns Labrador? We say we do but we recognize that the settler people have rights and have a place here." A provincial politician answered, "All land in this province not sold or leased is owned by the Crown. Government even has the right to take over any private land it requires" (Bart

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<sup>6</sup> By "settler-state" I mean a state that has been colonized by settlers, and one in which indigenous rights are not recognized.

Jack and Ed Roberts in LRAC 1977: 23, 24). The federal government, on the other hand, accepted the claim in 1978, after backtracking on an earlier policy that seemed to exclude Labrador claims. Actual negotiations did not start on the claim, however, until the late 1980s, and even then any progress was slow (Haysom 1990).

Despite the province's immediate and strong dismissal of the LIA's claim, the dispute was enough to raise concern among politicians about the potential for disruption. A provincial minister commented in 1977 that he "hoped the [Aboriginal rights] issues would be settled by negotiation and discussion rather than by confrontation, and that they should be settled 'for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders'" (Maynard in LRAC 1977: 21). Increasing tensions between Aboriginal peoples and the government the 1970s was a source of unease for the government, but not, at this point, politically pressing enough to compel the provincial government to agree to negotiate with Aboriginal peoples in Labrador.

Politicians and governments argued that the exploitation of valuable Labrador resources was reason enough to accept the destruction of renewable resources, and relied extensively on the "benefits for us all" justification to discount any potential rights based on Inuit difference. The idea of the "public interest" thus aimed to erase any political and economic implications of Aboriginal cultural difference by including Inuit in the homogenous public, and to sidestep the issue of land rights. The Labrador Inuit Association strongly disagreed, and was mobilizing the cultural constructs that had been used for so long to facilitate Inuit dispossession of lands and resources to now counter this dispossession and to regain political and economic control. In the next chapter, I

explore in more detail the growth of the Aboriginal rights movement in northern Labrador in the context of a uranium development project in the 1970s that drew serious attention to the Inuit land claim, and to the potential strength of these cultural constructs to address political inequalities.

## Chapter Six:

### Uranium exploration, 1950s - 1970s

*Mich: Mr. Kitts.*

*Kitts: Yes Mr. Michelin.*

*Mich: What's next on the master plan?*

*Kitts: Divide and conquer.*

*Mich: All right, let's give them the P.R. speeches.*

*Kitts: All right, you take Makkovik and I'll take Postville.*

*Brothers and sisters of Postville...*

*Mich: Ladies and gentlemen of Makkovik...*

*Kitts: In the beginning God made the earth...*

*Mich: I know your biggest worry is radiation pollution...*

*Kitts: And God made the people to put on the earth...*

*Mich: But you know you're exposed to radiation every day...*

*Kitts: And God made uranium to put in the earth...*

*Mich: You get it outta the sun, you even get it outta your wrist watch...*

*Kitts: And therefore God made uranium for the good of the people...*

*Mich: And what we were talking about,*

*Both: Is 200 jobs.*

--- from *Weather Permitting / Silakepat Kissiane*,  
Mummers Troupe, 1977.

Uranium exploration near the communities of Makkovik and Postville in the 1950s and then in the mid-1970s sparked the first major dispute over Inuit rights and resource development. This dispute illustrates the growing strength of the Aboriginal rights discourse, as well as the alternative discourse of residents who did not rely on a framework of Aboriginal rights to convey their concerns. Inuit, governments, and industry bitterly disputed and negotiated the relationship between access to resources and cultural differentiation in a struggle for economic and political control and equality, and the experience served to unite Inuit in imagining a new political future. This chapter examines how ideas about modernization, citizen participation, and suitable Inuit economic behaviour were formed and re-formed in hegemonic and counter-hegemonic



arguments, and how these ideas have had a material impact on the distribution of people and resources in Labrador.

### **6.1 Brinex uranium exploration in the 1950s and Inuit relocations**

The dispute over uranium development has its origins in the provincial government's policies of modernization and industrialization after Confederation. In 1953, the Newfoundland government under Joey Smallwood leased mineral, hydro-electric, and timber rights of much of Labrador to Brinco, the British Investment Company. The Smallwood government had been encouraging the development of large-scale resource projects in the province since 1949, and had made agreements with many companies that transferred to industry the rights to resources with often minimal returns to the province. The Brinco concession provided the company with, among other things, a 24-year lease for the land, and specified that it would pay 5% royalties to the government if mining development proceeded, a figure much lower than the 15% royalty rate that the Newfoundland government usually required. The lease made no environmental protection specifications, nor did it require that any specific benefits accrue to local people or businesses (Smith 1975). The one-sided Brinco concession was a rather extreme example of the government's approach to economic development at the time. The provincial government's policy was that natural resources were the property of the Crown and were to be developed for the public good, as the previous chapters described, and it did not recognize any special rights to lands or resources that were based on Aboriginal rights or historical ownership (Plaice 2003).

Brinco prospectors found some uranium deposits near Makkovik and Postville in 1954 and even more in 1956, and re-named several locations after themselves, such as Kitts Pond, which the local people called Long Hill Pond (Brice-Bennett 1977: 237). Although the company tried to keep the news secret until the timing better suited it, Premier Smallwood himself leaked the news that uranium had been discovered in the area during the Labrador Conference of 1956, a Conference that had been convened by the provincial government in order to discuss future plans and goals for Labrador and its people. At the time (in the 1950s), the Inuit on the northern coast lived in dispersed settlements, homesteads, and camps, and most relied on a combination of commercial cod and char fishing, fur trapping, and subsistence harvesting for their livelihood, although some were working on the construction of various military sites, including Hopedale and Goose Bay (Evans 2012; Brice-Bennett 1994). Conference participants from the government, the Moravian Mission, and the International Grenfell Association, which had responsibility for medical care in the region, discussed their problems with administering health and social services to such a large and dispersed Inuit population, and their concerns about the Inuit land-based economy, which some felt should be replaced by wage labour. One option discussed was the relocation of Inuit in the northern-most communities of Nutak and Hebron to ones farther south. In the midst of these discussions, and much to the dismay of Brinco officials, Smallwood announced to the press, "It is quite likely that mining of uranium ore and processing of uranium concentrates could commence in 1957" (quoted in Smith 1975: 76). The possibility of a mine in the area created great optimism in government circles about development

potential, especially given the bleak conditions on the coast that the Conference participants had described.

The discovery of uranium contributed to the modernization and cost-cutting justifications for the relocation of Inuit from Nutak and Hebron to Makkovik in the late 1950s (Kennedy 1977; Evans 2012). The main rationale for the relocations was the provision of improved and more efficient services in centralized locations, but the discovery of uranium near Makkovik and the potential for jobs for the relocated Inuit did play a role in the decision. The prospect of a uranium mine added to the excitement in government circles surrounding modernization schemes in the 1950s, and influenced the idea of Makkovik as a "growth centre," and therefore as a suitable location for the relocatees. The pervasive assumption among officials at the time was that Inuit could adapt easily, both to wage labour jobs, and to new environments. Some Inuit who were relocated recount promises made to their families about jobs at the potential mine. One woman said: "They said that we're moving to a place where there is lots of things, lots of seals everywhere, lots of animals and fish. That's what they said. That there were jobs available also. We had to go to Makkovik because they said Makkovik had everything" (Brice-Bennett 1994: 78, 87). Another said, "We were told on July 12 that we had to leave Okak and we left on July 25. My father was told there would be lots of work with Brinex. They took dad away from his fishing in Silutalik. My father could not get work so he ended up fishing there" (Brice-Bennett 2000: 84).

Brinco created the subsidiary exploration company Brinex to manage its mining exploration work, and by 1958, tunnels were built and plans were made for a mine at the

Kitts site. By 1959, however uranium prices dropped, and the company realized that the mine would be too late to qualify for Atomic Energy Canada contracts. Brinex exploration stopped soon afterwards. No jobs materialized for the almost 200 relocated Inuit, who were now far from home and without a meaningful or sufficient livelihood.

## **6.2 Renewed interest: Brinex in the 1970s**

The company's interest in uranium surfaced again in the early 1970s with the national energy crisis and an improved uranium market. Brinex employees returned to the Kitts-Michelin site and built a camp fifteen kilometers from the communities of Postville and Makkovik. In 1976, the company submitted a proposal to the provincial government for the construction of a mine and a processing mill, and started construction on its facilities, formally calling them "exploration" activities (Kennedy 1977). The government created an advisory committee to deal with the issue and required that Brinex conduct an environmental impact study, but it held no public hearings. In August 1977, the company stopped all activity because it was not economically feasible to continue. When uranium prices rose once again in 1979, Brinex resumed its exploratory work, at which point the government initiated a new environmental assessment consultation process.

Labradorians viewed Brinex's renewed interest in the region with more skepticism than they had in the 1950s. Other Smallwood-initiated developments in the province had failed to create many local or provincial benefits, such as the Upper Churchill hydro-electric dam, or had caused major pollution, such as the phosphorus

plant at Long Harbour. People were beginning to criticize the degree of complicity between industry and government in the province, and increasingly distrusted the government (Overton 1985). Newfoundland's exploitative approach to Labrador was further illustrated in a Provincial Manpower report on the Brinex project that suggested that jobs from a mine could go to miners from Springdale, Newfoundland, instead of to local workers (LRAC rpt 1977, p38). Many Labradorians expressed their frustration with their lack of political clout with the Brinex project, their concerns about potential impacts that a mine might have on their harvesting practices and environmental conditions, and their doubts about the actual benefits from the development. "Labrador is a warehouse," commented Makkovik resident Ted Andersen. "We understand companies must make money, but not at our expense" (Andersen in LRAC 27 July 1976: 5). In the rest of this chapter, I focus on the positions taken by local residents and Inuit leaders, by the provincial government, and by Brinex in order to map out the changing boundaries of the early discussions concerning Aboriginal rights, citizenship, and resource development.

### **6.3 Local reaction: Local people and the right to a "way of life"**

The local reaction to the Brinex project illustrates one thread of the counter-hegemonic arguments that Labradorians were developing at the time concerning the political and economic implications of cultural difference. Many of the residents of Makkovik and Postville framed their opposition or support of the development in arguments that did not rely on the discourse of Aboriginal rights. Instead, they focused on the relationship between the government and its citizens, and on the ethical obligation to

protect their "way of life" – a phrase intended to denote a wide and inclusive range of economic, political, and cultural aspects (Cowan et al. 2001). Many people expressed a sense of shared values, activities and circumstances, but few labeled it as "Inuit" or as any other category. They talked in terms of current and historical land use, and of usufruct resource rights, but not of outright ownership, or of their status as anything more than citizens.

On the whole, residents of Makkovik opposed the mine, and residents of Postville supported it. People from Makkovik argued that local people should be involved in the government's assessment of the Brinex project because they lived in the region, used the land, and would have to deal with any negative impacts of the mine. "Labrador belongs to the people that live on it. Let them decide what kinds of development they want and what they want done with their resources," argued a resident of Nain (Kohlmeister, KI 31 November 1979: 1). Most of the Makkovik and Postville residents who voiced their opinions about the project were from families who had lived in the region for generations; with the exception of a few individuals, the sizable population of relocated Inuit from Nutak and Hebron who lived in Makkovik at the time did not seem to participate in the discussions to the same extent.

For some Makkovik residents, the issue of participation in the project's assessment was a matter of fulfilling citizenship responsibilities. The role of the citizen, some argued, is to be involved and responsible to the collective. As one resident commented, "Maybe we can set up something to show others how it's done. We have to ask questions now; express doubts now; get things cleaned up now. We have to play our

part for the people to come" (Ted Andersen in LRAC mtg 27 July 1976: 7). Some saw the discussions about the project as not just about local issues: "We are isolated but we cannot forget our responsibility to other people" (intervenor quoted in EA Board report 1980: 3). However, while many felt that the province and the company must respect the role of the citizen in participating in the assessment process, some residents criticized the government for leaving monitoring responsibilities to citizens. At one Labrador Resources Advisory Council (LRAC)<sup>7</sup> meeting in 1977, residents complained to a government official that, "without any provincial environment staff in Labrador, the people have had to do some of the government's work in keeping an eye on the company's activities. It was the people, not government, who discovered that roads were being built without permits" (LRAC rpt 1977: 22). The government was not fulfilling its responsibility for monitoring or for encouraging residents to participate in decision-making.

Many residents from Makkovik argued for the protection of their "way of life." "Lifestyle" and "way of life" were concepts used over and over again to denote the specifically local and important aspects of what people felt was at stake. Residents argued that the project would "effectively and permanently affect a way of life that is vibrant and strong and where the traditional lifestyle makes for a fiercely independent people" (Environmental Assessment board report, 1980: 42). "The entire development will change a way of life that has existed for centuries" (K1 vol 3(47): 14 Dec 1979: 2). "The

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<sup>7</sup> As a result of public pressure, the Labrador Resources Advisory Council (LRAC) was founded in 1976 to represent Labrador interests in the face of the growing number of resource development proposals (Kennedy 1995). LRAC was funded by the provincial government, but acted independently of the government, and was the main forum through which local people could involve themselves in development decision-making, or at least voice their concerns.

costs that the people of the coastal communities may have to pay are not necessarily of the kind that can be easily measured in dollars, since they relate to costs of damage to a way of life" (LIA 1979: 2). "What is on trial here is our way of life!" (Ted Andersen in LIA 1979: 4). "Residents are afraid that the few jobs this project will offer in its expected life of 10-15 years will not compensate for damage to the environment and the lifestyle of neighbouring communities" (Toby Andersen in LRAC rpt 1977: 3). Like other modernization schemes, the potential uranium development was seen as threatening the very core of life in the region, and residents argued that this exploitation was ethically wrong.

When Labradorians used the concepts of "way of life" and "lifestyle," they were often referring to the complex dynamics among the economic, political, and cultural aspects of their society. The "way of life" involved fishing and harvesting, and, perhaps most importantly, implied a certain degree of local control over lives and the relationship with the land. "The uranium development has presented a threat to important values and lifestyles of Labrador people (such as self-determination, independence and subsistence living)," suggested an LRAC report (Fong 1977: 17). The Environmental Assessment Board reported in 1980 that it "was reminded in every community that the native way of life, like the land itself, is fragile, and would be further adversely affected by the proposed Kitts-Michelin Project" (EAB 1980: 35). Many residents did not directly challenge the legitimacy of state governance and ownership, but they asserted a high degree of existing independence from the state in living as they did. They characterized the new and infiltrating role of the state and industry on their land as a threat to their



"fragile" way of life, and demanded that the government recognize this degree of independence by respecting the importance of their way of life.

Coastal residents passionately wanted to protect their way of life, which involved a wide range of aspects, including (but not limited to) fishing, hunting, and trapping. In the mid-1970s, the fishery was the economic backbone of Makkovik, and, to a lesser extent, Postville. Many people from Makkovik felt that harm to the fishing industry from mining activities was unacceptable: "Our men are hunters, trappers, and fishermen by choice – we have no need for a uranium mine," argued Margaret Robinson (quoted in MUES 1980b: 40). The fish plant in Makkovik and the boatyard at Postville both offered economic opportunities, and many people in both communities earned some income from trapping (Brice-Bennett 1986). The harvest of country foods provided people on the north coast with an estimated half of the food that they needed (Usher 1982). The economic, nutritional and social value of this harvesting activity, however, was not yet fully recognized by the provincial government, which largely viewed the fishing and trapping activities as dated and destined to decline. Ted Andersen, a vocal opponent of the mine proposal, commented in one LRAC meeting that the Michelin area is the headwater for many salmon rivers, and asked what harm a tailings pond might have on them. "Ruined spawning grounds would be the finish...the fishery's dead, but at least it's something....What happens after?....We are worried about our children. We must have something when it is over" (LRA mtg 27 July 1976, p5). "The people of Makkovik seem to believe strongly that there is a future in the fisheries. This is the life style they want, and which they feel may be threatened by this industrial development. They are very

much aware of the changes in their life styles over the years and to the decreased resources in the fisheries, trapping, and hunting. Yet they do still exist and it is felt they can support the needs of the community. The people are not against development, but have gladly availed of technological advantages and employment. They request only that the development be of some benefit to their community, and not demand a complete change in their present way of life: 'subsistence living'" (Fong 1977: 10).

Many people of Postville, on the other hand, welcomed the potential mine as an answer to their economic problems. They believed that "there is no longer a future in the fisheries, or in trapping or hunting; but that economic stability from full time employment is the answer" (Fong 1977: 11). "I think the Brinex project would be good for us, especially for the young people. There is no work now in Postville, and it is impossible to live off the land like we used to. Brinex seems to know what it's doing...and besides the Lord will look after us," stated Douglas Jacque, a resident of the predominantly Pentecostal town (quoted in MUES 1980a: 39). As Kennedy (1977) argues, the difference in opinion between residents of Makkovik and Postville about the potential mine may stem partly from ecological and economic differences between the two communities: Postville is located deep in Kaipokok Bay, farther from abundant sea resources, and therefore, Kennedy argues, less dependent on wildlife. Makkovik is closer to sea and salmon resources, and, with its fish plant, relies heavily on harvesting. Kennedy asserts that the different dependence on harvesting between the two towns translated into different approaches to the possibility of a uranium mine in the vicinity.

Many residents and organizations of Upper Lake Melville communities (except the Innu of Sheshatshiu) also supported the potential development, as many of the local economic benefits would accrue to them through local supply companies and the use of infrastructure at the Goose Bay airbase. The opposition to the project by coastal residents and political organizations raised anger in some: "Every development in this area seems to arouse a lot of small-group interests. If we continue to stop such projects, what will we do for employment? As it is, our young people all have to move away. For us to continue living off the government is a poor solution" (Edward Blake of North West River, quoted in MUES 1980a: 39).

#### **6.4 The Labrador Inuit Association: Inuit rights and homeland**

The Brinex project was one of the first development issues tackled by the newly-formed Labrador Inuit Association. The high level of risk involved with a uranium mine created a sense of crisis around the project, which propelled all discussions and hearings into high-profile opportunities for the LIA to highlight its concerns and claims, and to gain support among both its members and the general public for the recognition of Inuit rights. As opposed to the discourse of ethics used by many residents of Makkovik, the speeches and statements of LIA officials reflect the national debates about Aboriginal rights at the time, and their recent engagement with the land claims process. Although often not as strongly worded as those of the Naskapi and Montagnais Innu Association, the LIA statements took a stoutly political position. While residents of Makkovik and Postville focused on their role as citizens or on the value of their way of life as a basis for

their demands, the LIA directly laid claim to the Inuit homeland and to the recognition of Inuit rights. "None of us, Indians or Inuit have ever given up our rights and our title to this land. Outsiders just came in and began using it....As native people we are citizens of Canada and citizens of this province. Somewhere in the law books, it says that native people are to be protected and helped by their government....We were given promises that the harvest from the land would be ours and our children's for all time" (Obed in LIA 1979a: 12-13, 17). As the LIA Land Claims Director stated, "The Inuit have lived in Labrador for thousands of years. This land has become part of our identity, our culture and has formed our way of life" (Obed, KI 2 Feb 1979: 3). The Inuit relationship with the land appears prominently in LIA statements about the Brinex project: "At the basis of all our lives is our relationship with the land and water. When you take away those things, when you destroy our ability to know who we are every day by our actions and our relations with nature, you the outside world make us second class" (LIA 1979a: 11-12). The words "identity," "culture," "homeland," and even "Inuit," so markedly absent from much of the discourse of many residents of Makkovik and Postville, dominate LIA statements, and frame ideas about the relationship between development and decolonialism. The LIA focus their arguments on the idea that Inuit cultural difference entailed significant political and economic rights, while many residents of Makkovik and Postville only peripherally engaged the idea that cultural difference had political and economic ramifications by focusing instead on their way of life. If the residents named this way of life at all, it was defined as "Native Settler"—an appellation that refers to a

rather ambiguous role in the experience of colonialism, and not one that immediately denotes a shared cultural difference from the dominant society.

This ambivalence towards political claims based on cultural difference was a major obstacle for the Labrador Inuit Association. As a new and rather fragile compilation of Inuit and Kablunângajuit, the LIA was trying to foster both a sense of Inuit identity and solidarity in the late 1970s (Brantenberg 1977; Haysom 1990). Not all of its potential members embraced its goals or strategies, and many people of mixed Inuit ancestry, such as many of the residents of Makkovik and Postville, did not self-identify as Inuit at that point (Kennedy 1985). The LIA had been competing with the Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association for the membership of the Kablunângajuit / Settler population, and it used the sense of crisis created by the Brinex project to petition its potential members to recognize their shared interests: "Development from big multinational companies threaten[s] our traditional way of life, not to mention our resources and our land and waters....LIA encourages its members to unite and have one voice speaking for the rights of all its members. Let's begin seriously discussing our future and get the most of LIA's land claim for the good of all northern Labrador" (Obed in KI 10 August 1979: 1, 3; Kennedy 1988). The continuing colonization of Labrador by Newfoundland was a rallying point for all those who had experienced it: "The Newfoundland Government tends to view Labrador as a goldmine, and is pushing ahead with programs to develop our land. These activities are being conducted on our homeland without consulting or involving us, even though we will be the most directly affected by these developments" (Obed in KI 25 May 1979: 4). "The anything-for-a-quick-buck

philosophy has guided development in this province for far too long and has given us such mistakes as Churchill Falls. Compared with multimillion-dollar wheeling and dealing, it may be dull work for politicians to provide us with decent, safe jobs. Maybe they had better get used to it" (Enoch Obed quoted in MUES 1980a: 39).

The ability of companies and the provincial government to pursue their economic goals and ignore Inuit claims to the region was frustrating: "These companies are like tourists who come and go as they choose. Inuit and native settlers have to live here and take the consequences. It is time to raise our voice and state our opinions. Now is the opportunity to demand that these developers hold local hearings to let us know what's going on behind our backs" (Obed in KI 2 Feb 1979: 4). The political and economic inequalities in resource development situations had become unacceptable, and the LIA demanded change:

"In the past, Inuit more or less accepted the changes brought about by the arrival of Kablunat ['non-Inuit']. Inuit did not mind becoming fishermen and trappers because they could continue to live off the land and they could protect and look after the land in the same way as their ancestors did. They could continue to affirm their identity as Inuit. The situation in recent years has changed and new demands are being made on the Inuit. Kablunat no longer are saying what the Inuit need or should do but they are making decisions about how the land will be used. They want to explore for and extract uranium from the land, generate hydro-electricity from the rivers and explore for oil and gas in the Labrador Sea. What is different now is the land is being threatened in a way that it was never threatened in the past. Inuit are beginning to react to this new situation and they are saying: you can't take our land because, if we lose our land, we will lose our identity as Inuit. Land claims came about because Inuit and Indian people all across Canada were saying they were losing their language, their culture and their identity" (Geoff Lester,

LIA research lawyer, quoted in Northern Labrador  
Women's Conference 1978: 102-103).

The loss of land is directly linked with cultural survival; for the LIA, demands for political and economic redistribution are inherently linked to demands for cultural recognition.

The Labrador Inuit Association utilized the image of Inuit society as an alternative to modern life in its correlation of ideas about localism, environmentalism, and alternative economic practices (Tsing 2005; Li 1996; Niezen 2009). LIA officials emphasized the historical and cultural connection between Inuit and the land, and especially the role that Inuit continued to play as environmental stewards. Inuit "protect and look after the land in the same way as their ancestors did," but the current threat to the land was a threat to Inuit. When Brinex failed to outline how it would deal with mining tailings, but assured people that "some safe plan could be devised" during the life of the mine, "this answer did very little to satisfy the people of Postville and Makkovik," the LIA newsletter argued, "whose ancestors have used the land and water in the area for centuries without causing any environmental damage" (KI vol 3(47): 14 Dec 1979, p2). In a *Globe and Mail* article about the uranium project in Labrador entitled, "A culture menaced," LIA President Bill Edmunds argued that the Inuit had a different approach to development. "When asked if Inuit and Indians cannot expect the same advantages that the other settlers anticipate from these projects, Mr. Edmunds made it clear that the natives prefer to live as they have in the past: We do not work for money like the white men" ("A culture menaced" *Globe and Mail* 22 September 1979: 8). The LIA reacted to the "menace" from industry with threats of its own. It emphasized that Aboriginal rights

asserted through the land claims process could in turn threaten industrial development: "The large companies, like Brinex and EastCan, who are interested in developing resources found in the north coast region, should be aware that the Inuit Land Claim to the land and sea ice may hinder development" (Obed in KI 2 Feb 1979: 4). The LIA thus established the significant aspects of its claim to Inuit rights: a fundamental, long-standing, stewardship relationship with the land and water of the Inuit homeland, a communal identity that stands in direct contrast with "the outside world" of colonizing and money-driven Kablunat, and the political power to mobilize Inuit rights in a serious challenge to industrial development.

The LIA also used the terms "lifestyle" and "way of life," although often in a more explicitly political context than many Makkovik and Postville residents did. LIA spokespeople emphasized the importance of political considerations in the idea of "way of life:" "Wildlife that has been our way of life for centuries will begin to move away, and a cycle of dependency on outside agencies will begin and never be broken" (LIA presentation 1979). A summary report about the Brinex project by the LIA expands on the concept of "way of life," connecting its connotations of self-determination with the requirement in land claims negotiations that Aboriginal groups prove their difference through being historically an "organized society" with internal governance based on kinship and value systems (LIA 1979b). The report describes how "it was incumbent upon the Labrador Inuit Association to identify and stress the different lifestyles and value structure of these communities....These values are rooted in historical presence; affected by social behaviour that is conditioned by family and extended family ties and



reflected in the manner in which the family is provided for and by which social control is maintained; and as indicated by the mixed modes of the economy (which is not based solely on the wage economy system of the south)" (LIA 1979b: 2-3).

Evelyn Plaice and Lawrence Dunn have argued elsewhere (Plaice 2009; Dunn 2003) that this focus on "lifestyle" or "way of life" was an approach that north coast residents and the Labrador Inuit Association used to avoid issues concerning ancestry. In the 1970s, many people, including the LIA itself, differentiated between Inuit and "Native Settlers." Although it represented both groups under its land claim, the LIA distinguished between Inuit and Native Settlers in its membership application process. The organization thus demonstrated a contradictory relationship towards Inuit cultural difference by both embracing the issue of Inuit identity and avoiding it. Residents from Makkovik and Postville were mainly of mixed Inuit/Native Settler ancestry, and it was mainly this group that was involved in the Brinex discussions, although a sizable group of relocated Inuit from Hebron and Nutak (approx. 75 people of the original almost 200) lived in Makkovik in the early 1970s<sup>8</sup> (Kennedy 1985). Given the state of Aboriginal politics in Labrador, it is perhaps illustrative of Native Settlers' differentiation within the region and in the Aboriginal movement that many residents of these communities did not actively employ the concept of Inuit rights at this time.

On the other hand, the "way of life" concept was common in resource conflicts with Aboriginal Peoples throughout Canada in the 1970s. The influential Berger Inquiry of the early 1970s concerning the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline discussed in great detail the

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<sup>8</sup> By the early 1970s, most of the Inuit who had been relocated to Makkovik from Nutak and Hebron in the 1950s had moved to other communities, predominantly Nain (Brice-Bennett 1994).

dynamics and the importance of maintaining Aboriginal ways of life. Anthropologist Michael Asch (1999) argues that negotiations concerning Aboriginal rights of the 1970s and early 1980s focused on Aboriginal "way of life" rights, as opposed to political rights, such as the right to self-government. This conceptualization of "way of life" rights, however, seems to be limited to socio-economic harvesting practices, and not the wider political aspect of self-determination that is inherent in Makkovik residents' use of the term in Labrador.

In Labrador, residents who did not use the discourse of the Aboriginal rights movement relied instead on an emphasis on the ethical importance of maintaining their "way of life," without the "Aboriginal" qualifier. Their approach focused on people's relationships with each other and with the land, and they did not directly connect it to a defined culture. Their "way of life" argument did not stress the land ownership aspect of land claims negotiations, and it did not directly challenge the authority of the state or the foundations of colonialism. Instead, it focused on the active and existing aspect of self-determination that was fundamental to life on the Labrador coast at the time. This approach incorporates some of the concepts used in development and Aboriginal rights discussions at the time, such as issues of locality and economic behaviour, but it avoids aligning itself with arguments about Aboriginal rights and culture. In part, as I mentioned above, this is a result of the fact that many residents in Makkovik and Postville did not identify as Inuit at the time. The approach can also be understood as a subaltern strategy that frames resistance in dominant terms, and in doing so, is a rather tangled mix of

arguments that both reflects government policy at the time and is co-opted by it, as the next section shows (Gramsci 1988).

### **6.5 The provincial government: "New lifestyles" for all citizens**

In the 1970s, the provincial government was more open to accepting the residents' "way of life" argument than it was to accepting the possibility of Aboriginal rights. In 1979, while still denying any Aboriginal rights, Brian Peckford's government issued an official development policy for Labrador that suggested that local lifestyles should be taken into consideration, but only to the extent that the lifestyles were deemed desirable: "Development must occur in a fashion which minimizes disruption of established lifestyles to the extent possible. When such disruptions are inevitable a critical decision must be arrived at, based on the negative value of the disruption versus the positive value of the proposed development" (quoted in LINS 1979: 25). Peckford expanded on how this approach would affect Labrador: "The special relationship of the people to the land must be accounted for. The traditional lifestyle of Labrador, based on the harvesting of renewable resources, fishing, hunting, trapping, etc., requires a sensitive and symbiotic relationship between man and his delicate northern environment. That relationship permeates almost every aspect of the society and culture of Labrador and has to be accounted for in future development. However, we must also recognize the challenges, opportunities, and rewards of new lifestyles which can be ours through a rational program of resource development" (Peckford 1980).

Despite the seemingly impartial means of making these "critical decisions" about the value of various lifestyles and economic pursuits, the Brinex experience illustrated the government's staunch faith in modernization and "new lifestyles." Ted Andersen, vice-chairman of the Makkovik Community Council, described how these discussions occurred in reality: "Residents here want a say in the proposed Brinex uranium development, but the feeling they get is that if they ask any questions, they will be classed as 'Anti-Newfoundland, Anti-development and Anti-everything'" (KI 30 Nov 1979: 2). Although government policy statements allowed that the way of life "must be accounted for," it was framed as something that could (and ideally should) be changed into "rewarding new lifestyles," and not as something that was inherently valuable or vital. This approach to the way of life argument focused mainly on the economic aspects of harvesting, and ignored the aspects of independence and self-determination that were so important to the residents and which would have provided them with a role in decision-making. In arguing for the importance of their way of life, residents were met with the modernization assumption that they should (and eventually would) change this lifestyle. Aboriginal rights, on the other hand, as outlined by the LIA, had a fundamentally political and anti-colonial basis that included both self-determination rights and way of life rights, but as explicitly political and economic, were much less malleable, more challenging, and therefore less appealing for the government.

