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Assessing the State and Nature of Poverty in Nunavut

A Multi-Dimensional Analysis

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Executive Summary

The Government of Nunavut (GN) has commissioned a feasibility study to determine if a guaranteed basic income (GBI) could serve as a "long term, simplified and sustainable solution to providing financial supports to those most in need" (Rogers 2020). Answering this question and assessing the extent to which a GBI would address material need among Nunavummiut requires a comprehensive understanding of poverty in the territory. A critical piece of context for the feasibility study, this paper provides insight into the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut by way of a multi-dimensional analysis.

There is a popular view among the public, elected officials, civil servants, and academics working in public policy that poverty is, in essence, a lack of income. Yet, income tells only part of the story: it represents but one aspect of the complex and multi-faceted phenomenon that is poverty. This is true in Canada and throughout the Western world; however, income-centric notions of poverty are especially inadequate in the Nunavut context, given the territory's demographics, culture, geography, and history.

The challenges associated with gaining a complete picture of deprivation and need in Nunavut are exacerbated by the technical difficulties that arise in measuring poverty. Still, measurement is crucial to both poverty assessments and analyses of potential policy responses like GBI. This paper builds on this notion and is written from the position that defining, understanding, and measuring poverty in a holistic and culturally attentive sense requires new tools. Accordingly, we attend as much to developing a multi-dimensional analytical framework as we do to employing the framework in a comprehensive analysis.

In Section 2, we consider how to define and understand poverty in Nunavut and review the challenges particular to measurement. To do so, we analyze the benefits and shortcomings of various approaches to defining poverty, and then situate such approaches in relation to the ideas underlying Nunavut's Poverty Reduction Process. We note that Nunavut's *Makimaniq Plans 1* and *2* reflect an idea of poverty that extends well beyond income and encapsulates Nunavut's unique circumstances, and as a result, constitute a good foundation upon which to construct an analytical framework.

In Section 3, we develop a multi-dimensional framework for assessing poverty in Nunavut. This framework integrates, as best we can from our position as Southern researchers, Inuit concepts of well-being, understandings of historical and present-day dynamics in Nunavut, demographic information as it pertains to Nunavummiut, and the available statistical measures of income poverty in the territory.

The remainder of the paper involves an analysis of poverty in Nunavut according to the multi-dimensional framework. In Sections 4 and 5, we present demographic, economic, and historical information and then assess statistical poverty using several income-based measures, noting their technical and philosophical shortcomings. In Section 6 we supplement this analysis with an assessment of poverty along three dimensions of Inuit well-being using a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

This analytical approach paints a comprehensive picture of poverty in a region characterized by a deep tension between the wage economy, on the one hand, and Inuit self-reliance through connection to the

land and skills related to hunting, fishing, and foraging, on the other. In addition, historical analysis, including in reference to present-day dynamics, not only uncovers less obvious gaps that must be closed to reduce poverty, but also helps to illuminate past mistakes and wrongdoings, lest they are repeated.

Mainstream Poverty Theories

Many public policy areas demand measurement: governments must be able to set targets and chart progress, and policymakers must have an understanding—often obtained through quantitative analysis—of the effects and trade-offs of a policy in relation to stated objectives. Poverty is no exception. For many, from political decision-makers and bureaucrats, to advocates, media, and the general public, poverty is synonymous with lack of income. This focus on income is partially due to the ease with which monetary resources can be measured relative to other proxies of deprivation. Indeed, it is income measurements that are used for the purpose of Canadian poverty statistics. Regarding income poverty, Statistics Canada has developed several measures—the Low Income Cut-off (LICO), the Low Income Measure (LIM), and the more recent Market Basket Measure (MBM)—each of which employs a different technical approach to collecting data and establishes a poverty line in relation to a certain threshold. The MBM is currently used by the Government of Canada as the basis for its poverty reduction targets. Additional monetary measures of poverty, such as consumption and asset poverty, have also been proposed. Still, all remain focused on the connection between poverty and limited economic resources.

Basic needs and material deprivation theories move beyond monetary notions of poverty and assess whether an individual can secure their basic needs in line with a certain standard of well-being. Such theories require information about material (e.g., access to food, housing, clothing, and healthcare) and social (e.g., participation in hobbies, presence of personal relationships, ability to give gifts) aspects of deprivation. Considering poverty from this broader vantage, it becomes clear that understandings focused squarely on income are inadequate. For example, in some cases those living above the income poverty line still experience deprivation, while the inverse is also true. There exist in Canada a few indices that reflect the basic needs approach. They include the Community Well-Being Index, which enables assessments of well-being in First Nations and Inuit communities according to four indicators covering education level, housing, labour force activity, and income, as well as the federal government's Poverty Dashboard, which allows for poverty reduction progress to be tracked across 12 quantifiable indicators spanning the objectives of dignity, opportunity and inclusion, and resilience and security.

For the purpose of our analysis, we identify four limitations of the monetary and basic needs approaches:

1. The available data do not provide an accurate picture, neither of income poverty nor of material deprivation, in Nunavut. They significantly underestimate monetary poverty, in particular.
2. Income poverty measures omit many contributing factors. This is partially addressed through basic needs approaches, yet even these remain centred on economic and productive measures and often fail to provide a sufficient counterbalance through a focus on non-monetary aspects.

3. These approaches are derived from a Western and Southern perspective, and thus ignore—and are even hostile to—Indigenous concepts of well-being. Given Inuit constitute the overwhelming majority of Nunavut's population, examinations of poverty must be rooted in the Inuit worldview.
4. These approaches ignore key drivers of poverty. Understanding such forces and mechanisms, particularly in terms of how oppression, exclusion, and violence have produced poverty and shaped institutions in Nunavut, will be crucial to any future poverty reduction efforts.

Nunavut's Poverty Reduction Efforts

In 2009, as part of the Tamapta Action Plan, Nunavut set in motion a multi-year, participatory Poverty Reduction Process. One product of the process has been the articulation of a shared understanding of poverty—one in which poverty is conceptualized as both multi-dimensional, as well as a product of colonization and the mismatch between Western/colonial and Inuit forms of governance.

A key outcome early in the process was the adoption in 2011 of *The Makimaniq Plan: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction*, a strategy based on themes such as collaboration and community participation; healing and wellbeing; education and skills development; food security; housing and income support; and community and economic development. Reflected in *Makimaniq 1* was the notion that poverty reduction must pay heed to the glaring need for community building, healing, and wellness among Nunavummiut. In 2017, *The Makimaniq Plan 2* was released as an action plan to guide future poverty reduction efforts. The plan included a definition of poverty and the outcomes being sought. Further, it articulated the vision for a collaborative and participatory approach to healing as a path to poverty reduction. While this is closely aligned with concepts of Inuit governance, it has proven a challenge for the GN, and particularly the public service, to 'buy in' to the process.

We use *Makimaniq 1* and *2* as a basis for our framework. Specifically, we draw on their wisdom regarding the connections between poverty and processes of colonization, forced resettlement, and imposition of Western systems, and consider economic well-being not only in relation to participation in wage economies, but also in terms of Inuit self-reliance and its basis in the land and relationships.

A Multi-Dimensional Framework for Assessing Poverty in Nunavut

In developing a multi-dimensional framework, we supplement statistical and historical analysis with three analytical approaches: the capability approach, an Inuit theory of well-being, and intersectionality.

The capability approach is a framework for assessing poverty which, instead of focusing on resources, conceptualizes well-being in terms of what one can do and be. The capability approach does not simply ask whether people have access to food or housing, but is instead concerned with whether people can be, if they wish and on their own terms, well-nourished, housed, etc. As it prioritizes individual freedom, the approach refrains from assigning a value system or set idea of well-being. It is also well-suited to the Nunavut context as it enables poverty analysis from the perspective of Inuit ideas of the good life.

To develop a list of capabilities and outcomes that accord with Inuit notions of the good life, we place a model of Inuit well-being at the centre of our analysis. We also do so to limit the extent to which we

interpret Inuit knowledge and values through the lens of Western poverty analysis and discourse. The model we employ is rooted in a three-dimensional theory of Inuit well-being as interpreted by Janet Tamalik McGrath in *The Qaggiq Model* (2018). The three interdependent elements of the theory are:

1. ***Inuuqatigiingniq* or peoplehood (living/being human together in kinship):** Being able to have and nurture strong family and collective relations, being able to act with integrity, being a good role model to siblings, listening to and respecting parents, and having a strong spousal bond.
2. ***Inuusiqattiarniq* or personhood (having good personal well-being, good character, or basis for life):** Being able to develop one's potential and sense of self in terms of skills, social, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Living in accordance with Inuit *maligait*.
3. ***Niqiqainnarniq* or livelihood ("always having meat"):** Being able to provide for oneself and the needs of the collective, including in fulfilling needs related to food, shelter, and clothing.

To this framework we also add intersectionality theory, an approach that rests on the insight that multiple facets of identity intersect to shape a person's experience of the world. Intersectionality focuses on issues of inequality and power, is oriented towards diversity and inclusion, and is useful both for identifying structural and identity-related barriers, as well as for supporting the creation of policies to dismantle them.

Our analysis follows a three-step process:

1. **Overview of the Nunavut context:** What is the historical context? What are present-day dynamics? Who are Nunavummiut?
2. **Statistical snapshot of poverty in Nunavut:** What are income poverty rates and depths?
3. **Assessment of poverty from the perspective of Inuit well-being:** What is the state of well-being for Nunavummiut along the three dimensions of livelihood, personhood, and peoplehood?

Overview of the Nunavut context

Demographic and economic background

With a population of 39,353 in 2020, 84.7% of which is Inuk, Nunavut accounts for 0.1% of the Canadian population. Nunavut's population has grown at more than twice Canada's rate over the past 20 years. This is primarily due to a high birth rate, which also accounts for a young population relative to that of Canada.

Nunavut's gross domestic product (GDP) has always grown faster than Canada's; over the past two decades, per capita GDP has almost doubled. Two-thirds of the economy are represented by three sectors: mining (one-third of the economy but only 4.3% of employment), public administration, and construction. Inuit hunting and harvesting is estimated to represent about 1.2% of GDP (roughly $40 million).

There is a large disparity in labour force outcomes between Inuit and non-Inuit. About 55% of Inuit participated in the labour force in Q3 2019 compared to 91% of non-Inuit, while the unemployment rate among Inuit was 18.7% compared to the Canadian rate of 5.8%. The public sector is the largest employer

in Nunavut and 40% of federal, 50% of territorial, and 85% of municipal employees are Inuit. However, there is limited representation of Inuit in management positions due to educational and other barriers. Indeed, high school completion rates are lower than 50%. Nunavut also has a high proportion both of tax filers who report income of $10,000 or less, as well as of tax filers who report income between $100,000 and $200,000. There is also evidence that a large percentage of low-income individuals may not file taxes, which would further skew this notably bi-modal distribution if true.

Historical background

For Inuit, the history of Nunavut has been fraught with struggles, including forced relocation, significant threats to self-reliance, systematic erasure of culture, and intergenerational trauma. While the effects of colonialism were present in Nunavut long before its pronouncement as a territory, since 1999 Inuit have been forced to contend with a government that is not equipped to properly administer and deliver on promises made through the Land Claims Agreement. Inuit are known as adaptive, self-sufficient, and nomadic; however, forced relocation and the residential school system has produced a rupture in Inuit way of life, which has had devastating and irreparable effects on all three dimensions of Inuit well-being.

Monetary Poverty in Nunavut

In Canada, poverty measurement has evolved significantly in recent years, and there are now three nationally sanctioned measures of income poverty, each of which employs a distinct approach. Measuring income poverty in the Canadian territories is difficult, given low survey response rates, the design of government programs and in-kind services, the presence of Inuit hunting and fishing activities, among other factors. One measure that can be used in the Nunavut context is the Census Family Low Income Measure-After Tax (CFLIM-AT), which incorporates available data spanning the years 2000-2018 (the most recent available year). Its drawbacks—including that the definition of a family used in the measure is not well-aligned with Inuit concepts of kinship, and that low response rates have resulted in underreporting by many of those with low or no income—suggest that this measure underrepresents income poverty. In addition, employed alone, income-focused measures are poor indicators of real poverty in Nunavut.

The poverty rate is the proportion of individuals whose income falls below an established poverty line—the CFLIM-AT in our analysis. Measured poverty rates for Nunavut are generally significantly higher than Canada's. For example, in 2018 the overall poverty rate in Nunavut was almost double the Canadian rate (27.3 vs. 16.5%). While child poverty in Canada was relatively stable from 2006-2015 (roughly 22%), at which point it dropped to 18% due to the introduction of Canada Child Benefit, in Nunavut, child poverty rose rapidly beginning in 2006 to hit a high of 40% in 2014, before dropping to about 32%. These different profiles are concerning, especially since poverty rates for children in Nunavut have recently been higher than for working-age adults. Poverty among seniors is also notable because, while the rate Canada rose slightly over the 2000-2018 period, it decreased steadily for Nunavut to the point that the rates have steadied around a 13% average since 2015.

Looking at poverty rates for different family types reinforces these observations. Singles (people not in a census family) in Nunavut have similar (slightly lower) poverty rates to Canadian singles, but the rates are high for both. This may be due to low tax filing rates, as the data is derived from tax filer

information. On the other hand, lone parent and couple families with children have higher poverty rates in Nunavut than in Canada. Further, the more children in the family, the higher the poverty rate. Nunavut couples with no children are the only group with relatively low poverty rates and rates that match those in Canada (11% and 14% in 2018).

Dimensions of Poverty in Nunavut through the Lens of Inuit Well-being

Having considered Nunavut's historical, demographic, and economic context, and having looked at the statistical information available about income poverty in the territory, we now summarize findings from our analysis of poverty in Nunavut through the lens of a three-dimensional model of Inuit well-being.

***NIQIQAINNARNIQ* or livelihood**		
Aspect	Finding	Considerations
Being well-nourished		
Ability to be food secure	Food insecurity in Nunavut is 77.6%, the highest in Canada.	– Contrast between store-bought food with low nutritional value and nutrient-rich country food. – Food security surveys ignore subsistence harvesting and community sharing.
Ability to afford food	Food is on average 2.2x the price in the South while income poverty rates are generally higher.	– Food subsidy programs (e.g., Nutrition North) have not been successful in reducing high costs. – Despite the high cost, community sharing of country foods can enable food security. – Depends on access to hunting and fishing opportunities, ability to buy and operate equipment.
Ability to choose preferred foods	Many families consume a combination of store-bought and country food.	– Hunting costs, dwindling stocks, climate change, loss of land skills, other factors affect access to country food. – Increasing tensions between two food types. – Shifts in consumption, desire/skills to harvest. Younger Inuit developing preference for store-bought food.
Being adequately housed		
Ability to be securely housed	Nunavut has a housing crisis: low vacancy, high cost, overcrowding	– Relocation promised housing, but much was poorly constructed, overcrowded, not well maintained. – In 1990s federal housing support was withdrawn – Programs focus on home ownership, while they lack cultural resonance and ignore low wages and limited jobs. Investments here detract from support for social housing. – 15 Nunavut communities had critical public housing needs in 2020 (waiting list at least 40% of current stock). – A key concern for women, children, elders, queer-identifying individuals: many forced to live with abusers, little to no access to shelters, second-stage housing
Ability to afford a home	40% of households cannot afford market housing	– High cost, limited supply. – Points to a failure on part of Canadian government to meet moral and legal obligation to Inuit.
Ability to access livable housing	Rates of overcrowding are 5-6x higher than in Canada	– Size of existing accommodation does not allow large families to live together comfortably and safely. – Quality of housing is poor: infrastructural problems, mould, water damage, poor insulation, etc. – Not suitable for basic activities, such as butchering meat or preparing and sewing hides

***NIQIQAINNARNIQ* or livelihood**		
Aspect	Finding	Considerations
		– Contributes to lack of belonging (homelessness) and reduced access to land.
Being able to meet other needs		
Utilities	Heating needed year-round. Access to transit, clean drinking water an issue.	– No public transit system, and thus individuals must rely on own vehicle for any sort of mobility. – Electricity costs are over 3 times the Canadian average – 87% of water systems are in poor condition; 1580 days (over half of a six-year period) were spent under boil water advisory.
Health	Housing and food security underlie poor health; healthcare limited and delivery a challenge.	– Overcrowding leads to diseases like asthma, tuberculosis and influenza, as well as chronic conditions and mental health issues. – Food insecurity results in poor nutrition and health. – Receiving many health care services involves being transported to a larger centre, often outside Nunavut.
Being self-reliant		
Ability to access means to secure a livelihood	The current mixed economic system has two currencies—money and meat—that interact (it costs money to harvest).	– Self-reliance is changing, as it is increasingly difficult to secure a livelihood for oneself and one's family. This has produced feelings of uselessness among Inuit. – Paid work is difficult to get—Inuit employment rate is 44.8%; non-Inuit 89.1%, lower for women. – Position of Inuit women is becoming increasingly strong: labour force status and earnings of women has changed significantly in past 25 years. Gender differences in attitudes towards wage labour could underpin this shift.
Ability to choose how to be self-reliant	Increasingly, one must engage in paid work to be land-based; however, the two are incompatible.	– Land-based livelihoods are becoming less feasible due to costs, time (given need to participate in wage economy), climate change, Canadian interests in the Arctic. – 30% of Inuit aged 25-54 do not see suitable role or place for themselves in the wage economy, while 85% continue to participate in land-based activities. – Limited childcare options (and only one Inuktitut daycare in Iqaluit as of 2019) further restrict the ability of Nunavummiut to engage in paid or land-based activities.

***INUUSIQATTIARNIQ* or personhood**		
Aspect	Finding	Considerations
Having a strong sense of self		
Ability to build a sense of self and to understand one's role	Nunavummiut experience high rates of suicide (10x Canadian average), addiction, incarceration, and family violence.	– Self-understanding and self-definition have been undermined through a loss of resilience, reduced connection to culture, land, language, weakening of community networks (due to colonization, intergenerational trauma). – There is evidence of distinct gender impacts. For example, males have experienced identity-related crisis due to lack of paid jobs analogous to hunting roles. – Weakened cultural ties complicate sharing of Inuit *maligait,* have also affected family bonds. – Overcrowding and food insecurity linked to low self-esteem, lack of belonging, addiction, suicide.
Being skilled and working towards one's potential		
Ability to access skills, knowledge, education, and training	Lack of access/barriers to Inuit knowledge and skills, as well as K-12 and post-secondary education, catch Inuit between two worlds.	– Transfer of Inuit skills requires ties to mentors and time on the land. Both are increasingly difficult to access. Only 62% of Inuit speak Inuktitut. Many youth do not have strong connections to parents and elders. – Focus on K-12 limits ability of youth to develop land-based skills, Inuktitut language skills. – t, K-12 participation is lower than in the rest of Canada (in 2016, 44% of Inuit had competed grade 12). The K-12 system is hostile to Inuit, and according to many, has yet to be decolonized. – Post-secondary education requires moving away to attend a Southern institution, a key barrier. – Many (especially public sector) jobs require Western or post-secondary credentials, limiting access to available jobs and careers in the wage economy.

***INUUQATIGIINGNIQ* or peoplehood**		
Aspect	Finding	Considerations
Having strong relationships		
Ability to form and nurture strong relationships	Relationships are key to Inuit well-being and the transference of knowledge and culture. Spousal relationships form the basis for strong relations elsewhere. Colonization, trauma, Western institutions, and the wage economy have undermined these dynamics.	– Spousal relationships have been affected by the historical context, as well as current conditions including the housing crisis and food insecurity. The incidence of family violence is a direct result of this. – Family violence, discord affect subsequent generations in a vicious cycle. Inuit youth note problems in household contribute to feelings of suicidality. – Processes of colonization have disrupted and destroyed the links through which Inuit ways are taught and maintained, particularly in terms of the relationships which form the basis for these ways of being and knowing. This disruption also impacts how Inuit youth navigate romantic relationships—which are also noted as a key source of mental health issues for youth. – The 9-5 workday, institutional learning context, broader wage economy have disrupted relationship flows. – Violence is now a key issue in schools.
Working together		
Ability to build strong community ties based on reciprocity	Working together for a common cause is central to Inuit conception of the good life; however, this is difficult to carry out given colonization, trauma, and imposition of Western governance structures.	– Lack of access among Inuit to management positions in institutions like government precludes operation of governance based on Inuit principles. – This produces a key tension: though there is understandable desire among Inuit to uphold legitimacy of the GN (given what it symbolizes), GN processes and structures, imbued with Western and colonial logics, continue to have a detrimental impact on Inuit. – Increasing harvesting costs have resulted in Inuit hunters increasingly selling rather than sharing country food. Tensions exist among Inuit as to whether such practices are acceptable.

Conclusion

Applying a multi-dimensional framework, with Inuit concepts of well-being and the good life at its centre, to the question of poverty in Nunavut reveals the interconnectedness of income poverty and broader experiences of poverty and need among Nunavummiaut.

Despite inadequacies in the available data, our analysis of income poverty shows that the high incidence of low income, combined with a high cost of living and high level of income inequality, is of considerable concern. Child poverty is of particular concern. On the other hand, better outcomes were observed in relation to senior poverty.

The multi-dimensional analysis shows that in every dimension a lack of well-being is directly linked to the historical context of relocation, residential schools, and cultural trauma and the ongoing tension between land-based activities and the wage economy. This includes such issues as the housing crisis, high food insecurity, barriers to accessing country food, lack of access to paid work, high suicide rates,

tenuous family and community connections, lack of education, family violence, and addiction and mental health concerns. In short, many Inuit are stuck between two worlds.

In terms of GBI, our analysis suggests that given the range of issues and their direct linkage to the historical context, as well as market failures in many sectors, simply adding increased cash transfers to the system is unlikely to solve many of the issues and has considerable potential to exacerbate many of them.

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Introduction

In their survey of poverty and prosperity in Nunavut, undertaken nearly one decade ago on behalf of the Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat, Battle and Torjman (2013) proposed the introduction of a basic income to replace the existing territorial income support (or welfare) system. The authors envisioned basic income as an eventual component of a broader improvement and "modernization" of the social policy architecture, one which would tackle problems of widespread and deep poverty in the territory. Nearly a decade later—and in a context that remains largely unimproved from the one upon which Battle and Torjman reported—basic income has again emerged as a potential approach for better supporting Nunavummiut. Specifically, the Government of Nunavut (GN) is considering the feasibility of what it terms a guaranteed basic income (GBI) as part of efforts to find a "long term, simplified and sustainable solution to providing financial supports to those most in need" (Rogers 2020).

Being able to gauge the appropriateness and feasibility of a GBI program in the Nunavut context rests on the development of a nuanced understanding, not only of the dynamics within which the policy would operate—dynamics which result from the unique and fraught history of Inuit in Canada, and in particular, a long struggle among Inuit, colonial, and emerging economies, cultures, modes of governance, and ways of living together—but also of how these dynamics are connected to and underscore notions of poverty and well-being. Put another way, to be able to evaluate whether a GBI program is indeed appropriate and feasible for Nunavut, and further, to consider various policy approaches and design and implementation options under the GBI umbrella, one must first build an understanding of the state, nature, and discourse surrounding poverty in the territory, and uncover its historical and systemic roots, as well as its present-day drivers. Indeed, Nunavut is a jurisdiction with a unique mixture of dynamics, tensions, and complexities, and its singularity means that a GBI designed for the territory would be like a GBI adopted nowhere else.

In this paper, we consider these questions from a multi-dimensional perspective, weaving together Inuit understandings and Western or Southern theories. We begin with a discussion and critical analysis of mainstream conceptualizations of poverty (i.e., those which focus chiefly on lack of income or material deprivation). Here, we highlight both the narrowness and analytical shortcomings of such tools for assessing or evaluating poverty, as well as the need for additional frameworks that do not leave the causes of poverty uninterrogated, but instead help in uncovering its historical and systemic drivers. Further, we identify points of disjuncture between Western theories of poverty, on the one hand, and ideas of well-being rooted in Inuit worldviews and ways of knowing, on the other. Here, we draw attention to the ways in which poverty and need, as well as the solutions developed to address them, are largely theorized at the individual level and in monetary terms, and linked to participation in the wage economy, ownership of private property, and acquisition of skills, credentials, and education in the Western sense. We also analyze poverty reduction efforts in Nunavut, highlighting the ways in which they represent an important departure from Western or Southern approaches, while still exhibiting some of their tendencies.

Following this analysis, we articulate a multi-dimensional framework for understanding poverty and well-being in Nunavut. This framework merges mainstream approaches with insights from three

frameworks—the capability approach, an Inuit theory of well-being, and intersectional analysis—which we believe can account for some of the shortcomings identified through our critique of theories of poverty. The decision to take this analytical angle was rooted in the inclination that while Western or Southern concepts and measures may allow one to paint a certain picture of poverty and need in Nunavut, such tools are, on their own, inadequate when it comes to understanding the sort of futures Nunavummiut—and particularly Inuit—envision for themselves.

After setting out the multi-dimensional framework, we apply it in the descriptive and analytical components of the paper. We begin by providing background on the Nunavut context, drawing on historical sources to establish links between processes of colonization and present-day issues and dynamics. Next, we paint a quantitative picture of income poverty in Nunavut through the presentation and discussion of poverty statistics, their shortcomings, and what they might reveal about the state and nature of poverty in the territory. We then supplement this analysis with a consideration of poverty through the multi-dimensional lens of Inuit well-being, drawing connections between facets of deprivation, marginalization, and compromised capabilities and functionings on the one hand, and their historical and systemic roots on the other. We conclude with some comments about what this picture of poverty and well-being means in the context of future poverty reduction efforts, particularly in terms of how it changes how one might evaluate existing systems, initiatives, and forms of governance, as well as the feasibility of a GBI.

