

Revisiting *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*: Inuit knowledge, culture, language, and values in Nunavut institutions since 1999

Revisiter l'*Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* : les connaissances, la culture, la langue et les valeurs des Inuit dans les institutions du Nunavut depuis 1999

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Abstract: Revisiting *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*: Inuit knowledge, culture, language, and values in Nunavut institutions since 1999

The Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement organizations have been making a lot of effort to integrate *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ) into their operations, institutional structures, and policies since the creation of the territory in 1999. This paper describes some of the ways in which IQ has been integrated into the operations, structures, and policies of Nunavut since 1999. It also proposes a broader discussion about the impacts of Western bureaucratic institutions on IQ, and highlights that IQ also impacts Nunavut operations and institutions. In this paper, I argue that IQ is not so much a practice of resistance to the colonial order, as some have suggested, but rather a way for Inuit to assume control of these structures to adapt them to their own use. Although IQ has still relatively limited influence, it has the potential, in the long run, to reshape Nunavut institutions and make them more representative of Inuit culture.

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Introduction

Between 2000 and 2002, I was an M.A. student interested in studying the integration of Inuit cultural values, known as *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ),¹ in Nunavut's operations (Lévesque 2000). The principal objective of my research was to understand how IQ was integrated into the institutional structures and policies of the new territory.² When they were negotiating the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the creation of Nunavut with the federal government, Inuit believed that their knowledge and values were threatened both by the rapid socio-economic development of the North and by political assimilation. The creation of Nunavut was seen as a means to conserve and develop *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* for present and future generations (NSDC 2001). In the early days of the territory—at the time I was doing my first fieldwork in Iqaluit—many Nunavummiut³ were already discussing creative solutions and designing inspiring principles to integrate IQ into the operations of the territory. Yet, at the time, IQ was still not reflected in the operations of the young territory.

Now that more than a decade has passed, I am wondering what IQ initiatives have been designed and adopted by the Government of Nunavut's institutions and the Nunavut land claims organizations. Have these initiatives helped to protect and promote the culture of the Nunavut Inuit? If so, how? Are the Government of Nunavut's institutions and the Nunavut land claims organizations using the same definition of IQ and the same means of implementation? This paper seeks to propose reflections about those questions. Its first objective is to describe some of the ways in which IQ has been integrated into the structures and policies of government institutions and land claims organizations in the past 15 years. Its second objective is to propose a broader reflection about cultural encounters because *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* provides a great opportunity to reflect on the impacts of Western institutions on an Indigenous culture, and vice versa.

I will start with a brief history and description of Nunavut. Understanding the origins of the institutions of Nunavut is essential to explain the context of IQ. I will then describe the origins of IQ and introduce examples of how it has been integrated into the operations of Nunavut. Finally, I will discuss the impacts of Western bureaucratic institutions on IQ, and highlight the fact that IQ impacts Nunavut operations and institutions.

¹ *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* can be translated as 'Inuit knowledge already acquired that is still relevant today.' It is dividable into five morphemes: qauji / ma / ja / tuqa / ngit:

qauji To look for, to move toward knowledge. Phase preceding the acquisition of real knowledge.

-ma- State; accomplishment; action that is already done/over. *Qaujima* means to know something, to master knowledge.

-ja(q)- Mark of the passive that indicates something already exists.

-tuqa(q)- Something old that is still useful. Also indicates the idea of "rediscovering something."

-ngit Mark of the possessive, third person plural, "their."

² Nunavut was officially created on April 1, 1999, after a six-year implementation phase that had followed 25 years of negotiation.

³ Nunavummiut is the demonym used for the people of Nunavut. It includes Inuit and non-Inuit alike.

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the Government of Nunavut

Nunavut is Canada's largest territory despite having a population of just over 32,000, 85% of whom are Inuit. Nunavummiut live in 25 communities scattered across a 2,093,190-km² territory. Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC)⁴ submitted their first land claims to the Canadian government in 1976,⁵ following the 1973 Calder case in which the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged the existence of Aboriginal title to the land (Foster et al. 2007). These claims had several goals: establish mechanisms to preserve the traditional way of life of Inuit; enable them to become equal and meaningful participants in Canadian society; achieve fair compensation and benefits in exchange for their lands; and preserve the ecology of the Canadian Arctic (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada 1976). ITC asked that Inuit be involved in land use planning and management and have title to some lands, provisions that were already parts of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement signed by the Northern Quebec (now Nunavik) Inuit. However, ITC's claims also called for creation of a public territory, Nunavut, where Inuit would form the majority of the population. The federal government rejected these claims on the grounds that it would not negotiate the creation of a new political entity. In 1977, ITC presented new land claims (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada 1977), which demanded the creation of an ethnic territory where only Inuit would be allowed to vote and where they would own all the lands and waters. These claims were rejected by the federal government.