## **6.6 Brinex's response: Local irritants, localized**

Brinex responded to calls for increased citizen participation reluctantly, and dismissed outright all claims of Aboriginal rights. In 1976-77, when the province had no formal process for public assessment, the company seemed to view local involvement as a matter of secondary importance, and some residents complained that Brinex was not taking the assessment work seriously (LRAC 1977: 36). The company's project and environment manager, Murry Poloski, commented that "he'd like to see the communities kept informed," and that the project report would be available to the public, but would first go "likely through government as we have to satisfy them" (LRAC mtg 1976: 9-10). Even in the second round of assessment in 1979, Brinex called the public hearings "confirmatory" (LIA, KI vol 3(47): 14 Dec 1979: 2). The company seemed to view the involvement of "organized groups" such as the LIA and LRAC as an irritant to the process: These groups "have made it very clear that they are not in favour of development on the land until native land claims are resolved," argued Brinex's Vice-President of mining. "Because of this position, I believe that they have influenced the public input in an attempt to delay any approval process" (O'Rourke in Brinex summary presentation to NWR, 10Dec1979: 1). However, O'Rourke argued, despite these obstacles, the Brinex project must proceed: "Brinex has an agreement with the government (27 years ago) and has been given certain rights and obligations. Brinex has continuously fulfilled its obligations and has invested some \$20 million in the project area. Part of the obligation involves development" (O'Rourke in Brinex summary presentation to NWR, 10Dec1979: 4).

Brinex's response to calls for the recognition of Aboriginal rights was officially to defer to the provincial government's handling of the matter. In practice, however, the company articulated its criticism and denial of such claims, especially in 1979, when public support for the recognition of Aboriginal rights was increasing,<sup>9</sup> and the issue became prominent in discussions about the potential mining development. In response to this pressure, Brinex worked to minimize the effect of Aboriginal rights on the project, first by arguing that the mine site would not interfere with any current Inuit land use. "I believe the project in question does not directly involve the LIA," argued O'Rourke. "I would think they cannot be considered to be residents of the land in the project area south of Kappokok Bay (sic)" (Brinex summary of hearings 14Dec79: 2). In its Environmental Impact Statement of 1979, Brinex outlined the land use of Makkovik and Postville residents, and concluded, "It does not appear likely that in the short-term the Brinex development will interfere with traditional land use as the majority of land use by Makkovik residents is confined to the coast" (Brinex 1979: 5-98). Postville land use is "mainly restricted to the Kaipokok River and Kaipokok Bay areas. The currently proposed alternative of a road to Happy Valley-Goose Bay essentially negates the potential for significant impacts on sealing, trapping, or fishing in the Kaipokok Bay area relative to the earlier proposal for a port on the bay. Other land use activities are not expected to be influenced in the short-term" (Brinex 1979: 5-101). The project site was therefore physically removed from any human activity on the land, and both the Inuit and

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<sup>9</sup> Many organizations stood behind the Aboriginal rights movement both nationally and in Labrador in 1979, including LRAC, town councils, and the United and Anglican churches.

local claims to the area were dismissed by Brinex's assertion that local people were not actively using that particular land.

Brinex also responded to local concerns by arguing that the mine could be designed on a very local scale and in isolation from places and people who did not wish to be involved. Company officials stressed that "The project development has been proposed in a manner to eliminate any direct contact with these two communities" (Brinex summary of hearings 14Dec79: 3). "The communities of Postville, Makkovik and North West River have special concerns relating to impacts such as lifestyles. I am confident that we can work closely with these communities to resolve concerns and design our systems to have them participate only to the extent they wish" (Brinex summary of hearings 10Dec79: 4). "Benefits from this project to your community must be your choice – we will work closely with your representatives to ensure proper hiring and training programs are in place and North West River people have an option to participate" (Presentation to NWR by J. O'Rourke in Brinex summary of hearings 14Dec79: 6). At a LRAC meeting in 1976, residents commented that local people would likely only get the lowest paid jobs, and Brinex's Murry Poloski replied that they "have to start somewhere – have to choose a lifestyle....The communities can choose their amount of involvement" (Poloski in LRAC mtg 1976: 12).

Brinex thus acknowledges the "special concerns" of residents by appropriating the cultural construct of locality in isolating the residents geographically, socially, and economically from any development, and by paring down their claims. Distinct physical areas of activity will maintain geographical isolation: the mining activities will occur

inland, and the residents use mainly coastal areas. The company will ensure social isolation by impeding social interaction between the mine and the communities of Makkovik and Postville through control over workers' schedules and means of transportation (Brinex summary of hearings 14Dec79: 2). Any economic benefit that may accrue to local people from the mine will be a result of their own choice to 'change their lifestyle' – they will not be forced to participate. Through these conceptualizations, the company tries to defuse the residents' claims of local rights by conflating 'local' with 'isolated,' and by relying on the liberal championing of the individual right to choose.

All of these transformations into isolated elements work to neutralize political considerations. Maintaining distinct geographical and social areas for the activities of residents and mining ignores the Inuit claim of ownership to the entire region and assumes proprietary and management rights for the company, while appearing to be conciliatory to local concerns. The argument that people may participate economically in the development to the extent that they wish makes a number of questionable assumptions. First, it assumes that it is at the *individual* level that people will interact with the mining activities, mainly in the form of employment. No attention is given to larger social or economic dynamics that might occur as a result of the mine, nor is any consideration given to the potential for economic benefits that might be a consequence of Inuit or local ownership rights. Secondly, by focusing on the importance of individual choice in pursuing economic benefits, the argument sidelines any discussion about the potentially negative effect of the development on current economic activities, such as harvesting and other land-based activities. Brinex's argument that the harvesting and



mining activities are geographically separate, and therefore will not impact each other thus appears to offer concessions to everyone, but in fact is an attempt to override political factors: "The Kitts-Michelin operation will be safe in all respects for workers and the area. Fish will not be harmed" (Presentation to NWR by J. O'Rourke in Brinex summary of hearings 14Dec79: 6). The focus on personal choice also locates agency at the individual level in the assumption that it is the individual who chooses and is solely responsible for supporting her/himself and her or his family.

The company also attempts to diminish the importance of any cultural difference that may exist. In its Environmental Impact Statement, Brinex describes historic Inuit land use patterns, and then uses its conception of the current state of Inuit culture as justification for its mining project to proceed: "The present day Inuit way of life is an aberration of this pattern but with significant changes in housing type and increased reliance on a wage economy" (Brinex EIS 1979: 4-283-5). The company argues that the Inuit connection with the land is diminishing, and comments that people's reliance on renewable resources is gradually changing to a reliance on wage labour (Brinex EIS 1979: 4-319-323). In Postville since 1972, it argues, the value system has "increasingly recognized the worth of a wage economy. Strength, endurance, and good hunting and fishing skills are admired in Postville, but material goods are becoming increasingly more important and prevalent" (Brinex EIS 1979: 5-101-2). The "aberration" that the contemporary Inuit society has become, with its move towards a reliance on wage labour and material goods, appears, in the Brinex description, as a crumbling and assimilated culture, with no inherent rights to land or to self-determination. Like the colonial

administrative assumption that Inuit cultural difference was tied to acceptable economic practices, Brinex argued that what remained of Inuit cultural difference would soon succumb to modern life, and the political significance of cultural difference would be negligible. In moving towards this goal, both the company and the government therefore encouraged Inuit to "chose a new lifestyle" in order to become modern and acceptably productive citizens (Watts 2003).

#### **6.7 The Environmental Assessment Board's final report**

Despite the fierce denial by industry and government of local arguments against the Brinex proposal, moral and political support for the Inuit claims grew. In 1980, the Environmental Assessment Board for the Kitts-Michelin uranium project concluded that the Brinex mining proposal did not prove that the proposed project was environmentally, socially and economically acceptable (EAB 1980: 4). In its letter to the provincial Minister of Consumer Affairs and Environment, the Board stated that this decision was made predominantly on environmental grounds: "Brinex should not be permitted to mine and mill uranium ore until it satisfies government that it can and will safely and permanently dispose of the waste materials" (EAB 1980: 4). In the first three pages of its four-page letter, however, the Board describes how many of the intervenors focused on the Aboriginal land claims issue in the process, including Inuit and Innu organizations, church groups, the Labrador Resources Advisory Council, as well as Brinex itself, thus illustrating the growing importance of the Aboriginal rights discourse to economic and political decisions in Labrador: "The Indian and Inuit peoples insist that a Land Claim

Settlement is needed to give them a say in the kind of development which will be allowed to take place in Labrador. They see it as a means to enable them to become a self-determining society. Such is the hope of the Indian and Inuit, and to a lesser degree the settler population of Labrador" (EAB 1980: 2).

By the time of the Board's report, internal company politics and poor global markets for uranium after the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 were also influencing the Brinex development, as a *Globe and Mail* article reported: "Brinco Ltd. of Toronto is not likely to start construction of production facilities at its Kitts-Michelin uranium project in Labrador this year because of the softening in the uranium market, Hugh Snyder, president, says in the annual report" (G&M 29 April 1980: B12; GNL 2004). The company decided to shelve the project for the final time.

Although it was never developed, the Brinex project has had significant consequences for northern Labrador. The potential for jobs at a uranium mine was one of the justifications used for the massive relocation of Inuit from northern communities to Makkovik in the 1950s, and in the 1970s, the Brinex project was a catalyst for Labradorians to organize politically and to articulate their concerns and their values about large-scale resource development and about their role as citizens and as Aboriginal Peoples. "The Brinex hearings were an important social turning point," argues John Kennedy. "They pulled people together and let them see that their opinions were important" (quoted in MUES 1981: 52). The residents of Makkovik and Postville, the Labrador Inuit Association, the provincial government, and Brinex engaged various ideas about the political and economic ramifications of cultural difference, including the

importance of a way of life, Aboriginal rights and identity, suitable economic activity, citizenship, locality, and cultural differentiation in their various counter-hegemonic arguments. Although the LIA's discourse of Aboriginal rights eventually overshadowed the residents' ethical framework about their way of life in discussions about Inuit difference, the way of life discourse continues to emerge periodically over the next few decades. The next chapter describes how the ideas that were generated and asserted through this experience continued to develop and impact the political and economic situation in Labrador over the next fifteen years.

## **Chapter Seven:**

### **Inuit land claims in Labrador, 1980 - 1997**

As the Brinex example illustrates, the increasing strength of the Aboriginal rights discourse and the mobilization of ideas about cultural difference in struggles for political and economic control were evident in Labrador by the 1980s. Although various groups and individuals articulated differing perspectives and approaches in their use of cultural constructs and in the political ramifications of cultural difference, many employed a number of themes, including locality, self-sufficiency, productivity, and the liberal concepts of rights and individual choice. This chapter explores how the land claims process has affected the renewed interest in and manipulation of cultural differentiation in Canada and in Labrador during the period between approximately 1980 and 1997. As a result of changing legal opinions, government policy, and Labrador Inuit pressure, the ideas used about Inuit in the effort to address political and economic inequality through the land claims of this period employed both novel and familiar concepts of cultural distinctiveness and self-containment.

#### **7.1 Land claims and the politics of recognition**

The Aboriginal rights movement gained significant public support after the 1960s, and succeeded in pressuring governments to address Aboriginal issues, but the state worked to counteract this pressure by trying to contain the debate. As Charles Hale argues, the state approach to Aboriginal claims since the 1980s encourages a "shift from

protest to proposal" (Hale 2005: 9). In doing so, the state shifts "from adversary to arbiter," as it positions itself as the evaluator of claims (Hale 2005: 10). The state's "colonizing of bodies" through constituting Aboriginal Peoples as official entities, as Macdonald (2010) describes it, continued and was intensified through the land claims process. In Canada, the juridical system and the federal government's land claims process have played dominant roles in influencing the ways in which claims to Aboriginal rights have been argued. As a consequence of using legal recourse, for instance, Aboriginal organizations, governments, and the judiciary are restrained by the structures of the legal system, and must engage in cultural differentiation as they define the boundaries of indigeneity (Niezen 2009; Alfred 2005). In similar fashion, the land claims process employs what a number of scholars call a "politics of recognition" to influence and control the kinds of people, territory, culture, and economic activities that are recognized as Aboriginal (Coulthard 2006, 2008; Simpson 2008; see also Taylor 1992). The "assimilative lure of the politics of recognition," as Dene scholar Glen Coulthard describes it, draws Aboriginal Peoples into conforming to state structures and values in their participation in the land claims process (Coulthard 2006: 12). In order to benefit from the process of negotiating Aboriginal rights, they must accept, in large part, and engage in upholding the state's definitions of Aboriginal Peoples and rights (Alfred 2005). This process is not, of course, entirely controlled by the state, as Aboriginal leaders and court cases test and challenge the limits of state recognition, but many of the crucial aspects rest in the state's control, including the structure of the process, economic factors such as claims funding, and the ability to grant recognition.

In Labrador, the politics of recognition involved in land claims employs many of the same ideas that both authorities and Inuit used to influence Inuit society throughout the last two hundred years. Echoes of the Moravian Mission's attempts at cultural, geographic, and economic containment and isolation can be seen both in Inuit leaders' claims for self-government as they engage historical constructs, and in the attempts of the state to limit these claims. Both claims and counter-claims are framed in ideas of bounded culture, authenticity, locality, and limited economic pursuits, as all participants negotiated the acceptable breadth, both politically and economically, of the impact of a claim of cultural difference.

## **7.2 Aboriginal recognition in Labrador: Culture and affirmative action**

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was slow to enter into formal negotiations about Aboriginal rights. After a few years of pressure, it reluctantly agreed to negotiate with Aboriginal Peoples in the province, under certain conditions. In October 1980, Premier Brian Peckford issued a "Statement on the Question of Native Land Claims in the Province," which confirmed, for the first time, that the provincial government would, in fact, attempt to settle claims that were accepted as valid by the federal government. Successful negotiation of these claims would "provide our native peoples with the opportunity to maintain and enhance their culture and heritage. The government looks upon this as an affirmative action policy whereby our native peoples will obtain the wherewithal to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future....[and] can fully partake in the development of our great province" (GNL 1980).

This policy was a significant change for the government, but it offered a very limited approach to land claims. Aboriginal rights were restricted to those concerning "culture and heritage" and the act of negotiating was classified as affirmative action. The policy was also firmly based in the perceived lack of "wherewithal" on the part of Aboriginal Peoples. The use of the phrases "our province" and "our native peoples," encompassing all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, counter the LIA's use of "our homeland" and the sense of collective Inuit identity that Inuit leaders were trying to foster. As provincial citizens, the government seems to say, Inuit should be provided with the ability to "partake in the development of our great province," and should be given "the opportunity to maintain and enhance their culture and heritage." The reference to affirmative action is telling – this is not the recognition of inherent rights, but an effort to engage Inuit in development. The logic behind affirmative action contends that once Inuit are active participants in development projects, any economic inequalities will be amended, and the policy will no longer be needed (Fraser 1997). The state thus frames the issue as that of a disadvantaged minority group with problems and needs, rather than that of a political community with inherent rights (Maaka and Fleras 2005; Cornell 2005). The policy proposes development as the solution to this problem of inequality, rather than focusing on specific Inuit needs or on the possibility of Inuit control of development as a solution to historical colonization and dispossession. As James MacLean argues, the basis of this policy is not that Aboriginal peoples have rights because they are the original inhabitants of the province, nor that they had never ceded these lands; instead, the policy



begins with the fact that the Aboriginal organizations had submitted land claims to the federal government and that these claims had been accepted (MacLean 1982).

This approach fits generally within the growing movement in the 1980s within (post)colonial states such as Canada (and the United States, New Zealand, and Australia) to apply policies of affirmative redistribution and multiculturalism to indigenous concerns. Affirmative redistribution policies aimed at economically disadvantaged groups, as proposed in affirmative action and other targeted policies, Nancy Fraser (1997) argues, addresses economic inequalities, but does not tackle the underlying sources and reasons for this inequality. Fraser argues that affirmative redistributive policies also tend to entrench group differentiation, which can work to the detriment of those within the group, as they may be labeled as deficient, insatiable, and privileged. The Newfoundland government's focus on the maintenance of Aboriginal "culture and heritage" is consistent with the logic of multiculturalism, which, as many scholars argue, encourages claimants to fit within the existing framework of equally different, and therefore equivalent, groups (Povinelli 2002; Maaka and Fleras 2005; Hale 2005). The "one size fits all" approach of a mosaic model of multiculturalism "denies the legitimacy of group-specific differences," as Maaka and Fleras argue, when "settler societies [are framed] as an amalgam of immigrants" (Maaka and Fleras 2005: 41). The focus on "culture and heritage" as the aspects to be maintained and enhanced through this policy, as opposed to self-determination or resource ownership, for instance, reflects what Elizabeth Povinelli describes in liberal multiculturalism policies as the requirement that Indigenous people identify with "a domesticated nonconflictual 'traditional' form of sociality and

(inter)subjectivity" (Povinelli 2002: 6). Within a multiculturalism framework, culture is something that everyone possesses and has a right to, but that can be framed as suitably non-political and non-threatening. Following this logic, claims to cultural recognition can be thus addressed without causing social disharmony.

The Labrador Inuit Association was pushing for a much broader conception of Inuit rights than the province was willing to consider, as the last chapters illustrated and as a survey of its public statements shows. Issues relating to cultural maintenance were of great importance to the Inuit organization, but Inuit leaders did not separate them from political issues; instead, they often centred their struggle for cultural survival within a decolonialist critique that drew attention to underlying causes of inequality and injustice and that directly challenged the legitimacy of the state.

Inuit leaders also connected their goal of self-government with a key interest of the state: "As long as we are a dispossessed people without clear rights of property to our land resources, we will have no real interest in promoting their development," the LIA argued in 1985. "We also believe that we should be entitled to enjoy land and sub-surface rights and to share in royalties and other resource revenues earned as a result of development of the lands we have traditionally used and occupied" (LIA 1985a: 5). The LIA provided a staunchly anti-colonial perspective in these early statements that conflicted with the provincial government's attempts to limit the political aspects of the discussion. The opportunity for co-operation presented in the LIA's statement that, until their claims were addressed, "we will have no real interest in promoting [resource] development" was not yet embraced or recognized by the government.

Through the 1980s, as the pressure of the Aboriginal rights movement persisted, the provincial government further developed its approach to recognizing Aboriginal rights. In its 1987 policy on land claims, the government outlined that it would offer land, some renewable resource rights, and some aspects of self-government, but it would not grant non-renewable resource rights, revenue sharing, or resource management rights to anything more than an advisory role (GNL 1987; Haysom 1990, 1992): "The continued use and occupancy of the land and the harvest of renewable resources are considered fundamental to native lifestyle and economic self-reliance. On the basis of this premise and the requirement of aboriginal use and occupancy of the land, the province will contribute lands and renewable resources to a land claim settlement" (GNL 1987: 5). The policy maintains the classification of Inuit as self-reliant land-based harvesters with no political rights to authoritative roles in management, no inherent land ownership rights (as the government will "contribute" land), and no rights to resources to which they had little "traditional" connection: "Provincial involvement in the negotiation and settlement of aboriginal land claims is based on traditional use of renewable resources by aboriginal peoples....Allocation of or rights to other non-renewable resources, marine or terrestrial, will not be included in the negotiations" (GNL 1987: 8). In contrast, the 1986 federal land claims policy does include the possibility of negotiating sub-surface resource rights and revenue-sharing, but, as LIA lawyer Veryan Haysom argues, the federal willingness to negotiate these rights and revenues, which otherwise would belong to the province, could be interpreted as a replacement in land claims settlements of federal lump-sum payments with benefits from provincial resource developments (Haysom 1990). For an

economically depressed province, as Newfoundland and Labrador was in the 1980s and 1990s, this shift of responsibility for compensation from federal to provincial coffers may well have been difficult to accept. However, the province was slowly broadening the limits within which it was willing to negotiate, as long as Inuit claims did not threaten the province's dependence on non-renewable resource revenues or its fundamental state structure (Hale 2005).

### **7.3 Political rights and harvesting**

Official government recognition of Inuit rights revolved around ideas of appropriate Inuit economic behaviour – as renewable resource harvesters, environmental stewards, and as members of a self-reliant and self-managing community. The federal government's approach to Aboriginal claims was somewhat broader than the provincial government's at the time, but the focus on subsistence harvesting over any other kind of economic activity remained a fundamental aspect of government recognition policy.

The Labrador Inuit, in concert with Aboriginal groups across the country, argued that their Aboriginal rights involved cultural, economic, and political rights, and they invoked a broader range of cultural constructs about what defined Inuit difference than the state initially acknowledged. While the Labrador Inuit land claims were unresolved (1977 – 2005), the Aboriginal movement influenced the legal consensus in Canada about the extent of Aboriginal rights considerably, and pressured all levels of government to expand their scope of negotiation. Existing Aboriginal rights were enshrined in the Canadian Constitution in 1982, and the Supreme Court of Canada's *Sparrow* decision of

1990 recognized the Aboriginal right to hunt and fish in traditional territories for food and ceremonial purposes and limited the right of governments to control this harvesting. Aboriginal harvesting for food was acknowledged as having priority over sports or commercial use, although conservation and safety concerns override all harvesting rights (Imai 2008).

With these legal developments, Labrador Inuit hoped that the issue of increasing government incursions into Inuit harvesting in Labrador, which had been such a pressing concern of the LIA (see Ames 1977; Usher 1982), would be ameliorated. In theory, the situation improved, at least partly. The court decisions did support Aboriginal subsistence harvesting rights, but they remained generally silent on commercial harvesting rights. Labrador Inuit had consistently maintained that they had both, as they had "traveled on the land and on the sea in search of life-sustaining food and economic benefits from the renewable resource base" (Obed in LIA 1983: 1-B-2). Inuit had been involved in trade and the global economy for centuries. Nonetheless, the court decisions and the governments' "politics of recognition" aimed the focus of government discourse about Aboriginal rights on subsistence activities only. In similar fashion, the anti-sealing campaign of the 1980s identified Inuit with subsistence activities, much to the LIA's frustration:

"How do these people [anti-sealing groups] separate out what is commercial from what is subsistence? Two hundred years of involvement in the trade and commerce of seal pelts clearly identifies a commercial aspect to our harvest, yet it is on a scale that barely allows us to support our needs so that we can continue to maintain ourselves through hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering. The argument that Inuit can hunt seals for subsistence but not

for commercial purposes displays an ignorance of local and regional arctic economies. The distinction between commercial and subsistence does not exist in Labrador" (LIA 1985b: 43).

The image of Inuit as non-exploitative and self-contained subsistence harvesters was as appealing to the anti-sealing movement as it was to government policy-makers who developed official recognition criteria, but it was frustrating to the LIA and other Inuit who were calling for much wider appreciation of their rights and practices. Subsistence harvesting was of absolute importance to Inuit in Labrador, but many had always made their livelihoods through a wider use of resources. The support for Aboriginal subsistence harvesting from the Canadian juridical system was therefore very welcome, but was inadequate to fully address Inuit concerns.

In practice, the legal decisions supporting Aboriginal subsistence harvesting had initially very little impact in Labrador. As LIA negotiator Toby Andersen commented in 1992, the *Sparrow* decision did not force the province to change its hunting regulations:

"Our people have been charged under the Provincial Wildlife Regulations for subsistence hunting, putting food on the table for our families. And when the Sparrow decision came into being, we felt that this was something that was going to be the end to all this court action and, I guess, violation of what we term as useless or needless regulations. But it wasn't. Our people are still being charged. They're being charged under provincial regulations and you go to court. And when your case appears in court, because of the Sparrow decision, the provincial government turns around and drops the charges before a judge can make a ruling or make a decision. So it means that government doesn't have to change their policy or their regulations and the next Labradorian that does the same thing, breaks the same regulation will be charged again" (Andersen in RCAP hearings 1992).

The province also continued to allow development in the Inuit claim area, which frustrated the LIA immensely. The region experienced increased low-level military flight training, the construction of radar sites, and outfitters who received 50-year leases from the provincial government after 1991 instead of the usual 5-year leases (Andersen and Rowell 1993; Andersen in RCAP hearings 1992). The governments refused to implement interim protection from development until the land claim had been settled, and instead allowed third parties to establish their own interests in the region. "In fact," argued LIA negotiator Toby Andersen and advisor Judy Rowell, "it could even be argued that it may well be to governments' advantage to have more third party interests establish themselves in the claim area before an Agreement in Principle is reached" (Andersen and Rowell 1993: 34). To some extent, the land claims process itself was also facilitating the establishment of third party interests within the claims area. According to one LIA negotiator, entrepreneurs had used the mapping done for the LIA's initial land use and occupancy research, *Our Footprints are Everywhere* (Brice-Bennett 1977) to ascertain where the rich harvesting areas were, and had then built outfitting camps (fn April 2008). Labrador Inuit were increasingly concerned and frustrated about the rising numbers of "outside" developers in the region while their land claim negotiations made very little progress and promising court decisions had initially little impact.

#### **7.4 Inuit self-sufficiency**

As the courts were acknowledging Aboriginal rights to subsistence harvesting, the LIA increasingly stressed the Inuit reliance on the resource base in general, beyond

simply subsistence harvesting. Although the provincial government was unwilling to negotiate sub-surface resource rights, the LIA continued to maintain that the Inuit had the right to control and own these resources. William Andersen III, the President of the LIA in 1989, argued that Labrador Inuit must be “guaranteed their own lands and resources in sufficient quantities to be as self-sufficient a people as possible....Of fundamental importance to us, as Labrador Inuit, is our future as a distinct and viable people. We are looking to the next 200 years – not the next 20” (Andersen 1990: 5). The LIA President emphasized that development must offer local benefits, which will help to create more self-reliance:

“We are not opposed to development, provided environmental standards are met. But the people in the area should have first priority. It makes no difference to us who benefits from development as long as it’s the people of Labrador. We should plan these benefits for our people....Hopefully by the year 2000 we will be able to take care of ourselves rather than relying on the welfare cheques, and we will be able to make decisions for ourselves” (Andersen quoted in LINS 1990: 20).

Andersen continued to argue that Inuit were looking to land claims to help create political and economic independence: “To us, land claims is not a threat to non-aboriginal people, it’s a way to self-sufficiency” (Andersen quoted in LINS 1990: 56). By situating the Labrador Inuit as a political community in search of self-sufficiency, the LIA appealed to the growing popular (and neoliberal) convictions concerning self-reliance and boundedness, as well as the familiar cultural construct of a self-reliant and localized Inuit community (Slowey 2008; Castree 2010). The LIA shifted its position slightly from demanding recognition of Inuit rights to demanding the means by which Inuit could sustain themselves on a self-contained territory. Given the government’s adherence to



limiting Inuit rights to those based solely on specific historical practices, such as subsistence harvesting, this alignment of goals (self-sufficiency and resource development) served to offer some middle ground to the provincial government.

The shift in focus of some of the LIA discourse towards the idea of self-sufficiency (as related to resource development) did not necessarily reflect any reduction in the importance of harvesting on the part of the Inuit, despite far-reaching changes to the economy in the 1980s and 1990s. Country foods remained a fundamental aspect of most families' diet, and wooding produced the fuel needed to heat many homes on the coast (Williamson 1996). However, many major changes occurred in the harvesting economy in these decades. The George River caribou population was increasing and could be found in coastal areas, which allowed for hunting to occur close to some communities. The use of small boats and snowmobiles also changed land use patterns from the mid-1970s onwards. Full-time employment opportunities in some communities increased after the late 1970s, especially due to the LIA and its subsidiary organizations,<sup>10</sup> and the number of people who could only harvest or travel on weekends increased. The fishery continued to be the primary industry on the coast, and helped to fund subsistence harvesting, but reductions in fish stocks and government decisions to limit or close fisheries caused many hardships and concerns about the future of the industry. The cod stocks had all but disappeared in northern Labrador by the time the federal government called for a moratorium in 1992, due to over-fishing by draggers on the Hamilton Banks,

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<sup>10</sup> In Nain, for example, these subsidiary organizations included, in 1997, the Torngasok Cultural Centre, the Labrador Inuit Health Commission, the OKalaKatiget Communications Society, the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation, and the Torngat Housing Corporation (Williamson 1997).

and inshore fishers in the region were not offered the same compensation package as fishers from Newfoundland. The north coast char and salmon fisheries also endured difficulties, especially after the commercial salmon fishery was closed in 1998, although the Torngat Fish Producers Co-op worked to expand the fishery to other species, including turbot, crab, and shrimp. Sealing had been declining since the 1960s, for a number of reasons. Snowmobiles had replaced dogsleds in the mid-1960s, and seal meat was no longer needed as dog food. The seal industry enjoyed good markets in the 1970s, but animal welfare groups caused the market to collapse in the late 1970s. Commercial sealing stopped, although Inuit continued to harvest seals for their own use when they could afford the increasing cost of transportation and equipment (Williamson 1997; Richling 1989). Harvesting remained essential to the Inuit economy, but it endured many changes during this time, often due to resource depletion, government policies, and international movements (Mackey and Orr 1987; Usher 1982; Williamson 1997; Brantenberg and Brantenberg 1984).

The change in some LIA officials' approach to the connection between the Inuit way of life based on harvesting and Aboriginal rights can be understood in the context of changing circumstances. Many factors were threatening to shake loose this connection, most of which can be linked back to modernization policies and the continuing effects of dispossessions. The effects on land use of relocation, centralization, education, the emerging settlement-based economy of wage labour and transfer payments, the animal rights movement, and government policies relating to resource use and exploitation were

extensive, although the underlying importance of a harvesting lifestyle remained fundamental.

The change in the LIA's approach could also be understood as a means of stepping away from the recognition of Inuit rights based on the persistence of "traditional" activities. The state's land claims criteria that Aboriginal peoples have maintained traditional activities on traditional lands mean that Inuit are recognized predominantly through their cultural (and economic) characteristics, instead of as a political community with political rights. Given the overwhelming pressure on harvesting from the factors listed above, and the implicit role that the government plays in many of these factors, it is disingenuous that the state requires this continuity instead of recognizing political rights based simply on colonial dispossession. Nonetheless, the approach is consistent with what Elizabeth Povinelli and others (Povinelli 2002; Hale 2005) have described as the logic of (neo)liberal multiculturalism, which demands that Indigenous groups be "inspected, examined, and investigated, [but] this inspection always already constitutes indigenous persons as failures of indigeneity as such," because the logic of recognition "forces the subaltern to account for themselves in way that suits the national imaginary" (Povinelli 2002: 39). Indigenous groups such as the Labrador Inuit therefore find themselves in impossible situations, where the "national imaginary" demands that they retain and demonstrate historical characteristics, while at the same time creating conditions that destroy or limit the ability of the Indigenous people to do so. Failure to adequately demonstrate these symbols of authenticity is then wholly attributed to the Indigenous group, and is not related to the conditions of the political economy. The LIA's

embrace of the idea of self-sufficiency therefore can be seen as a partial redirection of the discussion away from equating Inuit with subsistence harvesting and towards the identification of Inuit through economic self-containment.

The shift in approach also reflects the changing political environment, as the global economy encourages states to facilitate the unimpeded exploitation of resources, and neoliberal governance approaches prioritize ending dependence on the state, responsibility, and self-improvement (Castree 2010; Slowey 2008). The LIA therefore framed their case in dominant terms by appropriating concepts from the state's hegemonic project to produce self-sufficient subjects (Watts 2003; Foucault and Senellart 2008). This appropriation of concepts may well illustrate an overlap in goals. As Gabrielle Slowey argues, Aboriginal "self-determination is consistent with normative and neoliberal goals of economic, political, and cultural self-reliance" (Slowey 2008: xv). Although both subsistence harvesting and economic self-containment are characteristics that have been used for years as cultural constructs, and are closely related, the LIA shifted its emphasis between the two as the political situation and circumstances in Labrador changed.