Mainstream Poverty Theories, Their Uses and Shortcomings

Poverty is a complex and multi-dimensional social problem, equally challenging to define as it is to theorize. As a result, myriad definitions and conceptualizations abound. In this paper, we consider the state and nature of poverty along three dimensions or lines of questioning, each of which requires a different approach to thinking about poverty. The first involves answering the practical questions of "who are Nunavummiut, what are the material and other factors which characterize their multi-dimensional lives, and what does this tell us about particular needs and potential intervention points?" The second requires an interrogation of the historical and present-day processes, dynamics, knowledge systems, and power structures that have shaped—and continue to shape—the lives of Inuit, as well as Nunavummiut more broadly. The third is focused on Inuit perspectives and involves thinking about what the word 'poverty' might mean to a people who had little use for such a term prior to contact and forced resettlement; about how Inuit conceive of well-being; and about how Inuit imagine future possibilities, not only as individuals, but as families and kinship groups, communities, and as a people. We would also suggest that these mechanisms of inquiry are equally useful to the broader work being undertaken to study the feasibility of a GBI for Nunavut.

In the following section we consider common approaches to defining and measuring poverty in Canada, including those prevalent in the Nunavut poverty reduction discourse. We discuss the usefulness and shortcomings of these understandings in the context of our analysis, with the ultimate objective of

determining what supplementary accounts are necessary to fill gaps in understanding and enable an analysis along the three dimensions presented above.

Common Approaches to Defining and Measuring Poverty

We begin by outlining definitions and conceptualizations of poverty which dominate the Canadian academic and policy contexts, highlighting through this discussion the ways in which a desire to measure and track poverty rates has led to a prioritization of income and economic resources over other dimensions of poverty and well-being.

Why Define and Measure Poverty?

In public discourse and research contexts alike, poverty is often discussed in terms of quantifiable metrics—with reference to poverty lines, absolute and relative poverty rates, and a host of additional indices, such as those focused on basic needs and material deprivation. Indeed, that which can be quantified can also be measured and tracked, such that comparisons can be made over time and advancements towards a grand strategy or political goal charted and gauged. Further, poverty measures paint the statistical picture and drive the understandings of trends and causes upon which poverty reduction efforts are developed (Aldridge 2017), informing stakeholders about the evolution of poverty and the role and effectiveness of public policy in reducing it (Notten and Kaplan 2021). Measures are also readily enmeshed in strategies and legislation intended to communicate attention to an issue, as was the case when, in 2018, the federal government announced its plan to establish an Official Poverty Line as part of its *Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Though some suggest that it is for these very reasons that some governments have been hesitant to set clear targets and adopt an official measure of poverty (Corak 2018), measures, rates, and reduction targets remain among the most common tools used by governments, politicians, and researchers for speaking about poverty.

Monetary Poverty

This pursuit of quantification and measurement has shaped popular understandings of poverty. That is, though poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with a series of meanings spanning material, economic, and social concepts (Spicker 2007), many scholars and policymakers have reverted to thinking about poverty in terms that are largely monetary or resource-focused: as a phenomenon the predominant feature of which is a fundamental lack of the necessary economic resources to secure and maintain a basic standard of living. As noted by Spicker (2007, 232), income is "one of the most widely used approaches to the measurement of poverty […], to the point where some social scientists have started to think that poverty is low income."

Poverty discourse in Canada has also been shaped by the above tendency. For example, the federal government assesses poverty by determining the number of people living in low income—the poverty rate—and then uses this information both to track progress on poverty writ large, as well as signal program effectiveness, as was the case with the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and child poverty rates. Indeed, many studies that exist on the topic of poverty in Nunavut (see Battle and Torjman 2013; Daley, Burton, and Phipps 2015; Duhaime and Edouard 2015) also focus on poverty in monetary terms.

Designed by experts and introduced in the late 1990s (Hatfield, Pyper, and Gustajtis 2010), and adopted as Canada's Official Poverty Line in 2018, the Market Basket Measure (MBM) is a prominent lens through which governments and researchers consider poverty in Canada. The MBM defines low income according to a standardized 'basket' of goods and services (e.g., housing, food, clothing, transportation, etc.) that provides for a modest or basic standard of living, and which is variable by geographical region. According to this measure, a family is living in poverty if their annual disposable income falls below the level deemed necessary to purchase the basket of goods. Thus, the poverty rate is the percentage of the population with incomes that do not enable the basic level of consumption represented by the basket. It is important to note that, at present, MBM thresholds do not exist for the Canadian North. However, in its *Poverty Reduction Strategy*, the federal government indicated that Statistics Canada would be investigating how to develop such thresholds through a Northern Market Basket Measure (MBM-N). This process is ongoing and being undertaken in consultation with Indigenous communities. Other measures of low income used in Canada are the Low Income Cut-offs (LICO) and the Low Income Measure (LIM). Later in the paper, we draw on these measures in presenting a statistical picture of income poverty in Nunavut. Accordingly, we will discuss them in greater depth, including in considering how they relate to one another and how effective they are in capturing poverty, as part of that analysis.

It is also worth noting additional monetary approaches to defining and measuring poverty that have been developed in the Canadian academic context, among them analyses of consumption poverty (Pendakur 2001; Crossley and Pendakur 2006) and asset poverty (Rothwell and Robson 2018). For example, Pendakur (2001) establishes the poverty rate as the proportion of individuals whose consumption, rather than their income, falls below an absolute measure of poverty (e.g., the poverty line), suggesting that consumption levels might be a more accurate and informative indicator of material well-being than income. Alternatively, Rothwell and Robson (2018) argue that asset poverty—a situation in which a household's assets are insufficient to maintain well-being at a low-income threshold for three months—adds an important dimension to considerations of poverty, illuminating aspects of economic disadvantage and insecurity that are not always evident when relying on income poverty measures alone. While these measures supplement income-based measures, or approach monetary poverty from a different vantage, they remain fixed on limited economic resources as a proxy for impoverishment.

Basic Needs and Material Well-being

As summarized in Palmer (2011), basic needs approaches build beyond notions of poverty as lack of income and are instead concerned with access to material well-being. Such approaches consider the broader question of whether an individual can secure basic needs (e.g., food, water, clothing, healthcare, education, and more), rather than using a certain level of income as a proxy for those needs having been met. Basic needs accounts of poverty are often multi-dimensional—that is, they usually reflect the range of factors that together constitute a basic standard of living or lead to positive development outcomes—and thus require information on both monetary and non-monetary aspects of poverty. Tools developed in the international context, such as dashboard approaches (e.g., the Millennium Development Goals) and composite indices (e.g., the UNDP's Human Development Index, and more recently, the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index) are examples of attempts to measure multi-

dimensional poverty (Afonso, LaFleur, and Alarcón 2015) and draw on concepts of both basic needs and material well-being.[1]

Starting from a similar premise—that monetary measures are, on their own, inadequate to tell the full story of poverty—Notten and Kaplan (2021) have recently constructed an outcome-based poverty indicator for measuring material deprivation in Canada. In their model, poverty is understood as adverse material outcomes or living conditions resulting from insufficient resources. In comparison to the poverty indicators described above, which focus on establishing a level of financial resources sufficient to support an acceptable living standard, the outcome-based indicator evaluates the type of living experience that constitutes a sufficient level of material well-being. The 17 necessities that compose the indicator span basic needs, such as clothes, meat, vegetables, and internet, but also extend to social necessities, such as hobbies, friends, and gift-giving ability. A key insight from this work is that the existence of poverty-level living conditions are often found when incomes are above the poverty line, and that similarly, not all people living on a low income (as per Canada's poverty measures) experience material deprivation.

Further, Indigenous Services Canada publishes for all First Nations and Inuit communities in Canada a Community Well-Being Index (CWB), which is constructed using results from the Census (for a discussion, see Richards 2020). The CWB enables tracking of well-being in each community according to four sub-indices—a measure of per capita income, education level, labour force activity, and housing quality—as well as comparisons among communities, including those that are non-Indigenous. Importantly, these four dimensions of well-being are by no means intended to be exhaustive; instead, they reflect the data that are readily available through the Census, which is the only Canadian data source that enables assessments of social conditions of First Nations and Inuit communities over time and in relation to non-Indigenous communities (Indigenous Services Canada 2019).

Introduced in the federal *Poverty Reduction Strategy* alongside the Official Poverty Line, the Government of Canada's Poverty Dashboard is another mechanism for capturing levels of deprivation across different dimensions or indicators, and allows government to track progress over a reference period (Statistics Canada 2019). More expansive than the material deprivation and well-being indices described above, the Poverty Dashboard is predicated on the notion that poverty can be characterized by lack of income, as well as several non-monetary and immaterial factors, such as limited opportunity and lack of resilience. In particular, the Dashboard comprises 12 quantifiable indicators spanning the objectives of dignity, opportunity and inclusion, and resilience and security. They include:

- deep income poverty;
- unmet housing needs and chronic homelessness;
- unmet health needs;
- food insecurity;
- relative low income;
- bottom 40 percent income share;

1 It is important to note that Amartya Sen's capability approach has also played an influential role with regard to these indices, particularly in providing a theoretical foundation from which to consider poverty in relation to broad notions of well-being. We discuss this normative framework in greater depth later in the paper in constructing a multi-dimensional approach to considering the question of poverty in Nunavut.

- youth engagement;
- literacy and numeracy;
- median hourly wage;
- average poverty gap;
- asset resilience; and
- poverty entry and exit rates.

Critiques of Monetary, Economic Well-Being, and Basic Needs Approaches

The above conceptualizations—particularly those employed in the Canadian context—largely focus on poverty as a lack of income or economic resources, or on the various factors that lead to (and outcomes that result from) lack of financial means. However widespread and dominant such approaches may be, they are insufficient for understanding broader experiences of poverty, as well as who is living in or at risk of poverty, to what extent and in what sense, and perhaps most importantly, as a result of which forces and dynamics. Below, we discuss these critiques, [2] highlighting the reasons why dominant conceptualizations of poverty must be supplemented with alternative approaches.

First, while assessments of monetary poverty conducted using Canadian poverty lines, such as the MBM, LIM, and LICO, are helpful for measuring and tracking income over time, including in response to policy and other changes, and also enable (in some instances) comparative analysis domestically and internationally, they likely do not produce accurate pictures of poverty in Nunavut. In particular, there are substantial issues and gaps in terms of the data that support such analyses of income poverty. This may mean that existing analyses underestimate the extent of poverty (in monetary terms). These issues are discussed in greater detail in Section 4, where we present a statistical snapshot of poverty in Nunavut.

Second, monetary measures, by definition, paint an incomplete picture of deprivation and need, obfuscating other factors, material and immaterial, which contribute to states and feelings of impoverishment. Indeed, basic needs and material deprivation approaches arose in response to the narrowness of poverty understood as a lack of income, and as we highlighted above, such theories are more expansive than monetary poverty indicators. However, they have been met with criticism as well, both for focusing too squarely on consumption, as well as for, in some cases, underestimating poverty rates compared to other measures of income poverty. Further, though the material deprivation and well-being indices we present above do reflect a more nuanced understanding of poverty spanning basic material and social needs, as well as less tangible aspects like opportunity and resiliency, such indices are not comprehensive enough to offer a sufficient counterbalance to income-focused metrics—particularly in the Nunavut context.

For example, it is worth noting that though Canada's Poverty Dashboard intends to reflect the multi-dimensionality of poverty, many indicators are still aligned with economic or material conceptions of poverty. Further, indicators which could represent broader conceptions of well-being, such as youth

2 This list is not exhaustive; rather, it touches on the shortcomings that are most salient in the context of our analysis.

engagement, remain squarely focused on the wage economy and thus participation in education, employment, or training. Additionally, while the CWB serves to paint a picture of well-being that is more expansive than that provided by income measures like the MBM, the socio-economic dimensions accounted for in the measure still do not go far enough in capturing well-being in a holistic sense, as they remain structured along economic lines (i.e., in reference to incomes, attainment in education, participation in the labour force, etc.). Further, and as noted in Crump (2016, 35), the CWB does not include considerations of physical, psychological, and cultural well-being.

Third, and building on the previous point, both income-driven and needs-based conceptualizations of poverty struggle to incorporate and reflect Indigenous and other non-Western views of well-being and the good life. As we will explore in more detail later in the paper, income poverty did not exist in Nunavut prior to contact, colonization, and the introduction of the wage economy: despite Inuit communities having endured inevitable periods of deprivation and scarcity, they were also self-reliant (Battle and Torjman 2013; Nunavut Rountable for Poverty Reduction 2017). Thus, to conceive of poverty in monetary terms is to limit understandings of Inuit well-being to those framed within the context of colonization. Further, measures of income poverty do not easily account for family relations built around kinship ties, models of community provision, or sharing economies, all of which characterize the ways in which Inuit structure their lives. As well, such conceptualizations often marginalize the voices of communities and the poor, particularly when compared to participatory approaches, as indicators related to well-being and material needs are often developed without consideration of various conceptions of the good life, and instead remain centred around Western notions of education, skills, and participation. Currently, the Government of Canada has an opportunity to design a more reflective measure of poverty for Nunavut as it partners with local communities to develop an MBM-N for Nunavut.

Finally, most conceptualizations of poverty, including those which take a multi-dimensional approach, do not account for what drives poverty in the first place—they merely allow for assessments and comparisons of its existence. As argued in Crump (2016, 30), to attend to poverty in technical and scientific terms, and further, to use such terms to develop indicators and measure progress across them, is to (whether intentionally or not) depoliticize poverty, obscure root causes, and ultimately, prevent the development of more transformative solutions. This is also the argument articulated in Cash Back, a recent publication of Ryerson University's Yellowhead Institute, in which the authors refrain from using poverty statistics in their narrative. Speaking about poverty statistics, they note that:

> "These measures are well known and tell us almost nothing. In, fact they can hide more than they reveal because they point to huge differences [in] standards of living without offering any explanation for these gaps. Many Canadians jump to the conclusion that these gaps confirm or imply an inability of Indigenous people to succeed financially in society. The data is used to point to the "failure" of First Nations to self-govern with limited powers they currently have" (Yellowhead Institute 2021, 6).

Building on these assertions, we suggest that while definitions and measurement tools can help us to make important statements about the type and extent of material need in Nunavut, they are insufficient

for contextualizing and explaining that need. While monetary and basic needs approaches might be able to provide detailed information about the state of poverty in a given jurisdiction across various dimensions of need or facets of poverty, they do not on their own offer suggestions as to why poverty exists (that is, as to what drives lack of access to resources, opportunities, and social inclusion), or why poverty emerges as an issue for certain people and not others. As a result, they must be supplemented with explanatory theories which enable an analysis of the structural, systemic, and historic processes which contribute to contexts of poverty. Such theories should enable the analyst to uncover the ways in which poverty is not naturally occurring, but instead the product of overlapping systems of privilege and oppression, power structures, and histories of colonialism and violence, which are reinforced in social and economic spaces, such as the labour market, government, and the income and social support system.

Nunavut's Poverty Reduction Efforts

In the preceding section, we highlighted shortcomings of definitions of poverty that focus on monetary outcomes, economic well-being, and material deprivation. Next, we consider against this backdrop poverty discourse in Nunavut as it has evolved over the course of the territory's development and pursuit of a poverty reduction strategy. Through this analysis we uncover insights about how Nunavummiut understand poverty and the efforts that will be required to overcome it, upon which we ultimately draw to articulate a multi-dimensional framework for understanding the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut.

It is important to note that discussions of poverty and poverty reduction in Nunavut, particularly those which have shaped the Poverty Reduction Process and are woven throughout *The Makimaniq Plans 1* and *2*, reflect a broader and more nuanced understanding than those which characterize policy discourse in Canada. In particular, poverty in Nunavut is considered to be multi-dimensional and linked to historical processes and present-day exclusion; in some cases, it is discussed in relation to capabilities and social exclusion, not simply economic well-being. Accordingly, Nunavut's ongoing poverty reduction initiatives offer a strong foundation from which to build our framework.

Background on the Poverty Reduction Process

The Tamapta Action Plan, which established the GN's agenda and priorities for the 2009-2013 legislative mandate and outlined a twenty-year action plan for the territory, represents a key acknowledgement by the GN of the poverty-related issues in present-day Nunavut and their origin in the mismatch between Inuit and colonial forms of governance (Government of Nunavut 2009, 2011). In particular, Tamapta articulated 11 priorities to be pursued over the course of the mandate, one of which was to "reduce poverty." At the heart of Tamapta was the conviction that all Nunavummiut deserve to have their basic needs satisfied, where basic needs accorded with a multi-dimensional understanding and thus ranged from adequate housing and food to engagement in cultural activities and communication in one's preferred language (Government of Nunavut 2009). The Tamapta conception of basic needs also aligns with the social determinants of health paradigm: all but two of the eleven needs set out in the plan can be matched with a social determinant of health (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2014).

Since 2010, and in accordance with the vision set out in Tamapta, the GN and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) have co-chaired the Nunavut Roundtable on Poverty Reduction, through which they sponsored a public engagement process to drive the creation of a shared approach to poverty reduction for Nunavut.[3] The culmination of this process was a Poverty Summit held in Iqaluit in 2011, at which participants endorsed Nunavut's first poverty reduction strategy, *The Makimaniq Plan: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction.* The Plan reflects what drafters saw as a holistic approach to poverty reduction, spanning six themes—collaboration and community participation; healing and wellbeing; education and skills development; food security; housing and income support; community and economic development—that were identified throughout the consultation and public engagement process (Government of Nunavut 2011). A key message that emerged over the course of the Poverty Reduction Process was the need to understand the multifaceted nature of poverty, particularly in developing programs and initiatives. Specifically, the Process made clear the fact that efforts to reduce poverty should not focus solely on matters related to income, food or housing, and instead consider community integration and healing and wellness alongside material needs (Lenihan 2012).

In 2013, the Nunavut Legislative Assembly passed the Collaboration for Poverty Reduction Act, which the government framed as a "ground-breaking approach to inclusive policy development for poverty reduction." In particular, the Act legislates collaboration among the GN, NTI, Inuit organizations, other governments, non-government organizations, and businesses (through the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction) to implement *The Makimaniq Plan* and the poverty reduction action plan (now known as *The Makimaniq Plan 2*) (Government of Nunavut n.d.; National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2014). Important requirements set out in the Act were the development of a definition of poverty and a series of indicators for measuring the impact of poverty reduction initiatives.

The *Makimaniq Plan 2* was released in 2017. In addition to establishing a definition of poverty, this plan outlined eight long-term outcomes—strengthened foundation through *piliriqatigiingniq* (working together); increased community decision making; strengthened local economies; strengthened support for healing and wellbeing; strengthened life-long learning; increased food security; more supportive income assistance program; and increased access to housing—which are consistent with themes present throughout *Makimaniq 1*, as well as a list of indicators against which future programs and initiatives would be tracked. Around this time, the GN and NTI also committed to several other initiatives, including community wellness plans, the Nunavut Food Security Coalition and Strategy, and Nunavut Arctic College Program (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2014).

Two key characteristics of the Poverty Reduction Process, and ultimately *The Makimaniq Plan 2*, are a central focus on healing as a path to poverty reduction and the collaborative and participatory approach taken throughout the process. First, *Makimaniq 1* and *2* share a common theme of healing. Indeed, healing was identified over the course of the Poverty Reduction Process as crucial to the poverty reduction efforts, and lack of space and time to heal a key barrier to moving forward. According to Anna Ziegler, a Community Engagement Planner for the Roundtable, relating healing to poverty reduction was "radical," as it simply was not a part of the GN's discourse, which had instead been dominated by job

[3] Community consultation and engagement spanned four stages: a community dialogue on poverty reduction; regional roundtables for poverty reduction; a poverty summit; and program delivery.

creation and economics (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2014). Importantly, healing was also core to the participatory approach.

As stated by the co-chairs of Nunavut's Roundtable on Poverty Reduction, *The Makimaniq Plan 2* was driven by nearly five years of public engagement and collaboration, and thus represents community consensus regarding poverty in the territory and how to address it. As articulated in *Makimaniq 1*, public engagement is intended to foster "respect for community perspectives, capacity and self-determination." Crump (2016, 3) traces the participatory nature of Nunavut's Poverty Reduction Process to Article 32 of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA), which states that Inuit have the right to participate in social policy design, development, and implementation. Not only is community collaboration a key tenet of Inuit governance, but it is also indicative of a healthy community.

Yet, some note tensions surrounding this participatory process. As is inevitable in the case of broad and meaningful consultation, discussions were at times heated, emotional, and uncomfortable; others saw the meetings as "free-wheeling," and expressed that they lacked rigour or should instead have involved a presentation of facts, with those living in poverty there to provide context (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2014). Further, a case study report published by the Public Policy Forum (see Lenihan 2012) highlights mixed support for the public engagement approach within government. The report points to sentiments held by senior public servants at the time of the process that it could result in their involvement in actions for which they had no time or that were disconnected from their responsibilities, and that the process was "unfocused, undisciplined, and even coercive" (Lenihan 2012, 15). Further, the Secretariat and partners felt senior officials within government made little effort to understand or participate until the last moment possible. Indeed, though the Summit was a success, only a few Deputy Ministers attended, and most as observers (Lenihan 2012, 16).

However, to present such information is not to call into question the overall success and significance of the Poverty Reduction Process. It is simply to raise that if it has persisted, a lack of buy-in and limited sense of shared ownership among the public service, particularly those in senior positions, is concerning when considering the implementation of Nunavut's poverty reduction plans and any other strategic direction. Further, the issues that arose over the course of the Process mirror what could be seen as bigger tensions between Nunavummiut, the vast majority of whom are Inuit, and their government, the dominant attitudes and structures of which reflect Western or Southern logics.

Definitions and Measurements

The Collaborating for Poverty Reduction Act required that a definition of poverty be developed, and that it include considerations both of Inuit culture, specifically self-reliance and the social and cultural well-being of Inuit, and as well as of the resources needed for economic self-sufficiency and social inclusion. In requiring that these components form the basis of a definition, the Act opened the door to the creation of a mutual understanding of poverty that would bridge Inuit and Western perspectives.

The Makimaniq Plan 2 defines poverty as "a situation that exists today in Nunavut when people cannot access the supports they need to maintain their connection to the land or to participate fully in the wage-based economy," which, according to the drafters, reflects concepts including financial poverty,

capability poverty, and social exclusion (Nunavut Rountable for Poverty Reduction 2017). This definition recognizes two ways of achieving self-reliance—through connection to the land and participation in the labour market—and the reality that many need additional supports to pursue these paths to self-reliance.

Importantly, *Makimaniq 2* also discusses the root causes of poverty in Nunavut, particularly within the context of settler colonialism and the immense social changes to which Inuit have been forced to adapt over the past century. Pointing to the power imbalance between Inuit forms of governance and the present Nunavut model—a largely Southern structure upon which Inuit principles have been superimposed, often superficially—*Makimaniq 2* situates present-day poverty within processes of colonization, forced resettlement, and the enduring impact on systems, structures, policies, and procedures. As stated in the plan, poverty is "the broad outcome of the troubled shift from living with self-reliance and resourcefulness on the land to being settled in permanent municipalities where dependency on a money-based economy and assistance from outside the community could not be avoided." However, it also merits mention that, despite the spirit and intentions of *Makimaniq 2*, the Government of Nunavut continues to, in some ways, conceptualize poverty in terms against which critiques can be levied.

The definition of poverty that is ultimately articulated situates well-being largely in reference to material outcomes, whether attained through participation in the wage economy or connection to the land. Though this a good place to start, given it recognizes economic participation in more capacious terms, it leaves out several dimensions of well-being which are integral to constructing a more holistic idea of poverty and need. Further, *The Makimaniq Plan 2* does not address the distinct needs of diverse Inuit (or Nunavummiut more broadly)—that is heterogeneity and intersectionality are not central to considerations of poverty and need. Further, the plan does not consider the intersection of colonialism and its enduring impacts with additional structures of oppression, such as patriarchy, anti-queerness, ableism, etc.

The Act also legislated the creation of indicators for measuring progress towards stated objectives. Thus, *The Makimaniq Plan 2* presented eight concrete objectives (building on those outlined in *Makimaniq 1*), as well as a series of related indicators and options for measuring progress toward them. These indicators range from reduced crowding in housing to increased independence of Nunavummiut (through less reliance on Income Assistance). However, it is difficult to discern from public reportingto date (see, for example, Department of Family Services 2021) to what extent Nunavut's poverty reduction efforts have been successful. In particular, there is limited evidence of program evaluations,[4] with the 2016 review of Income Assistance being a key exception, while concrete metrics and the findings to support them are in many areas underdeveloped and reflect a lack of data. While it is clear that Nunavut's poverty reduction efforts are progressing and an ongoing process, it will be important to bolster evaluation and data collection efforts (where possible and appropriate) going forward. Indeed, data gaps have produced disturbing outcomes for the territory's population (McKay 2021).

[4] In reference to the indicator of increased public access to information, for example, the 2019-2021 report notes that "data was unavailable" regarding the number of research and program evaluation reports made publicly available.

Summary

Ultimately, *Makimaniq 1* and *2* reflect an idea of poverty that is both multi-dimensional and rooted in Inuit consensus, regarding both well-being and present-day barriers to achieving it. As a result, they offer a strong foundation from which to build a framework for considering the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut. In developing our framework, we thus bring forward the following core concepts articulated in these plans:

- The conceptualization of poverty in terms of systemic and root causes (e.g., colonization, forced resettlement, tensions between Inuit and Southern governance structures) and its definition in relation to both Inuit ideas of self-reliance (through connection to the land), as well as present-day livelihoods through the wage economy, both of which are present in Nunavut today.
- The focus on eight long-term outcomes of poverty reduction efforts, which are rooted in Inuit understandings of well-being, the need to focus on healing (in addition to economic metrics and job creation), and the central role of community participation and collaboration.

