INUIT ENCOUNTERS WITH COLONIAL CAPITAL:
NANISIVIK – CANADA’S FIRST HIGH ARCTIC MINE

by

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Abstract

Mineral development has a long history of occurring in the territory of Indigenous communities. In Canada’s North, mineral exploration and mine development has become the most significant economic development strategy for Nunavut, with unprecedented levels of investment taking place today. However, broader and long-term implications of mineral development, and relevant historical experiences, are not well understood or documented.

This thesis investigates a historically significant case: Canada’s first high Arctic mine, the Nanisivik lead-zinc mine, which operated near the Inuit community of Arctic Bay from 1976-2002. Across two papers, this thesis focuses on the mine’s development in the early 1970s, and closure in the 2000s.

Through a Marxian analysis utilizing the constructs of primitive accumulation and modes of production, chapter 2 outlines non-renewable resource-based industrial capitalism (exemplified by Nanisivik) as a distinct and severe structure of dispossession. This is contrasted with prior periods of similarly colonial but merchant capitalist resource extraction, namely whaling and the fur trade. I explain how the State and capital combined to impose capitalist relations of production on a predominantly noncapitalist Inuit social formation. Aspects of structural resistance to this imposition are also discussed. Archival materials demonstrate in particular the intention of the Canadian State to institute a mineral-based wage economy in the region, to facilitate capital accumulation, and Inuit assimilation and labour formation.

Chapter 3 explores Nanisivik’s closure and post-closure phases after operations ceased in 2002. It argues that, given the demolition of $50 million worth of industrial and residential infrastructure at Nanisivik, carried out against the wishes of the community of Arctic Bay, the mine represents a case of ‘closure failure.’ Research findings demonstrate a clear gap between the rhetoric and actual implementation of recent government and industry approaches to ‘sustainable’ mining, and socially responsibly mine closure. Analyses of relevant policy documents and interviews with residents of Arctic Bay suggest that economic concerns were consistently prioritized over socially responsible closure concerns. Profound and lingering disappointment and loss within the community over the outcome is also evident. Expanded mine closure regulation is called for in response.
Preface

Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis are intended to be stand-alone, peer-reviewed manuscripts. I am the primary author of these papers. My thesis supervisors Dr. Terre Satterfield and Dr. Frank Tester will be co-authors of the two papers. In each paper, my contributions include a) research conceptualization and design, b) collection of data and its analysis and c) full drafting and preparation of the manuscript. Dr. Terre Satterfield, Dr. Frank Tester and Dr. Peter Kulchyski provided contributions and input to each of these stages of research, in their role as supervisory committee members. To reflect this collaborative effort, chapters 2 and 3 are written with the plural pronoun “we,” while the study’s introduction and conclusion are written in the singular first person.

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<tr>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>Assistant Deputy Minister (Mineral Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakwater</td>
<td>Breakwater Resources Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEW</td>
<td>Distant Early Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIAND</td>
<td>Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DND</td>
<td>Department of National Defence Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMR</td>
<td>Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMI</td>
<td>Global Mining Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN</td>
<td>Government of Nunavut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBC</td>
<td>Hudson’s Bay Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICMM</td>
<td>International Council on Mining and Metals</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIBA</td>
<td>Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>Inuit Tapirisat of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Member of the Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMMSD</td>
<td>Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRI</td>
<td>Mineral Resources International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLCA</td>
<td>Nunavut Land Claim Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWB</td>
<td>Nunavut Water Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWT</td>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCMP</td>
<td>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RG 21</td>
<td>Record Group 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIA</td>
<td>Social Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMI</td>
<td>Whitehorse Mining Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

Mineral and other resource development worldwide has a long history of occurring in the territory of Indigenous communities. Within Canada, an estimated 36% of First Nations communities are located within 50 kilometres of a mine, while roughly 1,200 Aboriginal communities are within 200 km of active mines (Hipwell et al. 2002; Natural Resources Canada 2001).

In Canada’s North, mineral exploration and mine development has become the most significant economic development strategy for Nunavut over the past decade. Exploration investment is at unprecedented levels – an estimated $502.3 million in 2011. Nunavut’s exploration activity is more than that of the Yukon and Northwest Territories combined, making it the fourth highest jurisdiction in Canada, from an exploration point of view (NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines 2011). Examining a map of mineral exploration proposed and underway in Nunavut today reveals the immense scale, and hundreds of projects, taking place across the territory (Appendix A).

However, the cumulative effects of mineral development are not comprehensively assessed by the Nunavut Impact Review Board, or by any other regulatory authority. Documented historical experience upon which resource governance actors can draw is also inadequate.
Instead, mineral development is typically promoted as an obvious – even necessary – path for achieving economic growth, from community to national scales (Power 2002). Conventional economic logic poses this growth, including wage employment and increased business and investment, as bringing socioeconomic benefits to communities. This may be the case within capital-intensive, industrial development logic, but may have vastly different implications in the context of Indigenous or land-based gatherer-hunter cultures being actively or passively transitioned into an industrial one.

More broadly, mining has historically had a mixed record – success stories of mining and community development, as well as cases of conflict and negative social and environmental impacts, are both common. Many studies detail the risks and impacts of resource development and extractive industries on local communities and the environment, particularly in Indigenous, and Global South contexts (e.g. Blaser, Feit, and McRae 2004; Gedicks 2001; Whitmore 2006). Blaser, Feit and McRae (2004) argue that historically, industrial resource development in Indigenous territories has done more harm than good, and the distribution of benefits to local communities and their environments have been minimal or short-lived.

1.2. Study setting

This thesis seeks to understand a historically significant case of mining: Canada’s first high Arctic mine, the Nanisivik lead-zinc mine. It was selected as an example of the implications of moving rapidly from an economy based around the gathering and hunting of land and marine resources, to an industrially based one in the Canadian North and in reference to Indigenous communities living therein. It also serves as an example of what assessment and decision-making
might have occurred at this mining project, as compared with what did occur, and thus might be instructive for current proposals for mining. I examine the Nanisivik mine as having specific implications for broader historical, social and developmental contexts in the eastern Arctic. Further, it represents a case of the planning and consequences of mineral development through closure.

I find that the Nanisivik mine reflects Canada’s ambivalent record on mining in Indigenous territories. The mine has been praised by some (e.g. McPherson 2003), and questioned and critiqued by others (e.g. Brody 1975; Brubacher 2002). From 1976 until 2002, Nanisivik operated on the shore of the Strathcona Sound, at the tip of Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island). It was proclaimed as a model for future resource developments in the North. Though expected to bring extensive Inuit employment opportunities and economic development in the region, these promises were not fully realized, and in fact substantial uncertainties abound right from the mine’s outset as to how realistic these expectations were.

The Inuit community of Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay) is located approximately 30 km away from Nanisivik by all-weather road (see Appendix B). It has a population of 823 (2011 data; Statistics Canada 2012). As of 2006, 93% of the residents identified as Inuit and claim Inuktitut as their first language (Statistics Canada 2007). Arctic Bay pre-dates Nanisivik by almost fifty years, initially established by the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1926, though the area had been inhabited and utilized by Inuit for thousands of years (Adams 1941). Nanisivik was the largest employer in the region, and comparable economic activity has not resumed near Arctic Bay since the mine’s closure in 2002. Nonetheless, the community has long been strongly supported by the non-wage
sector, and in 2006 82% of Inuit adults in Arctic Bay reported hunting, 86% reported fishing, and 78% reported gathering wild plants in the previous year (Statistics Canada 2006).

A number of studies have examined Nanisivik’s socioeconomic impacts during the operational phase of the mine (e.g. Baffin Regional Inuit Association 1979; Bowes-Lyon, Richards, and McGee 2009; Brubacher 2002; Hickling-Partners Inc. 1981). However, few have asked how and why this mine – originally surrounded by economic uncertainty – came to be in the first place (Gibson 1978 is an exception). The underlying logics of development employed by the State and capital in the mine’s inception remain unclear or poorly understood. Similarly at other end of the mine’s life, few have examined how or why Nanisivik’s closure proceeded as it did. The longitudinal effects and dynamics of Nanisivik’s closure have largely been ignored, with the exception of one study in 2006 (Bowes-Lyon 2006). This thesis, as articulated by the chapter foci below, makes a contribution to both of these research areas.

1.3. Research objectives and thesis outline

Chapter 2 situates Nanisivik’s development against a background of three major periods of colonialism and capitalist resource extraction in Canada’s high eastern Arctic: whaling, the fur trade, and industrial resource development. In so doing, it locates mining in the North inside larger colonial, economic, local and regional contexts – both ongoing and contemporary ones. Chapter 2 is written as a paper examining the ways in which industrial capitalist activity such as mining differs from prior merchant capitalist activities in the Arctic. To do so, the concepts of primitive accumulation and modes of production – derived from the work of Karl Marx – are revisited and utilized.
Menzies (2010) has observed that the relationship between Marxism and Indigenous struggles has been an ambivalent one. However, Marxism can provide critical insights and an analytic lens for an understanding of power in historical and contemporary contexts, including the function of the State in the accumulation of capital (Menzies 2010, 5). As Simon recently noted:

Regardless of what one may think of Marxism as a political project…the intellectual contribution of Marxism to the anthropological study of capitalism remains relevant. If we use Marxist concepts as part of a larger set of methodological tools, rather than Marxism as a blueprint to yet another form of industrial society, our studies may contribute to even wider goals of social justice (2011, 6)

The concepts of primitive accumulation and modes of production provide a critical framework for understanding the attempted transition and transformation of noncapitalist, gatherer-hunter peoples such as Inuit to the industrial capitalist model dominant in the world today. Using this framework to inform readings of archival documents on Nanisivik, I examined differences in the social relations imposed by State and capitalist interests through the mine's development, as compared with the social relations of the Inuit gatherer-hunter mode of production that were largely retained throughout the whaling and fur trade eras. In so doing, two primary points come into focus: (1) that mining should not be seen as one development in a long history of developments, but as a singular transition point from one kind of economy to another; and (2) key moments of Inuit resistance to this new economic endeavor and its imposition can be identified through the framework used.