To get negotiations back on track, ITC stopped bringing up the creation of a public territory and decided to focus on land claims only (Légaré 1993: 37-41). Following creation of the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) in June 1982,⁶ both parties agreed to establish a number of governing and advisory bodies that would give Inuit some degree of self-governance over the development and resource management of their land claims area.

Despite the federal government's reluctance, Inuit negotiators remained committed to the idea that "consideration of political issues and political structures are an integral part of the land settlement process" (Graham et al. 1984: 33). In 1982, a plebiscite was held in the Northwest Territories (NWT) to give the federal government some directions for the political evolution of the territory. Voters were asked whether they agreed to divide the NWT into two different political entities: 56.5% of voters were in favour.⁷ Following the plebiscite, the federal government agreed in principle to division

4 Renamed Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), ITC is the national Inuit organization in Canada. It was founded by Tagak Curley in 1971.

5 For a complete history of the negotiations that led to the creation of Nunavut, see Amagoalik (2007); Dahl et al. (2000); Duffy (1988); Légaré (1993, 1996); and Loukacheva (2007).

6 The TFN was created for the sole purpose of negotiating the Nunavut land claims.

7 Turnout for the vote was low: only 53% of eligible voters voted. Furthermore, results varied greatly from East to West. Inuit from the the Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq regions massively voted in favour of division (i.e. 82% in Iqaluit, 92% in Iglulik, etc.) whereas western Inuit communities like Kugluktuk (39%) and Cambridge Bay (41%) were less favourable. A vast majority of voters from communities

of the NWT into two different political entities. However, division would be possible only under several conditions: settlement of all land claims; territory-wide agreement on a new boundary; and distribution of responsibilities among territorial, regional, and local levels of government (ibid.: 80).

In 1993, after another territory-wide plebiscite on the boundary and further rounds of negotiations that took place in the aftermath of the Oka Crisis (Amagoalik 2007; Kusugak 2000), the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) was signed. Section 4 of the agreement states that:

The Government of Canada will recommend to Parliament, as a government measure, legislation to establish, within a defined time period, a new Nunavut Territory, with its own Legislative Assembly and public government, separate from the Government of the remainder of the Northwest Territories (Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1993).

On June 10, 1993, the House of Commons passed the *Nunavut Act* (S.C. 1993, c. 28), which validated the creation of Nunavut. With jurisdiction over education, language, wildlife, and culture, the Government of Nunavut (GN) is a public institution whose mandate is to offer services to all Nunavummiut, whether they are Inuit or not. Yet, because Inuit form 85% of the territory's population, the GN effectively allows Inuit to legislate on relevant aspects of their culture.

The same day, the House of Commons also passed the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* (S.C. 1993, c. 29), the legislation that established the Nunavut Settlement Area and ratified the NLCA. This act formalized establishment of many governing and advisory bodies (Table 1) that were designed, negotiated, and included in the NLCA when the creation of Nunavut was still uncertain. As long as Nunavut, the public territory, was not a reality, negotiators needed to make sure the NLCA would establish bodies that would allow Inuit to participate in the economic, environmental, and cultural development of the Nunavut Settlement Area (Fenge and Quassa 2009).

The top NLCA governing body is Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI). It coordinates and manages Inuit responsibilities set out in the NLCA and ensures that the federal and Nunavut governments fulfil their fiduciary obligations. NTI has five departments: Executive Services, Corporate Services, Implementation, Social and Cultural Development, and Wildlife and Environment. On par with NTI is the Nunavut Trust, which manages the funds (\$1.1 billion) received from the federal government following the signing of the NLCA. Below are Inuit regional organizations, development corporations, economic development organizations, investment corporations, wildlife organizations, NLCA organizations, and institutions of public government.

that would remain in the NWT were against division, i.e. Yellowknife (26%), Hay River (16%), and Inuvik (23%). For a complete breakdown of the 1982 plebiscite results, see Frideres and Reeves (1987).

Table 1. Some Inuit and land claims organizations in Nunavut. In bold: organizations that have the responsibility to promote and develop Inuit culture and society. Source: NTI (2014a).