A Multi-dimensional Framework for Assessing Poverty in Nunavut

Having discussed prevailing understandings of poverty in Canada and Nunavut, as well as their shortcomings, we now proceed with articulating a multi-dimensional framework for use in our analysis. Importantly, the components of the framework are drawn from both mainstream and alternative accounts of poverty and well-being. This is because, while we recognize the value of income poverty statistics and needs-based assessments—and especially the wisdom captured in *Makimaniq 1* and *2*—we also see the benefit of supplementing these understandings with additional tools to bridge some of the remaining gaps or blind spots, particularly as concerns Inuit notions of well-being. Specifically, we introduce three additional theories—the capability approach; a three-dimensional theory of Inuit well-being; and intersectionality—as a way to build beyond the shortcomings identified in the previous section. Below, we summarize each theory and highlight the ways in which it is helpful in the context of our analysis. We then merge aspects of these frameworks with mainstream poverty theories to articulate our multi-dimensional approach to assessing poverty in Nunavut.

Useful Concepts and Theoretical Approaches

The Capability Approach

First developed by economist Amartya Sen as a multi-dimensional framework for assessing well-being, and further elaborated as a theory of justice by philosopher Martha Nussbaum, the capability approach is a well-known alternative to dominant conceptualizations of poverty and quality of life focused on income and economic growth. While the capability approach is used infrequently in domestic assessments of poverty and well-being across the Anglosphere, including in Canada, it has, as we noted in the previous section, inspired various initiatives focused on understanding and measuring poverty and

well-being in the field of development (e.g., the Human Development Index and its various iterations and offshoots).

As summarized in Robeyns (2006, 2007), the capability approach offers a normative framework for evaluating well-being, social arrangements, and public policies, not on the basis of access to resources, but rather, in relation to individual's quality of life—in terms of what they are able to do and be. Thus, the approach shifts the focus of social and economic policy away from income and basic needs (i.e., *well-having*) and towards the human being and their ability to pursue a life they can be expected to value (i.e., *well-living*) (Kimhur 2020, 265). Three concepts—functionings, capabilities, and freedom—are central to the capability approach. Functionings refer to various beings and doings a person may value—being nourished, participating in civic life, etc.—and which constitute a person's life; capability refers to the combinations or "set of vectors" of functionings that one is able to (i.e., has the freedom to) achieve; and freedom refers to the substantive opportunity to accomplish what one values (Alkire 2005). Means and resources are only considered to the extent that they can be converted into capabilities/opportunities or outcomes/functionings: they are neither an end, nor the central focus of the analysis.

In the context of poverty analyses, then, the capability approach asks the analyst to consider both whether people are well-nourished, suitably housed, well-educated, have self-respect, etc. (functionings), as well as whether the capabilities or real freedoms exist for people to realize these functionings, if they so choose (i.e., do they have access to the types and amounts of food that enable them to achieve their idea of being well-nourished; do they have the ability to secure safe, affordable, and appropriate housing, and does that housing also enable access to participation options, community, etc.?). Since it centres human freedom and the ability to determine for oneself what constitutes the good life, the capability approach does not impose hierarchies or systems of value; instead, it enables analysts, communities, or individuals to apply their own, and to then consider well-being and poverty from this vantage. This is vital in the Nunavut context, as conventional measures and concepts of poverty do not often leave room for ideas of well-being that do not align with Western/Southern notions.

In our analysis, we draw on the capability approach to consider dimensions of poverty and well-being in the context of Inuit conceptions of the good life. While Nussbaum (2003) calls for the creation of a definite set of capabilities, articulating her own list of what she terms "central human capabilities" as a result, Sen (2004) maintains an aversion to a "fixed and final" list, noting that lists must be selected and considered within the context and purposes to which they will be applied. Taking cues from Nussbaum's work, but ultimately following Sen, we construct a set of capabilities and functionings based on Inuit ideas of well-being. But how might Inuit ideas of well-being be characterized? We consider this below.

Inuit Conceptions of Well-being

Often distilled in Southern conceptions as 'traditional Inuit knowledge,' *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ) "encompasses all aspects of traditional Inuit culture, including values, worldview, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions, and expectations" (Wenzel 2004, 240). In as direct translation as is possible from Inuktut and English, IQ means "that which Inuit have always known to be

true" (Karetak, Tester, and Tagalik 2017). As Southern/Western researchers, we are mindful of the complex and often fraught discourse and power dynamics which underpin IQ, particularly as regards its integration within *qablunaaq* systems in an additive sense. Indeed, struggles exist to this day over definitions and applications of IQ in the Nunavut context, due especially to the concept's susceptibility to cooptation and appropriation (Tester and Irniq 2008; McGrath 2018). "While originally asserted by Inuit," notes McGrath (2018, 200-203), IQ "has developed a history and a certain discourse within academic knowledge debates that have […] marginalized Inuit and Inuktut epistemology," and its implementation across programs and systems has often reflected an assumption that it "should be integrated into qablunaaq standard systems and modes of operation."

In an effort to avoid such additive approaches to drawing on the wisdom of IQ, we have opted to place a model for Inuit well-being at the centre of our analysis. That is, instead of layering IQ principles on top of a quantitative or Western analysis of poverty, we reframe our core analysis around a notion of Inuit well-being conveyed in McGrath (2018). Below, we consider this model and then articulate an overall theory of Inuit well-being which incorporates the perspectives in an interconnected manner. The concept of Inuit well-being at which we arrive is visualized in Figure 1.

In *The Qaggiq Model* (2018), Janet Tamalik McGrath shares a three-dimensional model for Inuit well-being inspired by the insights and wisdom of Aupilarjuk, an Inuk elder. Aupilarjuk's triad (as McGrath calls it) consists of three interconnected principles—*inuuqatigiingniq* (peoplehood, collectivity, or people-to-people-ness); *inuusiqattiarniq* (personhood or individual well-being); and *niqiqainnarniq* (material well-being, livelihood, or productivity)—which together form the basis for Inuit well-being. Below, we summarize each dimension, as well as their interconnectedness. Though presented in the context Inuit knowledge renewal, Aupilarjuk's triad is equally useful for purposes of our analysis, as it articulates a holistic and interconnected vision of the good life, in Inuit terms. From this model, we can extrapolate a set of capabilities and functionings against which to assess the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut.

Inuuqatigiingniq or peoplehood

Inuuqatigiingniq translates to "living/being human together in kinship" (McGrath 2018, 267). This principle forms the foundation of Inuit well-being and advances the idea of healthy and responsible family and kinship relationships as the basis for harmonious collectivities.[5] According to Aupilarjuk, ways of being associated with *inuuqatigiingniq* are listening, obeying, and respecting one's elders, acting with integrity, and being a good role model for siblings. In particular, the relationship between spouses sets the context for other positive outcomes, such as child development and a healthy collectivity. *Inuuqatigiingniq* also suggests the importance of being given and upholding one's role within a community, as this underlies both individual and collective well-being. Finally, *inuuqatigiingniq* is consistent with reciprocity, a principle often presented as key aspect of Inuit worldview and politics.

[5] It is important to note that the focus on the family (or extended family) rather than the collective (i.e., the community or society) is likely a product of Aupilarjuk having been born prior to his family being resettled.

Inuusiqattiarniq or personhood

The term *inuusiqattiarniq* refers to the concept of having good personal well-being, good character, or basis for life—it is what makes a person whole and balanced, as well as the basis for *inuuqatigiingniq* (McGrath 2018, 268). Accordingly, it can include skills, attitudes, interactions, decision-making ability, and self-awareness, and requires training environments and knowledge transfer for development. *Inuusiqattiarniq* involves being able to live in accordance with or with awareness of Inuit laws, prohibitions, guidelines, and principles—what are referred to collectively as Inuit *maligait*.

Niqiqainnarniq or livelihood

The literal translation of *niqiqainnarniq* is "always having meat," and thus this principle accords with the ability to be self-reliant: to provide for oneself and for the material needs of the collective. For Inuit, having access to meat and other country foods was the benchmark for survival. It meant that a family had a good hunter and a good sewer, as being a good hunter depended not only on skill, but also on having proper clothing for the hunt and elements. If a family had meat, it reflected their attitudes, combined skills, and ability to work together effectively. Meat provided nourishment, but also meant a family would have animal skins with which to fashion clothing, bones for tools, and fat to be used for warmth and light.

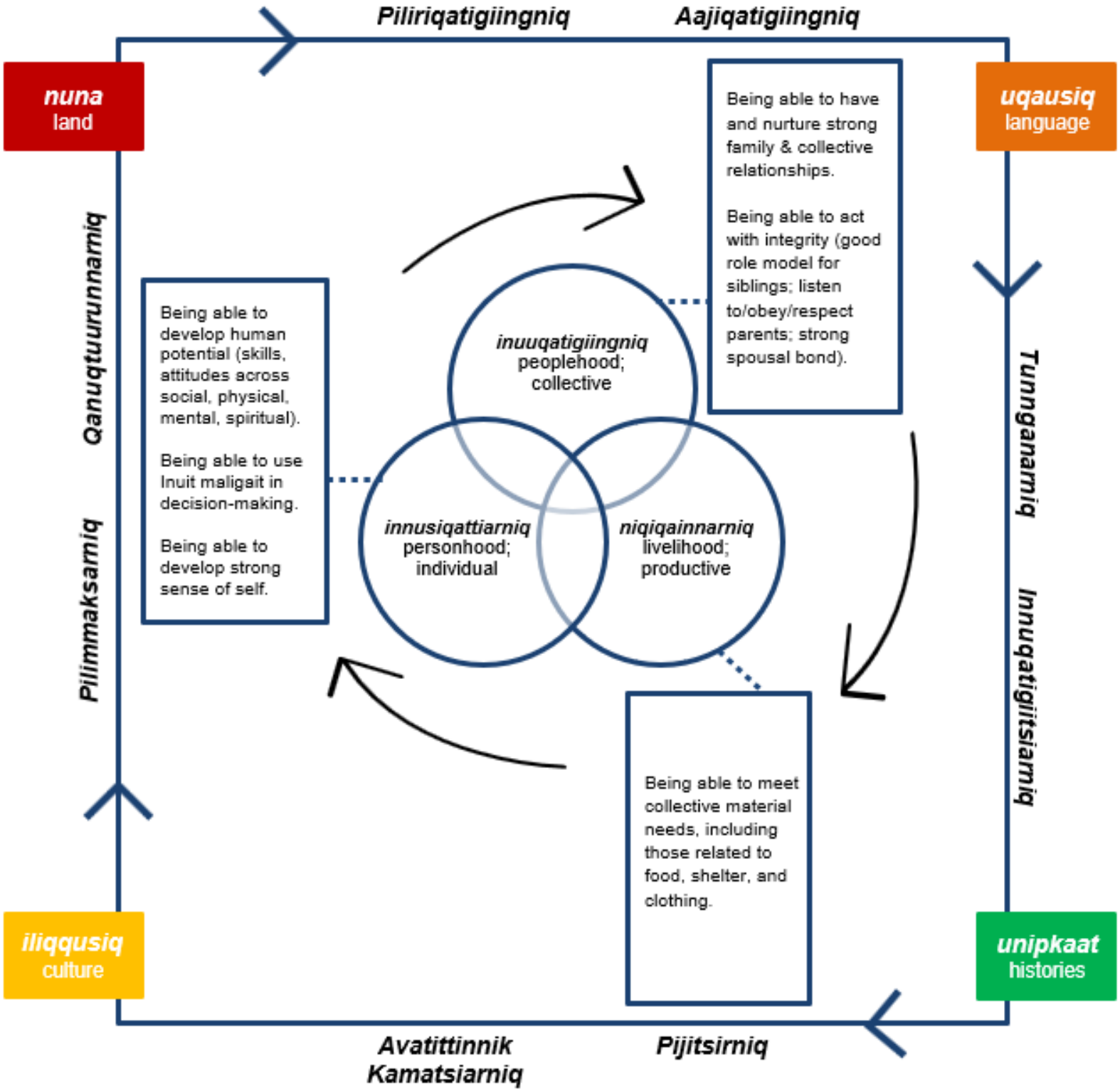
Aupilarjuk recognizes that in Nunavut's present-day mixed economy, one's livelihood or survival also depends on participation in the money or wage economy—and on being able to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to navigate it. Thus, *niqiqainnarniq* can apply to all aspects of securing a livelihood and ensuring collective material well-being.

Interconnections

McGrath (2018, 269) notes the interconnections among these dimensions, emphasizing that it is their collective functioning, not each principle in isolation, that is foundational to well-being. In her words,

> "Without livelihood, there is no support for the collective and the individual; peoplehood is compromised, and personhood is limited without a productive base. Individuals are also limited in their ability to thrive if they do not have a healthy collective to participate in, even if they have sufficient means for life. Collectivities cannot thrive without thriving individuals, both in the sense of strong personhood and effective participation in the economies of the community (meat and money)."

Figure 1: Theory of well-being based on Inuit worldview



Intersectionality Theory

We also draw on intersectionality theory in our framework. Specifically, intersectionality helps to uncover and understand both the ways in which poverty affects diverse Nunavummiut, as well as the historical and systemic drivers of poverty and need in the territory. We apply this theoretical framework throughout our analysis.

Initially developed and articulated by the American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of identity intersect to shape one's experience of the world (see Crenshaw 1989; McCall 2005; Hankivsky 2014). In intersectional analyses, identity is conceived of as multi-faceted (i.e., multiple factors intersect in shaping one's distinct identity) and socially constituted (i.e., it is constructed and reproduced, across time, space, and in relation to others); underlying these processes of identity production are overlapping systems of oppression and privilege—colonialism and hetero-patriarchy, as examples—which also structure systems and the contexts within which we live and interact, placing limits on some while edifying others.

Intersectionality is also the foundational theory behind gender-based analysis+ (GBA+), a tool developed by the Government of Canada to ensure diversity, inclusion, and heterogenous experiences and needs are considered in public policy.[6] Cameron and Tedds (2020) provides a critical overview and applies an adapted GBA+ framework to the issue of poverty in British Columbia. The authors note as strengths of the theory its central focus on issues of inequality and power, its orientation towards diversity and inclusion, and its utility in not only identifying structural and intersectional barriers to participation, but also in supporting analysts to envision approaches—including social policies—for dismantling them.

Intersectionality is an important analytical tool for two reasons. First, it enables analyses to overcome the tendency to depict Inuit (and Nunavummiut more broadly) as a homogenous group. Though one cannot ignore the shared history and struggle of Inuit in Nunavut, there is also complexity and tension in how Inuit conceive of their identities, wish to lead their lives, and imagine their community and futures, particularly from an inter-generational perspective. Different aspects of identity—gender, queerness, age, etc.—intersect Inuit identity to create distinct experiences of the world, of Inuit and Canadian/Southern culture, governance, and structures, and of poverty. Intersectionality allows for a consideration of these dynamics. Intersectional analyses are also a strong complement to capability-focused accounts of poverty, as the capability approach is predicated on the notion that heterogenous capabilities produce diverse outcomes in the face of the same material resources. Intersectional analysis also enables a consideration of systems of power and oppression, including histories of colonialism and

[6] Gender-based analysis+ rests on core insight from intersectionality that multiple factors intersect to shape identity and experience. It thus requires researchers, analysts, and program developers to consider in their work disparate identities, as well as differential impacts and potential inequalities (Status of Women Canada 2017). The 'point' of doing GBA+ is to analyze policy from the vantage of intersectionality, and to then to use this to both devise strategies to prevent further entrenchment of inequalities, as well as build toward the elimination of structural issues.

violence. For this reason, it is an approach that opens the door to considerations of the drivers and root causes of poverty.

An Integrated Framework

Our framework for assessing the poverty in Nunavut reflects an integrative approach, merging perspectives and tools from mainstream discourse with models that have emerged in Inuit communities. We also draw on insights from *The Makimaniq Plan 2*, historical analysis, and social exclusion theory to define poverty in Nunavut as a multi-dimensional issue, which is the product of historical and ongoing processes of colonization and the disjunctures and power imbalances that these processes have created. That is to say, Inuit history, and the way it reverberates within present-day Nunavut, has a direct impact on poverty and the way poverty is understood in the territory. Further, poverty is not only the inability to meet basic needs or achieve self-reliance. It also manifests in terms of a lack of connection to one's culture, language, and ways of knowing; a sense of uprootedness from the land, kinship ties, and community; and in barriers to living in right relations with oneself and one's family.

In application, our approach includes both a statistical snapshot of monetary poverty in Nunavut, as well as an analysis of poverty along three dimensions of Inuit well-being and in the context of historical and present-day structures and processes of power and oppression. Specifically, we consider the extent to which Nunavummiut possess the capabilities—that is, the real freedoms—to achieve the functionings that, considered together, constitute culturally-rooted notions of well-being (as reflected in the three-dimensional model). In Table 1, we outline the various capabilities and functionings that will be used in our analysis; this list is rooted in the Inuit theory of well-being articulated in Figure 1 and incorporates the outcomes and indicators present in *The Makimaniq Plan 2*. In discussing each aspect of well-being, we provide descriptive analysis, integrating quantitative, systems, and intersectional perspectives, and highlight the ways in which the current state of affairs is linked to historical and ongoing realities of colonialism, forced resettlement, disconnection from Inuit ways of being, and additional overlapping systems of oppression. The process for our analysis is described in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Multi-dimensional process for considering the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut

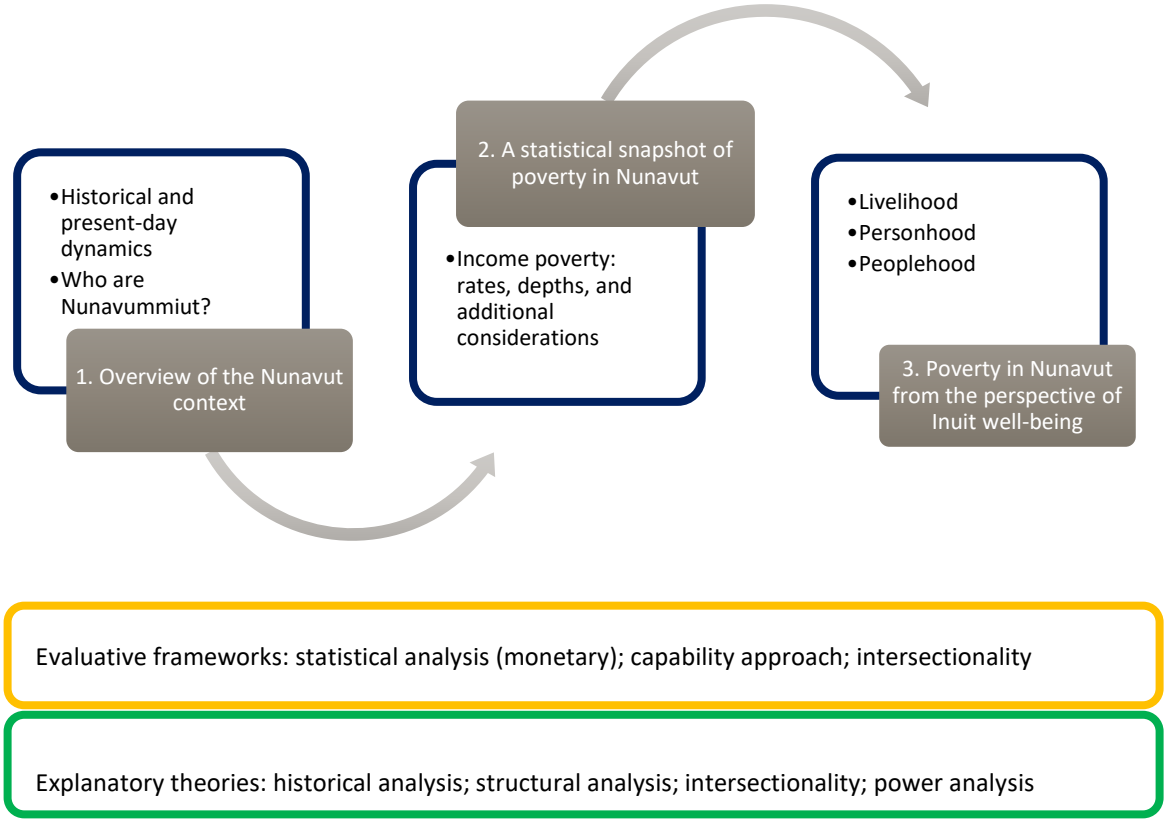


Table 1: Functionings, capabilities. and related inputs from the perspective of Inuit well-being and Makimaniq 2

Functionings (outcomes)	Capabilities (freedoms)	Examples of related resources/inputs	Alignment with Makimaniq 2
***Niqiqainnarniq* / livelihood / productive**			
Always having meat – Being adequately housed, sufficiently clothed, well-nourished, in good physical health – Being self-reliant in securing one's livelihood	– Ability to be self-reliant, meet collective material needs – Ability to make decisions about housing, food, clothing, etc. (i.e., choice, self-reliance) – Ability to meet basic needs w/o compromising other aspects of wellbeing – Ability to access and choose among mechanisms/contribution options for securing livelihood – Ability to access services (existence of/proximity to)	– Incomes/assets/other stores of value – Access to tools, equipment, hunting subsidies – Public infrastructure – Public health and dental care – Public & co-operative housing, subsidies, home ownership schemes	Outcome 3: Strengthened Local Economies Outcome 6: Increased Food Security Outcome 7: More Supportive Income Assistance Outcome 8: Increased Access to Housing

***Inuusiqattiarniq* | personhood | individual**			
Having good personal well-being – Having a strong sense of self – Having good character – Being skilled and working toward one's potential – Living in accordance with Inuit *maligait*	– Ability to develop one's sense of self – Ability to connect to & live in accordance with, one's culture, including through language, cultural practices – Ability to understand and pursue one's role and potential – Ability to access skills, knowledge, education, and training, understood broadly –	– Public education (ELCC; K-12; PSE) – Mental health resources and programming – Public infrastructure – Inuit/cultural knowledge, language programming, land skills programming	Outcome 4: Strengthened Support for Healing and Well-being Outcome 5: Strengthened Life-long learning
***Inuuqatigiingniq* | peoplehood | collective**			
Living/being together in kinship – Having strong spousal and kinship relations – Acting with integrity in relations and in community – Working together, through reciprocal relationships	– Ability to work together, in a united way, including in the face of adversity – Ability to form, nurture strong relationships with spouses – Ability to be a good role model for siblings – Ability to respect, obey, and learn from parents/elders	– Mental health resources – Inuit knowledge programming – Governance structures which enable collaboration and consensus – Public engagement forums and mechanisms	Outcome 1: Foundation through strengthened *piliriqatigiingniq* Outcome 2: Increased Community Decision-making Outcome 4: Strengthened Support for Healing and Well-being

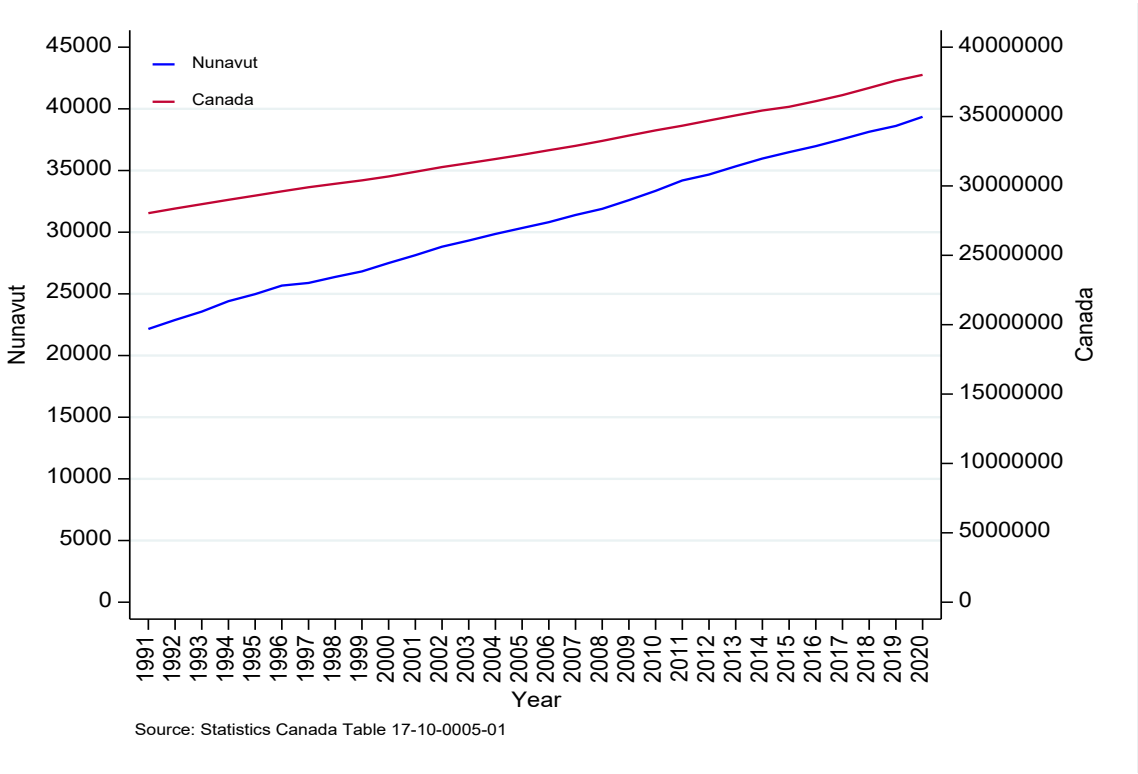
The Nunavut Context

The first aspect of our integrated approach to considering the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut is to consider the demographic, economic, and historical context. Below, we provide a demographic snapshot, economic information, and a historical overview, in which we connect processes of colonialism, forced relocation, and loss of culture to present day dynamics.

