Near the Floe Edge: Inuit Women's Role in the Nunavut Mixed Economy

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April 2016

A thesis submitted to McGill University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

For decades, the lives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women have been surrounded with silence (Klein and Ackerman 1995b). While northern research is rapidly expanding at the turn of this century, very little attention is been paid to northern women's roles. Recognizing the growing gap of knowledge regarding Inuit women and their activities, the primary aim of this thesis is *to understand Inuit women's roles within the transformed socioeconomic environment of Nunavut*. My analysis demonstrates that transformations in gender roles in contemporary Nunavut are highly connected to ongoing demographic and economic transformations, and therefore offers significant insight into how present and anticipated socioeconomic transformations may affect Inuit economy and society. My key findings expand current research in other Arctic regions and suggest that the ongoing changes in the north are producing very different gendered responses.

My study brings together the literatures on women and work, the sociocultural approach of work, provisioning theories, and gendered roles, power and relations. I draw important conceptual elements from these bodies of literature to guide my research objectives and analysis. As this research is concerned with making Inuit women's work and roles more visible within the northern economy, I gather data using a mixed methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative information. The research took place in Clyde River, Nunavut, where I conducted extensive fieldwork, over a period of six months, using semi-structured interviews, economic diaries, life history calendar and time usage chart to develop a comprehensive account of Inuit women's contributions in subsistence, domestic and wage work.

My thesis addresses three specific objectives. The first is *to provide a deeper understanding of the changing labour markets and related opportunities for Inuit women in contemporary Nunavut*. This objective focuses on internal dynamics and structural changes in employment in the Nunavut territory over the last four decades. In my analysis of Inuit women's work I specifically demonstrate that the combination of wage-work, domestic and land-related work forms a unique framework that captures the specificity of northern women's work. I argue that when women's employment is examined through socioeconomic and sociocultural factors, this analysis reveals similarities between the experiences of Inuit women from Clyde River and

those of other Arctic regions. A core argument I make is that the ways women and men engaged in work-related activities are deeply connected to social relationships, economic mechanisms and to the organization of norms, expectations and obligations in Inuit culture.

My second objective is *to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of the Inuit mixed economy*. Here, I scale down my investigation of women's roles to look at their provisioning responsibilities in their household and among other relatives and friend's households. I show that Inuit women are increasingly becoming the main monetary providers for their household and, concomitantly, are experiencing an increase in their provisioning responsibilities.

My third objective is *to assess the effects of economic transformations on gender roles and power*. My investigation reveals that wage-work is both experienced as empowering and disempowering by female participants depending on broader social dynamics. For a great number of female participants the development of a wage economy has meant new opportunities and greater control over household resources. However for others, waged employment had translated into increased obligations towards their family and little to no control over household resources and decision making. Results from my doctoral thesis also highlight the fact that contemporary economic dynamics in the Canadian north affect women and men differently depending on their geographical location and, because of the social heterogeneity of Inuit culture, due to a range of sociocultural norms and expectations.

Résumé

Durant des décennies, les vies des femmes autochtones des Premières Nations, Métis et Inuites sont passées sous le silence. Alors même que la recherche nordique est en pleine expansion, peu d'attention est portée aux rôles des femmes nordiques. Cette thèse vise à palier à ce manque de connaissance sur la place des femmes inuites dans leur société et sur leurs activités, en cherchant *à comprendre le rôle des femmes inuites dans l'environnement socio-économique en transformation du Nunavut*. Mon analyse démontre que des changements dans les rôles de genre au Nunavut contemporain sont directement reliés aux transformations démographiques et économiques en cours. La thèse offre un examen significatif des changements socio-économiques actuels et anticipés qui influent sur l'économie et la société inuite. Mes principales conclusions élargissent de façon significative les recherches en cours dans d'autres régions arctiques et suggèrent que les changements en cours engendrent des réponses très différentes en fonction du genre.

Mon étude s'articule autour d'un corpus varié de théories, incluant d'une part les écrits sur les femmes et le travail, les approches socioculturelles du travail, la théorie de l'approvisionnement et, d'autre part, sur la question du genre dans les rapports et relations de pouvoir. Je puise d'importants éléments d'analyse de ces théories afin de guider l'atteinte de mes objectifs de recherches. Comme cette thèse vise à mettre en lumière le rôle des femmes inuites dans l'économie nordique, j'ai privilégié une approche méthodologique mixte afin de recueillir à la fois des données qualitatives et quantitatives. La recherche de terrain s'est échelonnée sur une période de six mois dans la communauté de Clyde River, Nunavut. Au moyen d'entrevues semi-dirigées, de journaux économiques, de chartes de temps et de calendriers de vie personnel j'ai élaboré un compte rendu exhaustif de la contribution des femmes inuites aux moyens de subsistance, au travail domestique et salarié.

Ma thèse répond à trois objectifs spécifiques de recherche. Mon premier objectif est *d'approfondir notre compréhension des changements dans l'économie de marché contemporaine au Nunavut et les opportunités qu'ils offrent pour les femmes inuites*. À travers cet objectif je m'attarde particulièrement aux dynamiques internes de même qu'aux changements structurels au

sein du marché de l'emploi dans le territoire du Nunavut, et ce au cours des quatre dernières décennies. À travers mon analyse, je démontre que la spécificité du travail des femmes inuites se situe à l'intersection du travail salarié, des responsabilités domestiques et de la contribution aux activités de subsistance. Ensemble ces trois 'formes de travail' constituent un cadre d'analyse unique qui caractérise le rôle des femmes inuites. Je soutiens dans cette thèse que les facteurs socio-économiques et socioculturels qui définissent le travail des femmes de Clyde River révèlent des similitudes entre ces expériences et celles documentées dans d'autres régions de l'Arctique. Un argument central que je développe dans cette thèse est que l'engagement des femmes et des hommes dans les différentes formes de travail est profondément définit par les relations sociales et les mécanismes économiques, de même que par l'organisation des normes, des attentes et des obligations dans la culture inuite.

Mon deuxième objectif est de *construire une analyse exhaustive des responsabilités d'approvisionnement des femmes dans le contexte de l'économie mixte inuite*. Ici, je réduis mon échelle d'analyse pour examiner le rôle des femmes comme pourvoyeuses au sein de leur ménage et des ménages de leurs proches. Je démontre que les femmes inuites sont de plus en plus le principal soutien financier pour leur famille et, parallèlement, voient leurs responsabilités croitre.

Mon troisième objectif est *d'évaluer les effets des transformations économiques sur les rôles et relations, et la distribution du pouvoir entre les sexes*. Mon enquête révèle que pour un grand nombre de participantes le développement du marché du travail a entraîné de nouvelles opportunités et un contrôle accru sur les ressources du ménage. Dans ces cas le travail salarié a permis aux femmes de renforcer leurs capacités et constitue une forme d'autonomisation (*empowerment*). Toutefois, d'autres cas montrent que le travail salarié s'est traduit par une augmentation des obligations de certaines participantes envers leur famille et peu ou pas de contrôle sur les ressources du ménage et la prise de décision. Pour ces femmes la participation au marché de l'emploi était davantage perçue comme une contrainte qui limitait leur capacité d'action (*disempowerment*). Les résultats de ma thèse mettent également en évidence le fait que les dynamiques économiques contemporaines dans le Nord canadien ont des effets très différents sur les femmes et les hommes selon leur emplacement géographique et ce en raison de l'hétérogénéité de la culture inuite, et d'une série de normes et d'attentes socioculturelles.

Acknowledgements

When I decided to engage in a PhD project, I knew that I wanted to work in the North *with* people. All this became possible after a conversation with George Wenzel who agreed to take me as a PhD student. First and foremost, I want to thank George for making these five years a stimulating intellectual challenge and for sharing as many teas and stories as were required to advance to the next stage. George's generosity and humanism allowed me to get through two difficult events during those years – I doubt that I could have overcome these situations without his support.

At McGill, I found supportive and valuable committee members who enabled me to move forward as a researcher. Sarah Turner has been incredibly helpful in structuring my information, ideas and thesis. Her guidance and suggestions have greatly contributed to the strength of this thesis. I am also grateful to Lisa Stevenson who offered me different perspectives on the North. Thank you both for reviewing this thesis during your sabbatical leaves!

My experience as a PhD student in the Department of Geography has been wonderful and stimulating I would like to give special thanks to Nancy Secondo and Elisa David for their help and support over the years. I am also grateful to my colleagues for generously sharing their experiences and ideas with me and for accepting my constantly messy desk: Clara Champalle, Dante Torio, Jean-François Rousseau, Ellie Stephenson and Tim Holland.

I turn now to Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River). As I said at the beginning of this section working *with* people was highly important to me. The women and men I met in Clyde are the core of this thesis and the core of my northern experience. I made four trips to Clyde and every time I was fortunate enough to meet new and inspiring people. Among these exceptional people I want to especially thank Rebecca Hainnu and her family for inviting me into their homes and sharing stories and stimulating thoughts that contributed to furthering my knowledge. Rebecca introduced me to many wonderful women and men and supported me throughout my fieldwork. Her help and her thoughts contributed to the richness of this thesis. Thanks also to Mary Hainnu for her advice and her enthusiasm regarding my pregnancy and for countless cups of tea!

I also want to acknowledge the special contribution of Shari Gearhead and her partner, Jake, for their support. Shari has been an inspiring researcher for many years and her dedication to the community encouraged my own research approach and interests. I am especially grateful to her for helping me find places to stay while conducting my research.

I am grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for investing in my research project. Through their Talent Program I received a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Scholarship that allowed me to focus exclusively on this research over the last four years. My fieldwork sessions were also supported for three years by the Northern Scientific Training Program Scholarship. This financial support allowed me to participate in various conferences and to expand my professional network; it greatly improved the quality of this dissertation.

La réalisation de cette thèse n'aurait certainement pas été possible sans le support et l'amour de familles et ami-e-s. Particulièrement ma mère, Gisèle, qui a voyagé et séjourné à Clyde River à l'été 2013 alors que je terminais ma collecte de données. Merci d'avoir fait le voyage pour t'occuper d'Edwidge, alors âgée de 9 mois. Merci à mon père, Luc, pour son support inconditionnel et sa générosité. Merci à toutes mes familles proches et éloignées qui savez me faire sentir intelligente! Un immense merci à Madeleine et Lyne qui, autour d'une bière ou d'une tisane, m'ont accompagné durant les défis, les épreuves et les réussites de ces cinq années.

Merci à mon Edwidge, ma grande-petite fille qui me rappelle chaque jour combien apprendre est une chose émerveillante.

Finalement, merci à mon compagnon de vie, Julien, qui par sa présence à mes côtés a rendu cette thèse possible. Pour avoir accepté mes horaires parfois un peu fous, mes angoisses abyssales et surtout mes éternels doutes, il a été le support et le motivateur essentiel de ces cinq dernières années (et bien avant!). Il m'a permis de ne pas être entièrement avalée par les épreuves et de conserver l'équilibre entre vies académique et personnelle.

Thanks to all of those who believed in me when I doubted myself the most.

Dedications

To all Kangiqtugaapik women and men who generously shared their stories.

À mes amours perdus, Edgar et Henriette.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

> Life is about working hard for your kids and family, life is about connecting with our land and animals, life is about knowing the *qallunaat*[1] way, but never forgetting the Inuit way. Teaching life is what women do, I think. An Inuk woman is always caring for her family – that's my main role. Many Inuit women are also employed because that's the way to bring the money to go out hunting – that's also my role. And we also participate in the land work – I go hunting and fishing and I prepare the country food, but mostly I support my husband in his harvesting activities. It's a circle. All the work I do is connected and this way my family is healthy (Laura, 28 years old).

This study focuses on the roles of Inuit women in contemporary Nunavut. Like Laura, quoted above, many Inuit women provide a variety of resources and support for their family and their roles extend to all spheres – domestic work, subsistence and paid labour. The women portrayed in this thesis are mothers, daughters, hunters, fishers, wage-earners; their life experiences illustrate the multiple facets of life in the North and the complexity of its economy. These women, as I argue in this thesis, stand *near the floe edge*, in this very dynamic environment where land and sea ice meet the open water. In many ways Inuit women's roles attest to the dynamics and transformations the Arctic has undergone since the 1980s.

For decades, the lives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women have been surrounded with silence (Klein and Ackerman 1995b). While Native and Indigenous studies began to bring First People's perspectives into research, gender studies focused on women's universal subordination. As Beatrice Medicine, a Native anthropologist, wrote in 1988: "It is counterproductive to dwell on the paucity of published works on Native American (American Indian) women. There is virtually no research in this area and no research agenda for the future" (cited in Medicine and

[1] Inuktitut term used by Inuit to refer to non-Inuit.

Jacobs 2001: 108). Only in the 1980s did research on Native American and Canadian women become acceptable and publishable (Bataille and Lisa 1993, Green 1983, Sonneborn 1998, Van Kirk 1987). Patricia Albers (1989) notes the importance of documenting the cultural construction of various concepts such as gender and labour, and the importance of understanding the historical background in which women's roles are adapting and being negotiated, for instance in relation to colonization and *de*-colonization processes. Albers and Medicine (1983) argue for situating Indian women in Native history and Jaimes and Halsey (1997) for situating them in indigenous political and social resistance. In the same vein, Mary Crnkovich (1990) writes that the impacts of the changes experienced by women in the North have been empowering for some and devastating for others and that documenting women's lives should be a priority to understanding northern development. These researchers and others point out the near invisibility of Native women's lives in this scholarship and the complexity of analyzing and interrogating past records (Albers 1996, Frink, Shepard and Reinhardt 2002, Jarvenpa and Brumbach 2006, Medicine 1975, Miller and Chuchryk 1996, Turpel 1993).

While northern research has rapidly expanded since the early 2000s, very little attention is been paid to northern women's roles (for some exception see Cruikshank 1979, Jolles and Kaningok 1991, Jolles 1994, 1997, Kleinfeld, Kruse and Travis 1981). Although feminist economists and geographers have highlighted the importance of gaining a fuller understanding of economic roles for both sexes during the last century, little of this work has addressed contemporary gender dynamics among Inuit or other Arctic Indigenous peoples (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013, Hovelsrud and Smit 2010, Nilsson et al. 2004). Thus, gender is an emerging topic in Arctic research and remains poorly understood.

This gap in the literature is due to two main factors. First, a large proportion of recent Arctic research has focused on the potential impacts of climate change on Inuit traditional activities (see Crate 2008, Ford 2009, Ford et al. 2008, Fox 2002, Nuttall et al. 2005). Therefore, this literature has mainly addressed transformations in hunting practices. Because hunting is an activity dominated by men, this strong male bias has led to a near invisibility of Inuit women in this category of research (for some exceptions see Beaumier, Ford and Tagalik 2014, Dowsley et al. 2010, Dowsley 2014).

Second, transformations in the northern economy are relatively recent and the impacts on individuals – especially women – have not yet been fully studied. Economic transformations in the Canadian Arctic since the 1980s started with the European fur-ban (1983), and continued with the creation of Nunavut territory (1999). As a consequence, wage-employment and money have become two major components of the Inuit modern mixed economy. While the impact of this shift on men is fairly well-known, the extent to which these economic transformations are gendered and affect women remains poorly understood. Similarly, while the irreversible importance of money in modern harvesting activities has been amply demonstrated, patterns of access to this critical resource through wage employment have largely been overlooked (see Wenzel, Hovelsrud-Broda and Kishigami 2000a). Indeed, the rapid expansion of the cash economy and wage-labour in the Canadian Arctic as well as its internal dynamics, especially since the creation of Nunavut, have not yet received great attention from researchers. Perhaps more interestingly, gendered responses to the emergence of the Northern wage economy and the specific economic contribution of women have been greatly overlooked.

Recently however, increasing attention across the Canadian Arctic is being drawn to the fact that traditional gender roles and the related division of labour have undergone profound changes (Billson 2006, Desbiens 2007, 2010, Guemple 1986, 1995, SEDSG 2003). These changes are rooted in sociocultural and demographic transformations occurring in Inuit society, but also in new gender dynamics experienced across the Arctic in relation to new economic and political opportunities.

Today, evidence shows that Inuit women, especially younger ones, are adjusting effectively to the socioeconomic changes occurring in Nunavut with similar employment rates to non-aboriginal women and a smaller gender wage gap (see Chapter 3) (SEDSG 2003). In many northern communities, rapid population growth has outpaced job growth, creating high levels of unemployment and increased welfare dependence especially for men. To date, both the land and wage economies, as well as northern development planning, have failed to absorb the growing youth population. One of the consequences has been an increasing gap between Inuit women and men in terms of wage-economy participation, with women constituting a growing majority (Condon and Stern 1993, Hovelsrud and Smit 2010, Kruse 1991, McElroy 2008, Nahanni 1990, Suzack et al. 2010, Thomsen 1988, Williamson 2006a).

This phenomenon gives rise to new gender roles and labour divisions, about which academics and policy makers have little understanding to date. Indeed, the increased presence of women in new roles at many levels of Inuit society suggests that a profound reorganization is occurring in regards to gender-attributed roles. Since the 1980s, in many Arctic regions Inuit women have steadily raised their labour force participation rates to levels similar to non-aboriginal women (Hovelsrud and Smit 2010, Hovelsrud et al. 2011, Hull 2005). They also have similar patterns of work, with a preference for full-time and permanent positions (Dybbroe 1988). On the other hand, Inuit men show lower levels of participation than their non-aboriginal counterparts, a phenomenon found in many northern regions. Their patterns of work tend toward seasonal, occasional or part-time positions, as well as delayed age-engagement in the wage-economy relative to Inuit women. This situation has resulted in a growing gap in work patterns/opportunities/aspirations between women and men in many northern communities (Kleinfeld et al. 1981, 1983, McElroy 1977). More importantly, it appears that the gap is even wider when considering the youth population, as females tend to take on more mature roles earlier than males, such as family care and waged employment (Condon and Stern 1993, Hovelsrud and Smit 2010, McElroy 1975, 1979).

Recognizing the growing gap in knowledge regarding Inuit women and their activities, this thesis contextualizes Inuit women's roles in contemporary Nunavut. Concomitantly, the relationships among wage-work, subsistence activities and domestic labour have not been well explored. Feminist researchers from Native studies, anthropology and geography have demonstrated that such a relation is crucial in most aboriginal women's lives (Crnkovich 1990, Eikjok 2007, Green 2007a, Littlefield and Knack 1996, Nahanni 1990, Nahanni 1992, Williamson 2006a). This thesis attempts to illustrate the connections among those roles and challenges the common conception of Inuit women's 'complementary' role. While the focus is on Clyde River women, the study addresses gender issues in a much wider perspective: it explores socioeconomic transformations in the Canadian North since the 1980s, as well as the sociocultural changes in Inuit society.

Understanding those changes and their impact on Inuit women's roles has been crucial to this research. As Phoebe Nahanni (1990: 169), one of the first female northerners to have documented historical changes in women's work, writes:

> Among the many facets of life in the Canadian North, none affects the lives of women more than the concept of 'work'. One has only to examine the many changes in the socio-economic conditions of the North in the past two decades to realize how 'work' has changed the lives of northern women.

Nahanni (1990) highlights the complexity of Dene women's roles and the various types of work they engage in – paid, unpaid or subsistence. She also highlights the need for more research on women's contributions to northern life. Two decades later, our current understandings of gender dynamics in Nunavut territory remain slim.

While documenting a range of aspects of women's work, I have found that their roles encompass multiple and interwoven occupations and responsibilities. Throughout this thesis I argue that the roles of individual Inuit women are expanding in the context of transformations occurring throughout Inuit society. I also argue that women's roles are fundamental not only to Inuit modern subsistence livelihoods but also to the process of building Nunavut society.

1.2 Research design

To address gaps in the literature on Inuit women's roles, the main aim of this doctoral research is *to understand Inuit women's roles within the transformed socioeconomic environment of Nunavut*. Through this thesis I address the invisibility of Inuit women in contemporary research and emphasize the way modern subsistence and the contemporary economic environment, are experienced by Inuit women. I develop a comprehensive account of Inuit women's contributions in subsistence, domestic and wage work since the 1980s.

To do so, I investigate three specific objectives:

(1) *to provide a deeper understanding of the changing labour markets and related opportunities for Inuit women in contemporary Nunavut*. This objective focuses on internal dynamics and structural changes in employment on the Nunavut territory over the last decades. I explore how the labour market is organized and how the specific patterns of work operate for women and men. I am also interested in how individuals conceptualize work and how this influences their participation in the labour force. To complete my objective I draw on statistics from different governments (Federal, Territorial and municipal) and validate them at the local level, relying on interviews. This objective draws on the literature on Inuit mixed economy.

(2) to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of the Inuit mixed economy. Core data for this objective was collected through economic diaries in which participants reported their weekly expenditures and incomes. Using this information I explore the magnitude of Inuit women's provisioning activities, and develop an account of resource allocation within the twenty-nine participant households. This objective also addresses the connections between the cash economy and Inuit subsistence economy. My investigation also focuses on time allocation between different labours and decision-making. By using socioeconomic and qualitative data regarding gender roles, work and the division of labour, this objective aims to illustrate how traditional and modern resources are being secured through the expanding economic roles of Inuit women. To meet this objective, I draw upon the literature on provisioning from a feminist economist perspective. This perspective will allow me to analyze how resources are allocated and who has control over them.

(3) to assess the effects of Inuit women's contribution to gendered roles and gendered power relations. By interpreting the internal dynamics in Inuit families, I seek to determine the social expectations for women and men concerning their work and roles. I specifically draw on in-depth interviews with a smaller sample of female participants (18) to address power relations within Inuit families and at the gender dynamics at play in the community. In addressing this sensitive matter I seek to reveal how women negotiate the competing demands made upon them and how these affect their power and

status within their household. This objective explores the literatures on Indigenous feminism and Inuit kinship. This focus aims to deeply understand how gender issues are culturally situated.

1.3 Study area

In 1999, after more than thirty years of negotiations by the Inuit of the eastern and central Arctic, a new territorial subdivision was created from the erstwhile Northwest Territories: Nunavut. Nunavut, "Our Land" in Inuktitut, is the latest transformation to the map of Canada (figure 1.1). With 2.1 million km^2, over a fifth of Canada's land mass, Nunavut is the largest region in Canada and is mainly constituted of Arctic tundra and ocean and exposed to polar climate. The territory is sparsely populated with only 36,886 people and a population density of 0.02/km^2 (Government of Nunavut 2015). About 85 percent of this population identifies as Inuit and lives in twenty-five communities ranging from 163 people in Grise Fiord to 7542 in Iqaluit, the capital (average 1462 people).

Nunavut's geographic isolation from the rest of Canada remains an important limitation to mobility and greatly influences territorial development. As no roads connect communities together or Nunavut to any other province, transportation of individuals and material represents a huge cost. Despite this remoteness Inuit no longer live in isolation; rather they are increasingly connected to Canadian society and to the global economy. Indeed, most households are connected to Internet and make important use of modern technology both in the pursuit of their subsistence activities and personal enjoyment.

As I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 3, the development of the labour market and cash economy is relatively recent. Indeed, from a traditional land-based subsistence culture, Inuit have developed a unique mixed economy that has proven to be resilient and well adapted to their environment (Abele 2009). Inuit mixed economy is described as a combination of food produced through harvesting activities and money derived from two main sources: wage-labour and government subsidies (Dowsley et al. 2010, Langdon 1991, Usher, Duhaime and Searles 2003). The proportion of local food consumed in each household varies greatly, but overall remains important in Inuit nutrition and social organization (Harder and Wenzel 2012).

Since the creation of Nunavut, northern communities have undergone profound transformations, polarized recently around the issues of globalization and non-renewable resource development. The mining sector has been expanding rapidly since the 2000s and is expected to be a important source of new jobs for Nunavummiut in the foreseeable future. While extraction industry is expected to contribute to the 'development' of northern communities through large tax revenue and employment opportunities, little is known about how this ongoing transformation of the economic environment affects the roles of women and men in the Arctic (Desbiens 2010, Hovelsrud et al. 2011, Desbiens 2007).

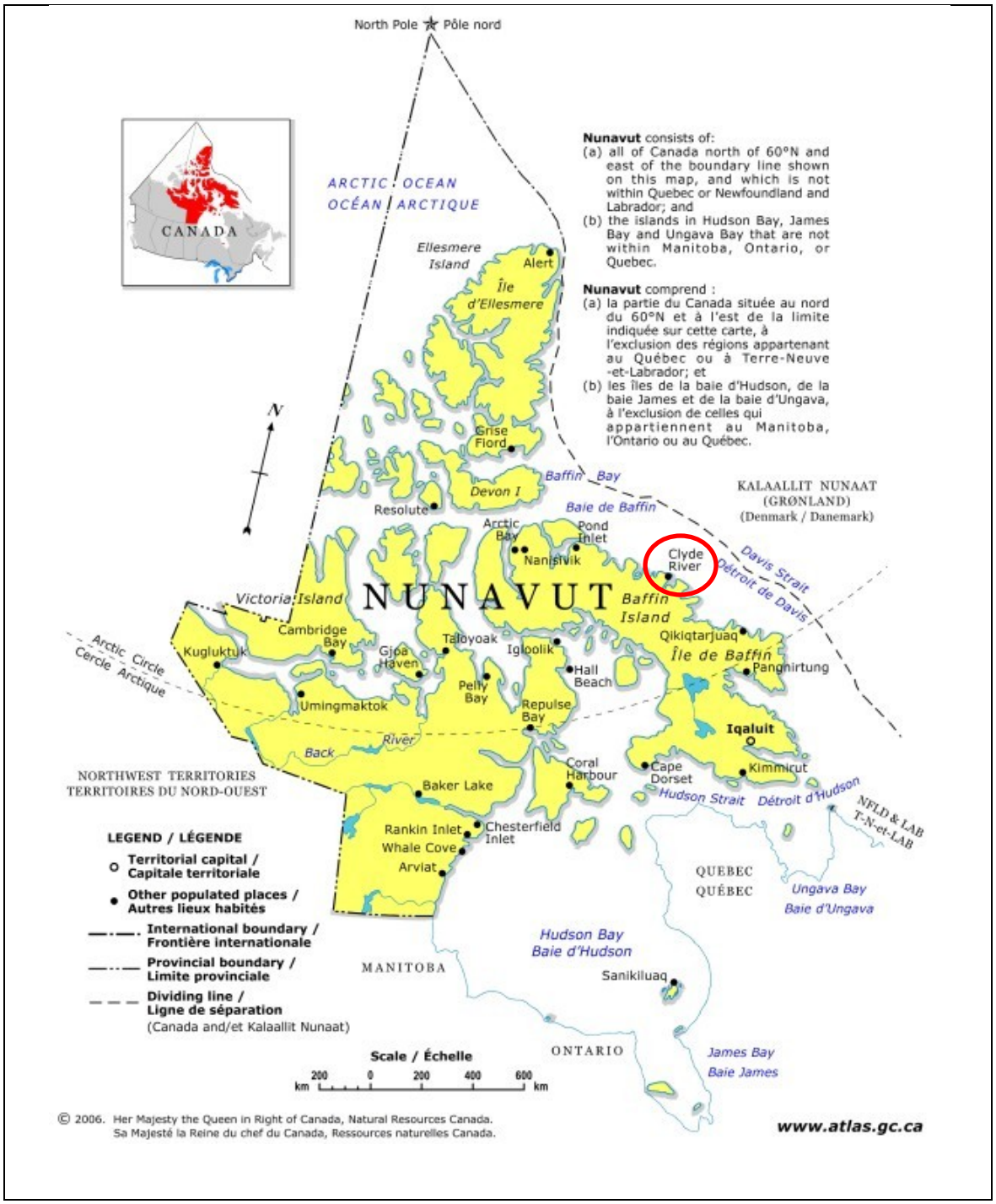

Figure 1.1: Map of Nunavut
(Natural Resources Canada: Online)

1.3.1 Clyde River

This research is situated in Clyde River, Nunavut (Figures 1.2-1.6). Clyde River is *Kangiqtugaapik* in Inuktitut which means "nice little inlet". It is a remote village on the shore of eastern Baffin Island, 200 km north of the Arctic Circle and 700 km north of the capital, Iqaluit (see Figure1.1). According to the 2011 census there are 934 people permanently living in Clyde River making it a medium sized community. Ninety-seven percent of this population is Inuit (Statistics Canada 2012a). When I conducted research in the community in 2012, it was reported to me that the community had just reached 1100 inhabitants.

Clyde River was selected for this research because it is representative of other communities of the Canadian Arctic. It is a young community, as only 62.2 percent of the population is over 15 years old (compared to 66.1% in Nunavut and 82.3% in Canada) and an average age of 20.8 years (23.1 in Nunavut and 39.5 in Canada). Fifty percent of the population is wage employed either part or full-time, which is similar to the rest of Nunavut (55.2%) but lower than in Canada (62.4%). In terms of revenue, the median income per household in Clyde River in 2005 was CAN$46,464, which is quite representative of Baffin Island communities ($47,219/year) when Iqaluit is excluded (see Chapter 3).

Clyde River is also a community where the subsistence economy is still very important (Harder and Wenzel 2012, Myers 2008, Wenzel 2000, 2005, 2008). It was fundamental for this research that both sectors of the economy, market and land-related, be vibrant in order to understand how women's workforce participation impacts both sectors of the mixed economy.

Finally, previous studies conducted in Clyde River have revealed the changing dynamics in modern subsistence related to an increased access to monetary resources (Harder 2010, Wenzel 1981, 1991, 1995, 2000). These studies highlight that the changing resource allocation patterns impact Inuit men in many ways, and underline potential similarities among Inuit women (Harder 2010, Wenzel 2000). These studies provide a very useful background for investigating contemporary gender dynamics.

Figure 1.2 Clyde River, Nunavut, main street (Source: Author, April 2012)

Figure 1.3 Clyde River, Nunavut, elementary and high school (Source: Author, May 2012)

Figure 1.4 Clyde River, Nunavut, view of the bay (source: author, August 2013)

Figure 1.5 Clyde River, Nunavut, iceberg in the bay
(Source: Author, July 2013)

Figure 1.6 Clyde River, Nunavut, view of the community from the Inuksuk on the hill (Source: Author, July 2013)

1.4 Thesis organization

Throughout this thesis I discuss Inuit women's work, responsibilities and roles using three different geographical scales. I first focus on the territorial level; focusing on changes in patterns and nature of work in Nunavut. Then I look at the how women participate at the community level: here I focus on the community of Clyde River and look at connections between families and how women are key to the maintenance of sociocultural practices. Finally, I narrow my focus to the individual level, looking at gender relations: how individual men and women deal with new roles and new power relations. Each of these levels allows me to investigate my main aim, which is, *to understand Inuit women's roles within the transformed socioeconomic environment of Nunavut*. The analytical chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) are structured following this same geographical scaling; from a territorial to a household perspective.

First, however, in Chapter 2 I outline the conceptual framework that structures my thesis. I review and critique the literatures on women and work; the sociocultural approach of work; provisioning theory; as well as gendered roles, relations and power. I draw important conceptual elements from these bodies of literature to guide my research objectives and analysis. Importantly, I situate women's work in a broad perspective that is not limited to wage-employment and develop a sociocultural approach to work. Using the concept of *provisioning* in combination with Inuit social economy and kinship organization I investigate the different categories of work and their allocation among individuals. Finally, the notion of power is broadly situated in the Inuit context and critically analyzed according to contemporary social dynamics.

In Chapter 3, I describe the Inuit context within which this research takes place. Specifically, I examine the historical and political construction of Nunavut, and the economic and social transformations that took place over the last decades. In doing so I set the socioeconomic framework through which I examine women's contributions. I highlight key elements that directly influence Inuit women's work and roles through experiences and accounts shared by participants. Throughout this chapter, my examination of Nunavut's wage economy shows that women's roles *are* expanding, as shown in labour force participation rates and employment data.

Chapter 4 centers on the methodological approach used for this thesis. First, I discuss the design of the research and situate myself in the research process. I then focus on the various methods employed to collect data and the limitations and challenges experienced throughout my fieldwork seasons. Methods include semi-structured interviews, economic diaries, time-use chart and life history calendars. This chapter concludes the first part of the thesis, within which all theoretical, contextual and methodological elements are outlined.

The subsequent three Chapters (5, 6, 7) provide the analysis and interpretation of data from the research. In Chapter 5, I address my first objective: *to provide a deeper understanding of work and labour market dynamics in Nunavut and the related opportunities for Inuit women*. Specifically, I examine how work is conceptualized in Inuit society today, the different factors that favor Inuit women's employment, and women's experiences. For instance, I explore socioeconomic and sociocultural factors that influence women's employment. However research participants' conceptions of what 'count' as work are also key to the understanding of Inuit women's experiences, and in this chapter I delve into personal life experiences to make sense of socioeconomic transformations in the North.

Chapter 6 examines my second objective, *to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of Inuit mixed economy*. I explore Inuit women provisioning responsibilities and the relation between work, earning and spending patterns for female participants. By scaling down to the community of Clyde River, I illustrate that the provisioning responsibilities carried by women are complex and that the resources they provide show great diversity. Using economic diaries I interpret the development of a model where female are often the primary wage-earner and male focus on harvesting activities. This finding is then analyzed within the Inuit mixed economy.

Finally, in Chapter 7 I answer my third research objective, *to assess the effects of economic transformations on gender roles and power.* I examine the complex dynamics surrounding women's work and the social values and expectations concerning wage-work. Here, interviews reveal the persistence of traditional labour divisions in Clyde River that are closely related to cultural norms and expectations. My findings show that gender plays a critical role in work and monetary allocation, pointing to the importance of attending to gendered dynamics at

all scales. Overall, I develop a deeper understanding of the concept of 'power' in relation to wage-employment and monetary provisioning in the northern context.

In Chapter 8, my final chapter, I review key findings from this research and discuss my main aim. This chapter integrates all the results from previous chapters, to present a comprehensive understanding of Inuit women's roles in contemporary Nunavut. Finally, I discuss the conceptual contributions of this research.

1.5 Chapter conclusion

Through a focus on Inuit women's roles, this research enhances our understanding of socioeconomic, sociocultural and gender features of contemporary Inuit mixed economy. This study also shows how women's work and responsibilities are shaped under modern conditions. Producing an in-depth account of women's roles is, I believe, particularly important in the context of current mass media portrayals of Aboriginal women as marginalized victims[2].

[2] While writing these lines the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women and the violence against them constitute an important debate in the media and among Canadians. While the Federal government has not yet decided whether a national commission of inquiry into this issue is needed, Aboriginal women are portrayed as oppressed individuals and victims with very limited abilities to reverse the situation.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptual framework

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I delve into the four core fields of scholarship (Figure 2.1) I use to explore the aim of this thesis: *to understand Inuit women's roles within the transformed socioeconomic environment of Nunavut*. First, my research is broadly informed by the gender and work literature (2.2). Then, I draw more specifically from debates over the sociocultural approach of work (2.3), provisioning theory (2.4), and gendered roles, relations and power relations (2.5). In the following sections I review the key ideas upon which my study is built. These ideas do not operate separately; rather they overlap in many ways. The cultural construction of gender, the need for multi-scalar understandings of work, and the importance of social organization, are key themes that weld together these bodies of literature. From these critiques I develop a comprehensive approach to produce a deeper understanding of Inuit women's roles in contemporary Nunavut.

2.2 Conceptualizing Inuit women's work

The literature on women and work provides a critical and analytical framework to the understanding of Inuit women's roles within the transformed socioeconomic environment in Nunavut. In the following section I examine some key ideas related to this literature and show their relevance to my research. First, I explore the concept of work and the contribution made by feminist scholars in this field of research, situating it in its historical and epistemological academic tradition (2.2.1). Then I examine women's work using the contribution and critiques of postcolonial (2.2.2) and indigenous feminists (2.2.3). Finally, I situate the concept of Inuit women's work in the context of indigenous economies and northern history (2.2.4). In doing so I critique those different approaches to better situate my research within this scholarship.

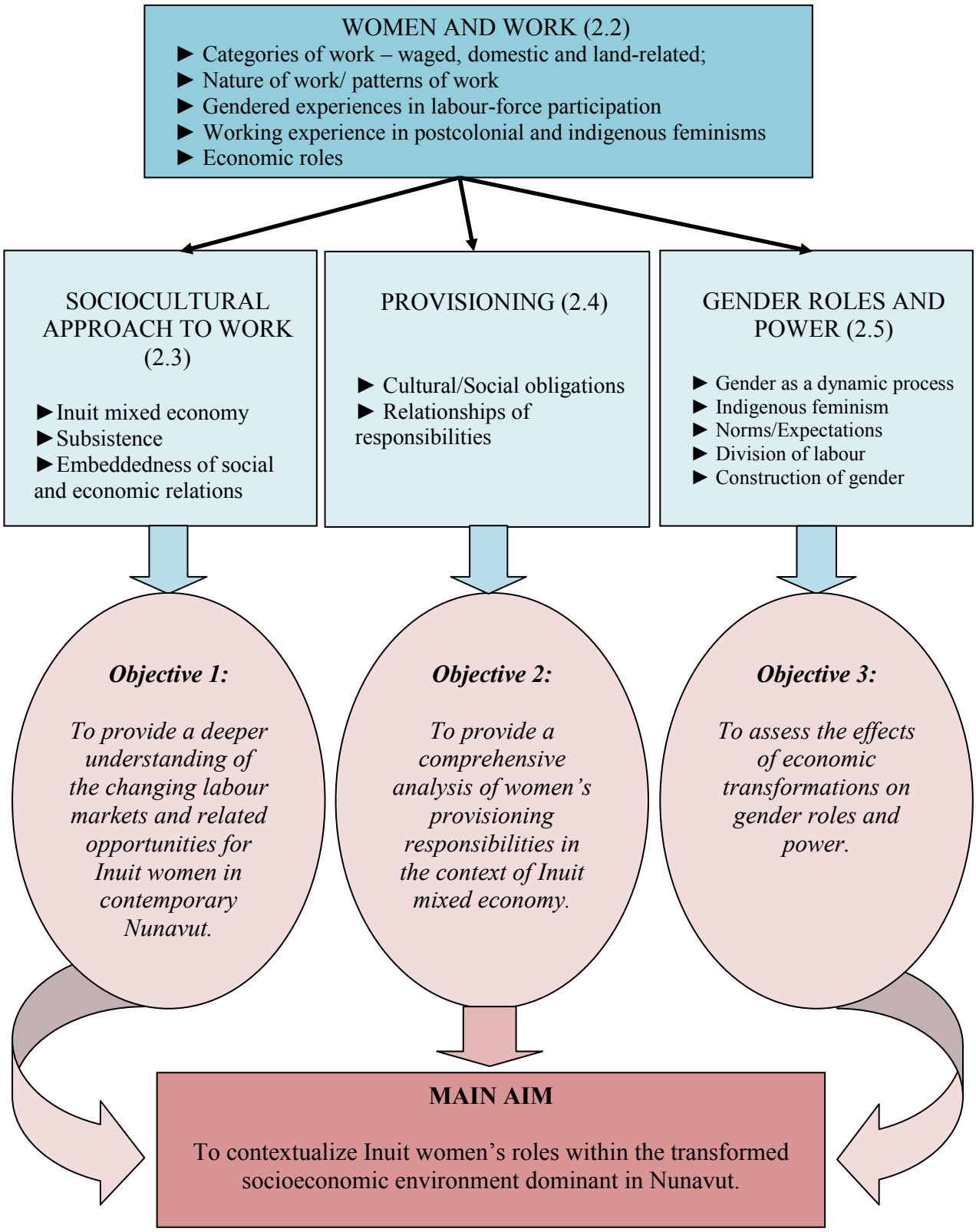

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework that informs this thesis.

2.2.1 Defining women's work

Western societies' transition from pre-industrial to capitalist-industrial economies in the 19th century has transformed the means of production and shifted the categories of work (Reskin and Padavic 1994). As industrial production replaced a large proportion of household production, the home ceased to be the site of production. A consequence has been a change of paradigm in what is considered 'productive' work, that which is performed outside the house and is paid. Conversely, what is performed inside the house and is unpaid, is considered 'reproductive' work (Folbre 1991). However, this analytical separation of home and work is geographically and historically situated and mainly limited to certain groups in Western societies (Oberhauser 2003, Pollard 2009).

Until the 1970s, social sciences uncritically assumed that such dichotomies between productive/reproductive, paid/unpaid and inside/outside the house reflected gendered division of labour. It was assumed that men played the role of producer and breadwinner and women with the role of reproducer and caretaker. This model has long remained unchallenged by social scientists as it was "assumed to be natural rather than reflecting a particular set of *social* arrangements" (Crompton 1999: 2). Likewise, this gendered construction of work reflects a long-lasting assumption in Western societies that 'work' equates to 'wage-employment', resulting in the invisibility of those performing other 'types of work', such as housework and carework (Benería 1982, Folbre 1991).

A major contribution made by feminist scholars in the second half of twentieth century has been to challenge the definition of work and what 'counts' as work (Benston 1969, Waring 1999 [1988]). Work, these scholars argue, is not limited to wage-employment, but includes a larger array of unpaid activities often performed by women. Ester Boserup's (1970) recognition of women's roles in economic development was instrumental in making work by women visible. By demonstrating that women's work was productive, time-consuming and generally not taken in account in national statistics on labour and incomes, Boserup (1970) challenged traditional economic analysis regarding women's *un*productivity. Indeed, often neglected in economic calculation, the fundamental caring and domestic work performed by women – and men – within and outside the household, allows the reproduction of the family as well as social and cultural institutions (Finch and Groves 1983). For feminist scholars, the concept of work needed to be

shifted away from a pure market perspective, towards a holistic understanding of the economy comprised of all types of work (Quick 2008). In doing so, they challenged the definition of work and workers, making visible women's economic contributions and the economic value of women's reproductive labour (Benería 1995). More importantly, by criticizing conventional definitions of economic activity and concepts of labour force composition they demonstrated that women's work was underestimated in terms of time and value (Benería 1981: 10).

A long tradition of feminist scholars has acknowledged this bias and demonstrated that domestic work not only produces goods and services, but also sustains or supports the market economy in many ways (Benería 1982, 1995, Ferber and Nelson 2003, Matthews 1987, Nelson 2006). For instance, carework and childrearing (Baines, Evans and Neysmith 1998), food preparation (Kemmer 1999) and other domestic labour have all been described as essential resources produced within households, that have significant value to all members of the family, but that are undervalued outside the house (Benería 1999, Hochschild and Machung 1989, Pugh 1990).

The large body of studies produced by those scholars acknowledges the differences between categories of work and the ways they are constructed. In *The Sociology of Housework,* Ann Oakley studied the work performed by housewives and so largely contributed to widen the meaning of work (Oakley 1975). Following her contribution, many authors have conducted research regarding the role and the importance of reproductive work in the economy and the recognition of its social and economic value (Baxter and Western 1998, Crompton 2006, Duffy 2007, Fox 1980, Folbre 1991). Despite the efforts put forth by many feminists to argue that reproductive labour does indeed produce value, and that it sustains productive labour and society, it is still often not fully acknowledged as work and is associated with ''the fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life'' (Katz 2001: 710). Moreover, it is still disproportionately women who continue to do such work.

Another important contribution was made by feminist economists regarding the ahistorical and disembodied development of economic analysis (Ferber and Nelson 1993). Feminist economists highlighted that gender affects the construction of economics as a discipline "in terms of the standpoint from which the world is perceived" (ibid 1993: 2). Through the use of gender as a central category of analysis, they have focused on women's labour force

participation, labour market discrimination, occupational segregation and segmentation and the gender wage gap (Bergmann 1986, Blau, Ferber and Winkler 1998, Mackenzie 1989, Reskin 1984), pointing out the androcentric bias in the analysis of these issues. For instance, within the labour force, women's experience is different than that of men and should be analysed separately (Blaxall and Reagan 1976). In this regard, Hanson and Pratt (1995) argue that because women bear most of the family responsibilities, they tend to choose employment in areas closer to home although it this may entail receiving lower wages.

2.2.3 Situating women's work in postcolonial feminism

If western feminist activists and scholars have pointed out the androcentric nature of work and the discrimination of women in the domain of wage-labour, critical feminists have argued that it has generated a uniform image of all women. Indeed, for decades western women's perspectives have dominated both the practical and theoretical aspects of feminist discourse. It is with the dismantling of colonialism and the construction of postcolonial discourse, in the 1970s-1980s, that the growing prominence of women's voices from the margins has shed light on differences between the experiences of western and non-western women (Jayawardena 1986). Ethnic minority women, native women and 'Third world' women contested this "hegemonic feminism" (Spivak 1985: 271) and criticized mainstream feminists for assuming that women, as a group, shared a common oppression produced by global patriarchy, denying *de facto* the possibility of heterogeneous experiences (Sandoval 1991). By challenging white women's 'universal' experience, from which all female experiences are judged, they drew attention to the multiple forms of oppression around the world.

Women of colour, mainly in the US, argued that multiple forms of oppression exist and intersect with gender to marginalize and exclude women from society (James and Busia 1993). Through their writings, they foreground issues of race, class, sexuality and culture to examine the structures of domination (Barrett 1987, Butler and Scott 1992, Crosby 1992). They criticized white feminists for focusing only on male domination and theorizing women's oppression based only on their own white experiences and argued that the ethnocentric nature of feminism had led to the invisibility of a large number of women (Andersen and Hill Collins 1992, Hill Collins 2004, Crenshaw 1993, Davis 1983, Glenn 2009, Lorde 1997). By showing how differences

connect together, black feminists focused on oppression as something dynamic, and on gender as something *constructed* rather than *given* (Hill Collins 2000, Zinn and Dill 1996).

The work of Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1997, 2003, Mohanty 1988) has been instrumental in showing the ethnocentric nature of dominant modes of feminism. In her ground-breaking article 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses' (Mohanty 1988), she questions the representation of the 'Third World Woman' as a "singular monolithic subject" (ibid : 61) in mainstream feminism (Mohanty 1991). Mohanty criticizes the way western feminist discourse has represented the Third World woman as someone leading "an essential truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and being 'third-world' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family-oriented, victimized, etc.)" (ibid : 65). This representation, she argues, is in direct contrast with how western feminists represent themselves (educated, modern and sexually free); a position from which then, they analyze *all* women, assuming that the problems, needs, goals and interests are similar for *all* women. Mohanty, among others, argues that this discourse of women's homogeneity leads to misrepresentations of internal differences and experiences which, in the end, erases "histories and struggles of third world women against racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism, and monopoly capital" (Mohanty, Russo and Torres 1991: 4).

If women are not a universal category, then their working experiences also reflect diverse social, historical and geographical contexts. While many feminist economists have argued that economic development and the incorporation of women into the labour force enhance women's liberation and freedom, feminist critical race and anticolonial theorists demonstrate that the ideology of work connects with gender, race, and ethnicity and isolates women in particular "exploitative contexts" (Mohanty 1997: 11, see also Chatterjee 2001, Littlefield and Knack 1996). Scholars like Maria Mies (1981) and Aihwa Ong (1987) have revealed the heterogeneity of women's working experience, writing "a counter-history of paid-labor, linking it not to empowerment, but to dispossession, exploitation, and structural disempowerment" (Charusheela 2003: 290). They analyze the emergence of a new international gendered division of labour where manufacturing industries, mainly situated in the 'developing world', hire large number of female workers in unskilled and low-paid jobs to the benefits of middle classes (including women) in 'developed countries' (Mies 1981, Ong 1987, see also Ng 1999, Quijano 2007). Other

feminist scholars have shown that for ethnic minority women in developed countries, paid-work is often limited to nannies, maids and other cheap labour at the bottom of the labour market where one product of their labor is leisure for upper-class women (Barker 2005, Lim and Oishi 1996, Zimmerman, Litt and Bose 2006). Racial discrimination prevents them from competing for other jobs and traps them into doing the jobs that no one else wishes to do. For 'Third world' women, working often means the extension of their reproductive labour into the arena of paid-work as domestic and service worker (Chaney, Castro and Smith 1989, Enloe 2000, Hochschild 2000, Shin 2009).

Critiques from post-colonial feminists suggest a multi-dimensional approach to scrutinize women's working experiences. By considering that race, ethnicity and social location directly influence one's experience, I can examine more critically the multiple situations in which Inuit women found themselves.

2.2.4 Situating women's work in indigenous studies

Postcolonial feminists and antiracial theorists have shed light on differences between the experiences of western and non-western women arguing that mainstream feminism does not necessarily constitute a universal framework for analyzing *all* women's experience (Freedman 2002). For indigenous women, this focus on difference instead of sameness has allowed them to engage in feminist discourse. Indeed, many Indigenous women consider that human rights, women's rights, and the rights of Indigenous peoples are intricately linked and constitute an organic whole that shape their identity (Cunningham 2006).