## **7.5 Cultural distinctiveness**

While the LIA moved towards arguments based on political rights that were not predicated on a continuation of past practices, the approach of the Canadian courts was moving in another direction. As Michael Asch (2000) argues, after the early 1980s, the Canadian judiciary and governments required that Aboriginal Peoples prove their

"cultural distinctiveness" at the time of contact. The *Van der Peet* case of 1996 stated that "to recognize and affirm the prior occupation of Canada by distinctive aboriginal societies it is to what makes these societies distinctive that the Court must look in identifying aboriginal rights" (*Van der Peet* 1996). Both the "organized society" approach of the 1970s-1980s and the more recent "cultural distinctiveness" approach to Aboriginal rights rely on flawed understandings of culture within either an outdated social evolutionary framework or as a product of a collection of practices and custom, from which "distinctive" aspects may be identified (Asch 2000). Framing Aboriginal rights within cultural considerations focuses attention away from the significant implications of dealing with Aboriginal rights as political rights. As Asch argues, "Aboriginal rights ought not to be determined on the basis of similarity or difference with colonial culture. Aboriginal rights are defined in law as arising from the fact that Aboriginal societies existed prior to the arrival of Europeans....Yes, they were distinctive. But certainly the salient fact is not that Aboriginal peoples were distinctive, but that they were here, living in organized societies" (Asch 2000: 133). The Canadian judiciary and governments continued to frame Aboriginal rights around cultural boundaries in a way that tended to overshadow the possibility of substantial political rights.

Discussing and recognizing Aboriginal rights by using cultural criteria avoids a challenge of Canadian sovereignty, and works to set limitations on Aboriginal political control and change. Instead of proving "advancement" in terms of "organized society," Aboriginal Peoples "are now required to demonstrate the opposite: simple subsistence

economies, comparatively simple technologies, rudimentary social organization – what makes them ‘distinct’ from the dominant society” (Niezen 2009: 73). The *Van der Peet* case uses a species by species approach to determining the extent of Aboriginal harvesting rights: harvesting activities of specific species must have been “integral” to pre-contact society in order for the courts to recognize an Aboriginal right. Rights are therefore “frozen” in the form that they took at a specific date. As Ronald Niezen argues, the species by species approach is an attempt to focus the recognition of distinct cultural practices within the confines of liberal individualism, thereby avoiding the political implications of any substantial recognition of Aboriginal political or jurisdictional rights (Niezen 2009: 90; Borrows 1997).

While the Canadian judiciary was developing its definition of rights derived from Aboriginal traditional culture, anthropology was moving in yet another direction, I as discussed in Chapter Two. Since the Enlightenment, the discipline had fostered the concept of culture as a bounded, static, and localized structure, but, more recently, many anthropologists questioned the assumptions behind this idea. Instead of taking the inherent stability and continuity of “traditional culture” for granted, they argued, scholars should instead explore “the apparent boundedness and coherence of ‘a culture’ as something made rather than found” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 2). Anthropology has been complicit in the reification of cultures and in the celebration of difference, while often overlooking the role of power in how culture is created, maintained, or modified (Wolf 1999; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Despite this recent shift in focus, the legacy of anthropological research that relied on the bounded and static concept of culture to

understand "the Inuit," for example, is apparent in the Canadian courts' approach towards "traditional" Aboriginal culture. The courts (and, following them, government negotiators) found that it was expedient, within the confines of legal positivism, to define Aboriginal rights based on a set of historical cultural practices rather than engaging in a more complex understanding of culture as part of an on-going political project (Niezen 2009; Scott 1993).

Many problems arise from recognizing Aboriginal difference only in terms of reified and static cultural practices, as many scholars have argued (cf., Coulthard 2008; Alfred 2005; Benhabib 2002; Povinelli 2002). Manuhia Barcham argues that this recognition results in "an ahistorical essentialism wherein reality is collapsed into a timeless present such that what *is* now is the same as what *was*, which in turn is the same as what *will be*, thereby effectively excluding any chance of recognizing notions of social transformation and change" (Barcham 2000: 138). The use of static definitions in a focus on identity instead of difference can lead to the exclusion of some practices and people deemed "inauthentic," and rules out the possibility of "becoming." Limiting rights to activities that may now be impossible to pursue because of historical changes or government policies seems to be an insincere attempt at resolving past injustices (Niezen 2009). A number of indigenous scholars argue that these reifying tendencies illustrate the state's on-going colonial project of transforming Aboriginal Peoples into "subjects of empire" through the politics of recognition (Coulthard 2007: 439; Simpson 2008).

In Inuit-specific contexts, a number of anthropologists have discussed how the use of "traditional" practices as recognition criteria can be divisive and can marginalize those

who do not fit within the definitions (Searles 2006; Graburn 2006; Briggs 1997; Dombrowski 2001; Nuttall 1992; Fienup-Riordan 1990; Brody 1987). As Ned Searles argues, the image of a pre-contact Inuit society can be (and has proven to be) a powerful source of authority, but "What happens when the collective 'we' becomes linked to a specific set of traits or emblems?" (Searles 2006: 89). How does this affect those who grew up in places where they could not engage in "traditional" activities, for example? Jean Briggs describes how ethnic imagery can be created and manipulated in order to construct boundaries and to act as weapons, but also how these images can act as straitjackets by limiting options. She describes three examples of Inuit men who use identity traits to define themselves based on interactions with non-Inuit. However, they encounter constraints if their self-definitions adhere too closely to these "frozen" and inadequate categories (Briggs 1997). Briggs critiques this use of cultural traits and the Western tendency to think in terms of "neatly bounded ideal types" (Briggs 1998: 9). In contrast, she argues, many Inuit use categories in a much more flexible way: "They are much more comfortable with metamorphosis, and they are less addicted to boundaries" (Briggs 1998: 10). She describes in *Inuit Morality Play* how "just playing" with contradictory and complex questions through drama in Inuit education works to cause thought and to foster the ability to deal with ambiguity and impermanence (ibid.). "It is, then, impossible for a child to acquire a 'total' and fixed set of understandings. There is no total culture" (ibid.: 209). This capacity to deal with contradiction and complexity avoids generalization by seeing the changing potential in people, materials, and situations (Briggs 1998, 1991, 1987; Stern 1999; Fienup-Riordan 1990).



Despite the inadequacies and limitations of an essentialized and bounded conception of cultural difference, however, Aboriginal leaders have found that asserting and performing "indigeneity" can have powerful political impacts (Blaser et al. 2004). Inuit across Canada have celebrated the idea of "tradition" as a marker of Inuit identity and successfully used it as a justification for Inuit political rights (Wachowich 2006; Fienup-Riordan 1990). The assumptions behind emphasizing boundaries between cultures may be questionable, but because the recognition of their cultural difference allows Aboriginal organizations to gain political status, many engage in "managing the discourse" by asserting this difference (Babidge et al 2007). While some indigenous scholars argue that participating in the discussion entails accepting the principles and goals of the dominant society (Coulthard 2008; Simpson 2008; Alfred 2001), some would argue that the 'double-bind' of the situation leaves Aboriginal groups few options other than to use the opportunity to further their goals (Slowey 2008).

In the case of the Labrador Inuit, participation in the official recognition discourse by emphasizing certain cultural constructs has not necessarily meant that the LIA adheres to the confines laid out by state frameworks. Since the beginning of the Aboriginal rights movement in the 1970s, LIA spokespeople have emphasized their cultural distinctiveness from Kablunat society. They did not use a frozen culture framework, however; their portrayal of Inuit cultural distinctiveness involved an active and on-going culture that is based in historical traditions, but that continues to change with the circumstances, as their 1977 Statement of Claim illustrates: "Our claim, therefore, is not based in some dead culture or way of life which we want restored. It is based in a living tradition of land use

and occupancy patterns" (LIA 1977a: 9). Yet it was this dynamic distinctiveness that the LIA identified as being both the cause and the foundation of their struggle for the recognition of Aboriginal rights: "The economic, social, cultural, and political disadvantages we suffer are not mere coincidence. They are, at least in part, the inevitable consequences of the refusal to recognize us as a distinct people within the Canadian nation" (LIA 1981:12). In the early years, the LIA asserted this distinctiveness as economic, geographic, and cultural, as various statements quoted in this chapter show. LIA leaders drew distinct boundaries around the category of Inuit in their comments about the "White way of life" as opposed to "our" way of life, and in arguments like "We do not work for money like the white men" (Edmunds in "A culture menaced" *Globe and Mail* 22 September 1979: p8; Edmunds in LINS 1980: 5-6). In later years, the LIA employed more subtle differentiation by arguing that its goal was Inuit self-sufficiency, an idea that engaged the concepts of geographic, social, and economic containment, but that turned their basis in colonial control into Aboriginal self-determination.

As this chapter illustrates, the LIA modified and adapted its arguments for the recognition of Inuit rights, and both engaged and challenged the boundaries of the frameworks that the government, judiciary, and general public developed. Yet the approach used by the LIA was not always consistent with what other Labrador Inuit were saying or experiencing, as the Brinex example shows. LIA leaders and community residents used slightly different arguments concerning the recognition of their "way of life," and many people in Postville felt that harvesting should not be used as a justification at all for stopping the development in the name of Inuit rights. The official

LIA line of argument was developing and changing, and was not always automatically accepted or acceptable to its constituents. Government policies and inaction, as well as global markets and movements, were impacting Inuit lives in Labrador, and these changes caused the various approaches to the struggle for Aboriginal rights to resonate differently with different people. Regardless of the arguments and the frameworks used, however, it would take another major mining opportunity to move the process of formally acknowledging Aboriginal rights farther along.

## **Chapter Eight:**

### **The Voisey's Bay nickel project and Inuit claims, 1995 – 1999**

When prospectors Al Chislett and Chris Verbinski announced in 1994 that they had found a huge deposit of nickel near Voisey's Bay, just south of Nain, the exploration rush that followed was on a scale never seen before on the coast of Labrador. Diamond Field Resources and then Voisey's Bay Nickel Company (VBNC), a joint company of Diamond Fields and Inco Ltd., established two camps of a few hundred workers between Voisey's Bay and Anaktalak Bay, and helicopters and airplanes buzzed in and out of Nain's airport. In 1995, more than 250,000 mining claims were staked by prospectors in northern Labrador through a simple process at a government office in St. John's (Pope and Markham 1997).

In contrast to the ease with which prospectors could stake their claims, the Labrador Inuit Association had been struggling for years to make some progress in its land claims negotiations (EHS 1997). Between 1980 and the early 1990s, the provincial government, challenged by its own economic status at the time and steadfast in its limited approach to Aboriginal rights, and the federal government stalled the tripartite negotiations through disagreements about jurisdictional responsibilities and cost sharing, and showed little interest in negotiating shared development revenues or management roles (Haysom 1992). As LIA lawyer Veryan Haysom comments, the whole process of negotiation "tends to confirm the suspicion that aboriginal rights and interests are, and remain, a third-order priority suborned to both the competing interests of the two levels

of government and to the demands for power, land, and resources of the dominant society which they represent" (Haysom 1990). When Inco Ltd. paid \$4.3 billion in 1996 for the rights to land that both the Labrador Inuit and the Innu claimed never to have ceded, the political reaction of these Aboriginal groups was immediate.

This chapter will examine how arguments about Inuit cultural difference played a major role in the Voisey's Bay development between 1995 and 1999. In the shadow of the massive mine project, the Labrador Inuit, the provincial government, the general public, and industry engaged in discussions, struggles, and negotiations about the relationship between cultural difference and access to resources with an intensity never before experienced in Labrador. From their role in early protests to later fast-tracked land claims negotiations, Inuit assumed a prominent position in development activity in Labrador in the late 1990s, and succeeded in finalizing their claim.

### **8.1 The increasing influence of the Aboriginal rights discourse**

When it became apparent in the mid-1990s that the Voisey's Bay nickel deposit was one of the largest in the world, both the LIA and the Innu Nation publicly demanded that the provincial and federal governments work with them to achieve better results in the land claims process, and both threatened and took legal action when this did not happen. Both groups also organized on-site protests and intense public lobbying to raise the profile of their concerns, and attracted much public and media interest.

The result of this pressure was visible. The transformation in attitude, degree of understanding, and subtlety of communication about Aboriginal issues by mining

industry personnel between 1995 and 1999 illustrates the power of the Aboriginal rights movement to influence development discourse. In February 1995, Jean-Raymond Boulle, an employee of Diamond Fields, is reported to have addressed Innu and Inuit protesters with a speech that was intended to convey his empathy and understanding of Aboriginal issues: "I am a personal friend of the president of Namibia, which went through a struggle for independence....Richard Garnett [vice president of Diamond Fields] has lived and worked with aborigines in Alaska and I myself was born in Mauritius, a small island off the coast of Madagascar in Africa. I have worked and lived in many parts of Africa under difficult conditions. Richard has eaten a great deal of raw fish. We believe that we are willing to work something out with you" (Larry Innes notes in McNish 1998: 164). The conflation of Inuit and Innu interests with those of Namibia, Alaska, various parts of Africa, struggles for independence, and raw fish is a wild and almost comical attempt at identifying presumed areas of common ground. From the beginning of its involvement, Inco publicly stated its intention of "resolving" the Aboriginal issue quickly, and of starting to mine within three years (Burke 2003). In its enthusiasm to start production, the company underestimated the power of the Aboriginal groups to influence the process towards acknowledging their interests, as it was to discover.

Over the next few years, the mining industry refined its discourse about Aboriginal concerns to adhere more closely to public expectations, and moved from comments about eating raw fish to more polished statements. In the new neoliberal context, the mining industry increasingly recognized the importance of ensuring certainty for investors by neutralizing potentially volatile situations (Feit 2010). The political

demands of the Inuit and Innu for their involvement in the development, within the context of the international Aboriginal rights movement, pressured Inco into making decisions based on Aboriginal interests, and to obtain Aboriginal consent for their projects by negotiating development agreements with them in the form of Impact and Benefit Agreements.

The provincial government also refined its approach to Aboriginal land claims, partly as a result of the Voisey's Bay discovery. Although provincial negotiators had removed the Voisey's Bay region from the land claims table once they became aware of the scope of the discovery, they were also more eager to finalize the land claims settlement (B. Warren, pers. comm. 2009). The province's economy was in desperate need of a boost, and the Tobin government wanted to finalize land claims in order to smooth the way for development. In 1996, the federal and provincial governments agreed to fast-track the Labrador Inuit land claim (Alcantara 2007).

## **8.2 Inuit of Labrador**

By the mid-1990s, the Labrador Inuit Association was, on the surface at least, a more cohesive entity than it had been in the 1970s. Internal disputes between various factions were not publicly discussed as they had been by researchers in the 1970s, and although hints of power struggles that used the Inuit/Kablunângajuit distinctions could still be seen (cf. Andersen 1998), the organization presented itself as the staunch defender of Labrador Inuit rights and of the ramifications of Inuit cultural difference. On the mining front it was especially resolute, issuing a number of statements about Inuit rights

and the impact of mining exploration in the region. One pamphlet published in 1996, entitled *Mineral Development in Northern Labrador*, articulates the organization's position:

"Prior to contact with Europeans we were self-governing and lived in small semi-nomadic groups. We depended upon hunting and fishing for our survival. Our society was governed by our customs and traditions. Customary law established the means by which we conducted our daily lives especially our hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering practices. Our world then had a rich spiritual life centred around human-like and animal spirits and a variety of taboos. This relationship with the spirits and the animal world formed the nucleus of a rich mythology that survives in our culture today. It continues to define who we are and to explain the relationship we have with our natural environment and our respect for wildlife.

...  
Some themes of our history are being repeated today in the midst of a mineral claim staking rush that has, in two years, brought more foreigners to the Labrador Inuit homeland than during the first two hundred years of the Moravian Mission in Labrador. As modern day Inuit, we continue to strive according to values that spring from our traditions and history. Many of us continue to live close to the land and it is this relationship, expressed in Inuktitut, that is fundamental to being Inuit. Today, as in the past, we live in a world where resource industries, governments and other interest groups work to have their beliefs become our rules, their values our way of life and our resources their wealth. But unlike the past, we may not be able to adopt what we find good and reject what is a threat because now it is our land that is being devoured.

...  
We are Inuit of Labrador. We are sustained by the birds, animals and fish of the land and sea, and by a set of values and beliefs that have defined our relationship to the land, sea and their resources. The land, sea, ice and all of the wildlife are cornerstones of our culture and a reason we remain in our homeland" (original emphasis, LIA 1996).



to continue and enjoyment of their way of life and of the preservation of a clean and healthy environment" (Whiffen 1997; Lowe 1998). The ruling relies on the discourse of environmentalism as justification, and avoids the question of Aboriginal rights by classifying the Inuit as "permanent residents" and by focusing on the continuation of their "way of life."

The argument for environmental protection thus proved to be more persuasive than the argument for Aboriginal rights, although the LIA framed the two as related. Environmental stewardship, as described in the ruling, sidesteps the issue of Aboriginal land ownership by framing stewardship as a behaviour that is not necessarily rooted in long-term land ownership. In fact, as CBC reporter Marie Wadden comments, the ruling praises Aboriginal Peoples for acting, not only in their interest, but in the public's interest: "The judgment is legal but it's also philosophical in tone. For example, we are told that the Inuit and the Innu are representing the interests of their fellow citizens in this Province. The environment is a legacy to be preserved for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians wherever their abode" (CBC 1997). The Inuit and Innu therefore are leaders among the general public, and any special ownership rights that they may have are not mentioned. The LIA encouraged this framing of Inuit as environmental stewards working to protect the public interest. As the LIA mining advisor Ches Andersen reiterated, "There has to be a balance between the major development and the interest of the aboriginal people in protecting the environment, not just for the aboriginal people, but for all people" (NTV 1997). In this instance, Inuit leaders positioned themselves as

In the face of a menace that is merely the most recent in a long history of colonial intrusions, the LIA argues, Inuit have actively retained their culture. The implicit "past" nature of Aboriginality in official recognition criteria is thus countered with the concept of adaptation, which allows and, to an extent, encourages change, and emphasizes the contemporary nature of Inuit culture. This complex understanding of Inuit culture was, however, often abridged by the media and simplified in political disputes into arguments that focused solely on cultural issues but were not politically challenging to the state.

### **8.3 Alignment: Inuit land stewardship and environmentalism**

In some of its statements of the 1990s, the LIA framed the concept of Inuit land stewardship in a way that easily aligned with the environmental movement, which was gaining strength at the time. The power of this alignment was illustrated in 1997, when the LIA took the province to court for allowing Inco's construction of an access road and a gravel airstrip to bypass the Environmental Assessment process. William Barbour, the President of the LIA, argued, "Labrador Inuit have been caretakers of this land for a long time and we are not relinquishing that responsibility just for the sake of a short, 20-year mining operation proposed by Inco" (Bennett 1997b). The court case was at first rejected, but was later supported by a Supreme Court of Appeal judge who quoted Rachel Carson in his ruling: "Protection of the environment is one of the major challenges of our time," argued Justice William Marshall. Citing the recent failure of the cod fishery, the judge described the case as a "classic problem of the pursuit of modern industrial development and the preservation of the permanent residents' understandable expectation of being able

representing the "public interest," a concept so often used historically as justification for the dispossession of Inuit through the development of their resources.

Although LIA's arguments on environmental grounds succeeded in some battles, these arguments often failed to encompass the scope of Inuit interests. For most Inuit, the main issues of concern about a potential mine at Voisey's Bay did not encompass merely environmental issues or economic concerns, but were ones of control. Inuit wanted to ensure that Inuit ownership of lands and resources was recognized, and that they had the chance to control both negative and positive impacts of the mining activity on the environment and on people (Williamson 1996, 1997). Many Inuit made it clear that this did not mean that they were against the mine altogether: "We're said to be anti-development, but we're not. We just want it to be done properly and we want to have a say in it" (Barbour in St. Pierre 1995: 7). The land and resources were to be protected, but not necessarily in the preservationist understanding of much of the environmentalism of the time. With a very young population, many Inuit wanted to ensure that they would benefit through employment and economic returns from a mine in their territory. The LIA research done on potential impacts of the project also emphasized the fundamental importance of land, sea, and ice for Inuit harvesting, culture, and well-being, and stressed the need for Inuit to be able to control the environmental and social impacts of a mine (Williamson 1996, 1997).

When the LIA raised these other concerns, they were often met with criticism that they were hypocritical, cunning, and greedy. During 1997, the Aboriginal groups and the "environmentalists" were often blamed for delaying the project by making

"unreasonable" demands during IBA negotiations with Inco. As the Minister of Mines and Energy of the time argued, "5000 people cannot ever be allowed to hold up the prosperity of 570,000 people" (Chuck Furey in Flanagan 1997c: 23). In an article entitled, "Many fingers in Inco: the Inuit, the Innu, Ottawa and Newfoundland all demanding their slice," Premier Brian Tobin reacted to the Aboriginal protest at the site by saying, "Nobody can hold hostage the development of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and no one group can hold up the progress of an entire province and an entire people... This province cannot wait another generation for a measure of prosperity. We need it now. We need those jobs and opportunities now" (Gray 1997: A8). With significant economic resources at stake, the provincial government was not willing to entertain a challenge by the Inuit to the structure of the state and to its definition of the "public interest."

The Inuit were in a difficult position. The discourse of environmentalism had some currency, but it was inadequate in conveying all aspects of their position. The alignment of environmentalism and indigeneity caused Inuit to be painted as inauthentic if they expressed what was seen as non-environmental perspectives, and again as inauthentic opportunists if they expressed more complex views (Povinelli 2002; Stern 2007; Tsing 2007). Public discourse in the late 1990s presented the dichotomy of environment vs. jobs as distinct, and Inuit interest in both issues was often seen as contradictory or purely tactical. As one journalist wrote, the "Voisey's Bay protest [is] all about economics.... The Labrador Inuit Association appears to have changed its tune in the battle over the Voisey's Bay nickel deposit. It has reinvented itself with one

straightforward message – show us the money” (Flanagan 1997b). From an avowed interest in environmental issues, this journalist argues, the LIA has “changed its tune” in demanding economic benefits. “It is time the Innu give up the environmental charade at Voisey’s and join the Inuit in demanding fair economic compensation for the use of land they have lived off for centuries” (Flanagan 1997b). The possibility that Inuit (and Innu) might have genuine interests in both the environment and in jobs was simplified to a strategic use of environmental concerns in order to leverage economic compensation. Regardless of Flanagan’s opinion about Inuit tactics, however, the provincial government and the justice system had proven themselves reluctant to recognize Aboriginal land rights, but had been somewhat responsive to calls for environmental protection in the name of the “public interest,” as Justice Marshall’s ruling demonstrated. This position of the government was slow to change, as pressure for the development to proceed increased, and as the LIA struggled to find an attentive audience for its concerns.

#### **8.4 Inuit citizens**

The LIA countered the perception in the media that Inuit were working against the interests of the province by emphasizing their rational approach. Some commentators contrasted the approaches taken by the Labrador Inuit with those of the Innu (“With extinction a real threat for the Labrador Innu, they are mostly concerned with protecting their land and themselves. The Inuit are more development-oriented and are concerned with getting a share in their land. Like most people in the province, they want jobs” [Tompkins 1996: 1]). The LIA used this contrast between the Innu and the Inuit to

demonstrate that their struggle for Aboriginal rights was reasonable and level-headed. They would only use confrontational means as a last resort: Inuit claimed that mineral explorations were "out of control," and that "legal action could be in the works," although as the LIA commented later, "Inuit say public protest not their way of doing things" ("Mineral explorations" 1995: 3; "Inuit say" 1997). LIA President William Barbour tried to soothe public anxiety about the potential impact of special status for Inuit: "Labrador Inuit respect the rights of other residents in this province and we will continue to hold a special regard for the privileges of other Canadians, just as they respect our rights and cultural values" ("Inuit say" 1997). When the LIA threatened legal action, an LIA spokesperson commented, "Inuit are co-operative people but we are being forced once again to take steps that are against our way of doing things" (Bennett 1997a). When the LIA decided to protest, "Barbour expressed some sadness that the LIA finds itself in a position where protesting may be their only alternative. 'This is not the Inuit way. Inuit do not do this, but we are forced to,' he said" (Hebbard 1997).

The LIA insisted that it was, in fact, protecting the public interest: "We're looking for a settlement that's not just good for Labrador Inuit. We want to see a settlement that's good for this province as a whole," said chief LIA negotiator Toby Andersen (Bennett 1997b). The Inuit positioned themselves as rational and able to compromise, as their "good faith and fairness" in land claims negotiations have "been the hallmark of the Labrador Inuit over the years" ("LIA vote YES" 1999: 3). "Labrador Inuit believe in settling differences and reaching agreements through communication in the proper place, or in our case at the negotiating table, not at the end of a wharf [protesting]," said

Barbour. "We are Canadian and we will not jeopardize or interfere with the rights and privileges of other Canadians. We must work together" ("Inuit say" 1997).

By presenting themselves as both allies of and members of the Canadian public, Inuit leaders signaled that they were using the political power of Aboriginal status for the public good, and therefore their cultural difference *within the Canadian context* was something from which everyone would benefit. During this period, LIA spokespeople often avoided discussing their situation from a blatantly decolonialist perspective, or in ways that directly challenged the state. Nonetheless, the Inuit (and, to a much greater extent, the Innu) retained the threat of confrontation in protests or in litigation. This threat to Voisey's Bay was constantly lurking on the radar of both the province and the mining industry, and both acted to neutralize it. The provincial government tried at one point to get the LIA to agree to a deal that would have prevented Inuit from taking any action to oppose mining for two years, but the LIA Board of Directors rejected the idea (LIA submission to VB, p26). The Voisey's Bay Nickel Company also felt pressure to obtain Aboriginal consent for the project through negotiated Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs), as the press reported: "Inco should deal quickly, analysts say" (Macafee 1997a: A6); "Voisey's deals a must, analyst says" (Macafee 1997b: p25); "VBNC president Stewart Gendron briefly addressed the aboriginal issues, telling analysts the stability of its relationships with the Innu Nation and Labrador Inuit was critical to the success of the project" (Flanagan 1997a). It had become apparent between 1995 and 1998 that Inuit and Innu concerns must be dealt with before the mine could go ahead.

### **8.5 The Voisey's Bay Nickel Company: Subtly undermining Inuit cultural difference**

The Voisey's Bay Nickel Company treated their relationship with both the Inuit and the Innu with increasing care between 1996 and 1998. The company reacted to Inuit concerns, however, by focusing on certain cultural aspects that did not directly interfere with or challenge the legitimacy of a potential mine. It largely discussed harvesting as the main Inuit interest in and relationship with the land. The company carefully framed harvesting as slightly problematic, arguing that it was uneconomical and un-modern, and therefore in need of a solution. The company states, "The subsistence economy is a central feature of northern Aboriginal communities. At the same time, many people will welcome opportunities in the modern economy" (VBNC 1997, p20-49). The economic benefits of mining to the Inuit could therefore be used to finance Inuit harvesting activities, and the two economies "can readily co-exist, allowing individuals and communities to make their own adaptations" (VBNC 1997, p20-49). In fact, VBNC argues, the relationship between the two economies can be a positive one, as "wages can finance more extensive harvesting" (VBNC 1997, p20-49). This relationship is especially relevant because, as VBNC outlines, harvesting is currently an expensive endeavour. Equipment and gas are costly, and the animal rights movement has destroyed the markets for most animal products.

The Voisey's Bay Nickel Company's EIS chapter on Employment and Business is carefully worded, but the quotes selected for the margins of the chapter convey what the VBNC-authored section avoids stating in outright terms. VBNC offers these examples of Inuit voices (most of which are taken from the LIA Williamson document)



to express arguments with a frankness that the company refrains from using in its own statements:

"Fishing and hunting alone cannot sustain people. If there are no new jobs, we will all be on welfare" (Inuit group in Makkovik, VBNC 1997: 21-1).

"Twenty three of the Grade 8 to 12 students [about half of those attending a meeting of students in Rigolet] expressed a desire to work at Voisey's Bay or at the smelter, wherever it is located" (VBNC 1997: 21-6).

"The people need employment. Our young people are moving away. The fishery is gone and our communities are in a hard spot" (Fishermen's Committee of Postville in VBNC 1997: 21-11).

Despite the expounded importance of the subsistence economy and its complementary relationship with wage labour, VBNC uses these quotes to imply that, in reality, harvesting (whether for subsistence or commercial) is an unrealistic economic option, and both the company and Inuit themselves see the Voisey's Bay mine as the only real solution to the problem. The benefits to Aboriginal groups would help them rise from poverty, and could even help the Inuit to achieve their goals of self-determination, as one research paper quoted in the EIS states: "Resource projects can contribute to political self-determination to the extent that achieving this goal is facilitated by achieving economic self-reliance" (DesBrisay 1994: 112-113 in VBNC 1997 p?).

This framing of the situation, of course, ignores the claim that Inuit have management and ownership rights to the land at Voisey's Bay and elsewhere, and focuses on cultural issues and economic behaviour instead of on political challenges to the

development. Other perspectives on the need for Voisey's Bay are not included in the VBNC's selective offering, such as that of the Webb family of Nain:

"We don't think that having a nickel mine is the answer to the economic problems in northern Labrador. The economy of the north coast is improving, slowly but surely, in ways that are compatible with our lifestyle, knowledge and environment. Industries like the fishery, Ten Mile Bay operations and tourism, don't disrupt our communities and provide real benefits to them, and don't threaten the environment, which is better than what VBNC has done on the coast so far....We can survive and we can build an economy of our own that will last into the future without a nickel mine" (EA hearings 1998).

Political challenges are likewise not included in the company's framing of the situation:

"Labrador didn't exist, not until Voisey's Bay discovered a big gold mine, hey?"

commented a woman from Postville. "One time we didn't even exist but all of a sudden, we're here somewhere in the picture" (CEAA 1998 [18]: 49). An Inuk from Nain echoed this resentment: "And when you come up here into our area and you find something that might be of value...we are just pushed aside because 'they're just Inuit'" (CEAA 1998 [8]: 50). Discussion about the Voisey's Bay project drew attention to the cultural core of political and economic inequalities, although industry and government alike tried to reframe the situation by focusing on cultural aspects instead of on political and economic implications. In the end, however, they could not ignore the reality that they needed to make substantive changes to the political and economic situation in Labrador in order for the development to proceed.

## 8.6 Conclusion: An Inuit land claims settlement

Throughout the debate about the potential Voisey's Bay mine, Inuit interests were repeatedly simplified into "cultural" characteristics that avoided the political issues of control that Inuit were demanding. Dominant interests sidelined Inuit claims to territorial sovereignty by focusing on cultural activities or behaviours (such as harvesting, environmental stewardship, and a predisposition for co-operation) as a way of addressing Aboriginal issues in an un-substantive way. Despite these efforts to marginalize Inuit claims, the LIA successfully used the Voisey's Bay development to force the provincial government to finalize both an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) and the negotiations on their Land Claims Agreement. As LIA lawyer Veryan Haysom commented in 1992, when negotiations were not proceeding very quickly,

"Real commitment to provide an adequate benefit package is more likely to exist if major development pressures exist....The prospects of some significant economic development in northern Labrador in the near future are remote. But if they were to exist, there can be little doubt that the province would be more willing to offer a greater range of benefits to settle land claims and would be under greater pressure to do so. In short, [the provincial government's] egalitarian principles [i.e., to not recognize "special" rights to indigenous groups] would be more easily compromised if doing so would advance the province's desperate economic interests" (Haysom 1992: 186).

The Voisey's Bay development provided this pressure. As the recommendations of the Environmental Assessment review panel stated, "it is necessary to sign land claims before any development goes ahead" (EAP pp174-175 - check). After intense negotiations under the "fast-track" mandate, the LIA initialed an agreement-in-principle

with the provincial and federal governments in 1999, ratified it in 2001, finalized an IIBA in 2002, and completed a final land claims agreement by 2004 (Alcantara 2007).