Chapter 3, focused on decommissioning and closure itself, asks how (inside this new economic tradition) over $50 million worth of industrial and residential infrastructure came to be demolished at the Nanisivik site – a significant event, given the severe infrastructure shortages
which plague Canada’s high Arctic. The chapter is written as a paper that explores the mine’s closure and post-closure phases, reporting on interviews conducted with residents of Arctic Bay, and analysis of various public documents and reports pertaining to Nanisivik’s closure. It tracks the changes in the positions of the territorial government, mining company, and community, in terms of support for establishing an alternative use for the Nanisivik site following the mine’s closure. Close attention is given to the perspectives and concerns of community members, regarding both closure planning and process, and the socioeconomic effects of Nanisivik’s closure. To understand these circumstances, the chapter draws on both chapter 2 and the literature dealing with the ‘sustainability’ (including social sustainability) of mining ventures; and socially responsible mine closure. Ultimately, a clear picture of Nanisivik as a case of ‘closure failure’ emerges in light of both current and past expectations.

The conclusion provides an overview of the arguments developed in this thesis. It outlines the implications of the research for resource governance actors and communities, as well as the academic contributions made.
Chapter 2: Mining as primitive accumulation in the eastern Arctic: Articulations of capital with the Inuit gatherer-hunter mode of production

2.1. Introduction

Periods of colonialism and capitalist extractive industry in Canada’s high eastern Arctic are often considered to have begun with the arrival of whalers in Baffin Bay in the 1800s; followed by the influx of traders, missionaries and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) beginning in the 1920s; and the subsequent involvement of the Canadian State and resource development actors at the end of World War II (Bone 2009; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Usher 1982).

It has been argued that the whaling period first exposed Inuit to the capitalist mode of production in the eastern Arctic (e.g. Mitchell 1996), and represented the first systemic colonial presence via the exploitation of resources – whales, and Inuit labour (Kulchyski 2005a). The commercial fur trade, beginning in the Arctic in the early 1900s, significantly exacerbated the pressures on Inuit to conform to capitalist interests. Though whaling did not tend to create dependency amongst Inuit, the fur trade driven by the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) certainly did. The HBC played a large role in the diversion of the Inuit gatherer-hunter mode of production, via the eastern Arctic’s incorporation into the market economy, toward animals valued for their skins, rather than as food (Brody 1975).

However, this paper argues that it is the third period, the phase of mineral, oil and gas development, that has witnessed by far the most unrelenting and totalizing attempts by State and
capitalist interests to displace the Inuit gatherer-hunter mode. Historical analysis indicates that, in fact, the capitalist mode of production itself was not confronted in the eastern Arctic until the introduction of non-renewable resource extraction. That is, while Inuit encountered merchant capitalist activity during the whaling and fur trade periods, they do not appear to have faced the capitalist mode in the high eastern Arctic until the arrival of the Nanisivik lead-zinc mine on northern Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island).

This event was, we find, a singularly important locus of primitive accumulation in the high eastern Arctic. Examination of Record Group 21 (RG 21, records of the former federal Department of Mines, Energy and Resources) at Library and Archives Canada reveals the very deliberate intention of the Government of Canada to institute a mineral-based wage economy in the high eastern Arctic in the 1970s. Developments ran contrary to much government rhetoric suggesting that Inuit be permitted to choose their own futures.

Investigating these events provides further understanding of the historical and contemporary processes of Marx’s primitive accumulation thesis – an area that has experienced resurgence in interest in recent years. Unlike primitive accumulation, the associated concepts of modes of production and their articulation have not resurfaced in recent scholarship. This, we find, inhibits a fuller understanding of mining in the north as a source of significant social, cultural and economic transformation. Specifically, capitalism may be the dominant mode of production on a world scale today (O’Laughlin 1975), but as we demonstrate, there is no primitive accumulation without noncapitalist modes of production. Rediscovering Marx’s notion of primitive
accumulation depends then upon the concept of modes of production, as does our broader understanding of social, cultural and economic/ecological transformation.

This paper begins with a brief overview of the theories of primitive accumulation, modes of production, and their intersection. These are essential to a critical understanding of the attempted transition and transformation of noncapitalist modes to capitalism, though many seem to have lost focus of the key interdependency between these two central Marxist concepts. Next, these theoretical constructs are utilized to reveal both the similarities and differences in the three major periods of colonization and resource extraction in Inuit social history that are outlined herein: whaling, the fur trade, and non-renewable resource development (particularly mining). Finally, we discuss the justifications and rationale cited within RG 21 for developing the Nanisivik mine, as an enlightening case study of how the State and industrial capital seek to impose capitalist relations of production on a noncapitalist, gatherer-hunter mode, at a fundamentally different scale and severity to the merchant capitalist enterprises of whaling and fur trading. Revealed also in our discussion are the moments and structures of resistance by Inuit to the disruption of their gatherer-hunter mode of production.

2.2. Ongoing primitive accumulation

In a very clear explication of the relationship between the two central Marxist concepts of ‘primitive accumulation’ and ‘modes of production,’ Robert Miles explained that:

[W]herever the capitalist mode of production has emerged, its origin is to be traced in a historically prior process of primitive accumulation. Consequently in each instance it is necessary to trace the emergence of capitalist relations of production, i.e. the capital-wage
labour relation. The reproduction and spread of the capitalist mode of production therefore presumes a continuing process of primitive accumulation (1987, 39–40).

In part eight of the first volume of Capital, Volume I, Marx stated: “So-called primitive accumulation…is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as ‘primitive’ because it forms the pre-history of capital, and of the mode of production corresponding to capital” (1990, 875). In signaling the ongoing nature of the processes of primitive accumulation, as an indispensable and permanent feature of the capitalist mode of production,¹ Miles’ formulation² above might be seen as a precursor to what many have described as a revival of interest in and utilization of Marx’s thesis (e.g., Baird 2011; Glassman 2006; A. Roberts 2008). The renewed debate has similarly made clear that dispossession pertains not only to historical phases of capitalism’s “pre-history” in Europe, but is an ongoing process in capital accumulation (Roberts 2008, 541; see also Charusheela 2011; Coulthard 2013;³ Glassman 2006).

The resurgence of interest in primitive accumulation has been stimulated in large part by David Harvey (2003a; 2003b), whose adaptation of the concept via his notion of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ is being deployed in analyses of processes taking place not just in the Global South, but in the capitalist countries of the Global North also (Glassman 2006). This reformulation overcomes both a feature in and a reading of Marx’s discussion of primitive

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¹ As recent discussions have noted (Bernauer 2011; Mezzadra 2011, 306; A. Roberts 2008), Marx’s usage of “so-called primitive accumulation” sought to radically critique the classical political economy of his day, especially Adam Smith’s sanguine view of “previous accumulation,” observing instead that the processes of primitive accumulation had historically been achieved through “conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force” (Marx 1990, 874).
² Following Claude Meillasoux.
accumulation as a process restricted to some former period, mostly passed in England but still in effect in the colonies when Marx was writing (Glassman 2006, 611).

Harvey’s movement in analyzing the dynamic of primitive accumulation in the Global North appropriately turns our attention to internal colonial contexts, such as those of Canada’s North (see Bernauer 2011; Coulthard 2013). These internal colonies have been formed by imposed, colonial structures of domination, which in both the historical and contemporary setting, have facilitated a stark dispossession of Indigenous peoples’ lands and sovereignty (Coulthard 2013, 2; see also Baird 2011; Gordon 2009; Howitt 2001).

In considering the relationship between colonialism and dispossession, Marx’s discussion of primitive accumulation is key, as he there “most thoroughly links the totalizing power of capital with that of colonialism” (Coulthard 2013, 2). In seeking to move beyond the teleological aspects of Marx’s original (early) discussions of primitive accumulation, Glen Coulthard advocates for an innovative contextual shift. By this he means approaching the problem from “the subject position of the colonized” experiencing dispossession, rather than that of the proletariat engaged in commodity production (2013, 6).

This contextual shift is both important and productive, for one because it follows Marx’s later works and thought wherein he began to move away from a unilinear model of development (and primitive accumulation), toward the possibility of alternative, or “multilinear pathways of development” (Anderson 2002, 87; Coulthard 2013; Kulchyski 2005b). In these writings, a

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4 Marx came to demonstrate an appreciation for communally-based, non-Western social structures, stating in the well-known letter to Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich that the ‘historical inevitability’ of a course to the
greater appreciation of ‘articulation’ (however uneven) between noncapitalist and capitalist modes of production within a particular social formation (or society) can be found, as can the “ways in which aspects of the former can come to inform the construction of radical alternatives to the latter” (Coulthard 2013, 6).

This brings us back to Miles, who posited that “the concepts of primitive accumulation and articulation of modes of production are interdependent” (1987, 49). As the capitalist mode of production arises and is reproduced through a continuing process of primitive accumulation, tracing these processes and the “emergence of capitalist relations of production” is central (1987, 39).

2.3. Revisiting modes of production

Marx’s framework for analyzing the emergence of these capitalist relations – the concept of modes of production – has not received a similar revival and usage since debates in the 1980s, in which they were generally deemed “exhausted” and outmoded, and largely abandoned as a result (Booth 1985; Kitching 1985; Graeber 2006). Perhaps in response, others have called for a reinvigoration of the ‘problematic’ of modes of production as a central area of critical Marxist thought (e.g. Jameson 1981; Kulchyski 2005b)

Marx’s materialist conception of history, or historical materialism, begins with the central proposition that social production and reproduction – of the means to support human life – is the capitalist mode of production is “expressly limited to the countries of Western Europe” (Anderson 2002, 82 citing Shanin).
basis of all social structures (Engels 2001; O’Laughlin 1975). The concept of mode of production is “liberally scattered” throughout Marx’s work (Harvey 2006, 25), and various references to and intentions for the concept in the Marxist tradition have been detailed and debated and thus are not reproduced here (e.g. Foster-Carter 1978; Southall 1987; Wolpe 1980). In Marx’s main usage of the concept throughout Capital, the labour process – or the “varied ways that human beings collectively produce the means of subsistence in order to survive and enhance social being” (Kivisto 2008, 218; see also Ingold 1988, 274) – is embodied by the (dialectical) combination of the forces of production, and the social relations of production (Callinicos 2004; Harvey 2006; O’Laughlin 1975).

