

# **Housing Nunavut: Care and Tutelage in the North**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

*Housing Nunavut: Care and Tutelage in the North* focuses on legacies of welfare colonialism, tutelage, and bureaucratic forms of care in Nunavut via housing from the 1950s to 2020s. I draw on federal archival documents and interviews with employees at housing and Inuit organizations to understand how Qallunaat (non-Inuit) and Inuit housing attitudes changed with the creation of Nunavut in 1999. I explore forms of care through housing, specifically the concept of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ). IQ was created to bring Inuit well-being to the forefront of territorial policies and programs. I argue that despite Nunavut's commitment to incorporate IQ into its structure, it fails to address Inuit housing needs. This thesis concludes Qallunaat are complicit in harmful forms of housing and care toward Inuit, and the housing crisis can only be addressed through greater control of housing decisions at local, community levels, coupled with an intentional application of IQ.

**Keywords:** housing; Inuit; care; Nunavut; welfare colonialism; Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

To my mom and dad for instilling a love of people, history, and old-timey sayings.



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## List of Acronyms

CMHC	Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation
DIAND	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
DNANR	Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources
GN	Government of Nunavut
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
HAP	Homeowners Assistance Program
INAC	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
INPHC	Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation
IQ	Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit
ITC	Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
ITK	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
LHA	Local Housing Association
NHC	Nunavut Housing Corporation
NLCA	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
NRHP	Northern Rental Housing Program
NTI	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporation.
NWTHC	Northwest Territories Housing Corporation
RCAP	Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples
SSCAP	Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples
TFN	Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut

# Chapter 1. Introduction

“Every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home.”

A simple statement. Benevolent in tone and intention. But as much as it affirms our sensibilities about basic human needs, those who speak it on the political stage are rarely able to follow through.

If you live in what-is-currently Canada, the chances are high that you’ve heard this phrase, or a variation of it.<sup>1</sup> It’s a common soundbite used by political figureheads and media typically during election season. It is also the rallying cry for government that housing instability and unaffordability is a major concern when announcing new federal/provincial housing programs. For decades, politicians and government representatives have said, “We will help you reach a state where you (the individual and all Canadian citizens) can afford a safe and affordable house.” But how has this declaration played out in policy and practice in the last 70 years, particularly regarding caring for those who need it the most?

“Those who need it most” refers to a number of groups including but not limited to the elderly, people with disabilities, single-parent families, and Indigenous communities. For the scope of this thesis, I focus on how the federal and territorial housing bureaucracy serves Indigenous communities, specifically Inuit that live within the territory of Nunavut in northern Canada. In Canada, there are three constitutionally recognized Indigenous groups: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.<sup>2</sup> Inuit are a circumpolar people, spanning from Greenland, Russia, Alaska, and Canada.<sup>3</sup> Most Inuit in Canada

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<sup>1</sup> This expression, and the expression “so-called Canada,” is often used by Indigenous activists and groups. These expressions are used to denote the temporality of place-names as well as challenge colonial notions of ownership amid calls of Land Back by Indigenous people. Any use of the word “Canada” throughout the paper implies this temporality.

<sup>2</sup> The term “Indigenous” is a collective, general term. For the purposes of this paper, any use of Indigenous refers to the three colonially recognized First Peoples in Canada unless stated otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> Since 1972 the government of Canada has used the term Inuit to refer to the Indigenous peoples of the Canadian Arctic. The word “Inuit” (singular, Inuk) means “the people” in Inuktitut, the language of Inuit, and is their preferred ethnonym. Earlier documents generally employed the ethnonym “Eskimo,” and I use the term only when quoting from pre-1972 documents and in the names of programs. The term Eskimo continues to be used when discussing Arctic peoples known only from the archeological record and in Alaska as a gloss for Yupiit, Alutiit, and Inupiat.

live in four regions known as Inuit Nunangat. These include Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, and the Inuvialuit settlement region. Most Inuit live in one of these northern regions, with a majority of Inuit living in Nunavut.

Nunavut is a fairly new territory, having been created in 2000. Nunavut means “our land” in Inuktitut, the language of Inuit. A result of one of the largest land claims agreements to date, Nunavut services 25 communities that are only accessible by plane or boat from the Lower Mainland (see Figure 1.1).<sup>4</sup> Considering the vast space which the communities occupy, each has its own unique features as well as challenges. Housing is arguably one of the greatest challenges facing Nunavut. It has been in a state of crisis since the federal government engaged with housing Inuit in the 1950s.

Unaffordability and low housing stock that impact communities in the Lower Mainland have been a reality of people in the North for more than half a century. But housing itself is not a singular concern for Inuit. It is interconnected with issues such as health, education, economic opportunities, culture, and other aspects of Inuit life. It is important to understand that all these factors contribute to the idea that housing in the North has been in a state of crisis since the introduction of government provided housing. A close examination of the development of northern housing policies and programs since the 1950s reveals how the housing crisis has escalated with very few realistic, effective solutions. This thesis will explain northern housing and all its incarnations, how the Canadian housing bureaucracy was formed to address the housing needs of northern citizens, specifically the needs of Inuit, and highlight the various physical housing structures Inuit have occupied since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, this thesis will demonstrate how Inuit housing needs conflict with the colonial and southern values practiced by the Canadian government. Exploring colonial attitudes and power structures, I will unveil tensions found between the federal bureaucracy and Inuit self-governance with the emergence of Nunavut.

Anthropologist Lisa Stevenson (2014) coined the term “suicide apparatus” during her fieldwork on suicide in Nunavut. The “suicide apparatus” in Nunavut includes a

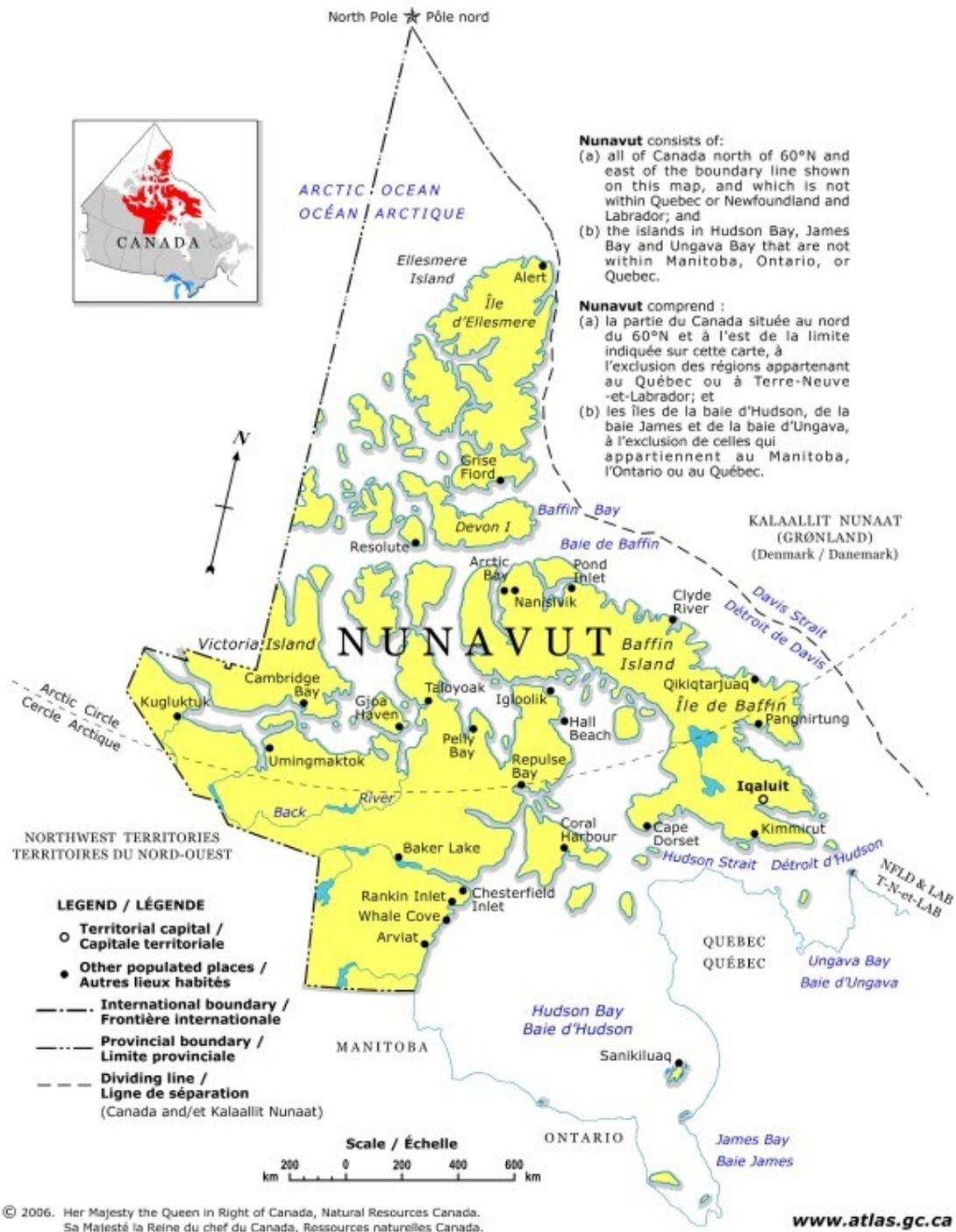
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<sup>4</sup> Lower Mainland refers to the people and areas south of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel. A majority of Canadians live near the Canada-United States border. Any reference to the “North” in this thesis refers to an area encompassed by the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, the Inuvialuit settlement region, Nunatsiavut, and Nunavik.

network of researchers, northern administrators and bureaucrats, consultants, etc., that work together to “keep Inuit alive.” My thesis draws on Stevenson’s (2014) work in terms of government intervention to “keep Inuit alive” via housing. Throughout this thesis, you will see the term housing bureaucracy which refers in some respect to the same government structure found in the suicide apparatus. “The individuals that make up this apparatus are kind, thoughtful people dedicated to improving the lives of Inuit in Nunavut” (Stevenson 2014), but their influence and power are facilitated by larger colonial structures. While this thesis on housing delivery in the North does not take away from the hard work and dedication to making positive change by those working within the housing bureaucracy, it shows how bureaucratic efforts under the current political system in Nunavut do not always succeed in shifting colonial attitudes.

I acknowledge my position within this work as a non-Indigenous researcher. I do not share the lived experience of living in the North, nor have I encountered housing instability. For this reason, there are some items of note. The term “house” will be used throughout the thesis rather than “home.” House refers to a physical structure and an expression of culture, while the term home can hold meaning outside of a dwelling. Home, like a noun, can denote a person, place, or thing. As I cannot determine what constitutes a home for Inuit, I refrain from using the term. I also ease caution to Inuit and other Indigenous readers that some of the content, specifically colonial rhetoric, may be upsetting. As generational trauma is harbored in the mind and body, I present this work with as much care as possible.

My approach in this thesis is not to erase or speak over Inuit voices. Inuit contribution to northern housing in any aspect is invaluable. As Inuit and Inuit organizations advocate for better housing by federal and territorial governments, it’s vital for non-Indigenous people to support Inuit initiatives. For if we allow current housing practices to continue, we abet in colonial forms of care (and harm) given to Inuit. As such, the thesis focuses on critiques of federal and territorial government housing policies and programs. The chapter that follows illustrates the background of housing in the North as well the theory and methodology used to conduct this research.



**Figure 1.1. Map of Nunavut: Boundaries and Communities**

Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, Natural Resources Canada, 2006. Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – Canada.

<https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/0c57ebbd-04d2-5ca6-93a3-a41ec8f17e67>

## **Chapter 2. Background**

### **Historical Context and Literature Review**

Prior to the 1950s, most Canadian Inuit lived in small (1-2 room) houses they constructed themselves from materials at hand. Beginning in the 1950s, the Canadian federal government initiated a number of programs directed at altering the lives of Inuit. These included the establishment of government-administered settlements, tuberculosis surveys and evacuations, wildlife management, schools, and public housing (Thompson 1969; Redgrave 1985; Wenzel 1991; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Wachowich 2001). The earliest government-provided housing were one room units made of plywood. Known as “matchboxes,” these structures were distributed by the Eskimo Housing Loan Program starting in 1959 to replace the self-built structures Inuit inhabited at the time (Collings 2005; Senate of Canada 2017). Administered by the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources (DNANR), the program was a rent-to-own scheme, intended to develop a northern housing market (Tester 2009). The Loan Program proved too expensive for Inuit and was replaced in 1965 by the Northern Rental Housing Program. Houses created for the rent-to-own program were repurposed as rental units (Bonesteel 2006). The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (successor to DNANR) authorized local housing associations (LHAs) to administer housing programs for each community. The associations were mainly responsible for the allocation of public housing (Redgrave 1985).

The federal government provided housing to Inuit settlements until 1974, transferring the responsibility for Inuit housing to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) (Redgrave 1985; Bonesteel 2006). The NWTHC’s directive was to ensure all residents of the NWT had access to adequate housing (Bonesteel 2006). The first homeownership program administered by the NWTHC was the 1984 Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP). The program provided a grant to qualified applicants for the material and construction costs for a house (Stern 2005). Owners were required to live in the houses for 5 years and pay for utilities and maintenance fees. After 8 years, HAP ended because most Inuit could not meet the financial requirements of the program (Tester 2009). HAP was eventually replaced in 1993 by Access, another homeownership program that adjusted housing mortgage payments based on household

income. The NWT HC modified their programs so Inuit could financially qualify, while continuing to encourage Inuit to become homeowners. Affordability was the main reason for the failure of homeownership programs like HAP and rent-to-own housing schemes. Economic opportunities in Inuit settlements are low compared to southern urban areas, with many Inuit unable to afford a mortgage, utility costs, and other expenses that come with living in the North. With Inuit struggling to afford housing in the North, the federal government withdrew funding for all social housing in 1993 (Tester 2009).

While dealing with the ever-changing landscape of northern housing policies and procedures, Inuit were also adapting to Euro-Canadian political structures. Beginning in the 1960s during government relocation efforts, Inuit sought their land/water/human rights within Canadian law (Abele 2007). One product of these efforts was Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK),<sup>5</sup> an Inuit non-profit organization which formed in 1971 to represent Inuit in political, economic, cultural, and social affairs (Matthiasson 1992; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). Composed of community leaders concerned about Inuit land and resource ownership, ITK became involved in various land claims across the North, beginning discussions for what was later called the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI),<sup>6</sup> an organization dedicated to representing Nunavummiut<sup>7</sup> specifically for NLCA discussions, later took over negotiations from ITK in 1982. A shift in favour of land claims efforts occurred when Indigenous<sup>8</sup> and treaty rights for Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples in Canada were recognized in the Constitution Act of 1982 (RCAP 1996b; NTI & IAND 2010). About a decade later, the NLCA was signed and ratified by NTI and the federal government in 1993, a historic moment for Indigenous land agreements within Canada. NTI continues to work, ensuring both parties, federal and Inuit, are meeting their obligations under the Agreement. Both ITK and NTI are involved in housing discussions for Inuit across Canada, developing reports and collaborating with federal agencies to ensure the needs of Inuit are being met.

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<sup>5</sup> Formerly Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, ITK stands for “Inuit are united in Canada.”

<sup>6</sup> NTI was known as Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) from 1982 to 1993.

<sup>7</sup> Nunavummiut is a collective term to refer to all Inuit who live in Nunavut.

<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the UN’s working definition on the term “Indigenous,” I am capitalizing the “I” as a sign of respect. For further information on the importance of terminology, please visit: <https://Indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/terminology/#capitalize>

After years of negotiations, Nunavut became an official territory of Canada in April 1999. It is run by a public government, as a form of self-governance.<sup>910</sup> Abele and Prince (2006) theorize that Inuit chose this system of “adapted federalism” for several reasons including demographic advantages, the high value placed on subsistence hunting, and gaining partial control over a vast land area versus exclusive control over small parcels of land. Members of the legislative assembly are also not associated with any specific political party and, even though it is not an ethnically exclusive government, Inuit maintain the majority of political seats.<sup>11</sup> This non-ethnic form of government can serve the interest of cultural survival in areas where Indigenous people are and will remain the majority population (Moss 1995). Decisions are made based on consensus through a majority vote. Abele and Rodon (2007) describe how this type of modern decision-making was actually informed by Inuit diplomacy long before contact with Western cultures. “Inuit society governed the behaviour of its members with a complex system of values, beliefs and taboos that clearly outlined the expectations of how people should behave” (RCAP 1996b). The adaptability and collective persistence embedded in Inuit culture allowed them to cope through this series of rapid cultural change.

In 2000, following the creation of Nunavut Territory, housing programs in Nunavut communities were transferred to the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC). The federal Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides the NHC with funding for public housing projects (NHC 2016; CMHC 2017).<sup>12</sup> The NHC is responsible for maintaining the existing northern social housing stock and constructing new subsidized housing units (Bonesteel 2006). While the majority of their efforts goes to managing subsidized rental housing units, the NHC also offers four home purchase programs and five home renovation and repair programs for homeowners. Funding for these programs in 2015-2016 came entirely from the Government of Nunavut (GN)

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<sup>9</sup>For specific information about the structure of the Government of Nunavut, visit <https://www.gov.nu.ca/consensus-government>

<sup>10</sup> Self-governance is used here as a political objective instead of the term “sovereignty,” as the latter term originates from European and East Asian discourses (Barker 2005). Self-government is another alternative term.

<sup>11</sup> The term “ethnic” is problematic as it sometimes places Indigenous people as the “Other,” or to indicate those not of white-European ancestry. In Canadian federal policies and documents, Inuit are sometimes referred to as “Indians,” “Arctic,” or “Sub-arctic” people.

<sup>12</sup> CMHC is a Crown Corporation. Crown Corporations are federally owned and provide public services that may not be otherwise privatized. An example of this is public housing in Canada via CMHC. It was established in 1945 to service the Canadian public and returning WWII veterans.

(NHC 2016). Current homeownership programs continue to provide financial assistance for applicants who wish to make the transition from public to private housing. These housing programs, public and private (via homeownership), are legacies of housing policies created by the federal government.

Several Inuit organizations and researchers have reported that Inuit communities have been experiencing a housing crisis (ITC 2001; Tester 2009; Senate of Canada 2017). A federal report from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996c) states Indigenous housing issues are due to three factors: lack of livable incomes to support a private housing market, the absence of a housing market in most Indigenous communities, and lack of clarity on federal government housing responsibility. They also report that the state of housing in the 1990s posed great risk to the physical health of Indigenous peoples, specifically in terms of contracting diseases like tuberculosis and various infections.<sup>13</sup> ITC described crowded housing in Inuit communities as a contributing factor to family violence, self-destructive acts, substance abuse, and harm to physical health (ITC 2001). The 2017 Senate of Canada report makes extensive recommendations to address the housing crisis in Inuit Nunangat (Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region) such as the creation of homeownership programs which would free up social housing units for priority groups of Inuit elders, young adults, and young families. Homeownership programs, such as those implemented by the NHC, attempt to enact social care, or to encourage Inuit to be independent so as to live on their own without assistance from the federal or territorial government (Phillips 2007). Tester (2009) also identified a housing crisis in Nunavut and suggests the solution is the allocation of federal funds to housing. The 2017 Senate of Canada report on northern housing recommends funding be used to create transitional homes for Inuit seeking a move from the public to the private housing market. The push for homeownership and the creation of a private housing market by the government is an effort to shift responsibility for housing onto individual Inuit and to maximize their independence as Canadian citizens (Phillips 2007). The general consensus among the RCAP (1996c), ITC (2001), and the Senate of Canada (2017) report was that along with adequate funding by the federal government, a partnership between the federal government (via CMHC) and other housing bureaucracies (such as

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<sup>13</sup> Tuberculosis, influenza, and other diseases were introduced in the North by Qallunaat.

the Nunavut Housing Corporation) is required in order to address northern housing needs. Contrary to all housing recommendations to date, however, the Canadian state has not enacted effective housing policies and designs that fully consider Inuit needs and the harsh northern environment (Thompson 1969; Buchanan 1979; Redgrave 1985; Condon 1987; Stern 2005; Dawson 2006; Tester 2009; Morin et al 2010).