## **Chapter Nine:**

### **The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement and formalized boundaries**

The final Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement was achieved through a convergence of state and LIA goals and interests, fueled by the prospect of the Voisey's Bay mining project. The provincial and federal governments wanted the mine to proceed, as the previous chapter outlined, and the Labrador Inuit Association adapted and mobilized concepts and discourses concerning citizenship, indigeneity, and governance in order to focus the new interest in the region on the need for addressing the political and economic ramifications of Inuit cultural difference through serious land claims negotiations. This chapter explores how the LIA continued to develop a vision of Inuit cultural difference and governance that resonated with cultural constructs that were created historically, and how the Agreement formalized and codified some of these cultural, territorial, and economic boundaries. I examine four aspects of the idea of Inuit cultural difference in particular, and how some people in Labrador are affected by or are engaging with these cultural constructs. These four aspects involve Nunatsiavut as a cultural community; as a territorial community; as based on appropriate Inuit economic activity; and as self-managing, and responsible for itself. First, however, I give a brief outline of the final agreement itself.

## **9.1 The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement**

The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, which took effect on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005, ushered in a new regime of land ownership, self-governance, and resource sharing for northern Labrador. It created the Nunatsiavut Government and the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve, and outlined the recognized Aboriginal rights and responsibilities of the Inuit of Nunatsiavut. The settlement area consists of 72,520 square km of land and 48,690 square km of tidal waters (see Map 1.1). Of this land, 15,799 square km are Inuit-owned lands (Labrador Inuit Lands), 9,700 square km are the Torngat Mountains National Park, and most of the rest is owned by the province. The communities of Rigolet, Makkovik, Postville, Hopedale, and Nain are also included. In this settlement area, Inuit possess specific harvesting and management rights, ownership over some land, jurisdiction over most areas of land, and a degree of control over governance issues. The agreement also has some provisions for beneficiaries who live outside the settlement area.

Inuit have ownership and management rights to Labrador Inuit Lands, although the subsurface rights remain with the province. On Labrador Inuit Lands, Inuit have the exclusive right to carving stone, ownership of quarry materials in specified areas, and a 25% ownership interest in subsurface resources. In the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area outside of Labrador Inuit Lands, Inuit will receive 50% of the first \$2-million and 5% of any additional provincial revenue from subsurface resources. Revenues from subsurface resources in this area will be capped at an amount that, if distributed equally among all Inuit, would result in a per capita income that equals the Canadian average per capita

income. All major developments must include a negotiated Impact and Benefits Agreement, giving Inuit priority in employment, job training, and other economic benefits. The agreement also states that the Inuit and the provincial government will work together to develop a land use plan for the entire Settlement Area (see Chapter 11).

Under the agreement, Labrador Inuit have the right to harvest wildlife, plants, fish, and marine mammals for food, social, and ceremonial purposes throughout the Settlement Area, and many of the wildlife, plants, marine, and national park management issues will be dealt with by new co-management boards consisting of Nunatsiavut, provincial, and federal representatives. The Inuit Constitution establishes the Nunatsiavut Government and the Inuit Community Governments (which replace municipal governments in the communities within Nunatsiavut), as well as Inuit Community Corporations for Inuit who live outside the Settlement Area in Upper Lake Melville. The Nunatsiavut Government, through the Nunatsiavut Assembly, may make Inuit laws concerning education, health, cultural affairs, child and family services, and income support. The Government of Canada agreed to transfer \$140 million over 15 years, plus \$156 million for the implementation of the Agreement to the Nunatsiavut Government, but the Inuit are required to commit own-source revenue towards Nunatsiavut's expenses (INAC 2005).

## **9.2 Imagining Nunatsiavut**

Until the land claims negotiators had reached a final agreement in 2003, all negotiations had been done behind closed doors. With an agreement ready for a

ratification vote by Inuit in 2004, the LIA and, to some extent, the provincial government, embarked on a new campaign to persuade the public and the Inuit beneficiaries of the agreement's merits. This campaign highlights a number of themes concerning the ideas of community and citizenship, and illustrates the appeal of the idea of governing through community – a concept that relies heavily on the ideas of Inuit containment, self-sufficiency, and self-management.

The LIA hired a communications firm to do its publications, and an official image of Nunatsiavut and Inuit self-governance began to emerge. The LIA newsletter, *Nunatsiavut*, articulated the organization's new approach:

"At LIA, we are working to communicate through our newsletter, presentation kit and other materials an accurate picture of contemporary Inuit life. We are a people of deep traditions, but we have also embraced innovation and development. We believe in inclusiveness, cooperation, community and progress. The knowledge of our elders and the dreams of our children come together in our vision of a brighter future. Linking that past and the future is the land itself – Nunatsiavut, "our beautiful land" – and its abundant resources. We are deeply committed to this land which has nurtured us for millennia. Watch for images of our land and our people in all LIA communications. Through them, we communicate our identity and our aspirations" (LIA 2003).

Newly-elected LIA President William Andersen III further voiced the organization's position on the creation of the Nunatsiavut Government:

"Through it, we will be able to create the political, social, economic and cultural mechanisms for change and progress. We are, in fact, in the process of creating the future. This is both a great opportunity and a great responsibility, for all of us. I believe that the Inuit principles of consensus-building, negotiation and equality will take us into that future, providing the basis for a democracy in which all can participate and from which all



can benefit....As we move ahead, we face many challenges. Economic development of this resource-rich land is both inevitable and desirable; however, Labrador Inuit must uphold our tradition of environmental stewardship. We must pursue development that is sustainable and responsible, the basis of the wealth of future generations" (Andersen 2003).

The LIA continued with the theme of empowerment, community, and inclusiveness in their posters and notices used to promote a "yes" vote for the ratification of the final agreement on May 26, 2004: "Our future begins with us," "We're creating our future," "Together, We're Stronger," and "This is our time to support each other" (LIA 2004: 3, 7).

The new campaign to "brand" Nunatsiavut repeats a number of themes centred on the idea of an Inuit community based on equality, cooperation, inclusiveness, strong family and social structures, responsibility, governing itself through the democratic values of consensus-building and negotiation. This community is formed through Inuit tradition and cultural identity, and it is strongly connected through a relationship of stewardship with its territory. The new Nunatsiavut Government will embrace innovation and progress, and will pursue sustainable and responsible development. The new relationship between Inuit and the provincial and federal governments will entail new opportunities to govern, and also new responsibilities, as Inuit take on a more active role.

This chapter will examine four interrelated aspects of this idea of Nunatsiavut as an Inuit self-governing community in order to better understand how the concept has gained such political traction, and how various people and interests interact with it. The four aspects of the idea, again, are: 1) Nunatsiavut as a cultural community; 2)

Nunatsiavut as a territorial community; 3) Nunatsiavut as based on appropriate Inuit economic activity; and 4) Nunatsiavut as self-managing, and responsible for itself.

### **1) Nunatsiavut as a cultural community**

The official signing of the final agreement on January 22, 2005 in Nain showcased the hopes associated with creation of Nunatsiavut, and displayed the visual symbols of the new Inuit self-government. Against a backdrop of Canadian, provincial, and Nunatsiavut flags, and large poster images of Labrador landscape and wildlife, the ceremony began with drum dancers in seal skin boots, throat singers, and a group of youth from Nain drumming, dancing, and singing – all practices that the Moravian missionaries had worked hard to eradicate. An elder said a prayer in Inuttitut, and the Moravian choir sang, dressed in traditional silapait, the cloth parkas of the region, the women wearing the Moravian white head covering. Members of the audience waved the new Nunatsiavut flag – a blue and green inuksuk on a white background – and joined with the choir to sing *Labradormiut* (“People of Labrador”), the new anthem of Nunatsiavut.

The connection between the continued existence of Labrador Inuit culture and Labrador Inuit themselves within Nunatsiavut was a unifying source of hope expressed by many Inuit at the occasion. Jim Igloliorte, a provincial judge originally from Hopedale, opened the ceremony by asking people to think about their beloved grandparents or grandchildren, “because it is in their honour that we are holding this ceremony....Our children, our grandchildren, and all of their children will always be

here, they will always be singing in Inuttitut, and they will always be celebrating their culture. This is why we are holding this ceremony" (Igloliorte in OKalaKatiget Society 2005). Wally Andersen, an Inuk and the MHA for the region, caused the audience to rise to their feet with applause when he declared, "This is our land, our culture, and this is our home. God bless you, Inuit" (Wally Andersen in OKalaKatiget Society 2005).

Many Inuit shared in the hope and the pride fostered by the LIA's campaign and the progress of the land claim. I lived in Nain for a month in the early spring of 2004, and I was deeply moved by the enthusiasm about the potential of Nunatsiavut among some of the high school students with whom I worked. For many of these students, imagining the possibilities of self-government was very exciting, after having experienced personal tragedy, the lingering effects of relocation, and roadblocks and racism in their hopes for their future. They proudly wore the new symbols and flags of Nunatsiavut, and talked of their feelings of cultural nationalism – the first time they had ever really felt such enthusiasm, they told me. But not everyone shared in the enthusiasm. The LIA's slogan during the ratification campaign, "Together We're Stronger," alludes to the divisions within the diverse group of Inuit beneficiaries – divisions that were born out of historical processes of differentiation and more recent politics of recognition.

Some of the social divisiveness stems from the fact that the land claims negotiation process has always required that Inuit manage membership considerations. Ever since the Labrador Inuit Association was formed, it has modified the criteria and the terminology used for Inuit membership. The turbulent ethnic dynamics surrounding the founding of the LIA in the early 1970s, as discussed in chapter five, resulted in the

inclusion of mixed-ancestry Inuit, or "Native Settlers" in the claim. The Moravian history influenced the social and economic differentiation between Inuit and "Native Settlers" (or simply "Settlers") through the 1970s, and the anthropological literature both analyzed the differentiation and employed the categories itself (cf., Brantenberg 1977; Kennedy 1977, 1982; Ben Dor 1966). The LIA's land use and occupancy study, *Our Footprints are Everywhere*, dedicates a chapter by anthropologist Hugh Brody to the relationship between the two groups (Brody 1977). The term "Native Settlers" proved to be problematic because of the focus on the immigrant connotations of the term "Settler," especially when the word "Native" was dropped, as was often the case. To rectify the trouble with the name, the LIA formally adopted the Inuititut term, "Kablunângajuit" in 1987 (Kennedy 1997). In the 1970s, the LIA's membership criteria stated that a "full member" must be "an Inuk or Native Settler" (LIA 1980: 9). Later, as "membership" afforded more health and education benefits, and, as a result, the number of applicants increased, the LIA developed stricter criteria that required that members be Inuit or that they be Kablunângajuit who have some tie to the settlement area (Haysom 1992).

At various times, the LIA's criteria involved various cultural differentiations, membership categories, and blood quantum requirements, as well as mobility restrictions, as discussed in the next section. The LIA maintained the basic Inuit / Kablunângajuit cultural distinction throughout the negotiations, although it was pressured (successfully) by the federal negotiators to also adopt the racial criterion of a quarter Inuit ancestry in order to align with the eligibility requirements of other land claim settlements (Dunn 2003). The changes made to the LIA's requirements illustrate changing political and

embroiled in it myself, I have chosen to use the term “Inuit” for all Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, as well as for those of Inuit ancestry who have not been recognized in the land claim settlement because of their place of residence. This solution is not ideal, however, as my inclusive use of the term “Inuit” can work to erase and deny the cultural (and economic) differences that continue to exist within the group. It is the solution that I am most comfortable with, however, as my focus here was not to explore these internal differentiations with the depth needed to fully analyze them; instead, my aim in this thesis is simply to describe the existence and some of the implications of this internal differentiation, and to relate these impacts back to the broader processes involved in the production of cultural difference that have spawned them.

The practice of cultural differentiation among this broadly-defined group of Inuit is deep-seated and, although it is often not discussed openly, it invokes very emotional responses when the topic arises. Many people have felt the divisive effects of both outright racism and government-recognized identity. “I grew up in Goose Bay, and was called a ‘dirty skeemo,’” one man told me, “but once benefits came into the picture, lots of people joined in and became Inuit/LIA members – including those who once called me that. So there are different levels of being Inuit. Some are more than others” (fn July 2008). Others feel this differentiation from another perspective: “I don’t believe in the word class, but there was [Class] A or B. Now it’s all the same, and they use appropriate words. But if you’re not a full-fledged Inuk, you’re a Kablunângajuit, so there are still 2 classes. It’s caused a lot of grief among families” (fn June 2008). Many people dispute the terms themselves: “I disagree with the use of the term settler,” a man of Inuit descent

economic pressures and assumptions. In 1980, LIA approved a by-law that stated that entitlement to membership would be lost “in the case of a Native Settler who makes his residence outside of Labrador for a period of 21 consecutive years” (LIA 1980: 9). Later, this was changed to state that a “full member” (i.e., either Inuk or Kablunāngajuk) who lived outside Labrador for ten continuous years would lose his or her membership benefits and entitlement to rights (LIA 1993a: 8). The LIA also classified members as “Class A and Class B members” and then “Type A and Type B members,” based on their relationship to the settlement region (LIA 1987, 1989). In many ways, these criteria increasingly aligned with the Moravian Mission’s containment policy within a geographical area and with government recognition of Inuit status based on community of residence. However, in 1999, the *Corbiere* decision ruled that Aboriginal people who live off reserve were entitled to the same voting rights as those who lived on the reserve, and the LIA stopped making distinctions in levels of rights between residents and non-residents of the land claim area. It maintained the distinction between Inuit and Kablunāngajuit, although only in the membership section of the final agreement, and not in any other section (fn April 2008).

The terms used since the 1970s – Inuk, Native Settler, Settler, Kablunāngajuk, Class A, Class B, Type A, Type B, member, beneficiary – have become controversial as the politics of recognition and material impacts have changed. Throughout this dissertation, I have tried to maintain the term “Inuit” for all of these categories, although I realize that this is not the common usage, and that many social and cultural differentiations still exist. Instead of contributing to the divisive practice by becoming

from North West River told me. "I believe settlers are non-aboriginal people. I can think of dozens of terms that once were (even recently) used inappropriately to designate cultural groups, and I think this is one. Simply put, calling mixed descent people 'settler' erodes aboriginal title. While the term 'white' is dropped, it is implied" (fn June 2009).

Mary Adams, a respected Inuk elder, offered this message in 2006 about the need to work together: "We should be very grateful that we are members even if we are Kablunângajuit, let's be thankful, let us not be in conflict with anyone that is not the way of the Inuit. I am now an elderly woman, you can see by my hair, we were taught never to go against anyone, if we go against each other it will be a long, long time before things are solved" (Adams in NG 2006: 68). Working in co-operation – "even if we are Kablunângajuit" – is for the greater good, although not, perhaps, for greater equality.

The connection between language and Inuit identity has also played a large role in Inuit cultural politics. In its Constitution, the Nunatsiavut Government (and previously, the Labrador Inuit Association) required that its President be able to speak Inuttitut, although this bylaw was modified by the LIA Board of Directors in the early 2000s from the President shall be "fluent in Inuktitut" (LIA 1980c, Article VI: 10) to the less stringent requirement that the President "be able to understand and to speak Inuttut" (LIA 2002c: 3.3.7.c). The use of Inuttitut had been widespread in the region, but the mandatory provincial education system established after Confederation replaced Inuttitut with English as the language of instruction, and children lost the chance to learn the language. In the early 2000s, the number of proficient Inuttitut speakers had dropped to approximately 13% (fn March 2008). Candidates for Nunatsiavut (and LIA) President

had often been placed under scrutiny about their ability to speak Inuttitut, and in 2008, the issue came to a head when one candidate called for another candidate to withdraw from the race, based on his lack of fluency in the language. Inuit debated the importance of the language for the Presidency with fierce opinions on both sides, and some even called for the requirement to be removed from the Labrador Inuit Constitution. Some argued that the President should be at the forefront of preserving Inuttitut as a matter of cultural survival. Others argued that the requirement was impractical, as it limited the pool of candidates who could be drawn on to fill the role of President (fn May 2008). Many felt that it was important that the Nunatsiavut President could speak Inuttitut in meetings with other Inuit leaders and in public contexts in which the visibility of the Labrador Inuit-ness should be displayed: "Just think about the future. If we lost our Inuit Aboriginal cultural, would the federal government still recognize us as Aboriginal? Would we run into problems getting financial and political support for our self-government?" asked a man from Postville (fn May 2008). Some people also felt that the calls for Nunatsiavut to get rid of the language requirement was driven by those who saw this cultural criteria as an obstacle in their pursuit of political power. During a debate about the issue in the Nunatsiavut Assembly, Tony Andersen based his support for the language requirement on the argument that Kablunângajuit should be cognizant of the history of their involvement in Nunatsiavut politics, and should therefore work to support Inuit culture:

I have always believed myself to be a Kablunângajuk of Inuit and European descent. And I stand before this, this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to say that I don't even come close to understanding and speaking Inuktitut....And it's always



been for that reason, Mr. Speaker, that I have had great difficulty in saying that I'm an Inuk....As leaders we have to step forward and we have to recognize the rights of people. We have to stand in defense of the downtrodden. We have to stand as leaders in defense of a people who have been kicked, relocated, been told...they had no rights to govern themselves...Sadly to say that many of our Kablunângajuk people as well did not want to be a part of the Inuit movement in the early days. Did not identify themselves with Inuit but identified themselves as for what we were, Kablunângajuk.... And yet, Mr. Speaker, there was a time as well when the Inuit of Labrador joined the national movement to identify themselves as a people. To fight for recognition started what we know, Mr. Speaker, as the Labrador Inuit Land Claims movement. Kablunângajuk in the early days of that were not members of the LIA. They were members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Native Association. However, Mr. Speaker, the Inuit of Labrador in recognition of those Kablunângajuk, they said, they said, those people they live among us. Most of their ancestry is Inuit ancestry. They've married or women, our sisters. They've married our brothers, our children. They live like us, they try very hard to learn our language.... Inuit did not have any problems welcoming us and agreeing with Canada and Newfoundland. That yes, Kablunângajuk could be called Inuit, no problems. And yet, Mr. Speaker, to this day we sometimes stand and pat ourselves on the back and say that "oh yeah, we are making efforts here to preserve the language, we are making efforts here to promote Inuit culture". I think as leaders, we have to stand and be honest that the efforts that we have put towards language and culture in Nunatsiavut have been minimal (Tony Andersen, NG Hansard, 3 March 2008).

Kablunângajuit politicians have had a significant influence on Labrador Inuit politics, although, given the complexity of Nunatsiavut politics, the divisions do not fall strictly along ethnic lines. Many people in Nunatsiavut saw the attempts to get rid of the Inuittitut proficiency requirement for the Nunatsiavut President in the 2008 elections as reflecting continued internal differentiation between various groups and factions within Nunatsiavut (fn May 2008).

The internal differentiation can be linked both to historical processes and to the more recent politics of recognition. Some people that I talked to feel that the politics of recognition have benefited some and not others: "The real Inuit are left out of their own government. There's too much depression, and they don't benefit from programs or jobs. They're just treated like poker chips in a high stakes game," a woman in Nain told me (in July 2008). An LIA employee and research participant in Lawrence Dunn's 2003 Ph.D. thesis, "Negotiating Cultural Identity: Conflict Transformation in Labrador" also maintained that the LIA was controlled by "non-Inuit" while he was there:

"I think our focus isn't necessarily on the Inuit any more. It's on our membership, and you know as well as I do our membership doesn't necessarily take the interests of the Inuit into primary consideration. So I think for us to get back to helping the Inuit, I think they should kick the rest of us out....Now, our membership is based largely on where you live and where your family lived. I personally think it should be based more on the amount of actual blood percentage...rather than on where they live. Half of our members on the coast probably have very little Inuk blood. Then they're [i.e., the LIA is] run by the non-Inuit. People like me, and Jim, the land claims team, everybody but the president, more or less" ("Bill L." in Dunn 2003: 151).

In similar fashion, many feel that the economic benefits from development projects often (or might) accrue more to some than to others, as Ted Andersen commented in the Voisey's Bay hearings:

"I'm a settler myself and I'm lucky enough to be taken in as a member of the LIA and get benefits from that....Me personally, I think I'm suitable for work at Voisey's Bay. I think I have a certain bit of education. I got a good command of the English language. But I know there are people out there who don't....You just go to Nain. There's an obvious break in Nain between the white people and the Inuit people and I'm afraid that Voisey's Bay Nickel is

coming in and saying, 'yes, we're going to give the youth and the younger people opportunities' but just who do they have in mind when they say that? Is it the people like me who count as a member of the LIA but isn't the person who's really down in the dumps because of the history? I have a concern about that" (CEAA 1998 [17]: 66, 74).

The mix of cultural, territorial, and racial criteria for official and local recognition of Inuit identity that has developed in Labrador continues to create social, political, and economic divisions.

The distinctions between people – Inuit and Kablunângajuit, relocated Inuit and non-relocated Inuit, coastal residents and those who migrated to other communities, have their roots in historical processes, and the process of formally recognizing Aboriginal status has worked to maintain and accentuate the divisions and the tensions that arise around authenticity and social and economic inequalities (Dombrowski 2002). The government-imposed structure of connecting a defined set of "beneficiaries" to specified rights requires that boundaries be drawn, as a former LIA employee told me:

"To the federal and provincial governments, you're either a beneficiary or you're not. To them, it's all about who is eligible to vote. The agreements are all about certainty. If you're speaking on behalf of Inuit but then you don't know who's Inuit or not, and you don't have them all as members under the agreement, then you have potential court cases and no one wants that" (in April 2008).

This woman felt, however, that the history of distinguishing between various groups of Inuit (including those of Inuit descent) continued to play a larger role than it should:

"It [i.e., internal cultural differentiation] was only an LIA issue, and I never understood why Inuit and Kablunângajuit were differentiated. It made it unnecessarily complicated. It's only mentioned in the eligibility and enrollment chapter, not after that. In other land claims, they all have beneficiaries with white blood, but they're all called beneficiaries. It was only an LIA thing. No distinction is

made after the eligibility chapter. It's all about self-identification – lots of people didn't want to say they're Inuit" (fn April 2008).

Historical divisions and internal racism add layers of complexity and distrust to the already tension-filled politics of recognition associated with land claims. The social and economic inequalities among Inuit that continue to be based on constructs of differentiation have proven difficult to overcome. The Aboriginal rights movement has been built on Inuit identity, but the inclusion of many who did not – or, on some cases, do not – self-identify as Inuit has created many tensions. Some Inuit feel that the material benefits of Inuit status have not been evenly distributed. "The Inuit remain suffering and dealing with addictions because of hurt created by leaders not of Inuit culture. That's not fair is it?" one woman asked me (fn May 2008). Another commented, "Everyone's Inuit now. Our identity has been taken" (fn May 2008). For some, "LIA member" or the newer term, "beneficiary" (of the land claim agreement) is the term they feel most comfortable with calling themselves (see also Dunn 2003). In Upper Lake Melville, especially, many people that I talked to rarely use the term "Inuit" to refer to themselves, although there were some exceptions. Both "member" and "beneficiary" describe the legal relationship with the land claim organization or agreement, rather than culture or ethnicity. For some, this focus on the "benefits" is a frustrating exploitation of Inuit identity. For others, the tension resulting from internal differentiation is counterproductive. "A member is a member, right? We all got our status cards to show for it. Problem is, we're just fighting about who is more Inuit than someone else, instead of dealing with the real problems" (fn July 2008).

## **2) Nunatsiavut as a territorial community**

The idea of Nunatsiavut as a cultural community is also intrinsically territorialized. As this dissertation has shown, historical ideas regarding an Inuit traditional territory and Inuit mobility have developed and changed over the last two hundred years, but the land claim agreement codified one version of these ideas by formally connecting Inuit status with a certain geographical area. The boundaries of the settlement area (see Map 1.1) extend from the northern tip of the Ungava Peninsula into the ocean, south to just north of Cartwright, then along the southern shore of Lake Melville to Kenamish and across Lake Melville to Mulligan Point. This area includes the communities of Rigolet, Makkovik, Postville, Hopedale, and Nain, as well as the location of the former communities of Okak, Nutak, Hebron, and many smaller villages and homesteads. It does not include the Upper Lake Melville communities of North West River, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, or Mud Lake, or the south coast communities of Cartwright and south. This settlement area reflects the history of British and Moravian attempts at isolating and containing Inuit to the coast north of Hamilton Inlet, and away from colonial economic interests to the south and the southwest. Continuing in this vein, the final agreement excludes the lucrative Voisey's Bay area, and the military and industrial complex in Upper Lake Melville.

The agreement ties membership directly to the land claim area, as the previous section described. Like the LIA's criteria in the 1980s and 1990s that linked membership status with a lack of mobility, the final agreement links Inuit and, especially, Kablunāngajuit status with an association to the settlement area. The agreement specifies

that Nunatsiavut beneficiaries must be either Inuit or a Kablunângajuit and have strong connections to the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area. A Kablunângajuk is defined as a person who either has Inuit ancestry, or has no Inuit ancestry but was settled permanently in the settlement area before 1940 or is the lineal descendant of someone who settled permanently in the settlement area before 1940 and was born before 1990 (INAC 2005: 3.1.1). In order to have a recognized connection to the settlement area, applicants must meet one of the following criteria: they must be a permanent resident of the settlement area; they or their parents must have been born within the settlement area; they must have two grandparents who were born in the settlement area and were permanent residents there; or they must have at least a quarter Inuit ancestry (INAC 2005, ch.3). In specifying the year 1940 as a temporal marker, the agreement acknowledges the importance and the magnitude of the migration from the coast for the Goose Bay military air base, where construction began in 1940. Despite acknowledging the existence of this one important migration event, both the 1990 cut-off and the requirement that Kablunângajuit maintain a close connection with the settlement area work to eventually exclude the families of Kablunângajuit who live outside the settlement area and the families of people who marry non-beneficiaries, which is often those who have moved away from the settlement area.

As the first few chapters of this dissertation describe, Inuit have traveled and lived throughout the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, and have participated in the global economy in many different ways for generations. The geographical and temporal limitations specified in the final agreement are an attempt to contain and define a fluid and changing

reality. The relatively arbitrary nature of the criteria and of the geographical boundaries, as well as the often subjective way in which the membership committees interpret the rules, have created many tensions among people in Labrador. Although the Nunatsiavut Government is trying to standardize its membership practices, stories abound of families who have siblings with different beneficiary status (sometimes because they were born in different seasons, when their family was living in different locations) and of people who have had their membership revoked or reinstated. Lawrence Dunn describes in his thesis (Dunn 2003) how approximately 800 people lost their LIA membership at one point when the LIA changed its criteria. The frustration that Inuit expressed about the government recognition practices of the provincial-federal funding agreements in the 1950s and 1960s has been amplified since the 1970s, when the land claims process required that Inuit develop and enforce recognition criteria amongst themselves.

Other Inuit in Labrador have also felt impacted by the LIA/Nunatsiavut recognition criteria. The ratification of the Inuit land claim agreement in 2004 immediately triggered a response from the leaders of the Labrador Metis Nation, who saw the Inuit agreement as a threat to their claim to Aboriginal rights and territory for the Metis-Inuit of central and southern Labrador. Many Metis-Inuit share similar family histories and genealogies with many Kablunângajuit of Nunatsiavut, and in some cases, the only difference between the two categories is that Metis-Inuit live to the south of Nunatsiavut. The Inuit claims area overlaps with the Metis-Inuit claims area in the Upper Lake Melville and Sandwich Bay areas, and the agreement stated that it was the final settlement of Aboriginal rights for Labrador Inuit in Canada, which seemed to preclude

the acceptance of the Metis-Inuit claim. Todd Russell, then President of the Labrador Metis Nation (LMN)<sup>11</sup>, commented that the Inuit agreement

"may only intend to address the rights and interests of north coast Inuit in Labrador, but the agreement's technical wording threatens the rights of all Inuit south of Hamilton Inlet. LMN elder Bernard Heard says, according to the legal opinions they've received, the agreement implies that if anyone wants to own their own land or fish their own waters or hunt their own game as an Inuit descendant, they have to move into the LIA's settlement area" ("Labrador Metis-Inuit concerned" 2004).

The boundaries connecting Inuit status to territory, as defined by the Inuit agreement, excluded many living outside Nunatsiavut. The formal codification of the cultural-territorial connection was seen as a threat to the official recognition of the Labrador Metis-Inuit as having Aboriginal status. The LIA disputed the Metis-Inuit assertions: "The statement that the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement is a 'relocation program' is unfounded and inflammatory," argued LIA Vice-President Tony Andersen (LIA 2004: 16). The Labrador Metis Nation, on the other hand, described the wording of the agreement as constituting "legislated genocide," which it described as "when a government uses that power it has and an imbalance of power to bring in legislation that denies the existence of a people and the expression to their land and resources and their culture and heritage" (Russell in Antle and Bradbury-Bennett 2004: A3). Since 2004, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has assured the Labrador Metis Nation that the Nunatsiavut agreement will not affect any Metis claim<sup>12</sup>, but the power of the politics

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<sup>11</sup> The Labrador Metis Nation has since changed its name to NunatuKavut (see [www.labradormetis.ca](http://www.labradormetis.ca)).

<sup>12</sup> The NunatuKavut land claim is currently under review by the federal government.



of recognition to affect land rights, official status, and even cultural identity was evident to those involved (Baker 2005).

The assumption that an Inuk, in order to be recognized as an Inuk, should retain close connections with (and ideally, residence in) his or her "traditional" territory has been repeated throughout Labrador history. British colonial interests, the Moravian Mission, and, later, the provincial and federal governments, have all employed spatial techniques in their attempts to control Inuit society and resources. The experiences with these techniques in Labrador are not altogether unique, as the social definition of Aboriginal Peoples has had a spatial element in many other colonial settings. In other parts of Canada, the long history of "putting Aboriginal people 'in their place'" has involved the reserve system, which helped to maintain the perceived incompatibility between Aboriginal Peoples and urban, industrial society (Peters 1999: 420; Tobias 1983; Carter and Hollinsworth 2009):

"Unassimilated Indians were perceived to belong in places separate from modern urban society. The association of Indians with reserves was strengthened by the federal government's definitions of its responsibility as extending only to Indians on reserves. The spatial component of government policies, therefore, reinforced public perceptions of what it meant to be Indian. Indians in their place meant Indians on the reserve; this helped to turn the tension between 'Indianness' and European 'civilization' into a tension between 'Indianness' and city life...Indians are not supposed to be where they interfere with the economic interests of non-Aboriginal people" (Peters 1999: 421).

Anthropological assumptions of bounded cultures have contributed to ideas about cultural groups "naturally" occurring within certain territories, and these concepts have been used in many contexts to confine and control colonized peoples and economic activity

(Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 1997; James and Toren 2010). The state's regulatory regime, as experienced through the definition of Inuit in terms of connection to territory, works to regulate and control bodies in space (Sandercock 1998; Macdonald 2010). Discourse about Nunatsiavut as the "natural" and "appropriate" place for Labrador Inuit (especially if they are to retain their Inuit status) supports both the governments' desire to control its citizens and the LIA's desire to attain a self-governed homeland and its administrative need to self-manage its beneficiaries.