The technical sphere (forces of production) refers to the sheer “power to transform and appropriate nature through human labour” (Harvey 2006, 101), and is constituted by three primary elements: 1) the ‘land’ or ‘natural resources,’ 2) ‘technology’ or the instruments of labour, including the “infrastructure through which goods are produced and circulated” (these first two elements are also known as the means of production), and 3) human ‘labour’ itself (Asch 1979a, 89; see also Callinicos 2004).⁵ The social sphere (social relations of production) refers to the “social organization and the social implications of the what, how and why of production” (Harvey 2006, 99), including the concepts of ‘ownership’ and ‘control’ of the means of production (Asch 1979a). Thus, a mode of production “…includes not only what a person uses to produce, but also how s/he relates to other persons, whether producers or non-producers” (Ingold 1988, 274).

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⁵ Harvey (2006) warns that the forces of production must not be equated with ‘technology’ alone, and that this misread of Marx explains the allegations of technological determinism leveled at him.
In order to understand the mode of production’s role as the determining element of social structure, we need to understand what Marx meant by ‘production.’ This [production] essentially refers to the entire social process: the reproduction of labour, the means of production, and the relations of production (O’Laughlin 1975, 349 citing Althusser; see also Kulchyski 2005b, 38). A mode of production is not simply a way of making things, but rather, is analogous to a way or *mode of life* (Coulthard 2013; Kulchyski 2005b), stated by Marx (with Engels) in *The German Ideology*:

[A] mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce (Marx and Engels 1970, 62).

At times, the forces and relations of production are in ‘*harmony,*’ and such societies are marked by relative stability (Asch 1979a). Conversely, transformation in the society is said to arise when antagonistic contradictions between the forces and relations of production emerge – for instance, via the introduction of capitalist relations of production to a noncapitalist mode of production, as discussed below. Such conflicts provoke change in the dominant systems of production, though Marx did not view such phenomena as an enlightened development of the division of labour, but rather as “uneven, periodized, qualitative change, marked by revolutionary transition from one epoch of production to another” (O’Laughlin 1975, 350; see also Asch 1979a; Harvey 2006).

Marxist historical accounts have focused on the transformation to (and development of) global capitalism, with “the long evolution from feudalism to capitalism” the best known among the transition debates (Heller 2011, 1). It is generally accepted that the capitalist mode emerged out
of the feudal or tributary mode, having developed “dialectically within [its] bowels” (Heller 2011, 12; see also Wolf 1982), though the nature of this transition remains contentious. Marx himself sought in his section on primitive accumulation to “trace the path by which, in Western Europe, the capitalist economic order emerged from the womb of the feudal economic order” (Anderson 2002, 88 citing Shanin).

2.3.1. Articulation and social formation

Marxist scholars working within a mode of production framework perceived a long and uneven transition to capitalism globally, wherein “incorporation of regions within colonial or mercantile empires did not necessarily impose upon those regions the laws of capitalist development” (Roseberry 1988, 168). Instead, a complex relationship or “articulation” between noncapitalist and capitalist modes of production occurred, raising an important distinction between mode of production and social formation (Brewer 1990; Roseberry 1988). Real societies reflect a “historically determined social formation” – constituted by several overlapping modes of production (Brewer 1990, 232; see also Poulantzas 1973, 15). The interdependence Miles identified between primitive accumulation and the articulation of modes of production has been taken up again recently, with a case made for a return to a more succinct focus on modes of production and their articulation within a social totality (Charusheela 2011, citing Mezzadra).

Elements of the articulation of modes of production approach, or the ‘new economic anthropology’ of the 1970s and 80s, are particularly useful for this present study (Foster-Carter

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6 Jameson expands: “every social formation or historically existing society has in fact consisted in the overlay and structural coexistence of several modes of production all at once, including vestiges and survivals of older modes of production, now relegated to structurally dependent positions within the new…” (1981, 95 citing Poulantzas).
Joining structural Marxism (influenced by Louis Althusser) with political economy, prominent French Marxist anthropologists including Claude Meillassoux and Pierre-Phillipe Rey sought to focus on the inter-relationship (articulation), or systems of relations, between capitalist and noncapitalist modes of production (Roseberry 1988; Wolpe 1980). The articulation approach recognized that “…capitalism neither evolves mechanically from what precedes it, nor does it necessarily dissolve it. Indeed, so far from banishing pre-capitalist forms, it not only coexists with them but buttresses them…” (Foster-Carter 1978, 51).

Rey’s (1973) conception of the articulation of modes of production is thought to have popularized the approach, building on the work of Althusser and Étienne Balibar, and is considered one of its strongest formulations (Berman 1984; Brewer 1990; Foster-Carter 1978). It represented “essentially a reformulation and specification” of the logic of the transition to capitalism (Foster-Carter 1978, 39). Rey distinguishes three periods of capitalism’s articulation with noncapitalist modes of production:

1) “an initial link in the sphere of exchange, where interaction with capitalism reinforces the pre-capitalist mode”; 2) capitalism ‘takes root’ through the imposition of the colonial structures of dominance, “subordinating the pre-capitalist mode but still making use of it”; and 3) at some point not yet reached in most ‘underdeveloped’ contexts, “the capitalist mode of production supplants all noncapitalist modes of production: noncapitalism disappears” (Bradby 1975; Foster-Carter 1978, 56; Patterson 1999; Ruccio and Simon 1986, 214; all citing Rey).

7 The articulation approach overcomes flawed attempts to use these frameworks for purely classificatory purposes, where each mode of production is treated as a ‘type’ under which human societies may be categorized (Jameson, 1981; Kulchyski, 2005b; Wolf, 1982). Specifically, it rejects the ‘stages’ perspective of some Marxist analysis that views modes of production as an evolutionary sequence.

8 Unfortunately as Les Alliances de Classes has not been translated into English, we must draw upon translations and interpretations of Rey’s work, especially Foster-Carter’s (1978) widely cited paper. In it, he notes that whereas “Althusser introduced the concept of ‘articulation’ without defining it,” the notion of ‘articulation of modes of production’ is not found in Althusser or Balibar, but rather must be “traced more proximately” in the work of Rey (Foster-Carter 1978, 54–55). According to Foster-Carter, “it is arguable that Rey’s work represents not only the earliest, but still the most effective and thorough-going attempt to ‘think’ the articulation of modes of production” (1978, 55).
Charusheela writes that “for Marx and Marxism, historical periodization [is] not simply about how “today” emerged. In the debates about primitive accumulation, modes of production…and transition, the stakes…are political,” in that they focus our attention on dynamics of exploitation and resistance (2011, 324 citing Mezzadra, emphasis added). Rey’s periodization then, stays faithful to this tradition, as his discussion of modes of production and their articulation was explicitly intended to address these political questions (Foster-Carter 1978). Modes of production in Marxist analyses provide a means by which the strategic relationships that shape the terms of human life can be understood (Wolf 1982). They are a critical framework by which the proliferation of the capitalist mode, and its impact on noncapitalist societies can be better understood, allowing us to comprehend “inter-systemic as well as intra-systemic relationships” (Wolf 1982, 76).

2.4. Transition and transformation

As noted, the transition from feudal to capitalist modes of production has received considerable attention in the literature. The transformation of Indigenous, non-capitalist modes of production that are essentially classless and do not intrinsically feature the logic of accumulation, however, has received far less attention. The way of life of the Dene of Canada’s western Arctic in the late precontact period is but one example of the stability of forces and relations of production in relative harmony (Asch 1979a). The same can be said of Inuit in the eastern Arctic at the time of European contact, who though embodying this stability, nonetheless represented a dynamic society adaptive to the opportunities and limitations of their environment (Coates 1985).
However, colonization serves to rupture this stability in Indigenous modes, “through the introduction of the economic and ideological effects of capitalism into non-capitalist societies by breaking down and transforming non-capitalist modes of production” (Young 2001, 24). The conflict between Indigenous gatherer-hunter peoples and the capitalist mode is specific, and is largely under-theorized in the literature (Kulchyski 2005b, 42). Although transformation can and does occur internally or wholly within a given mode of production, amongst the Dene this was driven by the external pressures of colonialism and capitalism. Understanding how this process takes place and the forms of resistance it generates is of immense historical importance (Asch 1979a).

In Peter Kulchyski’s (2005b, 37) view, currently “Dene and Inuit live on a fault line between two very distinct ways of life: that of the (post)modern, industrial, capitalist world and that of their traditional, subsistence, hunting world.” As has now hopefully been made clear, this fault line can usefully be analyzed through an examination of the articulation of the Inuit gatherer-hunter mode, and the forms of capitalism that it came to interact with.

### 2.4.1. Modes of production in the Canadian eastern Arctic

Wishing to avoid here what has been termed “the popular marxian pastime” of ‘mode-spotting’ (Crush 1986, 130), for the purposes of this paper we follow Jens Dahl’s (2000) explicitly Inuit gatherer-hunter mode of production framework. Drawing on Leacock and Lee (1982), Dahl’s Inuit mode of production is constituted by a number of key features: household as central socio-economic unit; ownership of the means of production; kinship and other networks of exchange

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9 Developed for a Greenlandic Inuit community, it naturally accounts well for the specificities of the Canadian eastern Arctic.
and reciprocity; collective and free access to the land and its resources; flexibility in hunting and other aspects of social life; and the “sustainable use of nature and of resources,” driven by *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (traditional knowledge) (2000, 211–213).

In contrast to the Inuit mode, the capitalist mode is the “most frequently studied” of all, and was the foremost subject of Marx’s inquiry (Brewer 1990, 13). It was the only mode of production for which he attempted a detailed analysis, primarily through *Capital* volumes I-III. The capitalist mode entails generalized commodity production, for exchange through sale on a market – as distinct from gatherer-hunter modes wherein people produce goods for their own use or subsistence (Brewer 1990; Miles 1987). Whereas in gatherer-hunter societies, economic life is not centered around commodities, under the capitalist mode “the entire economy becomes a commodity economy” (Amin 1976, 60).

The second defining feature of the capitalist mode stems from the class relation: between wage labourers, and capitalists (Brewer 1990). As discussed, this class relation and the transition to the capitalist mode of production requires various tactics of primitive accumulation (Marx 1990). These “colonial-like state practices” are intended to separate non-capitalist producers and peoples from their means of production and subsistence – the land (Coulthard 2013, 2 forthcoming). This generates the enclosure of collectively held land, and leads to the creation of a “free” class of wage workers (A. Roberts 2008, 536). Not only does primitive accumulation expropriate land from people, but also the people are “expropriated from the land and left with nothing but the sale of their labour power as a means of surviving” (Howitt 2001, 23; see also Marx 1990). These processes are well-known as *dispossession* and *proletarianization.*
2.5. Arctic articulations

What follows is a mode of production analysis of select moments in Inuit social history, culture and politics. By select, we mean those which indicate well events available and consistent with the archival material, as well as those which help illuminate the insights provided by Rey’s articulation framework. Rey’s framework, in particular, maps remarkably well with the encounters between Inuit and the forces of colonial capitalism in the North.