While being situated within the women of colour movements, indigenous feminism emerged out later in the 1980s and 1990s. A core concern was to integrate analysis of Indigenous women's issues into mainstream feminism and indigenous struggles (Green 2007a, Suzack et al. 2010). Indigenous feminism locates feminist values in the indigenous cultures and experiences and seeks to foreground social, economic and political conditions of indigenous women's lives through a critique of colonialism and the processes of decolonization (Green 2007b). However, indigenous feminism is far from an organized movement. Rather, it is grounded in multiple cultural definitions of gender, heterogeneous representation of indigenous identity as well as a diversity of colonial experiences resulting in various forms of domination, resistance, negotiation and adaptation (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013). Scholars such as Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2000),

M.A. Jaimes Guerrero (2003), Verna St-Denis (2007) and Andrea Smith (2005, 2006) have adopted an indigenous standpoint within mainstream feminism. Their works foreground the many issues that affect them both as women and as indigenous: power, decolonization, protection of land and resources, self-determination, family, culture and identity, racism, sexism and violence against women (Brant 1988). In this sense, indigenous feminism integrates men's and women's common struggles to protect their culture, traditions and identity as First People. As Verna St-Denis puts it, "equality is not appropriate or relevant in the context of continuing colonization, in which the sovereignty and rights of self-determination of Aboriginal peoples is denied; in other words, equality is not enough and does little to address colonial relations" (St-Denis 2007: 43).

Concomitantly, scholars have argued that indigenous women's experiences of work are not similar to those of white-middle-class women in settler countries (Williams 2012). Throughout the twentieth century, governments often saw the integration of indigenous population into the industrial capitalist economy as the best way for their 'assimilation' and later for their 'development' (Abele and Stasiulis 1989, Satzewich and Wotherspoon 2000). Such approaches have led to radical changes in family organization (from extended family to nuclear family), domestic production (from land-related activities to wage-work) and economic roles of women and men (models of male/breadwinner and female/housewife) (Bonvillain 2007).

The invisibility of Indigenous women's economic roles can be understood historically and culturally (Findlay and Wuttunee 2007). First, colonization and the following processes of decolonization constitute a historical trauma that has generally negatively impacted indigenous societies and economies as well as the roles of individuals. One important impact has been the systematic marginalization of indigenous women from all spheres of society (Wesley-Esquimaux 2009). The *re*construction of women's work and economic role has only recently been of interests to indigenous and non-indigenous scholars (Albers 1996, Berman 2003a, McCallum 2008, 2014, Miller and Chuchryk 1996, Williams 2012). Second, gendered assumptions about the division of labour within aboriginal communities were made by government officials, systematically marginalizing women into service and domestic jobs and low-paid white-collar jobs (Blythe and McGuire 1996, Sangster 2007, 2012). Indigenous men were often considered the main or sole family breadwinners, so their work counted for more than that of women'

(McCallum 2008). Colonization has resulted in profound transformations in work roles for both men and women, but often more negatively impacting women. From a Yukon perspective, Cruikshank (2004) writes that the absence of female perspective is a way of protecting and reconfirming familiar categories.

Recognizing the importance of colonial legacies in the way work is experienced and understood allows for a greater understanding of employment dynamics in the North. By considering Inuit women's labour force participation and experiences in this much wider perspective I can better situate their personal experience and choice.

2.2.5 Conceptualizing Inuit women's work

Portrayals of Inuit men and women have long relied on explorers, traders and missionaries. The voyages of Martin Forbisher, John Davis, Thomas Button, Robert Bylot, William Baffin, Jens Munk, Luke Foxe during the 16th and 17th centuries gave the first images of the inhabitants of this mythic northern region (Damas 1984). They depicted them as 'primitives' struggling to survive in the harsh Arctic environment. Men were ferocious hunters and women overworked drudges dominated by their male relatives (Francis 1992).

These portrayals of 'the Eskimos' pervaded the anthropological literature and popular media for many decades. The first ethnographies and rigorous works addressing Inuit social, economic and political organization, done during the first part of the 20th century by ethnographers such as Boas (1888), Rasmussen (1929) and Stefansson (1913), only slightly challenged this portrait. Overall, men and women's gender roles and relations were all but absent in these first ethnographies for it was not the purpose of any ethnographers or anthropologists to conduct gender research. In fact, before the 1950s, gender debates were absent in most academic research. So, little scientific literature written about the Canadian North during the first half of the 20th century addressed Inuit women. Their role was considered either to be marginal or simply complementary.

Accounts of gender roles and relations emerged later with the work of female researchers. They revealed that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Inuit men and women had distinct but complementary roles (Condon and Stern 1993, Giffen 1930, Guemple 1986, Kjellström 1973b, Leigh 2009, Minor 2002, Stern 2010). This complementarity was based on a division of labour where men and women were defined by where and what work they performed. While men

were hunters, women were maintaining the household. Women also supplied food by gathering herbs, berries, roots and grass, and sometimes hunted and fished small animals (Giffen 1930). In addition, women's work also included cooking, child care (Briggs 2000a), and the preparation of meats and skins and sewing, which were essential for men to hunt (Briggs 1974, Giffen 1930). Thus, even if economic gender roles were different, subsistence involved both men and women's work as a complementary blend. While women needed men to provide most of the food and resources for sustenance, men needed women to transform them into usable resources. Accordingly, women controlled their own labour and could make decisions regarding their activities (Bonvillain 2007).

Since the 1950s, transformations in the political and socioeconomic environment of most Arctic regions, in relation to colonization, resources development and the globalized economy, have resulted in the emergence of new economic roles for women and men. Conceptually, Inuit women's work has not been well examined under these modern conditions, nor is it explored in Inuit or Arctic studies. Indeed, much of what has been written on Inuit and work concerns men and hunting practices and adaptation of those practices to transformations in the northern environment. However, recently a growing body of literature on Native women and work has emerged, finally turning the gaze to the contemporary economic contribution of women (Berman 2003a, Jarvenpa and Brumbach 2006, Jolles 1994, 1997, 2002, Littlefield and Knack 1996, Sangster 2007, 2012, Williams 2012). To consider northern women's work, Nahanni (1990, 1992) uses a framework that distinguishes three types of work in which women are involved: domestic work in the house, wage-work usually outside the house and traditional work – or bush/land work – which is unique to Indigenous women. The combination of these three categories of work captures the specificity of northern women's work.

The development of the wage-economy in Arctic regions has produced a growing body of studies that acknowledges the increasing presence of women (Condon and Stern 1993, Dybbroe 1988, Kleinfeld et al. 1983, Reimer 1996, Thomsen 1988). Northern women's wage-work has been examined over the last three decades by these researchers and have demonstrated important changes in labour markets and employment patterns in terms of men and women's participation rates (Hull 2005, Stern 2001). Indeed, northern women's labour force participation rates have increased steadily in most Arctic regions. One consequence has been an increasing gap between

Inuit women and men in terms of their participation in the wage-economy (Gerber 2014, Hovelsrud and Smit 2010, Hovelsrud et al. 2011, McElroy 2008, Rasmussen 2009). In fact, in the second half of the twentieth century women have steadily raised their labour force participation rates to levels similar to non-aboriginal women in many Arctic regions. They also have similar patterns of work with a preference for full-time and permanent positions (Dybbroe 1988). As Kuokkanen (2011b: 224) notes, in many indigenous communities it is often women who are involved in wage-employment more than men. Their engagement in paid-labour is also more consistent and permanent than that of men's. These arguments are central to my study of Inuit women's contribution in Nunavut.

The growing importance of wage-employment in the life of many northern women is relatively new and not well understood in the sociocultural and socioeconomic context of northern communities in Canada and, more specifically for this research, in Nunavummiut society. One explanation for women's wage-employment is the continuity with traditional roles. Inuit women's traditional labour consisted of daily chores to feed, clothe and nurture those for whom they had responsibility (Chapter 3). It also involved 'managing' camp life; as men were often away for extended periods of time for hunting, they were the ones making decisions about work allocation and resources distribution. Women were keepers of the camp and this role has translated in an increased engagement in the labour force (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006). Minogue (2005) notes that women are "better at being resourceful and working out problems" as this was their primary responsibility in camp life.

Despite Inuit women's growing presence in the wage sector as a form of continuity from their traditional roles, they continue to also be the primary caregivers for children and elders. Domestic and caring labour is still heavily perceived as female's work (Billson and Mancini 2007, Condon and Stern 1993, Sprott 2002). It has also largely been acknowledged that the continuity of women's roles (and work) within the family might be an explanation of women's well-being in northern communities compare to men (Kral and Idlout 2009, Kral et al. 2011, Stenbeak 1987).

Land-related or 'traditional' work has been heavily impacted by the resettlement of northern populations. This category of work has received important attention from researchers because a large proportion of recent Arctic research has focused on the potential impacts of

climate change on Inuit traditional activities. However, most of this scholarship addresses transformations in hunting practices and men's roles (see Crate 2008, Ford 2009, Ford et al. 2008, Fox 2002, Nuttall et al. 2005). Consequently, little attention has been paid to women's role in contemporary harvesting activities and, more importantly, to their economic contribution in all aspects of Inuit traditional food production. While it has been suggested that women often hold wage-employment in order to support their spouse harvesting activities (Chabot 2003, Wenzel 2000), it is rare to see women's economic contributions included in the literature on hunting economy. This thesis specifically addresses this issue by documenting Inuit women's contributions. An argument I make in this thesis is that woman's economic role has expanded in many ways; one of these being that they continue to be essential to the hunting economy through the contribution and sharing of their wages.

2.2.4 Drawing from literature on women and work

The feminist literature on women and work that I have outlined and critiqued above, has pointed to the social and cultural construction of working arrangements. This scholarship also points out that not only is it important to look at women's labour force participation, but more essentially, research needs to look at the process by which women enter the labour force, their socioeconomic patterns and the gendered experience. Furthermore, I draw on this body of literature to analyze the impacts of Inuit women's participation on other types of work (e.g. allocation of housework and carework, land-related work).

This large body of literature helps me understand work dynamics and women's workforce participation, relating these to social change in specific cultural context. However, mainstream feminist economists have been criticized for failing to acknowledge differences (e.g. race, ethnicity, culture) as major components of women's experience of work. Postcolonial theorists and indigenous feminists have highlighted the importance of differences in analyzing women's work. More specifically, indigenous scholars have argued that sociocultural and socioeconomic factors (e.g. traditional livelihoods, colonialism) must to be included when looking at the work performed by indigenous women and what counts as work. Such approach is critical to this thesis as I situate women's work in the Inuit mixed economy context as well as the decolonizing process.

Such notions of *culture* and *difference* inform the way I analyze Inuit women's work: the *process* by which they enter labour force, their *work patterns* and their *gendered experiences* of wage employment. Looking at women's work in such a broad perspective allows to a better understanding of Inuit women's economic role under modern condition. Using this broad approach, I delve into more specific concepts to make sense of Inuit women's roles in contemporary Nunavut.

2.3 Sociocultural approach to work

In this section, I explore the meaning(s) of work for Inuit and the sociocultural context in which individuals live and work, so as to lay the foundations for my examination of current labour dynamics within communities and families. First, I examine work from the literature on Inuit economy (2.3.1), focusing on Inuit subsistence and Inuit mixed economy (2.3.1.1), to be able to better situate the concept of work in a culturally appropriate way. Then I examine the organization of work in Inuit society, with a specific attention to the nature and patterns of work (2.3.2); forming a basis for women's roles in the northern economy. Indeed, essential to this discussion, due to the gendered focus of my thesis, is the roles of Inuit women in the contemporary socioeconomic context in Nunavut. Therefore much of the attention is devoted to the emergence of the wage-economy and the related implications and opportunities for women. In following sections provide the basis for my analysis of work in Inuit subsistence and Inuit livelihoods.

2.3.1 Inuit economy

Two main schools of thought assert contrasting perspectives regarding how to define economy. Very briefly, assumptions about human behaviour have led neoclassical economic theorists to develop a universal model based on rational choice and the notion of 'economic man'. Because resources are limited, or scarce, individuals make 'rational choice' in order to maximize something – money, profit, pleasure, status (Cook 1966). Accordingly, neoclassical economists regard economy as being separate from society and operating independently of social institutions. They aim to articulate a universal theory, rooted in the axiom of maximization, to all human behaviour, regardless of place, time and history (Firth 1968).

Other economists, on the other hand, consider the cultural context and the various social institutions as being central to understand economic systems (Dalton 1961, Polanyi 1944, Stanfield, Carroll and Wrenn 2006). This group are sometimes called substantivists. In brief, they consider capitalism, rather than being universal, is a "historically unique economic formation" (Isaac 1993: 224). Therefore, pre-/non-capitalist societies cannot be analyzed with the same 'tools' – maximization and scarcity – used for western-market societies. Rather, non-market societies are based on two principles of behaviour: reciprocity and redistribution. Reciprocity refers to the "vice-versa movements between two parties" (Sahlins 1972: 188) and is part of a long-term relationship. Redistribution implies centralized movements between members of a group and transfers within this group. A socially recognized centre, such as kinship, is needed to redistribute subsistence goods in an appropriate manner (Dalton 1962). Social order regulates the flow of goods and access to strategic resources (Sahlins 1972).

Both approaches have been criticized for reflecting only partly the complexity of economic systems. Today, most Inuit make their livelihood from both traditional modes of production within the framework of social institutions, and modern production framed in the market economy. It is therefore important to distinguish how these two approaches both operate independently and how they influence one another. More specifically, I argue that social economic forms of sharing, like reciprocity, redistribution and exchange, apply – to different degrees – in both sectors, particularly in relation to gendered production.

2.3.1.1 Defining modern Inuit subsistence

Traditionally, Inuit subsistence involves the production and distribution of local resources as well as the reproduction of social norms and cultural values (Lonner 1980). Through hunting, fishing and gathering Inuit produce considerable volumes of wild foods (country foods) that are shared collectively. Inuit society is not organized around accumulation, rather it is characterized by the end-less flow of goods and services (Sahlins 1971). As Kuokkanen (2011b: 218) notes, "subsistence activities extend far beyond the economic sphere: they are at the heart of who people are culturally and socially".

While decades ago researchers and government officials predicted the death of subsistence practices across the Arctic (Murphy and Steward 1956, VanStone 1960), today, they continue to be carry out widely (Chabot 2004, Dinero 2003, Harder and Wenzel 2012, Poppel and Kruse 2008). Subsistence production remains significant in terms of food security (Duhaime and Bernard 2008), social and cultural practices (Caulfield 1993, Lee 2002) and identity (Condon, Collings and Wenzel 1995, Kuokkanen 2011b).

The social aspects of Inuit subsistence are central to the functioning of the Inuit kinship system. Kinship provides the structure that organizes the flow of resources between members of the extended family (Damas 1963). The Inuit kinship system is a complex network of associations in which men, women, youth and elders have specific roles, rights, and obligations (Damas 1975). Relations are structured following distinctions by sex and generation (Fienup-Riordan 1983). In Inuit intergenerational kinship relations, known as *nalartuq*[3], the subordinate member of a dyadic pairing is obligated to obey virtually any request of his/her superior kinsperson. Obedience is organized along the lines of age and gender, with women obeying males regardless of their relative age (Damas 1969).

Damas (1975) studied a number of Inuit societies and found that kinship classification is organized around three principles. The first is the principle of *generation* where "members of lower generations are usually subordinate to members of higher generations, especially in the case of adjacent generations" (ibid: 84). Secondly, the principal of *relative age* regarding the younger dyadic member: "he follows, listen to or obey the older" (ibid). And thirdly, the principle of *male ascendancy* with its implication of male advantage over women: "Although males tend to respect females within the kindred, at least in some male-female dyads, especially brother-sister, females should obey males" (ibid). Kinship is central to both economic and social relations and has been described as the fundamental organizing principle of Inuit society (Berger 1985, Briggs 1995, Guemple 1972, Stevenson 1997, Thornton 1998, Wenzel 1981, 1995, Wenzel, Hovelsrud-Broda and Kishigami 2000b).

Historically, this system provided the basis for resource production, distribution and consumption, and thus regulated the sharing of food and organized economic life (Lonner 1980,

[3] It variously translates as respect and obedience (Damas 1963), or responsibility and obligation (Wenzel 1995).

Stairs and Wenzel 1992). Wenzel (2000: 63) describes sharing as a "strategy by which participants achieve the widest possible intra-community distribution of resources". Inuit sharing practices include transfer, gifting and redistribution of, primarily, food resources among kinsmen (Wenzel 1995). Whereas economic decisions were structured along the lines of kinship, the extended family (*ilagiit*) constituted the basic unit for social and economic relations. Sharing and reciprocity among individuals are important features of Inuit subsistence system and, along with traditional technologies, reveal cultural imagination and adaptation to spatial and temporal variations in the availability of all resources (Fienup-Riordan 1983, Wenzel 1991, 1995).

Inuit have adapted to many changes in their economic environment over the last decades with one major transformation being the introduction of money. Indeed, modern Inuit subsistence is characterized by the integration of both food and monetary resources while still being driven by a social rationale. Contemporary Inuit subsistence is understood as a mixed economy where multiple goods are circulating: food, equipment and money. While money has come to play a significant role in the mixed economy, it is not the ultimate goal of economic activities. Rather, money is used for consumption and to maintain subsistence activities (Peterson 1991, Wenzel 2000).

The land-based economy, which today mainly refers to hunting and fishing, remains an important element of Inuit culture, economy and livelihood. However, as various scholars have noted, traditional food production has become increasingly expensive in monetary terms (see Quigley and McBride 1987, Müller-Wille 1978, Usher 1976). It relies on imported mechanized equipment and hydrocarbon fuels that both constitute substantial monetary investments in the Arctic. Thus, money has become critical to both the traditional resource production and modern consumption patterns and needs. Therefore, contemporary harvesting dynamics are far more complex because they require two resources that are hard to combine: time and money. For men to engage in wage employment has a deleterious impact on the time available to actually hunt (Wenzel 1991). So, the decision to either hunt or to earn a wage comes with considerable, sometimes untenable, opportunity costs, as each can only be done well by committing an amount of time to one or the other such that the alternative suffers (Chabot 2003, Natcher 2009). Essentially, without sufficient money, harvesting is at best occasional, as committing to wage employment severely limits the time available for harvesting.

On one hand, access to money is critical to harvest wild food (Ford et al. 2008, Natcher 2009, Wenzel 1991, Wenzel et al. 2000a); on the other hand, wage-employment is time consuming. This situation creates an increasing pressure on those who have wage incomes, especially when these persons are in a subordinate position, like young women (Wenzel 2000). Because of their dyadic position they cannot refuse sharing their wage earnings. Wheelersburg (2008: 172) notes that

> Inuit households required at least one wage earner, which most often was a female. […] Consequently, female wage earners often supplied the cash to purchase expensive modern hunting and fishing equipment, especially transport means like snowmobiles, and the fuel to run them.

Natcher gives another example of the way money circulates within the household: "a father may receive money from his daughter who is employed in the community daycare facility. With the money the father purchases fuel and supplies to fish for Arctic char" (Natcher 2009: 90). Interestingly, these studies report a new gender dynamic occurring in response to the changing economic environment, however they fail to provide any further analysis. If money is critical today, its gendered aspects are not well documented. In this regard, this thesis is very attentive to such aspects and builds on these studies to better highlight women's contributions.

Indeed, money plays an important role in hunting and more orthodox provisioning such as imported food, furniture and household materials imported from the south. Consequently, money is key to the Inuit mixed-economy. Increased incomes through wage employment changed Inuit consumption behaviour and thus transformed household economies (Chabot 2003). This modern economy is growing as the population grows and reflects new needs that are related to new values. Ford and his colleagues (2008: 54) have argued that

> the functioning of social networks has been affected by a decrease in importance of the extended family unit and the emergence of intergenerational segregation, a decline in the practice of traditional cultural values, a concentration of resources in fewer hands, and the emergence of social conflict.

Others have argued that Inuit mixed-economy is still largely influenced by social relationships (Chabot 2003, Wenzel et al. 2000b) and to some extent, modern commodities, such as cash and store food, are shared as are traditional resources (Abele 2009b, Harder and Wenzel 2012, Stern 2005). However, the literature is not clear, to date, to what extent the sharing of

modern items is practiced. Therefore, one focus of this thesis is the investigation of women's role in such practices.

Nonetheless, the mixed economy is the result of a successful adaptation of Inuit to the money economy (Abele 2009b, Usher et al. 2003, Wenzel 1991). Many authors have argued that this is an adaptive instead of acculturative change[4] (Dahl 2000, Dorais 1997, Langdon 1991, McElroy 2008, Wenzel 1995). Therefore, Inuit modern subsistence can be described as a combination of harvested resources and monetary income. Inuit households derive their incomes from multiple sources: domestic production (hunting, fishing, gathering), commodity production (crafts and goods for sale), wage-labour (public/private and part/full-time), and government transfers (federal/territorial) (Elias 1997). All these sources are perceived as vital in local economy as well as critical to this thesis. However, today, in most northern communities, wage-employment constitutes the most efficient way to access money (Chapter 3). Overall, cash incomes support traditional production which then reproduces social forms.

2.3.2 The organization of work in Inuit society

While 'work' exists in every society, its organization, division, allocation and nature differ significantly. Similarly, the relation of work with other aspects of culture and the social fabric is highly variable (Applebaum 1984). Ortiz (1994: 897) argues that "the significance of work is drawn from, and reflects, the social context of production and exchange".

Historically, one married Inuit woman and man constituted a 'working unit' and their work was mutually interdependent (Guemple 1986). Because social and economic structures were embedded, work was not separated from the rest of one's life. Colonization, settlement and transformation in the political environment with the creation of Nunavut Territory in the 1990s[5], have led to major shifts in work regimes. The recent generalization of wage labour constitutes a drastic change, one that I argue, has to be understood in relation to Inuit social organization and mixed economy.

A core argument I make in this thesis is that the way people think about 'work' is intimately connected to their social organization. For Inuit, the conception of work reflects

[4] Acculturative change refers to the processes by which colonized peoples are described as passive victims of change and therefore assimilated to a dominant culture. In contrast, the adaptation approach views them as central actor.
[5] See chapter 3 for further details on transformation in Nunavut social, economic and political environment.

aspects of 'traditional' subsistence organization, namely, cooperation, redistribution, sharing and division of labour. These characteristics are significant for the understanding of contemporary work organization.

According to Duhaime (1991), Inuit were used to seasonal and occasional patterns of work which explains their 'preference' for occasional and part-time positions, what he calls '*l'éthique du travail discontinu'*. More interestingly, Duhaime (1991) argues that Inuit have access to multiple sources of income because they pool and share their resources within a large group – one daughter might have a job, a son might sell carvings, a mother receives old age pension, etc. Therefore, because people know that they can access money, or what money stands for – food or ammunitions – they feel less pressure to hold to their job. Duhaime (ibid : 123) further argues that social norms and obligations explain this ethic of work among Northern Quebec Inuit.

In studying 'work' in Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territory, Stern (2001: 215) found that Inuit no longer perceived subsistence work as an economic strategy though it continued to have social value. According to Stern (ibid: 53), Inuit use wage work to support new consumption patterns of which subsistence is only *one* aspect. Chabot (2004), who studied trends in economic practices in Northern Quebec, found a greater centrality of monetary resources in Inuit life. However, Chabot (ibid: 164) notes that large proportions of money are used for harvesting production and that "the need for money fosters mutual help, not only at the household level but also at the community level, where economic resources circulate". These findings echo other studies in circumpolar regions suggesting that engagement in the wage-economy is done in close relation to subsistence practices (Dahl 2000, Nuttall 1991, Wenzel 1995).

The persistence of traditional social values and norms is in direct relation to Inuit cultural understanding of work. Indeed, Inuit continue to confer a great importance to country food and household food production which are highly connected to one's identity (Chabot 2004, Duhaime and Bernard 2008, Gombay 2010, Searles 2002, Wenzel 1991). More importantly, traditional subsistence work and its associated behaviours (cooperation and sharing) have impacted Inuit contemporary understanding of work. In this thesis, I make the argument that there is a great continuity in work value and organization, and that this is in direct relation to the persistence of

subsistence modes of production. More significantly, such continuity in work value has a direct impact on Inuit women's status and power; an argument I develop in Chapter 7.

Therefore, it appears essential in analyzing Inuit working patterns not to be limited to standard economic measures or factors such as gender, income, education and age, but to combine them with other sociocultural elements such as seasonality, centrality of mothering in Inuit culture and participation in subsistence activities. These additional elements might give a more accurate understanding of what 'counts' as work and what it means to 'work' in contemporary Inuit society. Furthermore, values and expectations embodied in subsistence work and those associated with wage work are not always harmoniously combined, rather they are constantly negotiated by individuals participating in a mixed economy (Kenny 2002). Berman (2003a: 149) notes that American Indians have always managed to develop new ways of making a living while re-conceptualizing ideologies of "work". Finally, Berman (ibid: 139) concludes that "women are particularly positioned to shape economic interventions, as they mediate between family life and welfare policy".

Using a sociocultural approach to contextualize modern Inuit understanding of work helps me to see how social organization and subsistence practices are key to Inuit engagement in the wage/non-wage sectors. Such an approach is also essential for me to be able to situate gender roles and specific expectations towards women.

2.4 Provisioning

The concept of 'provisioning' aims to explain how relationships shape the work-responsibilities carried by individuals, here women. This section reviews and critiques the literature on provisioning (2.4.1), highlighting the importance of division of labour, resources allocation and decision-making. I also focus on the importance of social relations in defining one's provisioning responsibilities and I draw from this body of literature to understand the complex nature of the activities performed by Inuit women (2.4.2).

2.4.1 Defining provisioning

While theories of work and gender have recognized the various forms of work performed by women and men, the role of social relations in shaping one's work responsibilities has only

recently been acknowledged (Glucksmann 1995, Macdonald 1995). For many of the feminist economists, the concept of provisioning enables them to connect and articulate economic and social spheres (Gardiner 1997, Nelson 1998, 2006, Neysmith et al. 2012, Power 2004). Indeed, recent research on women's work and responsibilities has recognized the complex nature of women's activities as well as the importance of social locations and relationships (Luxton and Corman 2001, Neysmith et al. 2010a, Taylor 2004, Vosko 2006). Taylor (2004: 31) notes that "work is embedded in and defined by the social relations within which it is located". Similarly, Neysmith and her colleagues (2010a) studied Canadian women from Ontario and British Columbia who are marginalized by income, race, and age. They found that "provisioning responsibilities flow through pathways of relationships" (ibid : 150).

In the literature on provisioning, the focus is not limited to the 'nature' or the 'categories' of the work performed by women, but extends to the connections between work responsibilities and social relationships. Macdonald (1995) notes that three concepts influence the way provisioning can be performed: division of labour, resource allocation and decision-making. The division of labour refers to the distribution of work among members of a household. The way work is allocated has a major influence on the provisioning responsibilities, as one individual can find him/herself bearing more responsibilities than another member. Resource allocation refers to the distribution of all types of resources – social, emotional, physical, and material. In analyzing the provisioning process, it is important to document the resources required and the way they are used by individuals within and outside a group. Finally, decision-making is critical to the understanding of the two previous elements. It involves power relations and control over resources and work allocation. Feminist scholars have demonstrated that the distribution of income and other resources is negotiated at the household level and is largely influenced by social and cultural norms (Folbre 1986, Sen 1990). Such 'negotiation' can be understood through power relations and can be framed by individuals as 'obligations' (Neysmith et al. 2010a). Understanding who controls resources and how decisions are made is therefore important to picture the possibilities and limitations of one's provisioning.

2.4.2 Contextualizing provisioning responsibilities

Applying the concept of provisioning to the analysis of Inuit women's responsibilities is organizationally useful as it allows me to combine the nature of the work performed by Inuit

women, the relationships that shape their working patterns and the strategies they use to meet their provisioning responsibilities. Indeed, the importance of social location and kinship relations have long been recognized to have great impact on Inuit obligations (Briggs 1995, Dombrowski et al. 2013, Nuttall 2000, Wenzel 2000). Kinship relations, as I described in section 2.3, are key to Inuit socioeconomic organization. In this thesis, I argue that they are also central to the understanding of Inuit women's provisioning. Consequently, I use the concept of provisioning to understand how Inuit women in Clyde River provide for themselves and members of their household and extended families. Following the work of Taylor (2004), Barker (2005) and Neysmith, Reitsma-Street and their colleagues (2004, 2005, 2010a, 2012), I focus on how Inuit women provide – what activities they engage in and what resources they produce – and how these resources are shared within the household and extended families.

The provisioning literature provides a framework with which to examine my second objective. This objective is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Inuit women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of Inuit mixed economy. Using provisioning in combination with Inuit concept of economy and kinship allow me to investigate *how* different categories of work are allocated among family members and *what* influences it (e.g. gender, full-time employment). Also, I analyze *who* produces household resources and in *what* quantity, and *to whom* these resources are distributed. Finally, I investigate *who* controls the resources necessary for provisioning processes. This information forms the frame within which provisioning activities are organized. Overall, the provisioning responsibilities carried by Inuit women are understood within the context of social relationships and kinship.

2.5 Conceptualizing gender roles and power

In this section, I explore the literature on gender focusing on the specific roles for women and men (2.5.1) and power in the context of Inuit society (2.5.2). Then, I situate gender roles, relations and power in the contemporary northern context (2.5.3). From this literature I seek to develop a more comprehensive account of women's status and how it influences their roles, responsibilities and contributions to households and communities.

2.5.1 Defining gender in Inuit society

The distinction between sex – biologically determined – and gender – socioculturally determined has long been demonstrated (Oakley 1972). Gender is not simply a state of being, but rather it is something that both men and women *do*, and *do* recurrently, in interaction with others (West and Zimmerman 1987: 140). Gender is constructed through those interactions and reproduced within the social context. Therefore, as Butler (1999 [1990]: 15) suggests gender can be understood as

> a relation among socially constituted subjects in specifiable contexts. This relational or contextual point of view suggests that what the person 'is', and, indeed, what gender 'is', is always relative to the constructed relations in which it is determined. As a shifting and contextual phenomenon, gender does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations.

In other words, gender is not a fixed attribute in a person, rather it intersects with other aspects of identity such as race, class, ethnicity and sexuality and as a result, "it becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained" (Butler 1999 [1990]: 6).

Judith Lorber (1994: 25) has also argued that "once gender is ascribed, the social order constructs and holds individuals to strongly gendered norms and expectations". Consequently, because gender is something men and women *do* within specific norms and expectations, it is not something static but rather dynamic. Changes in economic, social, and political formations affect gender construction and, conversely, ideological changes in gender constructs affect other aspects of culture (Bonvillain 2007). Therefore, *doing* gender in one location is not the same as *doing* gender in another location. In other words, men and women *do* gender under different norms and expectations that are specific to their culture, in a particular location at a certain period of time.

Recognizing that the construction of gender is dynamic highlights the importance of analyzing the specific context within which it is produced. Greenlandic scholar Karla Jessen Williamson (2004: 188) argues that gender analysis "requires an approach that differs from western feminist discussion" and that looks at indigenous social values in their social, cultural and historical contexts. Indeed, gender studies produced by native women underscore the importance to represent and situate gender in its cultural and historical context to avoid unitary and ahistorical readings of indigenous women experiences (Ford 1997, see also Albers 1983,

Bell 2004, Perdue 1998). For instance, in hunter-gatherer and forager societies, distinctions such as workplace, home, productive/reproductive work were less pronounced and domestic roles carry a different significance that was not necessarily less powerful. As Leigh (2009: 74) points out, it is not easy to articulate mainstream theories on gender and indigenous social values:

> This different-but-equal gender division sits uncomfortably with a conception of the universal human subject that often characterises Liberal Feminisms, and with the interpretation of women's location read as confinement in the private, domestic sphere as inherently oppressive. It also echoes a wider debate about the possibilities for Indigenous peoples to be different-but-equal in settler society (and for women to be different-but-equal in cultures worldwide).

Gender identity for Arctic indigenous people is also something being constructed and negotiated in relation to their sociocultural and economic environment (Frink et al. 2002, Jarvenpa and Brumbach 2006). Historically, gender identity in Inuit and other Arctic indigenous societies was not ascribed; rather it was socially constructed according to the work a person engaged in and by his/her experiences along the course of life (Guemple 1986, Sassaman 1992). It is often mentioned that regarding Inuit traditional livelihoods, men and women had distinct but complementary roles based on a specific division of labour (see Condon and Stern 1993, Giffen 1930, Kjellström 1973b, Minor 2002, Stern 2010). For instance, in the Belcher Islands (Nunavut) the status of men and women is defined mainly in terms of the particular kinds of work they perform (Guemple 1986: 12). Economic roles defined gender and *vice versa*. Accordingly, the lack of children of one sex in an Inuit family may have led to one child being trained to fulfill tasks associated to the other gender (Bonvillain 2007). Similarly, among Alaskan Natives, the domestic subsistence economy and its mode of production are critical factors in gender role formation (Jolles 2006: 244).

While the division of labour directly influenced the construction of gender roles, kinship was instrumental in organizing social and gender relations. Because Inuit kinship structures both economic and social relations, it is intimately related to the construction of gender relations. These relations are framed by women and men's obligations and responsibilities toward their kin. Furthermore, the centrality of the family greatly shapes female and male responsibilities and their relation. It is important to note that the concept of 'family', which refers to the extended family, is the organizational unit within which work is allocated and gender produced under

kinship regulation. Family is a microcosm of gender roles and relations and plays an important role in the construction of gender identity both traditionally and today (Leigh 2009: 71).

2.5.2 Defining power in Inuit society

Although the nomadic life of hunter-gatherers in the Arctic involved 'balanced asymmetry' of gender relations and roles (Billson and Mancini 2007, Jolles and Kaningok 1991), egalitarian principles (Williamson 2006b) and gender relations based on mutual respect (Gombay 2000) and complementary-but-equal division of labour (Giffen 1930, Leacock 1981), many scholars have argued that their authority over decision making was unbalanced (Guemple 1995, Reimer 1996, Stern 2010). According to Damas (1963, 1975), power relations among Inuit were not equal, both age and sex defined power relationship, although "the female should obey the male sibling regardless of age differences" (Damas 1963: 50). Relations are ranked following natural distinction such as sex and generation (Fienup-Riordan 1983). In this general framework, where "younger answer to older and females answer to males" (Guemple 1995: 22), women received less power, being both subordinate and obligated to men.

While the subsistence work performed by Inuit men and women was equally valued, men were keepers of the land, women were keepers of the camp (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006). The former had authority over 'public sphere' and the latter over the 'domestic sphere'. Thomsen (1988: 87) suggests that some aspects of Inuit modern social organization are based on the traditional dichotomies between the camp and land and have led to male dominance of the public political sphere.

2.5.3 Situating gender roles, relations and power in contemporary society

Despite developments in feminist theory and practice highlighting that gender experience is informed by other aspects such as nationality, race, class and ethnicity, gender analysis specific to indigenous communities and indigenous women issues remain underrepresented in contemporary feminist theory (Suzack et al. 2010). Indeed, there is a very small number of indigenous women who identify themselves and their work as feminist, as well as limited feminist work done on indigenous struggle (for an exception see Green 2007a, Smith and Kauanui 2008, Suzack et al. 2010).

This can be explained in two ways. First, some indigenous women have not supported feminist strategies and have distanced themselves from women's organizations to focus on their ethnic identity in a common struggle with men to protect their culture and traditions (Smith and Kauanui 2008, Thomsen 1989). Indigenous struggles have mainly been articulated within the framework of decolonization and such an emphasis on nationalism has devalued and marginalized gender issues and justice (Suzack et al. 2010). The second reason is because struggles for gender equality have been perceived as a white middle-class movement in direct opposition with Indigenous social organization and tradition. Indeed, an important conflicting theme underlining gendered analysis in Indigenous communities is 'tradition'. Many aboriginal women around the world who have identified themselves as feminists have been labeled anti-traditional or accused of destroying traditions (St-Denis 2007, Tuhiwai Smith 1999). In some communities, gendered analysis are (still) considered to be "divisive, corrosive of family and community, culturally inappropriate and even colonialist" (Green 2007a: 25).

While the project of indigenous feminism centers the analysis on categories of both gender and indigeneity, it also focuses on colonization *and* decolonization as gendered processes (Smith and Kauanui 2008). As an emerging field of research, indigenous feminism has focused little on contemporary gender issues in Inuit society. Yet, it is *not* my purpose in this thesis to develop a gender theory on Inuit women[6]. On the contrary, my contribution is focused on highlighting the fact that transformations in northern social, cultural, political and economic contexts affect women differently than men and that, in response, gender roles and relations are undergoing profound changes (see Chapter 3 for further details on contextual transformations). Specifically, I argue in this thesis, *that contemporary conceptions of work and the distribution of responsibilities within families are instrumental in the formation of gender roles and relations and to the distribution of power*. Because such an understanding of work and responsibilities is intimately related to Inuit traditional social organization and tradition, it is expected to result in mitigated responses for women. Overall, to understand the meaning of gender and the ways it is constructed, this thesis examines and documents different historical and geographical features of Inuit society.

[6] My positionality in this research is discussed in Chapter 4.

2.6 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined and critiqued the literature on women and work, sociocultural approach to work, provisioning and gender roles and power to develop a conceptual framework to achieve my research aim: *to understand Inuit women's roles in the contemporary socioeconomic environment in Nunavut*. Figure 2.1, at the beginning of the chapter, summarizes the key concepts that are mobilized in this thesis to explore the different facets of Inuit women's roles and responsibilities.

The four bodies of literature upon which my thesis builds do not operate separately; rather they overlap in many ways. For instance, 'work' is a central concept in this study and different perspectives are explored in order to gain a multi-scalar understanding of the concept. Indeed, work is examined through a feminist approach as well as a cultural practice within Inuit social organization and mixed economy. The (re)production of gender roles, relations and power are also closely rooted in the division of work and the overall conception of a 'worker'. Thus, the multiple facets of Inuit women's work are captured in this conceptual framework. Another key theme in this study is the importance of social organization in the development of one's role, responsibilities and obligations. The literature on Inuit kinship combined with an indigenous feminist perspective provides me with a broad understanding of Inuit women's social position and the cultural construction of gender.

To explore my first objective, that is, *to provide a deeper understanding of the changing labour markets and related opportunities for Inuit women in contemporary Nunavut*, I draw upon key aspects regarding the *gendered experience of wage employment* and *patterns of work* from the literature on women and work. I also draw from the *embeddedness of social and economic relations* from a sociocultural approach of work, as well as the importance of the *gendered division of labour* from literature on gender roles and power. To examine my second objective, that is, *to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of Inuit mixed economy,* I widely draw on the sociocultural approach and provisioning literatures to understand how the *Inuit subsistence* and *mixed economy* inform Inuit women's *relationships of responsibilities* and *obligations*. Finally, to advance my third objective, *to assess the effects of economic transformations on gender roles and power*, I build on the *cultural norms and expectations* in the construction of gender role and relation from the literature on gender

roles and power, as well as a cultural approach to the different *categories of work* that characterize Inuit society from the literature on women and work.

My conceptual framework informs the main aim of this study and the subsequent analysis and discussions of my research findings. In Chapter 3, I contextualize my conceptual approach within the contemporary socioeconomic context of Nunavut, specifically focusing on transformations in the nature of work and economic roles for both women and men. My methodological approach (Chapter 4) is also informed by this framework that has greatly contributed to design the case study in Clyde River, Nunavut.

CHAPTER 3

Contextualizing Inuit women's work in Nunavut

3.1 Introduction

> Laura is a young female in her late twenties; she was born in Clyde River. She grew up living in a northern village and was schooled from kindergarten to grade 12 in the village. She worked full-time permanent positions for different organizations in town. Her mother, in her late forties, was born in a camp 'on the land', and moved at a young age into a community nearby. She was schooled in the community until grade 5 or 6, and was sent in a residential school in the South to complete her tenth grade. Laura's mother is a self-taught person and she also worked in different communities for municipal government, she took extra classes to complete her education and undertook training programs to become an administrator. Laura's grand-mother was born on the land, had all her children in camps before moving into a government house in the early 1970s. She never went to school and held only occasional and/or seasonal jobs in Clyde River (my notes from various discussions with Laura and her mother).

Like Laura and her mother and grand-mother, Arctic women all around the circumpolar regions have had very different life experiences. The environment in which they grew up has drastically changed, from semi-permanent camps and a life directly connected to their physical environment, to permanent settlements and a life regulated by the clock. The work women do today, and their lives in Nunavut happen in a very different social, economic and political context compared to previous generations.

In this chapter, I explore the many aspects of contemporary life in Nunavut's communities and their role in shaping Inuit women's work. I specifically examine the different transformations in Nunavut's political, economic and sociocultural environment, which influence and define Inuit women's roles and work. For instance, historically, socioeconomic relations

have been instrumental in organizing women's labour and responsibilities, however, to various degrees, such relations have been impacted by colonization, settlement, schooling and wage-work.

In the first part I examine the historical and political construction of Nunavut, the colonization process and relations with *qallunaat* (3.2). The second part focuses on economic transformations and their impact on Inuit social organization (3.3). Exploring the economic northern geographies sets the table for a deeper understanding of women's roles and work under modern conditions. Finally, in the third section I look at the sociocultural landscapes in Nunavut, closely examining the transformations in the family structure, education system as well as demographic and social dynamics (3.4). Altogether the social, economic, political and historical contexts are important to examine how Inuit women make sense of their work and roles in the light of recent socioeconomic transformations (Chapter 5), what are their responsibilities and contributions in the mixed economy (Chapter 6), and how their work has changed their roles and status (Chapter 7).

3.2 Northern geographies: transformations in Inuit livelihoods

Across the Canadian Arctic, Inuit societies included a wide variety of customs; however their livelihood mainly relied upon hunting, fishing and gathering. Inuit life was tied to the land and sea and the resources they provided. Living in this harsh environment for centuries, they have developed a complex social organization that included subsistence harvesting, strong kinship relations, ecology, economy and cosmology (Wenzel 1991). Eastern Arctic Inuit were nomadic in the sense that they travelled according to the passing season; moving in-land during the summer and living on the coast in winter. These migratory cycles brought them to well-defined areas where they had established seasonal campsites.

Inuit traditional subsistence is a system in which both men and women's work was important to secure resources (Giffen 1930). For instance, equipment maintenance, food and skin processing and ritual were all essential to hunting practices. In traditional Inuit livelihood, division of labour was gender-based in order to secure food and resources for the *ilagiit*[7].

[7] Extended family.

However, if this division of labour has allowed Inuit to adapt to the Arctic environment, it is often mentioned that gender roles were flexible. Although men and women had very gendered work there was no restriction from engaging in each other's work when it was necessary (Giffen 1930, Graburn 1969, Rojas 2001, Williamson 2006b).

While few contacts between Inuit and *Qallunaat* occurred until the 16th century, it was at the end of the 19th century that traders and whalers had profound impacts on Inuit livelihood and migratory movements, by encouraging Inuit to stay longer on the coast to meet and trade with them (Damas 2002). The fur economy impacted Inuit traditional subsistence by slowly shifting from hunting for food to include trapping for the fur trade (Bone 2009). For example, fox skins, which were then highly prized in the South, provided a means to obtain hunting equipment and some food supplies like tea, sugar, flour and tobacco (Brody 1975, Malaurie 1999). In this context, hunting provided both food and an exchange commodity, and therefore continued to be a highly valued activity. The availability of European goods, especially rifles, through trading stations, made hunting much easier and successful (Damas 1963).

Beyond material provisioning, European traders, through their institutions and values, introduced the Inuit social economy to a differentiated value system. Gradually, the Inuit way of life came to depend on non-traditional resources and in the late 1940s included money (Watkins 1977). From a land-based economy relying exclusively on resources from land and sea, Inuit have developed a mixed economy that combine both traditional resources and modern resources. Hughes (1965: 17) notes that "the establishment of permanent Hudson's Bay Company trading posts in Eskimo territory in the first years of this century [20th century] greatly increased dependence of Eskimos to the outside world". Such a dependence, however, was part of continuous adaptations to their changing socioeconomic environment.

The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) monopolized most of the Canadian North for commercial fur trading until 1870 and beyond, even when most northern territories were transferred to Ottawa. The presence of the RCMP started in the 1920s and came to include the responsibility for family allowance redistribution. Until the 1950s, the federal government conducted a *laissez-faire* policy and invested as little as possible in the North. After World War II, the issues of northern development arose at the political level and led to a welfare reform approach that aimed to incorporate Inuit to a southern standard. Rather than being neutral, the

approach was rooted in ideological motives and like many colonization processes, it was meant to help and improve the colonized, the Inuit (Li 2007). Education, health and housing services were specifically targeted by the newly created Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources. However, to ensure the provisioning of social services, a spatial reorganization of Inuit populations, at that time scattered over a wide area, was needed. Moving Inuit populations to settlements was the first step towards reorganizing northern life. Inuit were variously invited, encouraged or forced[8] by the Federal Government to settle in permanent communities in order to receive medical care, education and new economic opportunities (Wynn 2007). Centralization continued until the 1970s and brought massive changes to the patterns of Inuit ecology and particularly to their subsistence economy.

3.2.1 The mixed economy

Throughout the twentieth century, Inuit have maintained their subsistence practices with high levels of household food production and redistribution. However, the impact of state intervention is manifold as it was much more committed to the transformation of life in the North than whalers and traders had been (Brody 1975: 23). Indeed, it is well documented that the establishment of permanent settlements has had a profound effect on all aspects of Inuit way of life. Most settlements were situated according to previous trading posts, missions, or military installations and, therefore, were not organized according to food availability, but rather around colonial governance and trade needs (Kirmayer, Brass and Tait 2000). Thus, settling into communities disrupted patterns of food acquisition with an increased number of hunters for the available wildlife around communities and greater distances between populations and other hunting grounds. Consequently, the maintenance of Inuit traditional subsistence activities meant adopting more mechanized equipment to handle their new environment (Wenzel 1981, 1991).

Indeed, new technologies, such as the snowmobile and power boat, allowed Inuit to overcome spatial constraints and to maintain their traditional food production. However, this adaptation to a new set of tools "came at a substantially increased cost" (Wenzel 1991: 111). Imported mechanized equipment and fuel necessitated a substantial monetary investment. The seal market that developed during the 1960s offered the perfect opportunity for Inuit to access

[8] In some areas such process has been experienced positively, and occurred over a longer period. In others cases (Northern Québec) Inuit groups were forced to resettle in foreign lands with little knowledge of the place and of its resources.

money and maintain their traditional subsistence activities. Hunting provided the two essential resources: food and money. Through the sale of seal skins, Inuit earned enough money to buy the necessary equipment and supplies for hunting and maintaining the household.

To maintain their livelihood strategies, a constant influx of cash was necessary and therefore money had become essential to traditional food production. This integration of money into the traditional subsistence system is referred to as a 'mixed economy' (Abele 2009b, Langdon 1991, Natcher 2009, Wenzel 1991). The subsistence economy and the emerging market economy make up the two sectors of Inuit mixed economy: they are thoroughly intertwined (Dahl 1989). Over time, subsistence and wage economies have become interdependent in the Canadian Arctic, without overwhelming the social economy (Kuokkanen 2011b, Nuttall et al. 2005, Wenzel 2013). The term 'mixed economy' continues to refer to an integration of several economic activities where households derive resources from multiple sources. The pooling of these resources appears to be a common strategy across the north with individuals moving between subsistence and market activities, depending on opportunities and preference (Chabot 2003, Usher et al. 2003: 177).

While the term 'mixed economy' describes this transformed livelihood that could no longer rely exclusively on food production, it also underscores the unique adaptation that Inuit have accomplished by incorporating money into their traditional subsistence economy (Nuttall 1992). Similarly to what Peterson (1991) found among the Australian Aboriginals, Inuit used money to reproduce their set of social values and social relations that structured distribution and consumption of traditional resources. Therefore, money allowed Inuit to perpetuate their subsistence activities in a slightly modified form: selling skins in exchange for cash, which could then be used to finance harvesting activities. Indeed, cash was rarely a means in itself; rather, it supported the land-based activities of various families and individuals (Chabot 2003, Fienup-Riordan 1990, Quigley and McBride 1987, Wenzel 1991). More importantly, this mixed economy allowed the continuous flow of goods that were then redistributed according to Inuit system of kinship (section 2.3). Therefore, Inuit social economy was not disrupted by the penetration of money into their non-market system, but rather maintained and reinforced it (Kruse 1991, Wheelersburg 2008).

While it has been argued that the introduction of money into the Inuit non-monetized economy did not disrupt their livelihood, life in settlements had much greater impacts. Indeed, traditional social organization and kinship structure were considerably disrupted by the establishment of permanent settlements and the concomitant infrastructures. Compulsory schooling and residential schools were particularly harmful to Inuit culture and subsistence practices, prohibiting children from learning their language and traditional knowledge and skills (see section 3.4.2). Similarly, housing policy was used to reorganize Inuit economic and cultural configuration (Dawson 2003). Houses provided by the government were too small to host extended families and poorly adapted to Inuit activities – butchering animals, storage, etc.