Demographics

First, we provide information on the Nunavut population. Figure 3 presents population information over time. The population of Nunavut was 22,154 in 1991 and grew to an estimated 39,353 by 2020, now composing just 0.1% of the Canadian population. According to the 2016 Census (Statistics Canada 2016), Inuk compose the majority (84.7%) of Nunavut's population, compared to 0.1% of Canada's. Across age groups, the population is fairly evenly split between males and females.

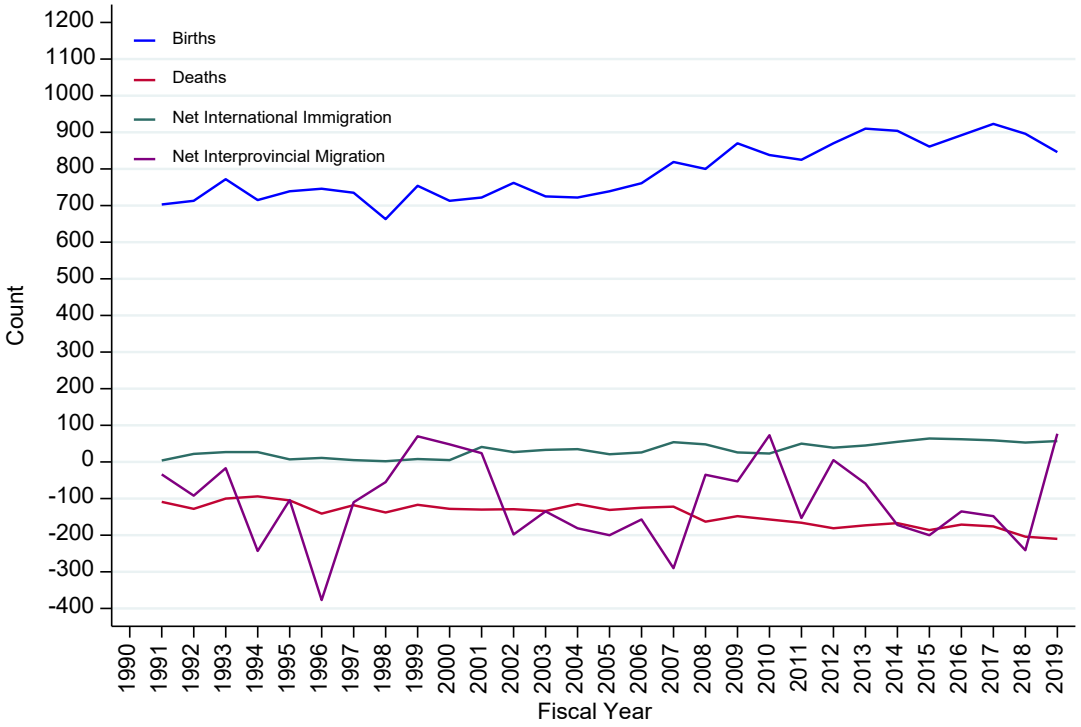
Figure 3: Population, Canada and Nunavut



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0005-01

While Nunavut's population may be small as a proportion of the Canadian population, it is growing quickly, having increased by nearly 78% in the last two decades (Canada's growth rate was 35.5%). Figure 4 shows the drivers of that growth, the primary source being births to residents of Nunavut (whether they occurred in the territory or in another jurisdiction) (Statistics Canada 2021a). Deaths only account for about one-quarter of births, international immigration to Nunavut is very low, and net interprovincial migration is either negative or marginally positive (Statistics Canada 2021b).

Figure 4: Components of Demographic Growth



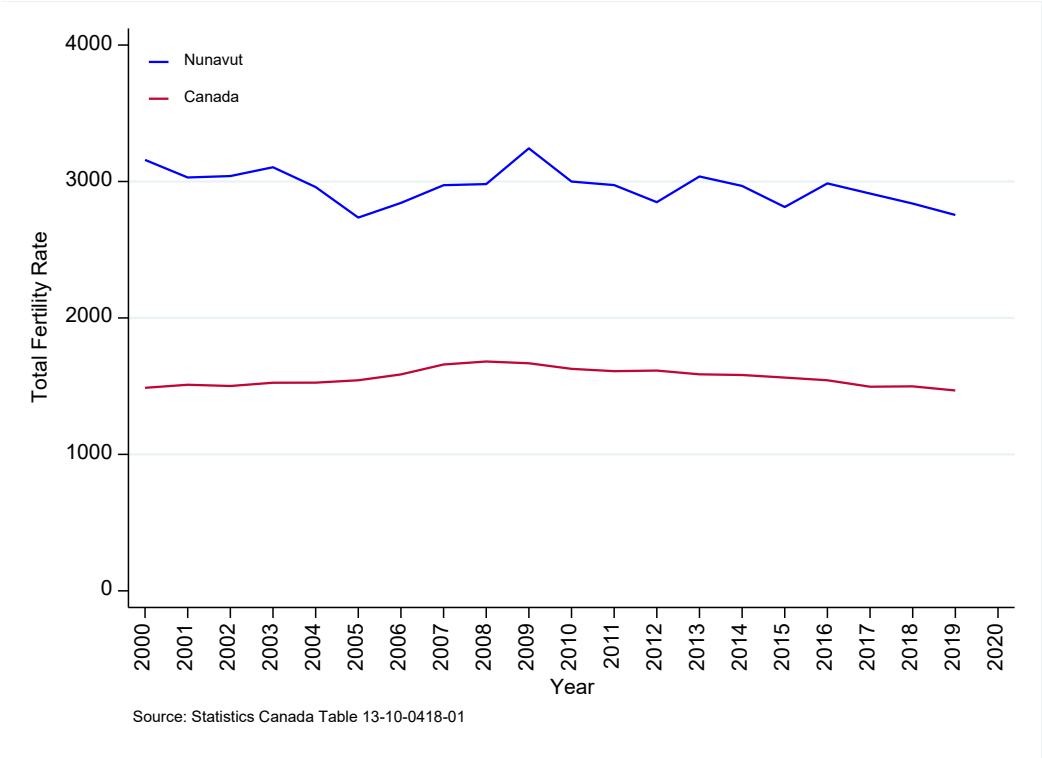
Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0008-01

Figure 5 presents the total fertility rate: the number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years and give birth to children in alignment with the prevailing age-specific fertility rates, expressed as the rate per 1,000 females. Nunavut's total fertility rate is roughly double Canada's but has been slowly declining in recent years.

Based on Census 2016 data (Statistics Canada 2016), the median age of Nunavut residents is 25.1 compared to 41.2 in Canada. The portion of the population that is under 15 years of age is 32% in Nunavut compared to 16.6% in Canada. Given the total fertility rate, it is unsurprising that Nunavut's median age is substantially lower than Canada's. Higher birth rates and lower median age also leads to larger family sizes, with the average size of a census family being 3.5 in Nunavut compared to 2.9 in Canada. The senior population is much smaller in Nunavut than in Canada, as those aged 65 or over only make up 3.8% of the population in Nunavut compared to 16.9% in Canada.

While the combined marital and common law relationship rates are similar between Nunavut and Canada, there are significantly more common law relationships (25.6% vs 12%) and fewer married couples (27.3% vs 45.7%) in Nunavut. Similarly, while the proportion of single adults is similar between Nunavut and Canada, in Nunavut single adults are mostly those who have never been married (40.3% vs 28.2%). The portion of single adults who are separated, divorced, or widowed is, consequently, much lower in Nunavut than in Canada.

Figure 5: Total Fertility Rate, Canada and Nunavut



Economy

Next, we provide an economic overview, including information on gross domestic product (GDP), key sectors, labour market dynamics, and incomes.

Gross Domestic Product

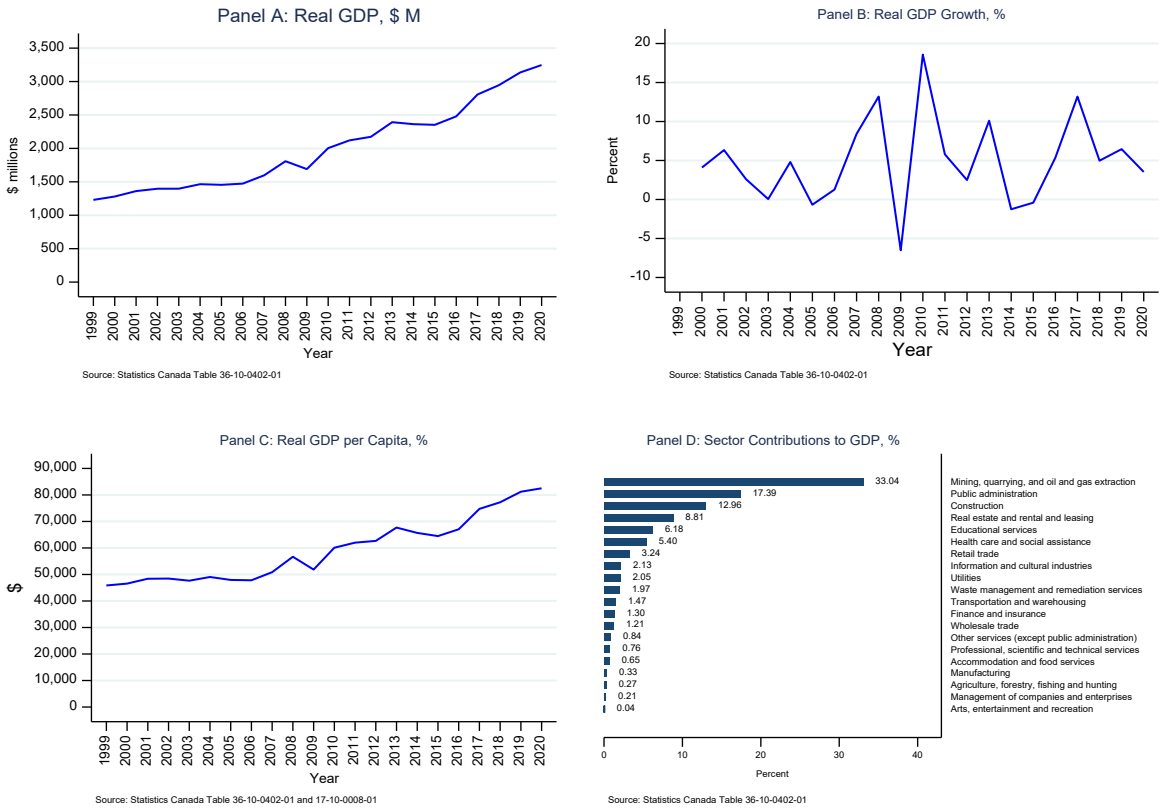
Figure 6 presents data on Nunavut's GDP. Panel A shows Nunavut's real GDP increased from $1.2 billion in 1999 to $3.2 billion in 2020. Panel B shows real GDP growth. While Nunavut's GDP has always grown at a faster rate than Canada's, in four of the last 20 years Nunavut saw double digit growth, with an average rate of 4.9%. Since GDP growth has outpaced population growth, particularly in the last decade, GDP per capita has also increased—from $45,587 in 1999 to $82,514 in 2020 (Panel C). We discuss this in the section on incomes.

Panel D shows how sectors contribute to GDP. Representative of two-thirds of Nunavut's economy, the top sectors are mining, public administration, and construction. The growth of the Mining sector (33% of the economy) is noteworthy. While this sector supplies important job opportunities, it is also volatile given unpredictable fluctuations in the global market and commodity prices. The public sector (educational services, health care, public administration) also composes a large part of the economy (30%), is a key employer (for women especially), yet is stable compared to other sectors, such as mining.

While not formally measured as economic activity by Statistics Canada, Inuit hunting and harvesting are important to the Nunavut economy (Employment and Social Development Canada 2021). It is estimated

that the current harvesting economy is worth $40 million annually, just over 1.2% of GDP (Government of Nunavut n.d.). This places the sector on par with support activities for mining and wholesale trade.

Figure 6: Real Gross Domestic Product, Nunavut



Labour Market

The Labour Force Survey (LFS), Canada's preeminent source for monthly data on the labour market, does not include publicly available data on the territories. This makes it challenging to analyze Nunavut's labour market. However, details about the LFS in Nunavut are available from the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics (2009). While tables are available for the years spanning 2010-2019, what is included in the tables changes over time, making it impossible to construct a consistent time series. We instead report in Table 2 information available for Q3 of 2019. Data is broken down by Inuit and non-Inuit. Across all measures, Inuit have worse labour force outcomes than non-Inuit, in both Nunavut and Canada. Table 3 presents data by sex and age for Nunavut. Males have a higher participation and employment rate than females, as do adults compared to youth. Males and youth also have higher unemployment rates.

Table 2: Labour Force Statistics, Third Quarter 2019, Canada and Nunavut

	Canada	Nunavut		
	Total	**Total**	**Inuit**	**Non-Inuit**
Labour Force (thousands)	20,462.9	16.4	11.63	4.8
Participation Rate (%)	66.4	62.3	55.1	90.7
Employment Rate (%)	62.6	53.7	44.8	89.1
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.8	13.7	18.7	N/A

Source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca/en/Labour%20survey.aspx

Table 3: Labour Force Statistics, Third Quarter 2019, Sex and Age, Nunavut

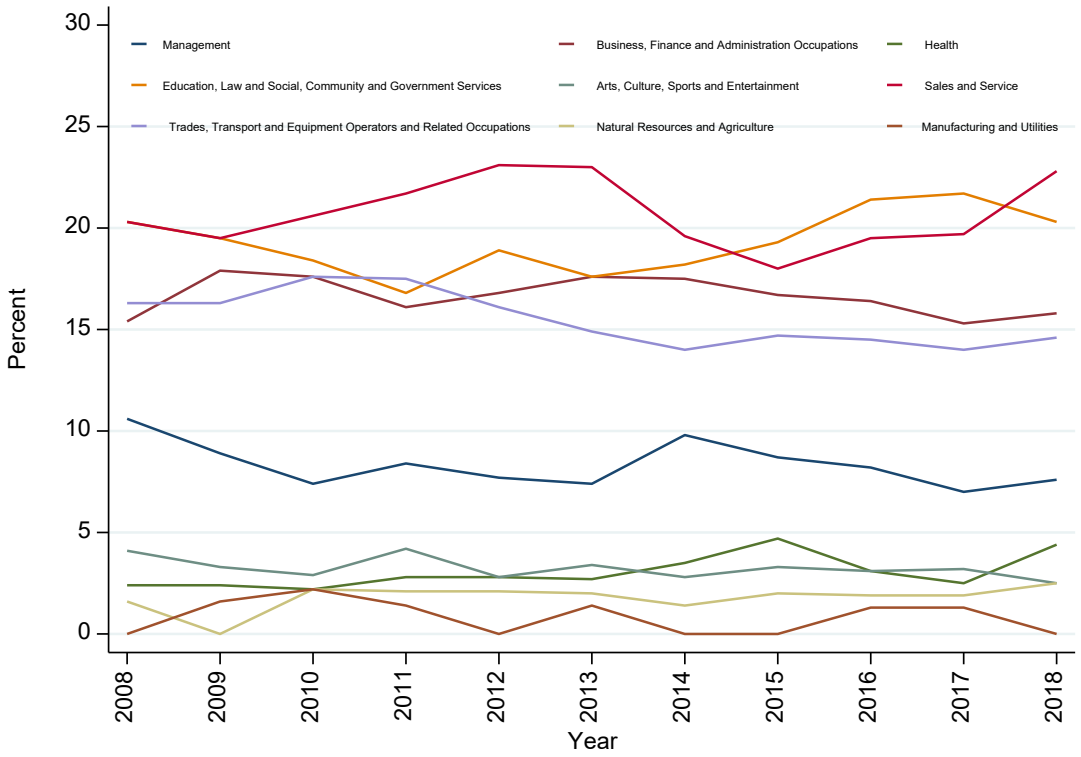
	Nunavut			
	Males	**Females**	**Youth (15-24)**	**Adult (25+)**
Labour Force (thousands	9.0	7.3	2.3	14.0
Participation Rate (%)	65.9	58.3	40.1	68.6
Employment Rate (%)	55.6	51.6	30.8	60.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	15.6	11.4	23.4	12.1

Source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca/en/Labour%20survey.aspx

Figure 7 presents information related to total employment by industry over time. Though it contributes the most to Nunavut's GDP, mining (along with fishing, hunting, trapping, and quarrying) only contributed 4.3% of total employment in 2018. The government and education sector is by far the industry that employs the most people, contributing 50.6% of Nunavut's total employment. Retail and wholesale trade contributes 12.1%, while remaining industries are each well below 5%.

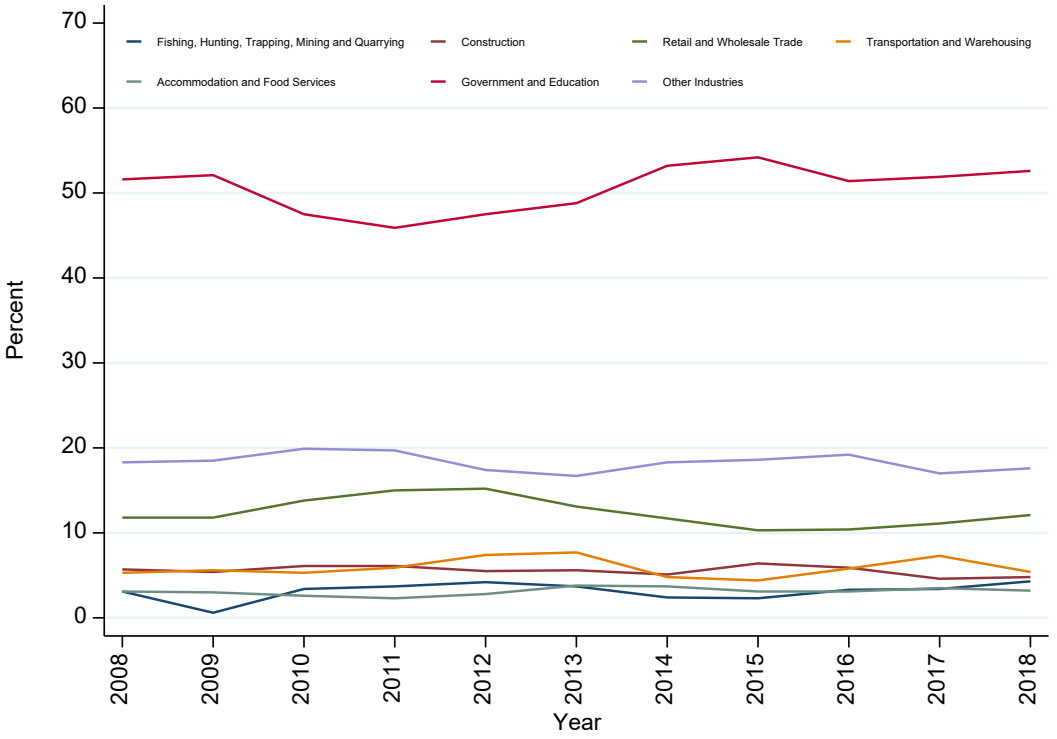
Figure 8 presents total labour force information by occupation over time. The top two occupations are sales and service, and education, law, social, community, and government services. The next largest are business, finance, and administration and trade, transport, and equipment operators. Considering Figures 7 and 8 together, it appears the occupations which make up Nunavut's labour force are not well aligned to total employment. This may explain the high unemployment rate, particularly among Inuit.

Figure 7: Total Employment by Industry, Nunavut



Source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca/en/Labour%20survey.aspx

Figure 8: Total Labour Force by Occupation, Nunavut



Source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca/en/Labour%20survey.aspx

Due to a lack of data, it is hard to provide additional details. However, Employment and Social Development Canada, with participation from NTI and the GN, recently completed an extensive analysis of the Nunavut labour force and related activity using internal administrative data and Nunavut-specific data sources, along with the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies Survey of Adult Skills, and the 2016 Census (Employment and Social Development Canada 2021). Totalling 1,062 pages, the report is the most comprehensive analysis of Nunavut's labour force. The focus of the report is the Inuit labour force which, as we note above, constitutes a large portion of the potential and actual labour force in Nunavut. We summarize key findings here.

As noted above, the public sector is the largest employer in Nunavut. Inuit account for 40% of Government of Canada employees, 50% of Government of Nunavut employees, and 85% of municipal government employees (Employment and Social Development Canada 2021, 16). However, Inuit are not well represented in management positions in government, which accords with the information in Figure 6 which shows less availability of labour in the management occupation. Many government positions carry a minimum requirement of some form of post-secondary credential, which will impose further barriers for Inuit (Employment and Social Development Canada 2021, 15), particularly given high school completion rates below 50% across the population. This further reinforces the material presented in Figures 4, 5 and 6, which shows a concerning mismatch between occupational clustering, available employment opportunities, and the dominant sectors contributing to GDP in Nunavut, and suggests that Inuit are not sharing equally in Nunavut's prosperity.

Incomes

The T1 Final Statistics produced by the CRA (2020) provide the most up-to-date information on income in Nunavut. The T1 Final Statistics are data from individual income tax and benefit returns processed for the tax year two years before the year of publication. The 2019 edition of the tables, the most recent edition available, reports on 100% of returns from the 2017 tax year and includes any corrections made through the assessment or reassessment process. The data is based on 22,640 returns filed, where the individual claimed Nunavut as their place of residence as of December 31, 2017.

In 2017, average total income reported by tax filers in Nunavut was $50,441.70, which is higher than in Canada ($49,237.38). Income is highly skewed, and thus median income is a better measure of central tendency; however, the tax statistics do not allow for this calculation. We can compare data for taxable and non-taxable returns, though. In Nunavut, 45% of returns were non-taxable and reported an average total income of $10,406.34—slightly lower than in Canada ($11,647.97). Taxable returns, the remaining 55%, report an average total income of $82,709.16, compared to $66,904.54 for Canada. 81% of tax filers in Nunavut (62% in Canada) report income from employment, for an average income of $52,258.47. In Nunavut, 4.5% of tax filers (8.8% in Canada) report business or professional income, while 26% of tax filers (6% in Canada) report social assistance income (an average of $6,658.94 per filer).

Table 4 lists tax filer information by sex for Nunavut. Though tax filing is evenly distributed across male and females, males have a slightly higher proportion of taxable compared to non-taxable returns. Males report higher average employment income, while females report higher average social assistance income.

Table 4: Tax Filer Information by Sex, Nunavut

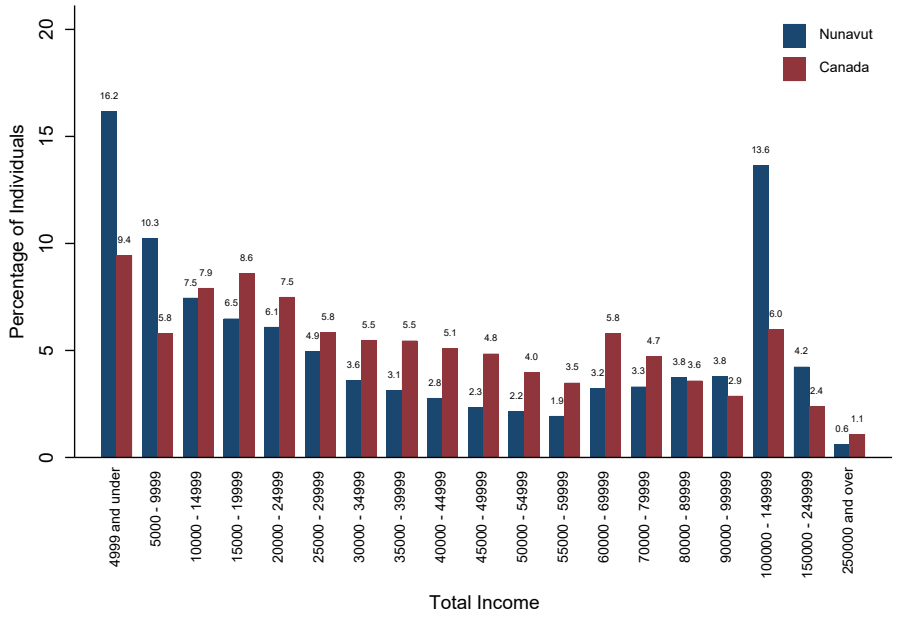
	Male	Female
Total returns (%)	50.49	49.51
Taxable Returns (%)	53.39	46.61
Non-taxable Returns (%)	46.88	53.12
Average Employment Income ($)	54,260.17	50,154.34
Average Social Assistance Income ($)	5,943.83	7,486.43

Figure 9 shows a polarized distribution of tax filers by total income. In 2017, 16.2% of filers in Nunavut reported less than $5,000 in total income and13.6% reported between $100,000-$150,000 in total income. Further, 26.5% of filers reported less than $10,000 in annual income, compared to 15.2% in Canada, while 25.4% reported total income between $80,000-$249,999, compared to 14.9% in Canada.

Figure 10 presents the distribution of average income by age and sex of tax filer. Across all age categories male tax filers report a higher total income than females. However, the gender differential small between the ages of 15-29. This pattern is similar to that found by Kleven, Landais, and Sogaard (2018), who show both that it is the arrival of children that drives gender-based income inequality, as well as that the child penalty persists throughout a woman's life. What is more worrisome given the high fertility rate is that child penalties are transmitted from mothers to daughters but not from mothers to sons.