Generally, early housing designs were developed to meet southern-Canadian housing standards, which were inappropriate for Inuit cultural needs and the northern environment. Over time, housing designs for Inuit incorporated more bedrooms, narrow doorways, and other features that discouraged Inuit from engaging in certain activities (i.e., repairing snowmobiles inside homes) (Don Jossa cited in Stern 2005). Peter Dawson (2006) observed that Inuit in Arviat used spaces in Euro-Canadian designed houses according to their unique contemporary lifestyle and cultural values. He observed that Inuit used bedrooms for storage areas and workshops, and activities like preparing land foods occurred in cold porches or tents outside because kitchens had limited space. He also interpreted a family sleeping in one room as a cultural behaviour rather than a method to manage overcrowded housing. Condon (1987) observed in Ulukhaktok that Inuit parents shared bedrooms with several children while a majority of adolescents had their own bedrooms (82% of the adolescents in his sample). The amount of space in housing determined sleeping arrangements, and families struggled to allocate sleeping space to all household members (Condon 1987). Storage rooms were commonly converted to sleeping areas for younger children. Multiple studies indicate housing designs do not accommodate Inuit utilization of space, family size, and traditional activities (Buchanan 1979; Redgrave 1985; Stern 2005; Dawson 2006; Tester 2006).

Although recent efforts have endeavoured to incorporate Inuit-designed housing in northern communities, the scope of those efforts is limited. The CMHC (2007) attempted to create energy efficient and culturally acceptable housing through a collaborative project involving Inuit. Labeled the Northern Sustainable House, the project considered family structure, spatial needs, and cultural behaviours of Inuit in Arviat. According to the CMHC, Inuit participants were pleased to be involved in the process and satisfied with the design, although Inuit acknowledged that more work was needed for the design to suit the community's specific environmental conditions particularly building on permafrost ground (CMHC 2007). In Nunavik, there has been the

construction of a new energy efficient duplex that suits the changing Arctic environment, provides enough space in areas like the kitchen, and are well insulated (Murphy 2016). These features were recommended by Inuit involved in the project's consultation process. Both of these housing projects were completed in their respective communities and are examples of success due to co-operative processes between the housing bureaucracy and Inuit.

In the 70 years since federal housing policies were first imposed upon Nunavummiut, the changing political landscape has done little to effectively address the housing crisis in Nunavut. Historical documents created by various researchers, Inuit organizations, and federal/territorial governments provide an opportunity to critically analyze the underlying motivations of Qallunaat (non-Inuit)<sup>14</sup> that create(d), deliver(ed), and critique(d) northern housing policies. To understand policy changes shaping northern housing from the early 1950s to 2021, I'm examining this topic through a framework of settler/welfare colonialism, tutelage, and care, and asking the following questions:

- What do federal housing documents reveal about Qallunaat and Inuit housing attitudes?
  - How do Qallunaat attitudes toward Inuit influence housing policies and programs in the North, both in the past and the present? In other words, what "mattered" to Qallunaat when it came to delivering housing to Inuit communities?
  - How have Qallunaat and Inuit priorities changed over time with regard to housing?
- As the federal government withdrew funding from social housing in the 1990s, how has that affected the way the government views or cares about its northern citizens?
  - How have bureaucratic forms of care been communicated to and by the federal and territorial governments?
  - What kind of care was practiced in the early development of housing and how has it changed over time?

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<sup>14</sup> There are different spellings of the word (e.g., Kalunat, Kabluna, Qallunaaq). I have chosen to use this spelling.

- With the creation of Nunavut in 1999, as an Inuit-governed territory, how were housing policies affected, if at all?
  - Did processes of welfare colonialism and tutelage continue to survive through the creation of the Nunavut Housing Corporation in 2000?
  - How does the practice of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)<sup>15</sup> in the Government of Nunavut change the way housing is delivered at the territorial level?
  - In what ways have Inuit needs been considered/implemented in housing policies?

## Theoretical Framework

Now that I've outlined a brief overview of housing policy and power in the North, let's explore and understand how its implementation contributes to Canada's legacies of colonialism, tutelage, and approaches to care. In examining northern housing, I am influenced by the concepts of settler colonialism, welfare colonialism, tutelage, and care as developed and understood by Patrick Wolfe (1999), Robert Paine (1977), Noel Dyck (1991), and Lisa Stevenson (2014), respectively. I'm specifically interested in the interdependency of these concepts as they relate to Nunavut housing.

Colonization as a historical and contemporary process has several forms. In North America specifically, colonization took the form of settler colonialism. "What is now called settler colonialism was known in the nineteenth century as 'colonization'" (Foley in Bateman and Pilkington 2011).<sup>16</sup> Settler colonialism is a process in which a colonial entity (i.e., Great Britain, France, Portugal, Israel, etc.) legitimizes land as empty, sometimes through ideas of "terra nullius," allowing for settlers to then move in and occupy the land.<sup>17</sup> In the meantime, Indigenous peoples are displaced. It is "a distinctive social relationship of oppression [that] exists between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples" (Camfield 2019). Formal legislation by the settler-colonial state sought to politically, physically, and culturally erase Indigenous peoples.

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<sup>15</sup> IQ is officially recognized by the Government of Nunavut as a form of knowledge and has been implemented into several GN departments. It means "the things Inuit have known for a long time" (Stern 2010).

<sup>16</sup> For details about the origin of the term colonialism, refer to Foley's chapter in Bateman and Pilkington (2011).

<sup>17</sup> Settlers refer to people moving into an area from which they did not originate.

Patrick Wolfe (1999; 2006), a pioneer in understanding settler colonialism, distinguishes it as a structure and not an event. He asserts that settler colonialism is perpetuated by a variety of agents, whether it be formal state institutions and/or individuals and groups. Wolfe (1999) argues there are three phases to settler colonization.<sup>18</sup> He posits that the first phase is typically marked by the seizure of land under the guise of caring for Indigenous mortality. While it's arguable that this phase began with the creation of Hudson Bay Company (HBC) trading posts and RCMP detachments in the 19th and early 20th century, respectively (Usher 1971; Paine 1977; Duffy 1988), the temperamental nature of the fur trade and the world market discouraged Euro-Canadian settlement in the North. Using Wolfe's (1999) outline, I argue that the first phase of settler colonialism in the North truly began with the tuberculosis outbreak in the 1930s-1940s (and continued post-WWII) as this outbreak increased federal government presence in the North under the focus of Inuit mortality rates and living conditions (Brody 1975; Stevenson 2014). The second phase is marked by the displacement of Indigenous people from their traditional lands and moving them into settlements, rendering the land available to the colonial power. As northern land became vital for defense and resource extraction following WWII, Inuit were moved into/coerced to live in government-created settlements (Damas 2002; Wolfe 1999; Tester and Kulchyski 1994).

The third and final phase is assimilation policies. A well-known example in Canada was The Indian Act of 1867, which outlined parameters of who was considered an "Indian"<sup>19</sup> and who was not. This meant, for instance, that any status First Nations women would no longer be recognized as First Nations under federal law depending on who they married (Hinge 1978).<sup>20</sup> These racist and sexist legislative policies attempt to erase First Nations legal status (Coulthard 2014). While this specific policy does not directly affect Inuit, the Indian Act is significant because it establishes a formal, legal relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous people (Morgensen

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<sup>18</sup> Wolfe's (1999) book focuses on the process of settler colonialism within Australia; however, the colonization of Canada is often compared to that of Australia.

<sup>19</sup> I'm using the original term in The Indian Act of 1867, which refers to a status First Nations member.

<sup>20</sup> For a comprehensive, accessible overview of The Indian Act and policies around blood quantum, see Joseph, B. (2018) *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality*. Port Coquitlam, BC: Indigenous Relations Press.

2011). For Inuit, one act of assimilation was when Inuit children and adults were sent to southern hospitals for tuberculosis treatment throughout the first half of the 20th century. Many children discharged from the hospitals were abducted and put into either residential schools or with settler families (Stevenson 2012; 2014). Inuit in the North waiting for the return of their family members were sometimes left with no news, only to assume what happened.

All three of these phases occurred simultaneously inside approximately 50 years. Settler colonialism is motivated by what Wolfe (1999; 2006) calls the “logic of elimination.” This process is harmful toward Indigeneity (culture, body, mind, etc.), but it is not always genocidal (Wolfe 1999;2006). Camfield (2019) argues that settler colonialism is present within Canadian structures. He states there is on-going dispossession of land and natural resources even though the federal government has attempted to reconcile and acknowledge their wrongdoings to Indigenous people.<sup>21</sup> Settler colonialism is a process of power and displacement that ultimately affects Indigenous peoples in Canada and was the impetus for the introduction of welfare colonialism in the North.

As settler colonialism was spreading into the North, Canada was becoming a welfare state, creating social programs that addressed the needs of its citizens in regard to education, income security, and health. These programs were a result of a budding industrial economy in Canada and the corresponding social issues that accompanied this new economic form. Further, programs were developed due to emerging “beliefs about the legitimate role of the state, and about the rights and duties of citizens in Western nations” (Banting 1987). The first welfare policies in Canada provided assistance through income supplementation post-WWII.

Welfare policies create an economic dependency among marginalized groups, integrating them into the colonial state. In other words, welfare colonialism is a systematic approach which breaks down Indigenous systems of survival which allow Inuit to live, and replaces them with ones favoring or contributing to the colonial system. This creates a dependency between the colonized and colonizer(s). Welfare or “relief”

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<sup>21</sup> Coulthard (2014) notes that former Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper claimed in 2009 that Canada never experienced/ “had” colonialism (p. 106).

programs left a lasting impact in the North, introducing welfare colonialism in guise of public assistance as early as the 1940s.

Robert Paine (1977), who coined welfare colonialism, understands it as a channel through which the state can govern at a distance. Paine (1977) suggests that the geopolitical interest in the North due to the start of the Cold War ushered in this new kind of governance/colonialism, since the federal government now had to “deal with” Inuit who occupied the land. Though welfare policies were universally enacted in southern Canada for Canadian citizens, there was reluctance by northern administrators to provide assistance for Inuit. The discourse from northern agencies emphasized that providing federal relief to Inuit would foster dependency on government resources. “The philosophy behind the issuing of relief was clearly one where deservingness had to be shown unequivocally,” according to Nixon (1990). For the federal government, to be “deserving” of relief meant that an individual was unable to care for themselves, such as the elderly, sick, and “non-producers” (i.e., children). But assistance was not given to Inuit who had the potential to provide for themselves. In some instances, relief was not issued to eastern Inuit communities because economic conditions were deemed “good” by federal agents, due to the fact that the Hudson Bay Company was profiting from the earnings of Inuit hunters and trappers in the region (Nixon 1990). Due to the remoteness of Inuit communities, welfare assistance was often delivered by federally sanctioned organizations such as the church, Hudson Bay Company employees, and RCMP.

With the displacement and relocation of Inuit into settlements around trading posts and military stations in the North during the 1950s and 1960s, Inuit were forced to adopt a mixed economy. This new economy combined both subsistence-based practices, such as hunting and trading, with wage labor. With this mixed model, many Inuit communities struggled with a high unemployment rate. Due to nonexistent permanent job opportunities, most Inuit were in poverty (Graburn 1964 cited in Kral 2019; Usher 1965). Tester (2006) adds that sub-par housing, coupled with low employment opportunities, increased poverty rates for Inuit. So it is not surprising that Inuit became dependent on welfare programs as a means of survival.

Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski (1994) have written extensively about Inuit-government relations and the Canadian welfare state. Their work focuses on processes of welfare colonialism in Canadian territories, specifically analyzing federal policies as

they pertain to Inuit relocation, housing, and self-determination. The authors are critical of the federal government and present an unfavourable view of early welfare policies as a means of social control through coercion. An example of this is the implementation of the Family Allowance Act in 1944, where Inuit families, in order to receive social assistance, were required to send their children to settlement schools (Tester and Kulchyski, 1994). Many Inuit stated they were forced to move into settlements by threat of discontinued welfare payments (Kral 2019). P.G. Nixon (1990) provides a similar argument to Tester and Kulchyski (1994) through his analysis of discriminatory welfare policies toward Inuit. In regards to the Family Allowance Act, southern Canadians and many First Nations were paid the family allowance via cheque whereas Inuit were “paid” via rationed food and supplies (Nixon 1990). The supplies given were based on the number of children in a family. While it appeared the government wished to demonstrate benevolence toward Inuit children and their families, the policy allowed the government social control over some Inuit behaviours. It wasn’t until 1961 that Inuit across the North received cheques instead of rations. Conversely, David Damas (2002) argues against this idea, stating that relocation efforts were not necessarily coercive by the government, but that some of these movements were due to migration/immigration. Damas’ analysis of northern policy is largely dependent on trusting that government reports about relocation efforts and early policies were accurate/truthful (i.e., Inuit morale was good, despite people having to be moved away from their traditional lands and being unable to return to them). He does, however, acknowledge that early policies were not always beneficial for Inuit in terms of social assistance.

In his exploration of welfare colonialism, Paine (1977) suggests that tutelage acts as a tool of welfare colonialism. He borrows the idea of tutelage from John and Irma Honigmann’s book *Eskimo Townsend* (1965). Tutelage, as an instrument for integration/assimilation, is when one group teaches another, or an instructor provides direction to a pupil (Dyck 1991). The paths by which tutelage agents interacted with Inuit were through welfare channels such as education, income supplementation, and housing. The Honigmanns believed that tutelage, as administered by Qallunaat, would help Inuit develop a new identity appropriate for the “modern world” (Paine 1977). Paine disagrees with this assumption, stating that tutelage has a negative effect on both Qallunaat and Inuit. He asserts that tutelage, as well as welfare colonialism, are complex phenomena where “white behaviour towards Inuit may (and sometimes is) characterized

as solicitous rather than exploitative, liberal rather than repressive. Both descriptions hold true” (Paine 1977). Noel Dyck (1991;1997) understands this concept as it applies to federal administration over First Nations as “coercive tutelage,” meaning one group exercises restraint or guardianship over another. Both Paine (1977) and Dyck (1991; 1997) highlight the power dynamics that occur in tutelage and emphasize that the tutor always feels their intentions are benevolent or altruistic.

The significance of institutionalized tutelage in northern housing policy demonstrates the government’s need for Inuit to become independent citizens of the state, while the state continues to maintain social control. Given Nunavut has 25 widely dispersed communities, all with varying social, economic, and environmental conditions, it’s reasonable to analyze how early housing policies failed to adequately deliver unique, area-specific housing and foster independence for Nunavummiut. For example, early housing programs like the Northern Rental Housing Program in 1965 were supplemented with housing education pamphlets and workshops conducted by Qallunaat (Thompson 1969; Buchanan 1979).<sup>22</sup> These pamphlets provided instruction on how to properly take care of and use Euro-Canadian styled houses. These attempts of tutelage/assimilation were clearly not successful as over forty years later, Inuit were observed to use spaces within Euro-Canadian houses to meet their own cultural needs (Dawson 2006). Because no other form of housing was provided to Inuit settlements, Inuit were forced to adapt to the unfamiliar living spaces of these houses. Dyck (1991) points out that tutelage creates resistance from Indigenous communities, which only serves to reinforce it. Put simply, if the student “acts out” then the tutor sees these acts as a need for continued education. Taking the example of housing pamphlets and uses of space, Inuit not maintaining their houses in accordance with Euro-Canadian standards reinforced the need for the state to intervene. Dyck (1991) details how forms of resistance against tutelage “...has been incidental, resulting from the failure of government programs to recognize local conditions.” This kind of indirect and non-confrontational resistance can be attributed to traditional cultural/emotional behaviours, where strategies are in place to avoid confrontations, and anger and unhelpfulness are considered unfavourable traits (Briggs 1970; Abele & Rodden 2007). As a result of these

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<sup>22</sup> A closer examination of these pamphlets will be examined in chapter 3.

programs and policies, it is arguable that Inuit exercise forms of passive resistance against the tutelage of government-provided housing.

Dyck (1991) states that tutelage has become a permanent condition for First Nation peoples, but is it true for Inuit? Could tutelage continue its pervasiveness in Nunavut, a self-governed territory, and if so, how? Could current housing policies and practices, those articulated in the context of reconciliation, reflect the desires of a housing bureaucracy that remains entrenched in colonial practices of assimilation? Just as Christian evangelists (a different tutelage agent) sought to “save” Indigenous people and encourage them to live a more “civilized, faithful life,” could housing tutelage today be articulated around a practice of care that seeks to “save” Inuit from living in “squalor” as compared to their more “sophisticated” southern counterparts?

A historical examination of housing policies will provide a better understanding of how tutelage, as a tool of welfare colonialism administered by Qallunaat, sought a variety of goals. It will demonstrate the federal government’s need for Inuit to manage and maintain their housing stock by encouraging Inuit to adopt Euro-Canadian housing behaviours. By doing so, the federal government hopes Inuit will learn how to become independent from state social housing programs (i.e., becoming homeowners instead of renters). This analysis will also shed light on Inuit forms of resistance in regard to government-provided housing.

Looking into past federal policies in the North, we clearly see two processes of colonialism working simultaneously (settler and welfare), while tutelage acts as a tool to keep the “colonized” under the supervision of the colonizer. Drawing on the arguments raised above, I will attempt to understand how early government housing policies for Inuit have served to enforce colonialist practices of care and control. I will also examine how these colonial practices have changed (or not) with the creation of Nunavut in 1999, as an Inuit self-governed territory.

While many scholars have written about Canadian colonialist policies towards Inuit (Paine 1977; Duffy 1988; Dyck 1991; Diubaldo 1993; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Damas 2002; Stern 2005; Bonesteel 2006; Tester 2009; Dunning 2012; Stevenson 2014), there has been little exploration of practices of care motivating the actions of the Canadian housing bureaucracy. To “care about” involves acknowledging and

understanding the needs of an individual or group and strategizing ways to address these needs (Phillips 2007). To “care for” involves taking action and responsibility for caring activities. As outlined by Phillips (2007), care has three dimensions: “care as labour, care within a framework of obligations and responsibility, and care as an activity with costs.” It also includes “the bodily labours of providing what is necessary for the health, sustainment, and protection of someone or something, and the feeling of concern and attachment that provokes such acts” (Caswell & Cifor 2016). Reflecting on the way Inuit have historically been cared for by the Canadian state, Lisa Stevenson (2014) describes how the death of and physical survival of Inuit became, and arguably still remains, the focus for northern bureaucrats. She examined how forms of care affected Inuit youth, and observed what she calls “anonymous care,” which is care that is administered indifferently without regard for the specific characteristics or needs of the individual sufferer. For instance, suicide hotlines exemplify anonymous care, as the hotlines act as a humanitarian resource but generalize the act of care to prevent as many people as possible from committing suicide (Stevenson 2014). This method of care emerged in the 1950s and 1960s alongside biopolitics. According to Stevenson, biopolitics is a form of care and governance concerned with the maintenance of life itself and directed toward a group of people rather than individuals. For example, medical professionals turn to Western methods of care, prescribing anti-depressant pills for example, rather than addressing the specific cultural or environmental concerns of the individual sufferer.<sup>23</sup> While these approaches to care may be helpful, neither of them are holistic in practice.