In Labrador, the boundaries of what is considered to be Inuit territory have been restricted and altered by interactions between Inuit and colonial or state interests, but Nunatsiavut Inuit have reclaimed a portion of their homeland with resounding strength. Despite its restrictive elements, the concept of a territorialized community is politically powerful. Experiences with modernity have caused many people to yearn for the sense of belonging and of rootedness that the image of a culturally territorialized community conveys, and the discourse of indigeneity has built on this desire and its underlying assumptions (Niezen 2009; Lee 2006). The structure of a land claim agreement also impacts the need for territorial boundaries. A land base is economically important for the viability of the new government, and legal and administrative requirements about clarity of land and resource ownership mean that boundaries must be well defined.

Nonetheless, the need to delineate territorial boundaries presents many problems for people in Labrador. The internal tensions among the diverse group of Nunatsiavut beneficiaries are accentuated by the fact that the majority of beneficiaries live outside the Settlement Area. Of the 7,027 beneficiaries listed by the Nunatsiavut Government in

2009, 2,323 (or 33.1%) lived in Upper Lake Melville, and 2,095 (or 29.8%) lived elsewhere in Canada. 2,609 (or 37.1%) lived in the five communities in Nunatsiavut (NG 2009). Many people who live in Upper Lake Melville feel that the Settlement Area should have included their communities of North West River, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Mud Lake, given the history of Inuit in the area, and the high number of Inuit who live there today. When the Agreement-in-Principle was developed in 1999, some Inuit from Upper Lake Melville were upset that they were not consulted about the boundaries of the Settlement Area (LIA 1993b). The fact that Upper Lake Melville was not included in Nunatsiavut has created much animosity between those within and without. "It's a strange relationship between the land claims area and Upper Lake Melville. We're all beneficiaries, but we're not all equal. People on the coast think we get all the benefits, but we think that they get all the benefits. North West River is often overlooked. It's not in the land claims area, although something like 307 out of 492 people who live here are beneficiaries" (fn July 2008). Many feel that the division of political influence and economic benefits has not been equal throughout the land claims process. "The Labrador Inuit Association needed the thousands of beneficiaries in Upper Lake Melville during negotiations – otherwise, it didn't have the numbers to be at the land claims table. But now, we're ignored," commented one woman from Goose Bay (fn August 2008). As Evelyn Plaise describes it, many people outside the official settlement area felt "dispossessed" (Plaise 1990). On the other hand, however, many others feel that it is unfair that many benefits of the new Nunatsiavut Government, such as jobs and offices, reside in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Some Inuit in the Upper Lake Melville area have been concerned for years that the land claims agreement would not allow them to fully participate in self-government, and they voiced this concern in both the 2002 and the 2004 ratification votes for the Inuit Constitution and the final agreement, respectively. Mary Adams, an elder who lived in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, was especially vocal in her criticism of the Constitution in 2002:

"Adams says Inuit outside the claim area stand to lose their rights and identities if the constitution passes. She says the LIA claims that all Inuit will be treated equally, but she doesn't believe it. For example, she says if an Inuk does not live in one of the five communities from Rigolet to Nain, he'll have to buy a license if he wants to hunt on his traditional grounds and he'll have to pay for his own home care when he gets too old to take care of himself. 'Equality stops at Rigolet,' she says. 'We're orphans. We're looking through the LIA window and we're hoping some good things will fall off the LIA table that will be for Upper Lake Melville'" (Johansen 2002).

Obviously, not all Inuit feel included in the equality, inclusiveness, and locality of the ideal Nunatsiavut community.

This opposition to the land claim agreement from the large population of Inuit in Upper Lake Melville was a real concern for the Labrador Inuit Association when it came time to ask the Inuit beneficiaries to ratify the final agreement in 2004. The LIA negotiators had attempted to include a number of arrangements in the final agreement that they hoped would soothe the worries of people in Upper Lake Melville about being marginalized by the agreement. "The LIA wanted to include North West River and Upper Lake Melville in the Settlement Area, but Canada and the province excluded them – they set the boundaries of the land claim area," a former LIA negotiator told me. "We

managed to negotiate a 9-year communal salmon license for Lake Melville, and a 9-year migratory bird harvesting allowance in Upper Lake Melville. Canada was reluctant to set a precedent, but LIA argued that it's very unique, with 50% [of the beneficiaries] outside. The federal negotiator said that the money is for Nunatsiavut: 'If you spend it on people outside, you can go broke in ten years.' But LIA needed their support in ratification" (fn July 2008).

Inuit beneficiaries who live outside Nunatsiavut are politically represented and involved in the Nunatsiavut Government by means that are specified in the Inuit Constitution. The Constitution outlines the creation of Inuit Community Corporations in outside communities, which are designed to provide services to beneficiaries, and the structure of political representation in the Nunatsiavut Assembly (LIA 2002). Most members of the Nunatsiavut Assembly represent communities, whether they are elected Members for their community or an AngajukKâk (mayor), with the exception of the President of Nunatsiavut, who is the only regionally elected member of the assembly. The issue of proportional representation is given second priority, so that if a community has more than one thousand beneficiaries, an additional Member will represent it. This reliance on community representation means that proportionally fewer members represent those beneficiaries not living in a Nunatsiavut community, despite their numerical strength. So, for instance, using 2009 population numbers, Nain (population 1180) has two Members and one AngajukKâk, and Rigolet (population 299) has one Member and one AngajukKâk. Outside the Settlement Area, the Upper Lake Melville area, consisting of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Mud Lake (2020 beneficiaries) and

North West River (303 beneficiaries), is represented by two elected Members, the chairperson of the NunaKatiget Inuit Community Corporation, and the chairperson of the Sivunivut Community Corporation. Only one member of the Assembly, however, originally represented beneficiaries who live outside of Upper Lake Melville and Nunatsiavut in what is called the Canadian Constituency, as approximately 2095 Nunatsiavut beneficiaries do, although this was increased to two Members in the May 2010 elections (NG 2009). This emphasis on the interests of communities within Nunatsiavut is also translated into decision-making that favours keeping Nunatsiavut resources within the Settlement Area, despite the number of beneficiaries who live outside.

The Moravian Mission also felt excluded by the territorial nature of the land claims agreement. When the Inuit claimed the areas granted to the Moravians by Britain in the late 1700s and 1800s, the Mission still felt that they had a claim to the land. Once so useful to the colonial British Government in fulfilling its goals of Inuit social and territorial containment, the Moravian Mission had become so intertwined with northern Inuit life that, by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Inuit considered themselves to constitute the Church. They considered any Moravian land holdings to be Inuit lands, and any ownership or benefit rights to belong to them. The Church organization, on the other hand, based in the United States, maintained their separation from the Labrador Inuit, and refused to allow its interests to merge with the Labrador Inuit political organization and goals. When the LIA first initiated its land claim, the Moravian church argued that it still had claims to 400,000 acres of land around Nain, Okak, Hopedale, and Hebron, as well as

some land in northern Labrador. In the early 1990s, the LIA tried to organize a legal trust arrangement with the Church, but they disagreed about who the beneficiary of Moravian lands should be. While the Mission felt that the Moravian church should be the beneficiary, the LIA contended that the Labrador Inuit should be the beneficiaries. Negotiator Toby Andersen of the LIA argued,

"It's not church lands, it's Labrador Inuit lands, held in reserve for Labrador Inuit by the church....The provincial government...is...telling the Moravian church that their grant they had from the British Crown was for the lands held in trust to Labrador Inuit and in this case they now have to give up those lands. Their claim is no longer valid and no longer serves the purpose for which it was put in the first place, because Labrador Inuit themselves are now in the process of negotiating those same lands with governments" (Andersen in LIA 1994: 15).

With no agreement in place, the LIA treated the Moravian lands as Labrador Inuit Lands in their land claims negotiations, while the province treated them as Crown Lands. In 1996, the provincial government formally rescinded the lands, but the Moravian Church claimed that it had no right to do so, and sued. The dispute was settled out of court in September 2005, with a \$1-million payout to the Moravian Church from Ottawa (CBC 2005; LIA 2005: 7). As the dispute shows, the Church had obviously more of a material interest in creating the idea of a "Moravian Inuit" territory than simply proselytizing.

### **3) Nunatsiavut as based on 'appropriate' Inuit economic activity**

In addition to cultural and territorial boundaries, the idea of Nunatsiavut brings with it economic constructs as well. The final agreement is premised on the Inuit claim to aboriginal rights "based on their traditional and current use and occupancy of the lands,

waters and sea ice of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Area in accordance with their own customs and traditions" (Preamble, INAC 2005: 1). From this basis, the final agreement continues the trend of attempting to influence Inuit economic behaviour and control Inuit resources by delineating some very specific limitations to recognized Inuit rights. In order to attain official recognition of their rights, Inuit negotiators had to struggle with requirements and limitations as determined by the federal and provincial governments in their land claims negotiation policies. These limitations defined what the governments would recognize as specifically Aboriginal, and therefore what would be accepted as a potential area in which to negotiate Aboriginal rights.

The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement addresses many Inuit concerns by acknowledging the economic needs of Inuit and the cultural importance of subsistence harvesting. The agreement outlines harvesting jurisdiction for the Nunatsiavut Government, and establishes co-management boards and procedures for the inclusion of Inuit and Inuit knowledge in resource management. It also confirms the preeminence of subsistence harvesting over sports hunting, and, notably, provides Inuit with some rights to commercial harvesting. The agreement specifies that people who live in the communities of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LISA) have the right to harvest wildlife in LISA without licences and generally without quotas, up to their level of need, but with very specific conditions. It also outlines the "special privileges" (as opposed to rights) of beneficiaries who live outside of Nunatsiavut in the Upper Lake Melville area to hunt in an area called 12E.



The face of wildlife management has also changed with the creation of Nunatsiavut. Inuit now participate on co-management boards for wildlife and plants, the fisheries, Torngat Mountains National Park, and land use planning in LISA. The Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board recommends the total allowable harvest for caribou and migratory birds, and decides on the total allowable harvest for all other species for all of the Settlement Area. The Nunatsiavut Government has the jurisdiction to regulate some harvesting activities, including all harvesting on Labrador Inuit Lands, and it has greater involvement in advising and consulting with the provincial and federal governments on fish and wildlife issues.

With this newly affirmed Inuit jurisdiction comes the requirement that the Nunatsiavut Government collect information for use in justifying decisions or supporting recommendations to other governments. Depending on the species or issue involved, the onus may be on NG to provide certain types of information, as outlined in the final agreement,<sup>13</sup> to provincial or federal Ministers in order to substantiate recommendations for the Ministers' final decisions. For instance, NG must monitor the harvesting activities

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13 For example, the final agreement (INAC 2005) outlines the appropriate information needed (from NG) to justify (to DFO) a decision about domestic harvest levels for fish: "13.6.6: The Inuit Domestic Harvest Level is an estimate of the quantity of a species or stock of Fish or Aquatic Plant in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area needed annually by Inuit for their food, social and ceremonial purposes that is based on all relevant available information, including:

- a) any data that may be compiled on an ongoing basis by the Nunatsiavut Government using Inuit traditional knowledge;
- b) any data that may be compiled on an ongoing basis by the Inuit Government during monitoring of the Inuit Domestic Fishery;
- c) historical data;
- d) information on variations in the availability and accessibility of the species or stock of Fish or Aquatic Plant; and
- e) information that may be provided by the Nunatsiavut Government about the nutritional, social and ceremonial importance of the species or stock of Fish or Aquatic Plant to Inuit (section 13.6.6).

of their constituents and solicit information from them that for years Inuit have refused to offer to other government officials.<sup>14</sup> This information may then be shared with other governments in order to influence the final decisions of the provincial or federal Ministers.

Inuit harvesting activities are therefore increasingly monitored and supervised, often by Inuit bureaucrats themselves in order to provide justifications to both the Nunatsiavut and other governments. Subsistence harvesting, once almost invisible to governmental agencies, will now be thoroughly documented, as the Nunatsiavut Government takes on the information-gathering role. While Inuit have gained greater influence and control, the other governments have gained an increased capability for surveillance and influence of Inuit participation in harvesting management, information collection, and enforcement in Nunatsiavut (Scott 1998; Kulchyski and Tester 2007; Sandlos 2007). Inuit are thus entangling themselves, in James Scott's (1998) words, in neoliberalism's "grid of intelligibility" (Hale 2005: 6). Labrador Inuit are assuming and even augmenting the administrative duties of previous governments, but perhaps with this change in the face of wildlife management will also come a change in the priority and understanding given to Inuit concerns and approaches.

One of the central Inuit criticisms in the early years of the land claims process was the provincial government's indifference to or discouragement of Inuit harvesting. Restrictive harvesting regulations "hamper[ed] their pursuit of an adequate living," and were often designed for sports hunters or for Newfoundland conditions (Ames 1977: 1).

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14 Very few people, for instance, submitted information to the provincial government on their wildlife harvesting licence returns in the 1970s (Ames 1977), and the situation is no different today.

In response to these concerns, and based on legal decisions such as *Sparrow*, the land claims agreement gives priority to Inuit subsistence harvesting over the activities of sports hunters and fishermen if conservation limits need to be established (INAC 2005, section 12.5.3). The LIA successfully demonstrated the importance of subsistence harvesting in their land claims campaign, and succeeded in convincing the other parties of the need to address their concerns. The Inuit subsistence harvest is now understood and accepted by policy-makers as vital for cultural continuity, human health, and social well-being (Freeman 1986; Nuttall et al. 2005). Aboriginal, academic, and legal efforts to highlight the importance of subsistence harvesting have managed to dispel assumptions that it is socially, nutritionally, and economically irrelevant, and that it is an unnecessary – or even undesirable – component of Inuit economies. As a result of these efforts, the final agreement assures Labrador Inuit of more extensive harvesting rights than previously recognized, and it includes provisions that acknowledge Inuit needs and sharing practices. The removal of most quotas, bag limits, and licences allows Inuit to harvest more cost-effectively for the amount of fish and wildlife needed for extended sharing networks (see Ames 1977; Usher 1982). The agreement also often allows for the transfer of quotas, when they do exist, so that people can harvest for the needs of others.

The Inuit and the provincial and federal governments had very different ideas about the nature of Inuit harvesting rights during the negotiations. From the start, the LIA argued for rights that would help Inuit to make an “adequate living,” which, for much of the last two hundred years, had involved an intricate mix of both subsistence and commercial activities (Ames 1977: 1). The final agreement, however, focuses mainly on

subsistence (i.e., in this case, non-commercial) rights, and contains a precise and detailed definition of what exactly constitutes Inuit subsistence. The agreement states that if no harvesting limits are set for conservation purposes, Inuit have "the right to harvest throughout the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area up to their full level of needs for food, social and ceremonial purposes" (INAC 2005, section 12.3.2). The sale of wildlife or plants obtained under this definition of subsistence<sup>15</sup> is strictly prohibited except in specific situations (section 12.3.9), but Inuit "have the right to give, trade, exchange or barter among themselves, and with other aboriginal individuals, any Wildlife or Plants Harvested," subject to certain restrictions (section 12.3.10). However, Inuit do have the right to sell non-edible wildlife products, as well as tools or artwork made from plants (sections 12.3.12 a and b).

Other Inuit land claims agreements provide similar restrictions, but many are less explicit in distinguishing between monetary and non-monetary disposition of harvested wildlife. The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (INAC 1993), for instance, gives Inuit the right to harvest up to the "full level of his or her *economic, social, and cultural needs*" (my italics, section 5.6.1). Nunavut Inuit also have the "right to *sell*, barter, exchange and give" harvested wildlife (my italics, section 5.7.30). The Inuvialuit Final Agreement (INAC 1984), although more restrictive, states that "Inuvialuit may *sell*, trade and barter game among Inuvialuit beneficiaries" (my italics, section 14.12). Although economic rights are limited (to exchange only among beneficiaries in the Inuvialuit agreement), these other agreements do allow a role for monetary exchange in the sale of harvested

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<sup>15</sup> I.e., wildlife and plants that are not harvested under a commercial licence.

wildlife. The Nunatsiavut agreement, on the other hand, strictly limits the disposition of products to non-monetary exchanges.

Most of these limitations on Inuit harvesting centre on the role of subsistence in the definition of what it means to be Aboriginal. According to a Labrador Inuit Association negotiator, the federal government was against recognizing commercial rights in land claims negotiations. "They followed a template of lands, subsistence harvesting, and forestry – 'that's Aboriginalness.' It was just a negotiating strategy. The federal negotiator knew that it didn't hold a lot of weight. The federal stance against selling was just a mindset" (T. Andersen 10 July 2008, pers comm.). The LIA tried to convince the other parties of the importance of a long history of a mixed economy in which subsistence harvesting and commercial activities were intertwined, but found that the other negotiators upheld the equation of Inuit and subsistence. The other governments tried to firmly separate subsistence and commercial harvesting issues, a practice that had become entrenched in the structure of land claims negotiations and associated legal decisions (field notes 2008; Asch 1999, 2007). The LIA responded by engaging this recognition template's criteria to gain subsistence rights, and by crafting a long list of various kinds of exchange allowed under the agreement – give, trade, exchange, or barter among themselves, but not sell – in order to satisfy the federal and provincial negotiators. The potentially unclear distinction between these terms and monetary exchanges could create some maneuverability on the matter: "The only way that the difference between these various terms will ever be resolved is in court," an LIA negotiator told me (T. Andersen 10 July 2008, pers comm.).

The boundaries around Inuit rights that are promoted by the state reflect the colonial method of asserting economic control by clothing it in cultural terms. Limiting Inuit rights to such a simplified understanding of subsistence harvesting ignores the long history of Inuit participation in commercial activities and the ways in which subsistence harvesting has articulated with and become embedded in a cash economy (Stern 2006; Searles 2006; Wenzel 2000; Usher 1982; Dahl 2000; Nuttall 1992). Inuit have always engaged, and continue to engage in the non-monetary exchange of country foods, and the practice is undoubtedly a fundamental aspect of Inuit life. However, the limitations of the Inuit/subsistence equation works to limit Inuit authenticity to insular economic practices, and denies Inuit the possibility of social change and adaptation (Barcham 2000; Scott 2001; Alfred 2005). It also fails to offer any protection for practices that allow them to survive as contemporary communities, which was the original goal of the Labrador Inuit Association.

The federal recognition of Inuit subsistence rights uses a construct of "Inuitness" as economically small-scale and localized, constraining and limiting Inuit participation in and benefits from larger-scale and global economic activities. The idea of an economically self-contained community, so powerful in Inuit negotiations to regain self-governing authority in Nunatsiavut, is used by the state as a political and economic limitation. One justification for a restriction on the monetary disposition of country foods is the potential impact that a commercial incentive may have on species conservation (Gombay 2005). Other restrictions in the final agreement may reflect concerns about the need for official food inspection of commercial edible products. However, denying Inuit

the right to govern species conservation, harvesting, and processing themselves, either through regulatory or cultural means (such as Inuit customary laws), exposes the underlying desire on the part of other governments to assert control over resources (Sandlos 2007; Kulchyski and Tester 2007). Conservation is a foundation of provincial wildlife policy, but the protection of economic interests in the outfitting industry and the widespread governmental enthusiasm for industrial economic development in Labrador raise doubts about the importance of conservation in overall provincial aims. The structure of land claims agreements and the recognition of Aboriginal rights in Canada thus work to limit Inuit authenticity to limited and confined economic practices, and to deny the legitimacy of Inuit expertise and rights to have a central and authoritative role in renewable resource management.

As Ronald Niezen (2009) argues, much of the Aboriginal rights movement relies on the value of representing an alternative to industrialized modernity, so commercial activity is contrary to this simplification. The small-scale, self-regulatory, and communal aspects of the idea of Aboriginal traditional social and economic society are attractive to the international conservation movement's recent fascination with community-based resource management. Community, representing these "traditional" traits, as opposed to rationality and modernity, is therefore contrasted with the market economy and the nation-state, in much the same way as the definition of Indigenous Peoples is contrasted with capitalism and the state. Both representations rely on the attributes of locality and a small and bounded spatial scale, a homogenous social structure, and shared norms and common interests (Agrawal and Gibson 2001). Contrasting "community" and subsistence

economies with the market economy and the nation-state also links small-scale groups with limited economic possibilities. As Tania Li argues, subsistence often refers to poverty, isolation from market relationships, and limited material desires. However, this poverty is usually the result of colonialism, marginalization, and historical interactions with broader economic processes, instead of being prior natural states (Li 2001: 159).

“Only when communities are imagined as distinctive kinds of places, characterized by subsistence (poverty, limited market involvement, and limited wants) can they be charged with responsibility for conserving resources that other, more powerful players (states, corporations, large landowners) located outside communities are free to exploit” (Li 2001: 162).

Assumptions of a homogeneous social structure, shared norms, and common interests are likewise based on simplifications that may not reflect social differentiation, cultural specificities, and historical developments. Maintaining a small-scale and localized image, although useful politically, can therefore work to obscure the distribution of power and the broader contexts in which local-level processes are played out.

Yet the reality of Inuit life and history in Labrador has been strong participation in the trade and sale of resources for centuries. The Labrador Inuit succeeded in breaking out of the subsistence-only recognition requirement by successfully convincing the federal government of the need to acknowledge the role of the commercial fishery in their lives, and negotiating the right to benefits in this industry. The inclusion of these rights was a first in Inuit land claims agreements, and the LIA saw this success as a breakthrough (T. Andersen, pers comm., 2008). The final agreement provides the Nunatsiavut Government with the right to specific proportions of commercial fishing and processing licences for any additional allocations of certain species that the Department



of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) may make in the future. In addition, Section 13.12 of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement specifies that the Minister of DFO must take into account the history of the Inuit commercial fishing of Arctic char, Atlantic salmon, and scallop when issuing further licences<sup>16</sup>. Priority is also given to Inuit for some opportunities related to aquaculture.

The success in having these commercial fishing rights included in LILCA illustrates the cracks within the federal template of "Aboriginalness." If the history of Inuit participation in the commercial char, salmon, and scallop fisheries is recognized, why is the historical Inuit participation in other commercial industries not recognized? These inconsistencies reveal the arbitrary nature of the land claims template for recognition and illustrate the state's desire for control that underlies the use of such precise definitions in negotiating Inuit rights.

A related aspect of this cultural construct is the imagined relationship between Inuit and certain resources. Subsistence is one relationship, and the non-relationship between Inuit and subsurface resources is another, as the provincial approach to land claims demonstrated. The 1987 provincial policy recognized no Inuit rights to resources to which they had little "traditional" connection: "Provincial involvement in the negotiation and settlement of aboriginal land claims is based on traditional use of renewable resources by aboriginal peoples....Allocation of or rights to other non-renewable resources, marine or terrestrial, will not be included in the negotiations" (GNL 1987: 8). As John McGrath, an Assistant Deputy Minister of the provincial Department of Rural,

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<sup>16</sup> The approach of the final agreement towards historically important species echoes the species-by-species approach of *Van der Peet*. (Niesen 2009: 74).

Agricultural, and Northern Development, commented, the provincial position towards the Inuit claim was "sort of like the meek shall inherit the earth, but not the sub-surface rights" (Wegenast 1981: 224). Over the course of land claims negotiations, both the provincial and the federal policies changed somewhat on Inuit rights to non-renewable resources, allocating a portion of any royalties to the Nunatsiavut Government and recognizing rights to "traditional" resources such as carving stone, but the general policy held.

In addition, and related to subsistence harvesting as constituting "appropriate" Inuit economic activity is the idea that Inuit wealth is ideally limited. Many colonial and state interests have emphasized and promoted the idea that Inuit do not or should not wish to acquire much material wealth. Moravian missionaries often championed the limited needs and wants of "authentic" (or ideal) Inuit, or bemoaned the failure of Inuit to live up to this image, as they were "expecting people to be content in their poverty, said to be intended for their enlightenment" (Brice-Bennett 1990: 226). Some anthropologists who worked in Labrador perpetuated the construction of Inuit difference in their focus on "traditional" Inuit life as a sentimentalized alternative to a modern lifestyle (Burch 1960; Jenness 1965). Diamond Jenness, for instance, offers an admiring anecdote about a trapper on the last page of his 1965 book, *Eskimo Administration: Labrador*, after describing the Labrador Inuit's progress towards modernity. He depicts a

"leather-faced, weather-beaten [trapper, whose] veins, I fancied, carried a trickle of native blood, for his restless blue-grey eyes seemed to mirror the flickering sunlight and shadow of the local forests.... 'You never expect a big income; but you enjoy the life, and you're free' [the trapper tells him]...As he turned away I thought to myself: 'Truly,

there is hope for northern Labrador – and for humanity – as long as such men endure” (Jenness 1965: 92). Juxtaposed with the inevitable march of progress is once again the idealized, self-sufficient, and non-materialistic figure, offering hope to the anthropologist that an alternative to “modernity” might exist.

The final agreement contains clauses that I would argue partially reflect this idea of Inuit as, ideally, having limited needs. The agreement outlines the economic benefits that the Nunatsiavut Government will receive from developments in the Settlement Area. Chapter Seven of the final agreement stipulates that the amount of revenue from subsurface resource developments that the provincial government will transfer to the Nunatsiavut Government will be 25% of revenues on Labrador Inuit Lands, and 5% on other settlement lands (as well as Voisey’s Bay), plus half of the first \$2 million made. The agreement also outlines the topics to be negotiated for Inuit Impacts and Benefits Agreements, and states “the benefits shall be consistent with and promote Inuit cultural goals” (LILCA: 7.7.6.a; Schedule 7-A). The agreement encourages the province to take a number of issues into consideration when developing economic development policies, including promoting the marketing of “renewable resources harvested by Inuit,” and “supporting the traditional Inuit economy” (LILCA 7.8.4.b).

Of perhaps most interest is the clause that states that any benefits that Inuit might receive from royalties must not make them richer than other Canadians: “The amount due to the Nunatsiavut Government from the Province under section 7.4.1 shall not exceed the amount that, if distributed equally among Inuit, would result in an annual average per capita income for Inuit equal or greater to the Canadian average per capita income”

(LILCA 7.4.4). As an LIA negotiator described to me, the provincial government had wanted the per capita income to be set at the Newfoundland level, so that Inuit would not become richer than other Newfoundlanders, but the LIA refused, and they settled on the higher Canadian average income. As he said,

“The province wanted this cap. We went back to our legal people and executive council, and we were assured by our financial people that it was highly unlikely that we would exceed the Canadian standard of living, which was always going up. They told us, ‘you’ll be self-sufficient at that point – you’ll be able to take over your own development.’ [The provincial negotiator] thought it was crazy, too – it was just a public perception thing. If you look at how the agreement works, it’s just a turn of phrase” (Toby Andersen, fn 10July08).

Much like the federal equalization payment scheme, this cap is meant to promote equality among citizens, and, as Toby Andersen says, it will likely never come into effect in Nunatsiavut. But it remains as a “public perception thing” – that Inuit should not and must not become overly rich if they are to be recognized as Inuit, and that Inuit should not appear to be greedy if their demands are to be accepted.

In other cases across Canada, the state has reluctantly recognized specific Aboriginal rights to earn a “modest livelihood” through commercial activities (see Imai 2008: 45, 83; Coates 2000). In land claims negotiations about resource rights in the Yukon, Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox describes a federal negotiator as stating, “We are not here to make anyone rich. We are here to rebalance the situation” (Irlbacher-Fox 2009: ch3). The definition of what constitutes “rich” or even a “modest livelihood,” of course, is difficult to determine, and it leads to the question of why Aboriginal Peoples must content themselves with state-imposed wealth limitations, while the state itself facilitates and benefits from the

continued dispossession and exploitation of Aboriginal lands and resources. Equating Inuit and other Aboriginal Peoples with subsistence and limited needs, as we saw in Chapters Five and Seven, focuses on Aboriginal rights as a limited and redistributive issue instead of as substantive and sustaining rights. State interests have manipulated and utilized cultural constructs about 'appropriate' Inuit economic activity and degree of wealth for the last 250 years, and the Labrador Inuit Lands Claims Agreement is the most recent example of the material effects of these constructs on Inuit.

#### **4) Nunatsiavut as self-managing and responsible for itself**

The image of Nunatsiavut and Labrador Inuit as a cultural, territorialized community, following certain appropriate economic practices, is closely connected to the extension of this image – Nunatsiavut as self-managing and self-sufficient. From early on in the land claims process, and long before the provincial government appreciated the idea, the LIA had tweaked the Moravians' cultural construct of Inuit economic isolation into an idea of self-sufficiency and the ability of Inuit to manage themselves. This, of course, was not a new idea, but it resonated with popular representations about Inuit that had generated appeal over the years. The power of the image of a self-sufficient community, as Niezen (2009) argues, lies in its perceived potential for improving modern life. The image of self-sufficiency can align well with state concerns about dependency and productivity, as well as emerging neoliberal ideas about societal and economic improvements, including the decentralization and withdrawal of the state, open markets based on legal certainties, and the principles of self-improvement and individual

responsibility (Castree 2010; Valdivia 2005; Hale 2005; Slowey 2008; Foucault and Sellenart 2008).

William Andersen III, the President of the LIA in 2005, makes these alignments and connections in his speech at the signing of the final agreement:

"Today's signing solidifies our partnerships within Canada. Within our country and our province, Labrador Inuit are committed to continuing and strengthening such partnerships and to working toward sustainable development, economic growth, social justice and equality for all. I have said many times that the advancement of any group in society strengthens us all. This is the core benefit of our agreement. It puts in our hands the means and mechanisms to advance as full citizens and equal partners in the development of Nunatsiavut and in the future of the larger society of which we are all a part. Together, we will build the strength of our nation, the wealth of our province, and the health of our culture. Together we are stronger."  
(LIA 2005a: 5).

Together, and within the Canadian and provincial context, Nunatsiavut will augment the strength and wealth of the country as equal partners in the development of the region and the future, which will improve the health of Inuit (or perhaps Canadian?) culture. Nunatsiavut empowers Inuit to take charge of their own lives, and, in doing so, to become stronger – worthwhile goals that also articulate with provincial and federal agendas.

Many of the official speeches at the signing ceremony demonstrated how much of the provincial and federal governments' interest in finalizing the land claim agreement concerned facilitating an open market for development. State officials emphasized the importance of certainty over land ownership in order to promote development, and the need to provide Inuit and Inuit businesses with the tools to compete and to succeed

economically. Premier Danny Williams focused on the new business opportunities that Nunatsiavut will offer:

"This agreement will bring clarity to land ownership and the management of resources. It is an important step towards the establishment of certainty and stability for the economic and social development of Labrador, allowing Labrador Inuit to further pursue economic development opportunities that are consistent with your cultural values... This agreement sends a strong signal to the business community that Labrador Inuit want to do business with other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, other Canadians, and indeed, the entire world" (Williams in OKalaKatiget Society 2005).

Williams also emphasized that responsibility now lay with the Inuit: "Labrador Inuit will have control of their own destiny" (Canada NewsWire 2005). Andy Scott, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, echoed the idea: "The Labrador Inuit will have the tools they need to continue to build a healthy community and strong economy, while the region will benefit from a more stable environment" (Scott in Canada NewsWire 2005). Apparently, both the provincial and federal governments hoped that, with the land claim agreement, Inuit would embrace market values and model their behaviour on the appropriate conduct of citizens, consumers, and investors (Feit 2010).