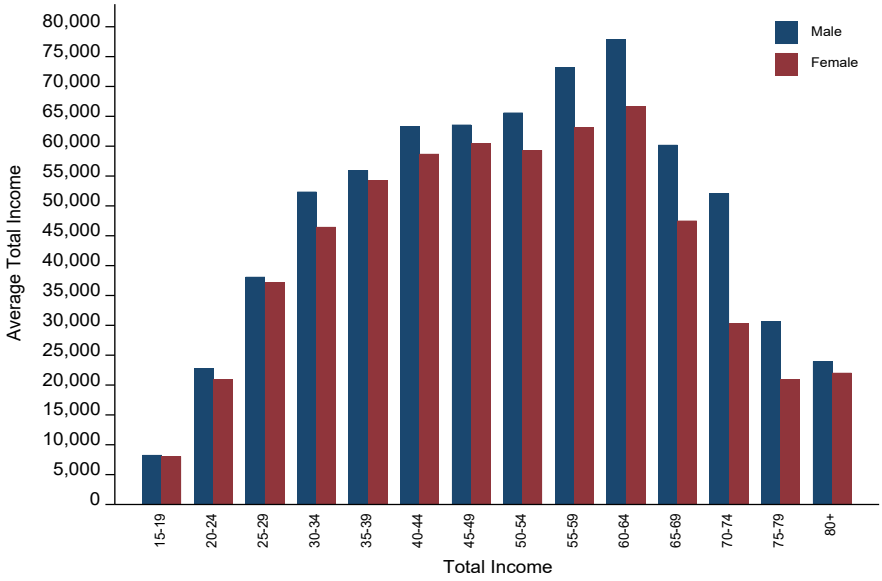
Unlike the tax statistics, the 2016 Census permits analysis of government transfers. Despite lower incomes in Nunavut, the median government transfers received by individuals is $2,524 ($5,453 for Canada). Women in Nunavut receive more income from government transfers than do men ($4,682 vs $1,275), but both amounts are lower than in Canada ($4,199 vs $6,136). Given that a large portion of federal transfers are delivered through the tax system, low filing rates in Nunavut could be driving this. We return to this, alongside a more detailed discussion of the income distribution, in the section on poverty statistics.

Figure 9: Distribution of Tax Filers by Total Income, Nunavut and Canada



Source: T1 Final Statistics

Figure 10: Distribution of Average Total Income by Age and Sex, Nunavut and Canada



Source: T1 Final Statistics

Historical context

For Inuit, the history of Nunavut has been fraught with struggles, including forced relocation, loss of way of life, and intergenerational trauma. While the effects of colonialism were present in Nunavut long before its pronouncement as a territory, since 1999 Inuit have been forced to contend with a

government that is not equipped to properly administrate and deliver on promises made through the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Inuit have always been adaptive, self-sufficient, and nomadic; however, forced relocation and the residential school system produced a rupture in Inuit way of life, which has had devastating and irreparable effects on all three dimensions of Inuit well-being. Considerations of poverty in Nunavut are thus incomplete if they do not take into consideration the historical processes which undermined Inuit notions of livelihood, personhood, and peoplehood. Though companion pieces examine this history in greater depth, we present key elements as they are central to our analysis.

Waves of contact

Inuit differ from other Indigenous groups in Canada in that their contact with settler groups has been relatively recent (Crawford 2014; Government of Canada 1996; Rasing 2017; Henderson 2007). Though Nunavut's remoteness relative to the rest of Canada did not impede contact between Inuit and other groups, it did create a unique "contact-history" that has, to this day, shaped perceptions of northern Indigenous culture and the Arctic (Rasing 2017). In particular, Inuit encountered three waves of contact with distinct groups of European colonizers: explorers; whalers and traders; and missionaries.

During the first wave, Norse and English explorers had only limited contact with Inuit, but relied on their knowledge to survhumive in the Arctic (Henderson 2007) and were particularly curious about their customs and traditions (Crawford 2014). However, this interest was not innocuous: as the 2013 Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples (RCAP) found, these early explorers purposefully exploited Indigenous groups, which led to the destruction of Inuit ways of life (Crawford 2014). In second wave of contact, Inuit experienced increased disruption from groups, predominantly traders and whalers, in search of economic opportunities. Many spent significant time living among Inuit, some having children with Inuit women. By the twentieth century, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), seeking economic opportunities linked to art and hunting, had also established a firm presence in the North (Henderson 2007; Hudson's Bay Company n.d.). As time progressed, Inuit's role shifted to that of customer or consumer (Henderson 2007). The third wave brought missionaries and traders, who interacted with Inuit far more than those in previous waves. The missionaries adopted Inuit's material culture, while attempting to convert them to Christianity (Henderson 2007; Laugrand and Oosten 2007; Cornelius and Oosten 2002; Trott 2001).

In addition to the above waves, Inuit in Canada also came into contact with Southerners (Henderson 2007). In the 1960's, Southern government officials, teachers, and construction workers sought out employment opportunities in the region. The level of interaction each of these groups had with Inuit differs by their reasons for migration: while teachers lived and taught in Inuit communities, other groups such as construction workers tended to live on site, and thus experienced less contact (Henderson 2007).

Relocation

Though only one example of how the Canadian government coerced Inuit into making lifestyle changes—changes which continue to fundamentally disrupt the Inuit way of life and undermine well-

being—relocation was a core process of colonization (Madwar 2018). The Qikiqtani Truth Commission defines relocation as the "planned movement of people to a location that has been chosen by an external agent," in contrast to migration which involves "moves carried out by Inuit themselves in a manner appeared to be voluntary or motivated by enticements" (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013a).

In the 1950s, the Government of Canada experimented with what is now referred to as the Inuit High Arctic Relocation, with the goal of establishing permanent settlements in the northern Arctic region (Government of Canada 1996). Through this process, 53 Inuit men, women, and children were relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay (Government of Canada 2010, 1996). Officials convinced Inuit to relocate under the guise of ample hunting opportunities, as well as the ability to return to their homeland if there were unhappy (Government of Canada 1996; Henderson 2007). The Inuit High Arctic Relocation constitutes yet another example of how the Government of Canada actively misinformed Inuit for its own benefit, and while neither the first nor the last relocation of Inuit, this instance began a pattern of government coercion that has had devastating and lasting effects.

As a government policy, relocation was intended to remove Inuit from the influences of Southern communities in the hopes that they would stop "relying on handouts" (Government of Canada 1996) and return to their way of life (Madwar 2018). In reality, relocation did the opposite. To understand the seismic shift that resulted from relocation, one must consider that around the time of the Inuit High Arctic Relocation Inuit, a nomadic people, inhabited more than 100 square kilometers of *ilagiit nunagivaktangit*, depending on the time of year. Today, the majority of Nunavummiut live in thirteen communities, ranging from 1230 to 1500 people (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013a). The new, larger communities thus led to a diminished sense of kinship ties. Further, in moving to these communities, Inuit lost parts of their lifestyle and in particular their connection to the land—a relationship that is said to represent a profound love and be as strong as kinship ties (Government of Canada 1996).

For Inuit, access to the land is linked to spirituality and survival (McGrath 2018). Thus, relocation also significantly compromised the ability of Inuit to provide for themselves, moving them closer to the Western conceptualization of poverty. The "culturally-based knowledge" that allowed Inuit to be self-sufficient in their homeland was no longer relevant in settlements (Government of Canada 1996). Harsh living conditions, in addition to inadequate hunting opportunities, posed a particular challenge for those who were relocated, as such conditions were not suitable for building igloos (Madwar 2018). The combination of lost homeland, livelihoods, and means of self-reliance led to the destruction of Inuit ways of life.

The above trauma and loss of self-reliance was compounded by the widespread skilling of *qimmiit*, or sled dogs, among Inuit in the Qikiqtaaluk region (Baffin Island), as documented by the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013b). During the 1950s-1970s, thousands of *qimmiit* were shot and killed by the RCMP, other authorities, and hunters in the settlements (particularly those in which Inuit lived in close proximity to *qallunaat*) due to what officials deemed disease and safety concerns, while others were abandoned by Inuit upon relocation. *Qimmiit* were not only crucial to Inuit livelihoods, playing a key role in daily economic activities as transportation and as hunting companions, but they also feature in Inuit myth and symbolic culture and were viewed as one would a family member

by many Inuit. By the mid-1970s, nearly every team of *qimmiit* in the Qikiqtaaluk region had been killed. The impact of this loss endures today.

It merits mention that Inuit experiences of relocation were vastly different (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013a). Indeed, some Inuit were attracted to the appeal of the settlements, which offered promises of housing, education, employment, and access to healthcare; others wished to escape the comparatively harsh conditions of living on the land. Thus, not all Inuit relocations that occurred were forced. However, those who relocated after the initial volunteers experienced greater hardships, such as poorly constructed housing. Further, many of the frustrations Inuit felt in the settlements were not addressed. As a result of cultural differences, as well as an inherent power balance, Inuit were reluctant, even fearful, to challenge the policies and laws put into place by the government (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013a, 11; Tester and Irniq 2008).[7] The sense of fear that surrounded the interactions between Inuit and *qablunaaq* added a layer of complexity to their interactions, making it difficult to communicate (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013a, 11). Tester and Irniq (2008, 52-53) highlight how, into the 1980s, Inuit saw 'talking back' to those claiming authority as new and challenging, and an uncomfortable form of resistance. Importantly, these complexities do not mean that intentional coercion did not occur, they simply point to the nuanced dynamics through which settler colonialism has played out in and shaped the lives of Inuit in Nunavut.

Despite the above, the federal government considered the Inuit High Arctic Relocation to be a success. A formal apology was made by the federal government in 2010 (Government of Canada 2010); however, widespread poverty and its attendant issues remain of high concern in Nunavut.

Residential schools

The residential school system is another significant source of trauma for Indigenous communities in Canada, including Inuit. The Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples (RCAP) has made a direct link between historical trauma experienced as a result of the residential school system and the suffering we see today (Crawford 2014). Despite their remote location, Inuit children were not exempt from attending residential schools; children were simply transferred further away from their communities. The intention of these schools was not only to educate, but to socialize and civilize children to assimilate into the "white [wage] economy" (Government of Canada 1996).

This erasure of culture and removal from families was coupled with harsh living conditions and sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. While many of these acts are crimes under the Criminal Code, the institutions responsible, the Government of Canada and the Catholic Church, have not been held accountable. Theories of collective and historical trauma posit that the effects of trauma are cumulative and can be transmitted intergenerationally (Crawford 2014). Those who survived residential schooling

7 This is not advance depictions of Inuit as meek or weak, but rather to emphasize the power relations that have, since colonization, undergirded relationships between Inuit and government officials. As Tester and Irniq (2008) highlight in the case of IQ, one cannot understand its expressions, use, and potential tensions in the present day if one fails to grasp the historical context and power relations within which it developed. The same point applies to the pursuit of social and economic policy change unfolding in Nunavut today.

did not so do without lasting scars, and the cumulative effects of intergenerational trauma manifest in Inuit communities today through high rates of suicide, addiction, and crime (Henderson 2007).

Further, the government's insistence on formal education and mandatory schooling changed the relationship Inuit had with the land. Youth no longer had the same capacity to cultivate a relationship with the land, develop the skills necessary for self-reliance—whether related to hunting and fishing, the crafting of tools and clothing, or other areas—nor pass this knowledge on to their children. Much of this responsibility is now placed on Nunavut's public education system, where the curriculum is largely set by Southern bureaucrats who lack a fundamental understanding of IQ (McGrath 2018). Indeed, the curriculum used in the K-12 system draws on the Alberta model.

Monetary Poverty in Nunavut: A Statistical Snapshot

The Government of Canada has chosen to examine poverty through the lens of income and has set poverty targets accordingly (Government of Canada 2018). We now proceed with the second aspect of our analysis: a consideration of income poverty rates and depths in Nunavut using Canadian measures.

Measuring Income Poverty in Canada

A discussion of Canada's low-income measures

In Section 2, we noted that Statistics Canada has developed three measures of low income for Canada: the LIM, LICO, and MBM (Statistics Canada 2016b).[8] As detailed in Petit and Tedds (2020), each measures low income in a different way. The LIM and LICO are relative low-income measures that compare a family's income to a predefined income threshold. The LIM measures the fraction of the population with an income lower than one-half of the median income in that year and is continually updated as the median income changes. The LICO measures the fraction of the population with an income lower than the level at which a family is likely to spend 20 percentage points or more on food, shelter, and clothing than the average, and reflects spending patterns anchored around an income base last measured in 1992 and based on the Family Expenditures Survey (the base is increased each year in line with inflation). Both can be measured using income either before (BT) or after taxes and transfers (AT), with a preference for AT.

Until the mid-1990s, the LIM and the LICO tracked each other consistently; however, they began to diverge in 1996, with the LIM staying constant relative to the LICO, which fell dramatically. By 2018, the overall low-income rate for Canada was 12.3% as measured by the LIM, but only 7.3% as measured by the LICO. Because of the divergence between these measures, those who wanted to argue that poverty had fallen would point to the LICO, while those who wanted to argue that poverty had not changed at all

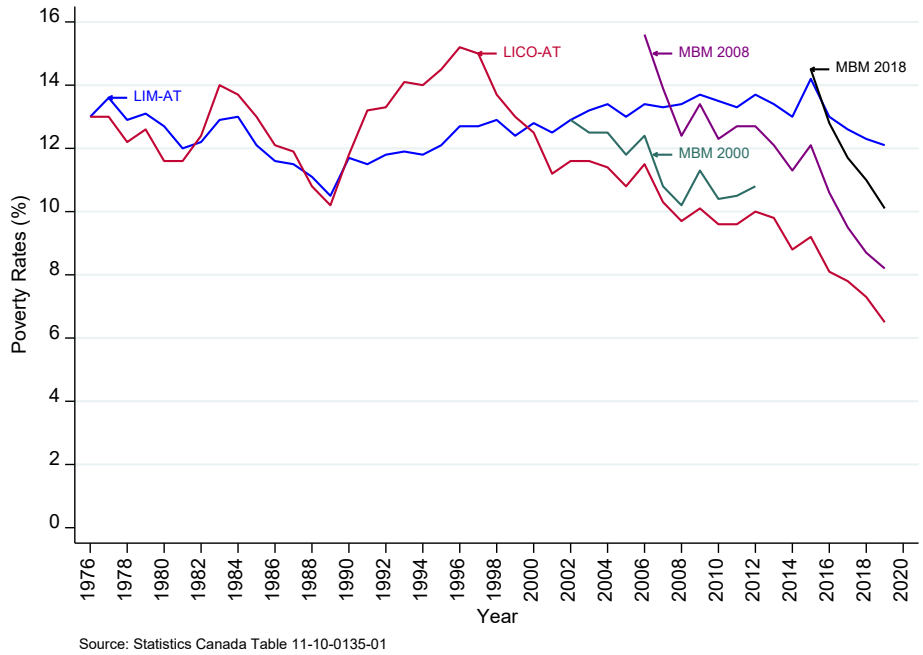
8 In terms of international comparability, both the LICO and MBM are Canada-specific measures and are not comparable to any other country's poverty lines. However, the LIM is comparable to poverty statistics produced by other developed countries.

would point to the LIM. This context ultimately produced calls for a new low-income measure. Following input from experts, Statistics Canada then devised the MBM in the early 2000s (Statistics Canada 2016b).

Calculating the MBM threshold involves costing out a basket of goods and services associated with a modest standard of consumption. It takes into consideration costs of specified qualities and quantities of food, clothing, footwear, transportation, shelter, and other expenses adjusted not only for family size but also for geographical region. In measuring low income, the MBM compares family disposable income (rather than gross income) to the MBM threshold. The use of disposable income better reflects the income available to purchase goods and services. Official measures of MBM low income are available starting in 2006 and, since it has been measured, the MBM has consistently provided a measure of poverty that falls between the two extremes of the LIM and the LICO, both in terms of trends and measured rates. The Government of Canada's choice to adopt the MBM as its Official Poverty Line accompanied its development of a national Poverty Reduction Strategy and establishment of poverty reduction targets, as outlined in An Act Respecting the Reduction of Poverty, SC 2018, c. C-87.

Many do not agree with the decision to establish the MBM as the Official Poverty Line. We acknowledge that the MBM is an imperfect measure of poverty—but then again, all measures are. Over the last several years, Statistics Canada has been conducting a detailed review of and consultation on the MBM, which has, to date, resulted in an update in the poverty statistics based on the 2008 base, as well as the release of the MBM given a new 2018 base. The new MBM poverty statistics (2018 base) address issues related to what a modest standard of living means and how consumption is measured in some of the categories, with shelter being the component that underwent the largest adjustment. The 2018 base uses the rental of a three-bedroom dwelling using results of the 2016 census, versus a two- or three-bedroom dwelling in the 2008 base. That the MBM income thresholds increased under the 2018 base means that a higher proportion of individuals will be found to be living in poverty, *ceteris paribus*. It does not, however, change the overall trends and comparisons across groups from the 2008 base.

Figure 11: Poverty Rates for Canada, Various Measures



Source: Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0135-01

Figure 11 presents the LIM-AT, LICO-AT, and the MBM (2000-, 2008-, and 2018-base) for Canada to show how the measures relate. The LIM-AT and LICO-AT are the poverty measures with the longest histories, dating back to 1976, while the various MBM measures are much more recent. Figure 1 shows that with each re-basing of the MBM, poverty rates increase relative to the old base; this reflects ongoing changes to the cost of a basket of goods. Figure 11 also shows that with each re-basing, the MBM is closer to the LIM, but trends towards the LICO as time passes. Across all measures, overall poverty rates declined in recent years. As detailed in Petit and Tedds (2020), poverty rates have been declining for every group except single working-age adults without children, for whom they remain stubbornly high.

Data sources for measuring income poverty in Nunavut

Relevant to understanding the above measures is the data source that is used to calculate poverty statistics. As detailed in Aldridge (2017), the Canada Income Survey (CIS)—a voluntary survey that collects information on labour market activity, expenses, wealth, personal characteristics, and other topics and then combines this with information from the LFS and tax filer data (Statistics Canada 2021a)—is the main source of data on households and income in Canada, and is used in estimating the poverty rates and depths of poverty that correspond with the measures noted above.

Unfortunately, Statistics Canada does not calculate any of the three low-income measures for the territories—the CIS is only conducted for the provinces—or in certain areas based on subdivision type

(including First Nations reserves) using the economic family.[9] There are several reasons for this. One, substantial in-kind services (e.g., subsidized housing) are provided to individuals in these jurisdictions, which complicates considerations of economic security measured using income (for a discussion, see Tedds et al. 2021). Further, individuals in these regions engage in a sizeable amount of own-production consumption (e.g., hunting and fishing), which makes income a poor indicator of ability to secure basic needs. Statistics Canada is working with Indigenous organizations and others to develop a Market Basket Measure for the North (MBM-N) that will include non-income measures of poverty; however it is not expected to be finalized until 2023 (Gustajtis, Lam, and McDermott 2021).

Statistics Canada does calculate one measure of income poverty, the LIM-AT, using the census family (rather than the economic family) and tax filer data (as opposed to the CIS). As a result, the CFLMI-AT is available for communities that are excluded from data sources used to calculate the official poverty statistics. It merits mention that the census family, defined as couples living together, with or without children, and lone parents living with their children,[10] is a narrower concept of family than the economic family. Those who cannot be matched to a family are defined as persons not in a census family. Persons not in census families may live with their married children or with their children who have children of their own. They may be living with a family to whom they are related or unrelated. They may also be living alone or with others who are not in their family. An economic family, on the other hand, is defined as all persons living in the same dwelling and related by blood, marriage, common-law relationship, or adoption. What this means is that all people in a census family are part of one economic family, which can itself be made up of several census families. If there are additional relatives living with a census family, those people are also in the economic family. The additional relatives, if two or more, may also be in a census family amongst themselves, provided they are a couple with or without children or a lone parent with children.

In addition to the data gaps highlighted above, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which these statistical definitions reflect Western understandings of the family, and thus to consider their relevance in the context of Inuit conceptions of family and kinship ties, as well as living arrangements more broadly. Bignami-Van Assche and Simard (2020) assess this tension, stressing that the census family is a problematic definition of the family because it does not take into account what Bignami-Van Assche and Van Assche (2020) call vertical and lateral extended families in the same dwelling (i.e., siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, grandchildren, and so forth). Indeed, such living arrangements are more prevalent in Indigenous communities than among non-Indigenous peoples. They conclude that using the census family "…and children's living arrangements in these families limits our understanding of family structures among Indigenous peoples and their evolution over time, which is necessary to develop appropriate policies" (Bignami-Van Assche and Simard 2020, 126) and to understand poverty statistics. These findings suggest that statistics based on the census family, considered in the context of Indigenous people and communities, need to be used with significant caution.

9 The family concept most used to calculate poverty statistics is the economic family. A detailed description of the economic family can be found in Statistics Canada (2015b). Additional details can be found later in this paper.

10 A detailed description of the census family can be found in Statistics Canada (2015a).

Aside from the definition of the family, some argue that the CFLIM-AT is a good measure of poverty because the data source, the T1 Family File (T1FF), is more inclusive than other data sets, such as the Census and the CIS (Campaign 2000 2021). However, as detailed in Tedds et al. (2021), there are reasons to believe the T1FF may also be a poor data source, due specifically to the high incidence of non-filing, especially amongst the most vulnerable. While companion work is assessing the degree of non-filing in the territory of Nunavut, we provide some evidence here that such concern is warranted.

To get a picture of non-filing in Nunavut, we obtained a count of the number of T5007 information slips issued by the GN where box 11 was filled out. [11] Box 11 on the 75007 information slip is completed for individuals that received either social assistance payment or provincial/territorial supplements and the payments total more than $500 in a tax year (Canada Revenue Agency 2020a). In Nunavut, a T5007 with an entry in box 11 is issued for individuals who received either income assistance or the senior's supplement. The number of T5007 slips issued therefore reflects the number of individuals that received social assistance income. We can then compare that number to the number of individuals who claimed social assistance income as reported in the T1 Final Statistics (Canada Revenue Agency 2020b). In 2017, the most recent year for which T1 Final Statistics are currently available, the GN issued 6,760 T5007, 6,138 for social assistance income and 622 for income from the territorial senior's supplement. The T1 Final Statistics show that 6,040 individuals that reside in Nunavut claimed social assistance income from a T5007 information slip on their tax form. A rough calculation then suggests that 10.6% of people who were issued a T5007 did not file their taxes in 2017. Since social assistance recipients will make up a significant portion of those living in poverty, the fact that 10% of social assistance recipients are missing in the tax data suggests that poverty statistics based on tax filer data understate poverty in Nunavut.

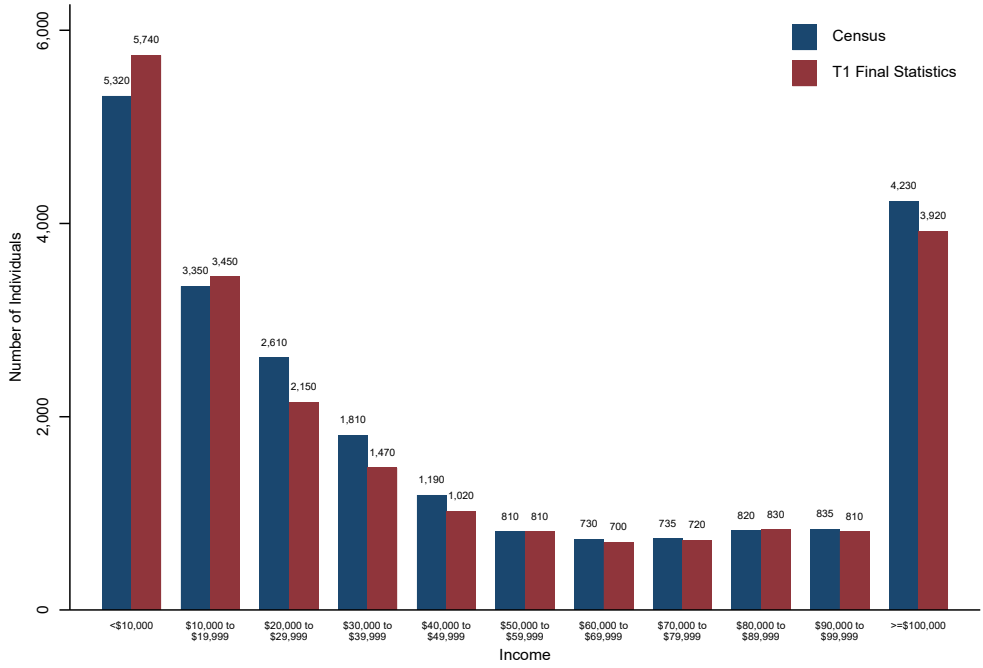
Another way to assess the accuracy of data sources used to measure income poverty is to compare tax filer data to Census data, as both report the number of people with income across income range bins. Census data is currently available for 2016, with the income data reflecting the 2015 tax year. Statistics Canada (2019b) details how data for Census 2016 was collected, which we summarize here. The sample frame for the Census in the territories starts with territorial health insurance records, which are then matched to their 2016 Census response. These matches are then manually verified to make sure that they match on the same individuals. Statistics Canada then goes through a lengthy process of trying to obtain information on individuals who were unmatched, including by using death data. Unmatched individuals can arise in several contexts. For example, there will likely be people who are residents of Nunavut but who are temporarily residing out of the territory (e.g., in Ottawa) at the time of the Census. In addition, some people living in Nunavut will not be in the health insurance data, because they either only recently moved or do not have a health record (Statistics Canada 2019b, 54). An additional aspect is the Census response rate, as Nunavut's response rate for the 2016 Census was 92.7%, the lowest in Canada (Statistics Canada 2017a). The response rate is calculated based on all occupied private

11 All recipients of social assistance income are issued a T5007 tax form. A copy of this form is received by both the assistance recipient and CRA in a process called third-party reporting. Third-party reporting, or matching, is a tax policy concept through which a third party (i.e., neither the individual nor the tax authority) provides an impartial verification of income, in this case the Government of Nunavut. CRA then uses third-party information and matching techniques to verify the information provided by the tax filer upon tax filing and corrects any mis-entered information. All final tax statistics reported have already been corrected for missing information that is subject to third-party reporting. This means that if a person filed their taxes and received social assistance income, the final tax statistics are an accurate reporting of the number who filed and received social assistance income. See Petit et al. (2021) for more details about third-party reporting, matching, assessment, and filing in the Canadian tax system.

dwellings that received a census form; however, respondents are weighted to account for non-response (Statistics Canada 2019b).