2.5.1. The whaling and early fur trade periods: “an initial link in the sphere of exchange, where interaction with capitalism reinforces the pre-capitalist mode”

In Rey’s first period of articulation, “the ‘traditional’ mode remains dominant. Capitalism gets raw materials from it, but in the pre-capitalist social formation this exchange not only does not promote capitalist relations of production, but rather reinforces the pre-capitalist mode” (Foster-Carter 1978, 59). This period aptly describes the whaling and early fur trade periods in the eastern Arctic.

Inuit in the region first began to encounter Scottish whalers seasonally around 1820, and more extensively in the 1860s when whalers began to winter over (Crowe 1991; Mary-Rousselière 1984). Whales were at the time a central source of the oil being utilized in the industrialization of Europe, and also provided commercially valuable ivory and baleen (Crowe 1991; Kulchyski 2005a).
The whaling period represented the first systemic colonial presence in the high eastern Arctic, via the exploitation of resources – whales, and Inuit labour (Mitchell 1996; Kulchyski 2005a; W. G. Ross 1984). Long before Europeans arrived in Arctic waters, Inuit were expert hunters of whales – utilizing kayaks, umiaks, and harpoons (Crowe 1991). When the whalers came, Inuit were hired in hunting roles – in the whaling itself, but also in the provision of fresh meat to the whalers, and various other support services including piloting and sewing (Crowe 1991; Mary-Rousseliére 1984). Though accounts suggest that they “received little pay beyond their food,” (Low, 1906, 28, cited in Mary-Rousseliére 1984, 443) and money was not exchanged in return for their labour, Inuit did receive trade items such as rifles, ammunition and even whaleboats in return for their efforts (Crowe 1991; Mary-Rousseliére 1984).

The departure of whalers left Inuit stranded in some respects – access to ammunition being one example. But the vacuum left by whalers was quickly filled by traders, missionaries, and RCMP, and this colonizing trinity or “big three” came to dominate Inuit life in many ways from around 1920 until the end of the World War II (WWII) (Coates 1985; Crowe 1991; Mitchell 1996). We focus here on the primary economic actors: fur traders. The Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) had effectively gained a monopoly in the fur trade by the late 1930s, with posts often established in former whaling harbours. The HBC controlled almost the entire flow of southern goods reaching Inuit, and built its trade on the export of arctic (white) fox furs to the fashion markets of Europe and North America.  

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10 Small skin boats.
11 It is worth noting that the Arctic fur trade began significantly later than the Subarctic trade which, based on beaver furs, had begun in the 1700s (Usher 1982).
Traders, like the whalers before them, encouraged Inuit to produce surplus goods for exchange, on top of the sustenance needs which had been their focus previously (Mitchell 1996; Usher 1982). However Inuit labour power was not purchased through wages (had not yet been commodified), and thus the surplus produced for trade did not take the form of surplus value, appropriated by capitalist whalers and traders. Rather, like the Subarctic Dene, Inuit acted as independent, small-scale primary commodity producers in the fur trade, which (as with whaling) “was a capitalist enterprise of the merchant variety” (Asch 1979b, 344).

This is an important demarcation, as merchant capital pre-dates the capitalist mode and involves “the accumulation of wealth through the process of the exchange of money and commodities (Satzewich and Wotherspoon 2000, 18; see also Marx 2001). Profits are gained through the purchase or exchange of commodities below their value, to be sold above their value elsewhere. This suggests that unlike industrial capitalism that increases profitability through making production more ‘efficient,’ merchant’s capital operates in the sphere or circulation, as opposed to that of production (Asch 1979b; Heller 2011).

During this period, Inuit life by and large shifted from a gatherer-hunter based economy, to one based on trade (Brody 1975, 22). But precisely what an understanding of social formation helps us to understand is, though the gatherer-hunter and trapping economies may appear as one, “in fact it consisted of two analytically distinct economic structures or modes of production” (Asch 1982, 362).

Because traders depended greatly on traditional lifestyle, little pressure was placed to alter the Inuit gatherer-hunter mode. Inuit were able to continue living off the land, and to live by
traditional skills, values and cycles – the fur trade economy supported this in some respects (Brody 1975; Coates 1985; Usher 1982). Although some have expressed concern that the fur trade diverted Inuit hunting towards animals valued for their skins, rather than as food (e.g. Brody 1975), others have observed that arctic fox trapping actually fit well with winter sealing practices, as the fox would typically appear to scavenge after seal hunting activity (Wenzel 1991). The trading and subsistence economies were perhaps not as mutually exclusive as previously suggested (e.g. by Tester and Kulchyski 1994, 26).

Articulation with the merchant capitalist whalers and traders enabled access to rifles and other productive technology, which supported hunting for both subsistence and trade, as well as access to imported food and other goods (Mitchell 1996; Stevenson 1997). Rifles and whaleboats in particular were the most significant items introduced by the whalers, then traders.

Increased individualization in hunting practices has been attributed to the introduction of the rifle, alongside a reduction in co-operation within the caribou and seal hunting complexes (Stevenson 1997, 110 see also; Balikci 1960; Mitchell 1996). Within Inuit social structure, this lessened the importance of the extended family, instead increasing the importance of the nuclear family as primary socioeconomic unit (Balikci 1960; Stevenson 1997). This process of individualization may have led to limitations on food sharing amongst some Inuit groups (Balikci 1960), though this phenomena did not hold amongst Cumberland Sound Inuit, suggesting that firearms may not have had the same effect among Inuit who relied more on marine mammals than caribou (Stevenson 1997, following Guemple).  

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12 For instance, one possible contributing factor is that rifles could not perform the retrieval function of harpoons, vita in the hunting of marine mammals (W. G. Ross 1975).
Increased individualization of hunting represents a change in the organization of production (Stevenson 1997), remaining squarely within the realm of production forces, as opposed to production relations. The Inuit production relation of sharing was maintained: nuclear or single-family units simply came to construct their homes nearby their closest relatives, and “sharing practices continued to be dominated by…the community-wide distribution of food and blubber” (Guemple 1972; Stevenson 1997, 112).

Although an apparent rise of the ‘individual/competitive’ dynamic over the ‘communal/cooperative’ dynamic” has been marked as a changing production relation (e.g. Mitchell 1996, 126), an alternative reading is possible. If we recall flexibility as *sine qua non* of the Inuit mode – we can see that increased individualization was by no means at odds with this, and may even be seen as reinforcing this facet. Flexibility requires a high level of individual decision-making, which the rifle facilitated. Yet “those who take advantage of the cultural demand for flexibility for only selfish purposes lose the support of the community…while most decision-making is individual, the control rests with the collective” (Dahl 2000, 213).13

As for whaleboats, this new means of production reinforced collaborative approaches to both commercial and subsistence hunting of whales and seals, and helped to preserve the pre-existing organization of production; the extended family structure (Mitchell 1996; Stevenson 1997). Whaleboats were scarce commodities, and so those who possessed them continued to attract relatives (Stevenson 1997). At the level of production relations, contra to the view that

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13 In a similar vein, Curcio and Özselçuk identify both individual and collective subjectivities within forms of the commune, such that “a seemingly ‘individual’ activity…is a site of condensation of a broader sociality and collectivity destabilizes any obvious way of demarcating production by ‘individuals’” (2010, 310).
whaleboats resulted in changing leadership and the advent of ‘head natives’ (Mitchell 1996; W. G. Ross 1975), they may instead be seen as helping to “preserve traditional leadership roles and decision-making relationships within the extended family” (Stevenson 1997, 117 emphasis added). Leadership was after all a common feature of Inuit society (Mary-Rousseliére 1984).

It has been argued that because Inuit were provided with rifles and whale boats, “this led inevitably to the deterioration of the skills used to procure materials and make and use indigenous implements and weapons” (Mitchell 1996, 84). Such observers view this change in the means of production as fundamentally undermining the Inuit mode (e.g. Mitchell 1996; W. G. Ross 1975). This view is misplaced, as that these new technologies were never forced on Inuit, but rather they generally retained their agency and choice in interactions with the whalers and early traders (Stevenson 1997). The Inuit mode of production endured: imported weapons were simply integrated into it. Inuit are often portrayed as passive recipients of both the good and bad effects of Qallunaat presence in the Arctic, but Inuit have been actively involved in these cross-cultural relationships and interactions. Inuit have, throughout their history, adapted various artefacts for use within their social and environmental parameters (Tester 2010; Wenzel 1991).

Despite the acquisition of new technologies during the whaling and early trading eras, relations of production remained largely unaffected. On the whole, much like Rey describes, the new technologies reinforced the Inuit mode. This was important, as it cannot be denied that whalers and traders had a significant impact upon Inuit life in general. In particular, exposure to new

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14 Inuit techniques and technologies were retained where Qallunaat (see note below) technology offered little advantage, such as seal hunting at breathing holes, or where a Qallunaat equivalent was inferior, or did not exist (rifles, unlike harpoons, do not provide a means of retrieval) (Stevenson 1997).

15 Inuktitut for a person of other than Inuit origin.
diseases such as smallpox, tuberculosis and polio had a devastating effect (Bone 2009; Crowe 1991, 108; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). Even under the strain imposed by epidemics, significant transformation in production relations did not occur (Stevenson 1997).

Whalers and traders also placed stress on Inuit wildlife resources, with bowhead whales hunted close to extinction, and caribou and other game populations also affected in the supplying of meat to the whalers, and later furs (Crowe 1991; Kulchyski 2005a; Mitchell 1996). However there is little evidence the changing means of production (rifles and whaleboats), and increase in harvest numbers for subsistence and commercial demand, significantly depleted game populations, except perhaps in the case of musk-ox (Mitchell 1996; W. G. Ross 1975).