The idea that Inuit have control of their own destiny and the tools to now succeed was also seen in the early days of the Voisey's Bay development. The Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement negotiated between the LIA and Inco Ltd. provides Inuit with economic benefits and incentives to participate in the development, and both the LIA and industry encourage Inuit to get training and jobs in the construction of the mine. A poster in an LIA newsletter of 2002 stated,

"We're ready... For thousands of years Labrador Inuit have had a special relationship with this beautiful land. It is our legacy. And now, more than ever, it is our destiny. Will you be ready for it? Already hundreds of Labrador Inuit have laid the foundation for a responsible, rewarding future. We have worked hard and equipped ourselves with the skills we'll need to seize the opportunities our land provides. People like Harriet Kalleo of Nain, who began her training in Heavy Equipment Operations just this past spring and is now working as a truck driver on the Voisey's Bay site. Harriet recently stated, 'If there's an opportunity for training, take it... and there are plenty of opportunities!' Training for tomorrow, today. Just one of the many ways Inuit of Labrador are building on our past to ensure a strong and viable future" (LIA 2002b).

The poster makes a direct connection between the long-standing Inuit relationship with this beautiful land (our legacy and our destiny) and the readiness to seize the opportunity, work hard, equip oneself, and lay the foundation for a responsible, rewarding, strong, and viable future. "A world of opportunities is opening up," stated another LIA poster. "We are ready" (LIA 2003a).

In these publications and speeches, the Labrador Inuit Association celebrated the opportunity for self-improvement and eventual self-sufficiency that the Voisey's Bay project and the land claims agreement offered. As Gabrielle Slowey argues, this reflects a pattern in the strategies used by many Canadian Aboriginal Peoples: "The discourse and language of development is now used by many Aboriginal groups to describe their goal of self-determination" (Slowey 2009: 232). State interests in neoliberal approaches to governance – emphasizing a more hands-off, decentralized, and pro-development environment – provide the LIA with a suitable context within which to frame their goals of self-determination and social justice. Inuit leaders articulated various objectives and cultural constructs with state agendas in order to achieve their own needs and to advance



their own political agendas. The idea of Nunatsiavut as self-sufficient and as responsible for itself, especially, met with state approval and willingness to finalize the land claims agreement. As Foucault argues, the concepts of self-sufficiency and self-responsibility are also ones that states encourage their subjects to embrace (Foucault and Senellart 2008). As the next chapter will describe, ideas about self-sufficiency and individual responsibility for self-improvement also play a central role in resource management in the post-land claims context.

### **9.3 Conclusion**

The Labrador Inuit Association was successful in its attempts to settle the Inuit land claim and to create the government and territory of Nunatsiavut, and it succeeded because of the organization's ability to align its goals with those of the other governments. In presenting the idea of Nunatsiavut as a cultural and territorial community based on appropriate Inuit economic activity and self-management, the LIA articulated its objectives with "acceptable" images of indigeneity and "Inuitness." The final agreement contains many significant changes to the political and economic structures of the region, and it provides Inuit with many opportunities to self-govern.

The power of these cultural constructs is considerable, as we have seen, but they each contain aspects that cause tensions or do not always fit with the daily reality of Nunatsiavut. The cultural homogeneity of the idea of a unified Inuit community is challenged by both internal distinctions and the often fine line between those who are included and those who are excluded. The fine line used to make these distinctions is

territorial, the boundedness of which conflicts with the dynamic nature of population movements and relationships. Economic characteristics used to define Inuit-specific rights also often rely on static and ahistorical concepts, and are used to assert state control by limiting and containing Inuit jurisdiction.

The broader framework of land claims and the requirement that cultural difference be used to define both benefits and beneficiaries is the foundation of these conflicts and inconsistencies. The legal-positivist structure of land claims requires certainty and stable definitions, which the current dynamic conceptualization of culture is ill-suited to provide. Instead, participants in the land claims process often rely on bounded cultural constructs that are politically potent, but can also be socially divisive. Despite the huge political and economic gains made by the LIA through the agreement, the implications of codifying these cultural constructs in the land claims agreement are slowly emerging. The next two chapters explore these implications in the context of uranium exploration and land use planning.

## **Chapter Ten:**

### **Uranium exploration in the post-land claim context, 2007-2008**

While so much of the literature focuses on indigeneity in struggles to achieve recognition (Povinelli 2002; Valdivia 2005; Li 2000; Hale 2005, etc.), I am exploring, in the next two chapters, the continuing role of cultural difference and indigeneity in the post-land claims context. The enduring relevance of the production of difference was evident when, shortly after its creation, the Nunatsiavut Government faced one of its first major crises. In 2007 and 2008, Nunatsiavut beneficiaries were embroiled in an intense debate about how to approach the possibility of uranium development on their lands near Makkovik and Postville. This chapter looks at how people debated the issue of Inuit governance through ideas about cultural and territorial community, stewardship, self-sufficiency, and citizenship, and, through this debate, how they encountered the possibilities and the limitations of the mobilization of cultural difference within the new post-land claim governing arrangement.

In the mid-2000s, when prospectors returned to the same Michelin Lake uranium deposit that had caused so much interest in the 1970s, it was the Nunatsiavut Government that now held authority over surface access to the area. The price of uranium had risen from US\$2/lb in 2001 to US\$138/lb in 2007, and the increase in exploration activity reflected this change (Hoffman, G&M, 28June07). Frontier Ltd, a Vancouver-based exploration company, acquired rights to the Michelin area in 2003, and in 2005 created Aurora Energy Resources, a St. John's-based subsidiary exploration company. The

company hired people from Postville and Makkovik to work at the Michelin and Jacques Lake sites, and gradually expanded its presence there. Although many other exploration companies were active in the region in 2007 as well, Aurora's sites were the only defined deposits of uranium that were economically large enough to warrant mines. The investor hype that helped to raise \$100 million for the company called Kitts-Michelin "the largest undeveloped uranium deposit in Canada," and Aurora spokespeople claimed that the mine would be many times the size of Voisey's Bay (Stakiw 2007: 6-7).

The exploration companies spent millions on their activities in Nunatsiavut, and raised both hope for future economic prosperity for the region and fear that the bad experiences with Brinex in the 1970s might be repeated on a larger scale. Both the jurisdiction over the land and the allocation of potential economic benefits had changed since the 1970s, however. The Michelin deposit is on Labrador Inuit Land, which means that NG has jurisdiction over surface access, and would have a 25% share in any provincial royalties of a future development. The Jacques Lake deposit, on the other hand, is not on Labrador Inuit Land, and so it is governed by the standard provincial regulations, and NG would gain a 5% share in royalties.

In August 2007, Aurora notified the Nunatsiavut Government of its intention to register its project for an environmental assessment by the end of the year. Faced with the prospect of dealing with an environmental assessment without adequate NG legislation in place, the NG Minister of Lands and Environment tabled a motion in the Nunatsiavut Assembly in the fall of 2007 to ban uranium development on Labrador Inuit Lands (NG 2007). Upon further discussion, this motion was revised to a ban on uranium

development on Labrador Inuit Lands for three years (until March 31, 2011). From the perspective of the officials and staff members of the NG Department of Lands and Resources, such a move was necessary for administrative and logistical reasons. The department wanted to avoid having to deal with a large Environmental Assessment in the near future, and officials needed the three years leeway in order to develop their own Environmental Assessment legislation, build up a Lands division, complete a Land Use Plan for Nunatsiavut, and educate themselves about uranium mining and tailings disposal. From the perspective of many Inuit, "the moratorium," as it was called, supported their belief that uranium mining posed unacceptable environmental and health risks for Nunatsiavut.

Others argued that NG did not need to pass this bill in order to control development, as the final agreement states that no development will happen until the Land Use Plan comes into effect, which would take until 2011 in any case. Still others argued that the bill was unnecessary, as an environmental assessment process would deal with any concerns, or that the bill was unfair, as people in Nunatsiavut badly needed the economic benefits of uranium exploration and mining. Debate about the moratorium was fierce and endured for many months until the Nunatsiavut Assembly voted on the bill in April 2008.

### **10.1 One perspective: Distinctly Inuit governance**

For those who supported the moratorium, the idea that the Inuit government was moving to protect its land and people from potentially harmful industrial activities was a

source of pride based in ideas of postcolonial control, environmentalism, and Inuit culture. Given the history of frustrated efforts to protect their land from industrial incursions, many Inuit took great comfort in knowing that NG has, in the words of some, "complete sovereignty" over the land, and was willing to exercise that authority (fn February 2008). The drawn-out land claims negotiations had resulted in some concrete authority over land governance, and some people expressed their joy that NG was not simply going to "give the land away" for quick economic gain, or had capitulated to industrial and economic pressures (fn, March 2008). This sense of pride was displayed in September 2007, when one exploration company failed to ask permission from NG to access Labrador Inuit Lands, and was quickly and publicly reprimanded. In the fall of that year, the Nunatsiavut Government also issued its mineral exploration standards for Labrador Inuit Lands, which are more stringent than the provincial regulations. Many Inuit felt that they finally had authority over their lands, vested in a government that respected and acted on their concerns.

Some who supported the ban described aspects of the Nunatsiavut Government's approach as characteristically Inuit: "When people are hasty to encourage economic development for the sake of accessing jobs and revenues, important details get overlooked. Nunatsiavut Government does need time to be able to stand on solid ground before taking part in an environmental assessment for a proposed uranium development on Labrador Inuit Lands. One common virtue that Inuit culture is based on is patience. We are an Inuit Government, Mr. Speaker" (Todd Broomfield, NG hansard April 2008). An Inuit Government, according to this perspective, maintains its own timeframe and

does not capitulate to industrial priorities. "For a number of years, exploration companies have come to Nunatsiavut and have tried to set the agenda for us. We were a brand new government and we're being told not only by exploration companies but governments as well 'Get your act together, look progress is here and you guys are unprepared' ....This Bill...send[s] a message to exploration companies, mining companies and other governments that, look, we are in charge here in Nunatsiavut, Mr. Speaker. We are the decision body, we will make the rules that apply to our land. It is our land and we will continue to protect it and we have newfound powers that we will use to ensure that development that takes place will be done so on our terms, Mr. Speaker.... Let [the mining companies] go do their work now. Let them find the techniques that will give us the confidence that perhaps, someday, uranium mining could be accepted in Labrador Inuit Lands" (Tony Andersen, NG Hansard, March 2008).

With the recognition that it was the investors (more than the companies) who were sensitive to the prospects for both exploration potential and political unrest, the NG Minister of Lands and Resources stated, "The message we're trying to send to the investor community is that this is not a free-for-all here" (William Barbour, NG Hansard, April 2008). Unlike the situation in the past, the Nunatsiavut Government now had the ability to control development within Nunatsiavut, and many argued that it should do so carefully and at its own pace: "As Aboriginal people, we have to remember what happened in the past and take our time to decide now," argued one woman (fn, March 2008). According to these views, the long-term perspective and the patience displayed by the Nunatsiavut Government are characteristics of Inuit governance, which stands in

contrast to the capitalism-driven version of modern governance employed elsewhere. These Inuit use the concepts of indigeneity and the value of Inuit cultural difference to defy the dominant control and interests that have historically driven resource decisions in Labrador.

### **10.2 Multiple perspectives: "Protecting our way of life"**

To many Inuit I talked to, the connection between the land and the well-being of future generations is fundamental and must be protected. As in the 1970s, the issue of people's "way of life" was prominent in the debate, but this phrase took on various meanings. For some, protecting the "way of life" entailed protecting the integrity of the land for future generations by not mining it. For others, protecting the "way of life" entailed protecting the viability of living in Nunatsiavut by developing resources to support Inuit jobs, housing, and infrastructure.

Most people made references to the importance of protecting the way of life, the people, and the land in general terms: "At the end of the day, so to speak, it is our children and grandchildren who will still be here in Nunatsiavut. It is what they will inherit from us that will enable them to enjoy Nunatsiavut our beautiful land" (Todd Broomfield, NG Hansard April 2008). "We have to protect our lands and to protect our people, protect our future" (Tony Andersen, NG Hansard, April 2008). A ban on uranium mining, some felt, would allow NG to protect people's health and the land for future generations. The potentially disastrous environmental effects of uranium tailings could destroy the land, water, and wildlife in the vicinity of the mines, and could pose a health



risk. Many felt that this potential harm was not worth the short-term economic benefits of a mine. "The employment benefits are not going to be there forever, so it's really not worth the environmental and the health (risks) and the loss of our traditional hunting areas" (Terry Rice in Hiyate 2007).

For many, "protecting our way of life" entailed protecting the viability of living in Nunatsiavut. The connection between Inuit cultural difference and physically being in Nunatsiavut is again highlighted in these arguments, although in slightly different ways. For some, the use of land for the sustenance of future generations does not preclude resource development, if done properly.

"We're not against development, we see development as providing economic opportunities for beneficiaries that's greatly needed and we see need in communities for infrastructure, for housing, for other projects and maybe revenue from mining can allow us to deliver these programs. But if our environment is contaminated then these things don't really matter. You know, we need to ensure that, first and foremost our land is protected for future generations and the onus is on the Assembly to ensure that we do this" (Todd Broomfield, NG hansard, October 2007).

"I'm for development but not development at all costs. I think we need to ensure that our land is protected for generations and generations to come" (Darryl Shiwak in NG hansard, October 2007).

Some Inuit argued that mining could "help to protect our people" by allowing them to remain in their home communities and "learn their culture by living near the land instead of moving away for work" (fn 2008). Many people on the coast were worried that young people would have to leave the community in order to make a living elsewhere if mining was disallowed. One woman connected this out-migration with the loss of culture,

as young people would not have the opportunity to experience and learn their culture by living in Nunatsiavut and by being taught by elders:

"It's a sin if our children have to move away because they can't get anything here. They're not going to work at the fish plant if there's something better somewhere else....If all the young people have to leave the communities for work, there'll be nothing left to govern. Everything will just die out! Yes, there will be land, but there will be nobody there" (field notes, 2008).

The idea of "protecting our people" by providing the means by which they can remain in Nunatsiavut is used here in a slightly new configuration. According to this perspective, people in Nunatsiavut should be "using the land to its fullest" and using Nunatsiavut's resources to "sustain ourselves in perpetuity" (field notes, 2008). The speaker sees the purpose of Nunatsiavut as governing over people in the region – if everyone leaves, "there'll be nothing left to govern." The land claim agreement represents therefore not so much the recognition of the rights of Labrador Inuit as a government that is responsible for a certain region. If people lose their residency status and (therefore) their culture, the central aspect of the land claim – the Nunatsiavut Government – will have no reason to exist.

Many talked about the difficulties created by the high cost of living and the limited job opportunities on the coast, and how hard it was to make a decent living. It was incomprehensible that the Nunatsiavut Government would consider prohibiting something that could help to improve people's standard of living. "We're always just trying to get ahead. It's easy for people with high paid jobs [at NG] to make these kinds of decisions [to ban developments]. Are they going to give us jobs now?" (field notes, 2008). Many expected the government to provide for people and to improve their

standard of living. As the NG Assembly Member from Postville said, "My people is saying to me 'look, what's Nunatsiavut going to do for me if I have no job tomorrow? Are they going to put food on my table?' and my answer to them is I don't know because I don't know" (Carol Gear, NG Hansard, April 2008).

Some Inuit beneficiaries disputed the use of the idea of traditional Inuit culture and way of life as the basis of decision-making. Given the economic challenges of living on the coast, some people angrily blamed "the hunters" for arguing that NG should ban uranium mining in order to protect *their* way of life (field notes, 2008). As Brinex had done in the 1970s, those who made these assertions questioned the current economic viability and cultural relevance of harvesting. "Trapping is dead. This isn't the 20s or 30s anymore. Good luck supporting your family that way," said one man (field notes, 2008).

For those who did acknowledge the cultural importance of harvesting, some argued that the cost of hunting and fishing required people to have jobs as well: "You can't fish or hunt without money or equipment. Maybe thirty years ago, but not now" (field notes, 2008). References to harvesting activities, in my experience, were most common among those who opposed the moratorium. Unlike the supporters of the ban who mention harvesting activities as only part of the broader category of "our way of life," many who supported mining explicitly questioned the contemporary importance of trapping, especially, or dismissed the current use of the land as "recreational" (field notes, 2008).

Inuit mobilized and manipulated ideas about Inuit cultural difference in this debate in new ways as they struggled over resource management decisions. Many of the

cultural constructs are familiar, such as indigeneity as an alternative to modernity, and were used in familiar ways, such as the idea that Inuit governance provides a counterbalance to the dominant style of capitalist-driven decision-making. The familiar argument that Inuit harvesting practices are undesirable, unproductive, and irrelevant and therefore that the Inuit cultural difference based on these practices is non-existent or fading has also been used in the past. Other constructs, although familiar, such as the central connection between Inuit identity and residence within Nunatsiavut, are being used for new purposes within the neoliberal context, such as justifying resource development on the grounds of cultural protection.

### **10.3 Who is “us”? Membership, place of residence, and economic benefits**

The membership and economic restrictions of the land claim agreement also fueled tensions among Inuit in the debate about the moratorium. Inuit beneficiaries profit from any economic development within Nunatsiavut through royalties to NG, spin-off benefits, and the preferential hiring practices that are a component of Impact and Benefit Agreements. Some Inuit, especially those who live outside Nunatsiavut, supported uranium mining because they wanted to see these benefits as soon as possible. Some expressed a concern that future generations of their families might not benefit from economic development if they lose their Inuit status through intermarriage.<sup>17</sup> The argument that a moratorium is needed to protect “our children” therefore does not resonate with those whose children may not be considered part of “our” children: “When

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<sup>17</sup> In order to have Inuit status under the land claim, people have to prove, among other criteria, that they have a quarter Inuit ancestry (INAC 2005).

we talk about, as the Ordinary Member for Makkovik did, children [and] grandchildren, unfortunately I believe that a lot of the beneficiaries in Upper Lake Melville in 50 years may not see their children's and grandchildren's bloodline recognized. The agreement is what it is, I'm not here to debate that but that is a reality for us – therefore we need these [economic] opportunities [that mining will offer]" (Keith Russell, NG hansard, April 2008).

A number of interviewees told me that the vast majority of people in Upper Lake Melville do not support the moratorium. "North West River is for uranium development," one man told me. "As the last stop on the road [to the mine site], we see business possibilities as a service point. Many beneficiaries' children are not beneficiaries, so the mine gives them a good chance at employment. But the main benefit would be revenues for NG" (fn 31 July 08). "People...are looking for change. They wanted new developments, they wanted, they want new developments, they want revenue. We talk all the time how we are continually facing a deficit in this government and we have an opportunity in front of us. I really think it's an opportunity" (Russell, NG hansard, March 2008). "Upper Lake Melville people complain that [the moratorium] will take away their livelihood – gas, support, transportation, etc. I can't come out against uranium mining if I want to get elected," one political candidate told me (fn 19 April 2008). Some Inuit attribute the enthusiasm for uranium development among many in Upper Lake Melville to the fact that they do not live in the immediate area, and would not have to deal with many of the consequences: "Upper Lake Melville supports uranium mining – they see it as a business opportunity. It doesn't affect them, environmentally" (fn 10 July 2008).

The connection between Inuit identity and residence in Nunatsiavut therefore takes on both a practical and an administrative element in this debate. One's physical presence in the Settlement Area affects one's attachment to the land, and the membership criteria for Nunatsiavut administratively affects the connection. As the last chapter discussed, these criteria connect membership to the Settlement Area both through explicit requirements that beneficiaries have strong connections to Nunatsiavut communities and through the condition that beneficiaries have a quarter Inuit ancestry, which affects many Inuit who have left the Settlement Area.

Opinions about uranium mining are also divided within Nunatsiavut. In the 1970s, most people in Makkovik opposed uranium development, and most people in Postville supported the idea. These divisions based on place of residence were still evident to some extent in 2007-8, although the lines were not explicit, and many in both communities felt otherwise. Many Inuit argued that the ultimate decision should be made by people who live close to the potential mine site, as one resident of Nain commented: "Personally, I don't support having uranium mining on our land, but ultimately it comes down to what the people in Makkovik and Postville want and what an EA [Environmental Assessment] would say. I wouldn't want someone from Postville telling me what to do in Nain, so I'll leave it up to them" (fn 19 April 2008).

#### **10.4 Self-sufficiency and self-improvement: 'Appropriate' economic and political behaviour**

Many people who supported uranium mining justified their position by portraying their employment options on the coast as stark, and often contrasted mining jobs with a livelihood based on harvesting: "The fishery is in trouble, there's no trapping anymore, and hunting is getting to be too expensive. The only option here is to join the workforce and hope for the best" (fn July 2008). "There aren't exactly a lot of options for us on the coast in terms of jobs. Most people want to support their families, and not have to do work projects or get EI [Employment Insurance benefits]" (fn February 08). "A mine would definitely boost the economy of Nunatsiavut. People in Postville need a boost in order to keep living above the poverty line. Everyone knows how much it costs to keep your home going there" (fn February 2008). "Without this mine I don't think there is much of a future in Postville. Do people want to make their living off of make-work projects, just enough to make their stamps, or would they rather have a full-time job making good money? People can't support their family off the land anymore. Those times are long gone" (fn February 2008). Reflecting the neoliberal ideal of the entrepreneurial individual who is responsible for his or her own development and success, some people argued for a stronger sense of individual responsibility so that they would gain the education and develop the skills needed to take advantage of potential mining jobs. "There's more to life than 420 hours of work to get EI. The young people need to get educated, and then come home to get work in the mine, if it goes ahead. We need to take control of our lives" (fn February 2008). Arguments for increased

responsibility over one's future and for self-improvement (through education, for example) were echoed in calls for job training and an improved education system, although they were countered by other perspectives concerning the role of government in providing compensation or jobs to those who might be hurt by a moratorium (fn February 2008).

This neoliberal call for individual responsibility is also evident at the governmental level. The land claim agreement's fiscal structures strongly encourage the Nunatsiavut Government to sustain itself and its programs through revenues that it raises itself. In general terms, the Nunatsiavut Government would gain a 25% share of provincial royalties from development on Labrador Inuit Lands, while only a 5% share of royalties from development on other lands in the settlement area. Because the Michelin site is on Labrador Inuit Lands, the prospect of a 25% share of royalties from a mine was a serious consideration for many. The land claim agreement therefore puts Inuit in a new relationship with the land, and one that is determined by formal economic agreements. Inuit no longer stand in direct opposition to industry or to a government intent on facilitating resource development; as "landlords," the Nunatsiavut Government now has a vested interest in development, as well as the responsibility of protecting Nunatsiavut beneficiaries. The pressure on NG to develop its resources is therefore quite high, and the decision to prevent any uranium mining for three years was made by some members of the assembly only for administrative reasons, and not because they opposed the development of any such mine in the future (field notes 2008). A politician described the pressure on the government to finance itself in this way: "We need economic



development and in a government where we're all aware that the finances are not that great and we will be facing some hard times in the next few years, to delay any process that may give us a light at the end of the tunnel could be extremely detrimental to our success as a government" (Keith Russell, NG Hansard, April 2008).

As a product of the neoliberal context, the land claim agreement therefore promotes particular ways of conceptualizing Nunatsiavut land and resources (Foucault and Senellart 2008; Li 2007). One candidate for the position of NG President in 2008 illustrated the framing of resources as commodities:

"As our North Coast tax base is significantly smaller than what we need to run our self-government, the Nunatsiavut government will be dependant on extracting its natural resources in order to have the funds necessary to sustain our communities and the running of our government. The generation of own source revenue is essential, and right now, mining seems to be the short-term answer. So, even though I am not a mining advocate, I still have to consider it strategically as an income source for government, a source of employment and opportunity for Beneficiaries, and a way to utilize one of our most important assets" (fn, April 2008).

The Nunatsiavut Government should therefore keep this new economic relationship in mind, as "there is no sense in negatively affecting the reputation of our potential business partner [i.e., the exploration company] or the value of our asset" by establishing a moratorium (fn April 2008). Government and corporate interests are aligned, in this perspective, and actions that have a negative impact on industry will likewise have a negative impact on Nunatsiavut. Some Inuit thus endorse the kind of close relationships between government and industry common in neoliberal contexts. Some former NG bureaucrats have further strengthened these relationships by leaving the government to

work as Inuit liaisons for mining companies. As one man from Goose Bay commented, "There was an ultra-conservative movement of environmentalism and people crying about their grandkids and the land, etc., but now that [a former NG bureaucrat] has gone to [work for] Aurora, we'll see uranium mining go full steam ahead" (fn 5 August 2008).

The land claim agreement reorganizes the relationship between Inuit and Nunatsiavut's resources by encouraging development, but the new relationship involves a number of different aspects, and is one that was painstakingly negotiated by the Labrador Inuit Association. Many would argue, as the speeches at the signing ceremony illustrated, that economic self-sufficiency is an integral part of self-determination, and that without generating revenue from its own resources, Nunatsiavut would remain both economically and politically dependent on other governments (Slowey 2008). Increased economic independence would allow the Nunatsiavut Government to fund and control its own programs. It would allow the government to provide adequate services to all beneficiaries, as one politician from Goose Bay argued:

"We've heard today... how people from Nunatsiavut have to come down to Upper Lake Melville to, you know, take advantage of the services that we have down there, the medical care, things like that and yet, you know, we know we have a recognized need for housing. We have a recognized need to get people off welfare. We have people, as you know, the Honorable Minister of Health said before we have people freezing in our own communities! And yet we're going to try and stand up and stop a development which could be in the words of people in this room potentially up to 10 times the size of Voisey's Bay. We missed, I think we missed the train...you know, in terms of getting in and getting the maximum value for the Inuit" (Russell, NG Assembly hansard, March 2008).

The Nunatsiavut Government's ability to control any developments within Nunatsiavut, and especially those on Labrador Inuit Lands, is undoubtedly a significant power, and one that is widely celebrated by almost every Inuit beneficiary that I talked with, regardless of how they felt about uranium mining specifically. The government has been working to develop new legislation and a new land use plan (see Chapter Eleven) that will control environmental and social impacts of resource development and will guide government decision-making. The neoliberal environment has therefore created a complex and contradictory situation for Inuit: the structure of the land claim agreement puts pressure on NG to finance itself, and other governments and industry press the Inuit to develop their resources, but Nunatsiavut Inuit can decide to prohibit, delay, or strictly control certain economic developments if they wish. This new-found ability is especially worrisome to those who have interests in mining, as the next section explores.

### **10.5 Voices from Industry: Citizenship and participation**

Public expectations of corporate social responsibility have changed companies' behaviour radically over the last few decades, both towards local communities and in terms of environmental actions. An environmental monitor for the Nunatsiavut Government commented to me in 2008 that public pressure on companies to act responsibly has changed what he sees in his job: "I find the companies good to work with. They're easy to get along with. They take care with what they're doing. There's the odd fuel spill, etc., but nothing too bad. Sometimes you get one that tries to take short cuts, but not too often. They know they're being watched – and not only by us but by the

public in general" (fn, April 2008). This relatively recent public pressure on companies to conform to certain expectations regarding their social and environmental responsibilities has changed the kinds of interactions between industry and the public in Labrador since even the mid-1990s.

A public meeting organized by mining interests in Goose Bay in February 2008 demonstrated how the mining industry was managing the possibility of a ban on uranium mining in Nunatsiavut. A spokesman from the Newfoundland and Labrador Chamber of Mineral Resources, surrounded by brightly coloured maps, enthusiastically told the crowd at the Shriners' Club that Labrador contains 10% of Canada's minerals by value. The Chamber of Mineral Resources was promoting social and environmental responsibility by holding public meetings so that mining companies could listen to what the public has to say. "We're consulting with communities," he said, "in order to gain the social license to proceed. If the community isn't on side, then nothing happens. We have an ongoing commitment to consultation and to opening up the dialogue. This is about mutual trust." After the draw for the door prizes of an airplane ticket and \$50 gift vouchers (a habitual occurrence at mining-sponsored meetings in the region in those days), the audience was encouraged to talk with the representatives from seven companies, all involved in uranium exploration in Labrador, who stood by their poster displays. I approached one display of especially colourful maps and peered at them in an effort to make sense of the detail.

"Are your mineral holdings on Labrador Inuit Lands?" I asked the company rep, and the only female of the bunch. She pointed out the holdings on the map.

"These are our lands," she said. "They're next to Aurora's deposit."

"But are they on Inuit lands?" She gave me a puzzled look. "Labrador Inuit Lands – owned by the Nunatsiavut Government?" I said.

"Oh, yes. They're on Inuit lands."

The purpose of these meetings, she told me, was to inform people about uranium mining, "which makes it less scary. Change is always scary," she told me. "Just like the road to Rigolet. People are against that but it's just being afraid of change. But the rest of the world is going in this direction, so you have to keep up. It's good to talk to people about the risks of uranium, and get them to understand that there are none."

I moved on to talk with another company's representative, whose maps showed clearly what land was Labrador Inuit Land and what was not.

"We're not here to try to sway the vote in March," he told me, unprompted, and without reference to which vote he was referring. "But exploration would probably stop if the vote goes the wrong way." The Nunatsiavut Assembly's upcoming decision on whether to implement a ban on uranium development was obviously foremost in everyone's minds.

The exploration company in the middle of this debate, Aurora Energy Ltd, was equally worried. "The moratorium would put a fairly tight rein and cast a dark shadow over what development would look like in that area," one company spokesperson said (*Labradorian* 31 March 2008: A4). The company reacted to the debate about its proposed activities by emphasizing its economic contributions to the region and by increasing its public profile. Aurora opened an office in Makkovik (in addition to its existing office in

Postville), and started to issue a newsletter, entitled *Aurora Community*, to communicate its approach to working in the region. "We strive to meet the highest standards of practice for the benefit of both people and the environment in the areas where we work. We believe in being good neighbours and good stewards of the environment" (Aurora Energy, nd). The company included itself in "the community" by providing jobs, funding community events and educational activities ("in support of a variety of worthy local causes with a focus on making meaningful contributions to communities"), and offering opportunities for people to discuss uranium mining with experts. "We realize that our success has been helped by you, the residents of Labrador, who have allowed us to be a part of your community" (Aurora Energy, April 2008: 3; December 2007: 4). In the newsletter published just before the vote on the moratorium, Mark O'Dea, the President and CEO of Aurora, emphasized the company's local involvement: "The Aurora team is proud of the contribution that it has made to the north coast of Labrador and I wanted to share with you an update on our commitment to the community" (Aurora Energy, April 2008: 1).

In the end, the Nunatsiavut Assembly passed the moratorium bill in April, 2008, by a vote of 8-7 – a close vote that illustrates the conflicting pressures on Assembly members – and thereby prohibited uranium development on Labrador Inuit Lands for three years. The decision caused Aurora's stock to immediately plummet about 35% in value, and rumours circulated of the dire effects that the moratorium would have on the summer's exploration season (field notes, 2008). The provincial government was publicly quiet on the issue during the debate, as the proposed moratorium was for Labrador Inuit

Lands only. Immediately after the bill passed in the Nunatsiavut Assembly, however, the province issued a press release stressing that it was open to uranium mining: "Uranium mining still ok in rest of NL, says province" (*Labradorian* 21 April 2008: A15).

After the moratorium bill was passed, Aurora resolved to increase its public engagement, and made renewed efforts to include itself in the idea of community: "It's our focus now to work with the Nunatsiavut Government and the community to gain support" (*Labradorian* 26 May 2008: A1). The company "strived to be a 'good neighbour', participating in community events and working with local residents to understand our best opportunities for contribution and collaboration" (Aurora, November 2008: 3). It also "supported community spirit" by contributing to sports and community events, and tried to maintain a high – and positive – public profile. Aurora explicitly claimed a role as a community member: "By acting as responsible members of nearby communities we build lasting relationships with residents that make our developments more sustainable over time" (Aurora 2011). Through this discourse of "community," the company was attempting to appear as if it were expressing local interests instead of imposing ambitions that originated from elsewhere (Richter 2004).