Census 2016 also links responses to tax records to ensure accuracy with regard to income. This is detailed in Statistics Canada (2017b). Individuals can be linked to either their tax filing or any third-party reporting slips filed with CRA (e.g., T4, T5007, etc.). In Nunavut, 72.5% of those who completed the short-form Census and 85.7% who completed the long-form Census were linked to their tax records (Statistics Canada 2017b, 9). Again, these are lowest linkage rates in Canada. Because the Census uses both tax filing and tax slips, *a priori*, one would expect that the income data in the Census could be better than that in the tax statistics produced by CRA. Figure 12 shows data from both Census 2016 and tax filer statistics and reports the number of people by income bin in each data source. Given the use of tax forms (not just tax filings) in the Census it is surprising that the Census undercounts individuals in the two lowest income bins. However, the Census has more people across the next three income bins and the Census and tax statistics are nearly identical in the next five income bins. The Census counts more high-income individuals than the tax statistics.

Figure 12: Number of Individuals by Total Income Category, Census vs Tax Statistics



Source: T1 Final Statistics are from the Canada Revenue Agency. Census 2016 data are from Statistics Canada.

The details presented here indicate that the main income data sources for Nunavut—tax filer statistics and the 2016 Census—undercount low-income individuals, especially those receiving social assistance. This means that statistics based on these sources will not represent those most likely receiving or in need of income support and will thus understate rates and depths of income poverty. The one measure that is generally available, the CFLIM-AT, is also problematic, not simply because of the income data it uses, but also due to its reliance on the census family. With these caveats in mind and recognizing that

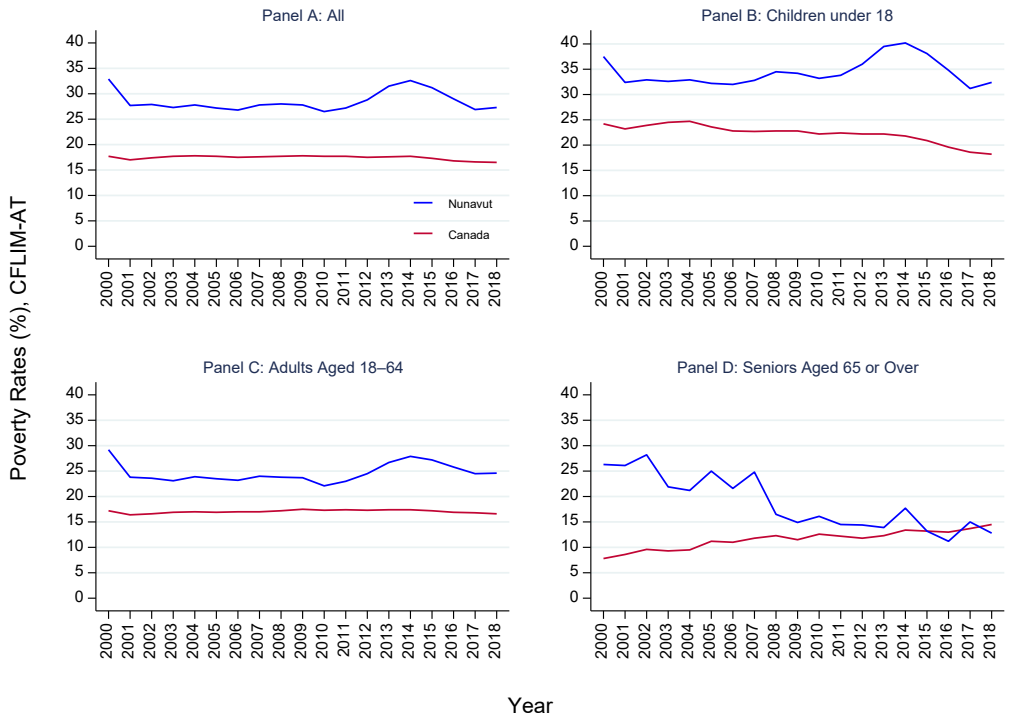
many have used the CFLIM-AT to discuss poverty in Nunavut, we present the available income poverty statistics below. The available statistics are measures of the poverty rate (the percentage of people living in poverty) and the depth of poverty (the average gap ratio).

Income Poverty: Rates and Depths

Income poverty rates in Nunavut

We begin by presenting measured poverty rates for all persons, that is those in a census family and those not in a census family. Figure 13 shows poverty rates by age for Nunavut and Canada using the CFLIM-AT for the years 2000-2018. Panel A presents poverty rates for all families and ages. For Canada, poverty rates measured by this metric have been consistent over nearly two decades, with a slight trend downwards since 2015. In 2018, the percentage of Canadians living in poverty as measured by the CFLIM-AT was 16.5%. In Nunavut, poverty rates are almost double those in Canada and the measure is much more variable. Measured poverty rates in Nunavut rose significantly between 2011 and 2015, after which they began to drop. In 2018, the percentage living in poverty was 27.3%.

Figure 13: Rates of Poverty, All Family Types, By Age, Nunavut and Canada



Panel B focuses on child poverty. While child poverty has been slowly trending downwards in Canada by all measures, including CFLIM-AT (as shown), Panel B indicates there had been little progress in Nunavut until recently. It likely that the poverty reduction effects of the CCB—credited as being a key driver of child poverty reduction in Canada since 2016—are not being experienced fully in Nunavut, perhaps due to low take-up and tax filing rates among social assistance recipients. This is concerning and highlights the need to increase efforts to expand tax filing, especially among social assistance recipients.

Panel C shows poverty rates for working-age adults. As shown in Petit and Tedds (2020), in recent years Canadian poverty rates have usually been higher for working-age adults than for children.[12] The inverse is true in Nunavut: child poverty rates are higher than for working-age adults. Poverty rates among working-age adults are also very high in Nunavut compared to Canada: while the poverty rate is around 17% in Canada, in Nunavut the rate is roughly 25%, having increased between 2010-2015. Panel D shows poverty rates for seniors aged 65 and over. In contrast to those in other age categories, seniors have seen their poverty rates (CFLIM-AT) decline, such that the 2018 rate for seniors in Nunavut was similar to the Canadian rate—just under 15%. In particular, the data show a significant decline beginning in 2008.

We now consider poverty rates by various family types: not in a census family; lone parent families; and couples. Figure 14 shows poverty rates by age for persons not in census families (essentially single individuals). We do not include those under the age of 18 because so few people in Nunavut are both under 18 and not in a census family. In Panel A, we see that single persons in Nunavut have a lower or similar measured rate of poverty than those in Canada, but that the rate is still high at around 35%. Panel B shows that this trend is driven by single persons aged 18-64. Interestingly, poverty rates for single persons were lower in Nunavut throughout the 2000s, yet began to steadily increase in 2010, converging with the Canadian rate at around 32% in 2017 and 2018.

However, whether the poverty level for single working-age adults was truly lower in Nunavut than in the rest of Canada and is now similar to the Canadian rate is a matter for careful consideration. As a reminder, these poverty statistics are derived from income data using tax filer data, which we previously showed to dramatically undercount social assistance recipients in Nunavut. If the tax filer data is missing a large portion of those who would fall under the poverty income threshold, then poverty measured using this data will be understated, especially for groups into which a high proportion of these individuals fall.

Panel C shows the measured poverty rates for seniors. Senior poverty rates in Nunavut are more volatile than in Canada overall. Before 2008, poverty rates for seniors in Nunavut were generally higher than Canadian rates, peaking at around 35% in 2008. Since 2008, however, there has been a sharp reversal, similar to that observed for all seniors. Given this trend appears for all seniors, whether they are in a census family or not, we expect it is policy driven. Policies and programs available to people in Nunavut will be explored in a companion paper.

12 The CFLIM-AT measure does not reflect this finding under other measures, such as the MBM, but it does show that child poverty rates have trended down, while adult rates have remained generally stable, so that by 2018 the CFLIM-AT measured rates were about equal.

Figure 14: Rates of Poverty, Persons not in Census Families, By Age, Nunavut and Canada

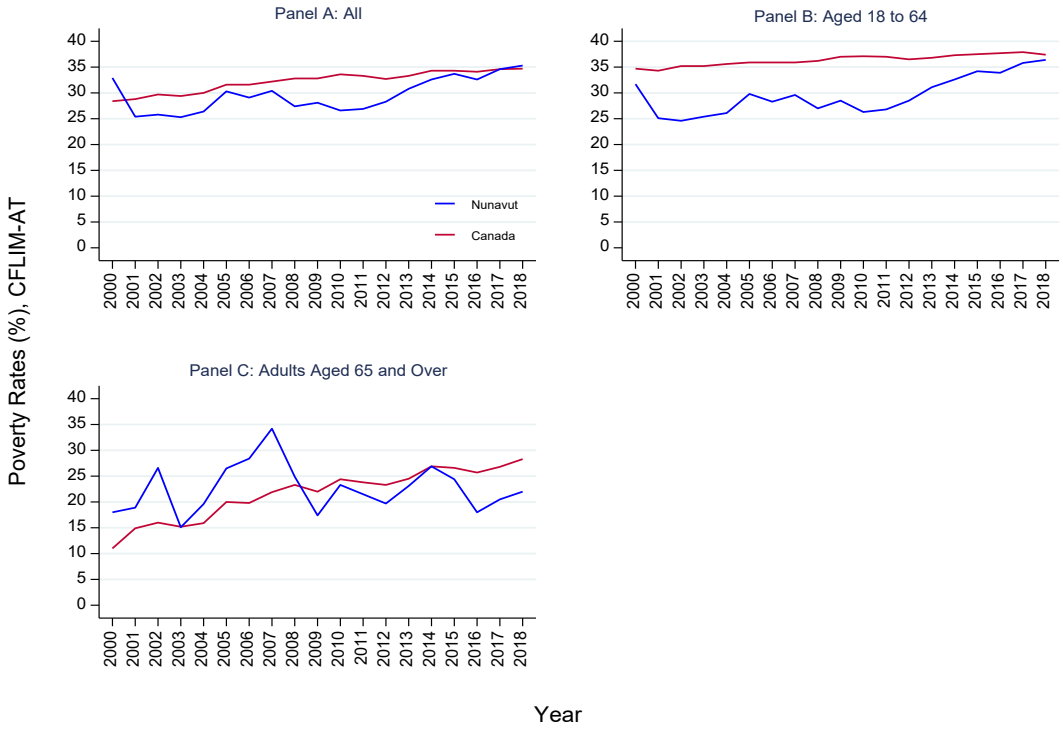


Figure 15 presents poverty statistics for those living in lone parent families. Measured poverty rates are very high for lone parent families and higher in Nunavut than in Canada. Overall, in Nunavut most lone parent families live in poverty. Poverty rates for this group have been fairly consistent across time, with a slight downward trend since 2014. It is likely that policy (e.g., child benefits) is driving this trend. We explore policy innovations in a companion paper on programs available to people in Nunavut.

Panel B shows children that live in lone parent families. This group is the most likely to live in poverty, with rates averaging around 60% during 2000-2014, and dropping slightly to 56% by 2018. Panel C presents poverty rates for lone parent working-age adults. Averaging around 46%, rates have been fairly consistent over time, with the same slight downward trend noted before. Panel D focuses on lone parent seniors. Poverty rates for this group were between 40 and 53% until 2008, when they trended downwards to just under 25% in 2018. Given this downward trend is not shared by other family types with children, it does seem like the previous hypothesis, that there was a policy focused on seniors that helped reduce poverty rates, is quite plausible.

Figure 15: Rates of Poverty, Lone Parent Families, By Age, Nunavut and Canada

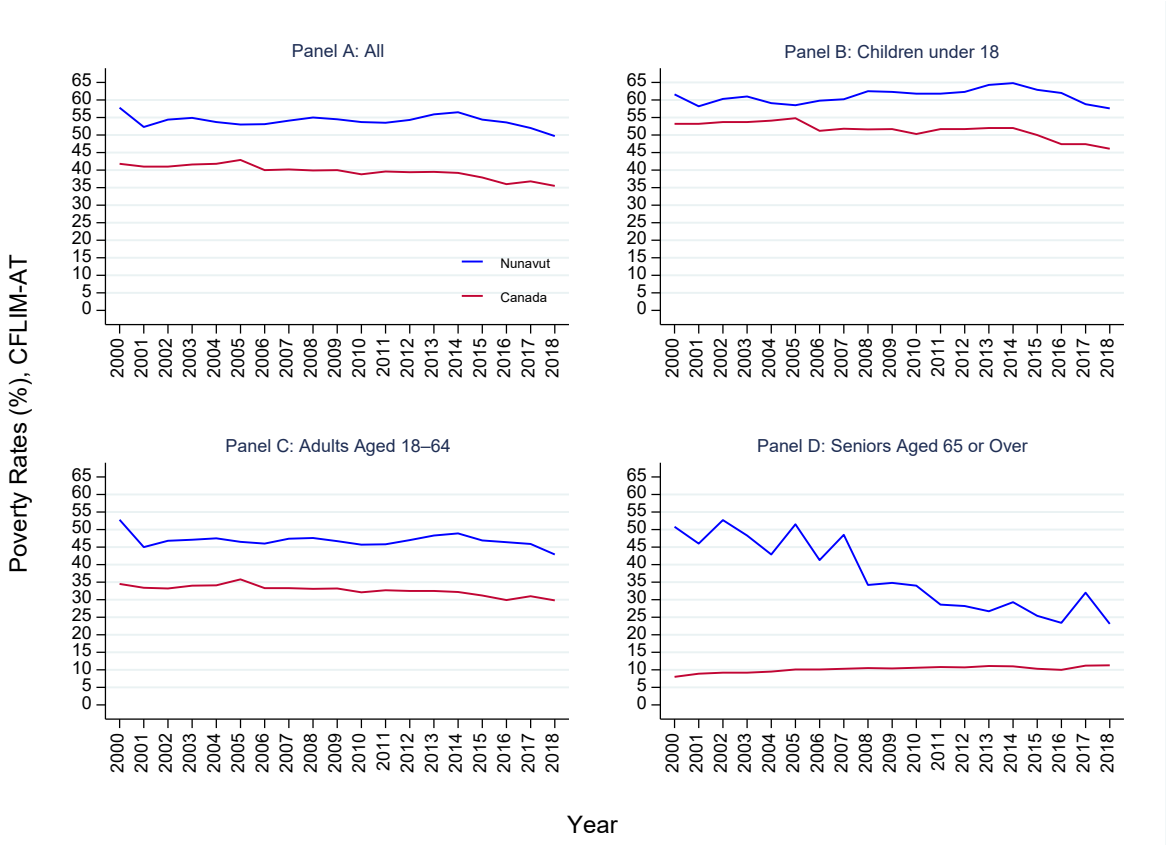
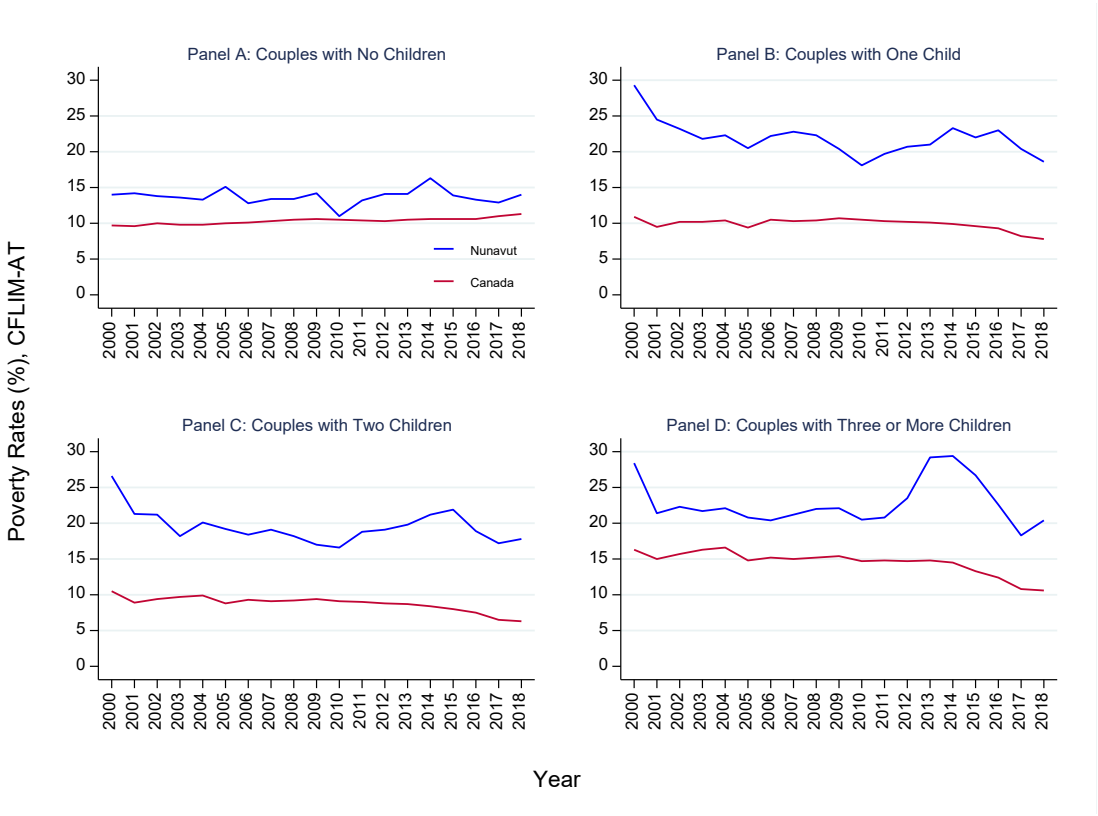


Figure 16 presents poverty rates for couple families, with and without children. Generally, couples without children have had the lowest poverty rates in Nunavut (they are only higher than Canadian rates). The rate is more variable in Nunavut, varying between 11% and 15%. In 2018, the poverty rate was 14%. Couples with one or more children, as shown in Panels B through D, are all high in Nunavut—much higher than in Canada—especially for couples with one child. Until 2003, we see early drops in poverty; then rates become fairly flat. Similar to other family types, we see an increase in poverty starting in 2010; this increase is more significant for couples with three or more children. The downward trend starts again in 2014. Poverty rates for couples with one or two children are similar—roughly 18% in 2018—but for couples with three or more children, they are above 20%, and show a recent and concerning increase.

Figure 16: Rates of Poverty, Couple Families, By Number of Children, Nunavut and Canada



Despite data and definitional shortcomings underlying the calculation of the CFLIM-AT, we do observe notable trends. First, poverty in Nunavut is higher than in Canada for most categories of people. Second, policies directed at seniors appear to be contributing to reducing poverty rates in Nunavut. Third, policies directed at families with children seem to be undoing the increases in poverty that happened around 2010; understanding the drivers of poverty that started in 2010 will be vital to making greater strides at reducing poverty. Fourth, single persons in Nunavut appear to have a lower poverty rate than their counterparts in Canada, but it is possible that this result is due to low rates of tax filing among this group. That is a matter that will be explored in companion work. Fifth, something happened in Nunavut in 2010 that caused an increase in poverty rates for every group examined. The economic statistics presented earlier do not seem to provide a simple answer for the increase in poverty rates after this date, which may mean the answer lies in policy changes. A companion paper considers policy and program changes in Nunavut.

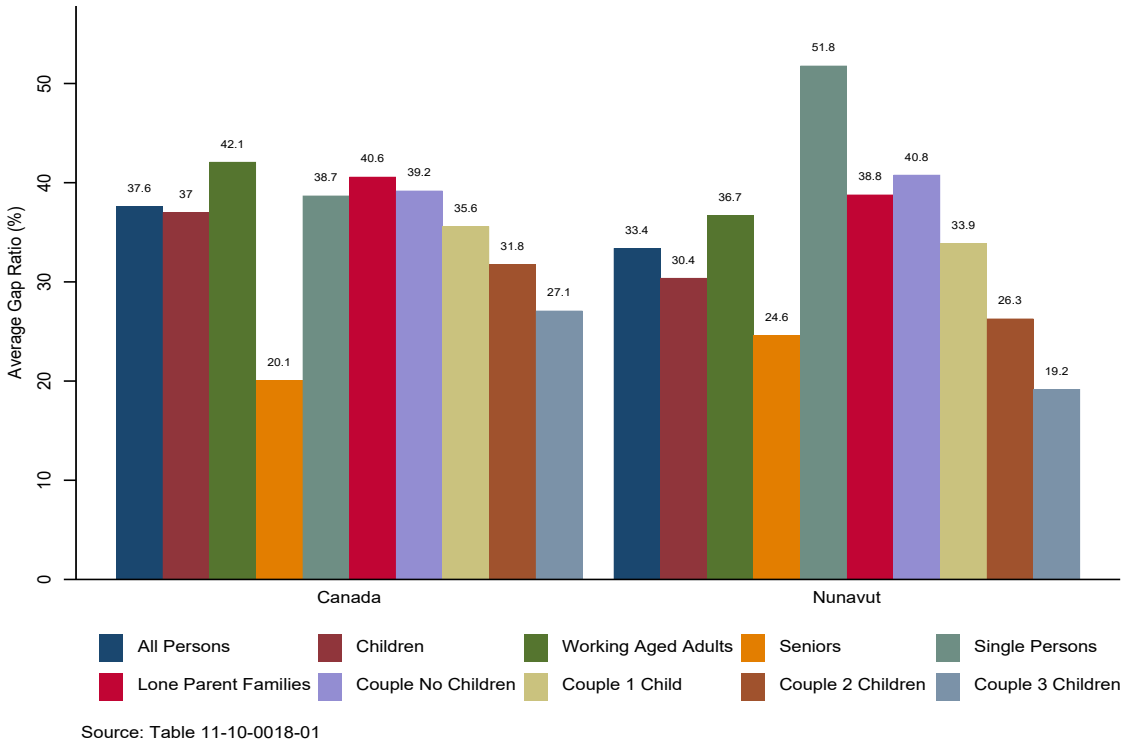
Depths of Income Poverty in Nunavut

We now consider poverty depths across family groups. Poverty depths are measured using the average gap ratio, or the gap between a person's household income and the income threshold used to measure poverty. In the case of the LIM, it is the gap between a person's household income and the income that

is 50% of the median income that year. For the CFLIM-AT, this is measured using after-tax income. The average gap ratio is interpreted such that the bigger the gap, the greater the depth of poverty.[13]

However, as explained in Petit and Tedds (2020), interpreting the average gap ratio over time is potentially problematic. This is best explained with an example. Suppose there are only two families. Family A has an income of $19,000/year and Family B has an income of $15,000/year. Suppose as well that the income poverty threshold is $20,000. Given these incomes, the average gap ratio is 15%. Suppose that due to some policy change, both families receive an extra $1,000. Family A is moved out of poverty with an income of $20,000, and Family B remains in poverty with an income of $16,000. After this policy change, the average gap ratio is 20%—the average gap ratio has gotten worse, but both families have a higher income. Thus, as the average poverty gap increases, it is possible that all families are better off. This occurs because as there is an improvement in poverty reduction—there are fewer families with income below the income threshold, and the number of persons/families over which the average gap ratio is measured decreases. This shortcoming aside, the average gap ratio is useful in assessing how many resources are needed at a point in time to eradicate statistical income poverty through a perfectly targeted cash transfer, like an income tested basic income. For example, an average gap ratio of 15% means that a perfectly targeted cash transfer that is, on average, 15% of the poverty line is needed to eradicate poverty. This provides a sense of the magnitude of the average gap ratio and intensity of poverty.

Figure 17: Average Gap Ratio, By Family Type, Nunavut and Canada



Source: Table 11-10-0018-01

13 More specifically, the average gap ratio is computed as follows: AGR = $\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\frac{(z-y_i)}{z}$ where z is the income threshold, yi is individual i's income, and n is the number of persons/families under the poverty line.

Figure 17 presents average gap ratios by family type for Canada and Nunavut. While poverty rates are higher in Nunavut than in Canada the average gap ratio is generally the same or lower. The one key outlier is the average gap ratio for single persons without children, which in Nunavut exceeds 52%. Here is where caution about the LIM—the poverty measure being used—is warranted. The income threshold is defined as one-half of the median income. In a jurisdiction like Nunavut where costs for every basic need are dramatically higher than in Canada this measure is likely to significantly understate need.