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. / Nunavut Trust	
NTI Board Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit Social and Cultural Development Advisory Committee • Inuit Wildlife and Environmental Advisory Committee
Regional Inuit Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) • Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) • Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA)
Development Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitikmeot Corporation • Sikku Investment • Qikiqtaaluk Corporation
Economic Dev. Org.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kivalliq Partners in Development • Kakivak Association • Nunavut Community Economic Development Organization
Investment Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atuqtuarvik Corporation • NCC Investment Group Inc. • Nunasi Corporation
Wildlife Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitikmeot Wildlife Board • Kivalliq Wildlife Board • Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board • Hunters and Trappers Organizations • Nunavut Wildlife Secretariat
NLCA Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunavut Social Development Council • Inuit Heritage Trust
Institutions of Public Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nunavut Impact Review Board • Nunavut Planning Commission • Nunavut Water Board • Nunavut Wildlife Management Board • Nunavut Marine Council

These bodies ensure Inuit have the tools to control the economic development of the Nunavut Settlement Area, have the power to advise governments about environmental matters, and allow the Inuit to participate in its cultural development. The last point is the most important one for our purpose. Under the NLCA and within

the NTI corporate structure, the promotion and development of Inuit culture and society is a responsibility shared by many organizations, highlighted in bold in Table 1:

1. The Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC) is a body created under Section 32 of the NLCA. Section 32 specifies that: “Inuit have the right to participate in the development of social and cultural policies, and in the design of social and cultural programs and services, including their method of delivery, within the Nunavut Settlement Area.” The NSDC conducts research, publishes and distributes information on social and cultural issues, and advises Inuit and governments on social and cultural issues.
2. The three regional organizations—the Qikiqtani (QIA), the Kivalliq (KIA), and the Kitikmeot Inuit Associations (KIA)—also have cultural and social responsibilities. For example, the QIA has a “Department of Social Policy” that creates social and cultural policies for Inuit in the Baffin region (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2014). The Kivalliq Inuit Association also has a “Social Development Department,” whose mandate is “to work with and receive direction from Inuit elders and youth of the Kivalliq in preserving Inuit heritage, culture, and language” (Kivalliq Inuit Association 2014).
3. The *Inuit Social and Cultural Development Advisory Committee*, which is an umbrella organization for all of the above, is a political advisory committee that provides advice to the NTI Board of Directors on social and cultural issues and sets and refines NTI’s social and cultural priority areas. This committee is comprised of the NTI Vice-President for the NSDC portfolio, and one appointed member from each of the three regional associations (NTI 2014b).
4. Some public-sector institutions created under the NLCA also deal with cultural and social issues on an ad hoc basis. For example, the Nunavut Impact Review Board examines whether a resource development project will impact cultural practices. These institutions only have advisory status.

Thus, it could be said that there are *two* Nunavuts (Wenzel 2004): 1) the Nunavut Settlement Area governed by Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) for the benefit of Inuit beneficiaries only; and 2) the territory of Nunavut, governed by the Government of Nunavut for the benefit of all Nunavummiut. Both have different obligations. Whereas the GN manages health, education, culture, language, and intergovernmental affairs on behalf of all Nunavummiut, NTI manages land and wildlife, and protects the rights of Inuit under the NLCA. The GN is funded through federal payments and NTI through land claims compensations and resource royalties. This situation creates de facto two poles of governance in the territory. Although they are not responsible for the same jurisdictions, NTI and the GN sometimes have a strenuous relationship (Légaré 1996). In 2011, they co-signed *Aajiqatigiinni: Working Together* (Government of Nunavut and NTI 2011), an agreement that outlines the terms of their relationship (Rodon 2014).

Inuit qaujimaqatugangit in Nunavut

Implementation of Inuit values, culture, and traditions in the operations of Nunavut has led to long discussions between NLCA organizations and GN departments. This section retraces IQ's origins and gives examples of how it has been implemented so far.

Definitions

In March 1998, the NSDC organized the *Nunavut Traditional Knowledge Conference*, which brought elders from all of Nunavut's communities to Iglulik. NSDC's aim was to identify "processes designed to ensure that Inuit culture, language, and values are democratically reflected in the policies, programs, and day-to-day operations of the new Nunavut government" (NSDC 1998a: 5). During the conference, the term *Inuit qaujimaqatugangit* (IQ) was introduced as a way to "replace and broaden the limited connotations usually attached to the term Inuit Traditional Knowledge" (ibid. 1998b: 1). Presented by the NSDC as the foundation of Nunavut, IQ was defined as "all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations" (ibid.: 1).