Life in settlements also impacted Inuit women's work and their roles. Programs were designed to teach them 'modern housekeeping skills' (O'Neill 2012). While men could continue to hunt, trap and fish, women were confined to nuclear-family houses in which not all *ilagiit* members could live. For women it meant adapting to a new organization of their labour. Their social organization as well as their work organization was disrupted as a result of this transformation setting (Nahanni 1990). Women's mobility was also impacted as they stayed in-town while men continued to go on the land. More importantly, the school replaced parents as a key source of knowledge and education and consequently a large part of women's responsibilities in the family were taken away. Overall, life in settlements has increased gender-based work organization with women increasingly confined to domestic work.

3.2.2 Inuit modern subsistence and wage employment

With sedentarisation, money became critical to the maintenance of Inuit livelihood: it sustained harvesting activities and, the more orthodox provisioning of goods such as southern foods, furniture, and household materials, all of which were imported. Inuit livelihood was characterized by a mix of activities: work in the labour market and harvesting on the land. People engaged in part-time, seasonal or occasional employment, practiced harvesting activities and received government transfers.

However, when the seal market collapsed in 1983, the entire mixed economy was affected (Wenzel 1991). As seal hunting provided both traditional and modern resources – food and money, respectively – the impact on the traditional food economy was considerable, and access to cash became much reduced. Many Inuit had to rely on governmental subsidies – family

allowance, old age pensions, social assistance – which did not provide enough money to support expensive hunting equipment. As various scholars have noted, traditional food production had become increasingly expensive and needed substantial monetary investment (Ford et al. 2008, Natcher 2009, Wenzel et al. 2000a).

Consequently, wage employment represented the only way to obtain sufficient money to conduct land-based activities and to support household needs. However, in the 1980s in most northern communities, the wage economy was very limited with mostly part-time, seasonal and occasional employment and only a few permanent full-time jobs. These wage opportunities included work at the Hudson's Bay and later the Northern store, unloading shipments, driving water and sewage trucks and general maintenance within the municipality and school buildings. Most of these positions were unskilled or semi-skilled jobs that men undertook to support their family. A few Inuit women were hired to work in the school and at the health centre as aides and these were also largely unskilled positions. In the coming sections I discuss the implication of a greater development of the wage economy during the 1990s, with the land claim agreements and the development of governmental institutions in relation to the creation of Nunavut territory.

3.3 Contemporary economic landscape in Nunavut

While the purpose of relocation was to provide public services to Inuit populations and their incorporation into the Canadian society, from the beginning the Federal Government's interventions also aimed to 'develop' its Arctic regions. Such development was mainly driven by exploration and exploitation of non-renewable resources and therefore depended on highly volatile prices (Bone 2009, Nassichuk 2003). However, over time economic development based primarily on large-scale projects and large infrastructure expenditures has shown limited benefits to northerners and has not resulted in significant employment opportunities (Abele 2009a). Between the 1950s and the 1970s Inuit populations and other aboriginal groups (Dene, Métis and Cree) were rarely consulted prior to the implementation of such massive projects. They were marginalized from their homeland – both spatially, by means of relocation, and socioeconomically, being excluded from development planning. As a result, an important and rapid mobilization took place across the North to regain self-determination and land rights.

Northern Aboriginal people's activism resulted in the "redesigning of northern political boundaries and institutions" (Abele 2009a: 32).

In 1993 the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA) was signed between the federal government and Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, and the Nunavut Territory was officially separated from the Northwest Territories on April 1, 1999. This process has been crucial politically for Inuit, as it represented great hopes to regain economic control and development planning over their lands.

Since the creation of Nunavut as a territory, its economy has more than tripled as a result of the development of various governmental institutions and investments from the private sector (Figure 3.1). However, government remains the largest employer in Nunavut with its spending on goods and services, public infrastructure, education, health and social services and defence constitute the largest component of Nunavut's economy (NEF 2013: 24).

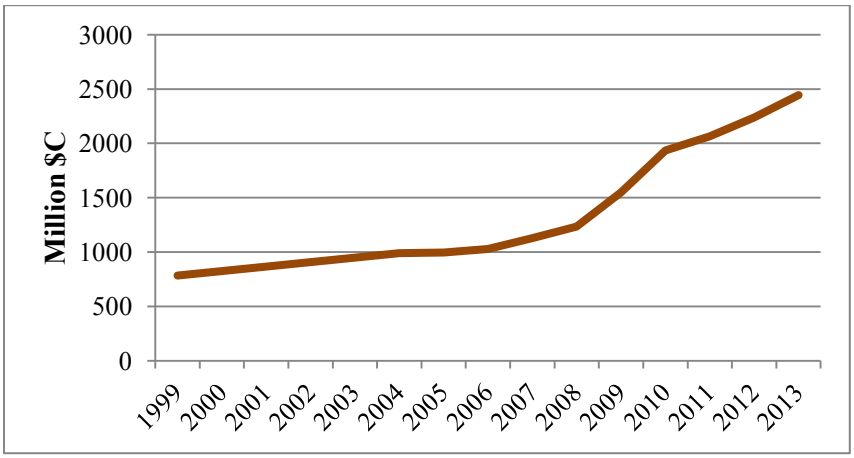

Figure 3.1: Gross Domestic Product, expenditure-based, Nunavut, 1999-2013
Source: Statistics Canada (2014: Online)

3.3.1 The wage economy in Nunavut

Both the development of public institutions and private investments in the North have contributed to transform the economic landscape in Nunavut over the last decades. Despite the rapid development of the wage economy over the last two decades, most individuals continue to

be involved both in land-based activities, which provide food and work in most communities, and wage work. This mixed economy shapes Inuit women and men's work experiences and as I emphasize in Chapter 2, work in the northern context comprises a large array of activities that are not limited to wage employment, but include domestic activities and harvesting practices. The integration of wage employment and subsistence activities continues to be significant for Inuit livelihood, as it is for other aboriginal groups in the circumpolar regions (Jolles 2002, Nuttall et al. 2005, Usher et al. 2003).

Nunavut's contemporary economic landscape is characterized by important geographic inequalities and gender disparity. These elements show the unique composition of Nunavut's economy and are important in understanding internal socioeconomic dynamics as well as to situate women's roles and work.

Labour market activity is typically measured using three indicators[9] of labour market activity: the labour force participation rates, employment rates and unemployment rates. These indicators provide a background from which it is possible to compare with other regions. However, it is important to note the various limitations of these indicators in the northern context. For instance, data from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) conducted in Clyde River and in other communities, did not meet the minimum rate of participation and therefore data were not published[10].

Today wage work constitutes an important part of northern people's lives. During a year, most Nunavummiut adults (91%) occupy a wage position either as their principal activity or as one occupation among many. According to the 2011 NHS, 9% of Nunavummiut did not work during 2010 compared to 5.2% for Canadians. So, almost twice as many individuals in Nunavut were not able to find jobs, although they were looking for one. Among those who worked, 82.6%

[9] The labour force participation rate is defined by the number of adults (15 years old or older) who are working or actively seeking employment, divided by the total adult population. The employment rate is the number of people who are working divided by the total population. The unemployment rate is the number of people who are not working but are actively looking for work, divided by all those who are participating in the labour market. All rates include only the population aged 15 and over at the time of data collection. Also, those rates do not take into consideration any other types of work undertaken by individuals, such as harvesting activities, therefore a large number of people participating in the wage economy only occasionally might not be counted if they were harvesting at the time of the survey.

[10] I am using such data to draw a broad picture but I am aware of its limitations in terms of representativeness and validity. In chapter 5, I compare data from various national survey and territorial institutions with data I collected in the community.

worked full-time at some point during the year compared to 80.1% for Canadians; 17.4% Nunavummiut worked part-time compared to 19.9% for Canadians. Although data suggests that more Nunavummiut worked full-time during the year than the Canadians, the wage labour in the North is characterized by a preponderance of occasional jobs (often full-time but for only a short period of time) than in the South. Indeed, the average weeks worked in Nunavut is 41.1 compare to 44.5 in Canada (Statistics Canada 2011). Overall, data shows the importance of wage work in contemporary northern life, but more importantly, it shows that Nunavummiut engage slightly differently in the wage economy than other Canadians.

Since 1980s, both Inuit women and men have participated more actively in the labour market, but it is especially true for women who have increased their participation rate more consistently (from 40% to 58%) compared to men (from 60% to 64%). Figure 3.2 shows that while thirty years ago the gap between men and women in the labour market was wide, it has significantly narrowed since the 2000s. In fact, women's participation is very similar to that of men's, and reflects changes in the nature of work in the North (Section 3.3.1.1) as well as changes in women's social role (Section 3.4).

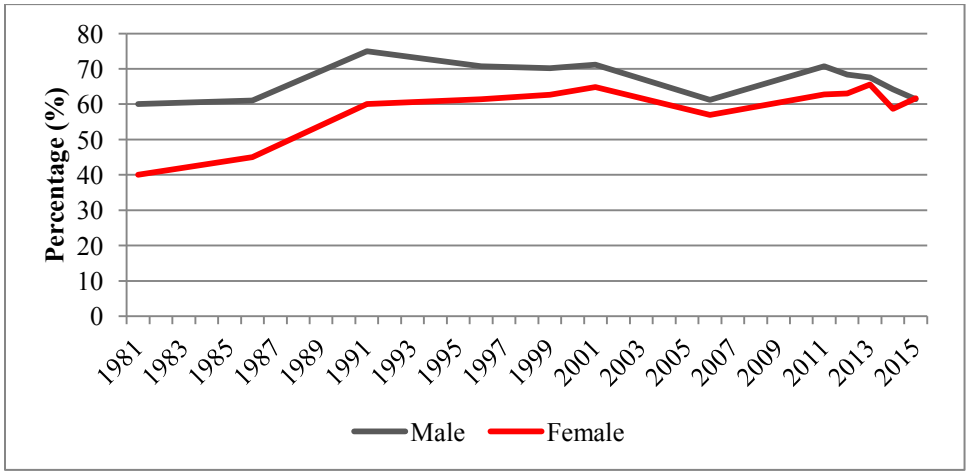

Figure 3.2: Labour force participation rates for men and women in Nunavut, 1981-2015[11] Source: Author's compilations and calculations from Statistics Canada (1984, 2007) and NBS (2015)

[11] Data for 2015 include only January-April.

While the participation in the labour force has increased for both women and men, the employment and unemployment rates show that women have augmented their employment rates more significantly than men since the 1990s (Figure 3.3). In fact, since the creation of Nunavut women have had higher employment rates than men for the years 2006, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (January to April). The unemployment rates tell the same story with women being less likely to be unemployed than men. The trend observed in Nunavut corresponds to what is seen in other parts of the Arctic and reveals a growing gap between female and male engagement in the labour force (Billson and Mancini 2007, Dinero 2003, Fogel-Chance 1993, Rasmussen 2009, Stenbeak 1987).

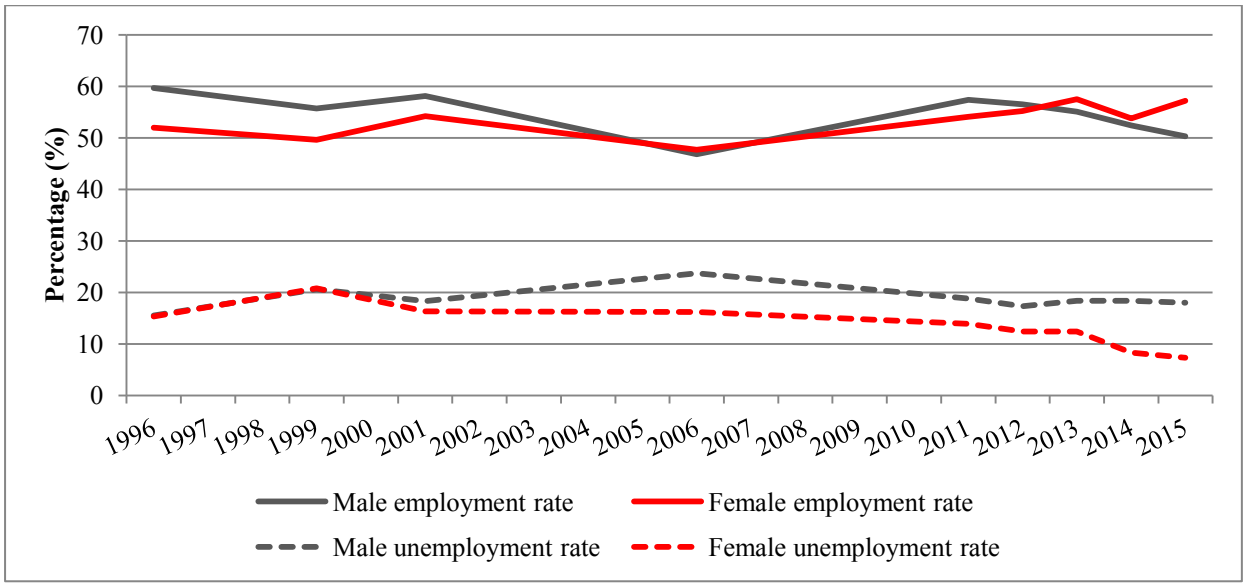

Figure 3.3: Employment and unemployment rates for men and women in Nunavut, 1996-2015[12] Source: Author's compilations and calculations from Statistics Canada (2007, 2011) and NBS (2015)

Overall, the labour market indicators suggest that men and women have both benefited from the creation of Nunavut territory in terms of employment. However, women appear to have gained more than men on this front. This *gender split* is not unique to Nunavut, but it has been

[12] Data for 2015 include only January-April.

better documented in Alaska and Greenland compared to the Canadian North (Kleinfeld et al. 1981, Rasmussen 2009, Thomsen 1988).

3.3.1.1 Nature of work and employment patterns

The low participation rates in the labour force in the 1980s for both women and men were mostly due to the lack of employment opportunities. The settlements created by the federal government had no formal economic base and therefore offered limited employment opportunities (Bone 2009). While people continued to rely heavily on harvesting activities, they took advantage of the few available jobs. Until the 1990s, most wage jobs available were unskilled or semi-skilled positions ('blue-collar'), and were typically male-oriented. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the public sector grew rapidly and became the main employer, with job opportunities in what was perceived mostly as female-oriented fields, such as health care, education and old age care ('white-collar').

The increased importance of the tertiary sector in northern economies has translated in a gender split where women occupy a large proportion of white-collar job compared to men (Rasmussen 2009). In most of the circumpolar Arctic, the tertiary sector accounts for 80% or more of the employed persons (UNDP 2004). This sector includes activities in fields such as retail, transport, and tourism as well as education, health care, and administration in the public sector (Duhaime 2004). In the Canadian north, the tertiary sector represents about two-thirds of the economy and is largely dominated by the public sector. For instance, public administration – municipal, territorial and federal, health care and education-related employment have represented most of employment opportunities in Nunavut since 1999 (CBC 2002, Nunavut Economic Forum 2010, Vail and Clinton 2001).

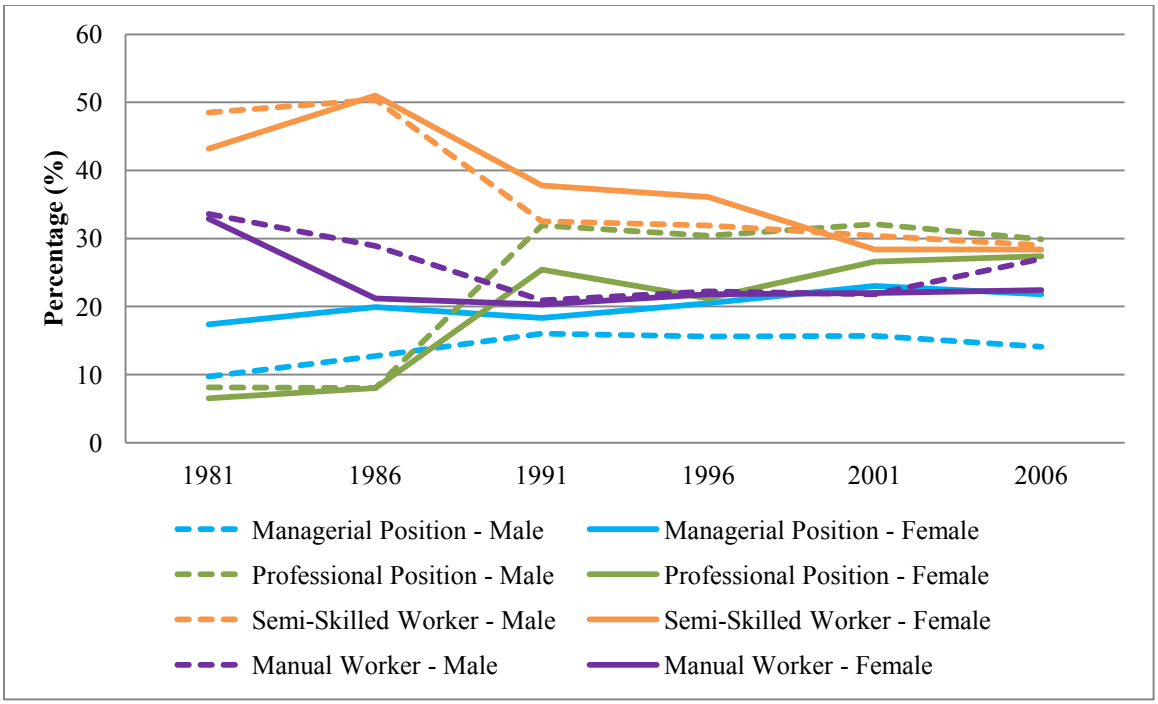

Figure 3.4: Occupation Distribution of Inuit in the Experienced Labour Force, Population Aged 15 and over by Sex, Canada, 1981-2006 Source: Adapted from Quinless (2012) and Sénécal (2007)

As Figure 3.4 shows, the development of the tertiary sector has propelled an important change in the nature of work. Indeed, over the 1980s there has been a steep drop in manual labour (purple lines) and semi-skilled work (orange lines) for both men and women. Simultaneously, there has been an increase in professional (green lines) and managerial positions (blue lines). Therefore, over the 1990s and more significantly during the 2000s, the nature of work performed by Inuit has shifted from manual and unskilled work to skilled and managerial work positions. While in the 1980s the majority of Inuit (75%) were positioned in manual and semi-skilled positions, a minority (10%) had professional positions or managerial positions (15%). Figure 3.4 also shows that the proportion of unskilled workers drops to 50% with a significant increase in upper level manager and professional position, especially for women. Indeed, there is a significant difference in managerial positions, with men accounting for 14% and women 22%. Interestingly, while Inuit women have always been more represented in that category and continue to move upward, men have stagnated since 1991 (Senécal and Inuit

Tapiriit Kanatami 2007). This difference is mostly attributed to the large proportion of Inuit women in teaching, health and social science occupations.

Concomitant with those changes, patterns of employment have also been modified over the last decades. Patterns of employment are defined as the way individuals engage in work-related activities, for instance full-time or part-time jobs, and whether these are occasional, seasonal or permanent jobs. Those patterns show individual and group preferences in terms of employment, but they also indicate long term structural changes in the labour market. At the time of settlement very few jobs were available and these were mainly seasonal and occasional positions. More employment opportunities were created with the development of communities and the creation of municipal governments and its related services.

Studies conducted in Alaska, Greenland and Canada revealed that overall, for Inuit men, there was little change in their patterns of employment (Kleinfeld et al. 1981, 1983, Rasmussen 2009). They participate in the cash economy intermittently and their 'commitment' to work is lower than women's. Because many men work as 'blue-collars' in construction and other similar positions that are often temporary, they tend to display a higher variability in their labour force participation rates (Senécal and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2007). Therefore, this prevalence of seasonal or occasional wage work, combined with the lack of job opportunities during certain seasons results in intermittent work patterns (Statistics Canada 2010). It has also been shown that men have high commitment to harvesting activities compared to women, leaving less time for wage-work (Chabot 2003, Duhaime 1991, Hobart 1984, Kleinfeld et al. 1981). Preference for occasional work can be perceived as being economically irrational, but it has been shown that for many men the social benefits of being a hunter are more rewarding than having a higher income (Chabot 2003: 30, also see Wenzel 1991).

On the other hand, patterns of employment for Inuit women have changed significantly. The job opportunities created by the municipal and territorial governments have enabled a significant number of Inuit women to enter the labour force. They tend to engage in typically 'white-collar' jobs that are full-time, year around and permanent and because of that they tend to work more weeks over a year than men (Table 3.2). In addition, their preference for permanent jobs serves as a buffer in times of crisis in the globalized economy. For instance, mining development projects that employ men in a large proportion can easily be delayed or even

cancelled according to global market. Whereas unionized positions such as teachers, nurses and clerks (mainly female occupations) are less affected by markets.

3.3.2 Income disparity in Nunavut

The contemporary labour market in Nunavut is characterized by important disparities. A first disparity is spatial and refers to the gap between small communities and larger towns. One goal in the creation of Nunavut, was the decentralization of most institutions in order to stimulate economic development in all remote communities and not only in the capital, Iqaluit. While many sub-department organizations have effectively been dispersed across the territory, most department executives are situated in Iqaluit as are the headquarters for federal agencies and private sector businesses. As a consequence, the wage economy in Nunavut is characterized by great disparities between a few regional centres, such as Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet, and the rest of the communities.

Table 3.1 shows the labour force activity and median income for Baffin region communities in 2010. Iqaluit has a much higher labour force participation rate (78.7%) compared to the rest of the region (64.5%) and a much lower unemployment rate, respectively 9.2% and 14.7%. Disparities in income are also wide between small communities (56 389$) and Iqaluit (90 036$). Such differences in economic opportunities between communities have fostered socioeconomic tensions as well as cultural tensions.

Table 3.1: Labour Force Activity for the Total Population 15 Years and Over, for Nunavut, Regions and Communities, 2011

	Total – Population 15 years and over	Median Employment Income in 2010	Employed	Unemployed	Not in the Labour Force	Participation Rate (%)	Employment rate (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)
Nunavut	**21 255**	**77 130**	**11 070**	**2 415**	**7 770**	**63,4**	**52,1**	**17,9**
Baffin Region	11 590	80 975	6 380	1 100	4 120	64,5	55,0	14,7
Baffin without Iqaluit		56 389						
Arctic Bay	515	52 120	205	70	245	52,4	39,8	25,9
Cape Dorset	900	56 942	410	95	405	55,6	45,6	19,0
Clyde River[13]	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
Grise Fiord	90	–	65	10	20	77,8	72,2	14,3
Hall Beach	340	61 045	115	60	165	51,5	33,8	34,3
Igloolik	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
Iqaluit	4 980	90 036	3 560	360	1 060	78,7	71,5	9,2
Kimmirut	295	54 581	155	25	115	59,3	52,5	14,3
Pangnirtung	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
Pond Inlet	1 010	59 649	420	120	475	53,5	41,6	22,2
Qikiqtarjuaq	365	70 275	175	60	125	65,8	47,9	25,0
Resolute	145	–	95	15	35	79,3	65,5	13,0
Sanikiluaq	525	40 112	155	35	335	36,2	29,5	18,4

...: Data has been suppressed for data quality due to a global non-response rate (GNR) of 25% or greater for the Census of Population or a GNR of 50% or greater for the National Household Survey.
–: Income statistics have been suppressed where the estimated total number of units (persons, families or households) in the reference year is less than 250.
Source: Author's compilations and calculations from Statistic Canada (2011)

Disparities in employment are not limited to gender and geography; ethnicity also plays a significant role in explaining differences in revenue and employment status in Nunavut. Indeed, the Inuit population in Nunavut does not do as well in the labour force as the non-Inuit population. The employment rate for the Inuit population aged 15 and over in 2014 was 44.3% compared to 87.9% for non-Inuit population (NBS 2015). Although the non-Inuit population constitutes 15% of the total population the difference is staggering. Such disparity is related to

[13] Many northerners have no or limited trust in government officials and refuse to answer surveyors or provide them with false answers. Also, some figures and graphs in this section do not include the community of Clyde River because data from the 2011 Census was discarded as the level of non-responses was too high.

the reasons that motivate non-Inuit to move to Nunavut; specifically to work and when they are not working they tend to migrate back to their originate province.

The second reason reflects the gap in educational realizations between the two groups. Indeed, there is an important mismatch between employment requirements and available skills and experience among Inuit population. Government positions and large-scale projects that have characterized Nunavut economic landscapes over the last decades have largely failed to provide broad employment to Inuit; one of the reasons being the lack of specialized trainings and education to fulfill such jobs. Such ethnic disparities in access to wage labour are not new to Inuit. Analyzing census data from the 1980s, Prattis and Chartrand (1990) note that Inuit across Canada were disproportionately excluded from the labour force and systematically under-represented in the highest-ranking positions in the labour force.

Finally a third disparity is found between genders when compared with the Canadian population. Interestingly Inuit women have very similar participations rates to Canadian women compared to Inuit men who have significantly lower rates than their counterparts. Data presented in Table 3.2 demonstrate that overall women in Nunavut have more similar work patterns and employment incomes to that of southern Canadian women than men have. In this regard, a higher percentage of women in Nunavut have worked full-time (71.5%) compared to female Canadians (69%). Conversely, men in Nunavut have been less involved in full-time work (78.4%) compared to male Canadians (82.4%). While Nunavummiut women worked just a slightly more weeks (41.3) than men (40.9), Canadian women worked similar weeks (44.2) than men (44.9).

Table 3.2: Work Activity and Employment Income for Population Aged 15 years and over in Nunavut, 2010

	Nunavut			Canada		
	Both Sex	**Men**	**Women**	**Both Sex**	**Men**	**Women**
Average weeks worked	41.1	40.9	41.3	44.5	44.9	44.2
% population worked full-time	75.2%	78.4%	71.5%	76%	82.4%	69%
% population worked part-time	15.8%	13.2%	18.7%	18.8%	12.8%	25.4%
% population did not worked	9%	8.2%	9.8%	5.2%	4.7%	5.6%
Median employment income ($)	25 662	28 225	23 603	29 878	36 211	24 606
Average employment income ($)	43 305	45 307	41 203	40 650	48 594	33 000
Median employment income ($) worked full-time and full year	77 130	75 890	78 353	47 868	53 046	42 181
Average employment income ($) worked full-time and full year	76 316	77 901	74 410	58 129	65 400	48 820

Source: Statistic Canada, National Household Survey, 2011: Online

Similarly, data shows that there continues to be a gap between Nunavummiut and Canadians in terms of employment incomes (Table 3.2). However, the gap appears to be much wider for males than for females. Indeed, women in Nunavut earned only slightly less (23 603$) than their southern counterpart (24 606$). The difference between men in Nunavut (28 225$) and in Canada was much wider (36 211$). More significantly, women in Nunavut surpassed Canadian women in income for full-time and full-year work with a median income 1.85 times greater. Comparatively, men in Nunavut also surpassed Canadian men, but the gap was somewhat smaller (1.43).

Interestingly, although women earned less than men in Nunavut, the difference was less pronounced than for Canadian women. In fact, women in Nunavut occupy a unique position in Canada with the lowest gender wage gap (Table 3.3). Indeed, young females (15 to 24 years)

have higher incomes than their male counterpart, which might suggest that the overall gap between Nunavummiut women and men will continue to narrow in the foreseeable future.

Table 3.3: Gender Wage Gap[14] in Nunavut and Canada, 2010

	Nunavut	**Canada**
Population aged 15 years and over	0,85	0,68
15 to 24 years	1,17	0,92
25 to 34 years	0,96	0,79
35 to 44 years	0,83	0,71
45 to 54 years	0,82	0,71
55 to 64 years	0,72	0,64
65 to 74 years	0,72	0,60
75 years and over	0,99	0,72

Source: Statistics Canada (2011: online)

This extraordinary increase in earning among Nunavummiut women was accomplished through the political and economic transformations resulting from the creation of Nunavut territory. Despite women's low educational accomplishments compared to that of Canadian women (see section 3.4.2), Inuit women have moved rapidly upward in the occupational structure and constitute a growing majority of the labour force.

However, despite the vigorous development of the wage economy over the last twenty years, Nunavut continues to show lower employment rates compared to the rest of Canada. Nunavut's unemployment rate (13.8% in 2014) is significantly higher than the 6.9% Canadian average and that of its neighbour the Northwest Territories (7.9%). Overall, the income picture suggests that Nunavummiut are poorer than Canadians as they have lower employment income, larger families and purchasing power that is weaker in northern communities than elsewhere in Canada. Also, one must consider the higher cost for most goods and services – food, transportation and housing – which are significantly higher in Nunavut.

[14] Gender Wage Gap is the difference between male and female earnings expressed as a percentage of male earnings.

3.4 Contemporary social landscape in Nunavut

Over the last century, the changes experienced by the Inuit population occurred at a rapid rate. While the central social foci of life gradually shifted from the land to the settlement (Collings, Wenzel and Condon 1998), people had to deal with multiple challenges that they had never faced before. This new lifestyle involved adapting to permanent houses, larger groups and new institutions to regulate social life.

The Government's centralization efforts aimed at creating permanent villages in the North in order to facilitate the provision of social services at the same time as securing its geopolitical position. Indeed, the major settlement development and reorganization of social life by the federal government was closely intermeshed with Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and Cold War concerns[15] (Armstrong, Rogers and Rowley 1978). The construction of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line accelerated the pace of changes with aircraft services and water transportation improvements that, in return, enabled the arrival of teachers, doctors, missionaries and government administrators (Duffy 1988).

This 'rush northward' shed light on Inuit social conditions in northern communities where they suffered economic hardships as a result of a sharp decline in world fur prices and their exposure to new diseases from the South (Abele 1987: 312). As reports of starvation were publicized in the South and social programs implemented for southerners, it became implicit for the government to export these to northerners and ensure their full and equal participation as Canadian citizens (idem). Social welfare and economic development measures were implemented in a top-down approach leaving little control in the design of such programs to Inuit.

Despite the Federal Government's profound involvement in Inuit life, its efforts were largely unsuccessful. Today, there remain many obstacles to achieve healthy societies in Nunavut. In the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA) a high proportion of Inuit expressed concerns about social problems such as unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, family violence and sexual abuse (Poppel et al. 2007). As McGhee (2004: 271) writes

[15] Canada and the US established weather and radar stations throughout the Arctic region of Canada. The Distance Early Warning (DEW) Line was constructed to detect Soviet missile attacks.

"peoples of the North are coping with a complex range of problems that would stun most southern communities". The social challenges Nunavummiut are facing today are deeply rooted in recent transformations; from subsistence economy that values family, community and sharing, to a wage economy where individual work and material wealth are central.

3.4.1 Education, training and skills

Education has been an instrumental tool in (re)organizing social and economic life in northern communities (Coates 1985), and a significant driver of social and cultural changes. Mandatory schooling for school-aged children aimed to build Canadian citizens by 'destroying' aboriginal culture, language and traditions; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission uses the powerful term 'cultural genocide' to describe the residential school system.

While school-aged children were taken away from their parents for several months to be educated in southern communities, families were broken down. A gap grew between the way one generation was raised compared to the other and the skills they each developed. Several authors have discussed the consequences of formal education on Aboriginal traditional skills and particularly the limited time children spent with their parents (Burch 1975). Briggs (1991) notes that, traditionally, observation and interaction with parents and elders was the most common way for Inuit children to learn knowledge and skills, which were then passed down to their own children. Wenzel (2004: 248) also notes that *Inuit Qaujimajatuqanjit* (IQ) is "acquired over an extended period". As a result, formal education prevented children from being exposed fully to their culture and from acquiring the relevant knowledge.

Although its mandate was to provide Inuit with educational skills for the market economy, mandatory schooling generally failed. Today, the gap between the general level of education and skills of Inuit and those required in the new wage economy remains wide. High levels of unemployment are often associated with the inappropriate skills to fulfill jobs at the territorial and municipal levels. According to Statistics Canada (2013) only four in ten (42%) Inuit aged 18 to 44 completed the requirements for a high school diploma or equivalent in 2012; women were more likely than men to have such credentials (46% versus 36%) (Bougie, Kelly-Scott and Arriagada 2013: 32). According to the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (2012) and National Household Survey (2011), Inuit men and women have very different reasons for dropping out of

school. The reasons for Inuit male dropouts included the following: school problems[16] (22%), lack of interest (15%), and wanting to work (11%) and for female the main reason for dropping out was pregnancy/need to care for their own children (38%) (idem : 33). Other barriers include lack of academic preparation, the need to relocate (often from remote to urban areas), lack of financial resources, family responsibilities, and loss of support systems (idem : 42).

The occupational change from unskilled to skilled workers in the Nunavummiut labour force has been advantageous for women as an increasing number of opportunities in the public and private sectors require more formalized education. Indeed, Inuit women, as opposed to Inuit men, are generally better educated and over-represented in post-secondary education (Government of Nunavut 2013, McElroy 1975, Minor 2002). Figure 3.5 shows the proportion of female and male that graduate from high school from 1999 to 2013. With the exception of 2001 and 2010, more Inuit women than men graduated from high school.

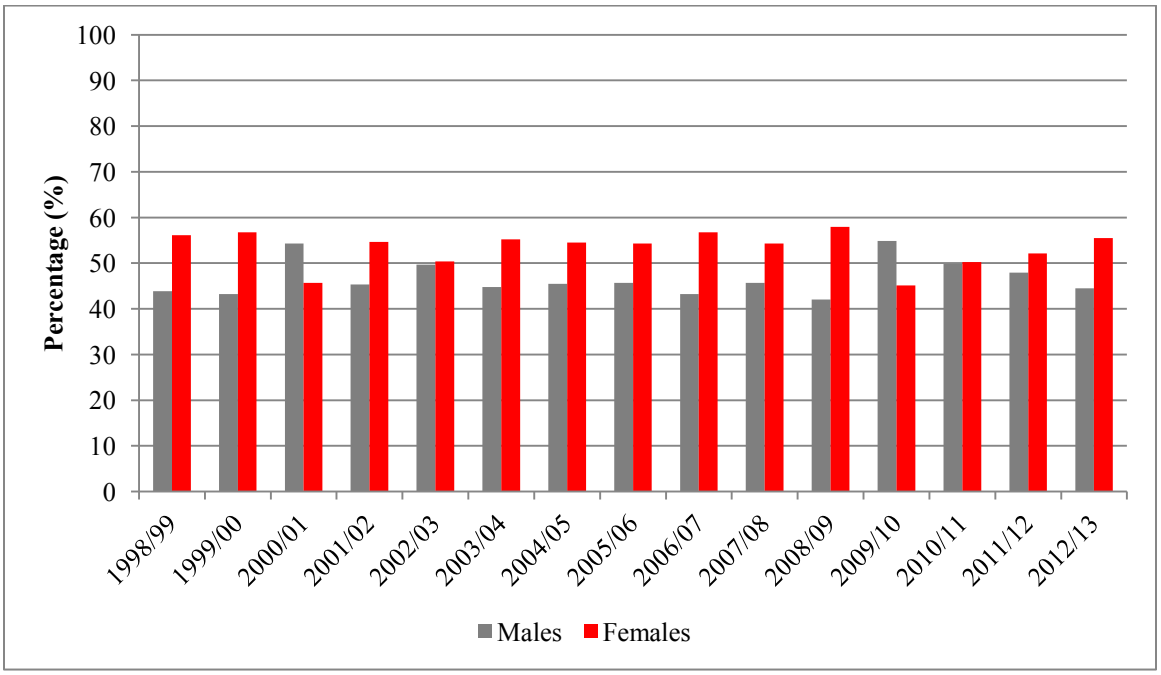

Figure 3.5: Nunavut Secondary School Graduates by Sex, 1999-2013
Source: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics (2014d: online)

[16] The category "school problems" includes having problems with school work, with teachers, or being expelled.

Moreover, the proportion of Inuit women with a university certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor level or above is slightly greater (14.7% for female and 11.4% for male) (Statistics Canada 2013). Because Inuit women tend to attain a higher level of education as well as specific training they qualify more easily for wage work. In contemporary Nunavut, education plays a major role in employment opportunities for both women and men. Many job postings require as a minimum a high school degree and many positions in the public sector – especially in health and education sectors – require advanced educational training. This educational gap between men and women is also consistent with what is found in other Arctic regions (Kleinfeld and Andrews 2006a, 2006b).

Another consequence is that many higher level positions continue to be filled by non-Inuit – especially in larger communities like Iqaluit. Nunavummiut male and female educational attainment, particularly post-secondary education, remains far below that of the rest of Canada. Indeed, 47.5% of female over 25 year old and 44.5% of male have no certificate, diploma or degree compared to 11.6% and 13.7% respectively for the general Canadian population (Statistics Canada 2013). This disengagement from postsecondary education is a major constraint to Inuit employment and further opportunities (Figure 3.6).

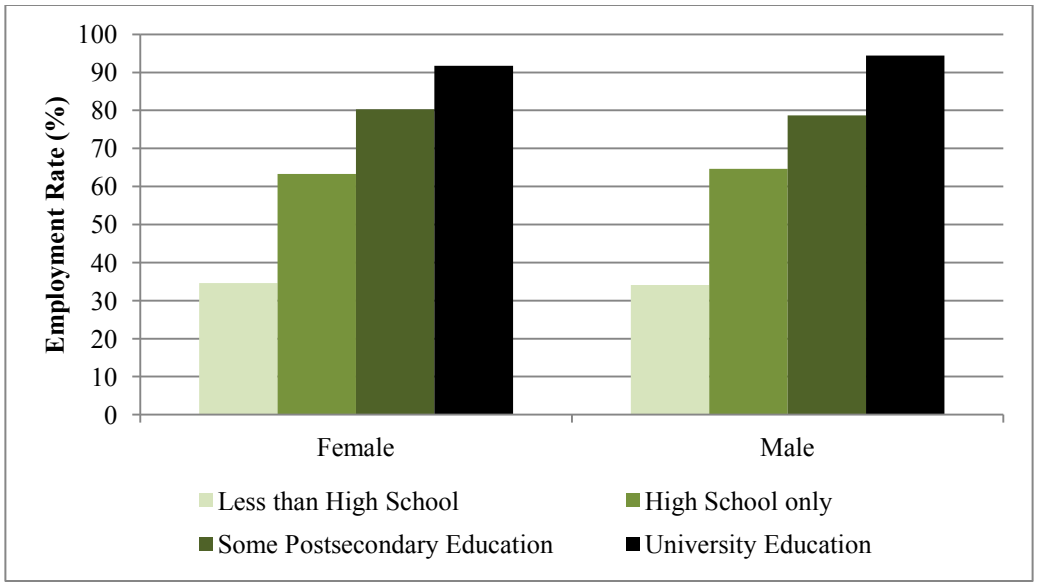

Figure 3.6 : Employment Rates by Education in Nunavut, 2010
Source: Statistics Canada (2011: online)

3.4.2 The Inuit family

Another critical change in Inuit social organization concerns the family as a social unit. Inuit are kinship-based people and prior to settlements they lived in *ilagiit*-based camps. Within the *ilagiit* – or extended-family – relations and roles are guided by kinship principles and structured along the lines of age, generation and gender (Damas 1972, Usher et al. 2003, Wenzel 1991). Kinship has largely been described as the foundation of Inuit social organization (Briggs 1995, Damas 1968, Trott 1982). The *ilagiit* fosters social and economic relations and is the site of gender socialization as well as the main organizational unit.

However, over the last half century, the growing importance of the nuclear family (a couple and their children living in a single unit), has been a major change in Inuit social organization as well as in many native societies (Miller 2004). Missionaries at first, then government agents, have tried to decenter and reconstruct family relations to produce 'normalized nuclear family' to "further the degree of conformity with Anglo-European standards" (Satzewich and Wotherspoon 2000: 84). McCallum argues that indigenous women were specifically targeted through a 'domestic assimilation' where "their 'traditional' domestic work became pathologized, and the assimilation of Indigenous women to Euro-Canadian standards became a priority. In this era, domestic labour and the home were targets of colonial

policy; it was within the home that cultural norms were to be reformed, produced, and reproduced" (McCallum 2014: 23). Damas (1976: 77) also notes that housing arrangements have been one of the more direct forces operating on family organization in the new centralized communities. Indeed, housing policies and house designs reflect Euro-Canadian sociocultural norms and not Inuit social organization (Stern 2005).

Concomitantly, the development of wage-labour has also increased pressure on Inuit social organization. Individuals with wage income are often the target of multiple requests from their less fortunate kin. According to Stern (2005: 78) in Ulukhaktok, NWT, "wage-earning, home-owning nuclear family households may not have to cut themselves off from traditional sharing networks, but for some it becomes easier to do so than to comply to constant requests for assistance from needy kin". Similarly, Wenzel (2000) reports increased demands made on subordinate members of *ilagiit* – especially females – for cash resources. Finally, Chabot (2003: 31) also notes that there is more reluctance amongst children who live with their parents to share income or to be involved in the household's production activities. Such behaviour can be associated with more individualistic world-views and present challenges the social foundation of traditional Inuit society.

Despite state interventions and social pressure, the *ilagiit* continues to play an important role in Inuit social organization and socioeconomic relationship. Harder and Wenzel (2012) note that the *ilagiit* remains basic to the contemporary traditional food economy; country food continues to be redistributed among *ilagiit* members and meals shared at the family leader's home. Furthermore, Kral and colleagues (2011) found that 'family' was a key factor to explain well-being. They (ibid : 430) note that "being with family, speaking with family, visiting, going on the land together, sharing food together, and many other family-related activities were closely associated with wellness, happiness, health, and healing".

Thus, multiple forces have pressured the Inuit *ilagiit*, from housing to wage work, but overall Inuit report strong family ties. Morin and his colleagues (2010: 105) note that kinship still plays a greater role in the social support than the rest of social network (colleagues, neighbours, etc.) and that more than half (53,9%) of Nunavummiut describe their ties with other members of their family as 'very strong'. Finally, it is interesting to note that a major finding of SLiCA is that

family ties and social support from one another figures prominently in why indigenous people choose to remain in Arctic communities (Poppel et al. 2007).

3.4.3 Contemporary demographic challenges

Demography is another important component that characterizes Nunavut contemporary social geography. Over the last decades, the Inuit population has increased rapidly, making it the fastest growing population in Canada. As Figures 3.7 and 3.8 show children and youth under 25 years of age made up 58% of all Inuit people in Nunavut, compared with 18% of the non-Inuit population in Canada. In contrast, adults aged 25 and over accounted for 42% of all Inuit people in Nunavut, compared with 82% of the non-Inuit population (Statistics Canada 2013). In 1996 41.3% of Nunavummiut were under 18 and this cohort was 38.6% in 2011. Comparatively, only 20% of Canadians were aged under 18 year old in 2011 (Statistics Canada 2013). Finally, the 2011 census showed that the median age of Nunavumiiut was much younger (24.1 years old) than for the Canadian population (40.6 years old).

In 2011-2012 the highest birth rate[17] was observed in Nunavut (+2.5%) which suggests that the population's rapid growth will continue for the near future (Statistics Canada 2012b). Such a young population has great implications for living conditions and work opportunities for the coming generation.

[17] The birth rate is the ratio between births and the average population during a period. The Canadian birth rate for that same period was estimated at 1.1% .

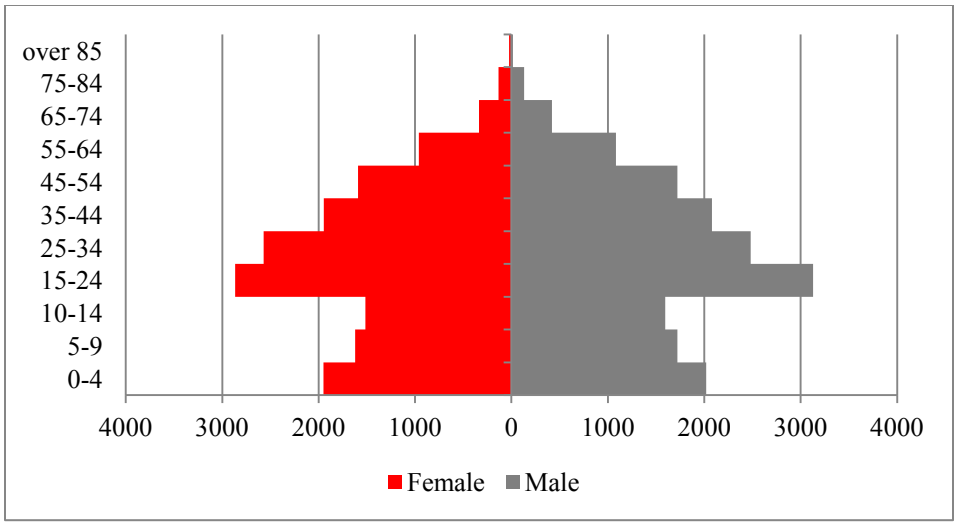

Figure 3.7: Age-structure in Nunavut, 2011
Source: Statistics Canada (2012c: online)

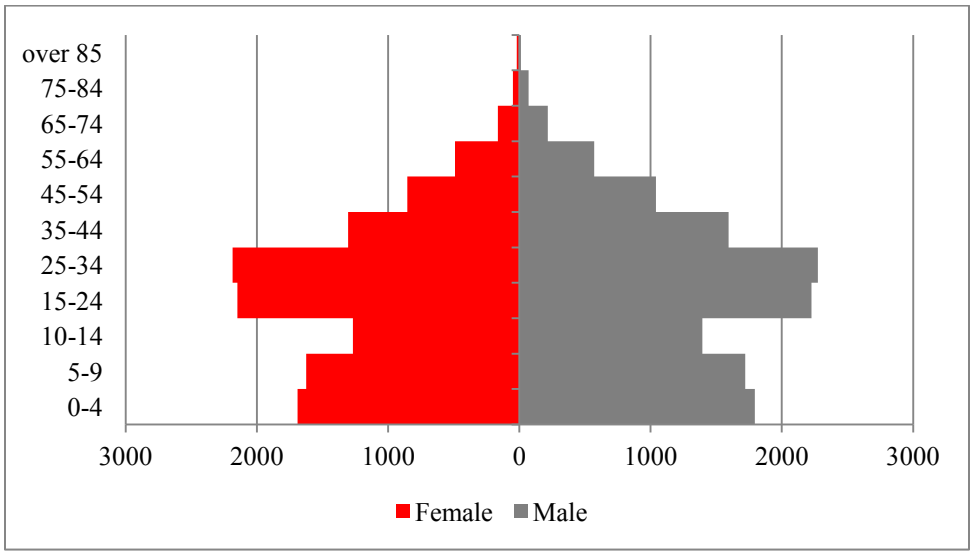

Figure 3.8: Age-structure in Nunavut, 1996
Source: Statistics Canada (2012c: online)

3.5 Chapter conclusions

Over the last decades, Inuit livelihoods have undergone significant transformations. From a land-based economy relying exclusively on resources from land and sea, Inuit have developed a mixed economy that combines both traditional resources and modern resources. With sedentarisation and the increased presence of wage labour in Inuit's lives, the economic landscape in contemporary Nunavut is deeply transformed. Such changes in social, economic, political and cultural contexts in Nunavut must draw attention to women's roles and the nature of their work. As will be explored in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, these factors are crucial to understanding women's work experiences, their roles within their family and communities and their power in all spheres. It appears that the 'silence' has hidden important gender transformations occurring in Inuit societies (Klein and Ackerman 1995b).

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

> My story is a long story; it is not small pieces that you can collect individually. It's a whole that needs to be heard as a whole. All our stories are long ones, but that's how we managed to survive up North: telling long stories so that we don't forget our knowledge (Ruth, 65 years old).

4.1 Introduction

The roles of women in Inuit contemporary livelihoods has seldom been documented, in comparison to men's. This gender gap in northern research, as Dowsley (2014) notes, lies on southern assumptions about Inuit livelihoods and the gendered-nature of harvesting activities, where a woman's role is basically seen as 'support to' instead of 'part of'. To explore and understand the multiple facets of Inuit women's socioeconomic roles and work experiences in contemporary Nunavut, I have used various methods that I discuss in this chapter.

As I described in the previous chapters, my research took place in Clyde River, Nunavut. I conducted fieldwork in four phases (Table 4.1), with specific objectives and methods in each trip. I began with a reconnaissance fieldtrip in the summer of 2011. Then I collected most of my data during two trips in 2012, one in the spring and the other in late summer and fall. Finally, I validated my previous data and collected complementary data during a short trip in the summer of 2013.