While care in the North is analyzed through the lens of anonymous care, we must also analyze how care is employed by the state through an ethic of care (Stern 2005; Stern & Hall 2010). Under the umbrella of a feminist framework, to apply an ethic of care is to understand and respond compassionately to individual and unique situations. Stevenson (2012) views an ethic of care as having someone matter to you and the ethics of responding/attending to the someone who matters. An ethic of care applies to approaches to and discussions of Indigenous health, where the maintenance of life

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<sup>23</sup> As I am not an Inuk, I cannot state specific methods medical professionals might use to help Inuit beyond writing prescriptions. There are cases where connecting with the land, creating community through hunting, etc., are helpful in revitalizing Inuit culture and well-being (Johnson as cited in Abele and Southcott, 2016). By combining both Inuit well-being practices and Western medicine, medical professionals may be able to extend help to Inuit beyond “the prescription.”

intersects with caring for the individual. It emphasizes “the ways people are linked to each other and larger communities through webs of responsibilities” (Caswell & Cifor 2016). It asks that we employ empathy toward the lived experiences of people as well as foster and maintain personal connections. But how has an ethic of care, or care that is compassionate and culturally sensitive, been practiced by the Canadian state? If we look to the early days of state-Inuit care outside of housing, we will see that the government employed both non-empathetic and empathetic policies. The Eskimo Identification System, also known as the Disc System, is an example of non-empathetic or anonymous care. Used from 1941-1971, this system gave Inuit unique, numbered identification markers which were engraved on discs, and Inuit were required to wear them. “The Government of Canada, in 1941, thought it had arrived at the perfect method of taking care of their Inuit subjects by issuing numbers to substitute for Inuit names” (Denning 2012). While an easier method for the state to keep track of its “subjects,” it ignored an important cultural practice. The naming practices of Inuit hold special meaning, as people are given name-souls, or their “atiq,” which is usually the name of someone who has recently died (Nuttall 1992; Dunning 2012; Stevenson 2014). This policy was one of cultural genocide, to diminish a cultural practice tied to Inuit identity by erasing and enumerating their names. In another attempt to care for Inuit through policy and procedure, the tuberculosis crisis in the 1940s and 1950s saw the arrival of medical ships in northern communities. If Inuit were diagnosed with tuberculosis, they weren’t allowed to leave the ship and were transported to southern hospitals or sanatoriums (Stevenson 2014). Often times, Inuit did not return back to their communities. It was a regime of care that “doesn’t matter who you are, just that you stay alive” and caregivers often turned to preserving life in periods of crisis (Stevenson 2014). Has this type of care, whether anonymous care or an ethics of care, been carried forward to the housing crisis of today?

In the context of housing in the North, we see forms of care emerge during the tuberculosis outbreak (which was brought into Inuit camps by Qallunaat) and, particularly, when American military troops entered northern Canada at the start of the Cold War in the 1950s to build Distance Early Warning (DEW) lines. Since Inuit were not provided housing, they used leftover material from the DEW stations and landfill sites near the settlements to create “shacks” (Buchanan 1979; Tester 2009; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). The resourcefulness of Inuit allowed them to live in permanent

dwellings, creating small settlements around schools and trading posts. Some Inuit regarded the shacks as less desirable than tents or snowhouses because of overcrowding (Condon 1983). Not all shacks, however, were regarded unpleasant for it enabled Inuit families to stay together as children began to attend school (Tester 2006). The military reported Inuit as being starved, diseased, and living in impoverished conditions, causing outrage and anxiety within the American and Canadian public sector. This put pressure on the Canadian government to take care of its northern citizens (Brody 1975; Paine 1977; Diubaldo 1993). In response, the government created the Eskimo Loan Fund in 1953 (Tester and Kulchyski 1994). The federal initiative supported the development of co-operatives and other economic opportunities for Inuit. Early policies were focused more on fostering an economic independence for Inuit. By 1956, the first “modern” houses were constructed for Inuit (Redgrave 1985). This included an iglu-type structure made of white Styrofoam and double-walled tents. This attempt to build a structure similar in style to Inuit traditional housing might be seen as empathetic care, or attending to Inuit through an ethics of care. But these early housing structures ultimately failed as they were either inappropriate material for the northern environment and/or were not popularly adopted by Inuit. In contrast, Qallunaat who moved north for employment purposes were often provided housing by southern companies or the federal government.<sup>24</sup>

This early example of housing care from the federal government toward Inuit gives a sense of how care is seen and enacted by the state. Stevenson’s (2012; 2014) analysis of northern care as it applies to Inuit housing in the early 20th century emphasizes the prevention of Inuit death as well as cultivating independent citizens. The makeshift shacks Inuit constructed prompted northern administrators to view housing as a hazard to Inuit health. “What becomes clear through the ethnographic and archival record is that such forms of bureaucratic care, while working to maintain the physical life of Inuit qua Canadian citizens, may also manifest a form of indifference on the part of the state—an indifference that is sometimes perceived by Inuit as murderous, even though it is always couched in terms of benevolence and care” (Stevenson 2012). Inuit response

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<sup>24</sup> These incentive programs are still active today, with the promise of “good” salaries and the provision of housing (usually in better condition than housing given to Inuit and reserved for Qallunaat workers). Qallunaat move into northern communities temporarily under these programs. The jobs often advertised through these programs range from nursing, teaching, government work, etc.

to the state's murderous care includes the decades long fight for self-governance. Although the goal of self-government in this context falls under a human rights framework, it must be analyzed through a perspective of care. The failure of the federal government time and again to provide Inuit with adequate housing, along with other important issues, pushed Inuit to achieve more political independence, so they may better care for each other. The pursuit for the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) affirms Inuit priorities of protecting their culture and strong ties to the land, as well as requiring the federal government recognize their constitutional right to self-determination (Moss 1995).

In the finalization of the NLCA, there was an agreement that the principles of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) were to be incorporated into the foundation of the Government of Nunavut. IQ is an Inuktitut phrase encompassing Inuit traditional knowledges, including eight components that describe Inuit cultural and social values (Nunavut Department of Education 2007; Tester and Irniq 2008; Johnston 2014). It is care specific to Inuit and attends to Inuit outside of bureaucratic forms of care. An example of how care via IQ is regularly practiced within Inuit communities is through their kinship networks, which perform affective functions (Nuttall 1992). These kinship ties compose a strengthened sense of community and, therefore, care. Indeed, acts of care are culturally informed, in which the body, self, and identity are all involved (Lyon 1995). Inuit led co-operatives in the North are examples of how care, as informed by Inuit cultural knowledge, bring together communities to focus on health and well-being of its members as well as community development. Co-ops were introduced to the North by the federal government as early as 1959, providing financial support until the 1970s (Alsop as cited in Abele & Southcott 2016).<sup>25</sup> Although the establishment of co-ops are important economically, early co-ops were watched closely by government bodies (Paine 1977). Several barriers still exist that hinder the development and success of co-ops including financial resources, participation of community members, and knowledge of bureaucratic systems/processes (i.e., grant writing). An example of a successful co-op is the Ilisaqsivik Society in Clyde River, Nunavut. It has a variety of programs which provide both permanent and temporary employment for community members. Programs include

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<sup>25</sup> Abele and Southcott (eds) (2016) present a variety of case studies of co-ops in northern communities, primarily focusing on the concept of the social economy. It is not a term heavily explored in this work.

healing workshops and hunting trips with youth and elders (Johnson as cited in Abele and Southcott, 2016). By incorporating IQ in their programs, the Society is able to promote cultural revitalization. Although not all co-ops achieve the same level of outreach like the example above, it does prove that Inuit led co-ops can practice a holistic approach to care by providing dynamic solutions to challenges faced in northern communities.<sup>26</sup>

While IQ is incorporated within Inuit kinship networks and co-ops, there is concern of how it works within a bureaucratic structure such as the Government of Nunavut. The inclusion of IQ, a holistic, Inuit-specific way of being, establishes a new kind of care, different from the colonial framework of care. How do Inuit better care for one another while still under the watchful gaze and financial constraint of the federal government? How does the Nunavut Housing Corporation incorporate IQ within their housing policies and procedures? Is the Government of Nunavut and NHC successful in making a difference in housing? These questions will be explored throughout chapter 4.

There is a tension when considering the motivations and practices of care by the state, because the term care itself demands negotiation over what is considered “good” (Buch 2015). The provision of housing to Inuit who are struggling with disease and inadequate shelter is considered a benevolent act of care, but the deliverance of housing is disappointing in terms of adequately and thoughtfully addressing Inuit housing and cultural needs. The intentional practice of IQ can positively impact the relationship between Inuit communities and the federal state as long as the state supports and adopts IQ when responding to issues such as the northern housing crisis. A deeper analysis of acts of care between Inuit communities and the housing bureaucracy will contribute to literature pertaining to care.

In light of the last 23 years of Inuit self-governance, it’s imperative to understand how settler/welfare colonialism and tutelage continue to play a significant role in Northern housing policy so improvements continue under the appropriate framework of care. Examination of historical federal documents as well as gaps in the written colonial record offer insight for understanding the story of early housing policies and how the

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<sup>26</sup> For an in-depth discussion on Northern cooperatives and similar organizations that contribute to a “social economy,” I recommend reading Chris Southcott’s (2014) book *Northern Communities Working Together: The Social Economy of Canada’s North*.

housing crisis evolved to what it is now. It also allows us to recognize how Inuit push for better housing is impeded by non-Indigenous power, thus preserving harmful housing initiatives.

## **Methods: Understanding the Archives**

In order to understand the genealogy of housing policy in Nunavut, I've chosen an ethnographic and historical approach for my methodology. My methodology attempts to understand the contemporary structure of the Canadian housing bureaucracy, and how that structure affects the delivery of housing in Nunavut. This includes understanding how current housing policies and programs reflect the ways in which citizens are cared for in Nunavut. The historical analysis aims to recognize how practices of tutelage and welfare colonialism contributed to the construction of Canadian citizenship for Inuit and the current housing crisis in Nunavut communities.

Nunavut was chosen as the focus for my research because of the overwhelming need for housing in the region as compared to other provinces and territories. Several provinces in Canada are entering what some consider a "housing crisis," whereas Nunavut has been plagued by problems of overcrowding and inadequate housing for decades (Hackworth & Moriah 2006; Tester 2009; Gaetz et al 2014, Senate of Canada 2016b). Nunavut has a rapidly increasing and young population, composed primarily of Inuit. The housing supply has failed to keep up with demand due to the economic and political decisions made by territorial and federal governments.

My methods for data collection include archival work and three interviews. I traveled to Ottawa, Ontario for two months to conduct the archival portion of my research. The first month was from October to November 2017 and the second month was from January to February 2018. I chose Ottawa as the focus for my archival work because various federal government housing agencies, libraries, and archives are located there. While in Ottawa, I did archival research at Library Archives Canada (LAC), Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) Library, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Library. The archival material referenced in this research are publicly available but is not easily accessible because most of their collections are not digitized. The archive in this study is the collective history of Canada, the colonial entity. I also acquired electronic copies of minutes from the Standing Senate Committee on

Aboriginal Peoples, a federal committee designed to study the practices and challenges to housing in First Nation and Inuit communities in the North. While the platform provided by the Standing Senate allowed Inuit and Inuit organizations to testify directly to government officials about their experiences with northern housing; these meetings happened in a colonial institution, with colonial rules and expectations, as well as recorded and stored within a colonial structure and reproduction of colonial knowledge (i.e., the physical and digital archive). In addition, I accessed digital archival material from the Nunavut Social History database. An open access, public database created by the University of British Columbia, the sources (mainly abstracts) found here are from the archives from the Government of the Northwest Territories and National Archives of Canada.

The archive is a construction and reconstruction of colonial attitudes, policies, and memories. The archive acts as an instrument through which colonialism can inform and shape the present, rather than being an institution and process left in the past (Stoler 2002). It is a system through which the personal is “erased...in favor of the state sanctioned,” as it consolidates “...authority and erasure of difference...” (Dykema 2014). The archive itself is a symbol of power, legitimizing the documents it keeps. It’s up to archivists to select which items are included and excluded in the archive. According to Bourdieu (1977), the archive is a hegemonic tool in which the state can control its subjects (as cited in Zeitlyn 2012).

During my archival journey, I found a significant gap within the archive regarding northern housing policies and programs, specifically between the 1990s to early 2000s period. Instead of focusing on housing in the North, the archive instead places importance on the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in 1993 which resulted in the creation of Nunavut. This took decades of planning and negotiation, and therefore took center stage in federal documentation. The focus on the NLCA distracted from government housing responsibility. Examining the archive and the inevitable deficiencies forces an uneven understanding of events. What narrative then is the archive creating and how does it shape the reader’s interpretation of documents? It is this gap in the archive that needs to be interrogated, as collective and individual memory tries to fill it (Dykema 2014).

Considering the archive as power, my understanding of the archive here is then through a feminist framework. Caswell & Cifor (2016) emphasize the importance of a feminist ethics framework vs. a human rights framework and critique the archive and role of archivists under the latter. The archival material found in the above institutions, for the most part, fails to recognize intersections of personal experience and structural violence. Instead, the archive highlights the macro vs. the micro. It places importance on governmental bodies and policies.

My hope is that this research contributes to literature that rejects and challenges colonial categories, and practices of colonial authorities (Stoler 2002). It hopes to expose the intentional gaps of knowledge and the shaping of colonial housing policies, as expressed through state (colonial) documentation. Early documentation of northern housing was often penned by Qallunaat - government officials, individuals or third parties contracted by the federal government, who may or may not have had familiarity with Inuit people and culture. These Qallunaat authors, all holding positions of power within housing and political systems, were credited by archivists as “reliable sources,” thus explaining their presence in the archive (Stoler 2002). Inuit voices were mainly absent from early housing documentation. It wasn't until Inuit representation in a government capacity as well as the creation of Inuit organizations in the 1960s/1970s that analysis and surveys of northern housing were not produced under those who held status in the colonial hierarchy (Stoler 2002). By this I mean that these Inuit organizations and groups were not necessarily founded as a tool of the Canadian government; they were arguably an anti-colonial product of the colonial institutions that sought to categorize and quantify the livelihood of Inuit throughout Canada.

It's almost natural for the layman to assume the archives hold facts, or a singular truth to history. We as readers and researchers must remember whose truth we are trying to understand, whose perspective we are learning. Zeityln (2012) warns that although each generation constructs new narratives about the past, they continue to do so on the basis of the same bodies of “evidence.” The archive is this same body through which I attempt to reconstruct the past of northern housing, but with an intention to see what voices were exempt from the process and when certain voices were “allowed” to enter the archive. What do the voices included and excluded reveal to me about welfare colonialism, tutelage, and practices of care? I recognize that the archivists have been/are employed by a colonial authority (i.e., the federal government), therefore

deeming certain documents more important. For instance, the CMHC library mainly held material commissioned or reviewed by the CMHC. It's also essential to remember that heavy federal intervention in Inuit lives happened approximately a century ago. In regard to other instances of colonization over Indigenous peoples, the imposition of colonialism over Inuit is relatively recent.

Along with the archival material, I also conducted three semi-structured phone interviews with employees from CMHC and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI). These agencies were chosen because they have been involved with Inuit housing both before and after the creation of Nunavut in 1999. They also represent the different levels of the housing bureaucracy, with the exception of the community level usually represented by local housing associations. Local housing associations (LHAs) are usually composed of community members and have the responsibility of collecting rents, maintaining housing units, and requesting housing from the territorial housing corporation. The involvement of each individual LHA is not thoroughly investigated in this research because there are 25 communities in Nunavut, each with different housing needs. The LHAs are important to the northern housing structure and how housing care impacts each community, but most of the policy and program decisions are made at the federal and territorial levels which is the focus of my thesis.

Three interviews were conducted between November 2017 and March 2018. All interviewees were contacted via email or phone and were conducted in English. Some participants worked in Ottawa, while others worked throughout Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. All of the interviews occurred over the phone and were recorded by an audio recorder. Since I asked participants to conduct the interview during work hours, it was difficult to recruit a larger number of participants due to busy schedules. I specifically approached employees who have current or past work experience in northern housing policy. For example, participants worked as affordable housing consultants or policy analysts.

The three interviews were focused on housing in Nunavut, the job responsibilities of interviewees within their respective agencies, and how they perceive Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (Inuit traditional knowledges) as it applies to their roles within the housing bureaucracy. They provided information on the current relationships between housing agencies as well as current programs and policies. Beyond these topics, I was

also interested in learning how interviewees' perspectives were shaped by their experiences in the north. Interviewees were eager to share their experiences working with northern communities. They were well informed on the overall challenges of delivering northern housing, but their experiences provided an in-depth look at the daily housing operations and how their work attempts to help Nunavummiut access better housing. Since the interviews were conducted during work hours, the three participants were representing themselves and their employers. I believe the participants were critical and honest in their answers, while being aware of how their answers may impact my perception of their agency or other housing agencies.

All of the interview transcriptions and notes from my archival research were compiled and analyzed in Nvivo. Nvivo is a qualitative research program that allows users to code and organize their data. The program enables me to identify key or repetitive words and phrases. I used the program to search specifically for the motives of housing agencies and employees. This includes looking for indications that may suggest how agencies care and act to benefit Nunavummiut. I also used the program to identify changes in government language that suggests shifts in attitudes of tutelage. Federal language and terminology, sometimes echoed by researchers, often uses evolutionary terms. For instance, researcher Tom Carter (1993) uses language denoting how federal services such as health care and education are more sophisticated than Inuit forms. It is also used when referring to the resourcefulness of Inuit, comparing Inuit intelligence with Qallunaat intelligence. This evolutionary language changes throughout the archive.

I decided to conduct interviews along with an archival analysis to better understand current state housing attitudes and actions. The interviews were also used to investigate how housing and Inuit employees understand IQ, specifically how it currently operated in northern housing and/or its potential in impacting the housing crisis. I was also curious to know if and how IQ could work in tandem with housing programs such as homeownership, which historically have failed to deliver culturally sensitive housing for Inuit. Within the archive, it is difficult to understand the impact of IQ in northern housing beyond the "mission statements" in annual reports of the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

The archival and interview material provide a detailed overview of how housing responsibilities, programs, and policies have changed over time and contributed to the current housing situation in Nunavut. The archival material is mostly historical in date,

spanning from the 1950s to the 1990s. The historical material is written primarily by federal agencies such as the CMHC, INAC (including INAC's former department names such as DIAND), and contract researchers for federal agencies. The contemporary material is written mainly by territorial and Inuit organizations such as NHC and ITK. It also includes meeting minutes from federal Senate hearings and information about federal investment in Nunavut housing. The interviews supplement the contemporary written material and provide insight at current operations of housing agencies.

With the archive as my primary informant for this research, and the three theoretical concepts explained above as my framework, we will begin the journey to understand the colonial process of housing in Nunavut. In the next chapter I will examine early documents of northern housing policies and programs from 1950 to 1989, with specific analysis of the Northern Rental Housing Program (NRHP). Chapter four will examine the shift in federal housing responsibility beginning in the 1990s, the political establishment of Nunavut and the devolution of housing. It will also include federal and Inuit response to the present state of housing in the North, with particular focus on the testimonies in the Standing Senate of Aboriginal Peoples 2017 report.

## **Chapter 3. Housing circa 1950-1989**

This chapter examines the history of housing policies in the North, focusing on Qallunaat attitudes toward Inuit housing. It also explores whether Qallunaat and Inuit housing priorities changed over time. First, I present a brief description of the traditional dwellings of Inuit before continuous contact with Euro-Canadians. Going back to the time before the beginning of Inuit-Federal relations provides context and a better sense about how government-provided housing conflicts with Inuit traditional ways of living. This section is supported by secondary sources, mainly from anthropologists and other Arctic researchers. Second, I explore the first government housing programs in the North, focusing on attitudes of federal government agencies in the 1950s before examining the first major public housing program in the North in the 1960s: The Northern Rental Housing Program (NRHP). Third, I discuss the emphasis of homeownership programs in the 1970s as it coincides with Inuit political activism. Lastly, I touch on the process of devolution and the decrease of federal government involvement in northern housing in the 1980s. The sections discussing the 1950s-1970s are partially supported by primary sources found in the archives, with secondary anthropological sources used to support claims made in the former. There is an absence of primary sources in the archive during the 1980s, and thus I rely mostly on secondary sources. Any sources by federal departments (CMHC, DIAND, etc.) were found either in the physical archive or on their respective websites.<sup>27</sup> The primary sources in this chapter are located in Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Library, Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation Library, and the Nunavut Social History database.