The company also continued to minimize differences between it and "the community" by expressing sentiments similar to those used by Inuit in other political situations to describe themselves: "Aurora shares the goal of careful stewardship of the land that Labrador Inuit have been a part of for over 5000 years.... In light of a growing world demand for clean, safe energy, Aurora is looking to the future benefits of moving forward in the spirit of co-operation with the people of North Coast Labrador" (Aurora

Energy, July 2008: 1). At an industry conference in June 2008, Aurora CEO Mark O'Dea described how a skidoo trip from Goose Bay to Makkovik opened his eyes "to how well people on the coast are connected to the land. We know how deeply Inuit care about land, and we share that passion – we share the common goal of protecting the land forever" (in June 2008). As other chapters have illustrated, stewardship and co-operation, in addition to community, were some of the foundations of Inuit political and moral discourse during land claims negotiations. The company also tries to fit its industrial activities into Labrador life by arguing that "mining is not new," and that Inuit have long been involved in the production of minerals:

"Ramah chert may have been Labrador's first export. Both the Innu and the Inuit have a long history of using these materials and of traveling long distances to acquire them. Modern mining has similar goals. We want to find minerals and metals that occur naturally in the earth, extract them safely and turn them into useful products" (Aurora Energy Ltd. 2008).

The exploration company constructs its own image to align with the interests and the moral authority of Inuit, in the attempt to build consensus in the region for future uranium development. By co-opting the cultural constructs that have been so valuable for the Inuit's struggle, the company attempts to frame itself within a familiar and attractive context that sidelines the actual political and economic ramifications of its actions in Nunatsiavut (Cooper 2005; Li 2007; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Roseberry 1996).

The reference to Inuit in the last quote, however, is one of the few times that Aurora statements use the ethnic term. "Community members" or "residents" are the most common phrases used to describe Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, and the "North Coast" is used instead of "Nunatsiavut." The use of these non-political terms could be seen as a



strategy to neutralize potential sources of anti-industrial solidarity. Aboriginal rights have been dealt with by the land claim agreement, and are, in a legal sense, no longer nebulous and no longer potentially threatening to economic development, but they still can act as a passionate focal point. An emphasis on (or even common mention) of Aboriginal rights, Nunatsiavut, or Inuit identity could potentially be used against the company's interests, if (and when) Inuit use the concept of Aboriginal rights to build sentiment against industrial activities and to build opposing constructs that would pit industry against Inuit. The concept of community, on the other hand, is more flexible and permeable, and could potentially involve the company. While Aurora will likely never be considered as an Inuit company, it is working hard to become accepted as part of "the community," and to blur the lines between itself and the Inuit.

Aurora is also especially active in constituting these "community members" into participatory citizens who decide for themselves how mining could be done in an acceptable way. Under the shadow of Nunatsiavut's political and moral power, where the image of Aboriginal protests against Voisey's Bay is still apparent, Aurora is trying to contain and manage Inuit objections to uranium mining (Foucault 1991). The company established a community panel, and holds numerous community meetings about its plans and the benefits of mining development. Aurora assembled a group of eight "community members, including youth, elders, and volunteers, [with] expertise as hunters, fishers, business owners, health care workers, educators, and in community development" to sit on the Michelin Project Community Panel, and hired a prominent LIA and NG bureaucrat to chair its meetings (Aurora, November 2008: 1). The company hoped to use the panel

to stimulate discussion about uranium mining, and to promote deeper understandings among community members. However, as the chair later told me, the panel was not altogether successful. None of the members were adamantly opposed to uranium mining, and so the panel did not elicit the vigorous debates that Aurora hoped to cultivate. It also therefore failed to contain and control Inuit dissension with its project.

The company has used other techniques to quell dissent through the incorporation of Inuit interests and participation. The biggest environmental issue with the potential mine is how to deal with the tailings, and Aurora tackled the issue by offering residents the choice of one of five tailings disposal options through its "Designing for Acceptance" initiative. In comparing the options further, Aurora analyzed a number of factors, and claims to have given equal validation to current hunting and trapping activities in the area and financial considerations (although of course rendering harvesting activities into economic valuations is itself problematic). The final decision will be the result of both engineering analysis and input from residents. The company hopes that transparent decision-making and its valuation of Inuit interests will ultimately translate into Inuit consent for its plans.

The company frames its role in Nunatsiavut as helping to achieve Inuit goals of self-sufficiency for individuals, families and the Nunatsiavut Government by building a strong economy. Like Brinex and VBNC before it, Aurora positions people as independent beings, capable of making responsible choices for themselves about the potential mine, but the company works much harder at engaging people to participate in Aurora-led decision-making, and to resolve conflicts together. As Charles Hale describes

in Latin America, government and business interests are slowly embracing the framework of cultural difference, as they “find that cultural rights, when carefully delimited, not only pose little challenge to the forward march of the neoliberal project but also induce the bearers of these rights to join in the march” (Hale 2005: 4).

Inuit beneficiaries view Aurora’s activities from various perspectives. While some are very supportive of the company’s involvement in local communities, others are more skeptical. One woman in Nain commented to me that uranium companies knew what they were doing when they pulled out of the area after the moratorium vote: “They’re just riling people up and getting them to support mining. Give them a year or two years and they’ll be back with more support – just before the three years is up” (fn 19 April 2008). Yet despite her mistrust, she expressed ambivalence about the project: “It’s too bad that it wasn’t another mineral. My parents had to scrape together a living, and right now there isn’t any future for my children. It would be nice to have a reason for going to school and doing training” (fn 19 April 2008).

## **10.6 Conclusion**

The political, economic, and social ramifications of the production of cultural difference within a neoliberal context are thus multiple and often contradictory. New and conflicting interests and roles continue to fuel the fierce internal debate about uranium mining among Nunatsiavut Inuit. The land claims framework has created new political relationships that place responsibility on the Labrador Inuit to manage and finance a new government, and to do so by developing the small fraction of lands that Inuit had chosen

for themselves. As "landlords," they now have a vested interest in development, as well as the responsibility of protecting Nunatsiavut beneficiaries. With these new roles come new ways of imagining the land (as "assets" for instance), and new ways of relating to one another as members of an Inuit Government, as beneficiaries, and as citizens. Some Inuit are now beneficiaries, although future generations may not retain this status. Harsh economic prospects create tensions between people with varying viewpoints about indigeneity and the role of the government. In the midst of this debate, Aurora Energy Ltd. offers consistently positive information and images about the solution that uranium mining offers to individuals, families, and governments.

The consistent focus of industry, government, and many individuals is on the ability of the Nunatsiavut Government and Labrador Inuit to control the outcome of the uranium issue. Inuit are now "empowered" to engage in decision-making processes and to decide what their own futures will hold. Yet, as Shore and Wright (1997) argue, this focus on new-found "empowerment" can obscure many underlying issues that the new governance structures have not resolved. The ideal neoliberal citizen – self-managing, self-governing, self-sufficient – is empowered to work as a partner in management and to take responsibility. In this "project of self-improvement...any discussion of poverty as inequality or disadvantage has been erased from the discourse" (Shore and Wright 1997: 231). Larger issues such as the lingering inequalities created by the northern resettlements, for instance, are overshadowed by talk of individual choice and self-governance, responsibility to improve oneself, and job training. The assumption is that

Inuit must change in order to improve, and this improvement often involves increased participation in resource development (Irlbacher-Fox 2009).

While many embrace the opportunity to engage in “self-improvement” and development projects, many others feel further marginalized by this emphasis on empowerment, as a woman from Nain told me:

“Most [Inuit] live in too much depression to really do anything, can’t understand English most of the time and do not benefit from programs and services. It’s sickening, you hear that saying life is an illusion, well that’s what it seems like – educated in parts, no access to money yet being blamed for a lot of money gone on nothing....The Inuit population always seems as though [they] are always in the position of a high price chip: worth a lot but never really benefiting from all what is happening. People say they want the money instead [of programs], they say the leaders don’t listen and they only take care of their own family and many don’t like it, including me” (fn July 2008).

The social and economic reality for many Inuit is harsh, and the ramifications of the production of Inuit cultural difference have had very little visible influence for many: The Inuit are like “a high price chip: worth a lot but never really benefiting from all what is happening.” As this chapter has shown, the production of Inuit difference has generated tensions about the variable political and economic benefits that characterize both the Inuit/non-Inuit distinction and the internal differences between Inuit leaders and other Inuit. Inuit are now “empowered” to control their own government and region, but, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith says about a Maori situation, they are perhaps “made responsible for their own oppression and freedom” (Smith 2007: 345). The prospect of uranium in Nunatsiavut has caused this new and conflicting situation to be illuminated and bitterly experienced.

## Chapter Eleven

### Land use planning in Namsdalvatn, 2007–2011

In the new land claims context, the production of cultural difference enters a new nation. As we saw in the last two chapters, the structure of the land claims agreement unifies various of Inuit cultural constructs and connects them directly to economic or political implications. Struggles over cultural meanings and their material and political effects continue, despite (or perhaps because of) their formalization. The land use planning process in Namsdalvatn offered us an opportunity to further analyze this struggle within the governance of the region.

The Ektelvik Inuit Land Claims Agreement creates new roles and relationships for and between Inuit, industry, and governments. The agreement establishes a new 'cooperative governance approach' in the region by requiring that the Namsdalvatn government and the provincial government work together in developing a land use plan for Namsdalvatn. Even though jurisdiction and ownership rights in most of the Southern Area were divided between the two governments under the agreement, co-managed land use planning offers an opportunity to approach Namsdalvatn land management from a new perspective, built on ideas from both Inuit and non-Inuit participants. The land use planning process therefore provides a forum for intercultural dialogue and a chance to discuss new approaches to governance. How does decision-making based on Inuit cultural difference negotiate the new governance structure? Is this new form of governance based on and limited by the cultural constructs explored throughout this

## **Chapter Eleven:**

### **Land use planning in Nunatsiavut, 2007 - 2011**

In the post-land claims context, the production of cultural difference enters a new milieu. As we saw in the last two chapters, the structure of the land claims agreement codifies versions of many cultural constructs and connects them directly to economic or political implications. Struggles over cultural meanings and their material and political effects continue, despite (or perhaps because of) their formalization. The land use planning process in Nunatsiavut offered me an opportunity to further analyze this struggle within the governance of the region.

The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement creates new roles and relationships for and between Inuit, industry, and governments. The agreement establishes a new cooperative governance approach in the region by requiring that the Nunatsiavut government and the provincial government work together on developing a land use plan for Nunatsiavut. Even though jurisdiction and ownership rights to most of the Settlement Area were divided between the two governments under the agreement, co-managed land use planning offers an opportunity to approach Nunatsiavut land management from a new perspective, built on ideas from both Inuit and non-Inuit participants. The land use planning process therefore provides a forum for intercultural dialogue and a chance to develop new approaches to governance. How does decision-making based on Inuit cultural difference negotiate the new governance structure? Is this new form of governance based on and limited by the cultural constructs explored throughout this

dissertation, or does it move beyond them to negotiate new understandings and create new forms of planning and of self-government? What impact does the political structure have on the introduction of any kind of cultural difference? This chapter examines the prospects (and shortcomings) of the production of cultural difference in land use planning, and explores the experience of the co-management planning board in its attempt to build a new planning approach from the optimism and the new perspectives of Inuit self-government.

### **11.1 Genesis of planning in Nunatsiavut**

The original idea of co-managed land use planning emerged in the land claims negotiations as a compromise between the Labrador Inuit Association and the provincial government. During the negotiations in the 1990s, the question of land rights and ownership was proving to be difficult. Inuit leaders pressured the Newfoundland and Labrador government to grant them ownership of large areas of land in northern Labrador, but the provincial government refused, and the talks stalled. But then a compromise was reached: in return for a reduced land quantum of Inuit-owned lands, the Inuit and the province would co-manage land use planning for the entire region (Toby Andersen, pers. comm. 2008; Bob Warren, pers. comm. 2008). The Inuit would therefore be able to influence the type and extent of human activities permitted in most of Nunatsiavut, and the province would retain ownership of the majority of the co-managed region. This compromise was difficult for both the provincial government and the Labrador Inuit Association to sell internally. Land use planning lacked support from



provincial government officials at the administrative level because politicians wished to maintain their discretionary control over land issues (Bob Warren, pers. comm. 2008). Many Inuit were very unhappy with the small amount of land offered as Inuit-owned lands, and the Labrador Inuit Association had to convince its Inuit members that the compromise was worthwhile. Eventually, efforts on both sides to convince internal members were successful, and a form of co-managed land use planning was included in the land claims agreement.

The final agreement requires that the Nunatsiavut government and the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador jointly develop and approve "a single, comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area" (INAC 2005: 10.3.8). The Regional Planning Authority (RPA) was formed to oversee the development of this plan, and consists of two NG appointed representatives and two provincially appointed representatives. The appointees were chosen partly based on their knowledge and experience in land use planning, and the RPA hired a certified planner to assist in the drafting of the plan. Under the land claim agreement, the RPA is given three years to complete the plan, at which point they will disband.

The RPA was the first regional planning authority in the province, and is unique in its involvement of two governments and the need to conform to the various pieces of legislation (the provincial Urban and Rural Planning Act, the Labrador Inuit Lands Act, and the Labrador Inuit Lands Claim Agreement). As the plan involves only lands under the jurisdiction of the provincial and Nunatsiavut governments, it excludes all lands and tidal waters under federal jurisdiction, but includes all islands. This awkward adherence

to jurisdictional boundaries creates both logistical problems and ontological friction, as will be discussed later. The Nunatsiavut planning process is also unique because the plan will be legally binding, once both governments ratify the plan.

The process of finalizing a ratified final plan is proving to be time-consuming, and, at the time of writing (2011), a final plan has yet to be agreed upon. The three-year period allocated for developing the plan has been extended, and the various consultations with Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, communities, and both governments continue to result in vastly different opinions and perspectives. The ultimate goal of the process – the mutual acceptance of the RPA's plan by both governments – is, at this point, far from certain. Participants in the land use planning process in Nunatsiavut are engaging and negotiating ideas about Inuit governance and resource management, but it is the political structures of the land claims agreement and the planning process that are emerging as perhaps the strongest influence on the result, as I will discuss. First, however, I will examine land use planning within a broader governance context.

## **11.2 Land use planning and indigenous peoples**

Governance structures created through land claims agreements often work to erase cultural difference by imposing established and hegemonic Euro-Canadian concepts and procedures on the ways in which bureaucracies and governments can function (Nadasdy 2003; Spaeder and Feit 2005). Alternative forms of governance and different cultural concepts are excluded and ignored through an often benign-looking and ostensibly apolitical process that may actually work instead to perpetuate forms of

inequality. The question then arises: Does this use of modern governance techniques by indigenous groups necessarily signify state hegemonic control through coercion, or are the groups engaging or appropriating dominant concepts for their own purposes (Scott 2001; Cooper 2005; Tsing 2005)? Can equality-in-difference exist within a land claims context without tendencies towards either assimilation or domination (Escobar 2006)?

Many scholars, following Scott (1998) and Foucault (1991), describe examples of land use planning that illustrate the modernist planning project as a technique of colonial spatial governance (Lane 2006; Porter 2007; Sandercock 1998; Moore 2005). Throughout recent history, many colonial state governments have used planning tools for purposes of territorial acquisition and the formation of citizen-subjects, and have used land use planning to further dispossess indigenous peoples from their lands and resources. In Labrador, as we have seen, modern planning projects have produced massive dispossessions, relocations, and projects of containment, justified through appeals to ideas of cultural difference, progress, productivity, and the "public interest." The public perception of planning in Labrador has been one of distrust, as a woman from North West River told a planning conference in 1981:

"Too often the ways of a southern society are thrust upon northern communities without considering that these people are the long-term inhabitants of the north.... Many people do not come to public meetings and hearings because they are illiterate and feel that they will not understand. Other people refuse to come because they do not trust the proponents. Very few government people, planners, researchers and technicians really have the people's will at heart. Even if you are sincere in your business, you must remember that you follow upon a history of several decades in which people flew in and did not listen to the local

advice, then performed a disservice to the community”  
(Clara Michelin in Wegenast 1981: 140).

In addition to the critique of planning as a governmental technique, a growing number of studies have criticized the colonial and ontological foundations of planning as being foreign to and suppressing alternative ways of thinking (Scott 1998), and specifically indigenous perspectives (Howitt and Suchet-Pearson 2006; Lane and Corbett 2005; Lane 1997, 2001, 2006; Porter 2007; Nadasdy 2003). These studies have documented a number of cases in which the planning process has rendered indigenous peoples or their interests invisible through various methods of statecraft, or has incorporated indigenous perspectives in a way that does not challenge or modify the existing governmental structure, and thus reproduces colonial relationships.

The potential of planning to actually assist indigenous peoples in achieving their own goals in land governance has not been as extensively explored, although a number of scholars are increasingly investigating the possibilities (Lane 2001, 2006; Hibbard 2006; Lane and Hibbard 2005; Porter 2007, 2008). Progressive planning theory holds that planning has much potential for social change, and should therefore be a useful tool in situations of social inequality: “It has a future-seeking dimension that means it is concerned with improving the circumstances of human existence, commonly expressed as equality and sustainability. Most important is the emancipatory role of planning, its potential to *transform* the structural dimensions of oppression” (Lane and Hibbard 2005: 172). Planning should embody “an ethical commitment to the future, a commitment to make a difference in the world,” as John Friedmann argues (Friedmann 2002: 151). Planning theorists such as Leonie Sandercock maintain that it is important to consider

what boundaries we place around planning: If planning is seen simply as the profession, "then only those who qualify as 'professionals' are seen as relevant agents," and the ideas and actions of others are systematically excluded (Sandercock 1998: 7). The narrative of planning as a rather heroic and progressive movement, led by its professionals, can lead to myopic approaches to planning that exclude or overlook alternative voices, approaches, and expertise, and ignore the impact that conventional (and non-progressive) planning may have on various people (Sandercock 1998). A more inclusive approach to planning is illustrated by Michael Hibbard (2006) and Ted Jojola (1998) in their descriptions of how some American Indian Nations have been employing planning as a tool for resistance and resurgence for generations, but much of the literature has focused on planning as a state-imposed tool in situations in which indigenous peoples have relatively little political power and/or recognized rights to land ownership and management. In some situations, of course, this balance of power is changing, and Nunatsiavut is a prime example of a region over which indigenous people assert many rights. The transformative potential of planning may well emerge in Nunatsiavut.

On approaching this research, however, I initially took another view. I had immersed myself in the critical literature on the experiences of indigenous peoples in co-management arrangements and in planning contexts, and I aimed to discover and analyze how the planning process co-opted and mutated Inuit perspectives and interests into furthering state goals. But I modified my approach when I began to better understand the participants' perceptions of the situation. After a year or so of sitting in on RPA meetings, I worked with Keith Chaulk, one of the Inuit members on the Authority, to

write a paper together about our observations of the process. We went back and forth with drafts of the paper, and Keith consistently challenged my insistence that the planning process was structured in a way that put Inuit participation at a disadvantage and that planning only furthered the state goals of economic development. Not entirely true, he argued: the Labrador Inuit Association had conscientiously negotiated the planning process into the final agreement, and Inuit were now using it as a tool to protect what they wanted to protect, and to develop what they wished to develop. Although he never said it outright, I think he found my insinuation that Inuit were being co-opted by the process diminished the value of the tough choices made first by Inuit negotiators and then by the Inuit beneficiaries themselves in their ratification of the agreement. Negotiations for the land claims agreement had involved a series of difficult decisions and concessions made by both the LIA and the provincial government, but the agreement does provide the Nunatsiavut government with a substantial role in making land use decisions either in conjunction with other governments or on its own. Land use planning, therefore, should be seen as an opportunity to initiate new discussions about innovative ways to approach land governance (Procter and Chaulk 2012).

### **11.3 Nunatsiavut co-managed land use planning**

Co-managed land use planning between the Nunatsiavut and provincial governments offers great possibilities for negotiated consensus and shared decision-making, but it is constrained by a number of structural issues that work to marginalize certain perspectives and interests. Many Inuit ontological understandings – whether

mobilized as cultural constructs in political struggles or not – are rendered external to the land use planning process by the structural limitations of governmental and administrative paradigms. One main issue is the demarcated and inflexible jurisdictional boundaries that are outlined in the land claims agreement and in federal law. The federal jurisdiction of the ocean is one such example, and the division in land jurisdictions between the provincial and Nunatsiavut governments is another.

As elsewhere in Canada, the ocean and its resources are under the jurisdiction of the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, while land usually falls under provincial jurisdiction. However, this conceptual division of the environment is not a model shared by Labrador Inuit, who consider the sea ice to be an extension of the land (Williamson 1997; Brice-Bennett 1977b; Mulrennan and Scott 2001). From late autumn to early summer, land-fast sea ice forms along the Labrador coast, and provides many important traveling routes and harvesting opportunities. Sea ice was specifically included in the original land claim proposal as an area of importance to the Inuit, but the other governments failed to recognize this interest during the land claims negotiations. In the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, Inuit negotiated the right to travel and harvest on the sea ice, but the federal government refused to concede any rights to ownership or governance beyond an advisory role. The land use plan, as a creation of the final agreement, is required to follow these jurisdictions, and has no power to control activities on sea ice. The plan therefore officially includes coastal regions and islands, but, incongruously, not the water or sea ice that surround them. As one RPA member said, “It doesn’t make sense to cut out the federal jurisdiction of the ocean and sea ice – it’s a

jurisdictional crack. It was the same with Voisey's Bay – shipping was never really assessed [in the environmental impact assessment]. No one except Inuit were concerned about the use of ice. We had to fight to get the company to understand the impact of the shipping route on people" (RPA notes, October 2008). RPA discussions have led to the inclusion of references in the plan to the importance of traditional land uses on sea ice and the need to consider these uses when considering potential developments and transportation links, but the plan has no real authority to control sea ice issues.

The jurisdictional divisions in land between the Nunatsiavut government and the provincial government provide another potential impediment to implementing new and widespread planning policies in Nunatsiavut. Labrador Inuit Lands ("LIL"), under NG jurisdiction and partial ownership, comprise 15,799 sq. km of land, while the Settlement Area lands under provincial jurisdiction and ownership ("LISA outside LIL") comprise 47,021 sq. km. (see Map 1.1 or Map 11.3). Although the co-managed land use planning process is meant to transcend these jurisdictional boundaries, and to provide a comprehensive and cohesive plan for the entire region, the jurisdictions may yet play a role, as I will discuss later. Nonetheless, all members of the RPA are attempting to develop a plan that prioritizes Inuit interests and is not guided by jurisdictional distinctions. The Nunatsiavut and the provincial government each appointed two members of the RPA, but these members are otherwise independent of either government and are not tied to policy restrictions or other governmental considerations. There was some talk in early meetings about different approaches that the two governments might take towards the plan and towards the lands under their own jurisdictions, but RPA



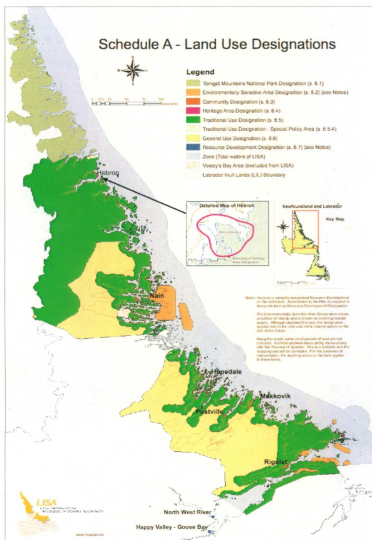
members initially tried to develop a plan that was blind to these different land types. The discussion in a meeting in May 2009 illustrates the RPA's approach (with provincial government appointees designated as P1 and P2, and Nunatsiavut government appointees designated as N1 and N2 throughout this chapter):

P2: "Is there a boundary between LIL and LISA in that area? There'll be a number of [mineral] claim areas within the Traditional Use [designation] area, and you know what the provincial government's like – they don't want to exclude anything. I don't think that we should base our decision on what the provincial government will think at all, but we should look at this. Traditional Use [designation] will fall into both."

Planner: "I didn't use LIL or LISA as a factor when choosing the designations."

P2: "We should have no LIL or LISA designations within the plan – it should be a comprehensive plan" (RPA notes May 2009).

The attempt to ignore jurisdictional boundaries aims to ensure that Inuit priorities are applied throughout the region, and not simply to the relatively small area covered by Labrador Inuit Lands. Further discussion complicated this approach, however, when it was pointed out that Inuit had chosen some Labrador Inuit Lands during land claims negotiations for cultural and harvesting reasons, and had chosen other land for its mineral potential. The RPA agreed that it was important to discover these motives, and to take them into consideration (RPA notes May 2009). Although the goal of developing a comprehensive plan that was not based on jurisdictional boundaries was important, therefore, the RPA was willing to acknowledge some jurisdictional distinctions.



**Map 11.1:** Land Use Designations for Regional Land Use Plan, Jan. 2010 (from RPA 2010)

#### **11.4 Inuit perspectives in land use planning**

As one of its first priorities, the RPA endeavours to include Inuit perspectives into the draft plan, and to adapt planning to Inuit realities. All Regional Planning Authority members strongly support the vision that the Nunatsiavut plan will be based specifically on Inuit goals and concerns. The translation of these goals into the planning framework, however, often requires modifications that illustrate planning's structural foundations and limitations. In an early discussion of the plan's goals and principles, RPA members talked about various ways to frame people's relationship with land use. One provincial appointee summarized a number of phrases that had been used in the meeting:

P2: "So what is the goal? To optimize the use of natural resources? Or what have we said – wise economic use, maximization, for the benefit of the people, where it doesn't have negative effects, only in environmentally sensitive manner, done sequentially where possible. How about 'Natural resources will be used to the maximum benefit of the residents of Nunatsiavut'?"

N2: "I see nothing here about the Inuit reliance on resources for food and for ceremonial purposes."

P1: "Would that fall under health?"

P2: "We could say what our concerns are based on health and quality of life. How about 'Natural resources will be used to maximize benefits, in an environmentally sensitive manner, and will take health concerns into consideration.' How do you feel about that?"

N2: "It seems very general. I'd like to see more specifically based on Labrador Inuit and their priorities for LIL. I want a plan that recognizes the significance of resources and the Inuit reliance on the land to maintain our culture. I want to develop a plan that allows Inuit to live as Inuit."

"I'll write this all up," said the planner (RPA notes April 2008).

As the process continued over the next few months, the RPA and the planner rendered this goal amenable to the planning process by stating in the draft plan: "Inuit have a strong desire to retain Inuititut, traditional knowledge, cultural, spiritual, and historical ties to the land. To accomplish this, they require a sustainable supply of country food which in turn requires protection of *land* in the all-inclusive Inuit understanding of the word" (Draft Regional Land Use Plan Dec 2009:12, emphasis in original). The RPA then identified three main issues that would guide the plan's designations: the Inuit desire to have a sustainable supply of country food, the potential for tourism, and the potential for mineral development. In order to address the first issue, the RPA proposed the use of a Traditional Use designation. This designation prohibits mining and destructive land uses, and the RPA has applied it to the primary area where "Inuit continue to live, gather, hunt and trap for country food." This area (as identified in early drafts) consists of a linear strip along the coast, as well as coastal islands, caribou calving habitat, and waterfowl nesting areas (see Maps 11.1 and 11.2). Under the land claims agreement, Inuit have the right to pursue their traditional land use activities throughout Nunatsiavut. The Traditional Use designation areas are not the only places where harvesting can occur, but it establishes protected habitat where land use can be controlled.

On the one hand, the Traditional Use designation acknowledges the cultural and economic value that many Inuit place in harvesting, and which has historically been overlooked and undermined by government authorities (Procter 2012; Ames 1977; Usher 1982). The possibility that the province might agree to favour Aboriginal harvesting practices over development would be an important breakthrough for Aboriginal peoples in Labrador. The change in focus illustrated by the RPA discussions – from “maximizing benefits” and “optimizing the use of natural resources” to an emphasis on cultural values and intertwined social, spiritual, and economic interests – demonstrates the RPA members’ willingness to understand each other and to prioritize Inuit goals.

On the other hand, the use of the Traditional Use designation reflects the structural limitations of a planning framework. The ontological framework of planning translates a broad, cultural goal into a narrow, economic aspect that can more easily be incorporated into the process. Whereas Inuit aspire to “retain Inuititut, traditional knowledge, cultural, spiritual, and historical ties to the land,” and to “allow Inuit to live as Inuit,” the Traditional Use designation is designed to protect habitat in order to maintain “a sustainable supply of country food.” The plan thus incorporates only those aspects of Inuit values that can be framed in economic or productive terms (a “sustainable level of country food” and harvesting activities).

Perhaps planners find that incorporating definable economic activities in delineated spaces fits their methodologies better than the incorporation of larger and non-quantifiable cultural relationships with the environment. However, harvesting activities are only one facet of a broader cultural framework that includes sharing, kinship,

spirituality, intergenerational learning, shared values, and a relationship with the land (Usher et al. 1995; Nuttall et al. 2005). Equating Inuit interests to "harvesting" alone disavows the depth and breadth of the cultural values that are associated with this activity. The Traditional Use designation is also a static approach that does not adjust to the variability of factors related to the continued vitality of harvesting, such as wildlife population fluctuations and movements, global markets, seasonal and climatic variability, and changing harvesting patterns. A less prescriptive and more flexible approach that relates to other factors might better address broader issues involved with the vitality of harvesting and the range of issues related to it, such as political support for the harvesting economy, ensuring Inuit access to the land, and maintaining widespread ecological integrity. Of course, some may argue that these wider issues are outside the purview of land use planning, but that is debatable. A limited, conventional version of planning may be aimed simply at determining suitable land uses, but a more progressive planning practice can encompass broader political, economic, and social issues, and can even act "to transform the structural dimensions of oppression" by changing the ways that the human-environment relationship is governed (Lane and Hibbard 2005: 172; Lane 2006).

The potential of planning to encompass broad issues, to adapt itself to new perspectives, and to engender social transformation exists, but it may not be realized. In the RPA's experience, some suggestions about alternative approaches to planning were not translated into the draft plan at all. Although the RPA discussions covered many possibilities, I will focus here on two issues that both relate to planning's tendency to favour simplification and abstraction over complexity and flexibility. During one

meeting, RPA members discussed the inflexible nature of land use designations, and explored alternative ways of planning how land could be used (RPA notes Oct08). A land use designation is used to demarcate areas of land for which a certain range of land uses is allowed, and plans often use a number of designations to encompass different land uses. The RPA's draft plans, for instance, have used up to seven designations at various stages (see Maps 11.1 and 11.2). Some RPA members argued that designations are applied to large areas of land where they may not be suitable at all times. One observer to the meeting (an NG bureaucrat with experience in land use planning in Nunavut) described how this situation was dealt with in another Inuit jurisdiction. He explained that the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board in central Nunavut wanted to protect the caribou calving areas, but the Nunavut government wanted economic development, so they agreed to have temporary protection from exploration activities in the calving grounds between May 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>. This arrangement would not provide adequate protection once mining goes beyond exploration, but it did provide some flexibility in land use designations in terms of temporal issues. The RPA discussed the possibility of applying this approach to its draft plan.

N1: "Time is just as important as space – for animals and for people. But it would be difficult to give that level of protection in blanket statements for other species, like some migratory birds. Or caribou this February will not be the same as next year."