In discussing the methodology used for this thesis, the following chapter is structured around five sections: in section 4.2 I explain how this research was designed and how data were obtained, whereas section 4.3 situates me in the field with regards to my positionality. Section 4.4 presents the methods used to register data: participant observation (4.4.1), semi-structured interviews (4.4.2), economic diaries (4.4.3), life history calendar (4.4.4) and time usage chart (4.4.5). Then, I explain the methods used to analyze my data (section 4.5) after which time I

discuss some ethical considerations (4.5) and highlight some accomplishments and challenges I have experienced while conducting and designing the research (4.6).

4.2 Research design and fieldwork organization

Central to my work in Clyde River was the initial research conducted by Rebecca Hainnu. As a local researcher and a highly respected member of the community, she had conducted preliminary interviews with a small sample of women[18]. Through our many discussions she made a great contribution to the design of this research. She repeatedly pointed out the importance of capturing the 'non-quantitative' part of women's roles and work. When I first met her in April 2012, she said: "I really like the research you and George [my supervisor] are doing, but it needs to show the complexity of women's contribution, not just the usual economics". Her concern was that women's work would be presented as limited to either the domestic or the subsistence realms, or just about their jobs in the wage market. She insisted that I look at the 'connections' between the multiple spheres of women's work.

While designing this study and during my stays in the community, I tried to make those connections visible. A first step in the pursuit of this objective was to separate the project into two phases: the first focusing on women's economic contributions as well as time allocation for each responsibility; the second focusing on women's personal work experiences and their relationships with family members in regards to their roles in the community and household. This division allowed me to develop a rapport with participants and establish trust during the first phase. Consequently, during the second phase, women were more comfortable discussing personal matters and I could get into the 'connections' that exist between women's roles, work, responsibilities and their obligations.

The choice of methods was also closely related to the rapport I had with research participants. For instance in the first phase of the research, the methods I chose appointed participants with a great deal of autonomy as I was less directly involved – women filled in

[18] Rebecca Hainnu teaches at the local school, does translation contracts and work as a consultant. She conducted preliminary interviews with ten women in Clyde River in 2010. The main theme was women's role in the subsistence economy – mainly focusing on the various contributions women made to support harvesting practices. The interviews focused greatly on the economics of hunting as the questions were designed by George Wenzel.

economic diaries which did not required me to be present. On the other hand, in the second phase I worked closely with them to navigate the different themes that were explored. Also, while participants were free to retire from the process at any time, the two-phase design allowed them to be involved completely only in the first one, if such was their wish, without impacting the results of the study. As I discuss in the following sections, some of the methods chosen for this study needed a greater commitment from participants, more so than a simple interview or questionnaire.

Organizing fieldwork has also been a matter of capturing each woman's work and responsibilities in the best possible way. I targeted the spring season, as women are more involved in fishing activities. Also, in June, I was able to collect data about an important expenditure many families must amply debate about internally: whether or not they will order food from the sealift. My choice of coming back in the late summer and early fall was dictated by the opportunity to observe other types of work women do, such as berry picking, as well as the beginning of the school year when many women go back to work. This period is also characterized by fresh starts, with women being involved in different work activities. So, although there were personal considerations regarding fieldwork organization[19], the selected seasons were closely related to Inuit women's changing roles, work and responsibilities.

[19] I was pregnant during all my fieldwork in 2012.

Table 4.1: Fieldwork schedule and achievements

Schedule	Achievement
Preliminary fieldwork	
July 2011	Meeting with local researcher; First contact with the community
Fieldwork I	
April-June 2012	Contact with Qulliit Nunavut Status of Women; Sampling; Research phase I; Observation; Interviews
Fieldwork II	
August-October 2012	Sampling; Research phase I and II; Observation; Interviews; Validation
Fieldwork III	
August 2013	Validation; Observation; Interviews

Obviously, not all fieldwork planning worked the way I had intended and 'on the spot' changes had to be made and new opportunities seized. For instance, I had a great rapport with the organization *Qulliit Nunavut Status of Women*. I visited them in their office in Iqaluit and they were willing to contribute to the development of the second phase of the research, as it was in line with their mission: women's status, roles, power, relationships, etc. Unfortunately, we never had the chance to strengthen those exchanges as they were dealing with a staff shortage and a decrease in funding. On the other hand, when I presented my research proposal to my thesis committee at McGill University, we agreed that fifteen to twenty (15-20) research participants would be a realistic target. It turned out that many women had heard about the project and contacted me directly to participate and 'comment' on it. This way I ended up having thirty-two female participants, of which three later dropped out. This success in recruiting participants was not expected but was very positive and served to validate the decision to conduct such a project.

While the project design was greatly influenced by discussions with Rebecca Hainnu and her comments about the research, as well as participants' responses to the first phase of the

project, the choice of methods was largely influenced by feminist and indigenous approaches. Feminist research is not limited to the inclusion of female perspectives or simply the addition of women to contemporary research, but rather it is about critically *reconsidering* categories such as economy, power, and work through a gender perspective (Ferber and Nelson 1993). Indigenous research, on the other hand, emphasizes that the process of research is as fundamental as the results produced. On this point, Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 144) argues that

> Story telling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place. (...) Stories are ways of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down further. The story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story.

My position in this research was often one of an observer (see details in section 4.3). Many participants (and other women) invited me to share a meal or "to listen to our stories" (Sylvia, 50 years old). These were opportunities for me to connect with people in a much more personal way, but also to 'situate' their own story. Women's lives and the choices they make are inseparable from Inuit social organization, and being part of it – even remotely – has taught me the importance of human connections while doing research *with humans* (on this topic see Desbiens 2010). So, it is through such stories, generously shared with me, that I managed to do this research and make sense of all the pieces held before me as a puzzle.

4.3 Positioning myself in the field

Before further discussing my research methods and the data collected during my multiple stays in Clyde River, I want to situate myself in this research process. Although I had never been to Nunavut before starting my PhD, I had previous work experience with Inuit from Nunavik. Indeed, my first contact with Inuit culture occurred in 2004 when I worked for the Kativik Regional Administration. I was hired to teach swimming and lifesaving techniques in Quaqtaq to a group of young Inuit men and women from all of Nunavik's fourteen communities. This single

summer experience taught me great lessons about the North, about Inuit and about myself as I relied greatly on this experience upon commencing this research project.

My position, as a young, middle-class, white woman from a large southern city, who goes North to study the Inuit woman's roles, is in many ways one of power. As Haraway (1991) notes: 'knowledge production' is powerful and influences the relationships between researcher and research participants. This relationship is embedded in complex social structures that influence the way the researcher understands the reality he/she is observing and also the way participants perceive the researcher and so how they answer her questions (Descartes 2007). On this matter Arctic ethnographer Briggs (1974: 262) notes that:

> my choice of questions, my perception of what the salient issues are in the lives of Eskimo women is influenced by the problems attendant on the relationships between men and women in our own society. But one should be careful not to evaluate Eskimo behavior that looks similar to our male-female behavior in terms of Western values. The same behavior in two cultures may be differently rationalized and may form parts of different behavioral complexes, so that it has different meanings in each culture. We shall see to what extent the attitudes and values associated with the roles of women in Eskimo society are different from those associated with similar roles in our own society.

While conducting fieldwork I have tried to stay aware of this issue by consistently writing my observations and understandings of life in the community. This way, I wrote a journal that addressed 'my perception' and with that, I could compare participants' description and conception of their reality. Writing this journal has helped me identify the gaps between my understandings of Inuit reality and theirs. Thus, I could better position myself while conducting fieldwork as well as when analyzing data.

Many academics have highlighted the importance of addressing these asymmetrical relations when conducting research, especially in an indigenous context (Brown and Strega 2005, Denzin, Lincoln and Smith 2008, Liamputtong 2008, Sidaway 1992, Tuhiwai Smith 1999). For decades indigenous people in Canada and around the world have experienced research within a colonial framework, where power lies in the hands of *qallunaat* (non-Inuit). Li (2007) refers to "the will to improve" to describe 'experts'' efforts to change and improve Other's well-being.

Although the notion of objectivity and the quest for the truth have been largely contested, particularly within feminist discussions on reflexivity and 'situated knowledge' (Haraway 1988, 1991, McDowell 1992), research carries a continuing legacy of disempowerment. Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 92) argues that

> many researchers, even those with the best of intentions, frame their research in ways that assume that the locus of a particular research problem lies with the indigenous individual or community rather than with other social or structural issues.

To avoid (or minimize) such asymmetrical relations, England (1994: 82) notes that it is possible for the researcher to adopt a role that will favour a reciprocal relationship:

> "[t]hus the researcher explicitly acknowledges her/his reliance on the research subject to provide insight into the subtle nuances of meaning that structure and shape everyday lives. [...T]he knowledge of the person being researched [...] is greater than that of the researcher. Essentially, the appeal of supplication lies in its potential for dealing with asymmetrical and potentially exploitative power relations by shifting a lot of power over to the researched".

My pregnancy has been an important factor that influenced my interactions with women in Clyde River and helped me develop a reciprocal relationship with women participants. It gave me a particular status in many people's eyes and I was considered "more normal" by many women. I spent over four months in Clyde River while pregnant and I integrated into the community Piruqsiakkut Program (Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program – CPNP), like many other pregnant women. My participation in the program gave me a sense of 'normality' as well as a way to connect with other women whilst pregnant. Since I spent most of my pregnancy away from my family, this also provided me with some moral support that I greatly appreciated[20].

4.4 Methods: acquiring data

As this research is concerned with making Inuit women's work and roles more visible within the northern economy, data gathering was organized around a mixed methods approach that

[20] Nothing that was shared with me during those evenings with other pregnant women appears in this thesis. Although I learned various things regarding women's roles and maternity as experienced by Inuit women, none of this information has been reproduced in this research. I went to CPNP meetings on a personal basis and was invited to share meals and discussions with other participants as a future mother and not a researcher.

combined both qualitative and quantitative information. This approach aimed to capture the many aspects of Inuit women's lives, and included participant observation as well as informal conversational interviews (4.3.1), semi-structured interviews (4.3.2), life history calendars (4.3.3), economic diaries (4.3.4) and the production of time use charts (4.3.5). Most researchers employ more than one method to analyze a phenomenon (Erzberger and Prein 1997); geographers, and feminist geographers in particular, have demonstrated that "understandings of the world are best produced with a politically informed combination of research methods" (England 2006: 291). This was an approach I also wished to take.

The first information I acquired was statistical data from various governmental sources. Because such data are subject to multiple confines in the North, they must be considered carefully. Therefore, during my research I was constantly compelled to validate and compare my data with the official statistics. Also, my mixed method approach aimed to supplement statistical data to better capture the interconnections between the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of Inuit lives.

Data from the community of Clyde River were acquired in two phases (I and II). All female informants (29) participated in Phase I which consisted in one semi-structured interview, one life history calendar, one time use chart and two economic diaries. Of that number, eighteen women accepted to participate in a deeper investigation of their life experiences regarding employment, work, roles and family dynamics. This phase consisted of two semi-structured interviews, one time use chart and one economic diary (see table 4.3). For each phase they received monetary compensation of 100$[21].

The sampling method used was a convenient one, meaning that all women who wished to participate were integrated into the research. Women who were interviewed by local researcher Rebecca prior to my research project (in 2010) were all asked to continue the project with me if they wished. For various reasons[22], among the nine women, only three accepted to be involved in

[21] This level of compensation was based on previous research conducted in the community (Harder 2010) as well as a recommendation from my research proposal's review by the community Research Committee Ittaq.

[22] Among the six women who were not involved in this project, two were not in the community at the time of the research – or came back only later, one had a newborn baby and did not have time, one had taken on more responsibilities within her extended-family and had no time, and two simply did not wish to pursue their involvement further.

this research. Some women who could not participate referred me to sisters, colleagues, daughters and friends, whom I contacted.

Another important element in my sampling strategy was to obtain a good representation of the population in Clyde River. While at the beginning, most women who participated were well-educated and in the labour force, at a certain point I decided to specifically target women who were unemployed and not in the labour force. This way, I made sure to have a more representative sample of the community. These non-labour force women were recruited by word of mouth, as news travels very rapidly in small communities. I accepted anyone who wished to participate but at a certain point during the fall fieldtrip I had to refuse women because there was not enough time left to complete the diary section, which took at least two weeks.

Considerable efforts were made to accommodate every participant. For instance, interviews were conducted in the location chosen by the informant and at the time the most convenient for them. I conducted interviews as early as 7:30 am and as late as midnight. I also accepted to interview people where it was the most convenient for them – their workplace, their house or any other place, including my house, where they felt comfortable.

An initial list of people likely to take part in the research was established, based on the list of those who participated in the initial project conducted by Rebecca Hainnu. In addition, other people from the personal network of these initial women participants were contacted, according to their age or their working status. These women were relatives, friends or co-workers. Overall, about 40 women were approached to discuss their potential participation in the project. Out of these 40 women, 33 accepted to participate and during the process, 4 women dropped out, all for personal reasons. All in all, 29 women participated.

The selection of informants was organized around two main criteria: (1) participation in the labour force at least once since 1999; and (2) age category. Because the purpose of the research is to examine work experiences of Inuit women it appeared mandatory that all of them had at least once been involved, even for a very short period, in the labour force. However, at the time of the research not all of them were engaged in the labour force. For the second criteria, I sought representation from all age brackets between ages 20 and 65 (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Female participants' distribution by age, provisioning role and working status at the time of the research

Age	Main provider	Equal provider	Partner main provider	Parents main provider	Partner's parents main provider	Another person main provider	*Full-time employed*	*Part-time employed*	*Unemployed*	*Not in the labour force*
20-29	5	2		4	3	1	*6*	*3*	*3*	*3*
30-39			1							*1*
40-49	2	2	1				*3*	*1*	*1*	
50-59	4	1	1				*5*			
60 and over	1		1						*1*	*2*
Total	12	5	4	4	3	1	*14*	*4*	*5*	*6*

Overall, twenty-nine households participated in the research. The focus was on one woman from each household, not always the head and not always the most economically active. Therefore participant data show a wide variety of situations, ranging from full-time employed women and head of their household, to unemployed women, highly involved in land-related work. Although any women who wished to participate were offered the possibility to do so, I intentionally sought to select a group of women who were the main monetary provider in their family, another group of women who were not the main provider, and a few who shared the provider's role (relatively) equally with another person. This way I could better address the focus of the research: the economic roles of women.

Some comments about the sample representation are relevant here. Full-time employed women and young women in their twenties are overrepresented compared to other categories. This can be explained by the specific effort to gather data from female workers, to see how they manage their time between different categories of work, and how they manage incomes between different allocation possibilities and requests. Also, as I pointed out in Chapter 3, the Inuit population is young and the choice to include a greater number of young women was partly deliberate, to be representative of the general age structure as a whole. It is also worthy to note that according to the 2011 census, there were 200 households in Clyde River and I sampled 29 of them, which is close to 14.5% of total population.

Table 4.3: Methods used and data acquired

FEMALE PARTICIPANTS		
PHASE I	**PHASE II**	**TOTAL**
Semi-structured interview	Two Semi-structured interview	65
Two Economic diaries	Economic diary	76
Time use chart	Time use chart	47
Life history calendar	-	29
MALE PARTICIPANTS		
Semi-structured interview		8
Time use chart		8
Life history calendar		8
OTHER KEY INFORMANTS		
Semi-structured interviews		6
Informal interviews		3

Qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews with Inuit women and men and other key informants from the community of Clyde River, Nunavut (Table 4.3). Quantitative data were obtained from socioeconomic information gathered in the life history calendar, time use charts, economic diaries and interviews. All the data were collected during the two fieldtrips in 2012 and most of data were validated during the following fieldtrips in 2012 and in 2013. Other data that I draw upon here were collected by a local researcher prior to my involvement in the project. I included much more qualitative questioning in my research design, after discussing my approach with the local researcher and considering her many comments. In the following sections, each method is detailed and tied to the data it yields.

4.4.1 Observation and informal conversational interviews

Observation and informal conversations help the researcher learn the various perspectives and situations found in his/her study community. These methods entail the systematic noting of events and behaviours of individuals (Marshall and Rossman 1989). While observation allows for insight into the context and relations of individuals with the community, it is also time-consuming and commands assiduity, not to mention that the researcher must exercise good memory to record events as they happen.

According to Crang and Cook (2007: 37), participant observation is "a means of developing *intersubjective* understandings between research and researched". Participant observation can provide complementary evidence, further a phenomena or contextualize individuals' behaviours (Kearns 2005). The spontaneity of everyday interactions is best captured with this strategy rather than simply asking questions during an interview. The Arctic anthropologist Peter Collings argues that "success depends heavily on the researcher's willingness to engage in participant observation, devoting the time and energy necessary to display communicative competence and develop rapport with Inuit" (Collings 2009: 134). He further notes that it is a good way to become involved in community life and to "overcome some of the limitations of being defined as a 'researcher'" (Collings 2009: 151). One way I was able to overcome some limitations of being a researcher was through the sharing of experiences with female participants around mothering (see section 4.3).

In the context of this research I conducted participant observation during my stays in Clyde River – six months between 2011-2013. Because of the size of the community, it is fairly easy to walk around and visit people on a regular basis. Also, my personal situation as a young pregnant woman allowed me to connect more easily with some women and their families. I shared a lot of experiences with many young women around a cup of tea or coffee. These informal conversations were great times for me to grasp their day to day responsibilities and understand their motivations. I engaged with participants in their activities: baked cakes and cooked meals and helped many women in various ways – writing resumes for a job or applying for identity card. In this research, understanding the context was highly important to situate women's roles and their work. However, for women directly involved in the research project, I

made it clear that I was not there to record their actions, but to get to know them and to enjoy their company. I mainly used my observation to validate the data I collected in interviews, economic diaries and time-used chart. Overall, spending time with participants in their houses or at their workplace allowed me to understand the context in which they perform various types of work and responsibilities.

Participant observation gave me first-hand impressions of how women actually contribute to their household via the labour they engage in, and the time they spend on each activity. These observations gave depth to the quantitative results from diaries and time-use charts. Data obtained by participant observation focused both on local dynamics and individual practices. These data were meant to both familiarise myself with the community and to validate some information collected during semi-structured interviews.

4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

In order to understand the complexity of Inuit women's roles within their family and community, as well as their work experiences, I conducted semi-structured interviews. This form of interview allows participants "to express the details and meanings of their experiences in their own terms and at their own pace" (Gregory et al. 2009: 393). It is largely used in social science, and in human geography in particular, to understand people's systems of representation and perception. Semi-structured interviews usually consist of a set of themes and open ended questions on which participants are asked to develop. Then, instead of asking many questions, the interviewer's task is to listen carefully to both the formal responses and other signs given by the participants.

I used semi-structured interviews in this research to gather data on women's work experiences in the wage economy as well as the subsistence and domestic economies. The first interview specifically focused on all aspects of women's waged work and their responsibilities and roles in the community, their household and extended-family (see Table 4.4). I asked women to discuss the tasks they undertook and the paid and unpaid labour they performed as well as provide comments. The second interview focused on household dynamics and women's conceptualization of their economic role and work responsibilities in various spheres (home, workplace, community). Discussions revolved around connections between various events in women's lives and their contributions and responsibilities (see Table 4.5). The third interview

expanded on these themes and looked at gender dynamics in Inuit society, family, work and educational environment (see Table 4.6).

Much of the information and data collected during interviews were not limited to the nuclear family, but rather were relevant to the whole household. Therefore, I have also distinguished and characterized each household according to its composition and structure. All semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide with focused themes (Kitchin and Tate 2000). The sub-themes allowed me to address all main themes from various perspectives. Unsurprisingly, different themes were emphasised by each participant according to their life experience and age.

Table 4.4: List of themes and sub-themes for interview no1

Household characteristics	**Money and income**	**Wage work experiences**
Composition	Main source/from who	Types of work
Partner's occupation/situation	Government transfer/for who	Work responsibilities
Children and grand-children	Wage/from who	Duration
Changes over time		Reason for staying/leaving
		Personal preferences
Domestic work	**Money and expenditures**	**Subsistence work**
Housework responsibilities	Main expenditures (rent,	Fishing/hunting
Care work responsibilities	utilities, etc.)	Berry-picking
		Skinning/sewing

Table 4.5: List of themes and sub-themes for interview no2

Household characteristics	**Perspective on money**	**Work experience**
Composition	Main source/from who	Aspirations
Partner's occupation/situation	Government transfer/for who	Wage work conceptualization
Children and grand-children	Wage/from who	Work relations
Changes over time		Work commitment

Perspective on domestic work	**Perspective on socioeconomic dynamics and changes**
Housework allocation among household members	Wage work
Care work allocation among household members	Domestic work
Difficulties experienced/ conflicts	Land-related work
	Community dynamics

Table 4.6: List of themes and sub-themes for interview no3

Household characteristics	**Perspective on money**	**Work experience**
Composition	Money and conflict	Obligations/choice
Partner's occupation/situation	Money and allocation	Pressure from family
Children and grand-children	Choice and decision making	Women/men in the labour force
Changes over time	Gender perspective	

Perspective on domestic work	**Education**
Fairness/Equality	Aspirations
Gender perspective	Commitment Women/men
	Challenges

In semi-structured interviews, women participants spoke of their work experience, their education and the economics of their household. Their statements as well as the socioeconomic data they shared were carefully recorded, compiled and analyzed in order to present the most accurate portrait of their lives in Clyde River. According to participant's preference, I either tape-recorded the interview or took hand-written notes.

For comparative purposes, interviews were also conducted with Inuit men. All men were related to one female participant. These interviews were also used to validate the information collected from Inuit women about their household. Because gender dynamics are at the heart of this research, men's participation was very important in understanding their own opinion and perception of women's roles in the contemporary economy. The interviews conducted with men were also semi-structured and focused on similar themes as for women participants. Finally, I conducted further interviews with other key informants – employers, workers and other relatives[23] – to gain a fuller picture of women's roles and work.

4.4.3 Life history calendar

The life history calendar (LHC) method allows researchers to collect data on "the timing and sequencing of personal events in the lives of individuals" (Axinn, Pearce and Ghimire 1999: 244). It is a quantitative methodology for qualitative research, but since its inception it has been used mostly in large-scale studies (Nelson 2010). The LHC has been used in research on nutrition (Chan et al. 2008), drug dependence (Hser et al. 1997), psychological studies and adolescent transitions to adulthood (Freedman et al. 1988), domestic violence (Yoshihama et al. 2002), couples' social relations (Munch, McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1997) and many other research projects that focus on human behaviour.

The LHC method highlights the interactions between people's cultural experiences, social ties, human agency, and timing (Giele and Elder 1998). Precise recollection of life events can be a difficult task and LHCs are specifically designed to make it easier by providing visual cues to help participant recall the course of their day. Also, because of its highly visual nature, the LHC helps the interviewer detect missing information or gaps and helps organize the structure of the interview that often follow or accompany the LHC. I used the LHC to collect data on more major events that are easier to remember (wedding, child birth, etc.) and slowly progress to more complicated events (job change, moving, etc.). The major events serve as reference points to organize and recall other events. For instance, many participants started by identifying the years where they got married and gave birth to their children. It was usually easier for participants to remember where they were working or with whom they lived using this broader context. So I

[23] Some women and men with key responsibility or position in the community were interviewed. For instance, Inuk and *qallunaat* teachers and other school staff, however, it is not possible to identify their position as it would breach confidentiality. In total, fifteen informants were interviewed.

used information from LHC to ask questions regarding employment status and living arrangements. So, instead of being chronological, the interview is logical because it reflects the structure of the autobiographical memory (Belli 1998).

Participants filled in the LHC at the beginning of the first interview, so it constituted a good way to start the conversation. Many women mentioned that it was 'fun' to fill in the LHC as it was less intimidating than starting with 'big questions'. Indeed, the LHC was designed as a matrix with columns that represent temporal cues and rows that represent domain cues. They formed a matrix with time cues partitioned into years and domain cues that represented birth, wedding, living arrangements, educational progress, working situation, etc. (Axinn et al. 1999) (see Appendix 1). Nelson (2010) suggests limiting the number of domains and instead let participants make their own vertical cues in order to recollect all important life events that would not be in a traditional list outlined by a researcher. Nelson found that respondents start by mentioning successful periods of their life and slowly, when they have established a rapport, began recalling difficult experiences:

> Because interviewers usually do not know which periods of a respondent's life were most difficult, allowing the respondent to dictate his or her own sequence of events, within the structure of the LHC, provides researchers with an opportunity to build rapport and capture narratives of emotionally sensitive events (Nelson 2010: 420).

I employed the LHC method to obtain an in-depth understanding of women's experiences over a long period of time. In this research I focused on four topics: living arrangements, family composition, education and employment. I used a standardized recall period to avoid problems with participant age differences (Axinn and Pearce, 1999). As Nelson suggests, the LCH occupied about half of a page, leaving room for respondents to insert categories, information, events, etc. The main data obtained with the LHC helped me map out the complex patterns of a woman's participation in the labour force, specifically, the relation between life events and work commitments, for example the birth of a child and its impact on work opportunities.

Life History Calendars were also very important for making sense of women's choices and validating statistical data from governmental sources. Many events were highlighted in the calendar and showed the persistence of some patterns. Female participants usually greatly enjoyed writing and drawing the calendar and they were often surprised to recall so many small

events or experiences because of the LHC. Finally, because participants filled the calendar at the beginning of the first interview it was a good way to establish a rapport with them without being in a 'formal interview' setting. Some women have also asked me to give them a copy of the calendar for their own use, to which I have obliged.

4.4.4 Income and expenditure diary

As was mentioned earlier, data on Inuit women are scarce and rarely concerns their economic contribution. Therefore, acquiring quantitative data was an important task in this research and has been done mainly through economic diaries on household income and expenditures. A diary is a research tool that requires participants to record their daily activities on a regular basis (Wiseman, Conteh and Matovu 2005). Diaries have been used in many different fields of research such as health (Bowling 1997, Morrison-Beedy et al. 2008, O'Dougherty et al. 2009), nutrition (Kaur et al. 2004, Taylor, Redworth and Morgan 2004, Waugh and Bulik 1999), lifestyle issues (Herbenick et al. 2011, Whitty and Jones 1992) and informal work (Eidse and Turner 2014).

Wiseman and his colleagues conducted research in East and West Africa using diaries to investigate the factors influencing household demands for the treatment and prevention of malaria (Wiseman et al. 2005). They asked their six hundred diary keepers to record all forms of expenditures and consumption over a twelve month period. Their study shows the relevance of the method on a large scale and over a long time period, but more importantly, it provides recommendations on the challenges of long-term diaries. Because of time and human resource limitations, this study has focused on shorter periods. Meth (2003: 197) notes, in her case study on domestic and public violence as experienced by women in Durban, South Africa, that writing diaries "may be empowering for the respondents in that it offers them the opportunity to identify what is and what is not their primary concern, it also allows them to construct these concerns in a way which clarifies for the researcher their own particular priorities" (Meth 2003: 197). Meth worked with 40 women (39 of them returned their diary) over a period of 4-5 weeks. She also notes that a significant benefit is the temporal nature of the insight offered by long term diary instead of snapshot views offered by other methods (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups etc.) (Meth 2003: 198). In the context of this research, a few women wrote long paragraphs, but most of them limited their comments to additional information on their expenses or income.

Hardly any research has used the diary method to collect data on household incomes and expenditures in order to measure individual's economic contribution. In the context of the British Family Expenditure Survey, Farrell and Shields (2007) investigated the expenditure behaviours of 1786 school-aged children who completed diaries over a period of two weeks. This large scale study aimed to highlight important factors determining child expenditure decisions, such as having a working mother, lone-parent or higher parental budget. I used their study to help me design an attractive, user-friendly diary (i.e. with symbols instead of text).

In accordance with these studies that show the relevance of using a diary in different research contexts, I have collected information on Inuit women's economic contributions to their household as well as to other households in and outside the community All women who participated in Phase I were asked to report their incomes and expenditures through two single week diaries. To capture the variation of money coming in and out during a month, each of the diaries was filled out during a different week – one during a paid or otherwise enabled week (via governmental transfers) and another when no specific income was expected. Women who were interested in continuing the research for Phase II were asked to do another diary at any time during the research.

The diary was designed to be 'user-friendly'. It consisted of four parts. The first part contained the socioeconomic characteristics of the woman and household members such as: age, occupation, kinship relation to the woman, etc. The first part also contained an English and Inuktitut version of the diary instructions. The second part asked the participant to detail all expenditures, while the third part asked the woman to detail all income by source. The fourth part contained questions about recurring payments and instalment purchases (see Appendix 2).

Although the diaries were 'user-friendly' with images and drawings instead of only text, they required a certain commitment in order to record all movements of money within the week – I asked that even small amounts such as children allocations were recorded. Some participants carried their diary with them at work and at home to fill it in every time a money transfer was happening. Others forgot about their diary, but kept all their bills and receipts. Overall, the most efficient means I employed to make sure all – or most – expenditures and incomes were collected, was to visit participants on a nearly daily basis. I would stop by their house or workplace to chat for a couple minutes (or hours) and we filled in the diary together as I asked

questions about gifts of money and grocery shopping or online shopping. This approach was both very efficient in terms of reliability and helped me develop a rapport with the participants. In fact, many women suggested that I dropped by to 'help' them with the diary, but they were more interested in discussing and exchanging information around various themes – not always related to this research. I always agreed to visit participants to fill in diaries wherever they chose to and at almost any time that was convenient to them – which meant that on a given day I could be found at 7:45am at the school having coffee and entering data in one participant's diary and then at midnight eating *maktaaq*[24] at someone else's house while recording their daily expenditures. I also received women at my house if they wanted to have a more private place to discuss their entries.

Finally, I also conducted short interviews to complement the diaries every time something strange (e.g. an unusual expense or income) was written. These interviews were managed according to what I found in the diaries and usually involved only a few clarifications about entries in the diary. This methodical follow up helped me insure that I understood all entries in the diaries – the nature of the expenditures was often the reason for such inquiries.

4.4.5 Time-use chart

While the economic diary focused mainly on women's waged activities, I used time use charts as a technique to capture the range of work performed by individuals. Indeed, the measurement of domestic and land-related work was less easily recorded with the other methods I employed, and the use of time-use charts allowed me to acquire quantitative data on these categories of work. In a study of women's economic roles it appeared important to me to collect information on women and men's unpaid labour. As Marilyn Waring argued "[t]ime-use data also provide a measure of the interdependence of the activities of household members, and of how paid work, caring work, housework, community work, leisure, and time spent on personal care are interrelated" (Waring 1999 [1988]: xxxix).

I filled out time-use charts with all female participants when I conducted their interviews (see Appendix 3). I asked them to recall their last day, focusing on the different tasks they engaged in, the duration of each task and with whom or for whom they perform these tasks.

[24] Inuit delicacy made of the outer skin of the narwhal.

Time-use charts combined with participant observation were designed to provide data on how women and men spend their time, how many tasks they perform, and how these tasks are time-consuming. Men who were interviewed also filled in a time-used chart. All this data supplements and validates the interviews I completed and gives me a nuanced understanding of how women organized their days and what labour they performed over a one day period.

4.5 Methods: analyzing data

I decided to use a mixed-method approach to produce different kinds of data and to combine them to better answer my research objectives. Such an approach is common in geography (Philip 1998), as well as in feminist research and in cross-cultural research (Hodge and Lester 2006). My aim was to better 'situate' the knowledge produced (Haraway 1988) and avoid a single perspective, or single approach, to answer my research questions. Analyzing the massive amount of data collected during my six months of fieldwork, plus data from local research and the validation with data from the different governmental sources, proved to be challenging. To manage the large quantum of data, I developed a systematic strategy that consisted of four steps (organizing data; coding; analyzing; interpreting).

First, I read my entire transcripts, fieldwork journals and notes to make sure everything was fresh in my head[25]. At this point my objective was mainly *to organize* my data into a readable format, including a large space on the right margin so I could later note 'codes'. Going over the entire transcripts as one stage was very useful as I could immediately make some connections between ideas and see some patterns emerge.

After organizing my data, I developed a *coding strategy* that involved systematic marking in the margins. Codes consist of words or definitions that describe what is written or said in the data (Cope 2005). While coding helps reducing the volume of data into a more manageable format, it provides a visual organization of the data, wherein repeating ideas and patterns emerge even more clearly. Overall, I used 90 codes. But reading over my data I realized that not all my codes were relevant afterwards and some of them only appeared a few times. Hence I completed

[25] I was pregnant when I conducted fieldwork and only a few weeks after coming back to Montréal I had my baby. Therefore I was on maternity leave for almost 10 months right after collecting the bulk of my data. When I came back to my PhD research it took me a few weeks to 'reconnect' with my data and objectives.

a second round of coding to see how codes appeared in the data, their frequency and their relations with each other. I grouped codes into larger themes that were meaningful. I ended up finding larger 'themes' that could each encompass multiple 'codes'. Then, I created separate folders for each of these themes and grouped all the relevant data into each folder. Each folder included quotes and other types of data in relation to one theme. For example, one of the themes was 'domestic work': it included anything that referred to housework by definition, i.e. traditional/contemporary housework, allocation among family members, perception, but also quantitative data from the time-use charts. I identified twelve themes and organized my data around them in order to refine my analysis. Table 4.7 summarizes the main themes and codes I used (Cope 2005).

Table 4.7 Coding process: Themes and Codes

Themes	**Codes (examples)**
Providing for the family	Money; Welfare; Payment; Income; Providing; Sharing; Transfer; Gift; Buying food
Women's roles	Women's roles; Responsibilities; Family responsibilities; Domestic work; Subsistence work; Pressure; Equality
Men's roles	Men's roles; Responsibilities; Family responsibilities; Domestic work; Subsistence work; Pressure; Equality
Paid Work	Experience; Stress; Pressure; Children's work; Inuit and work; Paid-work/volunteer work
Domestic Work	Allocation of housework; Caring; Cooking
Subsistence activities	Hunting; Fishing; Camping; Sewing; Skinning; Berry picking; Being on the land
Food	Country food/land food; Store food; Access to food/High cost of food; Buying food; Receiving/giving/sharing food; Eating at someone else's place; Hosting meals
Money	Definition/value of money; Inuit/Qallunaat and money; Men/women and money; Borrowing/saving/managing money
Education	School; Education and work/family/community; Men/women and education; Drop out; Discipline
Gender relationship	Gender; Equality; Violence; M/W relationship
Dream/Plan	About future and children's future; About relationship; About money/job/education; Time/space
Women and power	Power; Challenge; Model; Empowerment; Decision-making

Although coding is very useful for organizing large sets of data into meaningful categories or themes, it does not highlight the relationships between them. At this point I began *analyzing my data* by looking at the connections between the various themes and their relations with my research objectives. I constructed maps and schemes to visually highlight the recurrent patterns and how they organized spatially. Analyzing the relations between different themes was key in understanding the conceptualization of work, family and obligations for example. This step offered me the opportunity to look at all the relations among my data and also to highlight the codes that were highly important for participants. For example, although in the interview questionnaire there were no specific questions on parenting, most women found a way to mention how parenting had changed over time, or how it was hard to manage those responsibilities with paid-work. As such, I chose to include the role of parenting as an overarching theme because its importance in influencing women's work experiences, not only their day-to-day life.

After coding and creating themes, I started reorganizing each theme and specific quotes from participants into my conceptual framework. The objective at this stage was to bring together my themes underlying the project and the subjective experiences of my participants. At this step, I was searching for patterns in all the data; patterns that could answer my objectives and research questions. The data analysis answered most of my questions and revealed unexpected patterns. While interpreting these patterns and answers I slightly rearranged my research framework to include all the information I was gaining from participants' responses. Triangulating all the data allowed me to assess the credibility of the results and ensure that every specific objective was supported by more than one method source. When all the information was organized within my framework I started organizing ideas and linking my findings to that of other researchers (Berkhofer 1978).

Finally, during my last fieldtrip in Clyde River, in summer 2013, I tried to contact participants and present them some of the initial findings. While some individuals where very interested in knowing how their information had been used, most of them preferred talking about other topic and not so much about this 'past research'.

4.6 Ethical considerations

When conducting research with human subjects, many ethical considerations arise. These considerations are even greater in cross-cultural research and research with Indigenous peoples (Macaulay et al. 1998). As Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 2) notes "it is surely difficult to discuss *research methodology* and *indigenous peoples* together, in the same breath, without having an analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices"[26]. Indeed, research 'on' or 'about' Aboriginal Peoples cannot be separated from a broader historical context of exploitation and misrepresentation by non-Aboriginal scholars and colonial government agencies (Castellano 2004, Ball and Janyst 2008: 33, Menzies 2001).

Human geographers, among others, have produced insightful critiques and reflections on the ways Indigenous peoples are represented as research subjects and how their knowledge is obtained, used and disseminated (Hodge and Lester 2006, Shaw, Herman and Dobbs 2006). Calls for ethical and 'decolonized' methods have challenged research protocol and led to new approaches such as participatory research and community based research (Stirbys 2007, Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Similarly, to avoid past abuses, the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (2003) and the Tri-Councils (2010), in accordance with Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1993) have developed guidelines to conduct research with Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. They suggest additional requirements to ensure that the rights and interests of communities as a whole are respected.

One concern that emerges in consultation with Indigenous communities is the relevance of the research undertaken in their communities and who defines what is to be studied (Asselin and Basile 2012, Stevenson 2010). While preparing this research project I was aware of this challenge and sought community approval and input. My research aim, at least at the beginning, was to emphasize Inuit women's work and to shed light on their overall contribution to northern economy. Such an aim was ambitious and needed to be situated both at the scale of the territory and at the individual level.

[26] Emphasis from the author.

The related work done upstream by local researcher Rebecca Hainnu was instrumental in moving away from the larger picture and defining second and third objectives for this project in a way that emphasizes individual's experiences. As noted earlier, she focused greatly on 'connectedness' to discuss the Inuit woman's role and insisted that I collected 'the whole story' from female participants not just answers to my questions.

In Nunavut, ethical considerations are overseen by the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI) which is responsible for licensing scientific research activity. Like every other researcher wishing to complete research in Nunavut, I applied for a research license and was granted the permission to carry on. Following this, McGill University's Research Ethics Board granted to me a Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans. Throughout the research process I also tried to comply with 'Best Practice' recommendations from the Tri-Council ethics guidelines (Interagency Secretariat on Research Ethics 2005).

Although the Clyde River Ittaq Research Committee had approved my research, I was anxious to know if people from the community would have any interest in the project and want to collaborate. This sort of informal approval is extremely important when conducting research in small communities. I feel that I somehow succeeded in making this research interesting for people because many more people than expected wanted to participate, and those who did generally enjoyed their experience[27]. More importantly, I think, throughout the process many women mentioned having discovered and learned about economics and about their own work through their participation in the research[28].

Privacy was also a concern at the beginning of this research. As I outlined in the previous sections, this research used different methods that raised questions of privacy, confidentiality and informed consent of research participants. In many ways the project invaded participants' privacy; I asked personal questions about their income and expenses, financial management with their family, and also relationships between women and men. These matters can be very sensitive, therefore participants were informed beforehand of all the ways in which their information would be used. I also informed participants that private information would be kept

[27] While no participant specifically stated that that they engaged in the research for the money, I believe it influenced the decision to participate for some individuals.
[28] One woman in particular was very impressed by her own Life History Calendar. She had not realized how many jobs she held and how many occupations she undertook at the same time.

confidential and that at any time they could withdraw from the research or refuse to answer questions if they did not feel comfortable. One woman who agreed at first to participate changed her mind when I described the types of questions I would be asking regarding her income. She mentioned being afraid other people in the community would recognize her because of her very unique and particular occupation (despite me mentioning that I would use pseudonyms and avoid any information that could relate to her). Besides her, to my knowledge, no other participants withdrew for privacy or confidentiality reasons, and none refused to answer questions because they felt it was too personal. When I asked for feedback about the interview from various participants, they generally mentioned having enjoyed the interviews and even learned about themselves[29].

Another challenge in maintaining privacy was to find a place to conduct the interviews that would allow participants to express themselves as freely as possible. I offered all participants to choose a time and place that would be best for them, as well as offering my own accommodation so that no family members would be around when the interview took place. For the first phase of the research, the interviews were conducted in various places (workplace, my home, participants' home) and for the second phase, most interviews were conducted in my home. This was instrumental as many women enjoyed taking a break from their often over-crowded house to visit me; interviews and conversations also lasted much longer when conducted in my place. Women talked more freely in this 'neutral' space where no domestic duty or carework was expected. For the vast majority, women appeared to enjoy talking about and describing their work and were often surprised that I was interested in what they were doing. I always tried to show them that their knowledge was valuable and that they could express their opinion freely.

Participants' confidentiality can also be an issue in qualitative research, especially when conducted in a small community where everybody knows one another. Therefore, in this thesis I used pseudonyms to identify all participants and some information has been kept confidential

[29] A few female participants were very surprised to discover how much money they were spending on a single week. For most participants, small amounts of money were frequently given to children or grand-children on a regular basis and usually not calculated in their weekly expenses, but when we started calculating all expenses they realized how far their support extended – from their household to extended-family and even to family members in other communities.

because it could directly identify an individual. Also, all documentation that relates to participants' identity has been kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Finally, a few times, participants asked me if their answers were 'adequate', reminding me of the particular power relationship that exists between a researcher and his/her subjects. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, I tried throughout the process to avoid these power relations and tried to make enough space for participants to feel 'empowered' as much as I could. Also, interviews were designed around themes and open-ended questions instead of very structured questionnaires. Thus, participants were invited to address these themes in order of preference, but also to propose and discuss the related themes of their choice. I often told them "you can tell me as much as you want about this topic or anything you feel should be included in this discussion"[30]. Similarly, I insisted that there was no 'good or bad' answer to any question.

4.7 Chapter conclusion

My fieldwork and research experiences have confirmed my personal interest in conducting research 'with people' as well as my interest in women's roles in shaping societies. The choice I made to focus on both qualitative and quantitative information has proven to be useful both for the research itself but also to collect data that was more relevant for the community. Overall, the use of multiple methods and data collection have allowed me to produce a deeper understanding of Inuit women's roles, as well as to insure the integrity of the interpretations stemming from the data (Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2006).

Finally, the warm reception I received both during my fieldwork and when returning in 2013 with my daughter to present some preliminary results, greatly influenced my commitment to this research and the writing of this thesis. While studying and writing *about* Inuit women's work for over five years, this thesis has opened a new space for dialogue between the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada Association and me, about how to best use findings from this research. As this had been one of my concerns at the beginning of the process, I am now more confident that I can return some results in a tangible and meaningful form to the community to make useful

[30] On occasion, female participants told me that it was easy to talk with me and that I was a good listener. I felt this was a compliment, especially in the context of my role.

contribution, especially in the area of public policy. Having now outlined my methods, positionality and ethical considerations, I will now present these results in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5

Working in two worlds: the cultural landscapes of work in Nunavut

5.1 Introduction

> Work is a very interesting subject to study! I hope you'll study *me* because what I do is very different than what my husband used to do when he was alive. I am a woman and I see things differently and I don't make the same choices; although we are both Inuit! I hope you'll choose me, or other women, to talk about our work. We don't get to talk a lot about what we do, but we do a lot you know. (Maria, 56 years old)

Maria was one of the first women I contacted during my first field session. She had involved in the preliminary project, with Rebecca Hainnu, and she was very vocal about the work that women performed in the community and how it was underestimated, in her perception. Throughout the many discussions we had she constantly raised new questions that should be addressed 'by someone someday' and they always concerned women. She shared several ideas about the meaning of work in contemporary Inuit society as well as the land-related work that she performed in her early age when living in a camp. Maria described work in a very broad sense. Although there were significant differences in the nature of her work over time, Maria felt that, overall, work was always connected to her family and never limited to paid-work. She related her whole experience of work to the building of a 'strong family'.

A core argument I make in this chapter, and throughout the thesis, is that 'work' is not limited to wage employment, but rather is a sociocultural construction. As I explored in Chapter 2, the conception of work reflects aspects of 'traditional' subsistence organization, namely, cooperation, redistribution, sharing and division of labour. These characteristics are significant to understand the way women and men engage in work-related activities and are deeply connected to social relationships, economic mechanisms and to the organization of norms, expectations and obligations in Inuit culture (Duhaime 1991). Therefore, work is situated socially and culturally.

In this chapter, I address my first objective: *to provide a deeper understanding of work and labour market dynamics in Nunavut and the related opportunities for Inuit women*. Specifically, I examine three related questions. First, how do Inuit women and men conceptualize work today. Second, what are the factors resulting in greater participation in the wage economy amongst women? Third, how is waged work experienced by Inuit women? Drawing on interviews, life history calendar and socioeconomic data, I explore the concept of work and the way wage-work has come to play a significant role in Nunavut and Inuit subsistence economy. Through Inuit women's work experience I offer a gendered perspective on the changing northern economy.

The concept of work that I investigate in this chapter includes a wide array of elements. In the following sections, I explore the meanings of 'work' for Inuit participants (5.2), focusing on their own work histories (5.2.1) and the specific components that frame their understanding of work (5.2.2) to present an Inuit perspective of this concept (5.2.3). Finally, I examine the factors that favored women's employment (5.3), with a specific attention to socioeconomic (5.3.1) and sociocultural (5.3.2) transformations. The ways Inuit conceptualize and experience Inuit work are then used throughout this thesis to explain the provisioning responsibilities of Inuit women (Chapter 6) and shifts in gendered roles and power relation (Chapter 7).

5.2 The conceptualization of work: a cultural and gendered perspective

> Work means surviving in this world and it involves gathering all available resources to make ends meet (Sylvia, 50 years old).

Throughout this research I explore the meanings of work for Inuit women and men. All participants had work experiences as well as diverse perceptions of what counts as work. I asked them to think about work in its widest sense, focusing on all activities essential to their material existence as well as to their identity (McDowell 2003). Their understanding and experience of it directly influenced the way they engaged in work-related activities and therefore the way work was structured and organized. Equally important, the way they conceptualize work helps to

explain socioeconomic and sociocultural changes that propelled Inuit women into the labour force (see Section 5.3).

In the following sub-section (5.2.1), I present five personal work histories (three women and two men) that highlight a diversity of experiences and put forward an understanding of work that goes beyond paid-work. Their stories, as well as those of other participants, show a wide range of experiences that took place in different settings (from the colonial context to the establishment of Nunavut Territory), in different locations (on the land, within communities, in the South) and within different entities (family, community, government, private companies). Each of these experiences does not stand independently from one another; they shape one's whole understanding of work.

5.2.1 Some histories

5.2.1.1 Susan's work history[31]

Susan is in her mid-fifties. She is a teacher at Quluaq school and very much enjoys helping students learn and make something of their lives. She has lived all her life in Nunavut but migrated to the community several years ago for a work opportunity. Most of her family still lives in her hometown where she expects to return when she retires.

She describes herself as a full-time worker and a part-time fisher as she fishes every weekend and after school when the weather is good. Being on the land is very important for her. She felt connected to her real identity and enjoyed the work related to fishing. Also, Susan sews and knits; most of the time for gifts to friends or family, but sometimes to sell mittens, *amauti*[32] or hats. However, she does not count on that work for budgeting; all her income is from her wage labour and very little comes from other sources.

Her late husband used to undertake waged employment and be the main money provider in their household. When he died, she did not have a job and no way to support her family as she had no work experience and a very modest education. Still, she decided to apply for the Nunavut

[31] Pseudonyms have been used to protect anonymity of participants.
[32] A parka with a large hood worn by Inuit women to carry a baby.

Teacher Education Program in Iqaluit, was accepted, and four years later graduated. As she told me: “I was really proud of myself when I graduated, ‘cause I never thought I could do something like that. We weren’t taught that way when I was young”.

Financial support for her family was the main reason she decided to work. In her house, she takes care of her two adopted children, both in their teenage years. However, she mentioned several times how hard it is for her to fulfill her duties toward her other children (aged between 16 and 30 years old), especially those living in her hometown. Twice a week she sends them money to buy food and pay the bills – sometimes more than twice a week. None of her children have wage paying jobs and she feels obligated, as their mother, to provide for them.

5.2.1.2 James’s work history

James is in his early sixties and was born in a tent ‘somewhere out there on the land’. His family moved to Iqaluit when the government forced them to leave the camp. He went to residential school but did not want to talk about it because “it was a hard time back then”. Struggling with alcohol problems as a young adult, he moved to Clyde River where he was able to find occasional jobs in construction. Most of his life he had been seasonally employed as a carpenter and other blue-collar jobs, and the rest of the year he would go on welfare. For years he had been looking for a full-time job, but was unsuccessful until very recently. Over the last six years he has been full-time employed but because of illness he was put on leave and is now back on welfare again.

James speaks with some bitterness about the labour market in Clyde River and Nunavut. Several times he mentions that women seem to hold all the jobs in town and nothing is left for men. He acknowledges the fact that many men have also given up on looking for jobs because “nobody wants them (the men)”, so they just go on welfare. He perceived that things were easier for women as they could do whatever they wanted nowadays: hunting and wage work.