In 1999, the GN's Department of Sustainable Development created its own *Sustainable Development IQ Working Group* composed of Jaypeetee Arnakak, Peter Freuchen Ittinuar, and Joe Tigullaraq. They described IQ as "[t]he past, present and future experience, knowledge and values of Nunavut society" (Arnakak 2000: 3) and created an IQ framework loosely based on *tuqturausiit* (kinship structures) with six guidelines:

- *Pijitsirniq* – Serving
- *Aajiiqatigiingniq* – Consensus decision-making
- *Pilimmaksarniq* – Skills and knowledge acquisition
- *Piliriqatigiingniq* – Collaborative relationships or working together for a common purpose
- *Avatimik Kamattiarniq* – Environmental stewardship
- *Qanuqtuurunnarniq* – Problem solving

In September 1999, the GN organized a workshop that brought together government representatives, Inuit elders, and delegates from NLCA organizations (NTI, regional organizations, and the NSDC). The main objective was to provide a thorough definition of IQ. Participants agreed that IQ would make "the new Government [...] a more productive and harmonious working environment, beneficial to all residents of the new Territory" (Government of Nunavut 1999a: 17). In 1999, the GN also published *The Bathurst Mandate*, a document that highlighted its vision of Nunavut in 2020; it stated that IQ "will provide the context in which we develop an open, responsive, and accountable government" (ibid. 1999b: 1).

Before moving on, it is relevant to note that IQ is an iterative process that serves as a space for discussion as much as a way of viewing the world (Usher 2000). For this reason, initially, both Nunavuts had different definitions of and expectations for IQ. On the one hand, NLCA organizations, like the NSDC, saw IQ as a means to integrate Inuit social values into the fabric of the new territory. Their goal was clearly to turn the GN into an Inuit government for the benefit of Inuit. On the other hand, the GN viewed IQ more as a managerial strategy to establish a productive working environment and an accountable government that would be beneficial for all Nunavut residents. This discrepancy explains why the NSDC defined IQ using terms like “traditional Inuit culture,” “world-view,” “language,” etc., whereas the GN focused on the knowledge and values of Nunavut society as a whole. Unsurprisingly, these definitions and expectations correlate with the mandate of both organizations.

Over the following years, with the NSDC and the GN starting to collaborate on IQ initiatives, the line between these expectations and definitions became blurred. While NSDC became IQ’s most vocal advocate, the GN showed interest in integrating it into its own practices. This collaboration started in 2001 when the GN’s Department of Culture, Languages, Elders and Youth (CLEY) announced the creation of a *Task Force on IQ* composed of two NSDC staff members (John Ningark and Louis Taparjuk), two GN employees (Simon Awa and Sandra Inutiq), and two Inuit elders (Elisapee Ootoova and Mariano Aupilarjuk). The Task Force’s mandate was “to direct the Nunavut government on how to apply Inuit traditional knowledge to its programs, policies and services, and to make government offices more conducive to the Inuit lifestyle” (Rideout 2001). In the summer of 2002, the Task Force published its first and only report, which concluded that IQ should be used as a catalyst to integrate the GN into Inuit culture, and not vice versa (Inuit Qaujimajatuqanginnut [IQ] Task Force 2002). The Task Force also recommended (ibid.: 17-21), among many other things, that the GN:

- Develop an oral history program;
- Formalize teaching of the Inuktitut language;
- Decentralize authority and resources to communities;
- Provide cross-cultural training;
- Review all government statutes and policies;
- Develop a cultural strategy to help integrate the Nunavut government into Nunavut culture.

In September 2001, the NSDC published yet another report in which they demanded that the GN integrate IQ into its operations. The report, *On Our Own Terms*, asserted that the GN would have been able to find solutions to Inuit social issues if only it had implemented IQ in its operations (NSDC 2001). In 2002, NTI revoked NSDC’s status on the grounds it had been overstepping its mandate (Tapardjuk 2013: 84). NTI’s Department of Social and Cultural Development took over development of social and cultural policies in the Nunavut Settlement Area.

Government of Nunavut's IQ initiatives

The year 2002 marked a turning point in IQ's brief history. Not only was one of its most outspoken advocates disbanded, but from that moment on efforts were put into developing initiatives to integrate IQ instead of into trying to define what it meant. This desire to integrate IQ arose because, by 2002, neither the GN nor NLCA organizations had developed initiatives to integrate it into their respective operations. According to the Qaujimajatuqanginnut (IQ) Task Force, by 2002:

although most departments [were] involved in cultural-related and language-related activities [...], they [were] generally failing to incorporate IQ in a significant way into their departments. They [were] not sure what IQ [was] or how to incorporate it into the day-to-day workings of their departments (Inuit Qaujimajatuqanginnut [IQ] Task Force 2002: 1).