### **Traditional dwellings**

Northern Canada's environmental conditions makes the North appear as a difficult place to live; however, Inuit adapted to the challenges of living in the North long before the presence of Qallunaat (non-Inuit people). Inuit relations with their environment informs Inuit behaviours and cultural practices, differing from Qallunaat perceptions of Inuit and the North. Inuit constructed several styles of traditional dwellings, which

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<sup>27</sup> Any document accessed online will have the URL link listed in the reference section of the paper.

depended entirely on seasonal variation and animal migration. These dwellings included tents made from animal skins, snowhouses constructed of snow, and a round, tented-roof dwelling called qarmaqs that were walled with ice or snow block (Briggs 1970; Buchanan 1979). Qarmaqs were useful when the snow melted in the spring and returned in the fall. Due to the vast geographic area of the North and spatial separation of Inuit groups, housing type and material varied between groups and regions. Inuit mainly occupied coastal regions, but the exception is Inuit living inland in the subarctic Kivalliq region.<sup>28</sup> For example, Inuit who migrated around Pond Inlet lived in snowhouses in the spring during seal hunting season and lived in sod houses and tents in the summer months during whale hunting season (Wachowich 2001). In the coastal areas where whale hunting was practiced, Inuit were able to use whale bones in the construction of their houses. Inuit living in the Kivalliq region, who did not rely on whale in their subsistence practices, found their housing material in caribou skins (Vallee 1962). Inuit used available resources at their disposal to create a variety of structures to suit their needs as they adapted to their environmental conditions, where building and food resources were limited.

The environment not only dictated the type of shelter construction, but it also influenced the layout inside Inuit housing, as well as family structure. Qarmaqs and tents were typically single-room structures, while snowhouses sometimes had several rooms composed of sleeping and storage areas. Sleeping platforms were often on one end of the dwelling and raised above the ground. The entire family slept together in this area. Inuit travelled in small groups, consisting of immediate and extended family members, as they often relied on each other for food and shelter (Briggs 1970; Falls 1978; Wenzel 1991). Sometimes extended family members like grandparents, brothers, sisters, and adopted children would live in the same dwelling together. All these housing and cultural behaviours were practiced by Inuit until the second half of the 20th century.

It's reported that Inuit made first contact with European explorers and whalers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, respectively, though there's speculation contact occurred earlier (Graburn 1969; Condon 1983; Matthiasson 1992). Contact with Qallunaat increased with the establishment of Hudson Bay Trading posts and the

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<sup>28</sup> Also known as the Keewatin Region, the Kivalliq Region is one of three designated administrative areas in Nunavut. The other regions are the Qikiqtani (formerly Baffin) and Kitikmeot.

presence of trappers in the Arctic. Although increased contact with outsiders made different goods from outside the North available, Inuit continued to live in traditional dwellings and moved around according to the seasons and animal migration patterns. It wasn't until 1869 that Inuit were declared citizens of Canada (Matthiasson 1992). To claim the land Inuit lived on, the federal government created the Northwest Territories (NWT) in 1870. This territory encompassed land from the border of what is now Alaska in the west, across the northern continent to Baffin Island in the east. The law of the Canadian government as well as education and housing programs did not directly impact Inuit, and they were largely left to live as they always had lived. It wasn't until the early 20th century when the Supreme Court of Canada declared Inuit to be the responsibility of the federal government that a subtle encroachment upon Inuit lives began (Matthiasson 1992; Diubaldo 1992). Even then, the federal government adopted the rhetoric of "keeping the native native," encouraging Inuit to live on the land in traditional dwellings and rely on country foods rather than Qallunaat foods (Diubaldo 1992).<sup>29</sup> Dr. Richard Diubaldo (1992) uses this saying "keeping the native native" to reflect on the laissez-faire approach the government had toward Inuit in the North.<sup>30</sup> Rather than providing Indigenous people with resources such as healthcare, education, etc., the government preferred/encouraged Inuit to live traditionally (i.e., before the arrival of settlers). This allowed the government to keep the monies it would otherwise use to take to care of Indigenous people and it allowed the government to oversee their lives from a distance while continuing efforts of control and sovereignty in the North. In a report for the research branch of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Diubaldo (1985) states that any "real" contact between Inuit and the government was mainly through police, and Inuit had "to wait until the 1950s before their needs were taken seriously."

## **First Government Housing Programs and Policies - 1950s**

Although the federal government had this new obligation brought about by the Supreme Court decision to provide Inuit with the same rights and care as other Canadian citizens, there was a reluctant approach in the delivery of government services

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<sup>29</sup> Country food is food from wild animals and plants. For Inuit, country food includes seal, caribou, whale, arctic char, etc.

<sup>30</sup> Other Indigenous people throughout southern Canada were already being subjected to federal assimilative policies such as residential schools. The first residential school opened in Ontario in 1831.

to the north (Diubaldo 1992). In other words, the federal government made no major attempts to involve itself in Inuit life or provide Inuit with services such as schools, health facilities, and public housing. By the 1940s, diseases like tuberculosis, diphtheria, influenza, and the measles had reached the North and rapidly spread through Inuit camps. These diseases were introduced in the North by Qallunaat, including missionaries, RCMP, northern administrators, trappers, etc. The Department of National Health and Welfare, created in 1945, was responsible for Inuit and First Nations health (Diubaldo 1992). Due to limited access to health care in the north, many Inuit were flown to southern hospitals for treatment. In addition to increased contact with Qallunaat, northern administrators reported the disease outbreaks were also attributed to what Qallunaat denoted as crowded housing (Vallee 1962; Condon 1983). Because of this outbreak, the federal government *had to* get involved and care for the physical well-being of Inuit. The extent of this care was for the maintenance of the Inuit population, or the preservation of life (Stevenson 2014).

In 1952, spending on welfare and relief for Inuit was rapidly increasing, so representatives from several government agencies, churches, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the U.S. embassy met to discuss these issues.<sup>31</sup> This newly formed "Eskimo Affairs Committee" did not include any Inuit, as Inuit were considered not "responsible" enough to be part of the meetings, though the Committee assured that those in attendance had the best intentions for Inuit (Diubaldo 1992). One impactful decision made by the Committee included the establishment of day schools throughout the North.<sup>32</sup> Seven years later in 1959 at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee, Inuit voices were finally heard: George Koneak of Fort Chimo and John Ayark of Rankin Inlet. Koneak spoke of how Inuit in other countries were being treated better than those in Canada and stated that Inuit "don't want to go back to the old days any more..." (Diubaldo 1992). Ayark criticized policy makers, stating Inuit want to make their own decisions but are not included in those processes.

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<sup>31</sup> The US embassy was involved in the Committee because the American military was building Distance Early Warning systems in the North. As Inuit often made shelters near these military sites, the U.S. became involved in Inuit affairs (if only for a brief time).

<sup>32</sup> These schools, also called settlement schools, are now often referred to as residential schools. There were religious mission schools in the North before this decision, so a merger of religious and secular instruction happened in some settlements.

As mentioned previously in chapter two, the presence of American troops in the early 1950s to build DEW lines brought the Canadian public's attention to the conditions of their fellow citizens, the Inuit in the North. With the Eskimo Loan Fund in 1953 implemented to support economic development in the North, the federal government also attempted to enact education and relocation policies (Tester & Kulchyski 1994). Qallunaat who sought employment in the North, whether in sectors of natural resource extraction, education, policing (RCMP), etc., were often provided housing by their employers. The "shacks" Inuit created around these Qallunaat settlements, usually from leftover supplies from the DEW stations, allowed them to participate in local trading and send (whether by force or voluntarily) their children to settlement schools.

It was also around this time that housing in the North became the responsibility of the federal Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources (DNANR). Archival documents show that during a conference in 1958 on "The Native in the North", Inuit housing was a concern for a few federal departments, including the DNANR and Department of National Health and Welfare.<sup>33</sup> One of the DNANR employees in the Arctic division of the branch, P. E. Murdoch, said this about Inuit housing:

Although the Eskimo way of life has changed, his housing has not. As long as there is protection from the wind, the Eskimo feels housed. We, in the south, have found that if we are to live healthily in close proximity to each other, we must observe certain rules. These rules dictate that we must have a certain minimum of physical comfort and a great deal of cleanliness. If the Eskimo is left to discover this for himself, and if he takes as long about it as we did, I doubt that there would be very many left one hundred years from now. *Clearly we must do all we can to help them.*

-P.E. Murdoch, DNANR, for the Canadian Political Science Association conference on "The Native in the North" in 1958 (p. 2, emphasis added)

This paternalistic attitude to help Inuit because they lack a certain awareness for the "comforts" and "cleanliness" of living comes as a contrast to the stance of the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources from a few years prior. Anthropologist Robert Redgrave (1985) states, "[a]s early as 1954" the DNANR had decided "that an effort to place the direction of local affairs in the hands of [Inuit] [was] desirable." Yet Murdoch (1958) echoes the previous DNANR sentiment at the end of his

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<sup>33</sup> This conference was presented by the Canadian Political Science Association. The Association was founded in 1913, and its purpose was to "encourage the investigation and study of economic, political, and social problems in Canada (Volume Information 1958: p. ii)."

report, stating that "...once the [Inuit] realizes the advantages of good housing, he will do more to help himself out of his present predicament." Here we see tension between the government's belief that Inuit must be active in local decision making and the assertion that Inuit are incapable of figuring out how to house themselves (which Murdoch thinks could take as long as "one hundred years from now"). Inuit, the government believes, must also be guided and taught the "rules" to living by placing emphasis on their health. It seems here as though the DNANR views Inuit as both children—"we cannot let the Inuit discover the proper way of living by themselves for it will take too long," —and as adults— "we must let them handle their own affairs."

In his conference presentation, Murdoch (1958) also expanded on several low-cost housing projects as the expensive costs of housing in the North was hindering the Inuit from obtaining "proper" housing. The goal for the DNANR was to build "an inexpensive house which is easy to heat and which will assist the [Inuit] to live a healthier life in his new environment" (Murdoch 1958). The federal government made several unsuccessful attempts to create housing for Inuit, including a small dome-shaped Styrofoam structure, as well as structures made of stone, plywood, and aluminum (Buchanan 1979; Damas 2002). These structures turned out to be inappropriate and ineffective in a northern environment. In 1959, the DNANR created the Eskimo Housing Loan Program which promoted homeownership through a rent-to-own program (Collings 2005; Senate of Canada 2017). Welfare housing known as "matchboxes" were also distributed beginning in 1959. These were single room structures of 12' by 24.' Rent was not collected from welfare houses, but tenants were required to pay for their own utility services such as heating, sewage, and water (Buchanan 1979). Access to actual money to pay for those services was limited because wage labor jobs were not abundant, causing many families to become indebted to the system supposedly created to improve their lot.

Attending the same conference as Murdoch (1958), Dr. John Willis (1958), a Principal Health Officer for Indian and Northern Health services, also gave his insights on housing and health in the North. In his presentation, he attributes high infant mortality rates among Inuit to a "lack of protection from the elements."<sup>34</sup> He expresses a need for

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<sup>34</sup> Willis presented pictures during his presentation. Unfortunately, the slides were not included with the document, but the document contains Willis' commentary on each slide.

housing education in terms of cleanliness and organization. However, this tutelage in housing management need not be extensive:

“...an interesting experiment in giving an Eskimo a house and then having a chance to observe what he can do to it. I think you will agree that they do not receive too much supervision and yet they have not done too badly.”

- J. Willis, Department of National Health and Welfare, for the Canadian Political Science Association conference on “The Native in the North” in 1958 (p. 5)

While he does not offer any specific recommendations to improve Inuit housing, Willis proffers racist comments on the inferiority of traditional dwellings to Euro-Canadian houses, as well as trivializes Inuit health through remarks about how long Inuit can survive in their current state of living. His overall tone is one of pity and disbelief that Inuit can keep themselves clean and healthy under their traditional and shack housing.<sup>35</sup>

The shabby state of housing in the North in the 1950s left much to be done in terms of tackling persistent health problems. Both Murdoch (1958) and Willis (1958) make it clear that Inuit must be taken care of to survive, but only by teaching them the basics of cleanliness and housing management. According to Murdoch and Willis, once Inuit learn the essentials of Euro-Canadian housing behaviours, Inuit can then take the onus of managing their housing themselves. In their minds, Inuit health would improve with permanent housing and so would their overall state of living. While their comments are paternalistic, they also suggest that the federal government is beginning to think about Inuit and their need for better housing. As anthropologist Judith Phillips (2007) argued, acknowledging the needs of Inuit is itself an act of “caring about” someone or something. Now, whether the government truly listens and addresses Inuit housing needs is an entirely different question - one which will continue to be explored throughout this thesis.

It is no surprise to find there is an obvious lack of Inuit voice in the federal archives, with no personal accounts of Inuit experience during this period. While there may have been Inuit involvement in the housing program, we see a lack of record indicating Inuit needs or experiences and no leadership roles occupied by Inuit at that

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<sup>35</sup> In comments on one specific slide, Willis (1958) rhetorically asks to take “bets” on the lifespan of a young Inuk (p. 3).

time.<sup>36</sup> By “no leadership,” I’m specifically referring to a lack of inclusion of Inuit input and participation in the government’s decision-making process, particularly in the early archival housing record. Inuit involvement changes throughout time but it is often erratic or at the discretion of the colonial government when Inuit input is required or seen as “valuable.”

## **Centralization and the NRHP - 1960s**

The 1960s was a period of centralization in the North. There are two camps of analyses of why Inuit began living in settlements. For some researchers (Matthiasson 1992; Damas 2002) Inuit began living in settlements because of the government housing program, access to health care, and education opportunities. Anthropologist David Damas (2002) argues centralization was mainly voluntary because Inuit wanted to seize the opportunities available in settlements and improve their living conditions. Other researchers (Matthiasson 1992; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Wachowich 2001) argue that families were coerced into joining settlements by threat of losing family allowances and/or social assistance. The government also sought to move Inuit to settlements through relocation. Tester and Kuchyski (1994) suggest the federal government forcefully moved several camps of Inuit in the North as some relocation efforts were disastrous for Inuit, resulting in the very problems it was designed to prevent: starvation, lack of resources, and even death. For example, Inuit relocated by the government to Henik and Garry lakes resulted in them experiencing famine due to the depleted caribou population.<sup>37</sup> Damas (2002) however argues relocation proved to be beneficial overall for Inuit in terms of subsistence and economic opportunities.

While promoting the idea that relocation was necessary to improve the well-being of Inuit, the federal government also attempted to lessen Inuit dependence on welfare programs. Relocation was criticized as a tool for political and economic gain for the federal government (Tester & Kulchyski 1994). By establishing new communities and RCMP posts around the high Arctic, the Canadian government established a permanent presence and claimed legal/political sovereignty over northern land and water

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<sup>36</sup> Leadership roles specifically in the housing bureaucracy, territorial, or federal governments. This is not to say Inuit did not assume leadership roles among their family, camp, or communities.

<sup>37</sup> Tester and Kulchyski (1994) analyze the consequences of the Ennadai Lake relocations in the 1950s.

passages.<sup>38</sup> Inuit were also moved to areas where the federal government and Hudson Bay Company thought Inuit would contribute to the fur trading economy (Tester and Kulchyski 1994). For if Inuit had sustainable subsistence and participated in the Canadian fur trade economy, then they would not need to depend on federal relief programs. These relocation settlements also provided the prospect of wage labour (jobs), but employment was scarce for Inuit. So Inuit had to rely on subsistence practices and welfare programs to survive.

Housing availability varied across the North and Inuit were sometimes moved to settlements where housing was not available. In some settlements where large groups of Inuit were forced to live with little to no housing, diseases continued to spread quickly. There are different analyses of Inuit responses to these relocation efforts by federal agencies. When the caribou population sharply declined, Inuit groups that mainly relied on caribou as a food source faced risks of starvation and death.<sup>39</sup> It's argued that Inuit affected by the caribou decline agreed with northern administrators to move to areas with better resources and possibilities for life (Damas 2002). But it's also argued that Inuit were uncooperative and resistant to relocation. Since Inuit traditionally migrated with seasonal change and animal migration, Inuit movement perturbed federal agencies as they wished to control Inuit movement in the North.<sup>40</sup> Inuit moved by federal agencies to southern Canada often wrote nostalgically about wanting to go back north and missing their homes (Tester and Kulchyski 1994).

While some Inuit were able to take advantage of the housing loan program or acquire welfare housing, other Inuit families continued to live in traditional dwellings. Job opportunities were rare so the ability to buy private housing was impossible. As children were sent to settlements to attend school, they were often housed together in tents (Vallee 1962). Whether Inuit lived in small government-provided houses or in tents, there were reports of extreme overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions in the settlements (Vallee 1962; Condon 1983). In 1962, eighty-two Inuit households in Arviat (formerly

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<sup>38</sup> Tester and Kulchyski (1994) also discuss the government relocation of seven Inuit families from Inukjuak and three Inuit families from Pond Inlet to Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island in 1953. These efforts increased Canadian presence/sovereignty in the Arctic.

<sup>39</sup> Inuit who migrated around what is now the Keewatin/Kivalliq region were most affected as caribou mainly roamed this area. Refer to the Ennadai Lake relocations.

<sup>40</sup> Lisa Stevenson (2014) discusses how the seasonal movement of Inuit was one reason northern administrators created the disc naming system for Inuit in 1960s.

Eskimo Point) lived in 64 wooden and snowhouses (Tester and Kulchyski 1994).<sup>41</sup> But in a letter titled “Welfare Housing -Eskimo Point” (1963) to the deputy minister by an unknown federal department director, an alarm was raised concerning a tuberculosis outbreak in Arviat affecting a third of the population, many of whom had to be evacuated to southern hospitals.<sup>42</sup> “...Apart from the problems in human terms” this outbreak could cause, the letter stressed another more serious consequence—the outbreak “could embarrass the government” (*Welfare Housing - Eskimo Point* 1963). But what of the Inuit affected by the government’s actions? Inuit transported to southern sanitoriums were often treated by healthcare workers that did not speak Inuktitut, leading to confusion as to what community each Inuk originally came from (Stevenson 2014). Thus, many Inuit adults and children had difficulty or were unable to return to their communities, leaving many Inuit up North to wonder what happened to their relatives.<sup>43</sup>

The tuberculosis outbreak in Arviat was attributed to subpar housing and how it thwarted efforts made by the Department of National Health and Welfare. The shacks Inuit constructed from leftover building materials, as well as Inuit themselves, were viewed by northern administrators as filthy and fueled rising health issues (Stevenson 2014). The solution to deliver better and more affordable healthcare to Inuit was to provide Euro-Canadian designed housing (shipped by the federal government and built by southern contractors). So, a request for the funding of 30 welfare houses in Arviat was made (“Welfare Housing – Eskimo Point 1963). The author of the “Welfare Housing” letter notes that the cost of hospitalization for those with tuberculosis was far greater than the cost of building the 30 requested housing units (\$500,000 in contrast to \$84,000). “Welfare Housing - Eskimo Point” (1963) also acknowledges that in Arviat,

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<sup>41</sup> “An Inuit household is one in which at least one of the parents (in a family household), or at least half of the household members, has some Inuit ancestry” (ITK 2007). A family household refers to the Qallunaat nuclear family (a couple with or without kids, single-parent families, or common law couple with or without kids).

<sup>42</sup> It’s unknown who or what the deputy minister oversees but letter context indicates someone involved in Inuit or Northern affairs. It’s also possible that the author might be a director of the DNANR or another federal agency, excluding the Department of National Health and Welfare. “Over the past 6 years our Department has made a concerted effort to bring education, welfare and administration services to the residents of Eskimo Point” (*Welfare Housing - Eskimo Point* 1963).

<sup>43</sup> Lisa Stevenson (2014) recounts the experience of Sakiassie after his grandmother Kaujak was transported south to a southern hospital for TB treatment. Unfortunately, Kaujak died on the train going South, though little information was communicated to Sakiassie of her death. See her book for more Inuit experiences of the TB outbreaks in the North.

welfare payments make up a large part of family incomes, which is not “desirable” but is the only option until more wages jobs/a monetary economy is established.