Things have changed very fast over the course of his life. James was raised as a hunter and fisher, but today he feels he is lacking something to be a ‘good provider’. He is, and has always been, a regular hunter; hunting every time the weather is good and his machines are working. He mentions that broken or unreliable snowmobiles prevent him from going on the

land and hunting for food many times over a year. Fixing his snowmobile and hunting require money and his limited income is an obstacle for him. Money is a constant struggle he says.

If hunting has always been his way of working, today he pressures his son to look for a job because "that's the food we eat right now!" He feels that wage work is the most secure way to provide food these days because harvesting activities have become unreliable. Therefore, James worries about his son not being able to find a decent job despite having graduated from high school and training in heavy equipment operation.

5.2.1.3 Emily's work history

Emily is a young woman in her mid-twenties, and mother of an eight-year-old girl. Like many young people in Clyde River, Emily does not have her own house, although she applied for one many years ago. During my different trips to Clyde she had various living arrangements, but she considers her mother's place as her 'real home'. When she participated to this research project she was living with her mother, her sister and sister's partner and their kids, her young brother and her own daughter: eight people in total. As in most houses, there are always other people visiting or staying with them and as she often complained "it's always a mess because too many people come here" and it's often her who ends up cleaning as her mother is sick and her sister has a two month old baby.

Although Emily has not graduated from high school – she is missing only one class – she is the only one with a job in her house. She quit high school when her mother got sick and found a job to support her family. From her early twenties she has worked for different organizations in town, mostly white-collar, short-term positions. As she says, holding a job is the best way to provide for her family. She buys most of the food and she transfers money to her mother every paycheck to help her pay other bills and rent.

Due to her shy nature, Emily has always had tremendous difficulties saying no to people around her. She sometimes felt that people are taking advantage of her, because they know she almost never says no. She often ended up visiting her relatives and helping with housework. Although she felt it was her responsibility to help her extended family – share chores – she also thought it was unequally distributed among her siblings. She often discussed the fairness of

different events or situations with me, but rarely was able to voice it directly to the people concerned – her partner or her mother.

Several times, Emily reported that, because of the size of the community people would know exactly when workers receive their paycheck and therefore many visitors would come on those days to borrow money. She once told me that she had once stayed a whole day in her bedroom just to avoid people asking for money. Even her boyfriend, who had just gotten a job at the time of the research, was asking for money on a regular basis and "most of the time I know it's for drugs but it's hard to say no 'cause he is addicted".

Navigating through these requests was exhausting and has already led her to quit a job in the past. Nonetheless, she often mentioned that she *had* to find work because many people depended on her income. Most of the pressure came from her mother, to whom Emily was not able to say no.

5.2.1.4 Michael's work history

Michael is a young man in his late twenties. He and his girlfriend have a five year old boy and they all live with his parents, where only his mother has a regular job. Most of the time he and his girlfriend receive welfare as their main source of income, but sometimes during summer Michael works as a helper for construction companies and is able to increase his income.

For a long time, Michael was dealing with drug addiction and was not able to graduate from school, get a job or do anything else with his life. He quit school in grade 10 with a very low record of attendance and most of his work experiences were short term, as he was repeatedly fired for not showing up to work. Now he is much better at controlling his addiction but still spends some of his money on drugs and alcohol. This situation regularly creates tensions between him and his mother for she is often asking him to pay bills or rent and he has always refused, arguing that he cannot manage to save any money. Work and money were often a source of tension within his household.

Occasionally, Michael hunts or fishes, but most of his harvesting activities depend on his mother's support. She bought gas and hunting gear whenever she had enough money and

transferred it to him and his father. He felt this was a perfect arrangement because everyone was part of the hunt but in different ways.

When we talked about work he referred immediately to his girlfriend who never gets tired and works hard: “It seems she can’t get tired of doing all the cleaning and caring” in the house. He talked a lot about the women’s responsibilities within the household and the family and how he often felt helpless. Overall, he felt that these responsibilities were women’s and not so much men’s.

5.2.1.5 Sylvia’s work history

Sylvia is a very active mid-fifties woman. All her life she has been engaged in full-time employment, often at many places at the same time. She held several managerial positions in Clyde River as well as in other communities. At the time of the research, she combined a full-time administrative position while being self-employed for two different services she initiated. Most of Sylvia’s work experiences have been positive and rewarding and she has always been the main, and often sole, provider in her household. Her husband works occasionally, mostly during the summer season, but he engages in ‘full-time’ harvesting activities.

Like most people her age, Sylvia was born on the land, moved into the settlement at a young age and never graduated from high school. However, she took many training classes and programs to acquire necessary skills to hold a job in the wage economy. She openly talked about the importance of education for her children and grand-children to find jobs, but she felt that the lack of work in the community was an obstacle for them. She encourages them to seek work and further their education anywhere they want, even if it involves moving permanently.

Many people depend on her income but she feels that she controls how it is distributed. “Maybe because I’m getting older it gets easier to say no! Except for my husband and my parents.... that’s hard”. She shares her income mostly by being the one responsible for regular payments such as rent, bills and gas, but more significantly by buying food at the store. Her average spending on food for a week was $1082 according to her economic diaries and as she often told me: “feeding my family is very important”.

At the time of the research there were six people living in her house, but on a daily basis she hosted meals for an average of 14 people, mostly her children coming over for lunch. Almost every day she would buy and cook food for all of them, as often as possible it would consist of or include country food. Her husband is a good hunter who provides traditional foods on a regular basis. Therefore, she regularly supports her husband's harvesting activities and occasionally, her son's.

Sylvia often talked about work as a way to hold families together. For instance, her husband and son were hunting regularly and greatly contributing to the household food security. Her daughters and grand-daughters also helped her with domestic labour and her business. "When everyone is doing a little bit of work and shares the benefits, we can be a family". She believed that each person had work responsibilities according to their skills and that sharing responsibilities was the Inuit way to work.

5.2.2 The meanings of work

The working experiences of Inuit women and men are unique to each individual, but these five histories highlight some of the themes that repeatedly came up during the interviews. 'The family' was by far the most important theme related to participant's work experience. 'Food' and 'money' were also frequently mentioned. Finally, 'hunting/ fishing', 'housework/ carework' and 'wage-work and identity' were identified by some participants as part of the meaning of work. The way Inuit participants conceptualized work is connected to those six themes, but the importance of any one over the others varied largely depending on the age and the gender of the person. These differences are shown in Figure 5.1.

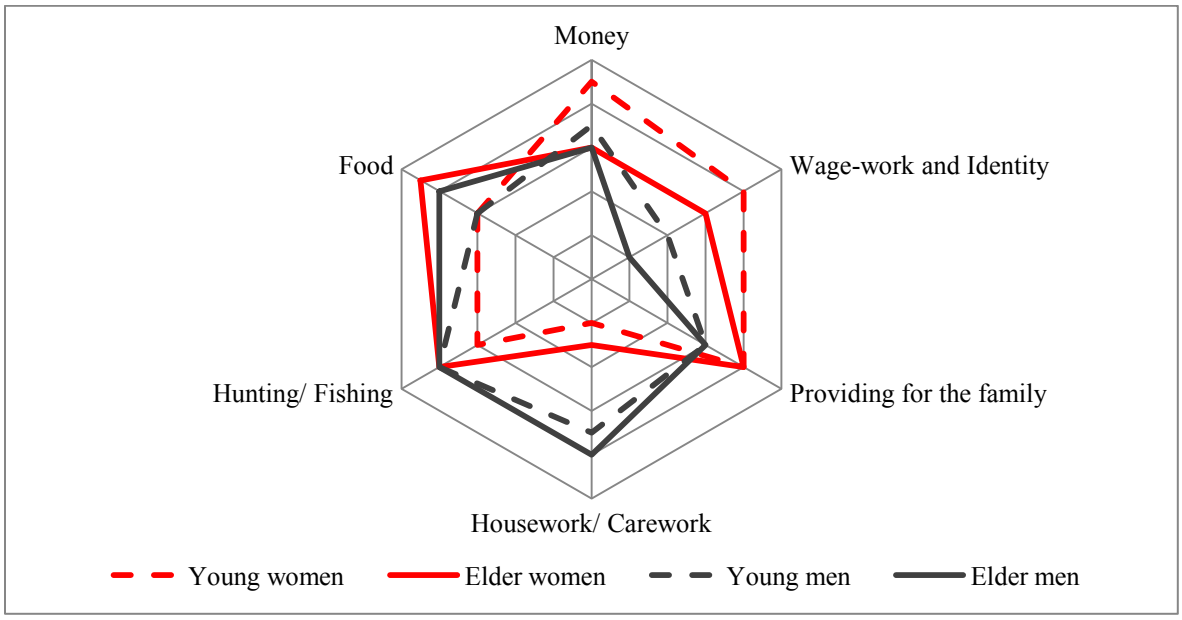

Figure 5.1: Inuit conceptualization of work, by gender and generation[33]

5.2.2.1 The family

Family has been described as the foundation of Inuit social organization and life (Briggs 1970, 1995, Bodenhorn 1990, Damas 1976). Historically, an Inuit family includes blood-linked nuclear families as well as relationships through marriage, adoption and name-sharing. When participants in the research project identified family as one meaning of work, they almost always referred to this extended family pattern. Because family and the social network are fundamental Inuit values, all types of work that connected people together were highly valued by participants (Briggs 1979, McElroy 1975, 1979, Searles 2002). For instance, country food production, food sharing and carework were often mentioned in interviews, especially among elders.

For women of all ages, 'the family' was by far most important meaning of work. When I asked them "what work means for you", they would consistently say 'my family'. Indeed, family was primarily identified as the direction of work: their work, responsibilities and chores are

[33] This figure shows how participants conceptualize and understand work and not necessarily how it is distributed or organized within families and households. For instance, men strongly stated that housework and carework were 'work' despite that they are not the one who undertake this type of work.

oriented toward the needs of their family. Only seldom have participants referred to themselves as beneficiaries of their work. Family was also identified as the outcome of performing work: a happier family, a healthier family, a stronger family.

Most men also identified 'family' as an important meaning of work. However, several men mentioned that providing for their family had become harder because there were less hunting opportunities and meagre work opportunities for them. Consequently, many felt that they were not working adequately for their family. Repeatedly, men talked about obstacles that prevent them from working and how it impacts their family. For instance, some perceived that it was much easier for women to find wage work because no one wants to hire men anymore. Concomitantly, many women have voiced concerns about men failing to play their role of provider for the family and the consequences of being the only one, or the main one, to fulfill this role.

Both women and men thought of 'work' as encompassing all the provisioning responsibilities toward their family. However, the most efficient way to do so diverged significantly between women and men, and between young and old. Younger participants tend to favour money (wage work) whereas their elder counterparts had a more tempered approach where providing for the family first referred to feeding the family and meant food rather than money.

5.2.2.2 Money and Food

Money is at once a container of value, a universal form of measure, a medium of exchange and a store value (Tickell 2003). Cultural geographers and anthropologists have discussed the relationship between different societies and money extensively, highlighting a wide range of practices and norms that emphasized one definition over others (Chabot 2003, Peterson 1991, Peterson and Matsuyama 1991, Simmel 1978). Although Inuit have used money since the late 1940s, for many decades it was only a supplement to the hunting economy. It is therefore only recently that money has taken a prominent place in the lives of Inuit. Most participants in the research viewed money exclusively as a medium of exchange and very few as a container of

value, a universal form of measure or a store value. This distinction is important as it helps understand the relationship between work and money for Inuit women and men.

Indeed, because work was often understood by participants as wage work, money was automatically referred to work's primary outcome. However, money *per se* was very rarely mentioned as the final outcome of work. On the contrary, most participants emphasized the need for money to meet the multiple demands of their family and relatives. For several women it often was a source of stress to make sure no one was going hungry or that all bills were being paid. Others also mentioned the pressure they felt from their spouse:

> Sometimes if he wants something expensive and I want food instead or pay the bills he thinks that 'cause I earn the money I get to spend all of it, all just for me... like, he thinks that, but it's mostly for the whole family not just for this expensive thing that he really wants.... he bothers me just like a little kid... "get a job please, I say in my head, it would be very great if you get a job, you would get your own PlayStation, pay for your own cigarettes or get whatever you want, you wouldn't have to ask me". 'Cause I do budgeting 'cause it's very tight and I can't look at other stuff. (Joyce, 26 years old)

This example portrays a situation experienced by many women, especially the young, where they have become the main or the sole provider for their family. Navigating through the multiple demands addressed to them often results in unsustainable situations. This was especially true for young women with children and an unsupportive or absent partner (4 of my participants stated being in this situation, but many other women I met openly mentioned it to me). Their situation partly explains why they privilege the association of work and money over other connections.

For most men a worker was someone who could provide 'tangible resources' for his family. Tangible resources included money and foods of all kinds (country and store foods). When men were asked about what work was for them they would usually summarize it in two words: money and food. Especially for older men, food (store and land) was perceived as the main outcome of work:

> When I was young at that time it's hard to find a job, back in 50s and 60s... [At that time my parents] never talked about work. With my son... yes. I always told him to look for a job, you're a teenager and when you are getting old it would be hard to find a job. It's important to have a job! That's the food we eat right now!! Sometimes it's hard to get country food... too many people right now. Too many people to share one seal, not enough... (James, 62 years old).

Young men also associated food and money to work, with the most effective way to make ends meet and acquire what is needed for a family would be through money: "Money talks! You can't buy anything without money, you can't buy groceries, you can't buy fuel, nothing, there is nothing you can do without money" (Lucas, early 30s).

But the relationship between work and money/food also tells another story. Most individuals who identified money as work were younger people, those who were born in the community and who knew very little of life in camps. For instance, while young women asserted that to feed a family you needed 'money', older women asserted that to feed a family you needed 'food'. This highlights the divergent work experience that younger and older women have had over the core of their life. Indeed, older women have lived a part of their life in camps on the land before moving into settlements. As I described in Chapter 3, women's land-related work emphasized the relationship between work and food production, and feeding their family was their main responsibility and their day-to-day experience of work. On the other hand, younger women, born in the community, have a more limited experience of land-related work. Although many of them knew how to skin and cook country food, they are not performing this work on a regular basis. Therefore, for young women the relationship between work and food has money as an intermediary. Similar parallels can be made for men.

5.2.2.3 Hunting and fishing

Hunting, fishing and gathering local foods have largely been described as central to the Inuit subsistence system as they provide food and work for Inuit women and men (Poppel and Kruse 2008). According to the Nunavut Community Labour Force Survey (1999), in 1999 about 71% of Inuit adults were involved in harvesting country food. More men harvested country food compared to women – respectively 80% and 63% – and Inuit men aged 45 to 54 had the highest level of participation in harvesting country food (Tait 2001). Annual economic reviews of

Nunavut tend to present the same level of engagement in harvesting activities (Nunavut Economic Forum 2010).

Accordingly, 65% of the families I worked with during the research project were involved in harvesting activities on a regular basis, 17% were involved occasionally and 17% were not involved. Therefore, most participants, especially men, mentioned hunting and fishing as part of their definition of work. Three main reasons were usually given. First, harvesting activities provide food. Second, several participants mentioned that because of the effort needed to perform such activities, it was considered work. Finally, many participants argue that hunting and fishing were directly related to Inuit identity and Inuit 'traditional' concepts of work, especially for men. For instance, participants highly valued boys or girls that would go out on the land to hunt, fish or skin and cook country food and share it with their family: "that's our work, us Inuit" (Ruth, 65 years old). As Rose (42 years old) told me one day:

> "I am really proud of my son because he is a hunter. And every time he catches something he shares it with us, with elders and anyone who wants it. I am really proud of him". "So, I said, you're proud of him because he shares, not because he is a good hunter?" "Of course! she said, sharing is what we do, us, Inuit, and I am proud because he is being an Inuk". "What about those who work full-time and have little time to go hunting or fishing?" Sometimes, when they catch something they can share, but otherwise they just go to their jobs". "But they can share money?" "Sharing money is ok, but it's not sharing country food, it's completely different!"

During my interviews, several female participants – of all ages – commented on the importance of harvesting activities for men's identities and the continuity of Inuit values. They also expressed a desire to have a partner that hunts and strongly valued men who combined hunting and occasional or part-time job. These discussions highlight the continuing importance of hunting and sharing practices in contemporary Clyde River.

5.2.2.4 Housework and carework

Housework and carework include all the domestic work performed mostly by women to allow social reproduction (Reskin and Padavic 1994). Feminist theorists have demonstrated that women are underappreciated because their unpaid work does not count in economic accounting (Boserup 1970, Fox 1980). However, this approach has been criticized by indigenous feminists who argue that maternalism and caregiving are fundamental values to Indigenous cultures and

must be upheld by feminism instead of being seen as a consequence of male domination (Leigh 2009, St-Denis 2007). This view was widely shared among participants for whom carework was essential to maintaining a strong Inuit family.

However, only rarely would women participants say that caring for their children or elders was work *per se*. This was explained to me by one young woman (Laura, 28 years old): "work is to make money and something for you to do and it's totally different at home. In here (home) it's love, it's for love.... not for money. For my kids... when I do work here, housework it's for my kids, so its love" (Laura, 28 years old). Her perception of work was also echoed by another young woman (Naomi, 22 years old) who felt that what she does for her child was not work as she loved him. Therefore, many women thought of work as something away from love and viewed housework and carework not as work but as "just things that you have to do" to keep the family healthy. Many female participants defined housework and carework as their role instead of a proper form of work and state that it should be valued differently than work for wage[34]. Carework was especially seen as a woman's responsibility and reflected the understanding of the family being a female 'responsibility'. This reflects what many indigenous feminists view as a distinctive approach to womanhood with women being empowered by this role instead of seeing it as a male domination (St-Denis 2007, Turpel 1993).

Meanwhile, men participants valued housework and carework as work *per se*. As they were not usually the ones doing those chores, when they ended up doing them they felt it was hard and time consuming and therefore stated that it was work (Michael, 27 years old).

5.2.2.5 Wage work and identity

Interestingly, many women mentioned that paid-work was "something to do", "an enjoyment", "a way to identify oneself" or "a way to go out". Young women and women with careers had a very positive perception of wage work and felt some value and accomplishment from being a worker. As Susan (55 years old) said "I love working with students. The time of the week goes by faster, it seems that the clock goes faster during working hours. I think I would get bored when I stop working". Similarly, Fanny (28 years old) "I like my work at the school. I get to help

[34] In Chapter 7 I specifically discuss the social value of different types of work and show how it empowers/dis-empowers women.

students that need more help than others. I like to see their faces looking at me, lighting up upon figuring out a problem they couldn't resolve previously. I like to see that happening".

If 'having something to do' was often mentioned by women to define paid work, it was almost never mentioned by men. On the contrary, paid employment for men was associated with specific needs, but far away from enjoyment. For instance, when I asked a young man why he had decided to work he told me that he wanted to buy a ski-doo. And when I asked him if he would still work if he received a ski-doo, after hesitating for a while his answer was "...maybe..." For him, work was directly related to a specific purpose – buying a ski-doo – but had no (or little) value or purpose in itself. For many Inuit men paid-work was limiting them in what they really wanted to do; it affected their freedom to go out on the land.

Also, several men expressed some reservations with wage employment relations. They mentioned disliking "when they get bossy" (the *qallunaat* boss). When I asked what they would do or how they would respond in those cases, I usually had answers like "I would just do it, 'cause they are just bossy anyway, and forget about it", "I don't say anything", "I would just walk away", "I would just quit for a moment". Surprisingly no women mentioned that as being something that would affect them in their work experience.

5.2.3 Re-mapping the boundaries of work: living in two worlds

In the preceding sections, I have detailed six key meanings of work identified by participants: family, food, money, hunting/fishing, housework/carework and something to do. As I suggested in Chapter 2, work is a concept that includes more than just wage employment. Indeed, a comprehensive understanding of work includes three main categories of work: land-related work, domestic work and wage work. All together, they frame a sociocultural construction of work.

First, land-related work encompasses hunting/fishing, food and family themes. Land-related work is organized through sharing practices, kinship networks and other social relationships. This work is deeply embedded in Inuit socioeconomic structures and involves mutual interdependence of women's work and men's work. Second, domestic work encompasses housework/carework and family themes. This work is organized according to age and gender and some level of co-residence obligations. Domestic work is associated to Inuit norms and values especially regarding childcare. Third, wage work encompasses money, food, something to do

and family themes. Here, mechanisms organizing such work are not 'controlled' within the kinship network or family but rather are disembedded from socioeconomic structures. Wage work focuses on individual rather than collective action, despite that the benefits can be shared collectively, as I will discuss in greater details in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, the way Inuit women and men conceptualize work reveals a highly intuitive understanding of their socioeconomic environment, as for most of them it involves 'working in two worlds'. Participants distinguished two broad perspectives that work conveys: one in relation to money and the basics of life; the other one in relation to family and the essence of life. So, one world is concerned with paying bills, rent, gas and buying store food. The other world is concerned with social responsibilities toward family and land. This distinction was made clear by many Inuit participants and if a few of them valued one world over the other, for the majority it was important to be involved in both worlds.

This conceptualization of work embodies the two sectors of Inuit mixed economy: the monetised and the social sectors. Inuit participants were highly aware of their position and work responsibilities in each sector. Working in the monetised economy meant earning money in different ways and providing the basics for the family (food, house and material) and was situated in the day-to-day life. Paid work was regarded as the most efficient way to work in the monetised economy and generally meant providing the basics of life.

If "money is what motions our world today" as Lucas (early 30s) said, it's not what gives it meaning, as Nellie (36 years old) rightfully argued. Indeed, she perceived that work could not be limited to money but had to include what really moved people; their families. By family she meant not only her household but also her kinship network and other, less formalised relationships. What Nellie referred to was the Inuit social economy where "at the center of the economic activity is not the exchange for profit or competition but the sustenance of individuals, families, and the community" (Kuokkanen 2011b: 219). In the Inuit social sector most participants saw work as the responsibility to provide 'quality resources' for their family, such as country food, time spent on the land and activities that forge Inuit identity. In other words, working in the social economy meant producing the social fabric of life.

Overall, interviews revealed that work is connected to all spheres of Inuit participants' life – on the land, within the house, in a workplace – which allows them to be involved in both sectors of the mixed economy. Indeed, people emphasized on the importance of working in those two worlds at the same time in order to be a good Inuk.

5.3 Exploring Inuit women's employment in Nunavut

Inuit conceptualization of work revealed complex experiences that are key to understanding the changing work regime in northern Canada. Indeed, around the circumpolar regions, recent research has demonstrated important changes in labour markets and employment patterns of women and men. One focus has been the steady increase of Inuit women's labour force participation rates and their higher degree of stability in the wage economy. In the Canadian North, women's employment has rapidly accelerated over the last decades in response to socioeconomic and sociocultural transformations. In the following sections, I draw attention to those transformations in the context of Nunavut and I examine their internal dynamics at the community level.

5.3.1 (Socio)economic transformations

Over the last century the working experience of Inuit has been considerably transformed in response to the (socio)economic transformations that have taken place. Life in settlements has increased the need for money in order to pursue harvesting activities as well as to meet the settlement needs, including public housing, rent and utilities (Ford et al. 2008, Natcher 2009, Wenzel 1991, Wenzel et al. 2000b). Today, northern households derive their income from multiple sources: domestic production (hunting/ fishing/ gathering), commodity production (crafts and goods for sale), government transfers (welfare/child allocation/old age pension) and waged labour. Complementarities of resources between harvesting activities and money have long been demonstrated (Duhaime 1991, Elias 1997, Wenzel 1983, Wheelersburg 2008), however, wage work has come to play a significant role in the provisioning of cash as in contemporary Nunavut it is the most efficient way to access monetary resource.

Concomitant with the increased importance of wage work in Nunavut is the development of its labour market. In the following section I examine the development of the northern labour

market and its local implications. I explain how the transformations in the nature of work and pattern of work have translated into changes in women and men's work.

5.3.1.1 Transformation in the nature of work

> I remember when I was a kid in the early 1990s no one had a job in my family except my mom. Nor my dad or my uncles and aunts had a job. People were just hunting and fishing or I guess just doing some little things (job) here and there, but no 'official' job. And then it started to change. One got a job, then another one got a job, and so on. And suddenly if I look around me it's like everyone has a job; I have a full-time job! It changed so fast (Joyce, 26 years old).

The speed of change that has occurred from a lifestyle where most people rely on hunting to a lifestyle where many of them have job obligations has no precedent. Before the 1990s in Canadian northern communities, very few regular jobs existed. Within one generation the north's population has seen jobs created at a pace not seen earlier, leaving them with very little time to adapt. Joyce, like many young people, had a firsthand experience of this transition as her parents and relatives were the first to access those newly created positions. Joyce talked at length about her childhood and being on the land with her relatives for extended periods – the entire summer, every holiday and weekend. Many young women and men from Clyde River had similar experiences of being involved in harvesting activities on a regular basis and being part of what they referred to as a hunting family. For many of them harvesting has now become at best an occasional practice, and the loss of 'connection' to land activities, in part due to time constraints of education and waged employment, was often mentioned during discussions and interviews.

Before settling into communities in mid-last century Inuit were semi-nomadic and engaged in 'full-time' harvesting activities. Elder participants described extensively their land-based work responsibilities and how these organized life in camps. Wherefore the nature of work was directly related to land activities with occasional access to monetary resources. According to most participants, after settlement the labour market was characterized by a mix of part-time, seasonal and occasional employment and only a few individuals had permanent full-time jobs in Clyde River. Although some people engaged in wage work in the 1980s and early 1990s, most families relied mainly on hunting and fishing for their subsistence.

Thus, the transition from camp to community has had a profound impact on the nature of work in the Canadian north with steady growth of waged employment due to the necessities of a new lifestyle and the increased centrality of money in the day to day life. Indeed, for the first time Inuit families needed money to pay for housing, heating and transportation. As an elder woman remembered:

> 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 (Ruth, 65 years old).

The need for money to support harvesting activities and other contemporary needs have led many Inuit women and men to engage in wage work. This first transformation in the nature of work from land-based to wage work occurred in the 1980s and throughout the 1990s in Clyde River. During that period, both Inuit women and men participants increased their involvement in the labour force during that period. Interestingly, life history calendars (LHC) completed by participants show that for many participants their first waged experience occurred during those years, regardless of their age. Similarly, several elder women reported that their partner was the one holding a job in the 1980s-1990s while they were mainly 'housewives'. Most of these jobs were part-time or occasional which allowed their partner to be involved in harvesting activities. Things slowly changed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with many women reporting that they entered the workforce at that time. One woman commented on those then new possibilities:

> I don't know how it happened, but I got a job. I mean, they (the employers) kept asking me for months and then I finally said yes, I'll give it a try. And I've been there since then. I never thought about looking for a job before, I had stuff to do at home. No one was really talking about jobs at that time, but then they call you to work… I don't know the politics and that stuff but they had to find people to count on, to trust, so many other women were asked to work too (Charlotte, 45 years old).

Participants' LHC of participants show that wage employment has increased rapidly over the late 1990s early 2000s. Not only did wage work became more significant in participants' life during that period, but the nature of their work also shifted. Interviews with participants show that over that period Inuit women have become important actors in the wage economy with many female participants holding professional or managerial positions in health or educational

services. Comparatively, fewer men had similar positions and they were usually in transportation or industrial services.

Figure 5.4 shows participants' occupational distribution in 2012. Fourteen percent of Inuit men had a managerial positions compared to 21% for Inuit women. The greatest difference is found in professional positions where women are over-represented with 21% and only 5% for men. Semi-skilled workers are about the same for men and women, and men are more represented in the manual work category with 24% compared to 17% for women. The largest disparity can be found in unemployment statistics: men (47%) are represented twice as much as women (21%). The over-representation of men in the unemployment category is because my research was conducted during the spring and fall, two periods of the year during which fewer men are working[35]. Had the research been conducted during summer, it would have resulted in an increase in professional positions as well as a decrease in unemployment. This supports what has been seen in other Arctic regions.

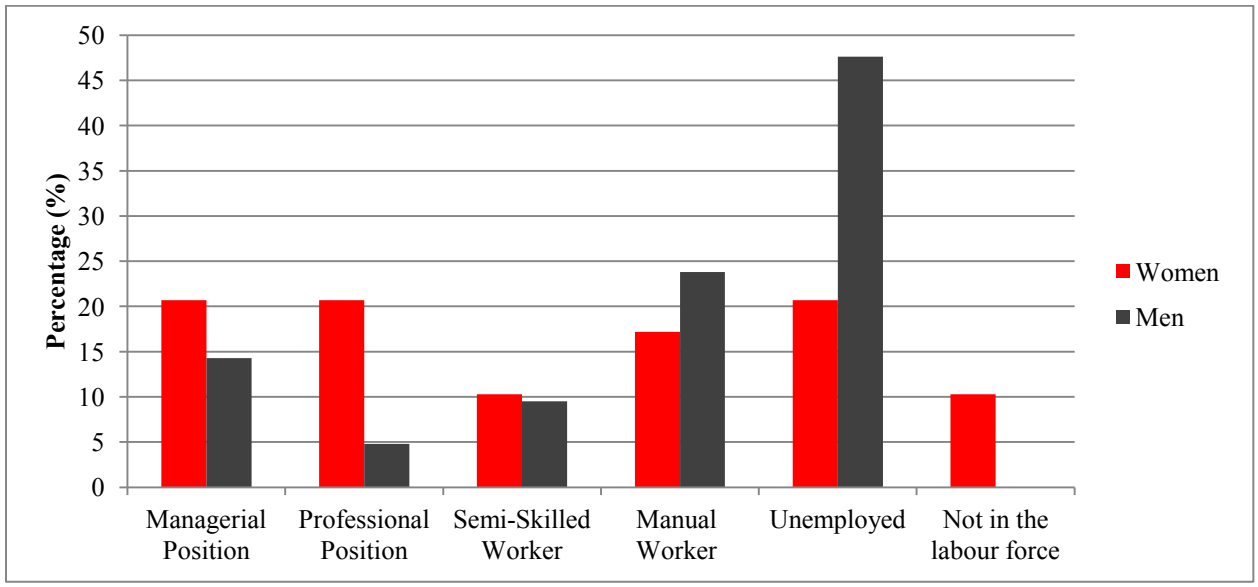

Figure 5.2: Occupational distribution for Inuit women and men participants in Clyde River, 2012

[35] Over summer months many men are hired to work on construction projects or on cleaning sites.

People in their late forties and up had seen the transition in job opportunities from manual to skilled workers. Many of them had firsthand experience of being employed for years in unskilled positions and moved to a managerial position when those opened for Inuit:

> There were not many options in those days. I would help here and there; at the health centre, at the hotel, at the community centre. And somehow, I don't know how it happened, or I don't remember, they asked us (Inuit) to hold those jobs. I became coordinator for the program and I moved on, I am manager now (Lisa, 40 years old).

Additionally, this occupational change has been more advantageous for women as most jobs in the public sector require more formalized education. Indeed, many female participants had a higher level of education than their partner with only two women who had a more educated partner. Among participants in this research, there is a strong correlation between the education attainment of participants and the nature of the work they perform (Figure 5.5). Women with diplomas were disproportionately over-represented in higher positions while those without a diploma were over-represented in lower positions or were unemployed. For instance, five women who graduated from high school had a managerial position and the same number had a professional position. Comparatively, only one woman without a diploma had such a position in each category. Figure 5.5 shows a clear connection between a higher position and graduation.

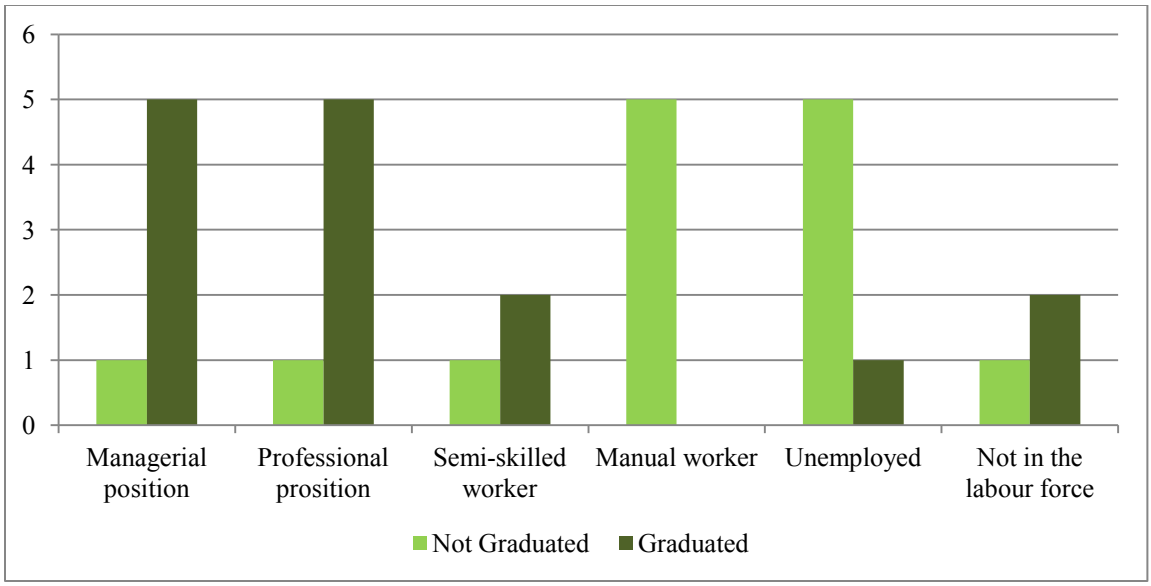

Figure 5.3: Occupational distribution of female participants according to their graduation status

Overall, between 1981 and 2012, both Inuit men and women experienced transformations in the nature of the work they perform, first from land-based activities to wage work, and subsequently from low-skilled position to professional and managerial positions. However, the difference is more significant for Inuit women than men. Two reasons have been explored in this section. First, the shift in labour market toward the tertiary sector with a strong increase in public services occupations, which typically tend to be more female-oriented positions. Second, the higher educational level among women has given them the opportunity to access professional and managerial positions.

5.3.1.2 Transformation in patterns of work

Concomitant to changes in the nature of work in Nunavut, patterns of work have also been modified over the last decades. Patterns of work are defined as the way individuals engage in work-related activities, for instance full-time or part-time jobs and whether these are occasional, seasonal or permanent jobs. Those patterns show individual and group preferences in terms of employment, but also they indicate long term structural changes in the labour market.

The labour force participation rates of Inuit women and men have continued to increase steadily over the last decades, but more significantly for women. Virtually all women work outside the home for part of their lives and only a very few have no work experience at all. During their working lives, most Inuit women withdraw from the labour force on one or more occasions for family responsibilities, but eventually return to the labour force.

Interviews in Clyde River with both women and men confirmed that hunting remains an important male character ideal. Indeed, most women considered hunting and the provisioning of country food a man's responsibility. And more interestingly, when women were asked to describe a perfect partner a large proportion of them mentioned that for a man being a hunter was equally important to being a worker. Naomi (22 years old) said that between a hunter and a worker she would choose a hunter because "country food is hard to access these days". It appeared that hunting for many women and men was a desirable male characteristic.

On the other hand, for the same period, patterns of work for Clyde River women had changed significantly. The job opportunities created by the municipal and territorial governments have enabled a significant number of Inuit women to enter the labour force in their community. Most female participants engaged in typically 'white-collar' jobs that are often full-time, year around and permanent.

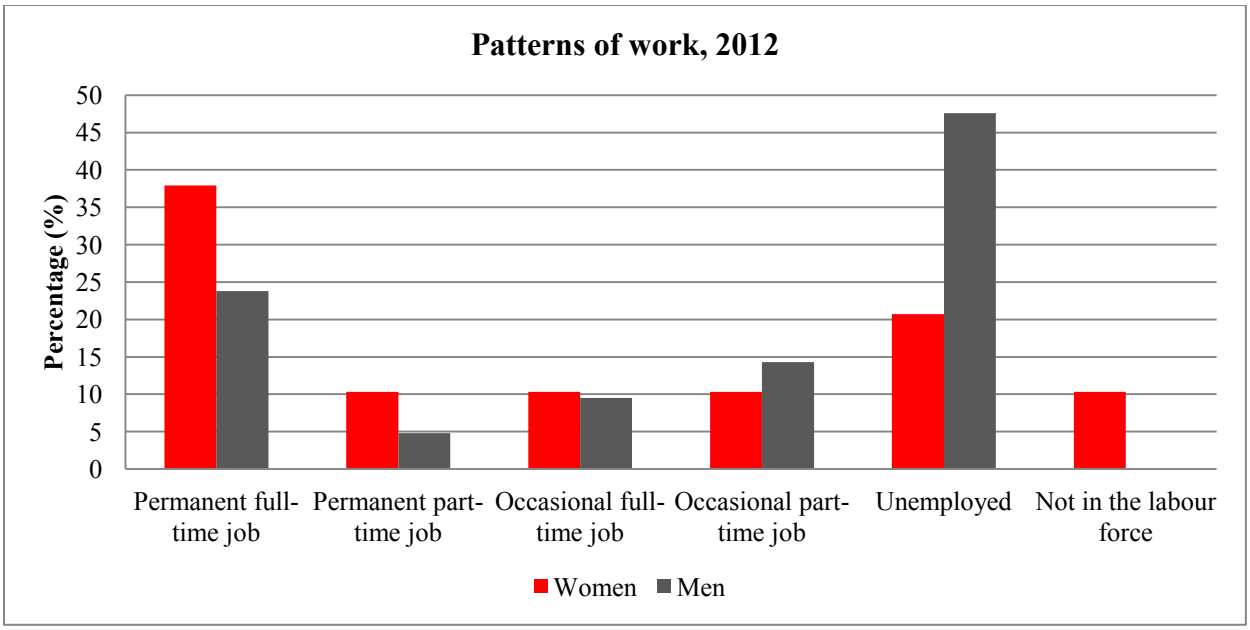

Figure 5.4: Patterns of work for Clyde River Inuit women and men participants during the research project, 2012

Figure 5.4 shows similar patterns of work in Clyde River than those observed in Nunavut in the recent years (Chapter 3). For instance, during the research project in 2012, 38% of female participants were engaged in a permanent full-time job, 10% permanent part-time job, 10% in an occasional full-time job, 10% in a part-time occasional job. Ten percent were not in the labour force at the time of the research (retired or parental responsibilities) and 20% were unemployed (looking for but enable to find work). The situation was different for men. During the same period, 24% of them had a permanent full-time job, 5% a permanent part-time job, 10% an occasional full-time job and 48% of them were unemployed. According to interviews, none were outside the labour force. So, during the time of my research, men were unemployed at twice the rate of women. Also, women are twice as likely as men to occupy a full-time position.

Over a two year period (2010-2012) the proportions in each category stay relatively similar for women but a greater difference is found for men (Figure 5.5). The percentage of unemployed men drops from 48% to 14% and overall 75% of men had a full-time experience (either permanent or occasional) compared to 69% for women. Therefore, the main difference between women and men in Clyde River is the way they engage in work. Patterns of work for

men highlight their preference for occasional position and patterns of work for women show their preference for permanent positions. Accordingly, interviews with men in Clyde River suggest a clear preference for occasional work, especially when asked about their long term preference, and women mainly preferred permanent jobs.

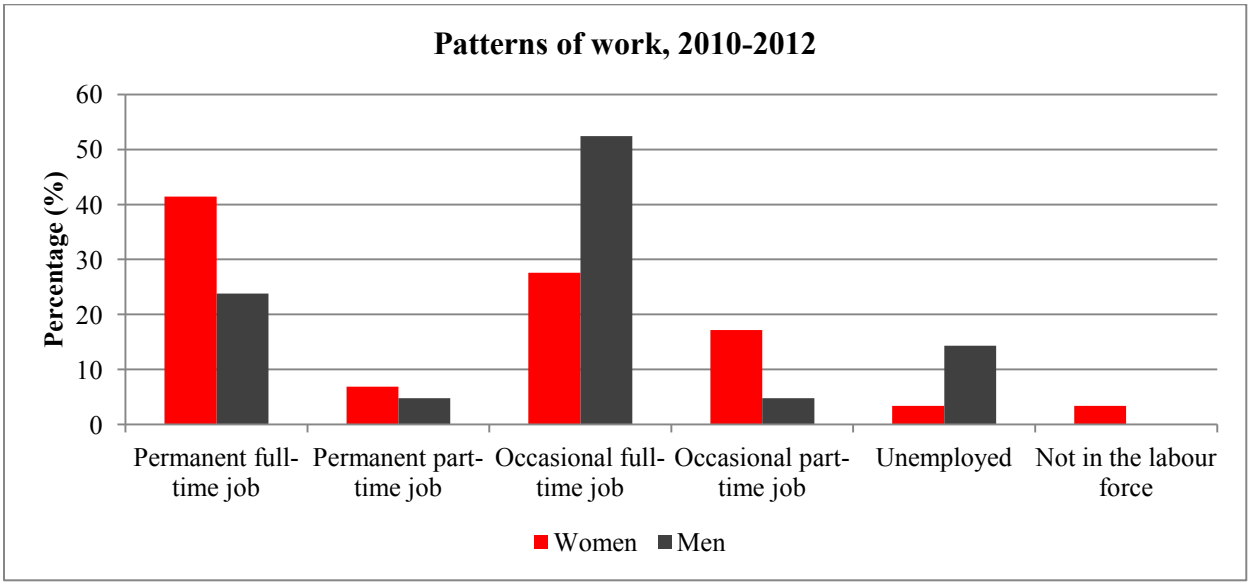

Figure 5.5: Patterns of work for Clyde River Inuit women and men participants, 2010-2012

Finally, within my sample there is a strong correlation between education attainment and patterns of labour force participation (Figure 5.5). Fifteen female participants (52%) had high school diplomas and all but one have been employed full time over the last two years. Among the nine (31%) women who had further education or training, eight (27%) had a full-time permanent position. Conversely, among the 14 female participants (48%) who had not graduated from high school, only three (10%) had permanent full-time jobs and the 11 (38%) others had occasional work experiences mainly. Finally, unemployed female participants were disproportionately represented by women who had not graduated from high school. Overall, these results suggest that changes in the nature of work and patterns of work amongst Inuit have resulted in a greater employability of women.

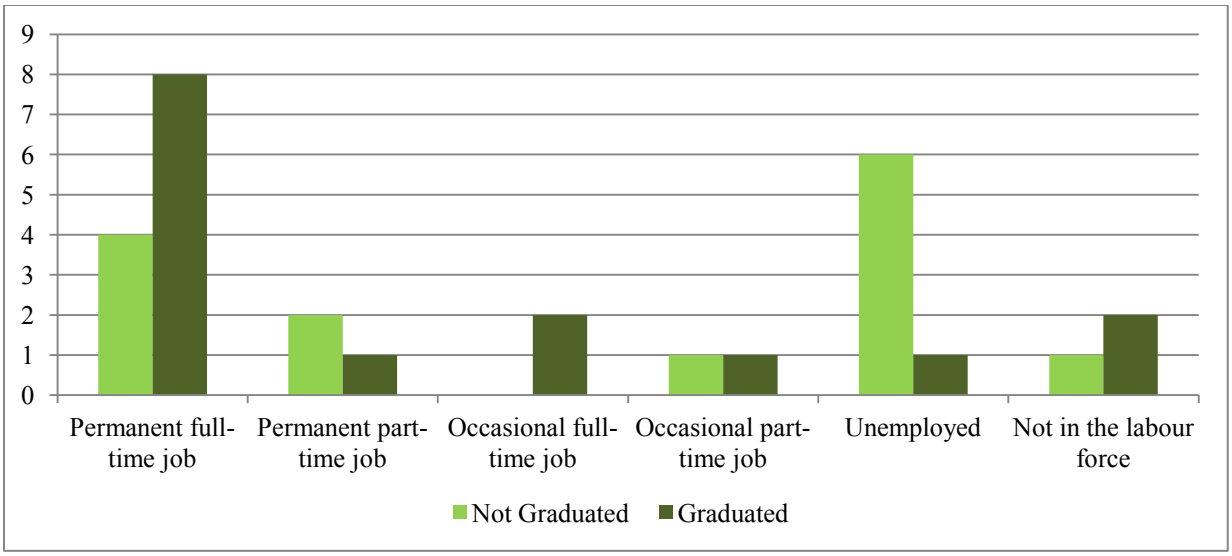

Figure 5.6: Patterns of work for female participants according to their graduation attainment

5.3.2 (Socio)cultural transformations and the context of wage work

While socioeconomic changes taking place in the Canadian north can explain Inuit women's high level of participation in the wage economy, it is believed that sociocultural transformations that accompanied them have also contributed to the current situation. Indeed, gendered roles and behaviours, and the way they are being transmitted, have been affected by social shifts and lifestyle changes. Inuit women and men have experienced those transformations differently resulting in a greater continuity of gender roles for women, and a discontinuity of men's roles in many cases.

In the following section, I explore the continuity of gender roles for women in relation to wage employment. I first explain how socialization of Inuit men and women affects their participation in the labour force. I also examine Inuit household dynamics as a vector of changes in women and men's work.

5.3.2.1 Socialization of girls and boys

One explanation for female/male differences in wage employment patterns is the way girls and boys are socialized. Indeed, gender identity, roles and behaviours are acquired through socialization processes that shape one's interest and ability to engage in different activities. In traditional Inuit society boys and girls were socialized at a young age into different gendered roles. While men were hunters, women were overseeing the needs of the family and camp – sewing, cooking and caring (Briggs 1979, Briggs 1974, Giffen 1930). In Inuit traditional livelihoods, men and women had distinct but complementary roles (Guemple 1986, Kjellström 1973a).

However, shifts in social context resulting from life in settlements have affected the organization of gender roles as well as the strategies of gender-role socialization (see Chapter 3). For instance, women tend to be more isolated in their homes with less contact with their relatives (Nahanni 1990), whereas men spend more time in the house/settlement because of the decrease in harvesting opportunities (Wenzel 1991). Children/teenagers spend more time amongst peers instead of being with adults (Condon 1987). Inevitably, those social transformations taking place in Inuit society are impacting men and women differently (Billson and Mancini 2007, Condon and Stern 1993).

In studying gender role socialization in the Northwest Territories in the 1980s, Condon and Stern (1993) found a significant difference in the way girls were socialized in a settlement setting compared to boys. While girls were expected to perform 'female tasks' at a young age and later to hold a wage earning position, boys "play hockey, drive snowmobiles, hang out with friends" (Condon and Stern 1993: 411). Differences between boys and girls in terms of their responsibilities were repeatedly mentioned during interviews with my participants. Girls were often described as a 'helper' and boys as a 'kid'. For instance, parents require that their young daughter help with a variety of domestic chores while young boys are left to themselves. This socialization into responsibility is even greater for a girl whose mother has a wage position. A clear example of this gender-role socialization is the young age at which girls begin to carry around their siblings in their *amauti*. During all the interviews and time spent with Inuit families in Clyde River, rarely have I seen boys performing household chores or even being assigned any responsibilities. Many would go out hunting with their father and male relatives, but these trips

were occasional and without expectations. Finally, there is usually little control over boys, leaving them with more freedom and less obligations than girls. Nellie (36 years old) exemplifies this situation when we discussed her expectations towards her coming baby (she did not know the sex):

> "For a son... I don't know. I would let him do whatever what he likes... I would be proud of him if he works anywhere. If I have a girl, I would teach her sewing and do house cleaning. I don't know if I would teach that to a son... but for a girl definitely yes! If I have a daughter I would like to see her do everything, like sewing and job, like in the office".

Therefore, there is a great difference in how girls and boys are socialized and the responsibilities they are expected to take on at a young age. More interestingly, Inuit women appear to experience a greater continuity in their roles between the traditional and contemporary periods. For instance, domestic roles and parenting continue to be a primary responsibility for women. This finding echoes what Condon and Stern (1993) and McElroy (1975) have argued many years ago stating that boys see themselves, to a lesser extent than girls, as adults.

One consequence of this contrasted socialization is that many families I worked with encouraged their daughter to seek work at a younger age, more so than their son. The given reason was usually that "it's easier for women to find work", a widespread belief amongst men and women of all ages. Mothers would comment on their son being too 'shy' to look for a job and their daughter being 'resourceful', 'mature enough' to deal with wage employment responsibilities. Therefore, many participants stated that wage work (especially in an office) was more of a 'female thing'.