After 2002, the paradigm shifted. This shift started with publication of the *Qaujimajatuqanginnut (IQ) Task Force* report in 2002 and continued when the GN appointed the *IQ Katimajiit* (IQK) in 2003—a group of Inuit with expertise on IQ. Their task was to advise the GN on culturally relevant programs and services for Inuit. Every GN department also hired its own IQ coordinators, whose job was to monitor how IQ was being implemented and to organize IQ-related activities. This move led, for example, to the establishment in 2013 of the IQ and Cultural Immersion Days, whose goal has been to give “GN employees a hands on educational experience to learn about Inuit traditional knowledge through different tasks and activities, namely land survival skills and traditional teachings and stories” (Government of Nunavut 2013). The IQ coordinators also formed a group called Tuttarviit, which has been working on developing strategies to increase the impact of IQ on planning, policy development, and decision making (Our Times 2011). Several times a year, Tuttarviit meets with IQK to review legislative proposals, terminology, concepts, reports, documents, and so forth (Government of Nunavut 2014b).

Some departments have also developed their own IQ policies. For example, the Department of Culture and Heritage has created an IQ branch with two divisions. First, the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Division coordinates the development of IQ initiatives across all government departments. It pilots the *Inuit Societal Value (ISV) Project*, which seeks to help promote IQ and to strengthen the role of Inuit elders (Government of Nunavut 2014a). This division also provides administrative support for the IQK and Tuttarviit. Second, the Piqqusilirivvik Division oversees development of an Inuit cultural learning facility, in Clyde River, a cultural school that opened in 2011.

The Department of Economic Development and Transportation has also established the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangita Isumaksaqsirtingit* (IQI), whose goal is to review and provide input into policy and program development (Government of Nunavut 2014b). The department also organizes IQ events like igloo building, ice fishing, or collecting of plants and fruits, and is working on amending statutes and policies to make them IQ-compliant.

The Department of Education has also been striving to move toward IQ. Since publication of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum* in 2007—which states that Nunavut educators are expected to understand IQ and recognizes the importance of elder knowledge and the lack of resources—and adoption of the *Nunavut Education Act* in 2008 (S.Nu. 2008, c.15), the curriculum has been moving toward IQ (McGregor 2012a: 296). The Nunavut Education Act “calls on the education system to account for linguistic, cultural, and local relevance to Inuit” (McGregor 2012b: 27). Its first section mentions that “[t]he public education system in Nunavut shall be based on Inuit societal values and the principles and concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit” (Section 1[1]). It also makes clear that the six principles and concepts of IQ developed by the *Sustainable Development IQ Working Group* apply under the Act (Section 1[2]). Section 1 of the Act also adds two new principles:

- *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* – respecting others, relationships and caring for people
- *Tunnganarniq* – fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive

The Act also mentioned that IQ needs to be the foundation of school programs and curriculum (Section 7). Currently, Nunavut’s curriculum is conceived as four strands, each of which is closely related to IQ (McGregor 2012a: 297):

- *Nunavusiutit*: heritage, culture, history, geography, environmental science, civics, economics, current events, world news
- *Iqqaqqaukkaringniq*: math, innovation, problem-solving, technology, practical arts
- *Aulajaaqtut*: wellness, safety, society, survival, volunteerism
- *Uqausiliriniq*: communication, creative and artistic expression, critical thinking

To further implement IQ in the curriculum, the Education Act also provides for certification of Inuit elders as teachers, which is called *Innait Inuksiutilirjiit* (‘elders teaching the way of the Inuit’), and allows them to teach their own knowledge and values in the education system (George 2013; Mackay 2012; Tapardjuk 2013). In a way, this certification represents a solid example of effective implementation of IQ. However, it has actually given official status to practices that had already existed in several Nunavut communities (Targé 2005).