Inuit, specifically an Inuit co-operative in Igloodik, were unsatisfied with the prefabricated welfare housing they had received and appealed to the government to ship them the raw materials instead. Critiquing current housing designs that were inadequate for the northern climate, they designed two different housing plans that fitted their cultural needs better than those of southern-designed housing (Tester 2006). One critique was the unnecessary inclusion of bathrooms and bathtubs. Inuit preferred placing the toilet on the porch and exclude bathtubs altogether. They also included a price range that was affordable for Inuit in their designs. Unfortunately, the northern administration was unable to approve of the proposed Inuit-designed housing because of the costs and instead sent a different housing plan, which the co-operative ultimately agreed to. Although it's unclear why the co-op agreed to the revised plan, it's most likely the case where it was better to get some form of housing into the community rather than be without. In more sad news, when the building materials arrived in the community, the units were missing key components and the material was mistaken and used for other buildings (Tester 2006: p. 245-246).

These fast-housing solutions (at the federal government's expense), like “matchbox” housing, sought to move Inuit into housing as quickly as possible. Cheap Qallunaat housing designs in the 1950s and early 1960s also sought to provide more sanitary living conditions for Inuit. But the federal government inadvertently created another housing issue. In 1965 the DNANR surveyed people living in the North and found that a majority of 817 one-room houses had 5 or more persons living in it (Buchanan 1979). According to the DIAND Branch Housing Committee Standards, overcrowding for a one-room house is 3 or more occupants per house (DNANR 1965). Most houses had around 4-7 people per house. This quantitative survey mainly emphasized the need for more housing stock.

These statistics were revealed at the same time the DNANR implemented the first rental housing program for Inuit, the Eskimo Rental Housing Program.<sup>44</sup> Later renamed the Northern Rental Housing Program (NRHP) in 1968, the program was

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<sup>44</sup> A year later, in 1966, the DNANR would be renamed the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND).

created to provide Inuit with low-cost housing. This rental housing program officially brought Inuit into the Canadian housing bureaucracy. Rent costs were determined on a sliding scale, where people who earned more income, paid more in rent. The program also included the delivery of services such as water, sewage, oil, electricity, and trash. Housing was distributed quickly. For example, in the community of Cape Dorset, 25 units were received in 1966 and 24 units in 1967.

The NRHP was supplemented with a housing education program (Thompson 1969; Buchanan 1979). Funded by the CMHC, the program was composed of three phases: phase one was the explanation of the rental program, phase two was home management, and the final phase was the creation of Local Housing Associations (LHAs). Arguably, the last phase was the most important aspect of this project from a government standpoint as it was meant to prepare Inuit to deliver and maintain the NRHP themselves. LHAs were composed of Inuit and Qallunaat. Their main responsibilities were distributing housing units to community members and establishing rent charges (DIAND 1968; Redgrave 1985). Pamphlets were distributed throughout the NWT that described how Inuit families should maintain their homes. This included the maintenance of kitchen appliances, the proper handling of cleaning chemicals, and how to properly clean each room in a house (DIAND 1986).

Near the same time the DIAND released their housing pamphlets, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT n.d.) published their own leaflets on housekeeping and laundry.<sup>45</sup> The leaflets stress the behaviours of germs and how to prevent germs from growing on food and in dirty areas, thus preventing one from getting sick. Instructions about which cleaning products are to be used for specific areas of a house are included (i.e., windows should be washed with spray cleaner, special soap should be used for washing clothes and sealskins, etc.). There are also statements that suggest a certain pride may be achieved when keeping a clean home: “Learn ways to make your house look nicer, then you will feel more like keeping it clean and neat” (GNWT N.D., Leaflet #8).

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<sup>45</sup> These leaflets were most likely published around the same time the AEP was launched because they follow a similar structure and setup to the AEP’s official pamphlets. They also appear to be intended specifically for the Kivalliq region, but the title page clarifies “any person or group” can order them.

Success for the education part of the NRHP was mainly determined by how quickly Inuit understood the program and setup their LHAs. But, by the DIAND's (1968) own acknowledgment, program educators were not always able to adapt the materials to local needs. This is not the first sign that a "one-size fits all" approach is inappropriate. The housekeeping classes taught in settlements mainly targeted Inuit women about their "duties" in maintaining the houses. But the women mostly attended for social reasons, rather than for educational purposes (Thompson 1969). Nevertheless, to federal housing authorities, even though their program was not successful in some settlements, it was "part of a long-term process of social development" (DIAND 1968).

Charles Thompson (1969), an employee of the Northern Science Research Group, developed a report about the delivery of the NHRP and included Inuit reception of the program. Some Inuit perceived the entire housing program as inadequate, with units having insufficient storage space and rent being costly. For Inuit, storage was viewed as a priority, one more important than sleeping space, and some men added porches to their units (Thompson 1969). In the community of Baker Lake, 42 houses were promised the first year of the program, but only 11 houses were seen as habitable (Thompson 1969). Inuit in Baker Lake were disappointed with the program but attitudes in the community of Cape Dorset differentiated, with many Inuit feeling that housing provided by the program was better than living in tents and shacks. The program was later expanded to include other Indigenous groups, and rent was set at 20% of the total household income (Buchanan 1979). There was overall dissatisfaction toward the program and the construction quality of houses (Thompson 1969).

An in-depth assessment of the program by Qallunaat housing evaluators illustrates how Inuit were perceived by northern administrators. They assert that Inuit were not "evolved" enough to have a leader to advocate for their "cause and help ensure that their rights and privileges are in no way thwarted" (Caldwell et al 1970). This implies that Inuit needs were not considered by the program creators and regulators because Inuit were not socially and politically advanced enough to do so (by Qallunaat standards). Under the evaluators' assessment, Inuit voices would only be considered by Qallunaat through their involvement in the colonial political system.<sup>46</sup> But by this time,

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<sup>46</sup> Inuit do assume leadership roles, but in different ways than Qallunaat political systems. These Qallunaat evaluators are unable (or unwilling) to recognize these roles, as the colonial political structure is viewed as a "legitimate" system of power and leadership.

several Inuit were politically involved in the GNWT. One example is the appointment of Abraham (Abe) Okpik, the first Inuk to be on the Northwest Territories' Council between 1965-67 (Petroni 1992). The first Inuk *elected* to the Council was Simonie Michael in 1966 (Diubaldo 1992; Kulchyski and Tester 2008).<sup>47</sup>

The evaluators agreed that living in houses rushed in construction was better than having no housing at all, or little housing with perfect construction (Caldwell et al 1970). This statement deserves special attention as it encapsulates an important, conflicting attitude/question. Although the delivery of housing was not going as planned, was it not better than what Inuit were previously living in? The answer depends on who you ask.

While Inuit focused on the extended family unit for social and economic support, government housing programs diverged from that cultural norm and promoted the importance of the nuclear family (Condon 1983; Stern 2003). The traditional formation of a communal society is, for Inuit, needed for survival (Falls 1978). Sharing resources was and continues to be crucial. In addition to changing the meaning and purpose of housing to meet the needs Qallunaat thought were important, housing provided for Inuit was below the housing standards provided to Qallunaat in the same communities (Vallee 1962).

Inuit were also offered the chance to purchase houses. During 1967-1968, about 800 Inuit families were interested in purchasing houses (Thompson 1969). The "512" house was created for Inuit looking to become homeowners. It was 512 square feet and two bedrooms (Buchanan 1979).<sup>48</sup> Under this program, the 512 was repayable up to twenty years and included a four percent interest rate. To become a homeowner, a family would need to assume the fiscal responsibility of paying for all services including the mortgage, utilities, and maintenance. Most Inuit families unfortunately could not afford these houses.

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<sup>47</sup> Both Okpik and Michael were instrumental in eliminating the disc numbering identification system and encouraging Inuit to adopt surnames instead (Tester and Kulchyski 2008; Stevenson 2014)

<sup>48</sup> In comparison to contemporary housing, the "512" house equates to the size of a studio apartment in urban areas.

Carter (1993) argues that though much of northern housing activity was related to health issues and providing the North with more sophisticated services (i.e., formal education), it was also a way for the government to oversee regional development by creating a more structured community hierarchy. "Housing was used as a tool to achieve other objectives: job creation or support for Northern resource development for example" (Carter 1993). In other words, housing policies and programs attempted to serve both local needs and national/federal objectives. Welfare housing (colonialism) and housing education (tutelage) created avenues where colonial sovereignty was asserted on Inuit.

In terms of care, the 1960s demonstrates the three dimensions of care as laid out by Phillips (2007). Care via housing is both acted upon (the delivery of welfare housing), care as practiced within a structure of obligation (the responsibility of housing formally given to the DIAND), and it is an activity with costs (labour, building materials, employment, etc.). But there are also inklings of the practice of anonymous care here (Stevenson 2014). Granted, the NRHP was the federal government's first attempt to provide a large housing program to the North; yet it was very generalized. Given the diverse, wide-spread locations of the communities, the program was not successful everywhere. It is also evidenced by NHRP's own evaluators, who recognised the problems of the program yet say it is "getting the job done," so to speak.

## **Housing Corporations and Homeownership Programs - 1970s**

The 1970s saw a shift in housing responsibilities as well as in the housing programs offered to Inuit. In 1971, housing programs for Inuit living in the NWT were set to be provided under the National Housing Act (Bonesteel 2006). The National Housing Act was originally created in 1938 and outlined how public housing programs were meant to be provided to those of low income (Redgrave 1985). The beginning of the 1970s also saw an increase of Inuit political activism, notably with the creation of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). ITK is a collective organization to represent Inuit in Quebec, Labrador, and the NWT.<sup>49</sup> Formal talks between ITK and the federal government began regarding the creation of a new territory where Inuit could attain self-governance, with the first proposal for Nunavut presented in 1976 (Moss 1995). This new territory would

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<sup>49</sup> The organization was first called Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC).

be carved out from the east of the Northwest Territories, spanning west from 60<sup>th</sup> parallel to the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, east to Baffin Island, south to Hudson Bay and north to Ellesmere Island. The proposal included hunting, fishing, and land rights for Inuit as well as a new government that allowed for Inuit to exercise greater control over their lives. The Nunavut proposed boundaries would encompass a majority of Inuit living in Canada.

In 1972, there was an estimated 18,300 Inuit living in the NWT and Quebec, or, to view it another way, 2,500 to 3,000 houses provided shelter to Inuit in these two regions. The DIAND had built 1,300 new units since 1966, “however” their “performance falls quite short of the need” (CMHC 1972).<sup>50</sup> Falls (1978) states in a report for the DIAND that housing no longer meets the individual needs of Indigenous people in Canada; that the builder (or more importantly, the funder: the federal and territorial governments) dictates the needs of the user. She emphasizes that Indigenous people, because they are experts in surviving in their specific geographic regions, can determine the most appropriate housing structures.

A year after guidelines were set by the National Housing Act, the NWT Housing Corporation (NWTHC) was created and answered to the NWT Commissioner and Legislative Assembly. It wasn't until 1974 that the NWTHC assumed control of public housing programs, jointly funded by both the CMHC and territory (INPHC n.d.; Bonesteel 2006).<sup>51</sup> Housing policies and programs, under the NWTHC, were created centrally, with prefabricated housing units shipped from the south. Southern contractors (Qallunaat owned companies) financially benefited from these programs as they were often hired to make housing materials and construct the units once they arrived in the North. Local Housing Associations continued to collect rents, allocate housing, and maintain public housing units. There were two problems with this approach according to the Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation (INPHC) (n.d.): current production levels were inadequate to meet housing demand, and Inuit had little input into housing type, design, and quantity.

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<sup>50</sup> Though the CMHC (1972) critiques the DIAND's approach to northern housing, there's still a question as to CMHC's exact involvement in Inuit housing, other than as a financial contributor (p. 107). Is CMHC attempting to avoid any responsibility for the state of northern housing? It's hard to distinguish their involvement in Inuit housing affairs up to this point.

<sup>51</sup> Public housing was previously managed by the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada before transferring the responsibility to the NWTHC. NWTHC also took over sewage and water services at this time, too.

Created by ITK in 1975, the INPHC set out to construct and maintain housing for low-income families in Inuit and Inuvialuit communities.<sup>52</sup> They advocated for housing control to be put in the hands of Inuit. They also predicted that due to the world economic conditions at the time, including high inflation and high unemployment, the federal and territorial governments “will expect Inuit to take more and more of the cost burden of northern living in post claim settlement days” (INPHC n.d.). Unfortunately, the INPHC was limited in their activities, including the number of rental units they owned (Sprudz 1987).

In 1974, a conference held in Inuvik focused on the experiences and attitudes of participants in workshops about northern housing and community development. The purpose of hosting these events in the North was to define what kind of houses, services, public buildings, and types of communities were *needed and possible* in the North. Participants in these workshops consisted of northern Indigenous people. Several participants felt resentful and resistant against development companies from the South because they believed the intentions of the latter were unclear. Since the federal government had complete authority in the NWT, Indigenous people felt as if they had no say in community planning (Glover 1974). This is one of the first examples in the archive that explicitly states the housing perspective of Inuit and other Indigenous people.

What’s noticeably different during this period of housing policy was the creation of more homeownership options by the federal government, and the devolution of housing responsibilities from the federal government to the GNWT.<sup>53</sup> In fact, along with housing, education and public works were also handed over to the territorial government (Diubaldo 1992). But there were clashes between government agencies on housing priorities in the North. The CMHC changed its policies in 1978 with a focus on strengthening non-profit and co-operative housing program, stating these programs would “...help people help themselves...” (Sprudz 1987). In contrast, the NWTHC emphasized federal homeownership programs, excluding any mention of the two previous avenues. Since housing responsibilities were split between different

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<sup>52</sup> INPHC now operates in Ottawa, servicing Inuit in urban areas with low-cost housing.

<sup>53</sup> Amendments to the National Housing Act in 1973 emphasized homeownership programs, managing and repairing existing housing stock, and encouraged co-operative housing and non-profit housing development (The Canadian Council on Social Development 1977).

government agencies, policy development became convoluted and difficult (Carter 1993).

In 1972, an NWT Task Force on Housing suggested that homeownership might be better encouraged if incentive programs were created (Sprudz 1987). A report in 1974, which represented several federal and territorial departments, sought to discuss northern housing programs, and arrive at consensus for solving these issues (Interdepartmental Committee on Northern Housing 1974).<sup>54</sup> Contents of the report included a focus on maintenance of the existing housing stock in the North as well as moving the housing from the social into the private markets. One of their recommendations stated that the "...Crown [federal government] quit the housing field...but do so in a manner as to foster a viable and independent housing market" (Interdepartmental Committee on Northern Housing 1974). They stated that private housing was beneficial for several reasons, including how a private homeowner benefits from capital appreciation in the housing market and relieves the government of the provision of housing. But it was recognized that a private housing market could only be developed in the North with the help of financial assistance in the form of loans, subsidies, or leases. This reflects in the programs offered by the NWTHC during this time, such as the Homeownership Assistance Grant, which helped Inuit achieve private ownership. Homeownership, in the view of the INPHC (n.d.), was not feasible because of the costs and the continued heavy dependence on government subsidies.

Another housing program offered by the NWTHC was the Rural and Remote Housing Program (RRHP). Funded by NWTHC and CMHC, this program assisted families with incomes capable of managing mortgages but who experienced problems obtaining financing for a mortgage (Bonesteel 2006). Although it provided subsidized mortgages and low down-payments, it required the occupants commit to maintaining the homes themselves.

The push for homeownership and maintenance of existing housing stock only emphasizes the fact that the federal government wished to be rid of northern housing responsibilities. Indeed, the number of new public houses being directly funded by the

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<sup>54</sup> Departments included DIAND, National Defense, Department for National Health and Welfare, Public Works, RCMP, Transport, Yukon Housing Corporation, etc. No Inuit organizations were included.

federal government began declining beginning in 1970 (The Canadian Council on Social Development 1977). This withdrawal, or perhaps reluctance, of care by the federal government only created more problems with the establishment of the NWTHC. Financial and housing responsibility only became more complex and housing programs continued to be inappropriate for Inuit.

## **A Convoluted Devolution - 1980s**

In the archive, specifically the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) library, there is a notable absence of housing documents from the 1980s as it was defined by an uprising in Inuit political activism as ITC and the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) continued to advocate for Inuit self-government.

Many reports are focused on concerns of employment and retention of Inuit employees, imploring the implementation of Inuit training programs. A report prepared for ITC by Stiles and Associates (1984) discussed the importance of creating these types of programs ahead of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Unfortunately, most training programs in the 1980s prepared Inuit for low-level positions. While there was a well-funded federal training program, it was critiqued as diverting “young talent” away from Inuit organizations and to public service or university programs in the South (Stiles and Associates 1984). Inuit organizations had to compete against federal departments, crown corporations, and big businesses for the few Inuit with managerial experience. Plus, Inuit organizations were not as well-funded as the other parties. Despite the growing probability of the establishment of Nunavut, there was only one GNWT program that trained Inuit for management related to Nunavut or land claims. Additional critiques of current training programs include lack of cultural sensitivity, reinforcement of class distinctions, and promotion of institutional racism (Stiles and Associates 1984). Other issues often mentioned in this report include disorganization, administrative disarray, and lack of mechanisms in place for Inuit to succeed within Qallunaat economic structures (Stiles and Associates 1984).

Researcher Tom Carter (1987) judged the failure of housing in the North due to the implementation of southern policies in a northern environment. Remote communities, of which all or most Inuit communities are considered, were faced with high transportation costs of shipping materials North, the cost of the building materials

themselves, and the need to import skilled labour to build the houses. Most Inuit households were unable to cover these costs. It was estimated that approximately two thirds of households could not afford basic operating costs of their houses (Carter 1987). In the Kitikmeot region, which at the time contained six communities, about 80% of the total population relied on social housing (Carter 1987). Carter (1987) recommends creating new housing policies and programs that do not assume most Inuit can afford nor depend on what's already available in the housing market (i.e., homeownership programs or rent-to-own schemes).

Along with hinderance of cost, NWT HC staff were criticized in 1981 for continuing to deliver northern housing through the same colonial and paternalistic approach by federal housing agencies (Sprudz 1987). Since there were little to no appropriate Inuit training programs, many of the positions within the GNWT and NWT HC were occupied by Qallunaat. It is also known that in 1983, Tom Butters, Minister of Finance, wanted the GNWT to emulate the financial practices of other provinces and federal administrators to increase their financial responsibility (DIAND 1984).<sup>55</sup> So, the criticism that the territorial housing branch was continuing systems of welfare colonialism is valid as Inuit were not truly in control of housing in the North. But, contrary to their position from the previous decade, the NWT HC approved a co-operative housing budget in 1985 after it was shown that co-ops were a better alternative than reliance on the public/private housing systems (Sprudz 1987).

Despite the lack of housing documents in the archive about housing projects in the 1980s, northern housing continued to be evaluated and developed. For instance, 657 units were either constructed, financed, or rehabilitated in the NWT in 1983 (DIAND 1984). The CMHC and NWT HC financed these units with programs such as the Rural and Native Housing Program, the Residential Rehabilitation Program, the Emergency Repair Program, the Homeownership Stimulation Plan, and more (CMHC 1986a). The CMHC was also testing different heating and ventilation systems in extreme northern weather. Though the CMHC (1986b) emphasized consulting people with experience designing, building, and maintaining northern housing, there was no mention of consulting Inuit, specifically.

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<sup>55</sup> Tom Butters career as a politician in both the NWT and federal governments from 1970-1991. He was also the Minister of the NWT HC from 1989-1991.

In 1984 the NWT HC created their first homeownership program: the Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP). With a grant to build their own homes, program recipients had to live in the houses for 5 years and pay for utilities and maintenance fees (Stern 2005). In its first year, 73 people were approved for HAP, while another 10 qualified for the RRHP (DIAND 1984). Eventually, the HAP program ended as it was not financially viable for most Inuit (Tester 2009). For the RRHP, seven years after the program began, most participants were in arrears on their mortgage payments. It's thought this was due to the high cost of unsubsidized utility payments (Bonesteel 2006).