2.5.2. The late fur trade, and the rise of the liberal welfare State and extractive industry: capitalism ‘takes root’ through the imposition of the colonial structures of dominance, “subordinating the pre-capitalist mode but still making use of it”

2.5.2.1. The late fur trade

In contrast to the relative stability of the whaling and early fur trade periods, the late fur trade represents a major turning point in the Canadian eastern Arctic. Following the collapse of fox-fur prices in the 1930s, HBC traders gained far greater control over Inuit hunters, whose economic plight had become serious by the late 1930s onwards (Brody 1975, 22). As the fur trade continued to experience crisis in the 1940s and 50s due to the declining value of furs and rising costs of imported goods, ‘relief’ and family allowances became crucial to survival (Usher 1982; Tester and Kulchyski 1994).
HBC post managers were initially responsible for distributing family allowances and relief payments in settlements without permanent RCMP presence – an effective offloading of responsibility by the State (see Jenness 1964, 54; Mitchell 1996; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). These “deliberately punitive” relief arrangements entailed a clear conflict of interest (Tester and Kulchyski 1994, 63). The HBC would ‘grubstake’ capable hunters and trappers, extending them credit and providing relief during difficult periods, while those regarded as ‘poor’ trappers received little to no credit. Those who “resisted the pressure to shift from subsistence to exchange” were labeled ‘unproductive’, and in some instances received no relief at all (Brody 1975, 23). As Tester and Kulchyski state:

The presence of the HBC and the logic behind the accumulation of wealth by the company, with Inuit bearing the social costs of this accumulation, was taken as a given. The task of those formulating government policy was to accommodate ‘The Bay.’ The result was distorted policy that couldn't begin to deal with the serious problems of Inuit health and welfare developing at the time (1994, 84).

Inuit who, at the encouragement (and coaxing) of both traders and the government had adjusted their way of life to engage in the fur trade, were systematically drawn into dependency relations within the world economy (Kulchyski 2005a). They were thus fully exposed to the adverse effects of the fur market’s collapse in the 1950s.

2.5.2.2. The rise of the liberal welfare State

Following WWII, concern for sovereignty and security, postwar extension of the liberal welfare state, and increased demand for northern resources led to a much greater and more active federal presence in the Canadian Arctic (Abele 2009; Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Wenzel 1991). This
was a period of significant transformation of the Arctic landscape, and social sphere. WWII had forced an appreciation of the strategic significance of the North, which continued to grow throughout the Cold War, and the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line of radar stations in the high Arctic was completed in 1957 (Bone 2009; Usher 1982).

Increasing awareness of the social and economic crises in the North, including the publicity received by major episodes of starvation and disease – signaled the end of the State’s laissez-faire approach to the Arctic and Inuit (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Usher 1982). The extension of family allowances and old age pensions to Inuit in the late 1940s was followed by the construction of residential and federal day schools and nursing stations in the 1950s and ‘60s, and then by the provision of housing and municipal services in the ‘60s and ‘70s (Usher 1982). Whatever their benefits, these interventions were very clearly imposed according to Southern Canadian attitudes and agendas – minimal consideration was given of what Inuit actually wanted (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Usher 1982). By 1965, widespread “transformation from traditional hunting and trapping camps to permanent settlements” had taken place, though the social relations and cultural forms this implied continued to be resisted by Inuit: the hunting economy endured, though undermined (Tester and Kulchyski 1994, 45).

Within State administrations, the prevailing view was that the Inuit way of life was dying out, and an agenda of ‘modernization’ and ‘development’ was carried out (Usher 1982). The State’s immediate solution was to provide healthcare and welfare, while their long-term solution was education and wage employment. Stated with some irony: “Only in this way could Native people be prepared for the industrialization of the North which surely lay ahead” (Usher 1982, 431).
This familiar agenda of ‘development’ sought to expand capitalist relations of production, and the extraction of surplus value from labour (Bradby 1975, 142).

The formation of Arctic settlements represented a concrete attempt at primitive accumulation, wherein the State undertook a series of extra-economic actions intended to 1) ‘free’ Inuit labour-power and make it available for waged employment, and 2) “obtain land held by custom” (Bradby 1975, 138). The dispossession of Inuit from the land was the State’s solution to two persistent challenges: reducing the costs of ‘relief’ to Inuit, and asserting Canadian sovereignty in the North (Tester and Kulchyski 1994).

Tester and Kulchyski’s conception of totalization in the eastern Arctic context is highly relevant to the current discussion; outlined as “a process whereby attempts are made to bring all aspects of life (spatial, temporal, social and economic) into line with a dominant or overarching logic” (Tester and Irniq 2008, 51; see also Kulchyski 1992; Kulchyski 2005b; Kulchyski and Tester 2007; Tester and Kulchyski 1994). In Canada this totalizing process – actively impelled by the project of capitalism – has involved the attempted negation and incorporation of Aboriginal peoples into Canada’s established order or polity, by a very specific agent: the State.

In Rey’s second period then, the ‘colonial structures of dominance’ are put in place by the State (Foster-Carter 1978). The State had in mind a ‘civilizing mission,’ and “for civilizing, read capitalism” (Brewer 1990, 250; see also Wolfe 1999). Whereas in the earlier periods of Arctic

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16 Often characterized as “assimilation” (Kulchyski 2005b, 23).

17 Unlike the dynamic of capital accumulation and the development of the commodity form, the State as a totalizing dynamic, “essential to the operation of the other two and presupposing the same logic,” was not examined in great detail by Marx (Kulchyski 2005b, 265).
history already discussed, totalization was driven by economic means; the State utilizes these means and more in the dispossession and subordination of the Inuit mode of production:

Totalization of Inuit involved, for the state, the transmutation of need away from relations to animals and toward what so-called progress had to offer: wage employment, permanent housing, settlement living, and all that they entail. Undermining the hunting regime, as a way of meeting culturally constructed needs, was crucial to attempts to absorb Inuit by the Canadian state into the dominant social forms (Kulchyski and Tester 2007, 7).18

2.5.2.3 Extractive industrial capitalism comes to the North

The other motivation for the dispossession of Inuit was very clearly the State and industry’s desire for access to the North’s resources. This has been the aim of nearly all contact by capitalist modes with noncapitalist societies; arguably of even greater importance than capitalism’s need for labour power and markets (Bradby 1975; Brewer 1990; Foster-Carter 1978). Such need for free access to new areas and sources of raw materials often then necessitates control over those in the way, meaning the attempted transformation and destruction of noncapitalist societies on whose lands these resources can be found – including their relations of production (Bradby 1975, 136).

Non-renewable resource development in the North certainly appears to have been taken as given following WWII, particularly since Prime Minister John Diefenbaker’s 1958 ‘Northern Vision’ for major industrial development in the Canadian North (Abele 1987; Coates 1985; Neufeld 2001). This economic strategy sought to raise the State’s awareness of the North’s resource

18 Rey labeled such systems of administrative coercion the colonial mode of production, and considered this colonial phase necessary in order for capitalism to ‘take root’ in noncapitalist modes of production (Bradby 1975; Brewer 1990; Foster-Carter 1978). Brewer points out: “There is no need to describe colonialism as a mode of production at all,” but rather as a form of State intervention generated in the articulation of capitalist and noncapitalist modes, serving the interests of capital (1990, 252).
potential, broadening the Canadian polity from north to south, as had occurred from east to west previously (Isard 2010, 13). The ‘Vision’ meant:

The North, like the west 50 years earlier, would provide staple export commodities. Northern minerals, like western wheat 50 years earlier, would fuel the engine of the national economy by providing export credits, jobs, and investment opportunities. The role of the state would be to facilitate resource development (Abele 1987, 312, emphasis added).

However the resource boom of the 1950s, spurred by the demand from industrial nations for mineral and energy resources (particularly the United States) mainly affected the Subarctic (Bone 2009; Usher 1982). The Canadian Arctic itself was not home to any of the major infrastructural projects under the Diefenbaker government’s ‘Roads to Resources’ program (Bernauer 2011). The first major (and only) mine in the Arctic in that period was the North Rankin Nickel Mine, which was developed then operated at Rankin Inlet in the period 1951-1962.

The Rankin mine provided the federal government the opportunity to put their agenda of modernization into action. Together with DEW Line construction work, it represented the first experience with industrial wage employment by Inuit in the eastern Arctic (Tester, 2011). However, little government assistance or regulation was evident – the company was left largely to its own devices (Gibson 1978). A number of studies have documented the appalling living conditions prevailed for Inuit at Rankin Inlet during the mine’s life, in terms of housing, healthcare, and the racial segregation of the workplace and town (see e.g. Dailey and Dailey 1961; Tester 2011; Williamson 1974). A significant number of Inuit were employed at the mine, though government researchers found that: “At Rankin Inlet, the Eskimo is being trained to be a labourer – not a citizen” (Dailey and Dailey 1961, 94).
2.5.3. The Nanisivik mine

Rankin’s successor in the eastern Arctic is undoubtedly the Nanisivik mine. The archival records of RG 21 provide an excellent opportunity to examine the decision making processes and motivations behind this lead-zinc mine.

Nanisivik was located on the shore of Strathcona Sound on northern Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island), approximately 750 km north of the Arctic Circle. Nanisivik is significant as Canada’s first high Arctic mine, and the first major industrial investment in the eastern Arctic – what is now Nunavut (McPherson, 2003; Burns & Doggett, 2004). The community of Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay) is located approximately 30 km away from Nanisivik by all-weather road.

Nanisivik was promoted by the State as a test case for future mineral development in the Arctic, and as a project intended to “…give a boost to the economy of the Eastern Arctic and to provide new employment opportunities for Eskimo people in the area” (DIAND 1974c, 1). Commenting on the mine, then federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Jean Chrétien said:

The need to broaden the economic base of the Eastern Arctic has been a major concern. However, our primary objective is to ensure that the maximum benefit will flow to residents of the region, not only through job and entrepreneurial opportunities but also through participation in the planning and management of the project and townsite… It is my hope that this new project will be a model for future mineral developments in the Arctic (DIAND 1974c, 5).

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19 Minerals in the Strathcona Sound area were first discovered in 1910 by the prospectors Albert English and Alfred Tremblay, during the government-sponsored expedition of Captain J.E. Bernier. The general area was mapped at this time by dog team with the assistance of local Inuit. The name ‘Nanisivik’ means “the place where people find things,” likely the pyrite crystals occurring there in outcrop, thought to be valued as a means of fire making (Gibson 1978; McPherson 2003).
The need for a pilot Arctic mineral development was discussed at the time of Nanisivik’s inception. The Mary River iron ore deposit and Arvik proposal – what would become the Polaris lead-zinc mine – featured in the Nanisivik discussions.