The Education Act is not the only legislation integrating IQ principles. This is also true for the *Nunavut Wildlife Act* (S.Nu. 2003, c.26), which is the first Nunavut statute to incorporate IQ principles. The Act assumes that IQ is important to management of wildlife and should be integral to the Act (Part 1, Section 1[2][f]). The Act is based on 13 IQ guiding principles, six of which have been identified by the Sustainable Development IQ Working Group. The seven others are:

- *Papattiniq* – Guardianship of what one does not own
- *Qaujimanilik* – Respect knowledge or experience
- *Surattittailimaniq* – Hunt only what is necessary and do not waste
- *Ilijaaqaqtailiniq* – Harvesting without malice

- *Sirliqsaaqtittittailiniq* – Avoid causing animals unnecessary harm
- *Akiraqtuutijariaqanginniq Nirjutiit Pijjutigillugi* – No one owns animals or land and so avoid disputes
- *Ikpigusuttiarniq Nirjutilimaanik* – Treat all wildlife respectfully

In 2005, this law justified an increase in polar bear quotas in the Baffin Bay and Western Hudson Bay regions. Although scientists said at the time that polar bear populations were in decline in both regions, Inuit maintained the opposite. Furthermore, they considered the human-polar bear relationship to be threatened by the very existence of the quota system and lobbied the government for its removal to restore the relationship. Inuit were worried that polar bears had left Nunavut for Greenland because of the quota system and cited the large harvests of bears in Greenland at the time as evidence (Dowsley and Wenzel 2008: 185).

NLCA's IQ Initiatives

NLCA organizations have also been devoting time and effort to encouragement of Inuit values and culture. Contrary to the GN, NLCA organizations have not tried to integrate IQ into their daily operations. In fact, apart from the NSDC before 2002, they barely use the term IQ at all. Instead, NLCA organizations have focused on developing research projects on culture and languages, and have established advisory committees on Inuit cultural issues. For example, NTI's Department of Social and Cultural Development has been a partner to numerous research projects developed in universities across Canada on various topics: traditional knowledge, leadership, mining development, education, marine life, etc. NTI is also on the board of the Nunavut General Monitoring Plan (NGMP), a monitoring plan required by the NLCA (Article 12). NTI also funds and seeks funding for research and creates programs to meet other Inuit needs, such as healing from the residential school trauma, supporting harvesters through a series of programs, etc.

Regional organizations also put a lot of effort into developing research programs. Hence, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association supports the creation and design of social and cultural programs and services by, for example, taking young Inuit onto the land or by funding language programs. It also collaborates with southern researchers to develop Inuit-relevant research and develops its own research initiatives. The most significant example is probably the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) established in 2006 “to create a more accurate history of the decisions and events that affected Inuit living in the Baffin Region from 1950-1975, and to document their impact on Inuit life” (Qikiqtani Truth Commission 2014). The commission met Inuit in every Baffin community and did extensive archival research. It led to publication of two reports in 2013 (Harris et al. 2013; Qikiqtani Truth Commission 2013).

NTI and regional organizations are not the only ones making some effort to document and encourage Inuit values. So are NLCA boards. The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (2014), for example, has an IQ program meant for “conserving

wildlife through the application of *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit* and scientific knowledge.” The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB), which examines environmental impact assessments that mining companies have undertaken to get licensed, have set guidelines to force them to reflect on the social and cultural impacts of their projects. Most importantly, however, NLCA birthright organizations still advise the GN on how to design and implement programs and policies that will better reflect Inuit values and culture.

Discussion and conclusion

NLCA organizations and GN departments have taken different approaches to Inuit values and culture in their respective organizations. Whereas NLCA organizations have supported research on culture and played an advisory role to public bodies, the GN has focused on integrating Inuit values into its own operations. To do so, the GN has put into place a series of initiatives: hiring IQ coordinators who are encouraged to meet Inuit elders; organizing cultural activities; adopting legislation that incorporates IQ principles; and much more. While the NLCA organization approach has encouraged research on Inuit issues, the GN’s efforts to integrate IQ into its operations have provided a great opportunity to reflect on the impacts of Western institutions on Inuit culture, and vice versa.

Colonial encounters are often conceived as unidirectional processes where Indigenous cultures are swallowed into a much larger and powerful structure from which they cannot escape. Throughout the 20th century, the whole colonial enterprise flowed from that premise. It was thought that by establishing colonies in “pagan” and “uncivilized” lands, Western powers were giving “primitive” peoples—who were deemed to disappear in the short term anyway—salvation, a better life, and the tools to live in the new world order. This motivation fueled Canada’s Arctic policy in the mid-1950s. Jean Lesage, who was the federal minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources in the 1950s (and who would become Quebec’s Premier in the 1960s), believed that it was “pointless to consider whether the Eskimo was happier before the white man came, for the white man has come and time cannot be reversed” (Lesage 1955: 4). According to him, the people who had modified Inuit lives had the responsibility to bring Inuit into the modern world. “If we do not accept this responsibility,” he wrote, “we are denying the Eskimos the opportunity to participate freely in the life and activities of the nation [and to] climb the ladder of civilization” (ibid.: 5). Lesage and his contemporaries were convinced of two things: first, the capitalist system of southern Canada would soon prevail in the North and, second, this system would contribute to eradication of Inuit culture (Robertson 1960, 2000; Zaslow 1988). It never occurred to them that the Inuit would survive in the long run, nor that Inuit would alter the system they were imposing on the North. Yet this is exactly what IQ is doing.⁸

⁸ In this instance, the Inuit are not unique. Comaroff and Comaroff (1992) have shown that colonial regimes are frequently modified by local cultures.