The 1980s were also defined by a steady decrease in federal funding for social housing in the North. With the NWT HC managing approximately 4,000 housing units, this had an incredible impact on northern housing policy and program development and delivery as the federal government was the main contributor to public housing funds (DIAND 1984; Carter 1993). With an ever-increasing population, Inuit need for adequate housing was a constant from the 1950-1980s.

This decade was particularly defined by devolution, as it was not as smooth or successful a process as was hoped by federal agencies. Devolution is the permanent transfer of power and programs from the federal level to the territorial level, meaning this power cannot be taken back once transferred (Moss 1995). In the Canadian-Northern context, it was to alleviate some financial responsibilities of the federal government. Prince and Juniper (1995) state that the federal government was the largest spender in the North (specifically the Yukon and NWT) until the end of the 1980s when the GNWT spent more than the federal government on expenditures. They attribute this change to the devolution of responsibilities and programs from the federal to the territorial level. For example, in 1988 the responsibility of health in the NWT was handed down from the federal Department of National Health and Welfare to the GNWT, decreasing the amount of federal spending in the North. Overall, however, federal government spending in the North is a small portion of "total public expenditures in Canada," which is typically less than 1% of expenses (Prince and Juniper 1995). This implores the question: If spending is so miniscule in relation to all of Canada, why did the government move away from financially supporting public housing in 1990? With significant financial and structural changes to come in the 1990s and 2000s, will Inuit see the housing care they truly deserve?

## Setting the Stage for Nunavut

In this chapter, I've provided a brief introduction to traditional housing and reviewed housing policies in the North in the timeline 1950 to 1989. Archival documents provide insight into several of my research questions, including how Qallunaat attitudes toward Inuit influence housing policies and programs and what "mattered" to Qallunaat. From Murdoch (1958) and Willis' (1958) comments on the shabby state of housing: simply providing housing and basic housing maintenance instruction to Inuit was the answer to solving Inuit health issues. These Qallunaat voices reflect the dominant attitude toward Inuit housing, encouraging harmful practices of care in the North. The Northern Rental Housing Program in 1965, the first major public housing program, ultimately failed to satisfy Inuit needs. But even though Inuit had mixed reaction to the program, with most Inuit being unsatisfied, Qallunaat programs evaluators maintained it was successful. Qallunaat failed time and again to support Inuit as they critiqued federal and territorial housing initiatives.

What "mattered" to Qallunaat is ultimately tied to the kind of care practiced in the beginning development of housing. In early housing policies, the federal government placed emphasis on Inuit health as it related to the tuberculosis crisis and what they deemed as poor housing conditions. But this push for government-provided housing can equally be attributed to financial reasons because it was cheaper for the government to provide housing rather than transport and treat Inuit in southern hospitals. It was also crucial for the federal government to cultivate a caring image on the international stage as the living conditions were broadcasted by American and Canadian armed forces. In the example of the NHRP we see a comparison to Stevenson's (2014) term anonymous care, which is administered indifferently without regard for the needs of the individual sufferer. Through the 1950s-1980s there is a generalized delivery of housing with an emphasis on Euro-Canadian methods of construction and cultural use.

The creation of and push for homeownership programs in the 1970s, along with the establishment of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC), attempt to bring Inuit into Euro-Canadian economic systems when the reality of the North is that communities cannot support a purely cash-based system. A cash-based system is one where money (cash, debit, credit, and other legal tender) earned through wage labor is used in exchange for goods and services. Because of low job opportunities, northern

communities rely on a mixed economy, which is a blend of subsistence practices and wage labor. Because wage jobs were low, most Inuit households were unable to afford rent, with a majority of public housing tenants falling into arrears. Pushing forward homeownership policies also demonstrates a dual purpose of encouraging Inuit independence, for their own well-being, as well as a federal interest to get Inuit off government assistance for financial reasons. Though the NWT HC was a way to try and localize housing efforts in the North, it echoed federal housing policies and programs. This need to move Inuit away from welfare housing and federal resources is only emphasized with the decrease in federal funding toward housing in the North in the 1980s.

As the prospect of Nunavut comes to fruition in the next chapter, will the type of housing care change from an “anonymous” approach to an ethic of care? Will the needs of Inuit be taken into consideration when developing housing programs and policies? Or will Qallunaat continue to promote programs that are inappropriate for the North? By understanding the structure of the Government of Nunavut (GN) and its housing corporation, I seek to understand if and how care changes. Can IQ, an Inuktitut term said to be an important concept for the GN, be the answer to an appropriate approach to housing care?

## Chapter 4. The NLCA and the National Housing Strategy

This chapter illustrates the rise of Inuit involvement in housing since the creation of Nunavut in 2000 – a step that has the potential to alleviate the housing crisis as Inuit begin to care for Inuit on a political level. But first, I spend time understanding how Inuit political involvement increased along with responsibility of housing in the 1990s. As the federal government shifted itself away from housing responsibility, what did this do to the quality of northern housing delivery overall? What does this do to the newly created Nunavut as housing responsibility is transferred from the federal to territorial level? Will this new government assume the same housing practices as its predecessors? To look at it another way, what happens to housing care through this transition? Entering the 2000s with Nunavut as reality, will this new, Inuit-led territory lead to a different kind of care, away from earlier bureaucratic forms of care that only focused on maintaining Inuit life? Using three interviews with employees at housing and Inuit organizations along with archival and anthropological sources, I attempt to understand any shifts in modes of housing care and how it does (or not) change the state of housing in Nunavut.<sup>56</sup>

### The Pursuit of Self-Governance - 1990s

The 1990s began with a negative blow to northern housing as the federal government withdrew federal funding from public housing in 1990. The federal government expanded their withdrawal by eliminating cost-shared funds for the construction of *new* social housing in 1993 (Pauktuutit 1998; DIAND 2005; Bonesteel 2006). My research indicates this withdrawal may have happened to lessen the financial burden placed on Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation because it was one of the largest debtors in the federal government (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 2000; 2001).<sup>57</sup> Up until this point, all housing programs in the North were subsidized by both federal and territorial housing authorities (CMHC and Northwest

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<sup>56</sup> Many sources in this chapter can be found physically in Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) archives and online at Library Archives Canada, Statistics Canada, CMHC, and on the Government of Nunavut's website. All sources accessible via the web have links listed in the references section.

<sup>57</sup> Within the Canadian federal archives, no specific reason was provided for the withdrawal of federal funding from the northern territories, as it relates to housing Indigenous peoples.

Territories Housing Corporation, respectively). All provincial and territorial governments felt the pressure of this decision, but the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation was especially burdened because many residents lived in public housing and the desire for social housing stock continued to increase with its population growth.

This shirking of financial responsibility by the feds did not sit well with Inuit. Researcher Wendy Moss (1995) conducted interviews with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) board members, an Inuit organization focused on the political and cultural well-being of Inuit, in 1992.<sup>58</sup> There was a consensus among some of the members that the fiduciary, or financial responsibility of Indigenous peoples, belongs to the federal government and should remain so with the arrival of Nunavut, a new Inuit-led territory. One member stated, “The federal government has been trying to escape its fiduciary responsibility but it cannot do so totally” (Moss 1995). This most likely alludes to the process of devolution where the federal government has been transferring responsibilities to provincial and territorial governments, and in turn, local governments. It also reveals that Inuit are aware of the legal obligation of fiduciary responsibility the government has toward Inuit, with financial obligation being the foundation of care toward its northern citizens (arguably beginning with tuberculosis treatments in the 1940s). Another ITK member echoed this sentiment but elucidated the federal government was trying to put the responsibility of Indigenous peoples on provincial governments. Indeed, devolution and actions such as the withdrawal of federal funding from housing are “undesirable” (Moss 1995). This conversation of fiduciary obligations extends beyond these interviews. When Inuit officially become citizens of Canada in 1869, the federal government had a constitutional obligation toward Inuit (Matthiasson 1992). So, even as the government attempts to detach themselves from their responsibilities (or disregard their laws/legal practices) to their northern citizens, they cannot as they are legally obligated to care for Inuit (as it applies to housing, health, etc.).

What does this withdrawal of funds tell us about housing care? Since the 1950s, the federal government cared for Inuit not because it was *Inuit* that needed caring but because it was important that the government cared for *someone*. Government housing care was determined to be its duty to its northern citizens via the tuberculosis outbreak

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<sup>58</sup> These interviews were conducted after a Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) workshop in the early 1990s. Wendy Moss (1995) structured the interviews around treaty rights and self-government as the late 1980s and 1990s were focused on federal-Indigenous relations.

and the public outcry from the American and Canadian public in the 1940s-1950s (Brody 1975; Paine 1977; Diubaldo 1993). The creation of public housing in the North began a cycle of dependence on welfare programs. The government's actions since have contributed more to maintaining the welfare state instead of moving Inuit off welfare programs. Inuit relied on these programs to survive in a mixed economy, where wage labour and traditional subsistence practices are used to survive. A steady increase in Inuit population growth only added to the necessity of welfare programs. So, even in a time of great housing need, the removal of funds from high-needs housing programs demonstrates a complete lack of care. The Government of the Northwest Territories scrambled to keep their housing programs afloat by slashing funds for other programs (Pauktuutit 1998). This is substantiated by the fact that in 1995 there was a shortfall of social housing by 1,800 units due to the reduction of funding for new social housing and operating and maintenance costs (Nunavut Implementation Commission 1995).

At the same time the federal government withdrew financially from the construction of new social housing in the country, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) was ratified in 1993. An enormous political achievement fought for by Inuit since the 1970s, NLCA gave Inuit a new territory with protections of land, animals, and Inuit culture (the preservation of Inuktitut, of cultural subsistence practices, etc.). The NLCA divided the existing Northwest Territories into two separate territories. The new territory, negotiated between the Crown and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., was named Nunavut and the land mass was drawn from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the West to Baffin Island in the East, down to the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel (see Figure 1.1).<sup>59</sup> <sup>60</sup> The political structure of Nunavut as a public government would echo assemblies found in other provincial and territorial governments in Canada, including a Legislative Assembly and Premier. Even though the new government was not an ethnic government, meaning only Inuit can participate, a majority of political seats would be filled by Inuit. Nunavut's government would setup similar departments found within provincial and federal governments such

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<sup>59</sup> Canada is still considered a Commonwealth country, which means it is politically linked to the English monarchy. Therefore, in official documents between ITK, NTI, and the federal government, the latter is represented by "Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada."

<sup>60</sup> NTI was previously called Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) during NCLA negotiations and is referred as thus in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

as a Department of Justice, Housing Corporation, etc. This was to ensure a smooth transition of federal and territorial responsibilities into the new government.

It was a great benefit for the federal government that the new Nunavut government be setup in a similar fashion to its own. Not only did it ensure that Euro-Canadian political structures would be maintained, but it also preserved the power structure with the federal government as a source of control (funding, constitutional duties, taxation, etc.).<sup>61</sup> The NLCA, then, acts as a partnership between an Indigenous group and colonial authority, with absolute power being held by the latter. Mohawk author Taiaiake Alfred (2005) discussed how colonial entities recognize Indigenous self-governance:

“By allowing Indigenous peoples a small measure of self-administration, and by forgoing a small portion of the moneys derived from the exploitation of Indigenous nations’ lands, the state has created an incentive for integration into its own sovereignty framework...[Indigenous communities] are viewed sympathetically as the anachronistic remnants of nations, the descendants of once independent peoples who by a combination of tenacity and luck have managed to survive and must now be protected as minorities.” - Taiaiake Alfred (2005: p. 44-45).

The idea of complete self-governance outside the Canadian colonial system becomes unachievable through the NCLA. Although Inuit will remain within the colonial framework through the NCLA, it does not diminish their overall objective which is to encourage self-reliance as well as the social and cultural well-being of Inuit (NTI et. al 2010). But it does cast doubt on the effectiveness of this new government as it is formed. How will Nunavut handle Inuit matters through a colonial political framework? How will care differ under this new government? It remained to be seen how housing, still a major concern for Inuit well-being, would be addressed after the ratification of the NLCA.

The prospect of Nunavut leaves glimmers of uncertainty and hope for housing in the new territory. While waiting for the creation of Nunavut in 1999 and the establishment of the new territorial housing corporation in 2000, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation continued its mission to provide housing to its residents and the future residents of Nunavut. The Housing Corporation created new housing

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<sup>61</sup> The federal government states the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is an act of reconciliation between Inuit and the Crown (Government of Canada [GOC] 2020), rather than a measure of control. Both sentiments can be considered true.

programs such as the 1997 Access to Housing and the Down Payment Assistance Program. This program, which succeeded the 1984 Homeownership Assistance Program, provided loans for Inuit who qualified for private mortgages (Tester 2009). Unfortunately, as with decades past, the program was not able to realistically accommodate Inuit, as most Inuit were unable to afford private mortgages or qualify for the program.

After decades of failure, it is difficult to understand why federal and territorial housing corporations continued the push for homeownership. I asked Sandra Turner, a now former employee of Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, to explain why the CMHC promotes homeownership in northern communities (personal communication, November 7, 2017). Sandra has had several positions within the CMHC and at the time of the interview she was an affordable housing consultant for CMHC for the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. As seen in the previous chapter, homeownership was not perceived as feasible for the North:

“There was a lot of homeownership back in the 80s and early 90s and for some programs, the way they gave their incentives to people in these small communities to look at homeownership, it was really advantageous to the government because instead of paying for public housing units and paying all of the operating and maintenance costs, if you created a homeowner and you put them in a house, if you gave them a house for free, at least they're off the system and paying their own O&M, right? So it made good sense to the government to create homeowners but only to the extent of those that had the money to afford that.” - Sandra Turner, personal communication, November 7, 2017

The problem the CMHC ran into years later is the dwindling number of people that were eligible for homeownership programs. It was and remains a difficult task to incentivize Inuit to become homeowners because of operations and maintenance costs (O&M) when public housing does not have similar costs. Sandra acknowledged how economic opportunities in the North are low, so using one's wages to purchase a house is not as feasible as it may be in southern Canada.

Sandra Turner also assessed that housing programs that provide grants, or just “throws money” at housing aren't very successful (personal communication, November 7, 2017). Between rent and other basic living expenses, it was difficult to afford entering the private rental housing market, so a continued reliance on public housing remained. Many Inuit employees for the Government of the Northwest Territories, which are highly sought-after jobs for financial reasons, were unable to afford basic living expenses such

as rent, childcare, etc., on their salaries. Some Inuit stated rent continued to remain too high. One Inuk said their rent was as high as \$1,300 a month (Nunavut 1999 Consulting 1996).<sup>62</sup> As the Standing Committee on Community Empowerment and Sustainable Development (SCCESD 1999) urged, a review of housing was needed including “the issue of facilitating home ownership.” So with homeownership being impossible for northern communities, the heavy housing burden remained and public housing was the most practical way to house Inuit.

Unemployment and education rates help us understand why homeownership was unrealistic for Inuit. For Inuit in Nunavut, 28% of Nunavummiut were unemployed compared to 2% of non-Indigenous people (Nunavut Implementation Commission and Training Committee 1996). About 61% of Inuit also had an education of Grade 9 or less (Nunavut Implementation Commission and Training Committee 1996). Therefore, many Inuit were only hired for low-skilled jobs in the government and within their communities because they did not have the “qualifications” for higher paying positions. Since many Inuit were unable to earn salaries high enough to afford mortgage and utility costs, public housing was their only option.

Because unaffordable housing programs and little economic opportunities made the private housing market inaccessible, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) was also critiqued in the way it was handling public housing. Some Inuit women who were public housing tenants wished to use part of their housing as lodging for tourists. This was to facilitate more participation in the northern economy. Because most public housing in the North is subsidized and owned by the NWT HC, it is not allowed to be used for any commercial uses per NWT HC policy (Pauktuutit 1993). This excludes Inuit living in public housing from earning wages and creates a feeling of powerlessness over their own lives. A survey sent to Inuit women who were active in their communities stated Inuit are too dependent on the government (Pauktuutit 1991).<sup>63</sup> Inuit lack of control over their housing is only exasperated by the fact that local housing associations are rarely involved in the decision-making process. Housing decisions were either made at a federal or territorial level, and local associations were often left out from

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<sup>62</sup> Rent in the North in the 1990s for this Inuk is comparable to skyrocketing rental costs in cities in the Lower Mainland Canada in the 2010s (Pomeroy and MacLennan 2019).

<sup>63</sup> The survey was sent either in the late 1980s or early 1990s. A specific date was not provided in Pauktuutit’s (1991) report.

contributing to important housing processes (Pauktuutit 1998). This is a small example of how public housing continues to perpetuate a cycle of dependence, where Inuit cannot use their housing to participate economically, cannot move out of or afford private housing, nor are able to control housing decisions in their own communities.

Along with territorial housing programs that remained unsuitable and restrictive to the mixed economy in the North, the housing stock continued to fail community needs. From 1991-2000, approximately 2,100 houses were built in the North (Statistics Canada 2017a). Although this was slightly more units built than the previous decade, the progress in construction did not solve housing demand. In 1992, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation determined “over 3,584 new housing are required to meet the demand for housing *at 1992 levels*” (Pauktuutit 1998, emphasis added).” This means the NWT HC was constantly playing “catch-up” as rapid population growth in the North outpaced housing construction. This shortfall of housing only intensified the on-going crisis.

The overcrowding and unstable housing experienced in the North negatively impacts physical health including family violence, substance abuse, etc. Specifically focusing on the struggles of Inuit women, Pauktuutit (1998), an Inuit Women’s Associations, states that while women experiencing violent situations get priority access to housing, there is very little housing stock to accommodate them. There is also very little access for Inuit women to participate in homeownership programs because of high construction costs, high heating and utility costs, and lack of access to wage employment. During the 1990s, many northern communities didn’t have shelters or temporary housing for women leaving abusive situations, therefore forcing women to either stay in their current housing or leave their community (Pauktuutit 1998). In this sense, the lack of housing is viewed as both violent and produces violence against Inuit.

The voices of Inuit begin to breakthrough in important discussions in the 1990s, specifically around Inuit self-governance and the impact of housing in Inuit communities. These discussions emphasized Inuit becoming self-reliant. But tension is found where Inuit wish to be self-sustaining through self-governance, according to their own traditional values, while affirming that the federal government cannot avoid their financial responsibilities toward Inuit. The federal government, in the eyes of Inuit, are responsible for their current circumstances. But from an overarching federal perspective, it appears

the federal government wants Inuit to be self-reliant to ease their financial constraints/responsibilities, as demonstrated with their withdrawal from new social housing in 1993. With the anticipation of Nunavut becoming reality in 1999, there was fervor in how the lives of future Nunavummiut would differ under the new public government, and how it would affect the ever-present housing crisis in the North.

## **Nunavut - 2000s**

Nunavut was officially established as a territory in April 1999, with the Nunavut Housing Corporation developed shortly after in 2000. Housing was now more directly in the hands of Inuit. With nearly half the Inuit population residing in 25 communities within the territory, housing Inuit remained a monumental task. How will Nunavut deliver housing differently from its predecessors? Will housing care change to fit Inuit cultural needs? Will the housing crisis in the North finally see relief under the management of the new Nunavut Housing Corporation?

The challenge of housing was placed into the hands of the Nunavut Housing Corporation in 2000. Their mission was to oversee the creation of housing programs and the managing of public housing stock.<sup>64</sup> The NHC has a top-down structure, with a Minister in charge of the NHC, a board of directors, employees working for the NHC head office, and three regional offices (NHC 2021). Decisions made at the NHC level are then passed down for execution to local housing association, contractors, etc. The NHC, just as its predecessor, also works closely with local housing associations when facilitating and delivering programs to each community. But its beginning started in disarray, or “slightly dismantled,” due to employee transfers and resignations (SCCESD 1999). This is likely the result of the setup and growing pains of the new government. They oversee housing for approximately 22,560 Nunavummiut, but many employees are Qallunaat, as Inuit were not provided adequate training and had low education levels to assume these high skilled positions (Nunavut 1999 Consulting 1996; Nunavut Implementation Commission and Training Committee et. al. 1996). With almost a quarter

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<sup>64</sup> Although it is a “stand-alone Corporation,” it is not completely separated from Nunavut’s government (NHC 2001). This means even though it is connected to the government, it has control over funding/budgeting, partnerships with other housing corporations, etc.

of Inuit households in Nunavut in 2001 having six or more people living in a house, the Housing Corporation had a slew of challenges to address (ITK n.d.; ITK and RAD 2007).