2.5.3.1. Economic uncertainties and unlikely opposition

The soundness of Nanisivik’s original economic rationale was uncertain – an economic boost to the region was far from guaranteed at the mine’s initiation. Records indicate that even within the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) – the key government decision maker in the project – the mine was initially considered by some as “privately and socially marginal” in light of government assistance totaling $8.8 m in non-recoverable expenditures and $7.9 m in loans (1974a, i). Within the federal Department of Energy, Mines and Resources (EMR), conflicting views on Nanisivik were evident, with the Assistant Deputy Minister (Mineral Development) (ADM) stating:

As far as current and near-term Canadian mineral development requirements are concerned, there is no real need to exploit this particular resource at this time. ... There are definite uncertainties as to the corporate profitability of this particular mining project (Drolet 1974a, 1).

EMR were clearly concerned with the project’s economics and the amount of government financing requested, with one analyst describing the project as “donating a mineral deposit for the purpose of employing some Inuit” (J. S. Ross 1974, 8). The analyst also estimated that the

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20 Now called Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. At the time of signing, Indian Affairs and Northern Development was the department’s official title, though it was referring to itself as Indian and Northern Affairs. For consistency and convenience, this paper uses the older legal title and the acronym DIAND, following Gibson (1978).

21 Now part of Natural Resources Canada.
government was committing assistance of $167,000 per Inuk to be employed. In response to DIAND’s proposal to Cabinet recommending Nanisivik be publicly funded, EMR’s ADM questioned the number of jobs being created. He also noted that the ore was for export to Europe and that Canada did not have the needed processing capacity, and pointed out the uncertain profitability of the venture, dependent on metal prices and fuel costs (Drolet 1974b). In addition, EMR were clearly wary of subsidizing private industry, and of the danger of setting precedents for government assistance.

What is perhaps more surprising about EMR’s input to the Nanisivik proposal was the department’s attentiveness to social issues. The department pointed out that the short mine life would result in problems with expectations and employment, and other social impacts, once the mine closed. One EMR analyst observed:

>Our evaluation leaves us with doubts that the social benefits will be as great as envisaged or that the associated social problems will be as small. Experience in Canada and in economically undeveloped regions in which indigenous people reside indicates that the social and economic problems are not of the type best remedied by a few giant industrial projects (J. S. Ross 1974, 8).

EMR suggested that if government financing could not be reduced significantly, other subsidized employment should be developed instead where: “Inuit would receive assistance in a more direct and less risky manner and at the same time prevent their unnecessary relocation,” at both the start and finish of the project (J. S. Ross 1974, 9).

Deputy Minister Jack Austin was the main figure within EMR backing the project, though many of his staff remained largely opposed right up till Nanisivik’s approval. He wrote to DIAND
stating: “I do want to continue my assurances…of the interest of this Department in supporting a project for Arctic mining at an early date – even if the economics might be marginal. I think we could look at it quite soundly as a development in the broader social interests” (Austin 1974a, 1). EMR were also interested in gathering data relating to mining under Arctic operating conditions, concluding (Austin 1974b, 2).

However, EMR was a minor player with Nanisivik, and any dissent was effectively sidelined throughout the development of DIAND’s proposal for Cabinet. EMR’s records indicate they were only involved at a late stage: “If EMR had been involved more during the feasibility study period rather than being involved suddenly at the end, then all would obviously have benefited” (James 1974a, 4). EMR personnel felt communications with DIAND were poor. Staff found that DIAND consistently misrepresented their department’s position, portraying them as in favour of the project, and that on the whole: “DIAND has tended to downplay criticisms...and overstress the benefits to the natives of the north if the project went ahead” (Gauvin 1973, 2).

EMR – as revealed by departmental memos – was told that it was not consulted adequately because of time constraints. DIAND considered June 30, 1974 a key deadline as an “agreement between MRI and its European backers will expire on that date unless the Crown agrees to give government assistance to the project” (Verity 1974, 1). Aligning with the interests of capital, the terms and conditions of the mine’s development were established via the Strathcona Agreement, signed on 18 June, 1974, between the DIAND and MRI (Government of Canada and Mineral Resources International Ltd. 1974). Nanisivik began production in October, 1976.
2.5.3.2. The civilizing mission of DIAND: State champions of industry

Given the reservations within EMR, how do we explain DIAND’s overwhelming support for the project, given their apparent mandate to represent the best interests of Inuit? EMR ultimately acknowledged that the potential socio-economic benefits were consistent with the broader objectives of DIAND and the State, including the view that the “major public benefits which the project could generate are employment opportunities for northern residents in an area where other economic opportunities are very limited…” (DIAND 1974a, ii). Nanisivik was therefore considered a good fit with DIAND’s attitudes and approach to industrial development in the North, regardless of the economic reservations (Gibson 1978).

The rhetoric of Chrétien and DIAND reflected the common promise of job creation: they had bought Mineral Resources International’s (MRI) pitch of 200 jobs being created, of which up to half were intended for Inuit within the first three years of operations (J. S. Ross 1974). Once an agreement was reached between MRI and the federal government in 1974, the announced target was a 60% Inuit employment rate (DIAND 1974c). Though this might be considered a laudable sounding goal – or ambitious attempt at proletarianization – the origins of the 60% target are not well-known. It was more than double the closest benchmark of a 25% Aboriginal employment level within five years, at the Anvil lead-zinc mine in the Yukon (Gibson 1978). Nanisivik’s proponents did not appear to investigate how or why the Anvil mine failed to come even close to its 25% target, never rising above 10%.

Nanisivik’s project manager described the 60% target as a “magic and completely haphazard figure,” insisted on by the government “solely to satisfy certain groups in southern Canada” (Jim
Marshall, in Lauritzen 1977a, 2). One observer of these events confirmed this, suggesting that at a meeting between government officials and MRI, they were at an impasse over the Inuit employment target. This observer reported that the Deputy Commissioner of the NWT at the time simply said: “We’re going to be here all night, so let’s make a decision. 60%?”, and that everybody replied “Okay, 60%.” “That’s the thought that went into it…no science, no sociology went into that number” (Kenn Harper. Interview 1 September 2011).

DIAND analysts were of the view that Nanisivik was “in an area where significant numbers of native people are un- or under-employed…” (1973, 5). Yet Nanisivik’s ‘enthusiasts’ likely did not take the time to properly assess the unemployment situation in the region:

It is claimed, it seems, that this enormous expense is justified by the need to provide local employment. Now, precisely, since Panarctic uses Eskimo labour, there is no unemployment in this area. We were told recently that meat had to be brought in by plane from the south to a small settlement because there were no longer enough hunters to supply local game: a bewildering situation! (Mary-Rousselière, in Brody 1975, 226).

Even within DIAND, internal critics believed that expected employment benefits had been exaggerated. These critics raised concerns around the adequacy of existing information, the potential for negative social effects, and recommended a study of Inuit attitudes towards the project (Gibson 1978, 43; see also Brody 1975). At EMR, one analyst questioned why “no current research has been done on the work force in the region, the actual numbers of workers available and willing, their capabilities… It seems that at the moment a lot of [DIAND] and [Government of the Northwest Territories] enthusiasm rests on unsubstantiated ‘feeling’ about Inuit participation” (James 1974b, 4). This ‘feeling’ may have been further influenced by federal and territorial concerns around welfare expenditures, revealed in the comment by EMR’s ADM:
“…the need for an industrial undertaking on the northern end of Baffin Island…is related primarily to social considerations and the increasingly large amounts of government money which are being spent for the support of northern settlements and their inhabitants” (Drolet 1974b, 3). Despite the doubts, essentially no social impact assessment would be conducted prior to the signing of the Strathcona Agreement (Hickling-Partners Inc. 1981).

Nor were any lessons drawn from the Rankin Inlet experience, despite DIAND’s awareness that “…mine closure created (and continued to create) problems for some Inuit employees who remained at Rankin Inlet and also for some who moved elsewhere” (DIAND 1974a, iv). Inuit from Rankin Inlet could have conveyed to north Baffin Inuit their direct personal experiences of mine work and some of its social implications, in their own language and cultural point of view (Gibson 1978).

Nanisivik’s proponents evidently did not investigate a great deal at all in terms of Inuit employment patterns and attitudes to the project (Gibson 1978; McPherson 2003). The initial mine feasibility study did not include any consideration of Arctic Bay’s concerns. In response, in 1972 the community’s Settlement Council sent a remarkable, unsolicited letter to the study consultants and other decision-makers involved, pointing out a lack of consultation, and expressing a desire for some influence over the development process. The letter stated in part: “…governments [have given opinions on Nanisivik] without first asking us, the people of Arctic Bay, our opinions on the subject and what we desire here in our own land” (in Gibson 1975, 2).
This calls into question Chretién’s promise of Inuit “participation in the planning and management of the project.” Nor does it seem to have been in keeping with DIAND’s official policy of furthering the interests of northern residents in a manner consistent “with their own preferences and aspirations,” as stated in Canada’s North: 1970-1980 (1972, 10).

In parallel to the assumptions that Inuit unemployment was rife and that job opportunities would be widely welcomed, it was assumed that the economic base of the eastern Arctic required major expansion, as Chretién stated (Gibson 1978). Although official government policy appeared to place non-renewable resource extraction as subordinate to social improvement, environmental protection, and renewable resource development, other official statements and actual practice contradicted this ordering (e.g. DIAND 1974b, cited in Gibson, 1978). Canada’s North itself included such statements as: “a realistic assessment is that…the economic future of the North lies in the ground” (14). Government officials in fact exhibited “an overriding determination to increase the production (extraction) of wealth in the North and treated non-renewable exploitation as the only realistic basis for expansion of the northern economy” (Gibson 1978, 123). With Nanisivik, the attitude was that non-renewable resource exploitation in the eastern Arctic had to move from exploratory activity to production, in order “to give stability to the economy” and provide steady Inuit employment opportunities (Yates 1975, 4–5).