The traditional culture of the Inuit differs radically from the culture of the Western bureaucracy that Nunavut institutions are based on. On the one hand, Inuit traditionally lived in bands of a few dozen individuals.⁹ Bands had no formal chief; instead, each one had an *isumataq*, a person with *isuma* (Oosten et al. 1999). *Isuma* is intelligence, the capacity to think. It also means inspiration, imagination, and spirit. Although everyone has *isuma*,¹⁰ the *isumataq* was the person whose judgement was most trusted. Such a person would lead by consensus and did not have the power to coerce anyone into following. Leadership was also shared with other individuals, like the *angakkuq*, the shaman, whose role was to ensure the cosmological order of the world. The *umialik*, the person who owned the *umiaq*, the boat, also played a certain leadership role, as he ultimately decided whether his boats could be used to hunt or travel. Good hunters and seamstresses could also be leaders in their own way. In fact, circumstances often dictated who played a leadership role. Although the *isumataq*, *umialik*, *angakkuq* and other occasional leaders were well respected figures whose counsels were valued, they could lose their status if they made too many mistakes, if they provided bad advice, and if the consensus around their persona faded. Thus, traditional Inuit leadership was neither hierarchal nor fixed in time and space, but rather a product of context and of reciprocal trust among band members.

On the other hand, Nunavut inherited all of the bureaucratic structures of the Northwest Territories (NWT). Throughout the 20th century, the NWT has been fashioned by Ottawa politicians and bureaucrats who recreated in the North the structures they knew and were part of in southern Canada. NWT ordinances¹¹ were discussed among civil servants in Ottawa and then adopted by decree by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Chief Executive Officer of the Territory appointed by the Federal government, who also happened to work and live in Ottawa. The NWT's capital was moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife only in 1967. Its Legislative Assembly was fully elected for the first time in 1975. Its Commissioner lost his full governmental powers in 1980 and has stopped chairing meetings of the NWT Executive Council only since 1985 (Dickerson 1992). The bureaucratic structure the NWT inherited was totally based on the Canadian bureaucracy. It had been created from scratch by civil servants in Ottawa, had a formal hierarchy, had fixed rules, was organized in a complex set of units, employed people on the basis of their technical qualifications, and so on. So when Nunavut was created in 1999, Inuit inherited a form

⁹ The following discussion is a simplification of an obviously much more complex and richer reality. Furthermore, the number of ethnographies written about Inuit is too extensive to be quoted exhaustively here. For this reason, the present discussion is based mostly on Michèle Therrien's (2012) *Les Inuit*, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰ Humans are not born with *isuma*, however. They acquire it as they grow older, usually around the age of four or five (Therrien 1987: 85-86). *Isuma* is essential to living a healthy life. Crazy people are called *isumairutijuq* ('those that lost *isuma*') (Spalding 1998: 33). Bears also have *isuma* (Laugrand and Oosten 2007: 360, 362).

¹¹ Before it had its own parliament, the Northwest Territories did not have laws, but ordinances that had the force of law. While laws are proposed, discussed, and adopted by an elected legislative assembly, ordinances were adopted by decree by the head of a jurisdiction, in this case, the Commissioner of the NWT.

of government they knew but which was radically different from the one their ancestors had traditionally used (Henderson 2007).