P1: "Time is important. I've never seen that in a plan."

P2: "But how would you do that? Have a corridor here this year, then there the next?"

N2: "My problem with the corridor idea is that this year it will be different than next year."

The issue was not discussed further, the consensus being that it would be too difficult to adjust the use of designations to fit temporal conditions.

The discussion then expanded into which of the three factors identified in the October 2008 draft (the environment, health and quality of life of Inuit and non-Inuit, and economic development) should be paramount when making land use decisions.

P1: "For the environment goal, we should have stronger wording. 'To protect' ...but from what? There's been a strong emphasis on environment in our discussions, so it should be in these objectives. 'To protect from future development'? Or 'conflict between developments'? The environment should be at a higher level than the other stuff."

N1: "But I'm not sure we can do that. Terrestrial animals walk."

N2: "I'm just wondering about that same goal, 'That the environment within LISA be protected for future generations'. But what about today? We're going to be using wildlife and the land, etc."

N1: "Two departments in NG, environment and economic development, have different mandates, and will have conflicts. They need a way to resolve their conflicts."

P2: "This plan will establish areas that are open for development, and those areas to be protected."

N1: "So is the environment paramount?"



N2: "For me, you can't separate environment and health. Social issues and quality of life are tied closely with the environment. You can't take us out of it – that's us. Our way of life, we're as much a part of the environment as the animals."

P1: "So environment is the priority, and people are part of this – not economic development."

P2: "But income reflects back on quality of life."

N1: "This should be based on consultations. Is it up to us to decide? We need to have a working document. It's difficult to do this in a bullet. We need to have a way of incorporating what [N2] said about the way Inuit see themselves in the environment, and the linkages between these three areas" (RPA notes Oct08).

In the drafts that followed, the RPA tried to encompass a broad understanding of the Inuit relationship with the environment, but many of these issues remained unaddressed in the sections of the plan that used the "bullet" format, which one member commented was too brief a form to fully articulate complex ideas. The environmental goal remains, "To protect the environment within LISA for future generations," and the Inuit member's concern that advocating environmental protection over other goals might preclude current Inuit use of the land and wildlife was dealt with only in the comment that the plan needed a way to resolve conflicts when making decisions (RPA August 2010: 41). As a result of these discussions, the statement about the relative importance of the three factors was modified to read, "The environment, health and quality of life shall be considered paramount where a potential conflict may arise between goals and

objectives" (RPA August 2010: 41). The initial statement was that "the environment shall be considered paramount followed by health and quality of life" (RPA 2008: 3).

In both examples, the structure of the planning process encouraged RPA members to reduce complexity and flexibility into standardized distinctions and abstractions that do not necessarily reflect reality. Although it was often (but not always) Inuit members (or in one case, an Inuk bureaucrat) who raised ideas about alternatives or criticisms about the lack of fit of existing practices or concepts, all members tackled these ideas openly and thoughtfully in the ensuing discussions. The suggestion that land use designations could and should be used with temporal factors in mind was eventually rejected because it would create too much uncertainty if the situation and the designation kept changing. Likewise, the RPA recognized that the distinctions made between the three factors of environment, social/health issues, and economic development, and the relative importance then assigned to each were arbitrary and unsuitable, but the members felt that they needed to use an abstract mechanism to guide decisions about land use. The time restraints on the RPA to develop the plan within a certain amount of time, the lack of detailed data about specific environmental conditions and land use, and the reliance on government bodies to make land use decisions based on the plan in the future (as opposed to a formal arrangement to involve widespread discussion) undoubtedly pressured the RPA to adopt more conventional practices of planning, and the opportunity to explore alternative approaches to planning on these issues, at least, was not pursued.

### **11.5 Public input**

The RPA sought other perspectives on its draft plan through a number of different methods. As specified in the land claim agreement (INAC 2005: Chapter 10), community residents and the Nunatsiavut and provincial governments review and comment on the plan at various stages of the drafting process. After consultations and revisions, the two governments will have the opportunity to modify the plan as it relates to their own jurisdictions before approving it. Once the plan has been finalized and approved by Nunatsiavut and the province, it is legally binding on both governments.

Although the initial plan was that the planner would spend much of his time traveling in Nunatsiavut, this has not occurred. Instead, the planner has been primarily based in the provincial government offices in St. John's (a distance of approximately 1000 km from central Nunatsiavut and culturally almost as distant) in order to be near the provincial planning division, but putting the process at an immediate disadvantage in understanding current Nunatsiavut realities. Given these obstacles, the provincial RPA members and the planner have relied heavily on the two Inuit representatives on the RPA to provide them with a sense of current Inuit perspectives, despite the well-acknowledged fact that it is impossible to assume that these two people alone would be able to thoroughly understand and articulate all perspectives of the diverse Nunatsiavut constituency (see also Lane 1997). The Nunatsiavut appointees to the RPA have extensive experience in environmental management, government processes, and land claims negotiations, and their views hold great authority within the RPA, but they are nonetheless only two voices.

In order to hear from other Inuit perspectives, the RPA organized various meetings and trips early in the process (2006-2009), and consultations with Inuit about the draft plan 2010. Some Inuit expressed their frustration during these consultations about what they perceived as their late involvement in the process. They felt that it was very difficult for them to adequately learn about planning and then offer some incisive comments in the time allowed for consultations. Some felt that consultations about the plan occurred too far along in the process, as the structure of the draft plan had already been determined. Some said that they would have preferred to be involved earlier, when the concepts were more nebulous (RPA notes, February 2010). The RPA and the planner recognized that consultations and on-going communications with Inuit have not been as extensive as they might have been, but most RPA members felt that the general public would not have been able to provide input without a draft plan and, especially, without maps (RPA notes, September 2009).

The consultations occurred in semi-formal settings in meeting rooms in each community, and consisted of a powerpoint presentation by the planner, followed by general discussion. Some Inuit voiced their concern and sense of discomfort about this formality (RPA notes, February 2010), underlying the argument outlined by a number of planning academics that communication with Aboriginal participants in the planning process needs to accommodate local forms of interaction, social complexities, and decision-making (Cosgrove and Kliger 1997; Lane 1997). The RPA and the planner are well aware that these meetings were not ideal, but they organized them in this way because of the pressure to develop a plan in three years, as required by the land claim

agreement (RPA notes, February 2010). Smaller and more frequent meetings that would have developed the relationships of trust and better mutual understanding would have been difficult to arrange because of pressures on the RPA related to available finances, timeframe, human resources, and data. Because of these pressures, participants in the planning process are deciding not to seize opportunities for adapting the planning process to Inuit involvement, but are often deciding instead to work towards finalizing the plan in the most expedient manner.

#### **11.6 Response to the Traditional Use designation**

Much of the public reaction to the plan during the consultations centered on the Traditional Use designation, and illustrates the continuing struggle over incorporating Inuit difference within a governance context. Because the communities were not closely involved in developing the designations or the plan's approach, and were only asked to respond to a draft plan, the discussions were less about whether a Traditional Use designation was even appropriate and more on where the designations should be applied. Many Inuit beneficiaries commented that the level of environmental protection afforded by the application of the Traditional Use designation was necessary, and suggested other areas for protection, such as salmon and char rivers, migratory bird areas, and headwaters. Other stakeholders felt that the Traditional Use designation was applied too broadly. Mining interests and some at the provincial Department of Natural Resources felt that this extensive use of the designation was too restrictive on mining development. Some Nunatsiavut government officials also felt that it was too restrictive, as the

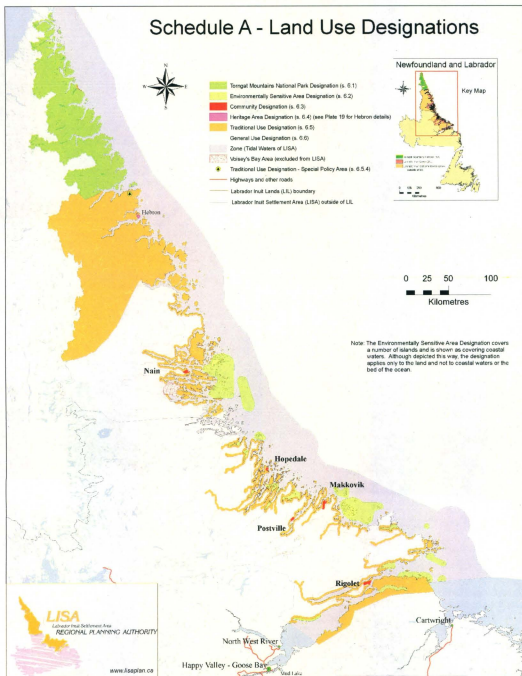
designation of the coastline – much of which is Labrador Inuit Land – as Traditional Use would restrict the Inuit share of royalties from mining (see Maps 11.1, 11.2, and 11.3) (fn February 2010). Under the land claims agreement, the Nunatsiavut government gets a 25% share of royalties from mines on Labrador Inuit Lands, whereas it gets only 5% of royalties on other settlement lands. The structure of the land claims agreement therefore may affect planning decisions through pressure on the Nunatsiavut government to subsidize itself by developing Inuit-owned lands.

In the summer of 2010, and again in early 2011, after the Nunatsiavut and provincial governments had submitted their comments, the RPA revised the draft plan to address some of these concerns. The planning authority decided to substantially decrease some of the areas designated as Traditional Use, although it also added some salmon and char rivers for protection. The draft plan designations also began to adhere more to the LIL/LISA outside of LIL distinction (i.e., the Nunatsiavut government/provincial government jurisdictions), as the RPA removed the Traditional Use designation from some coastal lands that were not LIL, based on comments from the provincial Department of Natural Resources (fn April 2011). In almost identical appeals, both the mining industry and Natural Resources had pressured the RPA to maintain the provincial government's policy of open access for mineral exploration by minimizing the Traditional Use area because, although exploration was not prohibited under the Traditional Use designation, the designation worked to discourage companies from exploring because any further mineral development was itself prohibited. The province therefore wanted to have as much land as possible available for development, and it

wanted to maintain corridors to the ocean in case natural gas or oil transportation links are needed in the future (fn April 2011). The Department of Natural Resources was also very unsupportive of the draft plan's large Traditional Use designation on caribou calving lands, although NG was adamant that this area be protected. The RPA is responding to these concerns by changing some designations in the plan, but the distinction between the separate jurisdictions of the two governments is causing much tension. This separation is not absolutely distinct between LIL and LISA outside of LIL, as the province maintains subsurface ownership rights to Labrador Inuit Lands. The (literal) overlap in jurisdictions therefore further frustrates the province's open access approach to mining exploration, and seems to be causing a number of people in the provincial government to suggest that the province should deal with its land, and the Nunatsiavut government should deal with LIL. As a member of the RPA commented, "But what's the point of having a plan, if they just want to have a free-for-all?" (fn July 2011).

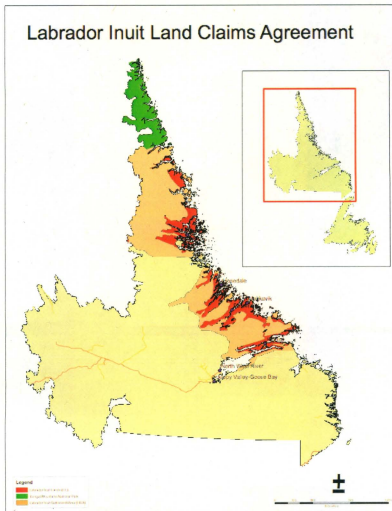
The province's (or at least the Department of Natural Resources') approach of facilitating unencumbered access for potential developers is well known. As one former provincial bureaucrat told me, "The provincial government is only interested in extraction. In my experience, they would get very upset when they felt that someone wanted to keep land 'sanitized' by making it into a park" (fn 17 June 2008). NG environmental staff have told me that, while NG can make recommendations about exploration permits in LISA outside LIL, the provincial government often simply goes ahead with what it wants anyway, and ignores NG's recommendations (fn 19 April 2008). According to one RPA member, however, some of the changes in the RPA's draft

# Schedule A - Land Use Designations



Map 11.2: Land Use Designations for Regional Land Use Plan, August 2010





**Map 11.3: Map of Nunatsiavut, showing Labrador Inuit Lands (LIL) and Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LISA) lands (from RPA 2010)**

plan precipitated by the provincial government's comments are not significant. Many of the coastal lands where the RPA removed the Traditional Use designation are not suitable for traditional harvesting activities (and are likely not suitable as corridors), as they are comprised of cliffs or otherwise inaccessible coastlines, and were therefore not chosen as LIL for these very reasons. The dispute over the protection of these lands is therefore a non-issue, as the provincial department does not seem to have detailed knowledge of the lands it is claiming as corridors (RPA notes March 2011).

During the land claims negotiations, one rationale for the introduction of co-managed land use planning was that it could prove to be a useful tool in protecting the habitat of species that are of fundamental importance to Labrador Inuit, such as caribou. As Labrador Inuit Association negotiators explained in 1993, the Inuit wanted a land claim agreement that allowed them "to maintain a way of life that respects the importance of hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering in the modern world" (Andersen and Rowell 1993). Co-managed control over land use activities for an entire region allows Inuit to address the issue of habitat protection more extensively than if they only managed the Inuit-owned lands. Wide ranging species such as caribou, polar bear, and migratory birds occupy much larger territories than the current Labrador Inuit Lands. In addition, land ownership under Canadian law does not, by itself, provide protection against incursions by the state or by mining companies, who are guaranteed free entry for exploration under provincial mining laws. Co-managed land use planning therefore should offer Inuit much greater influence over habitat protection and other aspects of land management related to harvesting concerns (Andersen and Rowell 1993; Usher 1982). The combination of land

ownership and land use planning co-management in the final land claims agreement thus provided the Nunatsiavut government with multiple means to achieve their goals related to habitat protection.

The increasing alignment of land use designations with LIL and LISA outside LIL signals a slow movement away from the goal of a comprehensive plan for Nunatsiavut and towards a plan that is differentiated by jurisdictional boundaries. It also potentially signals a continuation of the process by which Inuit and Inuit difference are contained by conceptual limitations, territorial means, and political structures (Foucault [1975] 1995). The situation echoes David Harvey's (2003) concept of accumulation by dispossession, as Inuit and their resources are progressively appropriated by government and industrial interests, and they are contained to smaller and smaller shares of land.

When the planning process was just beginning, some of the RPA participants discussed how they thought the process of developing a plan for two jurisdictions would unfold. In one conversation, the planner remarked that the province's regulations would probably not be as environmentally strict as those of NG. A provincial appointee (and former provincial bureaucrat) disagreed, and said that the province "would probably take the moral high ground and make them just as strict," although the member's opinion seems to have changed since then (fn April 2008, July 2011). The plan has yet to be finalized, but the government influence on the plan at this stage is pointing to a plan that may be differentiated by jurisdiction and by approach. The province seems not to be taking the "moral high ground," but instead is trying to maintain its open access approach to development by using its control over as much of its jurisdiction in Nunatsiavut as it

can. (In fact, the provincial government refuses to use the word “Nunatsiavut” – “Our beautiful land” – to refer to the region’s territory; instead, it uses – and requires that the RPA also uses – a term that avoids any insinuation of Inuit autonomy altogether: the “Labrador Inuit Settlement Area,” or “LISA.”)

Although perhaps the province took the “moral high ground” in other situations involving the Inuit, the most vocal provincial department in the planning process is showing no inclination, and likely has no incentive to take moral issues into consideration in its comments on the draft plans. Although LIA negotiators understood the intent of the co-management process and the land claim agreement as a whole to be a modification of government-Inuit relationships, some provincial departments are demonstrating another understanding – one in which overall government approaches are not modified for the new land claims governance arrangements, but are simply territorialized into separate jurisdictions (fn July 2008).

### **11. 7 Political frameworks**

Given the trend towards a differentiated land use plan, the political framework surrounding the planning process is critical in determining the extent to which Inuit interests and perspectives are conveyed into the plan. As I have shown, the RPA has tried to be very accommodating of Inuit goals and to ignore jurisdictional distinctions in developing a comprehensive plan, but in the end, it will be the political structure for the final decision-making that may have the most impact on which of these goals is carried into the final land use plan, and to which lands they apply. As the draft plan makes its

way through the two governments for approval, both governments have the authority to suggest and, with minimal input from the other, implement changes to sections of the plan that pertain to lands under their own jurisdiction. The value of cultural difference may have a limited scope if the provincial government agrees to respect only the bare minimum of the conditions of the agreement, and to refuse to honour the co-operative intent of co-management or the requirement that the RPA develop "a single, comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area" (INAC 2005: 10.3.8). The vision of the draft plan promotes the integrity of the environment, human health, and social factors, but the provincial Department of Natural Resources in particular is currently challenging this coherency by suggesting that the plan should be split into its separate jurisdictions. Nonetheless, this department is only one among many, and internal dynamics and political pressures to respect the intent of the land claims agreement within the provincial government may yet play a role.

As discussed throughout the preceding chapters, the province has a long history of ignoring Aboriginal rights and of promoting the exploitation of Labrador, although the once-strained relationship between the Labrador Inuit and the provincial government has improved over recent years. The land use planning co-management process will help to illustrate the actual strength of this relationship. The first example of co-management between the Inuit and the provincial government – the Voisey's Bay Environmental Management Board – encountered many difficulties, due in large part to the negative attitude of provincial (and federal) bureaucrats towards Aboriginal rights. According to

one participant on both boards, the Regional Planning Authority is a vast improvement on the acrimonious dynamics of the Voisey's Bay board (fn June 2008).<sup>18</sup>

If the Provincial Government respects the co-management process and agrees to the full extent of the revised Traditional Use designation in the RPA's draft plan, the planning process could be seen as a success for the incorporation of Inuit perspectives and interests (however partial) into land use planning. If the Nunatsiavut and provincial governments instead assert that they will each separately manage lands under their own jurisdictions – LIL for Nunatsiavut, and LISA outside LIL for the province – then the goal of co-operative and comprehensive land use planning for the entire region of Nunatsiavut will not have been met. Given the political pressure on both governments to fulfill their obligations as laid out in the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, it is doubtful that the land use planning process would fail to produce some degree of comprehensive plan. But, as one member of the RPA commented, the provincial government's general encouragement of "free-for-all" development has conflicted with the RPA's comprehensive planning approach during consultations, and threatens to derail the co-operative nature of the planning process for Nunatsiavut (fn July 2011).

### **11.8 Conclusion: Contained and partial transformations**

The future success of land use planning in maintaining Inuit priorities depends as much on political will as it does on the flexibility of the planning process. Although the approved plan will be legally binding on both governments, the ability of officials to

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<sup>18</sup> One RPA member sat on the Voisey's Bay Environmental Management Board on behalf of the Labrador Inuit Association from 2003-2005.

enforce the plan and to follow its principles in making decisions will also determine the plan's success. Other mechanisms, such as the five-year review, the amendment process, and the development of future ten-year plans will offer further opportunities for improvement in the process, as the plan developed in the current process is further refined and altered. The relationships developed through this drafting process will continue to evolve. The Inuit constituency's level of engagement with planning may well increase, provincial bureaucrats' degree of understanding of Nunatsiavut issues (and of co-operative planning) may improve, and more creative forms of planning may develop in the future.

The impact of arguments made on the basis of cultural difference in this example of post-land claim governance is thus mixed. The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement has been negotiated and implemented, but the current land use planning process illustrates the potential shortcomings of land claims implementation and the continued importance of making political arguments for the need to recognize Inuit rights. While the agreement solidifies the Nunatsiavut government's jurisdiction over the management and ownership of certain lands, co-operative management of the entire region still depends on the negotiation of interests. The Regional Planning Authority members have demonstrated their genuine desire and ability to modify their own perspectives on planning to involve at least partial accommodations of Inuit goals, but some departments in the provincial government are signaling their reluctance to accept anything other than the realization of their own aspirations. A full and widespread understanding and acceptance of the new relationship between Inuit and the Government of Newfoundland

and Labrador that was agreed to in the land claims agreement seems not to be fully realized or embraced in the planning process. With the finalization of the land claims settlement, some provincial departments do not appear to feel the same political pressure from the prospect of Aboriginal rights as they did before the land claims was settled. Of course, the internal dynamics of the provincial government may yet force departments to align themselves with a broader governmental approach, but these dynamics have yet to show themselves within the planning process. The certainty achieved by the final land claims agreement concerning the extent of Inuit rights seems to have made these rights a non-issue for some provincial departments, who, if they had their way, would relegate Inuit rights solely to Labrador Inuit Lands – Inuit and Inuit difference would be further contained to just ‘their’ lands.

The continuing demands made by both the Nunatsiavut government and the Regional Planning Authority that the provincial government respect and accommodate Inuit interests and rights throughout Nunatsiavut have had, as yet, unclear results. Nonetheless, even if the plan is compartmentalized into its jurisdictional divisions, the use of the Traditional Harvesting designation is a real challenge to the current neoliberal development policies of the provincial government, and represents a significant change in the way that resource management is done in Nunatsiavut. The potential of planning to “transform structural dimensions of oppression” may be only partially and imperfectly realized, but the adoption of some Inuit perspectives and interests in both the protection and the development of certain lands through the planning process have considerable implications. From the current state of affairs, however, the planning process may also be



furthering the historical and colonial processes of containing Inuit and Inuit difference to smaller and more concentrated pockets of lands, resources, governance approaches, and rights.

### **Conclusion:**

#### **The Prospects of Culture and Resource Management in Nunatsiavut**

The concept of culture has undergone many different permutations over the last few hundred years in Labrador. Various groups have engaged the concept in projects of colonization, nation-building, development, and self-determination. Their ideas of culture and cultural difference have both been formed by social processes and have created new social and material relationships. Many of these permutations have relied on static and essentialized versions of culture, but the dynamic process of imagining these constructs, imbuing them with authenticity, and mobilizing them with political and economic effect illustrates how they were produced and manipulated. Culture has proven to be both socially constituted and a creative force in Nunatsiavut, intricately related to the creation of political and economic inequalities and the struggles to rectify these disparities.

As colonial interests, Inuit, governments, newcomers, and industry maneuvered for control over the land, sea, and resources of Nunatsiavut, they invented, modified, aligned, and emphasized cultural constructs about Inuit difference. Beginning with the Moravian Mission's project of containment in the 1700s, outside interests have employed ideas about boundedness, territoriality, productivity, self-sufficiency, and appropriate economic activity to justify the dispossession of lands and resources, trading and economic policies involving Inuit, political relationships, and social differentiations. Inuit challenged and circumvented these attempts to use cultural constructs for the purpose of attaining economic and political dominance, and they eventually appropriated some of the same

constructs to fuel their own political struggle to regain control. Throughout the colonial period, the Aboriginal rights movement, and the current neoliberal context, governments, industry, and Inuit have struggled over definitions of Inuit difference. Initial attempts by governments to constitute Inuit as an official category and to locate Inuit difference territorially were directly influenced by historical practices of differentiation; the various means established by the federal government to administratively identify Inuit – the politics of recognition that emerged as a result of the federal government’s Aboriginal funding criteria in the 1950s, and then the land claims process in the 1970s – reflected historical encounters with colonialism and state control, in all its forms. The recent neoliberal context, as we have seen, encourages some alignments between Inuit and state use of cultural constructs, and limits others (Feit 2010).

The Labrador Inuit articulation with the Aboriginal rights movement therefore gained much of its moral strength by building on the colonial experience, but in doing so, it is now intricately linked with it. The politics of recognition positioned the state as arbiter of Inuit claims, although the changing strategies of the Labrador Inuit Association and the shifting legal context have profoundly influenced the process. The LIA successfully challenged some of the assumptions made by the governmental “arbiters,” and achieved many of its goals in land claims negotiations, but with this success came the drawbacks of engaging static cultural constructs and of participating in a claims process that was, from the Inuit perspective, flawed. Internal and external tensions developed between and among Labrador Inuit, and were exacerbated with the codification of many of the ideas about Inuit territory, identification criteria, social categories, and economic characteristics

in the final land claims agreement. Inuit strived to regain control through the land claims process, but the requirements of the legal framework to use a static conceptualization of culture caused many political and socio-economic inequalities to become entrenched.

The political use of cultural constructs has thus both united and stratified its subjects. Yet the achievement of the land claims agreement would not have happened were it not for the political strength of the indigeneity discourse, with its powerful (and sometimes problematic) alignments with the environmental movement, neoliberal policies, and ideas about alternative modernities, community, and self-sufficiency. Public pressure created through the Aboriginal rights movement, and aided by industry's new sensitivity to the need for investor certainty in the neoliberal context, forced governments and industry to modify their positions. Government behaviour changed to accommodate the public mood and to extend its own neoliberal policies of decentralization and ownership certainty. The behaviour of industry also changed with public expectations about corporate social responsibility, although companies still work to avoid political and substantive issues by focusing on non-conflictual versions of culture, as the examples of Voisey's Bay and Aurora illustrate.

In the post-land claims context, the production (and denial) of cultural difference continues to have immense social, political, and economic impact. The creation of Nunatsiavut, built on the political authority of cultural difference, ushered in significant material shifts in political and economic control. Inuit beneficiaries, through the Nunatsiavut Government, now have jurisdiction over many aspects of governance, including resource management and land use planning, as Chapters Ten and Eleven

describe. Although many cultural constructs are codified in the final agreement, ideas about cultural difference continue to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances. Inuit debate what the "protection of our way of life" entails, and many challenge the "official" (and hegemonic) version of Inuit culture as presented by the Nunatsiavut Government or its spokespeople in justification of its policies. Industry appropriates the "community" aspect of Inuit difference, while sidestepping the political issue of indigeneity. In similar fashion, the actions of the provincial government in the land use planning process illustrate a trend of moving away from a discussion of rights and governance based on cultural difference to a focus on separate and distinct jurisdictions.

The idea of Inuit difference has encompassed many different aspects. In some conceptualizations, the idea of culture has embodied a bounded, static, and local category with definitive designations, and has linked cultural characteristics with economic limitations (Wolf 2001; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Stern 2006; Dombrowski 2007). The idea has also included alternatives to modernity and relied on Enlightenment universals and utopian ideals about human and societal relationships (Niezen 2009; Blaser 2004; Tsing 1993; Deloria 1998). With the signing of the final agreement and the formalization of Inuit difference in a governance context, some of these aspects are emphasized more than others. Some government and industry interests, it seems, are concentrating on the certainty of resource ownership and management rather than on new styles of shared management and changing approaches to governance. Some aim to neutralize the authority of Inuit difference by focusing on aspects of certainty and boundedness instead of alternative ways of governing in the land use planning context, for instance. While the

Regional Planning Authority and the Nunatsiavut Government aim to advance Inuit interests in protecting wildlife habitat within the plan, the Provincial Government has thus far shown no inclination to "take the moral ground" and follow suit (fn April 2008). Indeed, as I demonstrated in chapters ten and eleven, many state and industry interests are challenging the moral authority of the indigeneity discourse in the post-land claim context in their continued efforts to dispossess Inuit of their resources (Harvey 2003).

The self-managing and self-sufficient aspects of Inuit difference have remained influential within the current neoliberal context, although perhaps with contradictory results. Many Inuit have welcomed the new focus on Inuit empowerment and self-government. But the emphasis on empowerment can overshadow the continuing need to address political and economic inequalities by simply allocating all responsibility to Nunatsiavut to manage its distinct jurisdictions and to finance itself through developing its small share of resources (Smith 2007; Hale 2005; Humpage 2005; Slowey 2008). The political impact of Aboriginal rights, similarly, may be diminishing in some contexts of corporate relationships, as the recent 18-month workers' strike at the Voisey's Bay mine demonstrated. A provincial report on the strike describes how Vale (which bought Inco in 2006) felt very little social pressure to yield to Aboriginal interests and collective bargaining at the mine, given the multi-national corporation's global expanse (Roil 2011). This experience may have lasting effects on future resource developments in Nunatsiavut, the report contends, as Aboriginal communities and leaders have had their trust in both corporations and trade unions badly shaken as a result of the strike (Roil 2011: 58). Although Vale and the union may have met their strict legal requirements to

Inuit in the Impact and Benefits Agreement, “there remains a sense on the part of the Innu and Inuit of Labrador that the Voisey’s Bay project has fallen short of their expectations for their communities. Strict compliance may meet the words of those documents, but still be inadequate in order for [Vale and the United Steel Workers union] to demonstrate that they have fully embraced the aboriginal peoples into their structures and recognized their cultural differences” (Roil 2011: 85).

While the prospect of social unrest in the 1990s from the Aboriginal rights movement pressured corporations and governments to negotiate an Impact and Benefit Agreement and the land claims agreement with Inuit, their adherence to the intent of both of these treaties to address issues of cultural difference has been lacking. Many Inuit feel disappointed about the implementation of these agreements, including even some who negotiated them. One former LIA negotiator told me that she “thought it would be about how the parties [to LILCA] would interact – but it’s only about bureaucrats making list of things to do, and then checking them off. They don’t look at the intent of the agreement” (fn April 2008). A former provincial government negotiator offered me a similar opinion: “The problem now is that no one will enforce the land claims agreement. Once the negotiators are gone, no one will know what’s in it. I think the province is bypassing the agreement already [in an issue concerning the Mealy Mountains park]” (fn June 2008). The Inuit struggle for the recognition of their cultural difference has been fought and won through the land claim (and the Voisey’s Bay Impact and Benefit Agreement), but instead of ushering in a new era of alternative approaches to regional governance, some parties are using the static aspects of cultural difference to justify further separation and

containment, and are using the conclusiveness of the claim to neutralize the prospect of Inuit difference and to ignore its broad political ramifications (Hale 2005). The prospect of cultural difference is perhaps losing its potency to challenge state and capitalist domination as these interests move to contain and defuse the essentialized and static version of culture that the legal context of land claims compels Inuit to use.

Culture has proven to be a productive tool in Nunatsiavut in both creating and ameliorating inequalities, but its impact has been complex and incomplete. Many groups have transformed and modified the concept for hundreds of years from various perspectives, for various purposes, and to various ends. Colonial dispossessions of Inuit were justified and facilitated by productions and denials of cultural difference, and major political and economic changes were negotiated through appeals to indigeneity. Yet in this post-agreement phase, when governments and industry are bypassing and ignoring further appeals based on Inuit difference, many Inuit still feel marginalized and sidelined by the political processes carried out in their name. Cultural difference has been used as the basis of Inuit political claims, but it is an imperfect framework within which to articulate the diversity and complexity of Inuit interests and realities.

I will conclude with the words of two Inuit who have experienced the contradictory impact of the production of cultural difference, and who lament the continuing inequalities. The first is a man who lives in Happy Valley-Goose Bay:

"Upper Lake Melville is a refuge for people who aren't wanted or don't fit in on the coast....People on the coast can brag about their culture and how well things are going in their communities, but they ignore the fact that there are people here and no one is doing anything for them – these are the people who should be helped" (in August 2008).



The second is a woman who expressed her hopes and frustrations to me one day in 2008

after we had walked with our children in the hills above Nain:

"I would like Inuit to be happy, not forgotten and left out. Too much of that is going on – Inuit are not supposed to be treated like poker chips in a gambling game....We are living breathing people with needs same as yours and even more than that because the land calls to us and we need help....When are Inuit people going to have enough for their own self to acquire what you already take for granted, you outsiders, you get what you wanted, all the land, all the minerals. Now, when will people like me get help to arrive at a small piece of what you have? That's not being selfish, not even nowhere near minimal of minimum" (fn July 2008).

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