On this point, it is instructive to recall the genealogy of DIAND. Responsibility for Inuit affairs has, since 1936, roughly passed through hands of the Departments of: ‘Mines and Resources,’ to ‘Resources and Development,’ to ‘Northern Affairs and National Resources,’ to (including at the time of Nanisivik’s development) DIAND (Tester and Kulchyski 1994). The emphasis on
resource development in DIAND’s pedigree would seem fairly obvious. Analyses have depicted
the relationship between federal government departments and their client groups as a dialectic of
representation and social control, with two distinct target groups in DIAND’s case: 1) Aboriginal
people, and 2) large corporations interested in exploiting northern resources (Mahon 1977).22

Mahon (1977) has argued that the Northern Development Branch, whose mandate pertained to
those resource development interests, held primacy over the Indian Affairs Branch within
DIAND. Given DIAND’s ‘province-like authority’ over the North at the time, an important
distinction needs to be made: According to one study: “[DIAND’s] personnel view the two
northern territories as vast sparsely populated areas, containing important natural resources
which should benefit all Canada. In contrast, the provinces see their resources as first, benefiting
their own citizens and second, other Canadians” (Keith et al., 1976, 61, cited in Mahon 1977,
190). Though at least the rhetoric had evolved to accommodate the specific interests of
northerners, echoes of Diefenbaker’s ‘Northern Vision’ of Arctic resource development in the
national interest still resounded clearly.

Both DIAND and industry were also desirous of Inuit labour participation at Nanisivik given the
high turnover rates and labour shortages plaguing mines “in more hospitable locations than
Strathcona Sound” (Gibson 1978, 34). Unless wages were substantially higher than mines in
southern Canada, a stable workforce was going to be difficult to attract. It was felt that: “training
and employment of native peoples of the region…will alleviate this problem” (Drolet 1974b, 4).
The vision was for a mobile and trained Inuit workforce in the north, willing to move to new

22 Which interests held, and still hold primacy now within Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is
a matter of contention.
communities, or commute, from industrial development to development in the future (McPherson 2003). Indeed at Nanisivik, Inuit workers had been recruited from at least 23 communities across the Northwest Territories (Hobart 1982). The Inuit mode of production, including people’s connections to the land and its resources, were completely discounted in this thinking – despite clear maintenance of this attachment to land by those already engaged in some wage employment: “It was assumed that many…would leave their relatives, their home villages, and their land – the land with which they were familiar and in which they had carried out their traditional activities” (Gibson 1978, 100).

Integration of Inuit into the dominant, southern Canadian culture and capitalist mode of production was the tenor of the day, and this meant wage employment (McPherson 2003). The State was unwilling to recognize the traditional economic pursuits of the Inuit mode, such as hunting, as a form of self-employment (Gibson 1978). Industry clearly shared the same sentiment (McPherson 2003), with MRI’s consultants stating:

It is inevitable that the Inuit people are going to be introduced to a more industrialized society than they have been accustomed to in the past. They will be better prepared for this transformation if they acquire skills that will allow them to be usefully employed.

The Strathcona Sound project is planned for a minimum life of 15 years… During this period, the Inuit people who are employed at Strathcona Sound will acquire skills that will allow them to transfer to other industrial projects that are certain to materialize in the Canadian Arctic over the next 15 years… or at the cessation of production at Strathcona Sound (Watts, Griffis and McOuat 1973, 6).

It is interesting to note that MRI’s expected mine life was initially assumed at the economically optimal exploitation rate of eight years, but DIAND officials insisted on a fifteen year life in order to promote ‘longer-term benefits’ (Gibson 1978). A twelve year life was finally agreed to,
with commitments by MRI to invest in ongoing further exploration, in return for substantial government investment in infrastructure (DIAND 1974c).

2.5.3.3. Reading the traces of resistance to totalization and the capitalist mode of production

Once again, responsibility curiously fell to EMR personnel to point out the general shortcomings of DIAND’s rationale, with the ADM observing that: “Employment of Inuit…is the main, and probably the only significant objective for federal government financial support for this project…” (Drolet 1974b, 4). He also made note of the high cost of obtaining this objective, and drew contrast between the limited span of jobs in non-renewable extractive industry, as compared to “more permanent” jobs in manufacturing and other sectors. Another EMR analyst dryly commented that even with a twelve year mine life: “The general statements that another ore body might be found,” or that other mineral developments will be in operation in the future, were “hardly reassuring” (O. Fisher 1973, 2).

These debates within the colonial State itself with regards to the Nanisivik proposal reveal interesting tensions and contradictions in the processes of totalization. The incorporation of the Arctic and Inuit into the Canadian polity has by no means involved singular and consistent practices, and contradictions within the bureaucracy abound (Kulchyski and Tester 2007). However, for all this complexity and nuance, the State’s ultimate objective remains totalization: “to incorporate by absorption or to expel by banishment any traces of social difference and social forms not ultimately conducive to the accumulation of capital” (Kulchyski and Tester 2007, 10). In the end, DIAND would have their mine. The department had promoted Nanisivik to Cabinet
almost entirely on its presumed social benefits, and on these grounds the project received State financing.

While Nanisivik would indeed achieve one of the highest rates of Aboriginal employment amongst mines in northern Canada, in all its twenty-six years it still fell short of the per cent target by more than half, reaching a peak of 28% (McPherson 2003). The realized Inuit employment rate at Nanisivik has still received commendation by some (e.g. McPherson 2003; Wojciechowski 1982).

An alternative understanding is enabled by those interrogating colonial processes in Canada and elsewhere. Coulthard (2013, 8) for instance, finds that Indigenous–State relations in Canada are characterized primarily by a history of dispossession – of lands and resources – and less so a drive for proletarian labour forces. This dispossession takes particular form across the Arctic, in that it was taking place for the purposes of exploiting the resources under the land – minerals, oil and gas – rather than appropriating land for settlement (Brody 1977).

While creating Inuit workers was certainly a goal of the State, as the preceding discussion reveals, assimilation in general and ensuring the creation of profits and capital through non-renewable resource exploitation remained the highest-order goals. The same profit imperative of course characterized MRI, with Nanisivik’s project manager stating that he only hired Inuit workers because he had to, as “from the point of view of effectiveness and thus productivity,” he would prefer to hire white workers (Jim Marshall, in Lauritzen 1977b, 2).
Yet another interpretation is engendered by critical analyses of totalization and articulation of modes of production – that is, the moments and structures of *resistance* evident in the attempted imposition of the capitalist mode into a social formation dominated by a noncapitalist mode. In Rey’s analysis, articulation involves a process of ‘combat’ between two modes of production, with all the confrontation and alliances this entails (Foster-Carter 1978, 56 citing Rey). Totalization likewise invariably encounters contradiction and resistance (Tester and Irniq 2008, 51), of the kind offered by EMR, but more fundamentally at Nanisivik, by Inuit. For gatherer-hunter societies specifically, resistance involves:

…constructing enclaves of culture within the established order, of finding space in the interstices of power, of controlling the pace and nature of links with the dominant social organization and culture, of adapting Western technology to precapitalist social relations, of taking the tools offered by the State and capital and using them to strengthen rather than destroy primitive culture (Kulchyski 1992, 177).

In this light, it is possible to understand the high Inuit turnover at Nanisivik as reflecting the persistence of the Inuit gatherer-hunter mode, in the face of sustained and explicit pressure to conform to the demands of the capitalist mode. Numerous residents of Arctic Bay reported that Inuit would often simply work at Nanisivik long enough to purchase hunting equipment (Lim, 2011). Likewise for those who retained their jobs at the mine: “Their income would go into the purchase of capital items, like skidoos, boats or, any equipment that they need. If an Inuk gets some big amount of money, the first thing they’ll think about is hunting equipment” (Sakiasie Qaunaq, carpenter at Nanisivik, then Arctic Bay. Interview 20 August 2011). Though such equipment was rarely shared beyond immediate family, systems of country food sharing – a central feature of the Inuit mode, and one which stands in contrast to the capitalist mode – remained prevalent, and remain strong to this day (see e.g. Wenzel 2000; Harder and Wenzel
As one Elder explained: “It was not so much sharing of the equipment, but the worker would go hunting and bring back the catch, and would be sharing that with the community. So the harvest was shared, rather than the equipment” (Olayuk Kigutikajuk. Interview 24 August 2011).

Such subversion is common, and indeed one of the few forms available, to those struggling against totalization (Kulchyski 2005b). We might even view the Inuit approach to Nanisivik as an inversion of Rey’s second period in some respects: the capitalist mode of production can be subordinated, and made use of, by the Inuit mode.

Nanisivik also spurred more overt political resistance by Inuit, and has been credited as a learning experience edging Inuit “out of isolation into the mainstream of the Native political process” (McPherson 2003, 89). The mine was developed around the time of the first Inuit land claim, and the formation of the emerging national association, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC). While Inuit from Rankin Inlet were not asked by the government for assistance during Nanisivik’s assessment, it was instead on the initiative of the ITC that two miners from Rankin were brought to Arctic Bay to discuss their experiences – unfortunately, this was six months after the Strathcona Agreement had been signed (Gibson 1978; McPherson 2003). Early in the mine’s life, the ITC described Nanisivik as “a monument to the colonial mentality,” arguing it represented an infringement of Inuit property rights given the lack of a formal land claims agreement in the eastern Arctic (in Lauritzen 1977c, 2). Inuit resistance and attempts to reassert control of space and territory at this level would culminate in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) two decades later, with the creation of Nunavut in 1999.

23 Now called the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.
2.6. Conclusion

The future of Nunavut? At some point not yet reached in most ‘underdeveloped’ contexts, “the capitalist mode of production supplants all noncapitalist modes of production: noncapitalism disappears”?

An open question remains: now that Nunavut is self-governing by some definitions – that is, as a function of a land claim settlement – are Inuit any better equipped to control the pace and nature of their links with the capitalist mode of production? It is not clear that this is so. The NLCA is the largest and most comprehensive of the Aboriginal land claims and self-determination agreements entered into by the Canadian State, hailed by the government as the most advanced model of Aboriginal self-determination in the country (Légaré 2008, 336). Yet somehow, the proportion of Nunavut allocated as ‘Inuit Owned Lands’ versus Crown lands via the NLCA is just 17.7% – less than 10% of which Inuit possess subsurface rights (see Appendix C). These subsurface rights amount to less than 2% of the territory that Inuit have lived in since time immemorial (McPherson 2003) – a most spectacular act of primitive accumulation by the State. The NLCA was indeed a remarkable assertion of rights and act of political resistance on the part of Inuit. However, as a number of critical scholars have since observed, formal land claims have become a central means by which the State attempts to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands, through the incorporation of both into the capitalist mode of production, and the extinguishment of Aboriginal rights (e.g. Alfred 2001; Coulthard 2013; Gordon 2009).