What's significant about the Government of Nunavut (GN) and the Nunavut Housing Corporation (in comparison to their federal and territorial counterparts) is the implementation of the Inuktitut term *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ) into their policies, objectives, and department mission statements. IQ is an Inuktitut term that encompasses every aspect of Inuit culture and knowledge.<sup>65</sup> The term goes beyond itself for Inuit, who truly understand its meaning. Constructed through workshops and feedback from Inuit in 1998, many of them elders, IQ is meant to work in tandem with the better aspects of Western bureaucracy. IQ is meant to reconcile the objective of government programs, its processes of maintenance and evaluation, with the unique needs of Nunavummiut (Arnakak 2002). Within the Nunavut bureaucracy, IQ is composed of eight different Inuktitut terms, which describes the way an individual conducts themselves, their interactions with others, environment, and animals.<sup>66</sup> The term appears in several legislative acts and is stated as implemented within all departments of the GN (GN 2013).

IQ, then, is both a theoretical and practical model of care - for Inuit by Inuit. It addresses the specific cultural needs of the individual being cared for. The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) promotes the use of IQ in their practices, particularly the "use of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) in the Corporation's decision making" process (NHC 2001). Unfortunately, NHC has not stated any specific elements it uses in its operations or in what capacity it has integrated specific elements into its structure. NHC has pushed, however, for Inuktitut to be a forefront skill for its employees to better serve Inuit.<sup>67</sup> IQ is possibly applied in decision making through general discussions and consensus (*aajiiqatigiinniq*) and working together for a common cause (*piliriqatigiinniq* or

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<sup>65</sup> IQ is sometimes referred to as Inuit Societal Values (ISV) or traditional knowledge (TK) in official documents.

<sup>66</sup> <sup>66</sup>Refer to Appendix B for a complete breakdown of IQ, taken directly from GN legislation. The Nunavut Wildlife Act (Bill 35) includes an additional five elements to IQ that are not listed in GN Annual Reports (Wenzel 2004: p. 241). I suspect the GN does not include the other five elements because they focus specifically on animals and environment within Nunavut.

<sup>67</sup> Though this is the bare minimum the NHC can do to serve Inuit, it is a general struggle in the GN to retain Inuit employees and cultivate an organizational culture that requires knowledge of Inuktitut.

*ikajuqtigiinniq*).<sup>68</sup> But there are aspects where IQ and the NHC clash. For instance, the NHC has a hierarchal structure whereas, traditionally, Inuit had a more flat or simple leadership structure (Johnston 2014).<sup>69</sup> Before extensive contact with Qallunaat, Inuit lived in small groups where no formal leader was established but one with *isuma* (the mind or intelligence/thoughtfulness) was respected, and decisions were made via consensus (Briggs 1970; Nagy 2006; Lévesque 2014). So, there are competing ideas of decision-making between IQ and the Western models of bureaucracy which formulates the NHC.

How did IQ apply to housing policies and programs under the Nunavut Housing Corporation? One promising program was the Northern Sustainable House created by the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) (2007) in partnership with the Nunavut Housing Corporation. This project attempted to bring together Inuit and housing actors to create culturally appropriate and energy conscious housing for the North. For instance, this design included cold porches and a storage area for dry goods over the winter (Senate of Canada 2016a). One model of this design was placed in Arviat, Nunavut, and the others in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. For the Arviat house, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the Nunavut Department of Education, and local Inuit were invited to participate in a workshop on how this new design can fulfill community and cultural needs. Community participants, for instance, stated that more housing training for Inuit was needed for all aspects of housing delivery (CMHC 2007). Unfortunately, the workshop revealed cultural conflicts between Inuit and the housing bureaucracy. Inuit elders and women who attended listened most of the time, as they respected the opinions of the housing representatives there as leaders (CMHC 2007). In other words, Inuit elders and women may not have felt as if their input was needed or valuable enough to contribute to housing discussions. Due to the structure of the workshop, led by Qallunaat housing experts, it was difficult for Inuit outside the housing bureaucracy to participate. There is some desire, then, by the housing bureaucracy for Inuit to be involved in the housing sector but it remains difficult for Inuit to fully participate in the consultation process. Though there were struggles of Inuit involvement, CMHC

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<sup>68</sup> This is based on the mission statements and objectives found in NHC (2001; 2011) annual reports.

<sup>69</sup> Johnston's (2014) statement here does not necessarily reflect the complexity of Inuit leadership. I use this reference to show how the NHC's Euro-Canadian bureaucratic leadership structure is not compatible with IQ or traditional Inuit leadership practices.

was pleased with the housing design and its performance in the community (Senate of Canada 2016a). Shortly after the Sustainable House was installed, similar designs were being applied in the North by the Government of Nunavut and housing designers. It's unknown how many similar units have been built and if they've been received well in Inuit communities.

While the Arviat Sustainable House was a step forward in providing Inuit appropriate housing, the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) continued to offer many of the same programs from its predecessor, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. This included homeownership programs, maintenance and repair programs, assistance programs for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, etc. The main gripe with these programs was the continued push for homeownership, which had been highly critiqued by Inuit since the 1970s.

But it wasn't just homeownership that was failing Inuit needs. The NHC was implementing housing designs that attempted to address Inuit population growth without considering cultural needs. In Iqaluit, the capital and largest community in Nunavut, there was a push for more multi-use buildings, a mix of commercial and residential uses (FoTenn Consultants Inc. 2003).<sup>70</sup> This, in the minds of the housing bureaucracy, was to accommodate issues such as high costs of developing land, maintenance, and operation costs, and prepare for fast population growth in the community. But for Adla Itorcheak, a housing policy analyst from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the on-going housing development strategy in Iqaluit is not necessarily appropriate to address the housing crisis. This type of housing development did not encapsulate principles of IQ. Adla stated that IQ is barely incorporated in Nunavut housing as the NHC is focused on building multi-plex units, which "only shows that there's almost a complete absence of IQ incorporated into social housing" (personal communication, November 8, 2017).<sup>71</sup> To Adla, IQ is about incorporating cultural needs into housing designs. For larger communities like Iqaluit, multi-plexes quickly put Inuit into housing, but they are rather unfavorable to Inuit kinship dynamics. Multi-plexes, built from cheap materials, can be quite noisy and disturbing to

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<sup>70</sup>Iqaluit is one of the more unique northern communities in that it has more of a private housing market, albeit still very limited, than other communities (Arif Sayani, personal communication, February 7, 2018).

<sup>71</sup> Multi-plex units are an amalgamation of 10-12 bachelor and/or 1-bedroom units in one structure.

young families as partitioning between units is thin and vibrations from neighbors are easily felt (Adla Itorcheak, personal communication, November 8, 2017). This does not make for pleasant nor culturally sensitive housing.

To make matters more complicated, there is also the issue of lot sizes in municipalities like Iqaluit which dictates the size and design of housing. Lots sizes in Iqaluit are currently 4,000 square feet per lot but a few decades earlier they were much larger. Arif Sayani, a Canada Mortgage Housing employee and former Planner for the city of Iqaluit, confirmed that the NHC was redeveloping lots from single family housing lots to larger multi-plex lots (personal communication, February 7, 2018). Because these lots are much smaller in size, it restricts the kind of housing that can be built.<sup>72</sup> For Adla, lot sizes affect how homeownership can be received in the community. When asked if IQ can be incorporated into the idea of homeownership, Adla stated:

“Yes, it could be but it would depend upon the development plans of each community because each community has their own social and economic development plans for community. But here in Iqaluit, we have no choice but to secure our own water crafts or snow mobiles and ATVs next to our own housing units, and because of that the question of lot size then becomes a factor.” - Adla Itorcheak, personal communication, November 8, 2017.

Adla points out the flaws with Euro-Canadian designed houses, where snowmobiles and other means of transport are meant to be stored beside the house. But if Inuit were able, they would store their vehicles in a different space, either in garages or in an indoor space where their ski-dos and snowmobiles would not freeze in the cold. But the lot sizes allowed in communities like Iqaluit restrict the building of garages and other storage areas. To accommodate their needs, Inuit must store ski-dos in living rooms. This is just one example at how Euro-Canadian housing designs are unsuitable for Inuit, with no consideration for Inuit cultural needs.

Adla’s experience overall demonstrates that if homeownership is to be successful, incorporating IQ and moving Inuit out of social housing needs to be addressed at a community level. What’s particularly important in Adla’s assessment is the importance of involving the communities in housing decisions. Each community, as

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<sup>72</sup> Land/lot size is also restricted due to melting permafrost in the North, making land unsuitable for housing. The effects of climate change and its impact on the housing crisis is outside the scope of this research.

demonstrated by Iqaluit, has its own unique housing challenges. For instance, some communities encounter different environmental conditions (i.e., melting permafrost, restricted buildable land, etc.). So, with their extensive knowledge and lived experiences, each community has the capability to solve housing issues at the local level. At present, communities are rather restricted in housing decisions. Local housing associations have the ability to request housing and distribute housing units throughout their communities. This devolution of housing responsibilities is minimal at the community level, with the creation of housing programs and allocation of funding being controlled by the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation dedicated a significant portion of funds to housing construction as it began to gain momentum from 2006-2016, which was on track to overtake construction trends pre-2000. In 2006, the Nunavut Housing Trust was created to address affordable housing concerns, with a focus on building a large number of housing units (NHC 2012).<sup>73</sup> While the Trust provided money for the construction for 726 new social housing, it failed to anticipate high costs such as administration (a trend seen in housing since the 1950s), thus falling short of its goal of building approximately 1,000 units (Senate of Canada 2016c). As a result, the Government of Nunavut had to cover the \$60 million shortfall. To the NHC (2012), this demonstrated how committed the territorial government was to address the housing crisis and take care of Nunavummiut. But others would view this as a failure of the housing bureaucracy. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2004) assessed early on, before the Nunavut Housing Trust, that a new housing program under the federal government that only sought to increase housing stock numbers “would be a throwback to earlier failed programs.”<sup>74</sup> While the Trust was not a creation of the federal government, it echoed unsuccessful federal housing initiatives.

Ultimately, housing continued to see a major decline in stock and liveability as the NHC began operations. By 2004, the Government of Nunavut estimated that at least 3,500 new public housing units would be needed to meet needs of the territory (DIAND

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<sup>73</sup> This Nunavut Housing Trust was a fiscal promise by the NHC to provide \$200 million over multiple years for the construction of new social housing.

<sup>74</sup> ITK (2004) also critiqued the GN and its goal to represent Inuit in the workforce. Due to low education and training opportunities, Inuit cannot obtain jobs within the GN or within their own communities; these positions are typically filled by Qallunaat instead.

2005).<sup>75</sup> But only a year later, in 2005, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. estimated that 6,000 new units would be needed to solve overcrowding and account for rapid population growth (Senate of Canada 2016c). The gap between these estimations is quite drastic. For colonial institutions, numbers are its foundation, or so to speak, its truth.<sup>76</sup> But the estimation from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., an Inuit led organization, can be viewed differently. They appeal to the governments' sense of truth, but it is more impactful than the Government of Nunavut's estimation because it provides more of an alarming image of housing in Nunavut.

This decade of housing policy emphasizes major tensions in housing between the territorial government via the Nunavut Housing Corporation and Inuit organizations. There's the idea by the NHC that "throwing" money at the problem will solve the crisis, and while that is part of the solution, it does nothing to solve the long-term crisis just as Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami predicted. Where the NHC does see some traction in solving housing issues is with the involvement and inclusion of Inuit and Inuit-appropriate housing such as the Arviat Sustainable House. But with those kinds of projects not seeing financial investment, there becomes a stalemate and a reliance on past methods of housing practices. The replication of housing programs from its federal and territorial predecessors demonstrates the difficulty of the Nunavut Government and the Nunavut Housing Corporation to move past colonial housing processes. Although committed to solving the housing crisis, the reliance on these outdated practices continue to fail Inuit.

## **The Standing Senate Committee - 2010s**

With the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Housing Corporations relying on Qallunaat housing programs and policies, housing in Nunavut remained in crises. With the housing emergency worsening year after year as Inuit population growth continued to soar, the hope felt at the creation of Nunavut began to diminish.

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<sup>75</sup> If you recall, this number is close to the amount of housing units needed in 1992, thus affirming that housing authorities were still unable to catch up or relieve housing needs (Pauktuutit 1998). If anything, housing authorities were only able to keep new housing construction on par with population growth, maintaining a steady need of new units.

<sup>76</sup> Lisa Stevenson (2014) details the cataloging of Inuit by the federal government into faceless, impersonal beings via the disc naming system in the North during the tuberculosis crisis.

In 2010, the Nunavut Housing Corporation commissioned a survey on the housing needs of Inuit. The survey reported 35% of dwellings in Nunavut were crowded, with 53% of those in crowded dwellings reporting the living room is for sleeping (Income Statistics Division 2010). Even kitchens, dining rooms, and hallways were also used as sleeping areas. This demonstrates how Inuit are utilizing their Euro-Canadian houses to deal with overcrowded housing and is an indicator of inappropriate housing design. Pre-contact, traditional housing had one sleeping area for the entire family. Euro-Canadian designed houses do not design sleeping areas/bedrooms with this in mind, instead family members are meant to sleep separately from each other (children in a separate room from parents and/or relatives). Crowded housing is more common among public housing units versus owner-occupied housing. Almost half of housing units were considered below housing standards, meaning either major repairs were needed and/or it was crowded (Income Statistics Division 2010). The survey also gives a glimpse into how housing policies such as home repair and homeownership were being used by residents. Approximately 20% of Nunavummiut surveyed owned their houses, while the rest rented (Nunavut Bureau of Statistics 2010). Based on the history of homeownership programs in the North, this number isn't surprising. Six years later, in 2016, the Nunavut Census had similar statistics for almost all categories including rented vs. owned units and overcrowding (Statistics Canada 2017b). As with early surveys and censuses, this data demonstrates a dire need for more housing units in Nunavut as well as Inuit-designed housing.

With no significant progress in alleviating the housing crisis in the North, the federal government set up an inquiry into current northern housing processes and practices. The 2015 Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples (SSCAP), made up of Senators from across Canada, visited northern communities to witness the state of housing and speak with Inuit about housing issues and solutions.<sup>77 78</sup> After their northern tour, the SSCAP held several meetings with representatives from Inuit organizations, federal housing agencies, universities, individuals, and contractors. All groups invited to

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<sup>77</sup> The 2015 study was titled the “best practices and on-going challenges to housing in First Nation and Inuit communities in Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, and the Northwest Territories” (Senate of Canada 2016b).

<sup>78</sup> A critique of this massive housing tour is the costs. Flying to northern communities is not cheap, and many of the concerns raised during the proceedings have been known and voiced by Inuit for decades. There is a question as to how much was spent during the inquiry, and what of those costs could (and should) have been redirected to northern housing.

the SSCAP meetings were asked to share their views on northern housing. Though the SSCAP inquiry expands across much of the North, I pay special attention to Nunavut's housing actors.

This investigation into northern housing is important for several reasons, including an understanding of how federal agencies are still involved in housing policies and programs, complexities around funding and housing delivery in general, and the struggles of Inuit organizations to directly contribute to housing. It also provided a major public platform for Inuit to voice their concerns and tell their experiences to political leaders, some of whom weren't familiar with housing in the North prior to these inquiries.

Federal housing organizations were called on during the SSCAP inquiry to describe their involvement in northern housing and projects with territorial organizations and southern contractors. In one SSCAP meeting, representatives for Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation confirmed the agency's role as a bystander in territorial housing decisions (design, rental rates, etc.) and more of a research partner, often working with contractors and housing designers to improve housing quality (Senate of Canada 2016a, 2016d). In a different SSCAP meeting, a federal representative from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) spoke on the importance of solving the northern housing crisis as easing housing concerns would allow for more economic development in northern communities.<sup>79</sup> In the view of the federal government then, housing is an obstacle to Inuit becoming employed and financially independent. The federal government must continue to financially invest in northern housing rather than developing a more robust northern economy. Although INAC is hopeful to achieve reconciliation with Inuit, their testimony at the SSCAP meeting alludes to the continued social and economic development in the North and its relation to "national interests" (Senate Canada 2016a). What national interests are being suggested is unclear as it could relate to resource extraction, security, transportation, etc. But it reveals how housing in the eyes of the federal government is seen as a hinderance, an obstacle, for Inuit to be self-reliant (via the "development" of the North). The INAC representative attaches reconciliation, an act of care that provides culturally specific care, with colonial notions of development.

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<sup>79</sup> INAC was separated in the late 2010s into two entities: Crown, Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs and Indigenous Services Canada. They are not directly involved in northern housing but in policy only, which could indirectly affect housing.

As federal agencies remain spectators to the housing crisis, how then is an ethic of care to be achieved (in relation to the federal government's goal of reconciliation)? Sandra Turner further explained how federal agencies retain a distance from northern housing by letting northern groups control housing to an extent. She explained that when the federal government provides funding for territorial governments and housing corporations (via Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation), they set parameters around the funding through agreements, but ultimately let the territories decide where they want to apply the funding. "We looked at it and said, 'you know what, they're best conditioned to understand the needs of the residents, better than we are' (Sandra Turner, personal communication, November 7, 2017)." With the federal government "allowing" territories to distribute the funds, it calls attention to the processes happening with territorial governments and housing corporations. The distribution of funds is done in a colonial manner – "agreements with parameters" – in turn, the housing corporations are limited in what they can achieve. These funding restrictions solidifies the colonial structure of housing and limits how the Government of Nunavut and Housing Corporation can address the housing crisis.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC), limited in their funding capacity, was challenged by high housing costs. Speaking with SSCAP senators in one meeting, the NHC detailed how Inuit are unable to pay high rent prices. In 2014-2015 for example, 75% of public housing tenants made less than \$23,000 - equating to about \$60 a month for rent based on public housing rent scales (Senate of Canada 2016b). As a result, the NHC does not see much return in their housing investments. Due to low investment returns, the NHC is unable to achieve one of their housing goals – the development of a robust housing spectrum. This housing spectrum, or continuum, if looking at extremes, ranges from homelessness to private homeownership. The development of housing options would help transition Nunavummiut from the public to private housing sector (Senate of Canada 2016b, 2016c).

With private homeownership still being pushed by federal, territorial, and Inuit housing organizations, the development of a full housing spectrum is essential to ending Inuit dependence on public housing. But Arif Sayani (personal communication, February 7, 2018) saw gaps within NHC housing continuum planning, particularly with the lack of insight in private housing. In his role as a City Planner, it was important for Arif to communicate to the NHC what was happening with private housing, especially in

communities where it was more prevalent like Iqaluit. The President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Nathan Obed, echoed this sentiment, stating homeownership would most likely look different from southern housing markets as the economy in the North doesn't provide enough opportunities for Inuit to qualify for current models of homeownership (Senate of Canada 2016b).<sup>80</sup> This idea of employment being an obstacle to accessing housing (specifically homeownership) directly opposes INAC's perception (stated above). INAC believes housing is an obstacle to accessing employment. These contrasting ideas indicate an ignorance by the federal government in understanding Inuit-perceived housing obstacles in the North.

Homeownership, to federal agencies, relates to Inuit pride in housing. Both the SSCAP and Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation suggested in one meeting that for housing to be more sustainable in the North, Inuit need to be proud of their houses and their ownership of said houses (Senate of Canada 2016a). There's a sense that pride needs to be instilled in Inuit in some way to encourage homeownership. This echoes sentiments from the 1960s during the Adult Education Program of the Northern Rental Housing Program. The pamphlets encouraged the proper cleaning and use of Euro-Canadian styled houses and in turn, hoped to see Inuit become proud of their housing. By doing so, Inuit would better care for their houses, ensuring longevity of the housing stock.