5.3.2.2 Adaptability and continuity

If wage work was often considered 'easier' for women, it is also because many of their socialized traits and attitudes tend to fit better in a workplace environment: "women are able to express themselves better than men I think, they are able to talk about what their problems are, like they seem to problem-solve better" (Joan, early 50 years old, employer). Adapting to new working environments often requires negotiations between individuals and a great deal of communication skills – capacity that Inuit women develop at a young age while attending to

their family's needs. Inversely, males are socialized into more individual activities that require independence and less space for negotiation. Therefore, Inuit women's socialization patterns tend to focus on skills that better fit an office setting than men, such as "being resourceful and working out problems", as this was their primary responsibility in camp life (McElroy 1975, Minogue 2005). Dealing with a workplace's challenges requires a certain ability to negotiate and compromise. For many participants it appeared that women tend to develop those skills more than men:

> "I think that women have more patience than men like... we can be a 'punching bag', metaphorically, for a while and still have more patience than men. If one little thing happens to them Oh! It's a big deal! Men give up while women tend to solve the problem..." (Joyce, 26 years old).

This difference in character is not unique to Inuit, but has generated the idea that Inuit women are more employable than men and often more open to change (Rasmussen 2009). The greater continuity in their gender roles has favoured adaptability to changing environments. Many Inuit participants have mentioned that men had lost more than women over the economic transition. They also stated that life for women was better now, but not for men. 'In the past' men had more responsibilities and a better role, while women have a better life now. Therefore, it was perceived that women had gained much from changes toward settlement life and the wage economy and men had lost. "It seems like women can change and men can't" said a woman in her 40s, while talking about changes over the course of her life. She felt that she had to adapt to various situations, which sometimes was frustrating but 'adapting means surviving'. Another young woman discussed the difficulties that men are facing in this transition, highlighting that they do not have as many obligations as they used to:

> "I think it was better for men in the past. 'Cause most of them were taught that even if you don't want to do something, like go out hunting, you *have* to in order to live and survive. Today.... right now, men seem like more lazy or not 'obliged' anymore to do those 'surviving things', it's almost if they can choose because no one is forcing them" (Naomi, 22 years old).

Because hunting has been greatly impacted by the transition to life in settlement, Inuit men "suffer the loss of their primary role" and sometimes "feel inadequate" in supporting their family (Joan, early 50 years old). These comments echo Brody's finding that "sporadic hunting

and occasional wage-labour has undermined the position of most men" (Brody 1975: 196). It appears that the situation has changed little, even with passing decades.

The greater adaptability of Inuit women to wage work requirements and expectations have been discussed for many decades now. While Hull (1983, 2005) found that Inuit women adapt more easily to wage work activities and move more easily into the labour market, Billson and Mancini (2007) and Kral and his colleagues (2011) argued that it can be explained by the fact that Inuit women are much more open to change than Inuit men. Similar conclusion were also found in Alaska (Bodenhorn 1990, Fogel-Chance 1993, Hamilton 2010) and Greenland (Rasmussen 2009). This adaptive flexibility has proven to be easier for women than men, leaving the former with more responsibilities and the latter with the felling of inadequacy. Indeed, many female participants mentioned having trouble meeting all the demands addressed to them, while many men mentioned feeling trapped, without any options.

Finally, most participants highlighted the fact that the 'traditional work' of women had declined in prestige compared to men's 'traditional work' (Chabot 2003, Dybbroe 1988). Indeed, it appears that Inuit men still draw prestige and identity from harvesting activities whereas Inuit women's traditional sphere of work has been more impacted over the last decades by a decreasing emphasis on traditional female skills in the socialization of children. Therefore, wage work was viewed by many participants as a way to enhance a sense of accomplishment and value for women.

5.3.2.3 Transformations in the household: the lone-parent household

Another factor that influences the surge of Inuit women into the labour force is the transformation in the type of Inuit household. Between 1981 and 2011, lone-parent households have rapidly increased in numbers in Nunavut, from 13 to 28% (figure 5.10). Moreover, a large proportion of them are female-headed households, resulting in an increased pressure on these women to provide for their family without support from a partner.

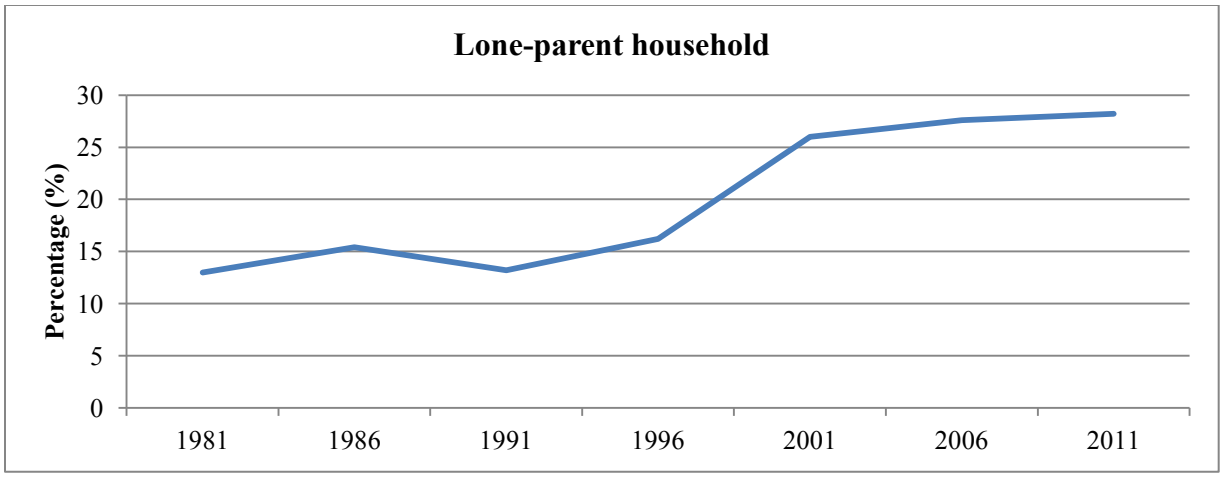

Figure 5.7: Lone-parent households in Nunavut, 1981-2011
Source: Author's compilations and calculations, Statistics Canada (2012b)

Within my sample study, 14% of families were lone-parent, female-headed households and all of them mentioned having trouble providing for their family and felt overwhelmed with multiple responsibilities toward both their household and their extended family. All but one had full-time jobs at the same time as being involved in both domestic and land-related work. For many female participants, combining work and family responsibilities was one of their biggest challenges. But it was significantly more important for those living in a lone-parent household,

> "Biggest challenges... raising child on their own, being a single mother, I think that's the biggest challenge for Inuit women they get lack of support from their spouse and they get lack of helps, the mother would have to do everything, cooking cleaning, washing their clothes, grocery shopping... and trying to get their kids be awake for school and trying to find them during the night 'cause they need to sleep..." (Emily, 24 years old).

> "Being a single mom is hard. I mean, I have to do stuff for my daughter and I always do everything around the house. And I have to help my grand-parents 'cause my parents passed away and my mom has always wanted me to be helpful to others, so I do that 'cause that's what my mom would have wanted. I have no support from my daughter's dad, I mean, that's how boys are, you know. But I don't really care, no point to complain all the time, you just do what needs to be done" (Ana, 27 years old).

> "I live with my parents and my two kids. The fathers are not around anymore, sometimes they don't even say hello to my kids in the street, I don't like that. A couple years ago I decided to look for a job 'cause my mom would take care of the kids and we needed more money for the family. My dad works and he told me to look for a job to help him. I said ok. Now I work full-time and sometimes on call during the weekends and nights, whenever they need me. It's much better for the food now and to buy stuff for the kids, but I don't think I could afford my own place" (Ashley, 26 years old).

When families separate, women typically end up with most (or all) of the responsibility of caring for the children. This suggests a differential impact of family structure on labour force participation between Inuit men and women.

Rapid sociocultural transformations in the Canadian north over the last decades have also impacted the passing down of knowledge and skills to make a living. Indeed, changes in the nature of work and patterns of work have created gaps between generations, with each generation facing different challenges than did their parents or than will their children. As one man rightfully said: "from *qamatik*[36] to computers, sure there is a big difference! It's a whole new life!" The rapid and drastic transformations have also left some participants feeling that what they had learned throughout their lives – knowledge and acquired skills– were now less useful or even irrelevant when it comes to making a living: "It's like all I've learned is useless, I am useless in a way".

[36] Traditional Inuit wooden sled.

Since the passing down of knowledge has proven difficult so is role modelling. The lack of role models in a person's life was repeated during the interviews as an important impediment to successfully engage in any type of work: wage work or harvesting activities. A young mother in her mid-twenties commented on the lack of role modelling for kids from their parents,

> "If the kids had role models they would have a great future. Instead I don't see much of role modelling but I see a lot of people gambling, drinking, smoking marijuana. I think the parents should be the role model for their kids, but it's not happening enough. It's like parents are lost and don't know what to do with their own life, so kids get stuck like their parents" (Emily, 24 years old).

It has often been mentioned to me that adaptation to drastic changes from the 'traditional way of life' to the 'modern way of life' has been easier for individuals surrounded by role models (Thomsen 1988). One participant pointed out "my mom works and my dad hunts. We have both the money we need, and the country food we like" (Naomi, 22 years old). More importantly in her case, both her parents acted as role models for their kids as Joan, the mother (50 years old) noted "I am proud to be a worker! I can provide for my family and I can be a role model for my girls. They are all working by the way!"

Related to the role modelling challenge, many participants highlighted that kids raised by their grand-parents were more 'resourceful' than those raised by young parents. Indeed, several men and women commented on the importance of elders around an individual in order for this person to be a 'good Inuit':

> I find that people that grew up with their grand-parents they tend to help more people. Like my cousin, he grew with my grandma, she adopted him and she talks a lot about life and how to have a good life and if you help more you will get more and stuff like that so my cousin, he helps a lot and he doesn't do drugs (Joyce, 26 years old).

Therefore, among my participants there seemed to be a common agreement that elders had wisdom and knowledge and were at the centre of Inuit social relations. But participants also agreed that elders did not talk to kids enough. An elderly woman was very critical of the changes occurring in the town and she pointed out that the lack of family structure was part of the problem:

> "All kids want now is freedom. Before they were good but right now kids think that they can do whatever they want. They want freedom. There is a lack of discipline at school, and in the town in general. Many families are split apart and kids have no home

> to learn their role and responsibilities. My grand-kids when they come here it's like the first time they have rules and discipline; I have to teach them, that's what we do the elders" (Ruth, 65 years old).

Cross-generational relationships have been critical for Inuit social organization and socialization although several participants mentioned that there was less interaction with elders than there used to be, especially for men. Indeed, many young and mature women had caregiver responsibilities toward elders, often in the form of helping with housework which resulted in a more constant interaction with them and more knowledge sharing. It appears that men and boys had fewer opportunities to interact with elders. Jason (31 years old) mentioned that every time he harvests country food he would bring some to elders, but that would be only a few times a year.

5.5 Chapter conclusions

In this chapter, I have sought to *provide a deeper understanding of work and labour market dynamics in Nunavut and the related opportunities for Inuit women*. I have illustrated that gender plays a crucial role in understanding the changing labour market in contemporary Nunavut. Three critical points are made. First, that the way Inuit women and men conceptualize work is deeply connected to the Inuit mixed economy where particular economic mechanisms are socially embedded (Natcher 2009). The second point is that socioeconomic and sociocultural factors have favoured women's employment and positioned them at the centre of the production of monetary resources. Changes in the nature of work and patterns of work in the Canadian Arctic have foregrounded 'white-collar' jobs mainly in the tertiary sector, which are typically female-oriented positions. Also, patterns of socialization have prepared girls over boys to participate in the wage economy. Inuit women also tend to show a higher degree of adaptability to the requirements of labour market that was associated to a greater continuity in their gendered roles. Finally, the increase in lone-parent household has created and intensified pressure for women to seek jobs. A key point is that wage employment can be experienced as an obligation by Inuit women as they are perceived as more employable than men.

My analysis reveals that the experiences of Inuit women from Clyde River are not unique, but rather resemble those of other Arctic regions. Indeed, data show that Inuit women's roles in the wage-economy is expanding in most parts of the circumpolar world and that Canada is following the same trend of high level female participation rates, including more stability in

women's work patterns. Women's higher levels of education also suggest that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. The experience of Clyde women informs the 'northern gender gap' (Dybbroe 1988, Rasmussen 2009) and contributes to the understanding of northern development dynamics.

In this chapter I have explored the concept of work and more specifically the gender dynamics in labour markets. In the next chapter (6), I explore the provisioning roles of Inuit women and how kinship and reciprocity are two principles which organize work responsibilities and the redistribution of monetary resources within families.

CHAPTER 6

Women's provisioning responsibilities and modern Inuit subsistence

> Providing for my family is my main responsibility. Providing food, money and shelter is what I do as a woman; that's what all women do. Money is central to this provisioning now as it supports our way of life; our hunting (Sylvia, 50 years old).

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter data are presented on the provisioning responsibilities carried by the twenty-nine (29) women who participated in the study. I use the concept of 'provisioning' to describe the complex web of responsibilities carried by Inuit women in contemporary Clyde River. As noted in Chapter 2, provisioning is understood as a strategy developed by women "to secure the resources to provide the necessities of life to those for whom they have responsibility" (Neysmith et al. 2012: 5). It is not limited to paid-work and therefore directs attention to the purpose of economic activity, connecting and articulating economic and social spheres (Gardiner 1997, Macdonald 1995, Nelson 1998, Power 2004). This chapter intends to answer my second objective: *to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of Inuit mixed economy*.

In Chapter 5, I described how socioeconomic changes in Nunavut have resulted in an increased participation of women in the wage-economy. I showed that this pattern of work is also associated with an earning pattern that is often substantial and more regular than for men.

In this chapter, I explore the relation between work, earning and spending patterns for women participants. I focus mainly on monetary and food resources to describe the extent of women's provisioning. I show that women's provisioning is expanding because of their roles in the wage-economy and their importance as monetary providers. Indeed, by sharing,

redistributing and transferring money, Inuit women are instrumental in securing both traditional and modern resources for their household and beyond. Although food was a major component of female's provisioning responsibilities, research clearly demonstrates that women were not only providing food to their family and relatives, but also other important resources such as money, accommodation, bill payments and hunting gear. I present these elements in this chapter to show the broad provisioning responsibilities of Inuit women.

Several authors have noted that Inuit women were often important monetary providers and that their contribution supports the various needs of households (Chabot 2004, Natcher 2009, Wenzel 2000, Wheelersburg 2008). However, the women's contribution was barely exposed, rather than being the main focus of these studies. Therefore, my intent here is to direct all attention to the roles of women.

My core argument in this chapter is that women's role has expanded over the last decades in relation to their participation in the wage-economy, resulting in an increase in their provisioning responsibilities. More specifically, I argue that through their monetary transfers, women are key assets in the maintenance of harvesting activities and more broadly to Inuit subsistence.

Harvesting is central to Inuit subsistence but, much of this literature has focused on men as it is primarily a male activity. The gendered nature of Inuit and subsistence research has led to a near invisibility of women in this field of inquiry (see for an exception Desbiens 2007, Dowsley 2014, Kuokkanen 2011b). Here, I document the provisioning responsibilities of Clyde River women toward their household and extended family and provide a better understanding of women's contributions to Inuit subsistence.

First, I explore the ways money circulates within participants' family and the related intrahousehold resource allocation patterns (6.2). Second, I focus on money as a core resource produced by women in contemporary Clyde River (6.3). Through the sharing of food and money, I demonstrate that women's provisioning extends far beyond the boundaries of their households (6.3.1) and includes a significant contribution to harvesting activities (6.3.2). Finally, I discuss the importance of women's provisioning role in the maintenance of the Inuit subsistence system

(6.4). I argue that their contribution is critical in connecting land and market economy and understanding of modern Inuit subsistence and adaptation.

6.2 Patterns of allocation: money

Money is an important but scarce resource in contemporary Clyde River, and to make a living Inuit have to find several ways to access it. A typical strategy to satisfy material needs is "the pooling of resources and the combining of various sources of income" (Chabot 2003: 27). Money enters research participants' households in various ways: as wages, as government transfers, as handicrafts' sales and as gifts. Many household members are asked to contribute to this gathering of money (Nuttall 1997). While money comes from various sources it also leaves participants' households in various forms: as payments for household expenditures (food, clothing, bills), as payment on a loan, as a transfer for harvesting activities or as gifts. Almost every household member has needs that nourish this flow of money.

Table 6.1: Living arrangements and income

	Multiple sources of income	Single source of income
Single family household	7	5
Multi-family household	17	0

Living arrangements are important to understand how money enters and leaves households (Table 6.1). The varied structures and household composition in Clyde River as well as in many Nunavut communities, differently impact the flow of money. Among the twenty-nine participant households, only twelve were composed of a single nuclear family and seventeen included multiple nuclear families or a nuclear family and one or more relatives. The more people live in one place without being in a direct relation with parents and/or children, the more incomes are held individually.

According to the 2011 Nunavut Housing Survey, one out of four persons aged 15 and over in Clyde River reported that they were on the waiting list for public housing (Nunavut

Bureau of Statistics 2011). Moreover, forty percent (40%) of dwellings housed temporary residents without a known permanent residency in the twelve months before the time of the survey (Nunavut Bureau of Statistics 2011).

Similarly, over the six months period of the research, nine participants reported changes in their household composition; either themselves or other people moving out or in. For most participants the investigation of their living arrangements since 1995[37] revealed great variation and often a failure to account for all the moves within their house. As Laura said:

> "We used to live with my sister. Me, my husband and our two children and my sister and her boyfriend and their two children. It was a two bedroom apartment. You know my whole family in this small bedroom! We were fighting all the time and me and my husband we almost divorced. It's really hard to get a place of your own, so people come and go, trying to avoid conflict wherever they stay. Some people move all the time until they finally get housing. But if they separate with their partner they come back, then they might leave again to stay for a while with another relative. It means that it's very hard to keep track of where people lived" (Laura, 28 years old).

Living arrangements are important to understand the flow of money. As I show in the following sections, the expectation to provide money depends on with whom one lives. People with wage-income are usually expected to contribute to the whole household and sometimes beyond its boundaries. Consequently, some participants moved from one household to another because they might feel too much pressure to provide in one place and less so in another. For instance, Emily lived with her daughter, her mother and her sister's family. She was the only wage-earner in a household of seven people. When I returned to Clyde River after the summer she was back with her previous boyfriend and had moved to his parents' house:

> "I changed house. I am back with my ex-boyfriend; my daughter's dad. I am not too sure why. Part of it is because I grew up without a father and I didn't want that to happen to my daughter. It was hard growing up without my father. Also, my mother's place was really crowded and everybody was asking for something. Here, at my partner's place I just pay for food but not all the bills and rent and... you know all the things that everyone wants. I wish to have my own place. When we get a place for our own I would like my daughter to move with us, now she is still with my mom. I have been waiting for five years for housing" (Emily, 24 years old).

[37] Living arrangements were investigated through the life history calendar. Participants were asked to draw lines with who they were living and the total of people in their household since 1995. See chapter 4 for all details on how this information was collected.

Emily's situation is not unique. Because she has a full-time well-paid job she is expected to contribute to the household where she lives. But the difference between living with her mother, where she was the only one with a wage, and living at her partner's house, where his mother also had a full-time job, meant that she was not the main provider and was not expected to contribute as much as she did in her mother's household. Her situation is typical of other young females with regular wage income. Because she does not have her own apartment, she has lower expenditures, thus many people come with competing demands.

As many participants noted, money is often difficult to manage and even harder to save. The main reason was that access to money is limited. Indeed, full-time jobs available in northern communities are scarce and occasional jobs do not always provide enough to support all the household's needs. Moreover 60% of Clyde River's population received social assistance at one point in the past decade which means that they have a very limited access to money (see Figure 6.1 on page 152).

Also, individuals who work usually support many relatives not only within their household, often leading to competing demands (Briggs 2000b). A last factor that makes it difficult for many women and men to save money is cultural, and involves the way money is perceived. Most participants viewed money as only having use value and without stored value and therefore did little planning or budgeting[38].

While living arrangements play an important role in determining the provisioning responsibilities of an individual, the main source of income and the strategy used to manage money within a household also influences women's responsibilities. Among all participant households (29), twenty-three (23) relied mostly on wages and six on governmental transfers to make ends meet (Table 6.2).

[38] I discuss in greater detail the gender perspective of money and work in chapter 7.

Table 6.2: Main source of income in participant households

Wage:	**23**
Female Wage	14
Male Wage	6
Both Wage	3
Transfers:	**6**
Social Assistance	3
Old age pension	2
Employment Insurance	1

The way money is managed within households reflects social norms, values and ideologies (Pahl 2008, Zelizer 1994). Patterns of money management include three main categories: the common pool where couples pool all their income together, the partial pool in which couples pool some of their money to pay for collective expenditure and keep the rest to spend as they choose, and the independent management system in which both partners have their own independent income which they keep separate, each having responsibility for different household expenses (Pahl 2008: 580).

My results show that within multiple family households there was no common pool strategy used. In fact, most participants from all ages, gender, working status and level of education perceived that the person who earns the money should have control over it. However, in multi-family households, individuals tend to manage money within their nuclear family using one of the three patterns described previously (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Patterns of money management according to women's providing role, work pattern and age

Patterns of money management	*Providing Role*			Work Pattern				*Age*	
	Woman is main provider	*Woman is not main provider*	*Equal provider*	Full-time position	Part-time position	Unemployed	Not in the labour force	*Average age*	*Median age*
Common pool	*4*	*5*	*1*	4	3	3	0	*42*	*43*
Partial pool	*3*	*3*	*3*	5	2	1	1	*32*	*27*
Independent[39]	*0*	*1*	*1*	1	0	0	1	*37*	*28*
Total	*21*			21					

Patterns of money management show a relatively equal distribution of participants between categories (Table 6.3). Interestingly, neither the provisioning role of women nor her pattern of work influenced the strategy used to manage money. In contrast, age seems to be a factor influencing whether money is pooled all together or kept more individually. While the median age for common pool management strategy is 43, the median age for the two other strategies is the late twenties. It suggests that among older couples more traditional forms of management are followed, compared to younger couple. This finding is consistent with other studies in industrial countries (Pahl 1980, 2008, Vogler and Pahl 1994).

Also, Treas (1993) has shown that the sociocultural context within which families are embedded greatly influences family financial practices. In the context of Inuit mixed economy, it is possible to say that allocation and use of money are subject to internal rules that are distinct from the market (Wenzel 2000, Zelizer 1994). Money does not circulate as other resources and their patterns of allocation are influenced by multiple factors: age, gender, personal and communal priorities. In the following sections I explore how money fulfills multiple purposes for a large number of people.

[39] All women participants who had no partner at the time of the research (n=8) were not included in this table as no information was collected regarding their previous arrangements. All of them would have been included in the independent category.

6.3 Women: monetary producer

There is a link between the way women earn and spend money, and the way men earn and spend theirs. Most female participants are the ones responsible for recurrent payments and spending within the household – payment of bills and rent, purchase of store foods and cash transfers such as family allowance. On the other hand, men are responsible for major expenditures or onetime expenses – snowmobile, oven, fridge, truck and the like. This is true when both the man and the woman have incomes, but what was surprising is that even in cases where neither had jobs, and so received welfare, it was usually women who ended up managing money.

Most basic needs are often accounted for by women in many households; they are often responsible for allocating monetary resources within and outside the household. Also, money produced by women supports harvesting activities and therefore the maintenance of Inuit mixed economy.

In the following sections I present how women use their monetary resources to meet their provisioning responsibilities. I focus on their role in providing basic resources to their household and beyond (6.3.1) and their role in supporting harvesting activities (6.3.2).

6.3.1 Providing Food

Food is not simply a consumer product; it has cultural importance and "serves as an important vehicle in the production of meaning and identity" (Searles 2002: 55, see also Lupton 1996). For most research participants, food conveyed a sense of collective identity, distinct from that of *Qallunaat*. The types of food, the way it was acquired, distributed and eaten are all part of being Inuit. Consequently, being able to provide adequate food to a family was identified by female participants as highly important both for health consideration and sociocultural practice.

Today, Inuit combine country food and store bought food in different proportions according to the availability of local foods and individual preferences. While many men continue to hunt to provide local foods to their family, a large part of food 'production' has shifted into the hands of women who are usually the ones responsible for purchasing it at the store. The consumption of store foods in Nunavut has increased over the last decades due to greater availability (Myers 2008), emerging food preferences, and a decline in the availability of country foods. In most Clyde River households, women are the ones taking local resources or store

products and transforming them into cultural product. Today, access to food is a challenge for many families in Nunavut: high cost and poor quality of store foods, and the limited access to country food have largely been discussed by communities, stakeholders and scholars (Duhaime and Bernard 2008, Gombay 2010, Walker, Kassi and Eamer 2009).

In this research I was interested in understanding the role of women in food provisioning. I focused on store and country foods and on the role of women in the procurement of these foods to their family. Women participants often mentioned that food and feeding their family was their main responsibility: "I have to make sure my family is healthy and this means feeding them with good food" (Joan, 50 years old). Much of Inuit literature on women has emphasized their 'traditional' role as food processors and cooks. In comparison, men have been largely studied in their roles as hunter and food producers. This division, I argue, tends to be changing.

Buying food is a daily activity for many families in Clyde River. Everyday people would go to the store to buy milk, bread or other food they needed. Going to the store was also a daily activity for me as it was a perfect place to meet women. I often discovered that it was a pay-day just by who I would meet at the store and the type of shopping they were doing. For instance, on days where families would receive their welfare and universal child allowance, expenditures at the store were larger. For instance, Sally, one of my informants, was never to be found at the store except when she received her welfare check for herself, her partner and their son. Invariably, she and her partner would go to the store and spend all of it (about 800$) on food on that one day. The rest of the month her mother in-law who had a full-time job and with whom they were living, would buy the food and other staples. As for women with regular income, they would often go to the store everyday according to the number of people coming to eat at their place. Sylvia, who had a full-time and well-paid job, did most of her grocery shopping just before lunch when she had a better idea of how many of her children and grand-children would come over to eat. She often spent over 100$ every day just for lunch.

Interestingly, in twenty-four (24) participant households (82%), buying food from the store is in the responsibility of one or more women, and in five (5) households (18%) the responsibility was shared between a man and a woman (usually a couple). Two reasons were given by participants to explain this situation. First, the responsibility to buy food follows from the responsibility to prepare meals. Indeed, most female participants stated that they were the one

responsible to buy food because they were the one cooking meals. So, it was assumed that they knew better what was needed and that it was a 'natural' responsibility for women to buy the food as they were the ones making decisions around food consumption. In most households, people also agreed that women make 'better' decisions in terms of quality of the food bought than men. Betty gives a strong statement about this:

> "The difference between men and women about food is large! 'Cause the men they don't usually go to the store to buy food and so they are very confused if they have to do it. Like my mother's boyfriend when he had a job he tried to go to Northern store on his own but he didn't know how to buy food or what to buy... like he is not used to do that. He would buy macaroni but nothing to make a sauce or the sauce but no pasta. Or come back with chocolate milk for kids and told my mom he was done with "trying to think about what to eat". You know what I mean?! It's women who are responsible for foods!!" (Betty, 23 years old).

The case described by Betty is not surprising. As shown in Chapter 5, for most women, food was highly important in their conceptualization of work and cooking and feeding a family were described as key elements of their provisioning responsibilities. Therefore, most female participants expressed strong commitment to their role as food providers and how it shaped their identity as woman: "We feed our families. That's what we do, what we have been doing for centuries; that's what a woman does: feeding a family" (Ruth, 65 years old).

The second reason that explains the larger proportion of women responsible for buying food was related to their earning patterns. Indeed, because women had more regular incomes they were usually the ones responsible for making recurrent payments, such as for food. In households where women had permanent jobs and consistent earnings, they were usually the ones responsible for regular payments such as bills, rent, groceries. Men, on the other hand, had more occasional jobs and fluctuating earnings and were involved in occasional spendings such as – buying a snowmobile, large items of furniture and hunting material. Patterns of earning were correlated with gendered patterns of spending.

Also, in households where a woman was the main monetary provider the amount of money spent on food was higher than when the woman was equal provider or not the main provider. Table 6.4 shows the relation between the provider role and the average amount of money spent on store food per week. The difference between women under or over 30 years old is not very significant compared to the difference according to their providing role.

Table 6.4: Average money spent on food per week according to woman's providing role

	Average money ($) spent on food /week
Woman is main monetary provider (n=12)	619,6
Woman is not main monetary provider (n=12)	291,7
Woman is equal monetary provider (n=5)	453,8
Woman is 30 and under (n=15)	446,1
Woman is over 30 (n=14)	570,5
Total household average	506,1

This data shows that women play an important role in the provisioning of store food for their household. When they are the main monetary providers, their spending on food increases significantly. The main reason given by participants was related to their social positioning within their extended-family. Indeed, among the twelve women considered main providers, seven were over 40 years old and had grandchildren as well as children and therefore provided beyond the boundaries of their household in various ways.

While women participants were highly involved in the provisioning of food for their household, they were also responsible for securing food and other basic resources for close relatives living outside her household – usually children, siblings or parents. Indeed, although the primary use for store food was within household consumption, to a certain extent these foods were also shared. Three strategies were used by women to share store food: give away store foods, share a store account and host meals.

6.3.1.1 Giving food away

During the project, twelve female participants reported transferring money to people outside her household on a regular basis, eight transferred store food and three paid bills for people outside their household (Table 6.5). However, among those who regularly transferred resources, almost all of them were full-time workers and only two transfers were done by a part-time worker. Not surprisingly, no unemployed or otherwise outside the labour force women did any regular transfers. However, the interviews also revealed that a woman whose partner was a full-time worker did not make regular transfers nor did her partner. So, this suggests that regular transfers that involve money were mainly done by women, and that those who can 'afford' to do it are those with substantial income.

Furthermore, as soon as women in Clyde River were full-time employed, their chances to be involved in direct transfers to a relative outside their household were high – eleven women out of fourteen for money, seven for food and three for payments of bills.

Table 6.5: Regular transfers of resources to relatives outside female participants' household

	Regular Transfers		
	Money	Food	Payment-Bills
All Female Participants (n=29)	**12**	**8**	**3**
Full-time worker (n=14)	11	7	3
Part-time worker (n=6)	1	1	0
Unemployed and not in the labour force (n=9)	0	0	0

Store food was usually given away to close relatives, children living outside their parents' household, parents or siblings:

> "When I get my income support or get paid for my work at the jail, I usually buy for two houses; for my mom and myself. I used to live with her but lots of people in the house. So, I buy food for my mom and I bring it to her place. Every time I get money I usually buy for two houses. I care for my mother... I bring her food almost every week and sometimes I give her some money... like every time I get money I usually buy her foods they got three kids too and she lives with her boyfriend and he doesn't work, he is only a hunter" (Betty, 23 years old).

> "This week on my diary it wasn't a regular week because usually I make more expenses. I would usually spend more than 1100$ per week on grocery… like up to

> 1800$ sometimes. Yah, it's a lot, because this food is for my household and to my other daughter's household. I always give them food. They are not working so I need to help them with their kids and all that" (Beatrice, 52 years old).

Many participants in their economic diaries or during interviews reported 'giving store food' after being asked for money. One woman explains to me that when she would receive her paycheck she would regularly receive phone calls or people directly asking to borrow money. When those demands came from non-relatives, women systematically responded negatively and often reported offering food as opposed to cash. One of the reasons was that they wanted to make sure that the money was not used to buy drugs, alcohol or cigarettes, but also because "sharing food is what we do us Inuit" (Rose, 42 years old). Many participants mentioned that it was almost impossible to say no to demands about sharing food, compared to money.

In contemporary Clyde, the 'impossibility' to say no to food requests also leads to situations where more fortunate people in position of little cultural authority and power see their house invaded by people with needs. Betty tells this story of her partner's brother and his wife and children coming to their house 'to visit' a few times a week just to eat:

> "They would come in the house and help themselves in the fridge. Sometimes they would start cooking a whole meal from our food. Most of the time it happens when my partner is out hunting. I don't mind sharing but I don't agree with this because we never go to their place because there is never anything to eat" (Betty, 23 years old).

Many female participants also mentioned receiving requests for food from non- related people on a regular basis. Women with a regular job were particularly targeted, as people knew their pay-day and when to come and ask for food or money.

Most participants responded to food requests and gave away food to these households. For example, Maria wrote in her diary that someone on the radio was asking for food for her kids, so she sent her some macaroni. Another woman mentioned that at the end of the month – just before the social assistance payment - she would receive many phone calls every day from people that had no more money to buy food for their family: "I always say yes, because food is food. I mean food is very important and everybody should eat, no one should keep food away. We are Inuit, we share food, that's what we do" (Susan, 55 years old). Many women in their diaries mentioned having given food – usually store food – to people in needs asking either directly or through the radio. When questioned about those transfers women mentioned being

uncomfortable in giving money to people that were not their relatives, but that they still feel 'obligated' to help them somehow. Similar situations happened with some women who maintained a difficult relationship with either a grown-up child or a sibling, knowing that they needed staples. Women would usually prefer giving food instead of any cash or payments in order to make sure that the resources were used 'properly'.

6.3.1.2 Sharing a store account

The second strategy used by women to share store food was sharing their store account. Many individuals in Clyde River have an account at the Northern Store so that they can charge on that account and pay it back later. It is often used to buy large furniture or material such as couches, appliances, snowmobile, etc. With such an account it is possible to designate other people that can charge on that account. A few women mentioned using this strategy to help other relatives. In all cases, women let only close relatives charge on their account.

Janet, a 28 year old woman, used that strategy to support her family. She was living with her parents and her two brothers and she was the only one with a job, all others received welfare. She had no children of her own and no boyfriend and was working full-time as a heavy equipment operator over the summer and full-time at the Piqqusilirivvik (Inuit cultural learning facility) during the year: "When I am back in town I pay bills, buy food and pay back my store account. So my family can use my account to buy food when I am away and I just have to repay the account after". Other full-time employed women mentioned using this same strategy for their mother:

> "I used to pay for my mother's Northern account. She is not working, my dad is the one who's working and I would pay for her account when she has some in her account... maybe three times a year. She never asked me, I just did it, because... because that's what I felt I had to do. Like, it's just to help out as she has no income of her own" (Fanny, 28 years old).

6.3.1.3 Hosting meals

The third strategy used by women to share store foods in Clyde River is through hosted meals. Damas (1972: 226) has described communal eating as an important system of food sharing. Harder and Wenzel (2012) have recently found that hosting meals was frequently practiced to redistribute food (mostly country food) in contemporary Clyde River. While traditionally the extended family would share meals exclusively of harvested foods on a daily basis, today it often consists of a mix of country and store foods. The frequency and composition of the meals varied widely depending on the availability and access to country foods, the preference of individuals, their financial means and their social connections. Generally, children would go to their parents' house to have lunch or dinner (or both) or just visit in the evening and have 'snacks'.

Table 6.6: Frequency of hosted meals by female participants according to their age and provisioning role

Host meals:	Total Participants	Average age	Median age	Main provider (n=12)	Equal provider (n=5)	Not main provider (n=12)	Average $/week on food
Frequently (more than 3/week)	9	45	45	5	1	3	697,1
Regularly (at least once a week)	6	37	36	1	2	3	569,3
Occasionally (less than once a week)	14	32	28	6	2	6	398,9

Table 6.6 shows no significant correlation between women's provisioning role and the frequency of hosted meals. However, it suggests a relationship between the frequency of hosting meals and the age of the participants. Indeed, those who host meals only occasionally are younger women (median age 28). Women who host meals regularly are in their mid-thirties, while those who host meals frequently are in their mid-forties[40].

Women who had children living in the community but outside their household were the ones reporting the highest level of hosted meals. Among those who hosted meals frequently

[40] In fact, among the nine women who reported hosting meals frequently, two women were young and lived with their parents who hosted meals for their siblings. So, if their age is not considered, the average for those who host meal frequently is 51 year old.

(n=9), 6 reported hosting meals on a daily basis. This result is not surprising as Inuit usually gather at their parent's place to eat. Therefore, this suggests the maintenance of sociocultural patterns of food consumption:

> "Yah, I host meals for my family. Like every day my kids come to my place to eat, and my sister and my partner's family. Every day! Like my kids and my partner's family on one day and next day my family and kids... they've been doing that for years... like nine people eat every day at my place...that's a lot and that's why there is a lot of expenditures in the diary!" (Rose, 42 years old).

> "All the grocery mentioned in the diary is for the household only, I don't really give food away but I host meals. Mostly every day there are extra people eating at our place, maybe an extra of six to eight people, they come over to eat for lunch. It's mostly for the family, like our children. Sometimes we might ask his siblings or my parents or his step-mom to join us, a couple times a week, maybe" (Sylvia, 50 years old).

This situation is reflected in the diaries filled by participants. Women who hosted meals frequently reported significantly higher spending on food per week (697$) than those hosting meal only occasionally (399$) (Table 6.6).

Although these data show that store foods are shared, it also shows that they are not shared the same way as country foods. The practice of pooling together the products of a hunt does not apply to store food. One woman explained that it is because store foods are not "real foods" (Inuit foods) and do not necessitate following Inuit redistribution mechanisms: so, no systematic pooling of store food at one place. However, I observed on many occasions women gathering to their parents place and bringing store food: cakes or pies that they had baked, packs of cookies for the children, cans of pop, bags of fries, boxes of cereals, etc. Invariably, those gifts were meant for immediate use by the people gathering. On one Sunday I spent the whole afternoon and evening at Ruth's house; she is retired and has ten children and over forty grand and great-grandchildren. Two daughters in-law arrived with cakes they had just baked. Three others brought snacks for the kids – chips, cookies, candies and chocolate bars. One daughter arrived with packed pizza and put it in the oven to bake. Another daughter had stopped at the store to buy juice boxes for the kids. Ruth had cooked a large stew of seal meat and two packs of bacon. Coffee and tea were brewed continuously over the day while people came in and out. There was also pieces of *maktaaq* available and fish waiting to be fried (I heard later that it was fried later in the night when I was gone).

Another similar event happened when I was visiting Betty who lives with her partner and his grand-parents. Their house is always full of visitors coming to eat mostly country foods made available by Betty's partner. One day, one relative from Iqaluit was visiting them for a week. The day she arrived she bought a large amount of groceries for the family and left them on the kitchen floor for anyone to consume. Betty explained to me that her sister in-law visited a couple times a year and missed the country food cooked by her mother so much that she would buy food at the store to contribute to the food in the household.

Overall, all research participants consumed store foods on a regular basis and at some point were either receiving or sharing it. The actual proportion of store food consumed by each participant varied widely, but most mentioned that store food was their main food most of the time over the year.

Data presented above show that women in Clyde River are highly involved in buying and sharing store food within and outside their household. Three main strategies have been developed by Inuit women to secure appropriate food to their own households and beyond their household: giving food, sharing a store account and hosting meals. They allow women from Clyde River to provide for those for whom they have responsibility. Interestingly, the strategies privileged often correspond to their social positioning within their family. Indeed, mature women, often head of their household, provided food through prepared meals while younger women were more involved in direct gifting of food or payments on an account.

6.3.2 Providing money

Sharing money was an important topic discussed during the project. Eight women reported transferring money to people outside their household on a regular basis. More significantly, seven of these women were full-time employed and only one) was a part-time worker. Most of these cash transfers were meant to support close relatives that had limited access to money. Indeed, women reported transferring money to children living outside their household because they had either no or a low paid job. These forms of transfer were described as allowances by female participants and were never expected to be returned. According to Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, 68% of people in Clyde River received welfare at one point during 2012 – the year when most of the data for this project were collected. Considering the high percentage of population receiving social assistance and the low median employment income in Clyde

River, compared to Nunavut (Figure 6.1), it is very likely that a large proportion of people have great needs.

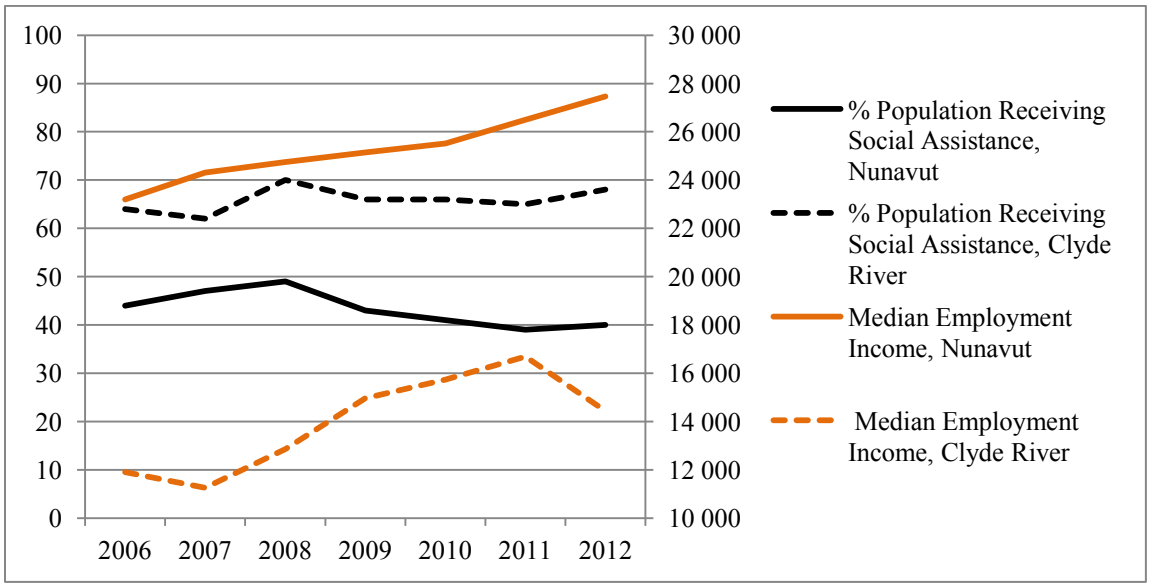

Figure 6.1: Percentage of total population receiving Nunavut Social Assistance and median income for Nunavut and Clyde River, 2006-2012
Source: Author's compilations and calculations, Nunavut Bureau of Statistics (2012, 2014b, 2014c)

Demands for money often resulted in sharing of food instead. Over the economic diaries filled by female participants, there were two reports of sharing store food after hearing someone on the radio asking for money. Two other women mentioned receiving regular calls from their children to give them food – or money for food. Finally, many participants also reported receiving phone calls from non-related people, colleagues or anyone asking for food. In those cases described as 'desperate', addiction problems were often involved and had affected redistribution mechanisms. Demands from relatives were notably more complicated to deal with than those from non-related individuals.

Also, almost all women gave a small allowance to their school-age children to buy 'snacks' during recess. Interestingly, women failed to mention these small allowances in their economic diaries and it was during interviews that it came out. Most of them did not think about

writing it in their diary "because it's such a small amount". These amounts ranged from 5$ to 40$ per day.

Another form of money transfer was to momentarily support a sibling who needed cash. In those cases, money was usually expected to be returned. Only rarely did women transfer money to non-related individuals without expectation of reimbursement.

Overall, it appears that when money was transferred to a close relative and that a relationship of authority was involved, in which the receiver was in the genealogically superior position, it usually resulted in no obligation of returning the money. For instance, women transferring money to their parents usually stated that it was a gift. Women who regularly supported their children's household also stated that "this money is to help them, they don't have to pay me back, they are my children" (Susan, 55 years old).

Similarly, many women paid bills for relatives:

> "Ya I am planning to help her by sending her some money over the year... I didn't think of that before Wesley told me... he called my nephew, Neil, he told him that he is having Pogo[41] now can you have Pogo with me through the phone, than after the phone call Wesley told me, Neel doesn't have Pogo at home, so I told him, I'll send them some money so he can buy Pogo... And I want him to be like that" (Fanny, 28 years old).

Many times I ran into women at the store waiting to pay bills. I got used to this being women's role, as in many household women are the ones responsible for recurrent payments. However, it appeared normal to see them *occasionally* waiting to pay bills, but at one point I started noticing that some women were *frequently* waiting to pay bills! One day I asked Beatrice (52 years old) why she was here to pay a bill when she did so yesterday – did she forget about one bill? She smiled at me and waved her eyebrows "I've got kids don't you know?" Later she explained to me that a few times a year she would pay her son's phone bill "to help him". Although, she noted that there was no explicit request to do so, she felt she *had* to do it. She described the 'pressure' to help her son as "her responsibility as his mother".

'Helping' children by providing financial support was a common theme among female participants. The proportion of the contribution and its frequency depend on the situation of the woman and that of her children. For instance, women with well-paid positions were contributing

[41] Pogo is a brand of sausage coated in a thick layer of cornmeal batter a stick.

more frequently and more substantially to their children's households than those with limited income. Susan (55 years old) notes that although she did not mind paying her children's bills (in her case it was on a monthly basis), she sometimes felt very stressed about not being able to pay her own bills. In spite of her well-paid permanent position she never was able to save and was often stressed about not being able to pay her own recurrent obligations.

On the other hand, women with limited income were rarely asked to contribute outside their household. But whatever their financial situation, women were usually the ones expected to pay bills within the household as it was perceived as a female responsibility to maintain the household.

6.3.3 Providing for harvesting activities

Numerous scholars have demonstrated that traditional food production has become increasingly expensive because it relies on imported mechanized equipment and hydrocarbon fuels that both represent a substantial monetary investment in the Arctic (see Müller-Wille 1978, Quigley and McBride 1987, Usher 1976, Wenzel 2000). Similarly, various studies have highlighted the connection between household level of cash production and level of food production (Alton-Mackey and Orr 1985, Condon et al. 1995, Duhaime, Chabot and Gaudreault 2002, Smith and Wright 1989). If access to sufficient money has a direct influence on harvesting productivity, the dilemma between employment and harvesting is also considerable. On one hand, access to money is critical to harvest wild food; on the other hand, wage-employment is time consuming and limits the possibility of harvesting (Ford et al. 2008, Natcher 2009, Wenzel 1991, Wenzel et al. 2000a).

Over time, this situation has created an increasing pressure on those who have wage incomes and, as Wenzel (2000) suggested, especially when these persons are in a subordinate gender/genealogical position, like young women. The economic importance of women in the hunting economy has long been demonstrated (Giffen 1930). However, much of their responsibilities as represented in the literature, refers to their role in food processing, clothing manufacture, and care for the camp and therefore does not reflect their modern contribution. In contemporary Clyde River Inuit women hunt, fish and gather to different intensity at different period of the year, but their contribution often includes financial support towards harvesting activities.

Indeed, among all participants, seventeen women mentioned that they had supported harvesting activities over the previous year and twelve women had not supported anyone over the last year (Figure 6.2). Among those who did not support any harvesting activities over the last year, four had done so the year before when they had access to more income. Also, another three women stated that they would like to support their spouse if he would hunt.

Different forms of support were described by women, ranging from occasional gifts or cash transfers, to regular and substantial cash transfers and expensive gifts. The nature of the support and the frequency depended on multiple factors. The woman's wage was the most important factor influencing how she would support harvesting activities. A second factor was the positionality with a hunter. The overall financial situation of both the woman and the hunter was a third factor that influenced the support provided by women.

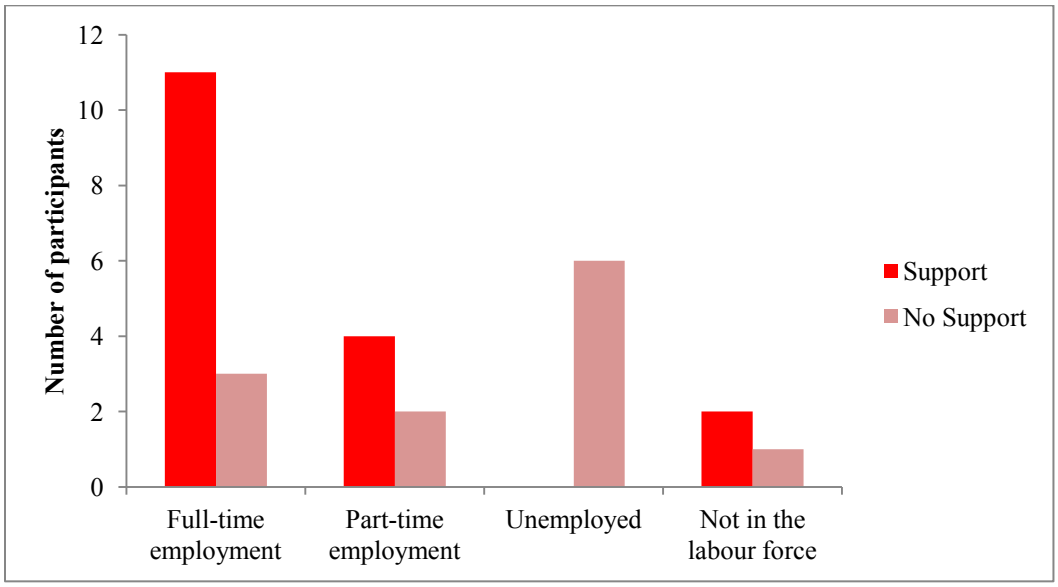

Figure 6.2: Number of female participants monetary supporting or not harvesting activities according to their patterns of work during 2012

Not surprisingly, full-time and part-time employed women were more frequently involved in supporting harvesting activities. Indeed, eleven out of fourteen women who hold full-time wage employment provided the monetary resources needed for their husbands, sons, brothers, or fathers to harvest country food for their family and extended family. While four

women employed part-time provided financial support, no unemployed women did. Also, two women that were not in the labour force at the time of the research supported harvesting activities; one of whom is retired but still has access to significant income and a young college student who uses her student stipend to pay gas for her partner's hunting. Among the seventeen women who supported someone over the last two years, twelve supported their partner, five their son, four a relative and one her father. Also, fifteen women undertook harvesting activities that they financed themselves.