Thus, by integrating IQ into the GN and into NLCA organizations, Inuit need to mould their cultural values to a set of rigid structures that IQ is foreign to. Consequently, meaningful integration of IQ faces systemic barriers and does impact Inuit cultural values, which inevitably become reified representations of some of their elements. First, the nature of the Nunavut bureaucracy removes IQ from its Inuit context. The range of Inuit values and culture that can be used and reflected in Nunavut institutions is thus in large part limited by bureaucratic structures (Tester and Irniq 2008). These structures impose a leitmotiv on IQ. To be reflected at all by them, Inuit cultural values need to fit the mould. For example, the fluid and consensual Inuit leadership has to modify its very nature to fit the structure of a fixed and hierarchized system. In this context, not every Inuit cultural feature can be integrated into GN and NLAC operations. Those features that are must have broad enough meanings so as not to be too foreign to the bureaucratic structure. The IQ guidelines are a good example of this point. Although they are Inuit values, their meaning is broad enough that they also make sense in the GN bureaucracy. Indeed, “serving,” “respect others,” “consensus decision-making,” “problem solving,” and “working together,” to name a few, are all principles that should be adopted in every bureaucracy.¹² Other principles, like those integrated into the Nunavut Wildlife Act (harvesting without malice, hunt only what is necessary, avoid causing animals harm, treat wildlife respectfully, etc.), are absolutely in the spirit of other wildlife acts, like the Canada Wildlife Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. W-9), for example. They are not specific to Inuit cultural values.

Second, as Tester and Irniq noted (2008: 51), integration of Inuit values is also limited to areas that are unrelated to resource development and use. Mining or road building, to take just two examples, will not adapt to IQ. Integration of IQ may also be limited in areas where it confirms scientific knowledge. As such, it is possible to think that the use of IQ in the Wildlife Act to justify hunting quotas works as long as both science and IQ agree on the state of certain animal populations.

Third, integration of IQ also faces cultural and linguistic barriers. Most territorial civil servants are non-Inuit who do not speak Inuktitut. Many of them also spend a few years in the territory before moving back to southern Canada. They are not fertile ground for implementation and integration of IQ in the structure of the territory.¹³ In this context, Inuit are sometimes ashamed of being Inuit and are reluctant to ask to be served in Inuktitut (Tapardjuk 2013: 123).

¹² In fact, the guidelines developed by the IQ working group are in many ways similar to shared mental models used in self-managing work teams (Duskrat and Pescosolido 2002).

¹³ GN and NLCA employees still overwhelmingly use English in the workplace. In fact, they have had the right to speak Inuktitut only since the Inuit Language Protection Act (S.Nu 2008, c. 17) came into effect in 2011 (Rogers 2011).

Despite these barriers, integration of IQ into GN operations and legislation is extremely meaningful for Nunavut Inuit. First, for many younger Inuit who have never lived on the land and have gone to school and been trained to work in GN and NLCA institutions, IQ is not so much about bringing traditions into the realm of institutions, but rather about making sure that the values they were raised with are reflected in territorial programs and policies. Younger Inuit know their Inuit culture differs from that of their parents and grandparents. That difference does not make it less Inuit.

Implementation of IQ in GN and NLCA operations and legislation also has impacts on the very same bureaucratic structures that act as systemic barriers to its implementation. *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* is not only “about power, about Inuit taking charge and making positive changes for the future” (Henderson 2007: 198) or only a “practice of resistance” used to counter “the logic and totalizing agenda of colonial state power and a Nunavut government that, some have argued, inherited this colonial legacy” (Tester and Irniq 2008: 50). In fact, IQ does not owe its existence to foreign political and economic agendas; IQ owes its existence to Inuit who want to create a meaningful world for themselves.

Like Sahlins (1993), I would argue that we need to escape paradigms that claim that Native peoples have built their contemporary societies only *in reaction* to colonial powers. It is common in anthropology to defend Indigenous peoples by claiming that colonial powers have destroyed their worlds and that they must resist and adapt themselves to new realities so that they will not vanish (Sahlins 1999a: 406). While partly true, this argument ignores that 1) no two colonial societies are alike, that 2) no two Indigenous peoples have reacted similarly to colonial powers, and that 3) very few Indigenous societies have disappeared under the weight of a colonial power (Sahlins 1999b: xx). For Sahlins (1999a: 409-410), Indigenous societies do not adapt themselves to colonial regimes; instead, they adapt colonial regimes to their own use. In other words, they indigenize modernity and this process expresses “not so much the culture of resistance as [...] the resistance of culture” (Sahlins 1999b: xvi).

Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is a very good example of indigenization of modernity. IQ is not so much about resisting colonial power as it is about transforming GN and NLCA institutions, operations, and legislation into something more meaningful to Inuit. Although, as we have seen, IQ has not yet completely transformed the GN and NLCA organizations, it could, in the long run, reshape them and make them more representative of Inuit cultural values. These changes will not happen overnight, but the steps taken so far, such as including IQ principles in legislation or teaching IQ and Inuktitut in schools (Ayres 2012), will have impacts in the long run and contribute to changing GN structures and priorities and making them more and more Inuit-like.

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