Income poverty statistics in summary

While there is no ideal measure of statistical income poverty for Nunavut, the details presented above present clear information that income poverty in Nunavut is of significant concern. Not only is the overall poverty rate for Nunavut higher than the Canadian rate, but the child poverty rate in Nunavut is also noticeably higher and does not appear to have been responsive to such poverty reduction measures as CCB, which produced large poverty reduction outcomes elsewhere in Canada. It is notable, however, that strides have been made related to the senior poverty rate, suggesting lessons can be learned from policy approaches for this age group. More interesting is the information that presents poverty rates for single working-aged adults in Nunavut as lower than in the rest of Canada. Across the provinces, the poverty rates for single working-aged adults are the highest of any group. It would be informative to be able to present these rates for those who identify as Inuit compared to non-Inuit living in Nunavut; however, the public use CFLIM-AT data do not allow for this. To do so would require access to the tax filer micro data files for Nunavut which are not publicly available. In addition, since the tax filer data dramatically underrepresents those on social assistance to be able to get a better picture of income poverty in Nunavut, tax filer records would need to be supplemented by income assistance data to fill that gap. Given that the CCB is delivered through the tax system, such data linkages would also help explore who is and who is not receiving the CCB in Nunavut which would be an important first step to developing policy recommendations to address this problem.

It is important to note that this does not account for the full range of circumstances faced by Nunavummiut, such as variations in housing, child-care, and other basic service costs, and costs faced by those with a disability, nor does it inform us about cycles of poverty. As a result, we supplement this information with a more detailed discussion of the experiences of Nunavummiut living in poverty, including by linking poverty among Inuit to colonization. The latter suggests that conventional economic data that is used to present detailed information related to well-being is insufficient in Nunavut, and that instead, a comprehensive view of well-being is needed. We now move to a consideration of well-being and need through a multi-dimensional framework.

Lens of Inuit Well-being

The third aspect of our analysis involves supplementing the above picture of income poverty with an assessment of dimensions of poverty through the lens of Inuit well-being. In Section 3, we drew on a three-faceted model of Inuit well-being to outline a series of functionings, capabilities, and associated resources against which to evaluate the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut. In this section, we consider each principle of Inuit well-being—livelihood, personhood, and peoplehood—through this lens,

assessing both the status of their corresponding functionings for Nunavummiut, as well as the extent to which this status is affected by limited capabilities (e.g., substantive freedoms) and resources. While the concept of *niqiqainnarniq* is most closely linked to our consideration of poverty and need, and thus composes the largest piece of this analysis, we also consider key aspects of both *inuusiqattiarniq* and *inuuqatigiingniq.*

Niqiqainnarniq or livelihood

The notion of *niqiqainnarniq* corresponds with two general functionings: the functioning of being sustained (e.g., adequately housed, sufficiently clothed, and well-nourished or having secured collective material needs) and the functioning of being self-reliant in securing the above (i.e., one's livelihood). As noted in Section 3, the direct translation of this term to English is "always having meat," as this was seen as a benchmark for survival and indicator of affluence. Having meat not only meant access to sustenance, but also signified the ability to fulfil other needs. In the present day, money (or the wage economy) serves a similar purpose, though many Inuit continue to engage in the meat economy as well.

In Nunavut today, *niqiqainnarniq* is complicated by several factors, among them a high cost of living, a loss of self-reliance through the meat economy as a result of colonization, and barriers to achieving self-reliance through participation in the wage economy. We discuss these factors below.

Being well-nourished

Being well-nourished invokes the notion of food security, which exists "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Chan et al. 2006; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2021). By contrast, food insecurity is closely linked to poverty and material deprivation, and driving factors include income level, preferences, education, social structure/lifestyle, social problems, country food access/availability, and market food (Chan et al. 2006). While food insecurity is of concern in all cases, particularly given the associated negative health impacts, it is of particular concern for children, where there is a high likelihood of developmental risk. Food security related capabilities include the ability to feed oneself sufficiently and in a way that is nutritious (particularly without compromising other aspects of well-being), the ability to choose among food options, and the ability to access food services in reasonable proximity to one's home.

Prior to contact, Inuit were semi-nomadic, relying on hunting, fishing, and gathering for sustenance. However, colonization and forced resettlement into communities has both compromised hunting practices, as well as introduced Southern foods to Nunavut. Now, the market of food supply available to Nunavummiut contrasts between store-bought food with low nutritional value (often highly processed with high levels of salt, sugar, and fat) and nutrient rich country food. At the same time, food insecurity in Nunavut sits at 77.6%—the highest rate, not only in Canada (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2021),[14] but also when compared to other Indigenous populations in developed nations. Food insecurity is worst among single mothers in Nunavut, over 50% of whom experienced severe food insecurity in 2017/2018

14 There exists no plan at the federal level to address this issue (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2021), though ITK has recently released (in July 2021) a plan aimed at reducing food insecurity for Inuit in Canada (Inuit Nunangat).

(Statistics Canada 2021d). Vitamin intake is particularly low for Inuit women, which impacts health outcomes and can result in complications during pregnancy.

Food insecurity in Nunavut has several dimensions or drivers; however, key factors noted in analyses are low incomes and high costs (Impact Economics 2012, 30; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2021). We consider these dimensions below, with the caveat that standard Canadian food security surveys, upon which the majority of the food security picture in Nunavut is based, do not take into account subsistence harvesting of country food, are largely based on the presence of financial means to purchase store food, and also focus on households as individual units, thus overlooking the interdependence that exists among households through extensive food sharing (Lysenko and Schott 2019). As a result, this information fails to account for a key aspect of Inuit capability with regard to food and sustenance. Thus, in our analysis we also consider complications in access to country foods.

Ability to afford food

Above, we assessed income poverty in Nunavut, and found that a large proportion of Nunavummiut, and Inuit in particular, are living in poverty. While poverty is a significant driver of food insecurity among Inuit (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2021, 16), the ability to afford food is a function of both income level and food prices. In terms of costs, food is on average 2.2 times pricier in Nunavut than elsewhere in Canada, with fresh fruits, vegetables, and dairy showing the highest differential (Nunavut Bureau of Statistics n.d.). In all Nunavut communities for which data exist, with the exception of Iqaluit, the weekly cost of the Revised Northern Food Basket is equal to 24% or more of weekly median income; in some communities, the cost is as high as 37% of weekly median income (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2021, 30). This suggests extraordinarily high costs, especially for those with lower incomes.

Food subsidy programs implemented in Nunavut have come under fire for failing to address high costs, a reality that has sparked local campaigns such as End the Price Hike and Feeding My Family. Nutrition North Canada—a federal program which provides retailers in Northern communities with a subsidy to reduce the price of goods and perishable foods—has received substantial public and academic criticism. In particular, the Auditor General of Canada, following a review of the program, noted that the department responsible for administering the Nutrition North program was not able to confirm whether northern retailers do in fact pass on the full subsidy to consumers (Office of the Auditor General of Canada 2014). Further analyses indicate that rates of food insecurity have actually increased in the territory since the introduction of the program (St-Germain, Galloway, and Tarasuk 2019).

The high cost of store-bought food aside, food security is still made possible in Nunavut today by community networks of Inuit who share country food. However, it is important to note that access to country foods has also been complicated by increasing costs and low incomes. Today, the production of country food requires heavy machinery and hydrocarbon fuels, which can be expensive to import and maintain (Quintal-Marineau 2016). In particular, the financial burden of harvesting country foods is tied to the cost of purchasing, fueling, and maintaining equipment, such as snowmobiles and boats (Lysenko and Schott 2019, 361), as well as the cost of supplies and ammunition.. As a result, hunting and fishing, particularly on a regular basis, is too expensive for many in the Canadian Arctic (Searles 2016).

Ability to make consumption choices based on food preferences (Inuit food sovereignty focus)

Being well-nourished not only rests on the availability of affordable food, but also on the ability to make consumption choices based on food preferences and cultural values. As we alluded to above, food insecurity in Nunavut can be conceptualized not just in relation to the high cost of store bought food, but also in terms of lack of access to country food, such as caribou, seal, fish, beluga, and polar bear (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2021). For Inuit, country food holds not only nutritional value, but also "physical, cultural, spiritual and economic" significance (Chan et al. 2006), particularly given the close link between culture, community, and harvesting activities. Comparing the image of a Nutrition North tag on the Co-op floor to a frozen fish on the floor of a kitchen, Daborn (2017, 52) notes, "unlike the discarded tag […], a frozen fish is an event: It fills stomachs, brings family together, fills a kitchen over the lunch hour, and is a significant site where the sharing of knowledge occurs." Thus, the availability of country food not only enables a diet rich in vitamins, micronutrients, and healthy fats, but also empowers Inuit communities, transmits IQ, promotes the transfer of knowledge, skills, and language, and safeguards tradition (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2019).

Given the importance of country food, Nunavut households still tend to consume a combination of store-bought and country foods, when available, though it is difficult to derive an accurate estimate of the percentage of households that do (Rasing 2017). However, as we note above, access to country foods—and thus choice in consumption—is increasingly an issue. Newell and Doubleday, in partnership with the Community of Chesterfield Inlet (2020) highlight several factors influencing food security as it pertains to country food, including the nutrition transition away from country food due to contaminant concerns, increasing consumption of market foods given availability of store food and diminishing access to country food, changes in family consumption, and rising costs of gas and hunting equipment. Other factors could include diminished stocks (including due to environmental impacts as result of climate change), reduced land-based skills, less time to spend on the land due to participation in the wage economy, and changing tastes (as summarized in Impact Economics 2012, 31).

Finally, of particular significance to ongoing food sovereignty efforts are shifts in desire and skills to harvest, as well as consumption habits. As we note above, over the last several decades, Inuit country food has existed in opposition to food that has been imported from Southern Canada, and the stark contrast between the two categories of food has created tension within Inuit communities. Younger generations of Inuit in particular have developed a preference for store-bought food, leading to a generational devaluation of the practices associated with hunting and country food more generally, also producing what some have termed a nutrition transition. Additionally, Kuhnlein et al. (2004, 2009) have found a gendered shift in consumption, with more women also consuming an increasing amount of store-bought food (as cited in Beaumier, Ford, and Tagalik 2014). Any strategy built upon the notion of Inuit food sovereignty must take these dynamics into account. We return to discussions of self-reliance and Inuit land-based skills, particularly in terms of how they relate to Inuit identity, in the following section on *inuusiqattiarniq,* or personhood.

Being adequately housed

Nunavut is in the midst of a severe housing and homelessness crisis. Indeed, this has been a longstanding issue in the territory. According to Tester (2009), providing sufficient housing for Nunavummiut was "one of the most serious challenges facing the Nunavut government during its first 10 years." Appropriate, safe, and affordable housing is simply out of reach for many households, due to high costs, lack of supply, and poor maintenance. Further, while public housing is provided by the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC), the vacancy rate is 0.2% across social and affordable rental units in Nunavut (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2020). A companion report assesses the housing affordability crisis in Nunavut in greater detail; however, we touch on certain elements here, given the connection between well-being and housing.

It is important to note that the housing crisis in Nunavut can be directly linked to both historical and present-day policies. While current experiences of homelessness and housing need in Nunavut have their roots in displacement—and the attendant strain on agency and ways of life caused by forced relocation—this situation has only been compounded by government failures to supply sufficient affordable housing for Nunavummiut (Lauster and Tester 2014). Before forced resettlement began in the 1950s, Inuit were self-sufficient and thus entirely capable of securing their own housing. Inuit dwellings differed by the season in which they were constructed—summer tents, or *tupiit,* in the summer; snow houses, or *igluit*, in the winter—and followed the migration patterns of wildlife (Christensen 2020). The relocation process underway, early federal government initiatives undertaken throughout the 1960s-1980s were developed with the intent of improving housing supply in Inuit communities, both in Nunavut and elsewhere; however, such initiatives, by and large, produced inadequate and overcrowded dwellings (Riva et al. 2020). Additional programs introduced under the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, such as the Homeownership Assistance Program (1984), and Access to Housing and Down Payment Assistance Program (1997), focused on encouraging homeownership (Tester 2009, 143-144).

In 1993, the federal government announced that it would no longer be funding any long-term social housing across Canada, and the impacts of this decision were significant in Nunavut (Tester 2009, 138). Effects of the federal withdrawal from the social housing sphere were exacerbated by policy decisions made by then-Finance Minister (Northwest Territories) John Todd, including increases to market levels of rents in government-owned facilities, the sale of staff housing, and further home ownership programs (Tester 2009, 144). The 1993 announcement also spurred the creation of several housing authorities and strategies (Christensen 2020). Much of the housing in the North is now administered through territorial housing providers, such as the NHC (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2020).

As is apparent from the above summary, a focus on home ownership is a current that runs throughout housing initiatives in Nunavut, despite lack of cultural resonance, limited job opportunities, and low wages in the territory; in addition to being ineffective, such policies have directed funds away from social housing, and have thus been detrimental to the development of a robust social housing stock (Lauster and Tester 2014).

Ability to afford a home

Housing in Nunavut is unaffordable for many. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2020), the average cost of a two-bedroom unit in Iqaluit is $2,736, which is a price that greatly exceeds those in the capital cities of the other two territories (average rent for a two-bedroom apartment is $1,277 in Whitehorse and $1,744 in Yellowknife). The high cost of housing stems from high land and labour costs, as well as a low supply of land for new construction (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2020).

Forty per cent of all households cannot afford housing at the current market rate. Those who can find housing without assistance usually end up in the rental market, as being able to afford a single-detached home would require a household to have an income around $139,000. As we noted in the previous section, average total income for tax filers in Nunavut was roughly $50,000 in 2017, and thus such housing is likely out of reach for many Nunavummiut. It is also important to consider household composition. Of the lone parent families, 61% are unable to obtain any housing within this market, versus 21% of couples with children (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2020). For Inuit, the profile of the homeless population varies from children to elders, but the basis for their homelessness can be traced to the steep cost of housing relative to incomes (Wright 2019). A recent point-in-time count conducted in four Nunavut communities revealed that the leading cause of becoming homeless was not being able to pay rent or a mortgage; 37% of survey respondents received social assistance, while 26% were employed (Government of Nunavut 2020).

However, to frame Nunavut's housing issues in terms of low incomes relative to the cost of housing is to ignore the historical and ongoing processes that have produced the current reality. In particular, Tester (2009, 139) notes that to frame housing as a market commodity—and thus to problematize housing issues in terms of the inability of most Inuit to earn enough to obtain this commodity—is to ignore the failures, not only of markets to enable Inuit to earn sufficient incomes, but particularly of Canadian state to meet its moral and legal obligation to Inuit. Further, the commodification of housing in Nunavut, as well as broader ideas of home ownership, run counter to Inuit cultural logic and practices built around family, kinship relations, and sharing of resources

Ability to access an appropriate and liveable home

As documented most recently by Mumilaaq Qaqqaq, MP for Nunavut, in "Sick of Waiting" A Report on Nunavut's Housing Crisis (2021), overcrowding is a significant issue in Nunavut, particularly within Inuit households. In all but one community visited by Qaqqaq, the average number of inhabitants per home exceeded the number of usable bedrooms, and in Gjoa Haven, Kugaaruk, and Naujaat, six inhabitants, on average, were required to share three bedrooms. In fact, rates of overcrowding are five to six times higher in Nunavut than in the rest of Canada (Perreault et al. 2020). A lack of available housing is a central cause of overcrowding. According to the NHC (2020, 25), 15 Nunavut communities had critical public housing needs in 2020, meaning that the waiting list for public housing was equal to at least 40% of the current housing stock in these communities. Communities in which housing need as a percentage of stock was above 70% include Kugaaruk (70%), Pond Inlet (70%), Naujaat (79%), and Iqaluit (84%).

Inuit households are large relative to the average household size in Canada: in Nunavut, 19.1% of households consist of over six people (Government of Nunavut 2016) and 30.9% of households consist of more than 5 people (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2020). While it can be said that Inuit kinship values, which reflect broader conceptualizations of the household, also contribute to overcrowding (Rasing 2017; Perreault et al. 2020), the size of existing accommodation does not allow for large, and often multigenerational, families to live together comfortably and safely. Thus, the housing stock in Nunavut is inappropriate for the population it is intended to serve. Further, much of the available housing is not conducive to Inuit carrying out the harvesting activities that are central to well-being: it is difficult for hunters to butcher meat or seamstresses to work on skins in such tight quarters (Qaqqaq 2021). As a result, the housing crisis undermines other aspects of well-being, including the ability of Inuit to meet material needs consistent with cultural practices. Overcrowding is also a public health issue: it can lead to respiratory disease, increased levels of stress (which is linked to increased instances of violence and abuse), and other forms of psychological distress associated with lack of privacy (Lauster and Tester 2014; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2016). Underscoring this fact is the finding that the costs to build and maintain enough decent and affordable housing in the Eastern Arctic have often been far outweighed by the costs of addressing the health problems resulting from homelessness and substandard housing (Lauster and Tester 2014).

In addition to lack of space, Nunavummiut face considerable issues in the quality of housing to which they have access. Many houses have infrastructural problems, including unlevel foundations, dipped ceilings, pipe leakage, and poor insulation from the elements, as well as substantial issues with mould and water damage (Qaqqaq 2021). Climate change has also contributed to the precarious state of housing, not only in Nunavut but in Arctic communities worldwide (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2016; Demer 2019). This is an issue that has existed since construction began in the polar north; however, climate change has accelerated the destruction of roads and houses alike. It is not uncommon for buildings to crack and shift above the melting permafrost (Demer 2019). The high cost of building materials and labor has led to developers taking shortcuts and compromises, which also accelerates the rate of destruction (Christensen 2020).

Low vacancy rates, high costs, and over-crowding are especially harmful for women, elders, those with children, and LGBTQQIA2S+ persons, as well as persons fleeing forms of gender-based violence (GBV), such as intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual abuse. As reported by MP Qaqqaq (2021), there is significant lack of access to safe space for women in Nunavut in particular, and given a low vacancy rate, there are instances of elders living with family members that have abused them physically and verbally. When considered in light of the high rates of sexual assault and IPV in Northern communities, the lack of shelters and second-stage housing in Nunavut means women are often forced to choose between remaining in an abusive context or leaving the community entirely, including to access services (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2019). This often leads to Inuit women heading to urban centres in the South, where they face further housing precarity, displacement, and increased risk of re-victimization.

Finally, Lauster and Tester (2014) contend that lack of belonging and lack of access to the land are important dimensions of Inuit homelessness and housing need not reflected in mainstream indices. In particular, the lack of available housing and the overcrowding this produces can undermine a person's

self-definition and self-image, as well as limit their ability to participate and belong in family and community contexts. Indeed, homelessness as lack of belonging is the most prevalent form recorded in the authors' study, suggesting that the housing crisis in Nunavut is a key driver of other issues in the territory, such as poor mental health, alcoholism, violence, and suicide. We return to these issues in the sections on *Inuusiqattiarniq* (personhood) *and Inuusiqattiarniq* (peoplehood).

Meeting other needs

Utilities

Two other important aspects also drive the high cost of living in Nunavut: utilities and a lack of public transit. Because Nunavut is a cold climate, heating is essential and used year-round. The lack of public transit means that having one's own transportation is essential.

The average price of electricity in Canada is approximately 12.9 cents/kilowatt hour (kW.h); Nunavummiut, on average, pay over 30 cents/kW.h more than the rest of Canadians (Government of Canada 2017b).[15] The high costs can be attributed to the geographical isolation and the low population density of Nunavut's hamlets. There is little commercial incentive to build the extensive energy networks that would be necessary for the cheaper and renewable alternatives that are used in the South (Government of Canada 2016, 2017b). The hamlets, each with their own diesel plants, are not connected to one another via power lines or roads as is the rest of Canada. The lack of a shared transmission grid is also known as "island mode" or a "micro-grid" (Quilliq Power Corporation n.d.). In the case of a power outage, there is no back-up grid available (Government of Canada n.d.). If an outage were to occur, the flow of energy is not able to be rerouted from one hamlet to another to provide a back-up supply of power to the hamlet that is experiencing the power loss. The micro-grids do have emergency generators on hand in case an outage were to occur (Quilliq Power Corporation n.d.).

Further, many Indigenous communities in Canada continue to be denied access to clean, safe, and even affordable drinking water. In Nunavut, the infrastructure used to transport water to communities is aged and damaged: roughly 87% of water treatment facilities and water pump stations in Nunavut are in poor condition (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2020). Further, between January 2015 and October 2020, 35 boil water advisories were issued for Nunavut, affecting 11 communities; as a result, 1580 days—over half of the nearly six-year period—were spent under an advisory (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2020).

Health

The topics discussed above have significant health implications. In the case of housing, issues such as overcrowding tend to affect the most vulnerable. For example, children who reside in houses often have

[15] The Nunavut Electricity Subsidy Program (NESP) reduces fuel prices for residents. The program provides a 50% subsidy based on the fuel rate in Iqaluit (in 2010, this amounted to roughly 60 cents/kW.h) (Lovekin, Dronkers, and Thibault 2016; Nunavut. 2004; Government of Nunavut 2004). This rate was capped at 6 cents/kW.h for residents that live in social housing (Lovekin, Dronkers, and Thibault 2016).

conditions linked to asthma, respiratory tract infections, tuberculosis, and influenza, as well as other injuries. Those who reside in unaffordable housing are more likely to have two or more chronic health conditions, likely due to high exposure to cigarette smoke, which is common in Inuit households (Kohen, Bougie, and Guèvremont 2015). The same can be said for food security. Undoubtedly, the nutritional transition among Inuit has led to poor heath outcomes, namely, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases (Chan et al. 2006; FAO 2013).

The GN provides basic healthcare coverage to its residents through the Nunavut Health Care Plan. It is noteworthy what is not covered under the plan: yearly physicals, physical examinations done at the request of a third party (e.g., preschool medicals, drivers licence examinations, or pre-employment requirements), and dental services. Further, an ineligible service within hospitals is alcohol and drug rehabilitation (Government of Nunavut n.d.-a). The lack of coverage may act as a barrier preventing Inuit from finding employment in the wage economy or ensuring that a child has access to developmentally appropriate education.

Delivering health care services can prove to be tricky due geographical isolation of the hamlets and the sheer size of the territory. Travelling between communities is quite difficult, especially in the winter, which requires travel via air. For non-urgent medical travel, commercial flights are used; however, air ambulances are used for urgent medical travel. Depending on the type of care the patient needs, they will be transported to larger centers located in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, Yellowknife, Ottawa, Churchill, Winnipeg, and Edmonton (Government of Canada 2017a). There are several psychosocial impacts of these medical evacuations. Inuit patients have reported a lack of cultural sensitivity which manifests in feelings of isolation and homesickness. This negatively affects mental health, which can worsen the condition and treatment outcomes of patients (CWP 2021).

Being self-reliant

Poverty in Nunavut is rooted in diminished self-reliance, which is itself the product of the Canadian government's policy of resettlement in the mid-twentieth century and the trauma and loss of culture and ways of life that followed. As noted in Lauster and Tester (2014), Inuit often experienced feelings of being useless following removal from the land and relocation to settlements. Today, self-reliance looks different for Inuit, as it hinges on one's ability to adapt beyond the land-based or meat economy and participate in the wage economy—particularly as the cost of living in Nunavut has become extremely high. This has implications, both for securing a livelihood for oneself and one's family, as well as for the ability of diverse Inuit to participate in society in the ways they may wish to. Speaking to these implications, Ruth, an elder Inuk woman living in the community of Kangiqtugaapik, notes:

> "We were independent at that time. Everyone had roles and responsibilities; everyone had a 'job' to do. It was just a different kind of job where no cash is needed. Now it's all about the money…for bills, for food, for kids, for the house…Even to go out (on the land) you can't rely only on yourself, you need money " (Quintal-Marineau 2017, 340)

Ability to access means to secure a livelihood

For centuries, Inuit were self-reliant, securing a livelihood through subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering, all of which was made possible through deep knowledge of the landscape. Today, Inuit gain the means to secure a livelihood through participation in a mixed economy, which is characterized by a combination of land-based resources (the meat economy) and employment and commodification (the wage economy). The meat economy consists of subsistence activities, such as hunting, fishing, and gathering, as well as the additional skills upon which these activities rely, such as sewing (Quintal-Marineau 2016; McGrath 2018; Statistics Canada 2019c). The formation of the mixed economy is largely the result of the federal government injecting money into Inuit society as a short-term solution to the long-term impacts of colonialism (George W Wenzel 2017). Its development was accelerated in particular by the European seal fur ban and political and governance changes in the 1980s and 1990s (Quintal-Marineau 2017). It is also the result of the commodification of Inuit traditions, knowledge systems, and ways of living. The HBC provides a prime example of this through their exploitation of Inuit through the fur trade and their "development" of Inuit art (George W Wenzel 2017; HBC n.d.). In some senses, though, the mixed economy can also be viewed as successful and even adaptive (Quintal-Marineau 2016).

What makes this mixed system particularly complex are the differing forms of currency found in each economy: country foods in the land-based or meat economy, and money in the wage economy. Importantly, resources and goods produced and harvested in the land-based economy serve two purposes: they can be commodified and sold within the market economy, but they can also be used for subsistence, which is the ultimate goal (Dowsley 2010; Quintal-Marineau 2016). Underpinning the land-based currency is sharing (*niqituinnaq*), which can be considered a form of currency in and of itself, especially within the social economy (George W Wenzel 2017).

Inuit economy and related practices went through many changes as a result of interactions between Inuit and *qablunaaq* (George W Wenzel 2017). A key characteristic of the mixed economy are the flows that move resources throughout the economy as a whole. Accordingly, there are now monetary costs associated with the production of country foods. In light of these costs, wage labor has long been used to support hunting and harvesting activities (George W Wenzel 2017). However, as we discussed in the previous section, cost is increasingly a barrier to harvesting. In particular, the cost of supplies to support harvesting has been increasing, while the value that the products yield is decreasing (Dowsley 2010). Yet, the returns gained (*niqituinnaq*) can still far exceed the monetary costs. For example, in addition to the social, cultural, and spiritual significance of country foods discussed above, recent research points to a "hidden economy" associated with locally harvested food worth $143 million dollars and 135 kilograms of meat per Nunavummiut per year (Anselmi 2019).