To demonstrate their involvement in northern housing, and perhaps fight against colonial narratives perpetuated since the 1960s, Inuit organizations also appeared before the SSCAP proceedings. Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., for example, told Senators that they have tried to involve themselves with Nunavut housing but found there was difficulty in implementing housing plans with the Nunavut Housing Corporation as monies were given directly to the NHC for their projects. No funding was provided to the Inuit organization for joint housing projects (Senate of Canada 2016c). One of their employees, Adla Itorcheak, spoke before the SSCAP on June 1, 2016. He emphasized how overcrowded social housing affects the educational pursuits of Inuit children and

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<sup>80</sup> Since its inception, homeownership programs in the North have been largely unsuccessful due to the structure of the northern mixed economy. The question of homeownership success comes down to affordability. Very few Inuit have been able to take advantage of these programs from the 1970s to the 2020s as the northern economy has not created many full-time, permanent job opportunities for Inuit.

youth. For Adla, he was fortunate to have a bedroom of his own for his studies and was one of few from his classmates to graduate from high school and university (Senate of Canada 2016c). As his first experience in front of the SSCAP, he thought it went well as he emphasized the importance of housing where kids can have their own bedrooms:

“We want to see our unique population to excel in schools but most of our young children are having a hard, difficult time excelling because they don’t have any room in their own homes. They need a quiet study area because most of these homes are all crowded.” - Adla Itorcheak, personal communication, November 8, 2017

Adla’s testimony emphasizes the impact of the housing crisis at both an individual and community level, with overcrowding only worsening since Adla was a child. In his current position as a housing policy analyst, he doesn’t have many high-profile interactions with federal authorities. Moments like these, where Adla can present issues affecting Inuit and Nunavummiut to federal senators, are important. His personal experience makes his testimony to the SSCAP extremely important for Qallunaat understanding of the housing crisis in the North. Adla’s knowledge and experience of housing struggles is common among Inuit in Nunavut, but the SSCAP proceedings demonstrates how little Qallunaat truly know. Adla’s story emphasizes how Inuit and Inuit organizations are invaluable to helping solve the housing crisis.

The significance of Inuit input in the northern housing crisis is stark during the SSCAP inquiry. In one SSCAP meeting, two witnesses from Natural Resource Canada explained how their organization was trying to better develop ventilation systems to prevent mould (Senate of Canada 2016c). Their challenges included how the ventilation systems were based more on southern standards, and their technology needed to be tested in northern environments. One senator questioned the effectiveness of their technology. The senator spoke of how some Inuit ventilated their houses by putting a hole through the wall so air could circulate. These Inuit-modified homes held up better than those that had southern solutions (Senate of Canada 2016c). The SSCAP strongly recommended that southern contractors seek the input of northern residents for their projects.

With encouragement from Qallunaat (senators in the SSCAP), there is support for Inuit involvement in housing initiatives. Sandra echoed the advice of the senators (personal communication November 7, 2017). In trusting the expertise of northern

housing authorities and government, I asked Sandra if any specific programs in the North were noted as being successful. She elaborated about an experience she had working as a program manager in Iqaluit:

“The policies to me that are most effective are the ones where you can build the capacity at the local level so that they can pass it along. I think one of the most successful ones has been, it's called a Housing Maintainer Program and this is when I was program manager over in Iqaluit. I found that a whole bunch of Inuit, older gentlemen in the communities, had a very good handle on how to fix the furnace for example. They would never be able to pass an apprentice exam or do any of the theory associated with the trade but were very capable. So we introduced the Housing maintainer course which was a specific certification for Nunavut and the housing program, and it basically certified them to maintain houses and heating systems without having to be some kind of an apprentice, or acceptable certification from down south.” - Sandra Turner, personal communication, November 7, 2017

There are issues in the way Sandra addresses the capabilities of Inuit. Inuit are unable to “pass an exam,” which is a measure Qallunaat use to assess an individual’s skill, but Inuit are still capable of handling housing issues. There is a tension in the colonial mindset then, where there is an understanding of how well Inuit can handle their own affairs but they must “prove” themselves to the colonial authority. Without some way to measure Inuit success/skill, Qallunaat are unable to trust Inuit to efficiently care for themselves. How then can Inuit become self-reliant if governing Qallunaat do not see them as truly capable?

Other general housing obstacles in the North presented through the SSCAP inquiry included a short construction season, high costs of materials and transportation, and lack of skilled labour in northern communities. Nunavut Housing Corporation’s President Terry Audla stated one public unit costs between \$400,000 to \$500,000, and this does not include utilities or maintenance costs (Senate of Canada 2016b). Another general concern was the effect of climate change on buildable land as permafrost was melting and erosion occurred, which was acknowledged by Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation and Natural Resource Canada, but no tangible solutions were available (Senate of Canada 2016a; 2016b). This is a pressing issue as the amount of buildable land is already limited in the North (Arif Sayani, personal communication, November 7, 2018). Despite the provision of funding from the federal government, there remains many difficulties to solving the northern housing crisis.

The SSCAP concluded in 2017 with the publishing of their final report.<sup>81</sup> One response to the report was the federal government's announcement of The National Housing Strategy on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017. The first national housing strategy in Canada, this policy is meant to tackle housing issues such as homelessness and address housing shortages around the country, prioritizing homeownership incentives (which are still seen as unsensible in the North). The Strategy will be applied in the North to address the specific, unique needs as determined by territorial governments and housing corporations.<sup>82</sup> As a national policy, there was concern if a northern approach would be applied to the Strategy among the three territories (Sandra Turner, personal communication, November 7, 2017). While the Strategy does take a blanket approach, it's people like Sandra, Adla and Arif that can share their knowledge of the North among their peers. A northern lens, in the case of Nunavut, can be IQ, a term which both Sandra, Arif, and Adla were familiar. While the federal agencies themselves cannot apply IQ within its own framework because they serve the general population in Canada, specific departments and employees that work with and in the North can use IQ to influence the way policies are applied to the North.

In the six decades of government provided housing, the 2010s marked an increase in Inuit voices and participation in housing discourses. Adla's lived experience invokes an urgency that touches us beyond the cold statistics of the housing bureaucracy (surveys, censuses, etc.). The stories of children not having access to bedrooms or women being stuck in violent situations due to housing paints a dark, real picture of the North. These stories might not be "objective facts" in the eyes of colonial institutions, but as Stevenson (2014) argues they "resist explanation and therefore resist the demand for objectivity that is caught up in the question of replicability." Stories do not produce the same effect or results every time, like reports or surveys attempt to do. There is no intention for a story to have one conclusion, one ending, contesting rigid structures and meanings. Stories appeal to the individual, to feel and interpret as they wish. Likewise, the stories and experiences of Adla resist bureaucratic forms of care,

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<sup>81</sup> Titled "We Can Do Better: Housing in Inuit Nunangat" (Senate of Canada 2017).

<sup>82</sup> The funding is set to stretch over a period of ten years, with a total estimated expenditure at the time of \$40 billion. By August 2021, the Housing Strategy had expanded to \$70+ billion with the creation of the Canada Housing benefit and the Canada-Nunavut Housing Benefit (CA-NU HB). The CA-NU HB seeks to support over 670 low-income households in need. This is a cost-matched program, where the GN must match the funds of the federal government for the program to fulfill its goals.

while at the same time appealing to the sensibilities of federal and territorial housing departments. Sandra and Arif, both aware of the realities of northern living, are constrained in their roles as federal agents even as they work to solve the housing crisis. The failure of the housing bureaucracy to address Inuit needs within the scope of their programs and policies time and again demonstrates that its colonial roots will continue to provide care without cultural sensitivity and inadequate housing (i.e., inadequate space, no garages, etc.) to Inuit.

## **A New Nunavut? - 2020s**

As Nunavut enters its third decade as a territory, the housing crisis presses on. It remains urgent but with an absence of appropriate actions from federal and territorial housing agencies. In 2021, the Nunavut Housing Corporation still provided the same housing programs it did six years earlier, many of which are aimed at homeownership or repair of existing housing stock (NHC 2016; NHC 2021). But with the dwindling of funding and the limits placed on funding from Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, housing agreements restrict what the NHC can do year over year for Nunavummiut.

Because housing programs and policies essentially remained the same, so too did housing care. Despite the creation of Nunavut, “colonial attitudes and colonial forms of governance have not ended but are embedded in inherited modes of conduct and care” (Stevenson 2014). For researchers Frank Tester and Peter Irniq (2008), the process of integrating IQ was difficult from the start as the term contrasts and sometimes contradicts with Western institutions. Within the Nunavut child welfare system, for example, its Qallunaat (Euro-Canadian) foundations make it difficult to infuse values of IQ. By using a child-centered approach, the child welfare system is structurally unable to address Inuit kinship dynamics. Moreover, most social workers in the agency are either Qallunaat or Inuit trained in Western methods (Johnston 2014). Though the Government of Nunavut maintains a position of cultural neutrality in the child welfare system, it does not place IQ or knowledge of Inuit culture as a requirement for social workers in the territory. A similar problem is found in the approach to addressing high suicide rates among Inuit youth, where Western medicine (mostly provided by Qallunaat health professionals) and a suicide hotline are meant to solve the crisis (Stevenson 2014). Unfortunately these strategies do not adequately address the specific cultural needs and challenges of Nunavut youth. “Inuit were anything other than bodies needing care. Who

an individual Inuit was – her life story and familial connectedness – no longer mattered” (Stevenson 2014). These examples, along with an illustration of northern housing policies and programs since the 1950s, demonstrate that IQ has not reached its potential in differentiating the Government of Nunavut from other provincial or territorial governments and providing unique, adequate care for Inuit. This is not to say that the Government of Nunavut has not made any stride but there is always a desire for more.

Arguably, the most important aspect to come from the creation of Nunavut is the amplification of Inuit voices. To Arif, “I think the biggest thing I see is that it’s really Indigenous groups that are leading the way now and telling the government what they want” (personal communication, February 7, 2018). In a Pauktuutit (1991) survey, one Inuk, Ann Hanson, had this to say:

“We have become sophisticated in dealing with different levels of government through education. We know how to be heard without the use of force but through diplomatic means, and I think it’s great. We should teach our youth this method. Our ancestors were yes people because they were too kind.” -Ann Hanson, quoted in Pauktuutit 1991: p. 39.

The idea of Inuit ancestors being “yes people” and “too kind” lends itself to the idea that Inuit fully cooperated with colonial forces. But as Lisa Stevenson (2014) argues, Inuit fail to cooperate to the extent the welfare state demands. The continued “misuse” of Euro-Canadian styled houses in the North, for example, demonstrates the continued friction between Inuit and assimilative policies of the Canadian state (Dawson 2006). Inuit use their houses to their own personal/cultural needs, failing to yield to colonial standards of living “properly.” Tester and Irniq (2008) state that Inuit resistance has mostly been covert, rather than overt. By being forced to participate in colonial structures, Inuit learned to advocate for their well-being and navigate Inuit-state relations more clearly than their ancestors. So while it may be true that Inuit ancestors were “too kind,” the continued active resistance against colonial structures since the 1950s must also be acknowledged.

Another important voice for Inuit includes MP for Nunavut Mumilaaq Qaqqaq (2021), who toured housing in the North, taking pictures and documenting the lived experiences of Nunavummiut.<sup>83</sup> She appeals to the compassionate side of her political

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<sup>83</sup> Qaqqaq is the youngest Inuk elected as an MP. She stepped down from her position in 2021.

peers in her report. “I urge the government not to treat these as just numbers - they represent people. People whose entire families have been drastically impacted by the lack of housing; people whose families have broken down from overcrowded and inadequate housing” (Qaqqaq 2021). She documented numerous houses where mold was present, which, along with poor ventilation, can contribute to high rates of tuberculosis. Tuberculosis still affects Inuit about 14 times higher than the general Canadian population (ITK n.d.). Many of the houses Qaqqaq visited needed major repairs. For Qaqqaq, money is the solution to fixing these problems. “My people need help. They need that help now. Promises don’t get rid of mould. Words don’t fix windows and doors. Empathy doesn’t fix leaking pipes. Money for remediation and new units is the only solution” (Qaqqaq 2021).

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), the Inuit organization that helped established Nunavut, passed “a resolution to seek a negotiation mandate with the Government of Canada to begin the exercise of the inherent right to Inuit Self-Government (NTI 2021).” According to NTI, the Government of Nunavut is not invested in preserving Inuit language and culture, instead focusing on meeting the needs of Qallunaat. NTI is suggesting that the GN is just an extension of the federal government, and it does not reflect the right kind of care for Inuit. This aligns anthropologist George Wenzel’s (2004) idea that Nunavut was divided into two— one managed by NTI via the Land Claims Agreement and the other by the GN. An article in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement allows NTI to re-enter arbitration with the federal government (NTI et. al 2010). How NTI will approach these negotiations or what they plan to demand has not been revealed, and whether the federal government will participate in these negotiations and agree to NTI’s terms is yet to be determined. Recently, on March 25, 2022, NTI and the GN together officially declared a joint collaborative effort via the newly created Nunavut Partnership Committee (NTI 2022). This initiative is meant to increase cooperation and accountability between the two entities to ensure the needs of Nunavummiut are being met.<sup>84</sup>

Although it is too soon to know how partnering with the Government of Nunavut will affect NTI’s critical stance, there is hope for transformation. As Stevenson argues:

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<sup>84</sup> Similar initiatives were created in the past between the GN and NTI, including the Clyde River Protocol in 1999, Iqqaanaijaqatigiit in 2004, and Aajiiqatigiinni in 2011 (NTI 2022).

“Recognizing that colonial attitudes and power structure persist does nothing to diminish the beauty and promise of Nunavut as a political project” (Stevenson 2014).

## Chapter 5. Conclusion: An Ongoing Crisis

Federal government intervention has drastically altered the lives of Inuit since the 1940s. The Canadian government founded its involvement in the North on the idea Inuit needed to be kept alive and healthy while simultaneously claiming sovereignty over the land during the Cold War via military presence and resource extraction. Embarrassed on the world stage for its treatment of Inuit, Canada began moving/coercing Inuit into government designated settlements in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus the project of housing Inuit began.

Beginning in the 1950s, welfare colonialism, tutelage, and bureaucratic forms of care were produced by federal and territorial agencies through public housing initiatives. Welfare programs were introduced early in the north, beginning a cycle of Inuit dependence on government assistance. A vital program for the wellbeing of Inuit, housing was an important part of cultivating independent citizens while also assimilating Inuit into Euro-Canadian culture. In that process, the federal government attempted to teach its northern citizens to care for their houses via Qallunaat standards of housekeeping and maintenance.

Early housing documents in the federal archives reveal a sense of superiority in Qallunaat housing attitudes as housing designs, programs, and policies are modeled toward Euro-Canadian standards and practices. The archive produces a narrative of government benevolence, with Qallunaat housing expertise and evaluation heavily favoured. Though the archive demonstrates a federal understanding of the northern housing crisis, the sense of urgency is absent as devolution of responsibilities and withdrawal of financial responsibility became their priority. Later housing documents show Inuit voices coming into the fold of the archive and housing discussions. Inuit organizations fill the void of housing concern left by the federal government, though their voices are minimal in the archive.

The archive demonstrates early housing, colonial mindsets through federal representatives like Dr. Willis during the 1950s, where an empathetic, emotionally invested care—what Stern (2005) and Stevenson (2012) calls an ethics of care—is absent from colonial rhetoric and action (i.e., distribution of funds). In its place is a tone filled with pity and racism. Bureaucratic forms of care instead focused on creating

independent citizens through housing strategies. First through the provision of public housing and later the strong push for homeownership, “give Inuit a house and they’ll become less dependent” was the sentiment that guided government housing policies.

With the Inuit population increasing and housing costs soaring through the decades, the federal government distanced themselves from northern housing by devolving responsibilities to territorial and community levels. This gave an illusion of passing housing control into the hands of Inuit. But with the federal government pulling back funding for housing in the North, and housing decisions being limited for territorial housing corporations and even more so for the local housing associations they serve, Inuit control of housing was mainly symbolic.

Inuit and Inuit organizations, dissatisfied with Qallunaat provided housing and having a desire for self-governance, became involved in the colonial political system. After the political achievement of Nunavut, there was very little change in the delivery of housing and housing care. Inappropriate housing programs such as homeownership continued with the creation of the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC). The primary focus of the NHC was to increase housing stock. Again, as with the federal government, the goal was to help Inuit become independent citizens. But with limitations in federal and territorial funding, it is difficult for the NHC to achieve these goals and alleviate the housing crisis.

Minimal changes were made to housing policies and programs after the creation of Nunavut. The type of housing care has also remained the same. *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (IQ), as an Inuit constructed concept of care, is almost nonexistent in practical application of housing delivery. The continued use of bureaucratic forms of care perpetuates dependence via welfare colonialism. Housing tutelage mistakenly continues to push Inuit to be “proud” of their housing through colonial notions of pride. Under this theory, when Inuit achieve this colonial pride, then Inuit will become homeowners and independent from government assistance. But with a mixed northern economy the dependence on welfare programs remains. So does the need by the territorial housing corporation to continue housing education through programs like homeownership. Overall, to great disappointment, the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Housing Corporation are an extension of the federal government despite their declaration of self-governance.

Though Inuit needs are slowly being considered (i.e., the Sustainable House in Arviat), Inuit input is not valued enough to combat the legacy issues plaguing northern housing. Approaches to obtaining and encouraging Inuit involvement in housing are still limited and rooted in colonial practices. Only by approaching housing through an Inuit-lens, as articulate by IQ, can the housing bureaucracy begin to make significant, meaningful changes.

To end this thesis, I wish to leave on a note of hope for much of this topic seems to be devoid of it. The voices of Inuit like Adla and Mumilaaq Qaqqaq speaking up for Inuit housing makes us realize that to be complacent with current housing practice is to be complicit in the colonial, bureaucratic forms of care given to Inuit. Adla and Qaqqaq, as well as various Inuit organizations, provide hope for a better future for Inuit people. Their advocacy for better housing and care for Inuit is strong and might be able to enlist us all in “the beauty and promise of Nunavut as a political project” (Stevenson 2014).

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## Appendix A.

### Regions and Communities in Nunavut

Listed first by Inuktitut placename followed by colonial placename in parentheses.

<b>Baffin Region</b>	<b>Kivalliq Region (Keewatin Region)</b>	<b>Kitikmeot Region</b>
Ikpiariuk (Arctic Bay)	Arviat (Eskimo Point)	Ikaluktutiak (Cambridge Bay)
Kingait (Cape Dorset)	(Baker Lake)	Uqsuqtuuq (Gjoa Haven)
Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River)	(Chesterfield Inlet)	Kugaaruk (Pelly Bay)
Aujiuttuq (Grise Ford)	Salliq (Coral Harbour)	Kugluktuk (Coppermine)
Saniravak (Hall Beach)	Naujaat (Repulse Bay)	Taloyoak (Spence Bay)
Iglolik	Kangiqtiniiq (Rankin Inlet)	
Iqaluit (Frobisher Bay)	Tikrarjuaq (Whale Cove)	
Kimmirut (Lake Harbour)		
Pangnirtung		
Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet)		
Qikiqtarjuaq (Resolute Bay)		
Sanikiluaq		

## Appendix B.

### Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) Principles

<i>Inuuqatigiitsiarniq</i>	Respecting others, relationships and caring for people
<i>Tunnganarniq</i>	Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive
<i>Pijitsirniq</i>	Serving and providing for family or community, or both
<i>Aajiiqatigiinni</i>	Decision making through discussion and consensus
<i>Pilimmaksarniq or Pijariuqsarniq</i>	Development of skills through practice, effort and action
<i>Piliriqatigiinni or Ikajuqtigiinni</i>	Working together for a common cause
<i>Qanuqtuurniq</i>	Being innovative and resourceful
<i>Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq</i>	Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment

Source: Government of Nunavut (2013: p. 4; 2014: p. 8)