If only women with wage-income are considered, the percentage of those supporting one harvester or more increases. Figure 6.3 shows that 20% of women with wage income supported one harvester (usually their spouse), 55% supported more than one hunter (typically their spouse and a son or father) and 25% did not support anyone over the last year.

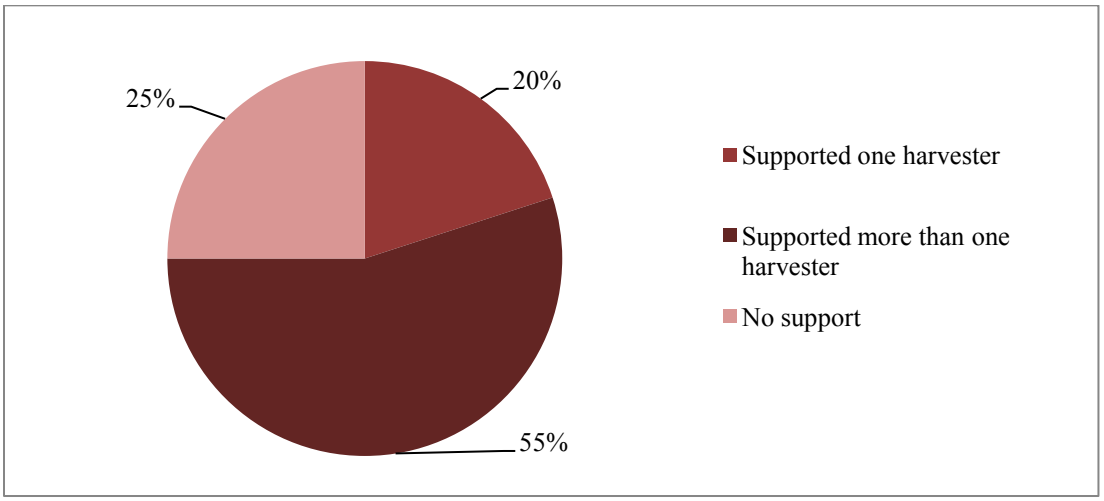

Figure 6.3: Percentage of women with wage income supporting one, multiple or no harvester during 2012

A common form of support provided by women was to buy gas and food for hunting trips in which women sometimes participate. Sylvia's diaries spoke particularly well of this situation as every weekend she and her family usually went to their cabin for hunting, fishing, gathering or just to relax. Every Friday, in preparation for their trip, she would record in her diary the gas and 'camp food' expenditures or cash transfers to her husband so he could purchase what was

needed. Another example of this situation comes from a young woman (Janet) who lives with her parents and brothers and is the only wage-earner in the household. She likes to hunt and fish and would go with her father or grand-father every time the weather was good; most of the financial investment for each trip was made by her. She also owns the snowmobile they use to go on the land and pays to fix it when it is broken. Because Janet is a full-time worker she lent her snowmobile to her father and brother when they would go hunting during her working hours. Other women also mentioned buying gas for relatives going caribou hunting which is usually a much longer trip and therefore much more expensive. One woman noted that: "I love caribou meat so much, so I gave him some gas money and just hope that they catch some caribou this year" (Naomi, 22 years old). In her case, she did not report any regular support to harvesting activities, rather she provided for some specific trips that she mentioned during the interviews.

Some women also provided large and expensive equipment or parts such as rifles, a snowmobile, an engine or a boat. Those involved in such expenditures and transfers were all full-time and well-paid workers. For instance, Laura is a young woman full-time employed and her partner is a dedicated and successful hunter:

> "I just bought a second hand Honda for 2000$ from someone in the community. And this summer I also bought a rifle, second hand too, for my husband to hunt. It was 1000$ and it included ammunitions. Now I am trying to save for a truck! I think if men are real hunter, like hunting regularly, I agree with women working and men hunting. I like my situation, especially 'cause I always want country food so it's ok for me if he hunts and I work" (Laura, 28 years old).

A few women with regular and substantial wages were asked to get loans from the store under their name to buy big piece of equipment because they were solvent. In many cases women participated in reimbursing the loan and a few times ended up paying most of it. Fanny (28 years old), for instance, contracted a loan of 60,000$ for her partner to buy a boat as his job at that time was not permanent and hers was. Most of the payments were done by her partner.

Some other women like Beatrice, made regular transfers of cash to her partner so he would buy his own equipment:

> "My husband is unemployed right now, but he was an occasional worker a few years ago and sometimes he works here and there, just sometimes. But he hunts a lot, not every day, it depends on the weather and if his ski-doo is working. It's broken right now. He hunts caribou, seal… everything… We usually always have country food in

> our house. Mostly every day we eat country food. And most of it comes from my husband and me, but me it's fishing only 'cause I don't hunt. The way we do it is that I pay all the bills and rent and for the food too. I also give money to my husband when he has to buy some gas or hunting material. Every paycheck I usually transfer 300$ in his bank account so he can buy his hunting gear. But I am the one responsible for buying any material in this house! I bought the two ski-doos that we have!" (Beatrice, 52 years old).

The most common form of support provided by women participants was to take all or most financial responsibilities of their household upon themselves so that their partner could use his income to buy what he needs for hunting and fishing. This support was often not noticed or mentioned by participants; rather it was discovered when reviewing economic diaries. Indeed, most women assumed the responsibility to pay bills and rent and bought food without noticing how this division of financial responsibility allowed their partner to use his income for harvesting purpose. Maria summarizes this situation:

> "Financially women and men have different responsibilities; same for me when my husband was alive. It's normal to me that men don't pay bills. But lots of women complain to me about that. Like men are spending their money on ski-doo, a rifle, gas, everything that concerns hunting... but not for bills... some men buy food... but they hardly pay for bills. Some women are frustrated about that" (Maria, 56 years old).

Financial responsibilities are not similar in every participating household, but when men had incomes of their own they were usually responsible for buying their hunting gear and equipment. As I showed in Chapter 5 (figure 5.8), men tend to work in occasional jobs which means that they have access to monetary resources, albeit not on a regular basis. In many participant households, men used their occasional wage income to buy their hunting equipment while their partner was responsible for purchasing staples. This seems to be in continuity with other studies conducted in the Canadian Arctic (Hobart 1981, 1982, Stabler 1989).

An important reason given by women to support harvesting activities was to access country food. Indeed, many women mentioned how hard it was to access traditional foods, especially for those without a hunter in their household or a close relative – usually a father or a son. Figure 6.4 suggests that there is a relationship between supporting harvesting activities and eating country food more frequently.

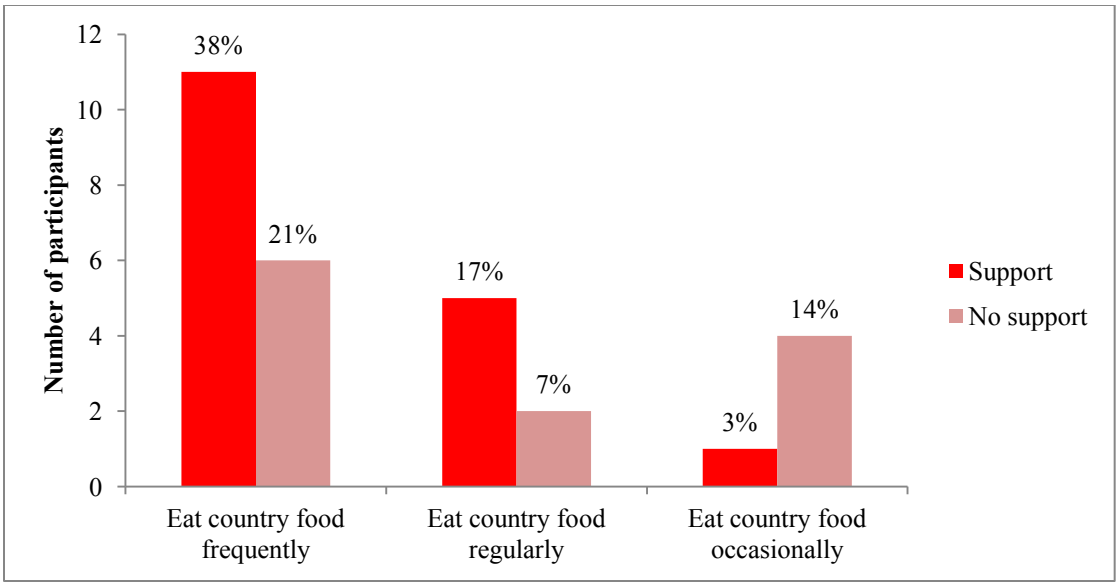

Figure 6.4: Frequency of country food consumption for women participants according to their financial support to harvesting activities[42]

While 38% of women supported harvesting activities and frequently ate country food, only 3% supported harvesting activities and ate only occasionally. Also, most women who reported eating country food only occasionally were those that provided no financial support to harvesting activities. However, it is interesting to note that 59% of all women participants reported eating country food frequently, of which 38% supported and 21% did not provide support.

Although these data show a relationship between supporting harvesting activities and eating country food more frequently, it also shows that those providing no support can also frequently eat country food. Indeed, six women (21%) reported eating country food frequently while not providing financial support to any harvester. This suggests that beyond the importance of money in the procurement of country food, redistribution mechanisms are still effective.

Another proof of the continuity of sharing practices is the way women accessed their country food. Indeed, Figure 6.5 shows no strong difference in the way they access country food for those who eat it frequently or regularly. It suggests that eating country food frequently or

[42] Eating country food frequently referred to more than three times a week. Eating country food regularly meant at least once a week and eating country food occasionally less than once a week.

regularly is associated with access within the extended family – from a partner, a parent or other relative[43]. However, those who eat country food only occasionally have a more limited access – parents or radio announcements. Access through radio is also associated only with occasional eating and was described by participants as a last resort. Overall, women who mentioned accessing country food mainly through radio were those with few relatives in the community – either because they had immigrated to the community or because many of their family members had emigrated elsewhere, and women isolated from their family for social reasons – often because of addiction problems.

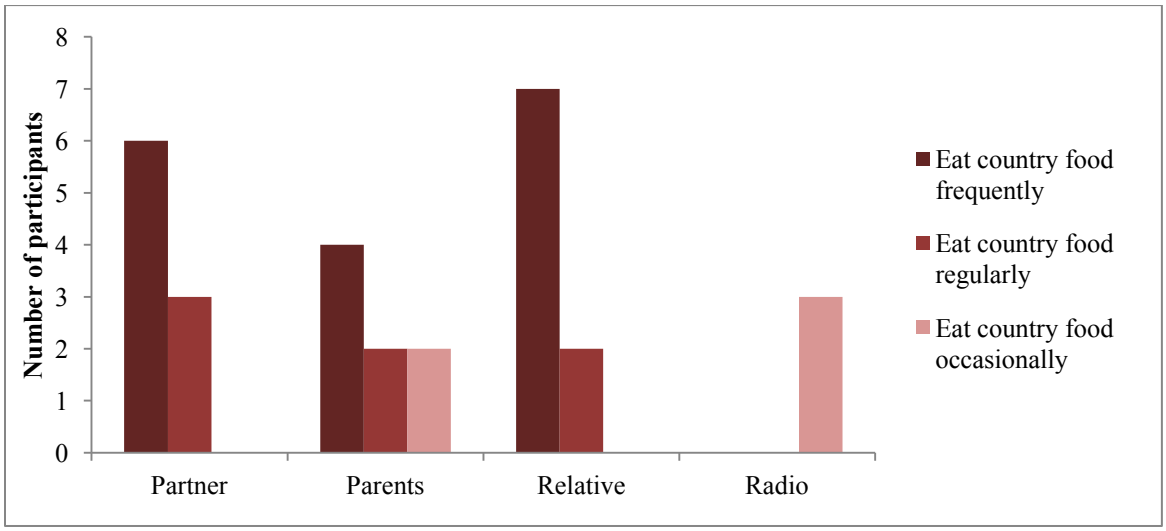

Figure 6.5: Main access to country food for women participants according to their consumption frequency

Sharing mechanisms are still important in Clyde River in order to access country food (Harder and Wenzel 2012). Table 6.8 shows that having a partner who hunts full-time ensures access to country food most likely frequently or regularly. Conversely, eating country food frequently is not affected by the presence or lack of a hunting partner; in fact most women who eat country food frequently had a partner that did not hunt or had no partner. Overall, it might also suggest that sharing mechanisms are effective.

[43] Relatives include: children, children's partner, siblings and uncles.

Table 6.7: Frequency of country food consumption for women participants according to their partner's hunting practices

	Average age	Median age	Partner is an active hunter	Partner is an occasional hunter	Partner does not hunt or no partner
Eat country food frequently	**38**	**40**	**7**	**2**	**8**
Eat country food regularly	**37**	**36**	**3**	**2**	**2**
Eat country food occasionally	**32**	**27**	**0**	**2**	**3**

The desire to eat country food more frequently was often mentioned by women of all ages during the interviews. Interestingly, although my data suggest that there is a correlation between the age of participants and how frequently they eat country food, during interviews younger women complained about the difficulty of accessing country food. Most of them would have liked to eat it more frequently, which suggests that being younger might affect access to food. One evidence for that is suggested by Condon et al. (1995) who found that men tend to engage more actively in subsistence later in their life. This delayed age of 'productivity' could explain why younger women (usually in a relationship with a young man) have more difficulty accessing country food.

Joyce describes her situation:

> "I wish he hunted, 'cause I like country food and my daughter loves country food. Sometimes I tell him that I am 'dumb' I had to pick a person that doesn't hunt... It's hard 'cause I get my country food at my parents' place, my dad is a good hunter. But what then, what after? When my dad will not be there, where will I get it? I am not sure. I think what is hard now it's that there is less hunters" (Joyce, 26 years old).

Elizabeth (20 years old) also made an interesting observation when I met with her for the second part of the project. Previously, she lived with her adoptive parents (her biological grand-parents) and she would eat country food frequently as her dad was an active hunter. When I came back to the community after the summer she had moved to her uncle's place where she felt she had more personal space. Interestingly, the first thing she mentioned, when I asked her how it was living there, was that they never ate country food, although her uncle was an active hunter.

But because he brought all his catches to his parents and parents' in-law, they never had country food in the house and his girlfriend did not cook any. So, Elizabeth would go frequently to her parents' place to eat the food harvested by her father although she did not live there anymore.

This situation is not surprising as most of the country food is usually eaten at the *ilagiit* house. What is very interesting in her situation is that when I came back to the community a year later (during summer 2013) she had moved to her boyfriend's parents' place "because they eat country food there and not just junk". Although her living situation was completely different – she had adopted a baby with her partner and they were all living at his parents' place with another five people in a two bedroom house – the food she could access was one of her first reason for moving. She was also very proud that her partner was hunting and working part-time; which was described as the ideal situation by most women participants.

Overall, the consumption of country food varied widely depending on the person's social access. The vast majority of participants stated that they would eat more country food if they had access to more. Therefore, country food consumption patterns were closely related to social linkage. As one female participant stated "when we have nothing else we eat store food, it's not as healthy but it's good sometimes" (Lisa, 40 years old).

6.4 Provisioning responsibilities: subsistence relations and mixed economy adaptation

The provisioning responsibilities carried by Clyde River women are complex. In the previous sections I have explored the great diversity of resources that women provide for those for whom they have responsibility for. By focusing on money, I showed that women provide for basic needs – shelter, clothing and food – in their household and beyond. The magnitude of their provisioning is highly dependent on their wage and the overall needs of their relatives. What my results show is that most women with wage income provide resources for relatives living outside their household on a regular basis.

Increasingly across the Arctic, women are becoming the main monetary providers for their households (Gerber 1990, 2014, Hamilton and Seyfrit 1994a, Hovelsrud et al. 2011, Kuokkanen 2011b, Poppel et al. 2007). In Nunavut, this situation is fairly new. In the 1980s and early 1990s, most jobs were held by men and men's hunting practices also provided another

source of income. This shift to female wage-earners has resulted, in many participants' households, to an economic model in which female = wage-earner and male = hunter.

While many studies have demonstrated that households with greater access to wage earnings produce, distribute and consume more wild foods (Chabot 2003, Wheelersburg 2008), the female/male model can be seen as a strategy that is both culturally and economically relevant. Indeed, contemporary harvesting dynamics have become more complex because they require two resources that are hard to combine: time and money. Hunters are dependent on and constrained by wage employment needs. For men to engage in the wage economy has a deleterious impact on the time available to actually hunt (Wenzel 1991); without sufficient money, harvesting is at best occasional. This dilemma is a reason for why many male participants choose to engage in occasional and seasonal wage-work rather than full-time employment (Chapter 5). Therefore, the financial contribution of a female kin person appears to be an ideal situation both economically and culturally.

My results show that women from Clyde River who engage in wage-employment make direct and indirect contributions to their spouse, children or other relatives' harvesting activities. In many households, the maintenance of land-related activities has been made possible because of female financial contribution. On one hand they provide the cash for more orthodox provisioning and on the other they facilitate others to continue subsistence activities; securing both traditional and modern resources. With women engaging in wage-work and sharing their income among kinsmen in support of harvesting activities, subsistence's cultural norms are maintained.

Among female participants, many agreed that this model was a perfect division of roles, especially if men could engage in part-time, occasional or seasonal employment. Joan is a strong advocate for this model as she herself is a full-time well-paid worker and her husband a successful hunter:

> Ya sure! That would work well. In fact, it does work well for us, because I get the food I want, the land food I love, I get them because he can go, he has the time to go. It is a good division of work and more people should have this division. That division would be very very good, economically too, it would save on buying store bought food because they are very very expensive. I know the tools for hunting are too, but in the

> long run you get your meat which is better quality and more energy and better overall... and not as expensive... (Joan, early 50 years old).

This division of roles was often described by women as optimal in order to access country food which was often mentioned as being harder to obtain these days. The desire to maintain Inuit specific cultural practices was also mentioned by women. Janet, single at the time of the research, gave a strong statement about the necessity for a man and a woman to work as a team. When she was asked whether she would prefer to be in a relationship with a hunter or a wage-earner, she first said that he could be both, part-time worker and hunter, which was the very common answer among all female participants. She hesitated a while before continuing:

> If he shares the meat with the family and the people in the community, I think it's fair and I would agree to support him... 'cause, nowadays, not every hunter shares, I mean not only with the family but with others too. It's hard because there is lots of people who want country food and not so many hunters (Janet, 28 years old).

If this model of one wage-earner and one hunter is ideal to sustain local production and sociocultural norms, it has to be balanced between spouses:

> Men hunters and women workers.... hum I don't know. Some parts of me agree with it. In my situation, he hunts and sometimes does occasional jobs and I work full-time and it works perfectly, especially 'cause I always want country food so much! So, it's ok for me if he hunts and I work. But I often see that a lot of women are working and their spouse is not doing anything... Like you know not all men are hunters, so if they don't hunt they should work (Laura, 28 years old).

Women's monetary transfers position them at the centre of food production. In many households in Clyde River, men's hunting, and by extension Inuit traditional food security, is highly dependent on women's participation in the wage-economy. While perception of the contribution of Inuit women to subsistence has long been limited to their domestic roles and the gathering of plant resources, the data presented in this chapter suggests that their roles in modern subsistence has expanded. Indeed, socioeconomic changes in Nunavut have made women's roles in modern subsistence practice much more than a matter of simple 'complementary' contribution.

This also suggests that modern Inuit subsistence is articulated around a new gender dynamic. Historically, Inuit economic relations were organized along kinship principles and generational, age and gender positionality in which women ascribed less power, being both subordinated and obligated to men (Damas 1963, 1969, 1975, Wenzel 1995). This system provided the basis for resource production, distribution and consumption, and thus regulated the sharing of food and organized economic life. Today, the essential economic contribution of women challenges this social configuration as they have become instrumental in the maintenance of Inuit subsistence practice.

Furthermore, women's enlarged contribution also suggests that there are misleading interpretations of statistics when it is stated that Inuit women have become less active than men in the land economy. Statistics from the Canadian and Nunavut governments often show a significant decrease in female participation in land related activities. However, I argue that their contribution to this sector is underestimated because it overlooks women's broad contribution, *including* monetary transfers.

Finally, the study of women's roles in Clyde River suggests that their contribution is a critical connection between land production and the wage economy. In fact, the role of women as monetary providers speaks to the conceptualization of Inuit mixed economy as an adaptation where social economy and wage economy are not two distinct economies; but rather are inextricably intertwined. Indeed, Inuit mixed economy is characterized by the *integration* of two modes of production; one of locally harvested foods, and one of money from wage-labour and government subsidies. The monetary transfers made by women weld together these two modes of production. While money is needed to buy the equipment for harvesting activities, locally produced foods are consumed and transferred within nuclear families and extended families, supporting dietary needs and more importantly allowing social and cultural reproduction (Dahl 1989, Dowsley 2010, Hovelsrud-Broda 1999, Wenzel 1995).

6.5 Chapter conclusions

Socioeconomic transformations in Nunavut have favored Inuit women's work and because women are increasingly involved in the wage-economy they have become important producers of money for their household. It is clear from the analysis in this chapter that women assume a wide array of responsibilities that are not strictly limited to their domestic role. Women's roles

have expanded over the last decades in relation to the increasing importance of money in Inuit society.

In this chapter I have focused on money to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of Inuit mixed economy. My investigation reveals that women's contribution extends far beyond the boundaries of their household and often includes responsibilities for adult children and siblings, and even members of the family living in other communities. Women provide money and food (section 6.3.1) and support harvesting activities performed by male kin (section 6.3.2). In addition to being important producers of money, I found that women play a key role in the circulation of monetary resources. In this matter, they sustain the continuous flow of goods and services that characterize traditional subsistence (Sahlins 1971).

As both traditional Inuit food production and modern household needs depend on a continuous flow of money, women's contribution has become critical to the understanding of modern Inuit economic adaptation. Overall, women's contribution maintains the essential/traditional cultural goal of Inuit subsistence, that is, the shared responsibility for community well-being (Wenzel 1995: 51).

In this chapter, I have also demonstrated the strong gender correlation between patterns of work, earning and spending. Women tend to work in positions that are more permanent, they have regular wage-incomes and therefore are usually involved in recurrent payments such as bills, rent, groceries. Men, on the other hand, tend to work in more occasional positions of employment, have fluctuating earnings and are involved in occasional spending. So, patterns of work earning were correlated with patterns of spending.

Historically, in Inuit traditional livelihoods, men and women had distinct but complementary roles. I suggest in this chapter that women's roles have greatly expanded and that modern Inuit subsistence articulates around a new gender dynamic with women increasingly being the main monetary providers. In Chapter 7, I explore women's new economic roles and how it has resulted in mitigated responses amongst women participants. Wage-work leads to forms of empowerment, but also increases women's obligations towards their kin.

CHAPTER 7

"Keepers of the camp": Inuit women's power

7.1 Introduction

As wage-labour and the cash economy expand in the Canadian North, the economic roles of women and men are shifting. While such transformations can propel new labour divisions, resource allocation and – more importantly for this chapter – a reorganization of power relations between women and men, traditional gender norms and expectations continue to play a crucial role in shaping individual and collective responses.

Prior to settlement, the Inuit subsistence economy involved the work of both women and men: they had distinct but complementary roles, as outlined in Section 2.2.5 of my conceptual framework. Power relations and authority over decision making, however, were unbalanced and generally women were subordinated to men (Damas 1963, Guemple 1986, 1995, Reimer 1996). Today, the northern economic environment is characterized by an increased importance of money and a growing level of female employment. Such changes, I argue, are causing fundamental sociocultural transformations resulting in the negotiation of new roles, relations, status and power for women and men. While exploring the individual responses to the new economic environment, I examine gender dynamics and gender ideologies more closely, and the role they play in shaping the decisions of individuals regarding work allocation. This chapter focuses on the household level to examine how economic transformations have impacted gender roles, how women make sense of their roles and relation, and how power is organized within their family.

Hence this chapter aims to answer my third research objective *to assess the effects of economic transformations on gender roles and power*. The first section explores family dynamics and women's carework and housework. Then, I examine how money and wage-employment are socially valued. More specifically, I look at monetization as a social process by which differentiation between individuals is created. Finally, I discuss the concept of 'power' in relation to wage-employment and monetary provisioning. A core argument I make in this chapter is that wage-work is both experienced as empowering and disempowering by Inuit women.

Understanding the dominant ideas regarding the roles of women in contemporary Inuit society and the way in which Inuit traditional norms and expectations are being reproduced, especially through sharing practices and kinship system, offers a significant insight on present and anticipated socioeconomic transformations in Inuit economy and society.

7.2 Gendered roles in contemporary Inuit family

Family or *ilagiit* is critical to Inuit social organization. As the site of gender socialization and the main organizational unit, it fosters social and economic relations. Within the *ilagiit,* relations and roles are guided by kinship principles and structured along the lines of age, generation and gender (Damas 1963, Guemple 1972). Over the last century, the growing importance of the nuclear family, a couple and their children living in a single unit, has been a major change in many native societies (Miller 2004). Despite profound changes in the construction of Inuit family relations (Chapter 3), in Clyde River and in most communities in Nunavut, the *ilagiit* continues to be the site of important sociocultural practices, such as the sharing of wild resources. More importantly to this chapter, behavioural norms and expectations as well as individual's role continue to be channelled by *ilagiit* relations. For women participants, for instance, such relationships – especially with parents and in-laws – greatly defined their obligations.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the family was a recurrent theme during the interviews with women and men. While exploring the roles of women it appeared clearly that the family and all responsibilities around it played a major role in women's identity and relationship to her *ilagiit*. Most participants expected women to take primary responsibility for childcare and running the household. In contemporary Clyde River, the household unit is also instrumental in defining one's responsibilities. Repeatedly, participants mentioned their household as their primary organizational unit, rather than their *ilagiit*. As I mention in Chapter 6, living arrangements play an important role in organizing resource allocations and, concomitantly, as I argue in this section, the allocation of labour. Among the twenty-nine (29) participant households, interesting gendered patterns of labour division were revealed.

7.2.1 Household organization and work allocation

In this section I analyze the three types of work performed by women and men: domestic, wage and land-related work. Each of the twenty-nine (29) households was involved in the three work categories, but work allocation for each member of these households varied greatly. This analysis focuses on the importance of gender in these allocations of work.

Figure 7.1 shows the distribution of households in each work category according to who took on the main role in each category. Not surprisingly, given customary gender norms, there was no household in which a woman was primarily involved in land-related work and no household in which a man was primarily involved with domestic work. I identified the three categories of work as being shared when both woman and man were involved similarly in that category. For instance, women were considered sharing that responsibility when they went on the land to hunt, fish or gather berries at a similar frequency than their spouse. Similarly, the butchering, skinning and food preparation mainly done by women was also considered in land-related work. Men, on the other hand, who were involved in housework or childcare to a similar degree as their partner, were also identified as sharing such work. Paid work was considered shared when a man and a woman both contributed similarly in the total household income. However, when it was a shared responsibility between two women I counted it in the women group.

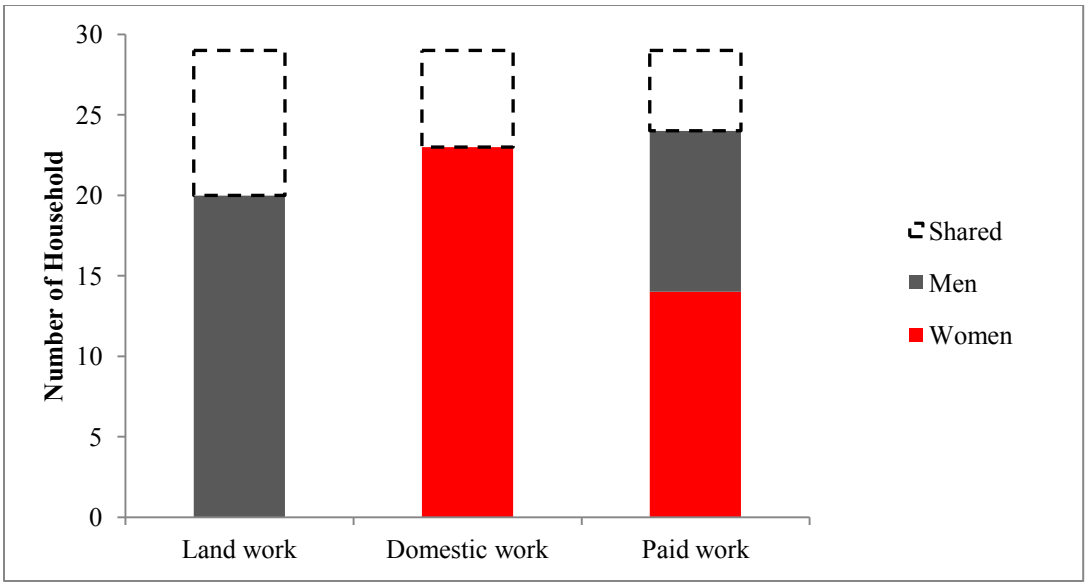

Figure 7.1: Allocation of work, by sex among participant households

In twenty households, land-related work was primarily undertaken by a man and it was a shared labour in the nine other households. However, among these nine households, six practiced only recreational harvesting and went on the land as family trips with no expectation of productivity. Those households were further classified as 'non-productive households' (Table 7.1). The three other households were composed of a regular female harvester who participated in land-related work with a son (2) or a father (1). Two of them were widows and one was not in a relationship and had no children at the time of the research, but all three were productive harvesters, and contributed to food production in their household and redistribution to their *ilagiit*. Overall, land-related work followed lines of gender with men mainly responsible for such work.

Domestic work was disproportionately a female responsibility in twenty-three households and a shared responsibility in six others. Women who shared domestic responsibilities with a man were much younger (average 28 year old) than those taking on most of it (average 40 year old). Such gendered divisions of labour reflect a persistent understanding of caregivers as part of the female role and identity (see Section 7.2.2). It also suggests that younger men, like in Canadian society as a whole, are assuming new roles within the household, although not to equality yet.

Wage work brings a different perspective on these traditional divisions of role as it is not necessarily perceived in the first place as a 'traditional' male domain, unlike in most of the Western world (Chapter 2). Figure 7.1 shows that in fourteen households, a woman was primarily involved in wage-employment, in ten it was a man and in five it was a shared labour. Although it is important to note that I made a deliberate choice to select wage earning female participants, for this research, such diversity of arrangements also reflects the nature of work in northern communities as well as work preference (Chapter 5). In terms of work allocation, it also shows the importance of women in the wage economy and supports findings from other Arctic regions (Dahl 2000, Hovelsrud et al. 2011, Jolles 2006, Reimer 1996).

Work allocation among household members followed lines of gender in most cases. The persistence of traditional labour divisions in contemporary Clyde River was closely related to Inuit cultural norms and expectations. Indeed, interviews with women and men revealed that expectations for men did not exactly fit western-influenced expectations regarding paid work and the ideology of the male breadwinner model. For instance, a large majority of female participants the ideal partner would be part-time employed with hunting skills, in order to access country food. Despite a clear desire for local food and a relative agreement to support their partner's harvesting practices, no woman preferred a full-time hunter because it was agreed upon that it would be too expensive to support him.

Interestingly, and importantly going against broader conclusions of gendered work expectations in Western academic literature, to the question 'who should be wage-worker in your household?', most participants identified a female, arguing that it is easier for them to find jobs or simply that they are better at it. One male participant made an interesting comment about wage-work being "a female type of thing" whereas men "should be out there on the land looking for the food". He then explained his view saying that: "women are good to organize and do the planning for the family and the community. Men aren't that good with staying in an office". Another example of this vision came from Nellie (36 years old) who is a mother of a one year old boy and who was pregnant again at the time of the research. She made it clear that if she had a girl she would like her to get educated and find a "good and steady job". She was not as convinced for her son: "for my boy... I want him to be helpful, but a girl, sure get to school, 'cause it's good to be independent". Overall, there was no clear expectation for wage

employment for men in comparison to women, which suggests in the first place that such labour is not seen as a male-domain. An interesting example of this is the number of females, especially young ones, who have their heavy equipment training and licence. For most research participants this was not "unusual" or surprising; rather they thought that women, or men, could do that kind of work, it was not seen as gender-specific. On the other hand, all care jobs were predominantly identified as a female type of work – nurse, aids, etc.

This important difference in regard to who engaged in wage work activities led me to analyze gender roles according to who was the primary monetary provider in the household. Three models can be discerned: the female breadwinner model, where a woman is the main monetary provider for her household; the male breadwinner model, where it is a man performing such provisioning; and the shared breadwinner model where both a woman and a man have a relatively equal income. These three models present typical divisions of labour found in Clyde River's households. They are not intended to represent more respected distribution of responsibilities in the community or more successful organization, but rather they show the wide range of situations within which women and men find themselves. In each model, there were individuals who were critical of their role and responsibility or that of others, but there were also individuals who felt perfectly at ease with those arrangements. While this classification by no means establishes a ranking of households, it does attempt to highlight the diversity that emerges from household organization in relation to household harvesting productivity[44].

[44] Household harvesting productivity was established according to the food produced over the month prior to the interview, as well as participant self-identification.

Table 7.1: Breadwinner models among participant households

	Domestic work		Land-related work		Household harvesting productivity		
	Primarily women	Shared	Primarily men	Shared	Highly productive household[+]	Productive household[++]	Not productive household[+++]
Shared breadwinner model (6)	4	2	4	2	4	1	1
Male breadwinner model (9)	8	1	7	2	2	7	0
Female breadwinner model (14)	11	3	9	5	6	5	3
Total	23	6	20	9	12	13	4

[+]Household where at least one active harvester was identified and who is considered to hunt regularly.
[++]Household where at least one occasional harvester was identified.
[+++]Household where no harvester was identified.

Model 1: shared breadwinner model. It has been amply demonstrated that an equal contribution to the household income between men and women does not translate into an equal division in other spheres of the household, particularly for domestic work. Six households in my sample shared the breadwinning role, and among them only two were identified as sharing domestic responsibilities; in the other four cases it was primarily a woman carrying out this role. Interestingly, the four households who identified as highly productive were also the four in which a male was primarily involved in harvesting activities. The shared breadwinner model was also characterized by a much greater average annual income ($71,000) compared to the total average ($57,000).

Model 2: The male breadwinner model is characterized by a man as the primary monetary provider and is found in nine participant households. Seven of them practice harvesting only occasionally and two practiced it actively. However, in one of these two households the man worked full-time in a seasonal job for an extended period and then received employment insurance for the rest of the year, at which time he and his wife go on long harvesting trips. The other household has a male wage-earner who is also committed to hunting activities, but more

significantly, one son is a highly productive hunter and is supported by his father. The male breadwinner model supports previous findings in Clyde River and in other communities regarding time dilemma for hunters (Condon et al. 1995, Wenzel 2000). The average total income for a male breadwinner model ($58,200) is higher than that of the female one ($51,100).

Finally, *model 3: the female breadwinner model* is found in fourteen households and is characterized by a woman as the main monetary provider. In eleven of these households, women were also the ones assuming most of domestic work, whereas the three others shared responsibility with a man. Interestingly, six of these households were characterized as highly productive households, five were productive households and only two were not. As discussed in Chapter 6, women's employment is important to provide financial capital and time for men to hunt.

Table 7.2: Household productivity according to total household income in participant households

	Total household income				
	Average income	Median income	Female breadwinner model (14)	Male breadwinner model (9)	Shared breadwinner model (6)
Highly productive household (12)	58,000$	60,000$	55,800$	42,500$	69,000$
Productive household (13)	63,300$	50,000$	50,800$	62,700$	x
Not productive household (4)	36,700$	37,500$	42,300$	na	x

na: no household in this category
x: only one household in this category

While work allocation within the household reflects traditional gendered labour divisions, the gender of the main monetary provider does affect the productivity of the household. Highly productive households were those involved in regular harvesting practices with high level of food production that is shared among *ilagiit* and the community. Twelve households were identified as highly productive, six of which have a female as main monetary provider. More interestingly, those twelve households all had a man as the primary person involved in land-related work, none shared it. This suggests a strong continuity of this specific gender role for men at least in this work category.

The thirteen productive households engaged in harvesting activities only occasionally also produced food that was shared, but to lesser degree. For instance, one woman was only involved in fishing activities and only during the spring, but she fished almost every day and produced enough food to share it with neighbours and friends; I counted her household as a productive one. Seven of these households have a male as main monetary provider.

7.2.2 Household dynamics and gender roles

> "Keeping my family happy is my role. It's probably true for every Inuk woman. Whatever what I do, I do it to keep my family together: I work 9 to 5 so that we can pay bills and have food on the table, I sew so that my kids have warm clothes and I cook because I love them. When someone needs something I provide, my sister, my mother… I keep my family strong!" (Laura, 28 years old).

Laura is a young woman, mother of five children, living with her husband, a full-time hunter and occasional worker. Like many other women in Clyde River, Laura has a wide array of experiences, not limited to 'traditional' roles that range from wage-worker to board member and consultant. She strongly believes that family defines the role of a woman and the meaning of work for her. Over the many conversations we had, she constantly referred to her role as being the "keeper of her family", emphasizing the importance of both the family as an institution and her role in keeping this institution alive and well. Her numerous siblings, her parents' in-laws and her parents constitute the focal point of her social obligations and towards whom she acted as a 'protector'.

Women's work experience diversity, the new opportunities for women in the wage economy and the continuity of work allocation within households have had various impacts on gender roles over the last several decades in Clyde River, and presumably in many other communities in the Canadian north (see Williamson 2006a for a similar disucssion for Greenland). While from the 1960s through the 1980s households were strongly organized along the lines of gender, the development of the wage-economy in the 1990s and more significantly in the 2000s, has accelerated the diversification of households' organization. Although gender continues to play a critical role in division of land and domestic labours, it was made clear by participants, during the interviews, that the lines between these categories of work had become increasingly blurred over the last decades. As Joan strongly expressed:

> "I guess we are just following the rest of the world because lots more women are going to top jobs and stuff like that. And more men are taking care of their children in a more nurturing way. Men are also involved with the house, the cleaning and all that; it's changing a lot in terms of who does what in the house. I see my daughters have a very different life than I had; I was born in a tent and there was no ski-doo at that time. Work was a whole different thing for both men and women, but I think women have gained a lot" (Joan, early 50 year old).

According to interviews and participants' life history calendars, it appears that traditional Inuit gender expectations for work and family responsibilities continue to significantly influence women and men's roles in contemporary Clyde River. While traditionally the division of labour followed lines of gender, with women responsible of the maintenance of the camp and the family, today, in most households, it is women who disproportionately account for childcare and housework regardless of their employment status. Therefore, balancing family life and work responsibilities was often the first answer given by female participants when asked about household dynamics. Managing the household – from childcare to housework and budgeting – was repeatedly mentioned as a female responsibility that involved constant negotiation between partners.

Research participants mentioned repeatedly that men were getting more involved in housework and childcare in their household, however it varied widely depending on family background, the age of household members and their living arrangements. For instance women who had a male parent involved in such work usually received more help from their own spouse.

According to time-use charts, most men would help with house chores when their partner was performing them. In other households, chores were divided among members and often involved explicit negotiation. But the most recurrent answer was that men helped their female partner whenever they were asked to do so:

> "He helps me a lot, but only if I ask" (Charlotte, 45 years old).

> "If I ask him to come and help me with the dishes he helps me" (Corinne, 20 years old).

> "I don't really like doing those kinds of things – like cleaning and stuff – but if my girlfriend ask me to help her I do it" (Michael, 27 years old).

Among the twenty-nine participant households, three were identified as having a male highly involved in family care labour. These men were young (under 35 years old) and their

partners were educated and had a well-paid job. In two cases the men were unemployed and not hunters and took care of a small child (under 2 years old) while their partner was working. In the other case, the man did a large proportion of the cleaning and cooking at the same time as being a regular and successful hunter. In the three cases, their female partner mentioned that they were 'lucky' with such arrangement and that their situation was somehow unique:

> "Most of the women I know who are in a relationship, most of the men stay home and women do the shopping, care for the kids and sometimes have a job... but I've been noticing some dads are helping a lot more with their children than older people used too, like the previous generation....so I guess it's changing. But really, caring for kids it's still a female thing, it seems" (Naomi, 22 years old).

> "I am lucky 'cause he stays home during the day while I work and he takes care of our baby. But you know as soon as I am back it's like all on me. Part of it is me I guess 'cause I want to, but I would also want him help more with the cleaning and cooking... at least try to get closer to equal share" (Joyce, 26 years old).

While a new diversity of work arrangement has emerged recently, an interesting point that was made during interviews was the lingering importance of women as child caregivers and 'keepers' of the family. One reason that was often given was some form of continuity between roles in camp and in settlement. Childcare and rearing have not changed much since the settlement period in the 1960s; women are still the main caregivers and expectations and norms around mothering have not been impacted as much as other roles assumed by men and women. Therefore, the continuity of family as a central institution was often described as a woman's role and was perceived as a form of feminine strength. Indigenous feminists have argued that in many indigenous cultures, through their role as caregiver, women are the bearers of the nation and hold power from this role (Berman 2003a).

When I asked male participants how they would define a 'perfect partner' they invariably mentioned the importance for a woman to be able to keep the family strong and together:

> "Men and women are equal, but women are the ones to light the igloo with the *qulliq*[45], they are the ones who bring the light and the warmth to the family" (Jason, 31 year old).

> "To me it feels like women are strong because they can manage the family and do other work – like paid work and help on the land. My girlfriend is strong because she can

[45] *Qulliq* is the traditional oil lamp that Inuit used to cook, heat and light the igloo.

> cook the food I hunt and she can feed my family – my grand-parents with whom we live and our baby. The family is strong because we all eat this food together and women are the ones who provide this food to the children. A perfect partner is one that is committed to the family" (Noah, 28 year old).

It appeared that there were numerous expectations regarding women's roles and responsibility. For instance, while looking at the responses given by both men and women on the 'expectations' and 'fairness' of their household's division of labour, most participants preferred and expected women to assume carework. Similarly, women were disproportionately assuming responsibility for housework and household decision-making, but here the expectations of how such tasks should be allocated were slightly different. For instance, only 37% of research participants thought it should primarily be women's role, against 63% who believed it should be a joint responsibility. The women's reasoning was that they valued carework and identified with such a role, whereas they did not consider housework very rewarding. Indeed, women felt that childcare and rearing was their primary role and most participants identified themselves as the main caregiver in their household. Not only did participants perceive women as the 'foundation' of the family but also as its 'keeper'. Among the twenty-nine female participants, only three did not have children at the time of the research[46]. Being a mother and being able to care for a child was highly valued among women to a point where Nellie (36 years old) suggested that in order to be an Inuk woman one had to raise kids. This strong identification to the role of mother is also found among many indigenous groups and is perceived as a source of power for women (Berman 2003a, Bonvillain 2007).

A common value among older women was how they highly identified themselves as 'keepers of the family' and valued younger women who had a similar family commitment. Ruth, an elderly woman whom I visited regularly, often referred to her daughters and daughters-in-law according to how their children behaved, emphasizing the role of women as mothers. One day some kids in the street were throwing rocks at the street lights, she nodded her head and said: "some kids have no discipline and maybe no mother". The judgement was harsh and left little space for another interpretation. When I asked her about the role of the father in disciplining

[46] Two of them were under 22 years old and the other one was in her fifties. One of the younger one adopted a baby shortly after the data were collected and I discussed some of the new issues when returning to the community the year after.

children she nodded her head again and said “we (women) build families, we make them, shape them, we are family-maker... although I know that things are changing”.

Increasingly, the household unit acts as the basic economic institution where production is primarily organized and labour allocated, especially regarding the market economy (Usher et al. 2003). While the family continues to be the central institution through which roles, responsibilities, identity and power are structured, many participants noted that gender roles have undergone profound changes over the last decades in response to family restructuring and transformations in the socioeconomic environment. The weakening of the *ilagiit* and the increase in lone-parent households were repeatedly mentioned by participants as consequences of new household organization. These transformations in the social organization of Inuit families have had tremendous impacts on gender roles, especially for women. In fact, the development of a model where women are increasingly becoming the main monetary provider and men continue to hunt, although seen as socioculturally consistent, imposes greater pressure on work allocations within families and the concomitant gender roles.

7.3 Money: social meanings, sharing practices and gender

The new work regime in Nunavut has brought considerable changes in northern communities including the centrality of individual income in Inuit household livelihoods. While for decades Inuit relied mainly on local food production with money as a subsistence input, today money is an important factor in organizing economic and social life. If money has become the main currency in most transactions, its value and the prestige and power involved in its production and possession reveal important Inuit sociocultural traits. Although money has fully become part of the resource environment of Inuit, it does not carry the same social prestige as other ‘natural raw material’ and is rarely seen as an objective in itself (Fienup-Riordan 1986, Wenzel 2000).

Money is an integral part of contemporary economic life in Clyde River and every participant household uses and produces monetary resources to meet the multiple needs of its members. Participants described various strategies undertaken to support their economic responsibilities. The combination of various sources of income and food production were common to most families, but involved each individual to a different degree. While a few

households focused primarily on harvest production with income derived from social assistance, unemployment insurance or occasional wage-work, others combined part-time, occasional and full-time wages from various members to support household food production. As I explored in Chapter 6, harvesting activities are expensive and produce little to no income, but to a certain degree all households were involved in such practices.

For most research participants, money embodied a sense of modernity as well as a way to sustain 'traditional' resource production. This double-role played by money is, I argue, deeply related to Inuit sociocultural practices and a specific trait of their contemporary way to inhabit the world.

7.3.1 Social differentiation and pressure on social relationships

> "Some people are getting rich here. Before, it's like everybody had the same, and now it's like some have everything and the others are left with nothing" (Ana, 27 years old).

Since the creation of Nunavut, Inuit households have experienced an important increase in their total income (Chapter 3). For instance, the median income per household in Nunavut has increased from 30,101$ in 1995 to 81,219$ in 2010 (Statistics Canada 1997, 2012c). While a few decades ago households in Clyde River enjoyed relatively similar standards of living, today they are characterized by great disparities that are the result of income differences between households. In Clyde River, the median total income for individuals has increased consistently from $11,700 in 1999 to $22,500 in 2012 (NBS 2014a). However, this increase in individual and household incomes has not been even among all groups, and hide large disparities in what constitute the total income and how many people depend on it.

Among research participants, the median total income for females in 2012 was $25,000 and the median total income for their households was $55,000. Research participants living in households with one or more wage-earners enjoyed greater revenue and had access to more material resources. In contrast, those living in households without any wage-earner were limited to income assistance programs and highly dependent on the support of their relatives. The composition of the total income varied greatly between households, from 100% of wage earnings to 100% of government transfers. Similarly, the household size among participants ranged from two to ten individuals with an average of five individuals, with the per capita household incomes

ranging from $4,000 to $65,000[47]. These differences in income were mentioned often by participants during interviews and most of them identified disparities in access to financial and material resources as a major change in Clyde River over the last decades (Figure 7.2).

Among all participants, only one household received 100% of its income from wages. Both the woman and the man each enjoyed a relatively high income and lived alone in their house. Their total income was the highest among all participants and the highest per capita. However, they supported many relatives with lower incomes, especially their two sons who came almost every day to visit and eat. As I also visited them quite often, I was able to see that there were always several other people visiting and eating at their place. On the other hand, only one household received 100% of its income from government transfers. This household was composed of two adult females and one child. Neither of the women had worked over the last year, one because of health conditions and the other one had not able to find a job. This household was the poorest among all participants as well as the poorest per capita. On a weekly basis they received assistance from relatives, mostly from an older brother who helped them with store food, country food and furniture.

[47] Per capita household income is the total income for the household divided by the total number of people living in the household, including children and adults, other family members and unrelated people (Statistics Canada, 2002). Per capita income is an important indicator when comparing household incomes as Inuit households are much larger.