Though Nunavut's economy is mixed, paid work is difficult to find, due to few industries and a fixed number of positions in the wage economy. Thus, self-reliance is complicated both by a loss of land-based sustenance, as well as limited options to secure a livelihood in alternative ways. As we outline in our consideration of labour force statistics, this is an issue for Inuit in particular (the employment rate among Inuit is 44.8% compared to 89.1% among non-Inuit). Over half of Nunavummiut are employed in the Government and Education sector.

While we observe that the employment rate remains lower for women than for men, additional research suggests that the position of Inuit women in Nunavut is becoming increasingly strong—a finding that is consistent with that which has been observed across Arctic communities (Quintal-Marineau 2017). In particular, the labour force status of Inuit women in Nunavut has changed significantly over the past 25 years when compared to that of Inuit men, with greater increases in both participation and employment rates, and larger decreases in the unemployment rate; women's earnings have also increased relative to men's (Quintal-Marineau 2017, 337-338). However, and as we highlight above, median income is still lower and social assistance income higher for women when compared to men.

Underlying these trends could be gender differences in attitudes towards wage labour. While Inuk men indicated that work served to provide for material needs (e.g., the purchase of a Ski-Doo), but was otherwise of little value (instead affecting freedom and flexibility to go out on the land, for example), women both expressed that participation in paid work constituted a way to express oneself or was a marker of identity, as well as showed greater flexibility and openness to differences in the paid workforce (Quintal-Marineau 2017, 341-342). It is also noteworthy that the employment opportunities that do exist in Nunavut, particularly those in the Government and Education sector, as well as those in health and care, are more closely aligned with traditional roles of Inuk women (Quintal-Marineau 2017)

Ability to choose among mechanisms/contribution options

There is also a broader question of choice underpinning self-reliance. That is, it is not clear if Inuit truly have full access to the participation options they may desire—whether this means contributing to the land-based economy through hunting and other harvesting activities or participating in the wage economy through paid employment. We consider this below.

Though Nunavut's economy is mixed—that is, a blend of land-based and wage economies—there exists an inherent power imbalance between the two. This dynamic will only be reinforced as land-based livelihoods become less feasible, particularly in the face of climate change, rising harvesting costs, and Canadian interests in the North. Indeed, there is also a substantial opportunity cost related to participation in the land-based economy—a cost that was not present in the past. In particular, Inuit must now have both the money and the time to engage in these activities, and since employment in the wage economy is necessary to earn an income, the amount of time an individual has to engage in the land-based economy is significantly limited (Quintal-Marineau 2016; George W Wenzel 2017).

The disconnect between the meat and wage economies has often led Inuit to forgo participation in wage labour. According to the APS (2017), approximately 30% of Inuit in Canada aged 25 to 54, chose to not participate in the economy or were discouraged from participating in the economy due to the belief that there was no "suitable" work for them. On the other hand, 85% of Inuit aged 25 to 54 participated in at least one land-based activity in the year preceding the survey; many participated in activities several times a week (Statistics Canada 2019c).

In terms of the wage economy, opportunities can be limited. Oftentimes, waged positions will only become available if someone passes away or moves, both of which are unlikely. This dynamic places pressures on Inuit who can find employment, particularly those in subordinate positions within the

family such as young women who may find it more difficult to refuse sharing (Quintal-Marineau 2016). Further, limited access to university-level education serves as a barrier to accessing certain careers (e.g., teaching) and stands in the way of promotion within others, thus placing bounds on earnings. This reality is particularly evident in the public sector, where Inuit compose the majority of GN and municipal government employees, as well as 40% of Government of Canada workers, yet are not well-represented in management positions.

Additional factors, such as responsibility for care and reproductive work, further complicate access to paid employment for Inuit women in particular. In our consideration of labour market dynamics, we note a penalty with regard to a mother's earnings following the birth of a child—and one that is passed on intergenerationally to daughters. At 22%, Nunavut's rate of licensed childcare coverage was among the lowest in Canada in 2018 (Macdonald 2018), while coverage for children aged 0 to 5 across regulated and unregulated spaces was not much higher in 2020, at 35% (this is the lowest rate across provinces and territories, and also lower than the national rate of 52%) (Statistics Canada 2021b). In some communities, there are long childcare waitlists relative to the population size: GN studies estimate that roughly 700 people are on a waitlist in Iqaluit (Burke 2018), for example. In addition, there was only one Inuktitut daycare in Iqaluit as of 2019 (Frizzell 2019), which suggests that access to culturally-appropriate care is particularly limited.

The dearth of childcare spaces in Nunavut has produced labour market impacts for both men and women, with many Nunavummiut reporting they were forced to end training or miss substantial portions of work placements to watch children in their community, and others indicating that lack of childcare has prevented them from accessing the jobs they desire (Burke 2018; Hill 2019). However, the consequences are especially pronounced for Inuit women, with reports citing lack of access to accessible, affordable, and quality childcare as the most significant barrier to their economic participation (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2016).

Inuusiqattiarniq or personhood

The notion of *inuusiqattiarniq*—having good personal well-being—corresponds with the functionings of having a strong sense of self, being skilled, working toward one's potential, and living in accordance with Inuit *maligait*. In pursing *inuusiqattiarniq*, Inuit rely heavily on cultural and linguistic tradition, as well as on opportunities to learn and gain skills, not just formally through training at an educational institution, but as importantly, from one's elders and through experiences on the land.

Today, many Inuit face substantial barriers to pursing and attaining *inuusiqattiarniq*, including a lack of connection to culture and language, inter-generational trauma, and limited opportunity. These dynamics undermine the ability of Inuit to develop a sense of self, spanning self-confidence, an idea of one's potential, and a sense of one's role in community. In the following section, we consider these elements of *inuusiqattiarniq* alongside the historical and ongoing factors which complicate the ability of Inuit to attain them.

Having a strong sense of self

Ability to build a sense of self and to understand one's role

Kral et al. (2014) outlines the ways in which Inuit resilience is both individually rooted (i.e., linked to notions of being part of nature and connected to the land), as well as secured through community networks and kinship ties. Inuit ideas of the self and one's role were traditionally shaped in relation to the land and the knowledge and skills required to thrive in such contexts. Such capacities were developed in a relational manner: they were passed down by elders and then honed through practice. This understanding of Inuit selfhood aligns with that articulated by Inuk elder, Aupilarjuk, and presented in McGrath (2018).

As summarized in Quintal-Marineau (2017), Inuit took up distinct but complementary gender roles, both equally vital to subsistence, within this context: while men hunted, women maintained the household, performing child care, cooking, supplying food by gathering herbs and berries, preparing meats and skins, and manufacturing clothing (including that which was necessary for the hunt). However, following several waves of contact and eventual resettlement—what Wenzel (1991) termed the dawn of the government era—roles, responsibilities, and livelihoods began to change, complicating Inuit self-perceptions and ideas of one's place in the world, and leading in particular to increased cases of suicide (Kral et al. 2014).

Today, Nunavummiut continue to experience in their communities the devastating impacts of high rates of suicide, addiction, and incarceration (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013c, 74), as well as family or domestic violence (Conroy, Burczycka, and Savage 2019). Suicide rates are of epidemic concern and sit at roughly 10 times the Canadian average (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018); relatively high rates among young males are especially concerning (Kral 2013). As we suggest above, these dynamics are a direct result of forced resettlement, residential schools, and other processes of colonialization, and reflect the extent to which inter-generational trauma continues to shape the lives of Inuit. In particular, a connection can be made between the above context and the barriers that Inuit face in establishing a sense of self and purpose within their communities, particularly as they navigate a mixed economy and Western institutions.

A loss of connection to culture through land-based livelihoods has been especially damaging for male Inuit. While males have struggled to adjust to a mixed economy, perhaps due to few analogs for harvest-based roles within the wage economy, women have in some ways been able to transition more easily to jobs within the public service, as well as care and service-related professions, and see participation in the wage economy as amplifying of personal identity (Quintal-Marineau 2017).

Tenuous cultural ties also underlie diminishing understandings of Inuit *maligait*, which refers to the fundamental natural laws for Inuit, as well as weak ties to elders and family members. For example, Kral et al. (2014) identifies that few Inuit youth today receive mentorship or counsel from elders in their communities, while relationships between children and parents are also tenuous and characterized by avoidance by both parties. We return to this point below in considering its impacts on knowledge transfer and training, as well as in the following section on *inuuqatigiingniq*, or peoplehood.

Finally, it bears repeating that the negative ideas of self and poor mental health overall that are prevalent among Inuit (and youth in particular) are also linked to poor material conditions. Specifically, overcrowded housing and food insecurity were identified as risk factors for suicide among Inuit in Nunavut (Affleck 2020), and additional research has established links between experiences of housing precarity, core housing need, and homelessness, on the one hand, and reduced self-esteem, pride, and ability to participate in society according to one's vision for oneself (Lauster and Tester 2014). Indeed, many of the experiences considered in Lauster and Tester (2014) indicate that Inuit value having a place of their own, as it represents a crucial aspect of self-definition, and is linked to belonging and contributing as an individual within a broader community.

Being skilled and working toward one's potential

Ability to access skills, knowledge, education, and training

The ability both to conceive of one's potential, as well as to access the training, skills, and knowledge to achieve it, is fundamentally linked to notions of self-confidence and self-knowledge. In the absence of this, many Inuit remain caught between two worlds (that of Inuit and that of *qablunaaq*) and their respective knowledge systems, practices, and economies, ultimately lacking both a connection to Inuit ways, as well as real opportunities within the Western institution that is the wage economy in Nunavut. Below, we examine the extent to which Inuit have access to the opportunities and relationships to be able to develop skills and knowledge, broadly conceived. We also consider the tensions that exist between land- and language-based training, on the one hand, and credential-focused training within the Western educational paradigm, on the other.

Skill development, whether in relation to the land, language, or other core practices, is highly relational for Inuit, with the transference of skills taking place through kinship relations and particularly through learning from elders and parents, who are considered to be key mentors. Time spent on the land is associated with cultural strength, spirituality, intergenerational continuity, and kinship; considered alongside the skills gained in such contexts, this suggests how access to the land and relationships are fundamental to Inuit well-being (Salusky et al. 2021). However, and as we have discussed throughout the paper, these processes have been complicated by colonization, forced relocation, and inter-generational trauma. In particular, research finds that there is now limited connection between youth and their parents and elders (Kral et al. 2014). Further, Inuit youth are increasingly forced to contend with competing forms of education, knowledge, and skill building. Binary conceptualizations of Inuit and Western/Southern knowledge, particularly within a settler-colonial context, have produced significant tensions within educational systems in Nunavut. As a result, outcomes are poor according to Western metrics, experiences are largely negative for Inuit youth within the system, and fewer youth are receiving training in land-based skills and Inuktitut language.

Engagement in the K-12 educational system, as well as participation in post-secondary education or training, is lower in Nunavut than elsewhere in Canada. Regarding participation in post-secondary, Nunavut does not have its own university, which means that most Inuit seeking a university degree are

forced to move away from their communities and attend a Southern institution.[16] This is a key barrier. In addition, according to the 2016 Census only 44% of Inuit have completed high school or above. While completion rates have increased over the last two decades, the increase has been slow and incomplete. This outcome must be understood within the context of historical trauma detailed by the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (Qikiqtani Inuit Association 2013c) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015), particularly when considering the role of government-run schooling as a tool of colonization and violence. Indeed, despite recent efforts to move beyond assimilationist models, in many ways the educational system in Nunavut has yet to be decolonized (Berger 2014; McKechnie 2021). In addition to the trauma that continues to play out in such spaces, factors such as overcrowding, food insecurity, violence and bullying, and high stress levels among youth also contribute to poor attendance and completion among Inuit youth (Kral 2013; Kral et al. 2014). Regarding experiences of Inuit youth within the school system, one Inuk mother, whose daughter now attends college in the south, said the following:

> "Alone and in school, they do not address that it is OK to be Inuk. Inuit are constantly treated lesser than their southern peers. These southern peers develop ideas and preconceived notions of Inuit being less human, less intelligent, less capable, and are 'ghetto,' and are told they will not get anywhere in life. […] It creates an environment where Inuit become uncomfortable and feel unwanted. They develop in this environment and that leads to feeling a lack of purpose in life further on" (Nunatsiaq News 2019).

Despite the obvious barriers for Inuit youth to both educational achievement and participation in post-secondary, many of Nunavut's institutions continue to prioritize Western credentials in hiring—a fact which underscores the value hierarchy which exists between Inuit knowledge, on the one hand, and the Western paradigms that characterize the educational system in Nunavut, on the other. Considered alongside the negative experiences of Inuit youth in the school system, as well as weakened kinship ties, this hierarchy has inevitable consequences for transference of Inuit knowledge, skills, and language. The impacts of this are not only material, but cultural and social as well.

Building on literature which points to changes in traditional modes of skills transmission, observation, and apprenticeship, Pearce et al. (2011) find lower levels of mastery among younger Inuit in Ulukhaktok, a community in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in Northwest Territories. Forced to negotiate their cultural identities within a Western colonial context, young Inuit must balance the importance of tradition and time on the land with the knowledge that their economic futures are increasingly tied to participation in the wage economy, and thus their success in Western educational contexts which draw little, if at all, from Inuit knowledge (Salusky et al. 2021). It is likely that these dynamics also characterize the Nunavut context. This shift and declining rates of land skills and environmental knowledge transmission will inevitably impact material well-being and livelihoods, as well, and will have particular implications for future access to country food in Inuit communities.

Language transferral is another area in which such trends are apparent. For example, although Inuktitut is the mother tongue of the vast majority of Inuit in Nunavut, only 61.8% of the population speak it. This

16 Nunavut Arctic College is the only option for higher education, and offers several degrees (law, nursing, education) in collaboration with Southern universities. Current ITK president, Natan Obed, has recently said that the creation of an Inuit university is a priority.

proportion continues to decrease, as each year fewer Nunavummiut report that they speak the language. By contrast, 90% of the population has knowledge of the English language.[17] Only 5.7% of the population does not have knowledge of either the English or French language.

It is evident that, moving forward, Inuit will require expanded access to both Western credentials and training as well as Inuit knowledge, land skills, and language training; however, Western systems in particular—including K-12 education and credential-oriented training—must be reimagined, with Inuit language, values, and ways of knowing driving this transformation.

Inuuqatigiingniq or peoplehood

Inuuqatigiingniq refers to living or being together in kinship. It reflects having good spousal and kinship relations, as well as acting with integrity within community and working together through reciprocal relationships. Strong family and particularly spousal relationships are viewed as the foundation for a healthy collective that is capable of working together in a united way, including in the face of adversity.

Having strong relationships

Ability to form and nurture strong relationships

Inuit and Western systems exist in opposition to one another. Western systems tend to be information-oriented, prioritizing the transmission of knowledge through books, texts, and material, while Inuit systems are relationship-oriented, prioritizing people, kinship relations, and knowledge keepers. As a result, within Inuit systems, knowledge and information transmission is often built on the foundation of relationships. Efforts are made to ensure that relationships are cultivated and maintained, which creates space for the transmission of living histories (McGrath 2018).

The importance of forming strong family foundations (*ilagiittiarniq*) is instilled in Inuit children from a very young age. As told by Aupilarjuk, there is strength in unity. Family members should be able to rely on one another when in need. This is especially true within the spousal relationship, which is said to be both essential and foundational. Within this relationship, the husband and wife have a duty to both have and care for children, to have a healthy relationship, and to secure enough resources to support their family unit. These duties cannot be separated from one another; it is hoped that if spouses are facing difficulty in fulfilling these duties that they can draw on another to unite them (McGrath 2018)

While Inuit value self-reliance significantly, one cannot achieve this without a strong family foundation, whether this be with a spouse, sibling, or parent. With healthy relationships, an individual should always have access to support; however, current policies place constraints on the type and amount of support family is able to offer. Feelings of frustration and acts of violence can occur when an individual does not have a support system to rely upon. The historical trauma associated with colonization has weakened Inuit family structures and the relationships that compose them.

17 Few people in Nunavut report having knowledge of the French language, which is likely an outcome of Nunavut's English-dominated school system (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, and Dunbar 20196).

Processes of colonization, such as residential schools and resettlement, have disrupted and destroyed the very links through which Indigenous culture was taught and maintained. The removal of children from their families meant that many grew up without having the knowledge or skills necessary to foster a nurturing environment within their own households (Hanson, Gamez, and Manuel 2020). This trauma has led to high rates of substance abuse, and domestic violence. The domestic violence that occurs in Inuit households is deeply rooted in colonialism—that is, violence is rooted in trauma and systemic injustice. In addition to undermining the strength and importance of Inuit relationships, colonialism has also created a culture of "social distress," which manifests in intergenerational disconnect and violence, among a host of other issues (Kral et al. 2011; McGrath 2018). The introduction of institutional learning and the nine-to-five workday within the wage economy has contributed to a stark change in relationship dynamics. The industrialized clock has led to the majority of the household being away for long periods of time, which has had damaging effects on the transmission of Inuktut culture and living histories. While children can be exposed to IQ through schools, it is important to remember that these sites are colonial constructs which prioritize colonial epistemologies (McGrath 2018)

Violence has become prevalent in schools across Nunavut. As is the case with domestic violence, educators believe that school-based violence is a result of ongoing colonial trauma that has gone unaddressed (Murray 2021a). Recent data suggests that there were over 1000 incidents of violence during the 2019-2020 school year. The altercations in these situations do not only involve students, as there have been instances of student-teacher violence, as well (Murray 2021b). The high levels of violence also stem from a lack of access to mental health services within the territory. Students are severely underserved—there are only five guidance counsellors in the territory—and this lack of services is likely also a factor contributing to Nunavut's high youth suicide rate (Murray 2021a).

Since relationships are vital to Inuit, well-being is closely tied to the presence and health of family and kinship relationships. In fact, problems within the household were frequently cited by Inuit youth as a reason for suicidal ideation; though, the most common cause of suicidality stemmed from problems in romantic relationships (Kral et al. 2011). The changes that occurred within relationships, both romantic and familial, often create difficult situations affecting the strength of the relationship. This could include decreased communication or visitation, especially intergenerationally (Kral et al. 2011). It was common for Inuit in Aupilarjuk's generation to have arranged marriages, but this practice is uncommon among younger generations (McGrath 2018). In previous generations, when parents had more involvement in their children's relationships, youth could turn to them for support; however, this is less frequently the case in contemporary love relationships. Given a lack of support, from both parents and mental health professionals, trouble in romantic relationships can produce devastating consequences for youth in Nunavut (Kral et al. 2011).

Working together

Ability to build strong community ties based on reciprocity

Inuit societal values of *piliriqatigiinniq* and *ikajuqtigiinniq*, which have traditionally formed the basis of how Inuit live in community with one another, reflect the notion of working together for a common cause—a notion that is central to Inuit well-being. While these values remain central to Inuit conceptions

of the good life, they are complicated by trauma, and are difficult to carry out within highly individualized Western institutions and structures. Thus, it is impossible to ignore the extent to which colonization, the imposition of Western forms of governance (i.e., liberal democratic, bureaucratic, technocratic, etc.), and the prominence of the wage economy have impacted how values of sharing and reciprocity are enacted today.

One example of this concerns evolving practices related to country food. As harvesting costs have increased, hunters have also started to sell country food to other community members (Beaumier, Ford, and Tagalik 2014; Searles 2016). This reflects not only the increased cost of harvesting, but also potential changes to attitudes among Inuit about sharing systems. Within this context, researchers have observed a tension among Inuit: while some have become open to selling and buying country food, particularly as a means to subsidize an increasingly unaffordable harvesting tradition, others see country food markets as undermining what it means to be Inuk, creating tendencies of stinginess and hoarding (Searles 2016). Yet, additional research (in particular, a study of Inuit hunters in Clyde River) has found a refusal among community members to turn country food into a commodity to be bought and sold, as well as stigmatization of those who attempted to engage in such practices (Harder and Wenzel 2012, cited in Searles 2016). Additional ways in which societal dynamics are changing in Nunavut, particularly among Inuit, are detailed in (Pfeifer and Redfern 2021).

Finally, the power dynamics which characterize key sites of collaboration, such as government systems, undermine the Inuit value of working together. In the previous section on self-reliance and livelihoods, we noted that within the wage economy there exist 'career ceilings' for many Inuit given lack of post-secondary training. As a result—and despite the fact that half of GN staff are Inuit—few Inuit hold positions of authority and decision-making power. This means that organizational strategies, as well as institutional processes, programs, and approaches, remain driven by those trained in Western and Southern contexts, as thus inevitably reflect their biases. The implications of this include that Inuit must face ongoing dynamics of colonialism and cultural erasure within key institutions, including what was meant to be an Inuit government, as per the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. It is impossible to deny that such a reality complicates and indeed makes extremely difficult the pursuit of working together towards a common objective—particularly in the face of the tensions and pressures we highlight throughout this paper. Moreover, this raises another tension, this time between the importance to Inuit of upholding the legitimacy of the GN (given what it symbolizes), and the detrimental impacts on Inuit of GN processes and structures, which are colonial and imbued with the worst of Western/Southern governmental logics.

Conclusion

In this paper we have considered the state and nature of poverty in Nunavut through a multi-dimensional analysis, which enabled us to assess both the prevalence of income poverty (e.g., poverty rates and depths), as well as broader experiences of poverty and need among Nunavummiut from the vantage of a three-dimensional model of Inuit well-being. At the outset of the paper, we noted that we intended to pursue our analysis in the context of three distinct questions: (I) who are Nunavummiut and what are the material and other factors which characterize their multi-dimensional lives; (II) what are

the historical and present-day processes, dynamics, knowledge systems, and power structures that have shaped—and continue to shape—the lives of Inuit, as well as Nunavummiut more broadly; and (III) what do the concepts of 'poverty' and 'well-being' signify to Inuit, and how do Inuit imagine future possibilities in their communities. With the above in mind, what have we learned?

First, taken on its own (and despite shortcomings related to the data), income poverty in Nunavut is concerning, especially among Inuit. Areas of concern include the prevalence of low incomes (particularly in relation to extremely high living costs), child poverty rates (which do not appear to have been responsive to the CCB), and income inequality. However, senior poverty was one area in which better outcomes were observed.

We also presented substantial information about well-being and need in the Nunavut context, and highlighted several issue areas, among them high costs to secure basic needs (e.g., food, housing, utilities), barriers to food security through diminishing access to country food, and substantial problems with living conditions spanning overcrowding, infrastructural concerns, repair needs, and mould and water damage. Additional areas of concern include lack of employment and income-generating opportunities, a high suicide rate (particularly among young Inuk males), tenuous family and community connections, issues within the educational system, and high rates of violence, abuse, and addiction. Further, we made sure that such information was considered from a historical, structural, and intersectional perspective. These analytical tools allowed us to uncover information regarding differences in gender roles and gendered experiences of present-day Nunavut (among them the wage economy), as well as important generational differences that could serve to complicate efforts at reconciling Inuit ways of being with Western notions going forward. They also allowed us to situate present-day poverty and strains on Inuit well-being within the context of colonization, forced resettlement, and ongoing trauma and violence.

What distinguishes this paper from much of the poverty research, including that which has been conducted on the Nunavut context, is the fact that we opted to place an Inuit theory of well-being at the conceptual core of our analysis. Not only did this enable us to consider poverty and need in a more expansive and culturally appropriate way, but it also revealed a great deal about the interconnectedness of aspects of material well-being, self-reliance, connection to culture, shared history, and traditional knowledge, relationships between people and the land, and the presence of personal and community strife. We would suggest that future assessments of poverty in Nunavut employ a similar model, though we also recognize *The Makimaniq Plan 2* as a positive document, particularly given its focus on healing, participatory nature, and consideration of poverty within structural and historical processes and dynamics.

The most significant insights gained through the analysis conducted in this paper pertain to the tensions that underpin notions of Inuit well-being in the Nunavut context—present and future. While Inuit in Nunavut have, since colonization, been forced to bridge their systems and ways of living with the logics and structures of the Western/Southern colonizing forces, the situation that exists in Nunavut today suggests that many Inuit, particularly Inuit youth, are stuck between two worlds, without a foothold in either. Across contexts and institutions—whether they are governmental, educational, material, etc.—Inuit contend with navigating systems that were structured with the erasure of their culture and ways of

being in mind. Yet, Inuit at the same time accept ownership of their futures and have for decades approached this struggle with pragmatism and resilience. Any consideration of changes to social and economic policy, including those which concern the Income Assistance system, must be taken with these tensions in mind. A policy which further embeds Western approaches to provision will do nothing to support Inuit in Nunavut, while failure to improve systems to deliver adequate support—in whatever form that support takes—will mean that Inuit well-being will continue to suffer.

That said, we would suggest a few things about a GBI for the Nunavut context. First, it is evident that responding to the above issues and building towards better outcomes for Nunavummiut (and Inuit in particular) will require a multi-pronged approach, spanning a decolonization of systems and programs (governmental, educational, etc.), increased support for community healing, relationship building, and transmission of Inuit culture, language, and values, and comprehensive reforms to social housing policy, to name only a few policy areas. Setting that to one side, reforms to or expansions of the Income Assistance system, including through a GBI program must be considered based on the above dynamics. At this point we are cautious about the GBI approach, particularly given the tensions that exist within Nunavut society along inter-generational and gender lines. Indeed, if implemented too hastily, such a program could serve to reinforce existing divisions and tensions. Further, a GBI on its own would fail to reduce multi-dimensional poverty in the territory given the acute need for substantial and ongoing investments in a host of basic services, such as housing, broadband, healthcare, transportation, childcare, and GBV supports, and the infrastructure and trained staff required to maintain them.

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