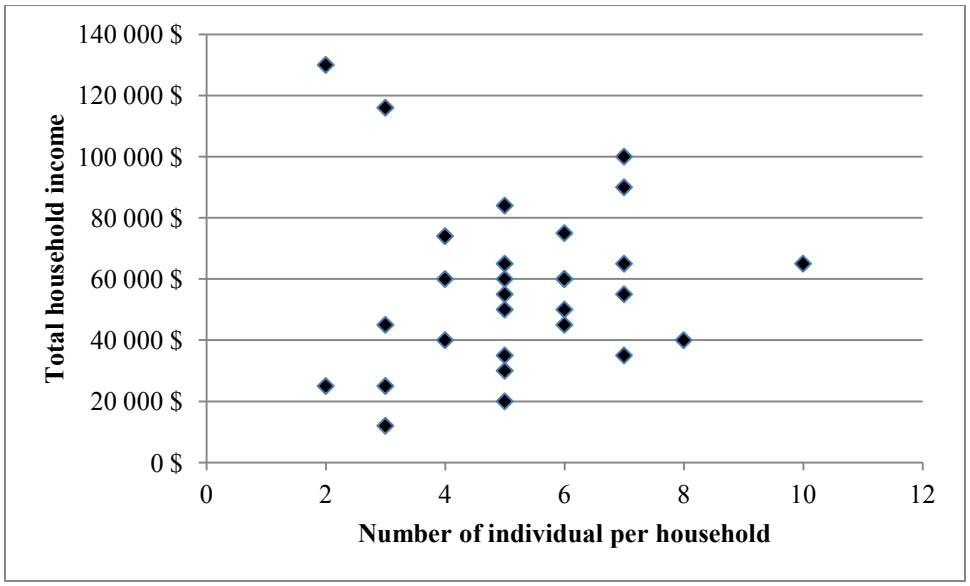

Figure 7.2: Distribution of participant households by total household income and number of individuals

Such differences in total household income translate to social differentiation. Because money is not accessed evenly among individuals it creates groups that could be called 'the haves' and 'have nots' (see Wenzel 2014). Participants distinguished those who 'have' from those who 'have not' by looking at the assets owned by individuals and households and their capacity to go out on the land. Those that have access to substantial amounts of money have many assets (snowmobile, four-wheeler, truck, boat, cabin, firearms and various hunting equipments) and engage in harvesting activities more frequently. On the other hand, those who have no access to regular and significant amounts of money own fewer assets and are limited in their capacity to hunt due to broken hunting equipment or lack of necessary gear. Joyce summarized the situation:

> "I see some people that don't have to live paycheck to paycheck. They have trucks and boats and they are not hungry. They are out there hunting or just on family trips on the land. It looks like they have no problem with money, but I don't see them every day. At least they have a truck, a boat and ATV...! I hope my boyfriend gets a job, so he can help me and we might be able to get those things and go out on family trip too! (Joyce, 26 years old)"

With the increased differentiation of households in Clyde River, the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' creates greater pressure on social relations. As Wenzel (1995: 54) noted

in the 1990s, the change in the basic economy has placed considerable stress on the structure of relations, as well as on the actual practice of sharing. Similarly, in studying socioeconomic changes in Clyde River between 1999 and 2009, Harder (2010) found an increased income inequality among households within the *ilagiit* and significant changes in its socioeconomic organization.

7.3.2 Sharing practices in a monetized world

In Western societies money is individually produced and tends to be individually "owned". According to my research informants' money was rarely given without any formal request. The movement of money was in almost every case initiated by demand and it did not circulate as widely as country food. Because money in contemporary Clyde River is mainly acquired through wage-employment, participants repeatedly referred to two different categories of people: those who are always running out of money and constantly looking for strategies to access money (the 'have nots') and those with regular access to money and who constantly receive demands to share (the 'have'). Sharing was a key theme when discussing income and differences between individuals and households. Many women and men felt that some people made too much money compared to others and did not share enough, or did not share appropriately.

During interviews I was asking participants what their strategies were when they were running out of money. The most common answer was to 'demand' money from kin – fifteen participants (52%) mentioned having asked for money over the previous week. Depending on the relationship with the person, participants would either borrow the money or ask for it as a gift. For instance, asking a parent would usually result in a gift rather than a loan and siblings would usually borrow money from one another. A greater proportion (86 %) of both women and men participants specified that they would ask a female rather than a male relative, because women usually accept more easily. Short loans were frequent among siblings and were usually paid back on time (meaning in a reasonable time). Borrowing small amounts of money was a strategy described by few participants who themselves had limited access to money, often were on welfare, and lived in 'poorer households'.

> "Sometimes I have to ask my family for money. If I ask they just give it to me, like my grand-mother, but if I ask my brother I'll have to pay him back. He's not so much of a

> giver. But I try not to ask for money too much 'cause I don't like to pay back!" (Rosie, 26 years old).
>
> "Yes a lot of people are asking me for money! It seems that borrowing money has become so common in Clyde, like every day I receive phone calls from people in town to borrow money, but I rarely loan them anything; sometimes I do when I know they are desperate or need food, but otherwise I don't. It's anyone that can ask... But usually I give money only to my children or grand-children... or my parents" (Sylvia, 50 years old).

Another frequent strategy described by participants was to sell something on the radio. This was often an item bought earlier in the month that people had no use of anymore or because they urgently needed cash that they end up having to sell a valued item. Numerous examples of this were mentioned by participants, from selling a litre of gas, baby formula and diapers, to toys and video games. Alternatively, some women mentioned that they would made food or clothing to sell. For instance, one woman made frozen yogurt and fruit mix and announced it for sale on the radio. Children and adults would drop by her house to buy them, and she could make up to $60 in an evening. Other women mentioned that sewing was their 'back up plan' when money was needed. They would sew *amauti* or parka or knit hats and sell them via the radio or on Facebook.

> "If I have economic problem, I would try to sell something. I would make some food or sew and sell it" (Nellie, 36 years old).
>
> "Some people, when they get paid they buy one expensive thing, not thinking about the future and end up selling it by next week 'cause they need the money. We do that too sometimes, I have to say, but not as regularly than some people. For us it happens a few times a year, but other people, you hear them almost every day on the radio" (Joyce, 26 years old).
>
> "I don't borrow money. If I am out of heating fuel, I would sell my laptop. I would sell something... anything that I am not using too much" (Maria, 56 years old).

Borrowing money and selling goods were the two main strategies mentioned by participants and most individuals who use such strategies were usually those with limited access to money, the 'have nots'. On the other hand, those who received constant demands and increased pressure to share were 'well-off' individuals, the 'haves'. In a small town like Clyde River, the distinction between who belongs to which category is easily established and the possibility to avoid demands is therefore limited.

With the increased differentiation of households in Clyde River, the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' creates greater pressure on social relationships. Because Inuit households do not live in isolation one from another, the haves and have nots are intrinsically linked through a complex web of kinship relations. Chabot (2004: 165) notes that in Nunavik, individual accumulation and personal interest "are channelled toward the fulfillment of social duties and traditional roles or their representations". Such social pressure was frequently mentioned by participants as a reason for not being able to save money or have money for their personal use. Indeed, for many women I interviewed, their ability to deny requests by relatives was very limited. The first reason was the type of relationship they had with the person demanding. For instance, women repeatedly mentioned that saying no to their partner or parents was impossible. Similarly, requests from siblings or children were difficult to deal with, but could result in refusal, if need be.

The proximity of families and because they visit one another frequently, if not daily, makes it difficult to avoid requests. Visiting was however described as the best way to share and redistribute resources needed in different households without an explicit demand. For instance, Rose (42 years old) often mentioned how much money she spent at the grocery store every day to buy what was needed for people who would come for dinner or visit at night (an average of 1,862$ per week).

The proximity that characterizes life in small communities makes it difficult for people to avoid others, and the constant visiting sometimes imposes on those who have resources. For instance, Betty (23 years old) repeatedly talked about her sister in-law coming to her house to eat without 'equally' sharing. As Briggs suggests "there are just too many people who have needs to fill, and many of these people are not one's kin. [...] Even when people want to help others—kin or friends—their resources may well be inadequate because of competing claims" (Briggs 2000b: 115).

These constant requests, resulting from increased differentiation between individuals and families, make it difficult to manage money and often impossible to save money. Indeed, the challenge to 'save money' and 'manage income' was a recurring theme among all participants. Although most participants mentioned trying to save or wished to do so, only a few had been able to. Commonly, three reasons were given by participants. First, the high costs of food and

other resources make it very expensive to live in the north. Everybody I met and worked with in Clyde River mentioned the high cost of food and other staples and it was often the main reason to explain why money was hard to manage, as Emily highlights:

> "When I receive my paycheck I try to keep it in my account, I try to save a little bit for emergencies. But sometimes we run out of things, so I have to buy more food or stuff. I am the only one working in the house and we are so crowded in my mother's place that it's hard to save. My sister needs to buy baby formula for her baby, she has no money left so I go get some" (Emily, 24 years old).

The second reason is that access to money is limited in Clyde River because there is a limited number of jobs in the community, especially full-time and permanent, which makes many individuals dependent either on part-time and occasional positions. In fact, most people rely on mixed strategies to make ends meet: they work part-time or occasionally, receive social assistance and government allowances for children the rest of the time, and receive support from relatives. Andrea (44 years old) is a good example of the necessity to combine multiple strategies. Her husband runs a tourist business which brings only a few thousand dollars over the year – and some years no money (the year I was collecting data, 2012, he had not made any money to date). They have three children and the youngest is two years old, which limited Andrea's ability to seek employment, although she was employed occasionally by different organizations in town, mainly as a substitute worker. For Andrea's family, as for many other families, money is a constant struggle. Saving money is not an option as their access to funds is limited and finding regular wage-employment is not easy with her limited formal education:

> "We receive social assistance on a regular basis but any time I can make a few dollars here or there I do it. Some jobs I really don't like, but we need to eat and buy diapers, so I do it. At the end of the month sometimes we have nothing left, no more food no more money and we still have to wait for welfare. So, I try to borrow money or sell something or we just go eat at my sister's place" (Andrea, 44 years old).

Finally, the third reason that explains why money is hard to save is because people support many relatives and not only their household. As I have also explored in Chapter 6, women are very important in monetary redistribution across households and this explains their difficulties in saving money:

> "We don't really save money, we live cheque by cheque. I think most people do that, at least most people I know, because we support many people around us, not just my family and so we need a lot of money to feed them all" (Laura, 28 years old).
>
> "Managing money is hard because so many people depend on me. I can't say no and let them go hungry. I don't make that much money, but I keep spending it all on food for many people around me" (Alison, 27 years old).
>
> "I support and give money to my family, but specifically to my children. Some also have their own family, but no job. So I am sending them money for food regularly and I am also supporting them for their Internet and TV bills. I can't save although I have a very well-paid job. Sometimes it's hard for me to pay my own bills because I have been giving too much, so I have to say no" (Susan, 55 years old).

The centrality of individual income in Inuit household is an important factor in organizing contemporary economic and social life in the North. While money plays an important role in sustaining 'traditional' resource production it also embodies a sense of modernity where the individual who 'produces' the income stands apart. In this regard, money has increased differentiation among households in the community and generated pressure on individuals with significant incomes. Female research participants were particularly aware of that situation as constant requests from relatives made it harder for them to manage money. This situation also raised questions and debates regarding who made decisions in their household and who had 'the power'.

7.4 Work, money and power

> "When I was a kid, in the 1960s, we all had responsibilities and many chores to look after, we hardly had time for other stuff. I used to clean the house, do the dishes, fetch water and make sure there was always hot water for tea. I was close to my father, and he was a happy man, yah! He was proud of me 'cause he didn't expect me to find a job. You know, expectations for women were mostly around the house and the family, but not so much for wage-work, no. This is probably one very surprising thing that happened to women up here: paid work!" (Maria, 56 years old).

The greater integration of Inuit women into the wage economy and their increased economic earning power have had consequences on gender relations and allocation of power within

households. The literature on women and work has a long tradition of seeing women's access to monetary resources, and wage-employment has a way to empower them. Feminist economists have argued that access to paid work can increase women's agency and shift the balance of power (Benería and Roldán 1987). Traditionally, Inuit women have had authority over the domestic sphere as well as the responsibility to manage camps, especially when their spouses were out hunting. Women and men had 'complementary but equal' roles which have translated variously in the contemporary context of settlement. While their roles were equal their relation was unbalanced (Guemple 1995, Reimer 1996, Stern 2010). This inequality in Inuit women and men's relations comes from their structural, and often genealogical, position in the kinship system where they are generally subordinated to male relatives and should obey male siblings regardless of age differences (Damas 1963, see also Chapter 2).

While discussing 'power' with research participants, I found complex and multilayered definitions and representations of power. For instance, many women asserted that power was something to be 'earned' rather than something given. Other women believed that a powerful woman (or man) would necessarily be an elder with wide experience. Such representations of power emphasize that power is a process rather than a status, and echoes the definition found among many indigenous communities in North America (1995b). Klein and Ackerman (1995a: 16) suggest that aboriginal women's power be analyzed in its proper social context to avoid narrowness of perspective as such a concept is highly connected to the culture that produces it. Following these lines I explore, in the next sections, what power means and how it is experienced by female research participants.

7.4.1 Inuit women and empowerment

New dynamics within households and couples have emerged since the 1980s in response to changes in the social and economic organization of families. As wage employment and money have become increasingly important to a family's economics, the roles of women have moved from a simply complementary contribution to a much more central one. During interviews many participants agreed that Inuit women's earnings have become increasingly important to support their family's needs, and that many families in Clyde River rely heavily on a female wage-employment.

Such transformations in the contribution of Inuit women have resulted in forms of empowerment. Indeed, many female participants considered their wage employment and individual income as a way to assert their independence as well as a form of power over their own lives. Thus, women emphasized the connection between one's economic independence and power. For instance, Joyce (26 years old) argued that because she had wage work experiences and options to earn a living, she had control over her life and could make her own decisions:

> "Now, I feel I am an independent person and I have become an independent person because of work opportunities. My story is one of abuse. At first I was in a bad relationship, my boyfriend was really abusive and controlling. In a small community like here, you cannot hide or just vanish, there's no way. So I had to leave the community and rebuild my life. I studied and worked abroad and when I came back I was not the same person in a way. I had education and work experience; I had opportunities. I have always worked here and there, always had a good position so that I knew I could take care of myself and my kids, whoever I was with; I am an independent person. Wherever I go, I know I can work and provide for my family" (Joyce, 26 years old).

Her story displays a sense of autonomy and empowerment that result from her economic independence. This was the most common response I received when I asked women participants about the reasons to seek work. Indeed, participants referred to their wage work as a source of independence and security. They felt pride in being able to provide food, clothing and other material resources to their family. Such provisioning was described as a source of power and control over their lives. This way, women asserted that wage work had augmented their ability to decide for themselves and their children, as well as given them more control over household resources and decision-making. In some other cases, wage work has also contributed in shifting the balance of power between genders and provided women with greater respect. Overall, most women agreed that paid employment provided women with personal freedom, autonomy and a sense of self-worth and self-reliance.

Interestingly, wage-work was also described as empowering as it increased women's participation in cultural practices. Indeed, women themselves saw their employment as creating a greater cash flow for the maintenance of subsistence practices which in return reinforced Inuit values. Joan notes that:

> "Essentially, I work and he hunts. But really what matters to me is to be able to feed my kids and grand-kids with those good and nutritious local foods. Living up here, being

> healthy and being Inuit means we travel on the land and eat local foods. That's our way of life and it's the healthiest one!" (Joan, early fifties).

This sense of cultural contribution was frequently mentioned by participants, especially mid-age and elder women who expressed great pride in supporting their partner or son's harvesting activities. In a way this form of empowerment was expressed as a collective empowerment where Inuit livelihoods are maintained through women's employment.

> "I think it is important to continue our way of life, our hunting and our sharing in order to continue being Inuit. We are Inuit because we share our country food. Men work hard hunting and we, women, work hard too. I hold this job so that my husband can hunt and we can all enjoy our land" (Sylvia, 50 years old).

This sense of cultural continuity and identity is not unique to Inuit and is found among other aboriginal groups. Subsistence practices, as Natcher (2009: 87) puts it, are "fundamental basis for the social identity, cultural survival and spiritual life of northern Aboriginal peoples" and women, as men, are committed to such cultural practices. Similarly, Berman (2003a) found that Fort Berthold women were highly important in the maintenance of ceremonial and cultural practices in contemporary context. Through their role in the family, aboriginal women are important sources of cultural continuity (Findlay and Wuttunee 2007, Green 2007a, Hull 2006).

Finally, wage work was also described by young women as a way to get freedom and escape from in-home obligations. Being employed meant being away from housework responsibilities and the scrutiny of older family members. Young women in Clyde River described their job as a way to escape this 'pressure' of staying home and being 'subordinated' to almost everyone. For instance, for Naomi who lives with her in-laws, the pressure and obligation to perform housework is somehow increased by her genealogical position. One way to escape this is to be involved in wage work outside the house:

> "I like my job 'cause I can get out of the house. Like my mother in-law is also working so during the day there is mainly just my father in-law and my boyfriend in the house, so because I am the only woman than I kind of have to do the cleaning or cooking or you know that kinds of work. But the days I work it's almost sometimes a relief!" (Naomi, 22 years old).

> "It is hard to be home and not do things that have to be done. You know, cleaning, laundry and cooking; it's like someone is looking for you all the time. When I am out working, I don't feel that pressure" (Tamara, 22 years old).

7.4.2 Wage-work as disempowering

> "I've heard stories that there was lots of discrimination against women about their role and what they were doing. Like the traditional men should work and women should stay at the house to do cleaning, cooking and stuff.... now, if I look at myself and my mom, it's all this plus the job! But it still seems better because at least women have more opportunities; they have options to choose from. So, all I can say is that women have more roles now than there were before…" (Joyce, 26 years old).

Although, increased labour force participation is often recognized as a way to improve women's status and control over resources, it has also been shown that it can have contradictory implications for women such as increased work and obligations (Charusheela 2003). Joyce's quote expresses this dilemma where many women have more opportunities to choose from, but at the same time, more obligations.

Indeed, while Inuit women's employment and access to monetary resources has increased more steadily than for men (Chapter 3), their authority and control over resources and decision-making are often proportionally lower. The high value ascribed to household food production has created pressure on individuals with income to participate financially in various extra-household activities, regardless of their personal interests. For instance, Emily (24 years old) often complained that her partner would always ask for money to buy more gas, ammunition or other hunting gear, arguing that because it was for harvesting purpose she was not in a position to say no.

In contemporary Clyde River, harvesting activities are widely practiced and continue to provide prestige to those who engage in them. This is no different from many other communities in the Arctic and Subarctic regions (Chabot 2004, Fienup-Riordan 2000, Gombay 2010, Jolles 2002, Nuttall 2000, Searles 2002). Household food production continues to be significant both socially and economically, and in shaping relationships as well as notions of gender-defined work and relations. Research participants' highly valued subsistence-related work and food production and agreed that such activities conferred cultural prestige. Conversely, employment status and individual income were rarely mentioned as a form of cultural prestige. Individuals who harvested, shared and ate country foods were described as 'real Inuit' and many participants asserted that such practices distinguished Inuit from *Qallunaat*. No equivalent was proposed by

participants for wage work and sharing money was not perceived as 'Inuit', at least not in the same valued way. Interestingly, sixteen women (55%) described a good partner as one who hunts, at least occasionally. The best arrangement was to be with a man that both hunts and works: "This way he shares the food everyone wants and I feel we, as a family, are providing what we should provide" (Laura, 28 years old). According to participants, having a partner who hunts fulfilled the expectations of providing and sharing traditional foods.

If Inuit identity continues to be deeply associated with subsistence practices, women participants point out that it is more a source of power for men than for women. The imbalance of power and prestige lies in the fact that although most women participate in food production, it is to a lesser level than men. Most food produced in household was by men whereas women's contribution was more limited to fishing and berry picking and only a few hunting expeditions. Consequently, food production was mainly performed by men and awarded them with more cultural status. Although women were often essential contributors to harvesting practices through their wages, their contribution was rarely mentioned as part of the food production. In fact, sharing locally harvested foods is much more valued than sharing money even though it is now essential for such practices. Because wage work embodies a lower social status compared to harvesting practices, women are disadvantaged although they share and redistribute their income.

Although the shift from a land-based economy to a wage-economy has favoured women in terms of employment, it has not necessarily resulted in the same shift in the distribution of power and prestige and, consequently, Inuit women appear to be disadvantaged on two levels. First, the work they do in the wage-economy is less valued than work in household food production. Second, the nature of their contribution is undervalued: money does not culturally equal country food. So, because the medium is different – money instead of local food – and the way to acquire it is also different – individual labour in the wage economy compared to collective effort on the land – money has not translated in cultural prestige.

Meanwhile, another reason described by female wage earners and others looking for work, was a feeling of 'obligation'. Several women mentioned that because many people depended on them they had no other choice but to seek work. "Helping my family" and "supporting my family" were answers often given to me when I asked why they had decided to work. And when I asked how it happened, many mentioned that they decided to seek work

because they had no choice: “We have to have clothing and food on the table, and pay our rent and cable and internet and phone and gas” (Alison, 27 years old). This young woman with four children under the age of 10 combined part-time and occasional jobs to make ends meet, while her boyfriend held a job in the summer and hunted the rest of the year. Most of Alison’s boyfriend’s income was used to maintain his hunting/fishing equipment, to which she agreed as he was a good hunter and provided country food regularly. However, that situation left her with most of the burden for regular payments. Moreover, in her house she also accommodated four relatives (two female adults, one teenage girl and a child) and had to provide for them, as only one of them had a part-time low-paid job. When I asked Alison if she thought her partner should be working more she said “men do what they can, but at the end it’s on you”.

Alison’s situation is not unique. On the contrary, many women participants felt obligated at some level to work, because their family depended on their wage to eat and have a place to stay, also because no one else was taking that responsibility. In many Inuit families women have become the most reliable source of support for their household and their kin. Similar situations are found in many contemporary indigenous communities with wage labour being more consistent and permanent among women (Kuokkanen 2011b). Indeed, the erratic nature of men’s wage-labour participation has made it difficult to provide steadily for their own household or to extend their help to other households (Albers 1983: 217).

Women with well paid, permanent jobs experienced constant pressure from their family to continue working, supporting them and sharing their income.

> “Maybe I will work until I get disabled or something like that. I don’t think I would stop working because I have to support my children because they all don’t have any jobs… It is hard to find jobs especially in small communities. Work… it’s very important to me, because I have children, grand-children, I worry about them not to get hungry or whenever they ask for money I have to send them right away” (Susan, 55 years old).

> “I always give them (my relatives) money. Every time when they want.... I mean... when I have some money I always give them. They always ask. Even my brother in Ottawa! Even my sister living in Pond Inlet and (a relative) from Iqaluit... everybody is asking for money. Only when I have some I would say yes. I would send them 50-70... not every month, just a couple times a year. But for kids it’s when I get paid. They ask on my pay-day between 60$ and 80$. Sometimes I pay their power bills, telephone bills and Internet and cable... I do that for my two kids living outside the house” (Beatrice, 52 years old).

> "I am looking at houses; I see lots of women working instead of men. Especially around my area and my parents' area, the houses, the women are the most likely to have a job or at least to have something. From my experience, it feels like we have no choice and men aren't lucky or aren't really looking, they are just waiting for something..." (Joyce, 26 years old).

Young women appeared to be more vulnerable to pressure from their family or partner. Many young women mentioned being in a relationship where they felt obligated to say yes "because he is my boyfriend". More extreme situations were described to me by a few women where some young men get involved in a relationship specifically with employed women so they can provide them money to buy drugs, alcohol or cigarettes:

> "I was going out with one guy, then after that he was just asking for money... I gave him 20$ and he just bought weed, I didn't like that.... It seems like they are just playing with girls. Like they don't look for jobs and just get the money from other people.... mostly from women... I don't like that" (Elizabeth, 20 years old).

> "(My boyfriend) wants money from me too much. I want him to get his own money. When he was working he was not asking that much, still a little bit. It's hard to say no 'cause he is addicted to drugs... I don't' really say no, I say "I only have this much and I need to buy some food and after buying food I can give you what's left"...." (Emily, 24 years old).

7.5 Chapter conclusions

Gender roles and relations are not static over time and space, rather they show great variability. In this chapter I explored the impacts of the increasing centrality of money and wage-work to Inuit women's roles and relations in contemporary Clyde River. One argument I have made here is that the recent transformations in the socioeconomic environment in Nunavut have resulted in new gender dynamics. For a great number of women the development of a wage economy has meant new opportunities and greater control over resources. However, for others, employment has translated in increased obligations towards their family and little to no control over household resources and decisions.

Such control or authority, or lack thereof, was frequently mentioned during interviews with women and was associated with changing power dynamics between men and women. Female participants expressed both satisfaction and concerns regarding their new roles as

monetary providers. For instance, many women noted a greater diversity of choice available to them compared with a few decades ago. With new opportunities women are not limited to traditional gender roles. Conversely, other women highlighted that transformations in the household's economy have resulted in less choice for them, because paid employment was their only option to support their family.

If economic transformations and territorial development in the Canadian north has opened new opportunities for women and men, traditional gender norms and expectations continue to be reproduced at the household level. For instance, women are expected to bear most of the responsibilities for carework as well as related work in the house. Additionally, they have more responsibilities outside the house with wage employment. In this conjuncture, women are often disadvantaged compared to men and they face a 'double burden' (Hochschild and Machung 1989). This has resulted, for many participants, in a feeling of overwhelming obligation. Central to this analysis is the concept of power.

My results show that women's experiences varied greatly and did not necessarily lead to situations of empowerment. Various sociocultural factors can explain the uneven experiences, most of which are rooted in the Inuit kinship structure where women are normatively subordinated.

Concomitantly, my data demonstrate that sharing practices continue to be a central element of redistribution between individuals and households. With increased social differentiation money creates greater pressure for demand sharing on wage-earners and women are specifically targeted because of their participation in the labour force and their sociocultural obligations. Consequently, women's wage-work and increased access to money have had mitigated impacts on gender roles and relations.

Finally, my analysis adds to Wenzel's understanding of socioeconomic transformation and the integration of money. According to Wenzel (2013: 191) the dilemma confronting Inuit is not the penetration of money *per se* into the local way of life*,* "rather, it is that the production of money requires a very different pattern of labour allocation than many traditional resource activities—principally, its acquisition is through the sale of the individual's labour rather than through collective action". While agreeing with Wenzel's view, I further argue that the

production of money requires a very different arrangement of gender roles. My data show that the monetised and the subsistence sectors in which individuals operate are not separate, rather they are integrated through new patterns of labour allocation in which gender roles are important to the acquisition of both essential resources: women producing money and men producing country food.

While the construction of gender in contemporary Inuit society has not been of major interest for researchers, my analysis suggests that it constitutes an important contemporary social transformation for which little information has been recorded. This is even more significant given that the context in which it takes place – economic transformations and globalization – is expected to accelerate in the foreseeable future.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion: women's roles in Inuit subsistence and livelihood

8.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have attempted to make Inuit women's contributions more visible within the northern economy. Particularly, I have investigated the work Clyde River women do and the roles they play to support their household and families in the context of Inuit mixed economy. While women's role in the wage economy is expanding so is their contribution to household basic needs and subsistence production. Despite such a magnitude their provisioning responsibilities remains largely underestimated and overlooked in current literature on Inuit. Indeed, my investigations reveal a complex socioeconomic structure within which women provide various resources – ranging from care to money – for a large number of relatives and non-related individual.

Through this thesis, I attempted to develop a comprehensive account of Inuit women's contributions in subsistence, domestic and wage work. While addressing the invisibility of Inuit women in contemporary research, this thesis emphasized the way modern subsistence and contemporary economic environment are experienced by Inuit women. As I introduced in Chapter 1, the main aim of this thesis was *to understand Inuit women's roles within the transformed socioeconomic environment in Nunavut.* In pursuing this primary endeavour, I focused on three levels of analysis. First, at the territorial level I explored changes in the Nunavut wage-economy, women's labour force participation, the patterns and the nature of work over the last decades. Secondly, on the community level, I examined women's work in relation to subsistence practices in the community of Clyde River. Thirdly, I narrowed my focus on the household level to look at women's domestic responsibilities. Each level allowed me to approach my main objective and to explore gendered aspects of contemporary Inuit society.

In my introductory chapter, I also presented three specific objectives that deepen my main aim; 1) to provide a deeper understanding of the changing labour markets and related opportunities for Inuit women in contemporary Nunavut; 2) to provide a comprehensive analysis

of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of Inuit mixed economy; and 3) to assess the effects of Inuit women's contribution on gendered roles and gendered power relations.

In Chapter 2, I outlined the conceptual framework that structured this thesis. I reviewed and critiqued the literatures on women and work, the sociocultural approach of work, provisioning theories and gendered roles, power and relations. I drew important conceptual elements from these bodies of literature to guide my research objectives and analysis. The literature on women and work was instrumental in situating my research. Specifically, several authors have discussed the importance in situating women's work in a broad perspective, that is not limited to wage-employment (Albers 1996, Berman 2003b, Medicine and Jacobs 2001). By defining categories of work, northerners such as Nahanni (1990, 1992), Guemple (1986, 1995) and Kuokkanen (2011a, 2011b) have helped me approach Inuit women's work from three different perspectives – waged, domestic and land-related work.

Studying Inuit women's work also involved being aware of the cultural and colonial structures that frame women and men's economic roles. To assess Inuit women's labour-force participation, I used studies conducted in other Arctic regions, and highlighted the importance of sociocultural factors - family, gender, age and location – to measure ones experience (Dybbroe 1988, Hovelsrud and Smit 2010, Hovelsrud et al. 2011, Kleinfeld et al. 1981, Kleinfeld et al. 1983). Women's land-related contributions were situated in Inuit livelihoods and subsistence contexts, with reference to previous studies conducted in the community of Clyde River as well as in other northern communities (Collings et al. 1998, Condon et al. 1995, Harder and Wenzel 2012, Wenzel 1991, 1995, Wenzel et al. 2000a). Finally, women's domestic and caring roles were investigated with a focus on notions of *culture* and *difference* (Condon and Stern 1993, Jolles 2006, Sprott 2002) and with insights from indigenous feminists (Saunders 2002, Smith 2005, St-Denis 2007, Suzack et al. 2010). Overall, such a broad perspective has allowed me to better conceptualize women's work.

In order to describe the socioeconomic context in which Inuit women perform their work and provide for those they have responsibility for, I developed a sociocultural approach to work. I examined work from the literature on Inuit subsistence and Inuit mixed economy. While defining the modern Inuit subsistence, I emphasized the importance of money in the maintenance of harvesting practices (Ford et al. 2008, Natcher 2009, Wenzel 1991, Wenzel et al. 2000a). To

examine the organization of work in Inuit society, I drew attention to the nature and patterns of work and argued that a sociocultural approach to work should reflect aspects of 'traditional' subsistence: organization, cooperation, redistribution, sharing and division of labour (Chabot 2004, Dahl 2000, Duhaime 1991, Stern 2001).

Provisioning literature provided a broad and critical way to explain how relationships shape the work-responsibilities carried by Inuit women. In this literature, feminist economists define women's work and responsibilities as a complex set of activities in which social locations and relationships are paramount (Luxton and Corman 2001, Neysmith et al. 2010a, Vosko 2006). Taylor (2004: 31) notes that "work is embedded in and defined by the social relations within which it is located". Using such an approach has enabled me to connect economic and social spheres in regards to Inuit women's roles. More specifically, my focus on contextualizing and explaining the division of labour, resource allocation and decision-making, were critically influenced by power relations and the notions of 'obligation' and 'negotiation' (Neysmith et al. 2010b). Throughout this thesis I used *provisioning* in combination with Inuit social economy and kinship organization to investigate the different categories of work and their allocation among family members. Such an approach has allowed me to investigate the provisioning responsibilities carried by Inuit women within the context of social relationships and kinship.

Finally, concepts of gender identity and power informed my analysis of women's roles and economic contribution (Bonvillain 2007, Leigh 2009, Williamson 2004). Using this approach I considered the historical construction of gender identity among Inuit and other Arctic peoples (Frink et al. 2002, Jarvenpa and Brumbach 2006), and relied on Inuit traditional livelihoods, where men and women had distinct but complementary roles based on a specific division of labour (Condon and Stern 1993, Giffen 1930, Kjellström 1973b, Minor 2002, Stern 2010). I emphasized that economic roles define gender and *vice versa*.

Also important to this analysis, is the notion of power. While several authors have noted the 'balanced asymmetry' of gender relations and roles (Billson and Mancini 2007, Jolles and Kaningok 1991) and the complementary-but-equal division of labour (Giffen 1930, Leacock 1981), I have emphasized in this thesis that, historically, Inuit women's authority over decision making was unbalanced (Reimer 1996, Stern 2010, Guemple 1995). Overall, I used this body of literature to analyse women's work experiences and to make a key argument in this thesis, which

is *that contemporary conceptions of work and the distribution of responsibilities within families are instrumental in the formation of gender roles and relations*.

In Chapter 3, I provided contextual information to situate Inuit women's work in Nunavut. I discussed the geographic, demographic, political, social and economic transformations that shaped the construction of contemporary Nunavummiut society. Specifically, I explored northern geographies and Inuit livelihoods to highlight the rapidity of change in the North. From being semi-nomadic small groups, Inuit have moved to permanent settlements. This spatial reorganization has brought massive changes in their livelihoods and in Inuit women's work. While examining these socioeconomic transformations I highlighted the absence of Inuit women's perspectives and experiences.

Throughout this chapter, I underlined all the places in the literature where women's roles and contributions were neglected and demonstrated the importance of gaining a fuller understanding of their roles. In Chapter 3, I set the socioeconomic framework through which I then examined women's contributions. My examination of Nunavut's wage economy provided key arguments in demonstrating that women's roles *are* expanding, as shown in labour force participation rates and employment data.

The importance of a female's income and work patterns are explored in order to better position research participants' experiences. In this chapter I also presented the social landscapes in which women make their living and emphasized the importance of education and training, as well as the transformations in the Inuit family.

Chapter 4 focused on the methodology used for this thesis to analyze and interpret the results. In the first part, I described the approach I took in designing the research and the importance of local researcher Rebecca Hainnu in this pursuit. I emphasized the importance of each fieldwork session, and my positionality while conducting this project. In the second part, I described each method used to capture all aspects of women's work. Specifically, I explored participant observation, semi-structured interviews, economic diaries, life history calendar and time use chart. Finally, the last part examined the way data was analyzed and validated. Inclosing, I discussed some ethical considerations and challenges I experienced while conducting and designing the research.

Together, these preliminary chapters (1-4) allowed me to set the conceptual, contextual and methodological framework with which I investigated my thesis main aim and related objectives. The resulting findings are outlined in the next section.

8.2 Key findings and conceptual contributions

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 presented the key findings present in my data and their analysis and interpretation. In Chapter 5, I sought to *provide a deeper understanding of work and labour market dynamics in Nunavut and the related opportunities for Inuit women*. To illustrate the crucial role that gender plays in understanding the changing labour market in contemporary Nunavut, I presented the individual story of five participants. Drawing on participants' conception of what counts as work, I developed a comprehensive understanding of the concept that includes six key meanings: family, food, money, hunting and fishing, housework and carework and wage-work and identity. These meanings are all connected and convey a sociocultural construction of work that reflects participant's experience and conception. Indeed, the way Inuit women and men conceptualized work appeared to be deeply connected to the Inuit mixed economy, where particular economic mechanisms are socially embedded (Natcher 2009). In my analysis of Inuit women's work I specifically demonstrated that the combination of wage-work, domestic and land-related work formed a unique framework that captured the specificity of northern women's work (Jolles 2002, Kuokkanen 2011a, Nahanni 1990, 1992, Sprott 2002, Wenzel 2000).

Another important point I made in this chapter was that women's employment could be explained through the examination of socioeconomic and sociocultural factors. I specifically relied on life history calendar and interviews to explain Inuit women's monetary contribution. In this section, I navigated between statistical data and field data to validate and enhance our understanding of northern wage economy and its internal dynamics. For instance, female participants tended to show a higher degree of adaptability to the requirements of labour market which was, in return, associated to a greater continuity in their gendered roles.

My analysis also revealed that the experiences of Inuit women from Clyde River are not unique, but rather resemble those of other Arctic regions. Indeed, data shows that Inuit women's

roles in the wage-economy are expanding in most parts of the circumpolar world and that Canada is following the same trend of high level female participation rates, including more stability in women's work patterns. Women's higher levels of education also suggest that this trend will continue in the foreseeable future. The experience of Clyde women contributed to the understanding of the 'northern gender gap' (Dybbroe 1988, Rasmussen 2009) and of northern development dynamics.

Finally, I made use of demographic and social data to illustrate reasons for women to seek jobs. Indeed, research participants repeatedly mentioned the challenges of living in lone-parent household and the instability of families to explain female's labour force participation. Overall, a core argument I made throughout this chapter is that the way women and men engaged in work-related activities is deeply connected to social relationships, economic mechanisms and to the organization of norms, expectations and obligations in Inuit culture. Such findings are then used throughout this thesis to better capture women's experiences.

In Chapter 6, I explored my second objective: *to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's provisioning responsibilities in the context of Inuit mixed economy*. In this chapter, I scaled down my investigation of women's roles to look at their provisioning responsibilities in their household and among other households. While the previous chapter explored female labour force participation on the Nunavut scale, here I focused on the community of Clyde River. I illustrated that the provisioning responsibilities carried by Clyde River women are complex and that the resources they provide show great diversity.

My core argument in this chapter was that women's roles have expanded over the last decades as can be seen in their participation in the wage-economy. Indeed, Inuit women are increasingly becoming the main monetary providers for their household, a situation that echoes in studies of other Arctic regions (Gerber 1990, 2014, Hamilton and Seyfrit 1994a, Hovelsrud et al. 2011, Kuokkanen 2011b, Poppel et al. 2007).

While this phenomenon in Nunavut is fairly new, I showed that this shift toward female wage-earners has resulted, in many participants' households, in the creation of a model female/wage-earner and male/hunter. On one hand, I argued that this situation appeared to be ideal both economically and culturally. On the other, I highlighted that such a division of

work/roles implied a new gender dynamic where women are positioned at the centre of production and critical to connect land production and wage economy.

Concomitant with the expansion of their roles is an increase in their provisioning responsibilities. In documenting female participants' various responsibilities, I argued that through their monetary transfers, women have become a key asset in the maintenance of harvesting activities and Inuit subsistence at large. While the women's breadwinning role transformed the traditional division of labour, it offered a different perspective in regards to the fundamental hunter's dilemma of opting between time and money (Chabot 2003, Natcher 2009, Wenzel 1991, 2000). Various scholars suggest that the presence and availability of males affects access to country foods (Duhaime et al. 2002: 95), Wenzel (2000) has suggested that the presence of a female wage-earner might also significantly affect access to costly hunting equipment.

My data showed that the income generated by women can provide funding for men to hunt. While a large proportion of female participants supported at least one harvester, my data also revealed that such contributions varied greatly between households; from weekly monetary transfers to occasional and modest ones. In other words, the role of women has become much more than a complementary contribution; it fuels the dynamics between both sectors of the economy. Accordingly, I argued in this chapter that women's contributions are fundamental to the maintenance of the Inuit mixed economy.

Another important contribution is that Inuit women's participation in the wage-economy does not mean that they are moving away from the land-based economy. On the contrary, I argued that their non-existence in this 'category of work' is the result of what is being 'counted' as work. In other words, harvesting activities are counted as work for those – and *only* for those – who participate 'physically' in such practices, those – women – who contribute to it 'indirectly' – such as through their wage – are not counted. My argument spoke to the way work is defined and conceptualized in the literature and in official statistics and adds to Ester Boserup's (1970) definition of women's roles in economic development. Findings from this chapter set the ground for the next chapter, where I highlighted the challenges and limitations of such shifts in gendered roles.

In Chapter 7, I explored the construction of gender roles and relation as well as the concept of power. Specifically, I aimed to answer my third research objective which is *to assess the effects of economic transformations on gender roles and power*. With a focus on the household level, I examined how economic transformations have impacted gender roles, how women made sense of their roles and relation, and how power was organized within their family. I first drew attention to work allocations within participants' households and showed that housework and carework followed the lines of gender in most cases. Interviews revealed that the persistence of such traditional labour divisions in Clyde River was closely related to cultural norms and expectations and, consequently, that gender continued to play a critical role in work allocation. More importantly to this thesis, my analysis showed that money had become a crucial factor in explaining individual and collective choices. For instance, work allocation within households followed gender and age, but the importance of monetary production greatly influenced construction of gender roles.

A core argument I made in this chapter was that wage-work was both experienced as empowering and disempowering by female participants. While women's new economic roles resulted in new gender dynamics at the household level, whether such change resulted in forms of empowerment or disempowerment depended on broader social dynamics. I demonstrated that various sociocultural factors could explain such uneven experiences, most of which are rooted in the Inuit kinship structure where women are genealogically subordinated (Damas 1963, Wenzel 1995). For a great number of female participants the development of a wage economy had meant new opportunities and greater control over resources. However for others, employment had translated in increased obligations towards their family and little to no control over household resources and decisions.

My data analysis from Clyde River also revealed that the family continues to be the central institution through which roles, responsibilities, identity and power are structured. However, I argued in this chapter that gender roles have undergone profound changes over the last decades in response to family restructuring and transformations in the socioeconomic environment. I pointed out that the dismantling of the *ilagiit* and the increase in lone-parent households had resulted in new household organization.

These transformations in the social organization of Inuit families have had tremendous impacts on gender roles and power relations. In fact, I argued that the development of a model where women are increasingly becoming the main monetary provider and men continue to hunt, although seen as socioculturally consistent, imposed greater pressure on work allocations within families and the concomitant gender roles and relations. Such a finding, broadly situated in the literature on Inuit social organization, also speaks to Rasmussen 'gender split regarding work'.

Finally, Chapter 7 demonstrated that sharing practices continued to be a central element of redistribution between individuals and households. With increased social differentiation, money created greater pressure for demand sharing on wage-earners and women were specifically targeted because of their participation in the labour force and their social obligations. Consequently, women's wage-work and increased access to money have had mitigated impacts on gender roles and relations.

8.3 Main aim and further contributions

Throughout this thesis I sought *to understand Inuit women's dominant roles within the transformed socioeconomic environment in Nunavut.* I grounded my analysis in a conceptual framework that delved into feminist and indigenous perspectives to better capture Inuit women's full contribution to northern economy.

This research has resulted in three major findings. First, Inuit women are key actors in the wage-economy in Nunavut as they are more likely to enter and continue in the wage sector than men and attain higher levels of education. Moreover, they have consistently increased their labour force participation rates over the last decades particularly since the early 1990s (Chapter 5).

Second, at the community level, Inuit women's provisioning responsibilities are highly important to the maintenance of the Inuit mixed economy. Indeed, by sharing, redistributing and transferring money, Inuit women are instrumental in securing traditional and modern resources, and in doing so directly contribute to modern Inuit subsistence adaptation (Chapter 6).

Third, new gender dynamics (in relation to division of labour and provider roles) are being experienced across the Canadian north and, in turn, are reshaping Inuit identity and culture (Chapter 7). Overall, my doctoral thesis shows the highly valuable contributions of Inuit women to the mixed economy of Nunavut as well as their importance in the process of building modern Nunavummiut society and culture.

Results from my doctoral thesis also highlight the fact that contemporary economic dynamics in the Canadian north affect women and men differently depending on their geographical location and, because of the social heterogeneity of Inuit culture, various sociocultural norms and expectations. In this process Inuit women are facing new challenges. Although they have absorbed new roles in the wage-economy, they continue to be the main caregivers in their nuclear and extended families – and have most responsibilities in the domestic economy. Also, because of their genealogical position (see Damas 1963, Wenzel 1981) women often feel obligated to respond to requests made upon them by male kin (Wenzel 2000). All this raises questions of how to balance their continuing domestic responsibilities with the new dynamics of being both breadwinner and harvesting provider.

Through this thesis I demonstrated that transformation in gender roles in contemporary Nunavut is highly connected to ongoing demographic and economic transformations, and therefore offers a significant insight on how present and anticipated socioeconomic transformations will affect Inuit economy and society. My key findings echo research in other Arctic regions that suggest that "the ongoing changes in the north are producing very different gendered responses" (Rasmussen 2009: 528). Indeed, researchers from Alaska, Greenland and Canada have identified some consequences of this gender split: massive outmigration of indigenous women in some small communities (Gionet 2008, Hamilton and Seyfrit 1993, 1994a, 1994b, Hamilton et al. 1996, Hamilton, Colocousis and Johansen 2004, Hoogensen et al. 2004, Huskey and Southcott 2010), higher levels of suicide among young males (Kral et al. 2011, Kral 2012, 2013), and increased domestic violence and crimes against women (Billson 2006, Kral and Idlout 2009, Qamanirq 2005). These consequences cannot be analyzed independently and divorced from structural changes that affect the lives and responsibilities of women in the North.

Finally, my findings have important concomitant policy implications that expand beyond the conceptual framing of this research project. Given the state of the northern economy, Inuit

women's inputs, through their wages, are much more than dollars *per se*. Indeed, their support to harvesting practices is a direct contribution to food security in their household and community. Such an argument does not minimize the role of men in the procurement of country food, but rather *reframes* access to foods and food security through a gender perceptive. While the relationship between gender and food (in)security has already been identified in previous research (Beaumier et al. 2014, Beaumier and Ford 2010, Council of Canadian Academies 2014, Healey and Meadows 2008), none to this day has provided any significant data to connect the roles of Inuit women in securing food resources.

In addressing this topic, this doctoral research has contributed to a more holistic understanding of the way economic development is experienced by Inuit women amidst modern conditions. In doing so, I addressed the northern gender gap (Dybbroe 1988, Dowsley 2014, Rasmussen 2009) and provided new data regarding women's roles in Inuit modern subsistence and livelihood

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Appendix 1

LIFE HISTORY CALENDAR

NAME : DATE :

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Living arrangements																	
- With parents																	
- With husband/partner																	
- Alone																	
- With friends																	
- Other																	
Family																	
- Marriage																	
- Relationship																	
- Child birth																	
- Child birth																	
- Child birth																	
- Child birth																	
- Child birth																	
Education																	
- High school																	
- University degree																	
- Certificate																	
- Other																	
Employment																	
- Unemployed																	
- Maternity leave																	
- Part-time employed																	
- Full-time employed																	
- Occasional work																	

Appendix 2

DIARY --------PART 1: YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Your Name:_____

Names of all members of your household, with their age and occupation:

Name	Age	Occupation

Dear diary-writer,
This diary is part of my research on Inuit women and their contributions to the Nunavut economy. Using your diary I will make sure to keep your name and personal information secret, unless you specifically allow me to use your name.

Do you wish to be identified? YES / NO

As discussed previously, the purpose of this diary is to understand how you participate in the economy. Therefore, I am looking for information on your **incomes** (all sources: gift, paid check, subsidies, etc.) and also on your **expenditures** (all sources: grocery, gas, Internet orders, gift to others, bills, etc.). Please keep your bills in the binder.

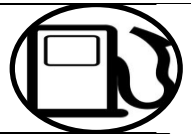
Please feel free to write the context or some details regarding the nature of your income or expenditure. I have left some free space behind every page so you can write anything you feel relevant (e.g. how do you feel about these incomes and expenditures).

Please, try to write every day for a seven (7) day period starting _____.
If you have question you can reach me at _____.

Thank you.

Magalie Quintal

DIARY PART 2: EXPENDITURES
(Please write how much you spent every day in each category)

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 Store food							
 Gas							
 Hunting material							
 Clothes							
 Tools							
 Bills							
 Internet order							
 Gift to...							
Other							

DIARY PART 2: EXPENDITURES
Please write any comments regarding your expenditures.
For example, are all your expenditures made for yourself or your family? Did you buy something for other people (extended family, friends, etc.)?

**** IF YOU GIVE MONEY TO SOMEONE PLEASE WRITE HIS/HER NAME/RELATION****

DIARY PART 3:

INCOMES

Sources of income	**From who? (Government, friend, family, etc.)**	**When did you receive it?**	**What amount?**	**Comments?**
Paid-check				
Subsidies (family allocation, etc.)				
Unemployment insurance				
Sales (Art craft, food, etc.)				
Gift (Did someone GAVE you money? Who?)				
Other sources				

DIARY PART 3:

INCOMES

Please write any comments regarding your incomes:

DIARY PART 4:

RECURRING PAYMENTS

TYPE OF PAYMENT	WHO USUALLY PAYS IT?	AMOUNT THIS MONTH
Mortgage (house)		
Rent (house)		
Rent (vehicle)		
Telephone		
Electricity		
Water		
Insurance		
TV (Cable)		
Internet		
Northern Account		
Other		
Other		

Appendix 3

TIME-USE CHART

Time Activities	Paid work and related activities	Hunting/ Fishing and related activities	Household work and related activities	Voluntary work	Sleep, meal and other personal activities	Socializing	Television, reading and sports	Other
6:00am								
6:30								
7:00								
7:30								
8:00								
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