The ‘certainty’ provided by modern day treaties like the NLCA is thought to encourage industrial capitalist interests such as mining (Blackburn 2005). The unprecedented mineral exploration taking place in Nunavut today supports this view – an estimated $502.3 million in
exploration investment in 2011\textsuperscript{24} (NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines 2011) – and perhaps explains Nunavut’s much higher levels of investment compared with jurisdictions like the Northwest Territories, where a number of land claims remain unsettled.

Despite Nunavut’s political promise of Indigenous autonomy, as a territory it continues to face immense socio-economic challenges. The question remains: Will mineral development help Nunavut meet these challenges or will it exacerbate them? Research has concluded that little long-term economic or social development occurred in Arctic Bay as a result of the Nanisivik mine, and that limited contribution was made to the community’s capacity to achieve its own development goals (Bowes-Lyon, Richards, and McGee 2009; Brubacher 2002). Public investment in the Nanisivik mine was rationalized on the grounds that it would fuel regional employment and development, yet this has evidently not been the case. Was this public money well spent? A socio-economic impact study on Nanisivik suggested that regional development could have been better-achieved if government investment had been spent directly on local capacity-building instead (Brubacher 2002). One study concludes: “As it stands, it is almost as if the mines had never existed, so few are the lasting positive impacts of the mines” (Bowes-Lyon, Richards, and McGee 2009, 392). This begs the question – what are the lasting negative impacts – social, cultural, environmental – of Nanisivik and other resource developments in the Arctic? Is mining truly desirable as Nunavut’s primary economic development strategy?

Nanisivik likely still falls under Rey’s second period of articulation between capitalist and noncapitalist modes; the Inuit mode may have been subordinated, but certainly has not disappeared. One look at a map of the exploration projects proposed and underway in Nunavut

\textsuperscript{24} The fourth highest jurisdiction in Canada.
today however (Appendix A), suggests the Nanisivik experience may well be repeated hundreds of times over across the territory. This immense scale of contemporary non-renewable resource development represents a level of primitive accumulation and imposition of the capitalist mode not yet seen in the Arctic, and these totalizing efforts threaten to bring about Rey’s third period of articulation: the eradication of noncapitalist forms and the absolute institution of the capitalist mode of production. As Rey reminds us, the final goal of capitalism is the destruction of all noncapitalist modes of production and relations of production, substituted by its own (in Foster-Carter 1978, 58).

Yet as the articulation and totalization frameworks used here have shown, the capitalist mode must constantly struggle to reproduce itself precisely because it is met with struggle, by resistance and by subversion. Unlike the feudal mode of production from which the capitalist mode transitioned, noncapitalist modes are “fiercely resistant” to it, and in fact: “Capitalism can never immediately and totally eliminate the preceding modes of production,” nor the social relations which characterize them (Foster-Carter 1978, 58, 59 citing Rey). Jameson derives insight here from Poulantzas’s identification of ‘anticipatory tendencies,’ potentially inconsistent with the existing system, but without autonomous space of their own as yet (1981, 95). These anticipatory tendencies embodied in the Inuit mode of production point to “social relations and practices that are not just different, not just outdated, but possibly emancipatory” (Kulchyski 1992, 174). Papers such as this contribute to a better understanding of the particular shape, form and processes of colonial capitalism in Canada’s eastern Arctic, that we may better identify and promote these anticipatory tendencies.
Chapter 3: “We thought it would last forever”: The social scars and legacy effects of mine closure at Nanisivik, Canada’s first high Arctic mine

3.1. Introduction

In 2004 and 2005 over $50 million worth of industrial and residential infrastructure was demolished at the Nanisivik mine, and town site, in Canada’s eastern high Arctic. This occurred in spite of sustained pleas from the nearby community suffering from infrastructure shortages. From the moment Breakwater Resources Ltd. (Breakwater) announced the closure of Nanisivik in 2001, residents of Arctic Bay petitioned the company and Government of Nunavut (GN) to either find an alternate use for the site, or failing that, to transfer much-needed infrastructure to Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk). This paper examines the events during Nanisivik’s closure and post-closure phases in particular, to understand how and why this experimental mine became a ‘closure failure.’ The case holds lessons for current standards regarding the ‘sustainability’ of mining ventures. More specifically, it raises questions about the possibility of socially responsible mine closure in Indigenous territory and/or amongst those who live near or adjacent to such sites.

Socially responsible mine closure is receiving increasing attention and recognition as a critical component of mining operations, particularly with regards to the sustainability and the maintenance of a ‘social licence’ for mining enterprises. Closure, by definition, invokes full life cycle planning for mines, including planning through end of life. Life cycle planning draws from sustainability principles, arguing the importance of social, environmental and economic
considerations across the mine’s life cycle as central to good practice closure (Hilson and Murck 2000; Laurence 2006; Otto 2009; Thomson and Boutilier 2011; Veiga, Scoble, and McAllister 2001). What is currently less understood is how co-existing components of sustainability goals may clash in significant ways; such that the social implications of closure are not simply viewed as subordinate to the economic and environmental implications of closure, but are at times so fully unaccounted for that lasting and also unexpected legacy effects arise.

During a summer field season in the eastern Arctic, conversations and questions about closure and post-closure led to discussion of opportunities foregone regarding infrastructure, significant discontent with the company and government’s misunderstandings, and perceived indifference on the part of the desires of Arctic Bay’s residents. This paper examines these concerns in light of proposed best practices for ‘sustainable’ mining. Its findings are derived from interviews with residents of the nearby community of Arctic Bay (many of whom worked at the mine or had family members who did). In conjunction to these were analyses of policy documents including Nanisivik closure submissions, public hearing transcripts, government documents (e.g. archival sources, consultants’ reports), and media reports. We paid express attention to community members’ comments and recollections of how closure planning was conducted and concerns with closure then and now.

The paper begins with an overview of the literature on socially responsible mine closure, as it intersects with notions of sustainable development and social licence to operate. We then provide background on Nanisivik and Arctic Bay, including a brief history of the mine’s development, and an outline of the qualitative case study methodology employed herein. The next section of
the paper investigates the initial phase of planning for regional economic diversification through an alternative use of the Nanisivik site. While early on, such proposals held considerable weight, eventually government and company support for this measure waned during the post-closure phase, as parties were unwilling to put in the hard work and investment required to sustain the ongoing use of the site. Community perspectives on the reasons cited for full reclamation of the site – environmental contamination, threats to human health, and the poor economic case – are explored, followed by a discussion of the socioeconomic effects of Nanisivik’s closure on Arctic Bay. Nanisivik’s limited contribution to Arctic Bay’s development capacity, and the community’s economic challenges post-closure, make a case for expanded guidelines for mine closure planning, including social impact assessment – a point we discuss in this paper’s conclusion. These insights are important in view of the central role that mineral exploration and mine development occupy within Nunavut’s economic development strategy.

3.1.1. Mining, closure and sustainable development

The 1990s witnessed a period of declining commodity prices, and sustained criticism of the social and environmental impacts of the mining industry internationally, driven primarily by non-governmental organizations (Evans and Kemp 2011; Hodge 2011). High-profile chemical spills, tailings dam failures and community conflicts in this period resulted in a deteriorating public image for the industry. Mining companies, concerned about the threat posed to their ‘social licence to operate,’ undertook steps to respond (Thomson and Boutilier 2011). Following its introduction at a World Bank conference on mining and communities in 1997, the concept of social licence to operate soon entered the lexicon of industry, governments and civil society. It
refers to the level of acceptance (or even better, approval) of mining activity by the local community and other stakeholders (Otto 2009; Thomson and Boutilier 2011).

In Canada, steps taken to retain a social licence included the Whitehorse Mining Initiative (WMI), which sought “a sustainable mining industry within the framework of an evolving and sustainable…society” (WMI Leadership Council 1994, 1). Following this, nine of the world’s largest mining and metals companies launched the Global Mining Initiative (GMI) in 1999, intending to amplify the industry’s voice at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 (ICMM 2011; MMSD 2002). The resulting Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) project was designed to “examine the role of the minerals sector in contributing to sustainable development, and how that contribution could be increased” (2002, xiv). At the same time, sustainable development is both an ambiguous and contested concept, and is defined differently by different actors according to their political and value positions (see e.g. Connelly 2007).  

Following these developments and the evolving expectations of stakeholders – investors, affected communities, regulators and non-governmental organizations – Otto suggests that a “paradigm shift” has occurred in the approach to an important, yet frequently overlooked facet of a mine’s life cycle: closure (2009, 251). Mine closure is now squarely on the agenda of governments and the mining industry, acknowledged as an important component in achieving a social licence to operate (Laurence 2006; Otto 2009; World Bank Group and International Finance Corporation 2002).

25 The concept of sustainability employed by the mining industry, and under discussion in this paper, is associated with ‘weak’ sustainability, as opposed to ‘strong’ (Kirsch 2009).
The increasing attention being paid to sustainable development concepts in the mining industry has brought into focus the need to address the “important social and community aspects” of mining (Laurence 2006, 286). This is over and above the environmental emphasis on closure plans that prevailed from the 1970s to the mid-1990s (ICMM 2008). While environmental considerations remain important, it has been argued that sustainability in the context of mining entails much more, particularly in terms of the “social health and welfare” of communities affected by mining (Veiga, Scoble, and McAllister 2001, 191).

Sustainable development standards in the mining context require “continuous environmental and socioeconomic improvement” over the full life cycle of a mine, including design-for-post-closure from the outset of a mining project (Hilson and Murck 2000, 228; Hodge 2011). A mine’s life cycle is commonly characterized by at least four phases: exploration; development; production; closure/post-closure (Laurence 2006; Sinding 1999; Warhurst and Noronha 1999a). As the logical outcome of the first three phases, closure should be an anticipated event (Keyes 1992). Yet acknowledgement by mine operators and regulators of this fourth phase, and its equal importance to the other stages, appears a relatively recent phenomenon (Laurence 2006). Comprehensive mine closure planning seems to be only a bourgeoning arena, with “its scope and practice…still evolving” (Veiga, Scoble, and McAllister 2001, 199). This is a peculiar situation given the many years that industrial-scale mining has taken place in human history.

The industry appears nonetheless to have acknowledged the socioeconomic sensitivity of affected communities to closure, and the need for holistic consideration of closure effects
through full life cycle planning (e.g. ICMM 2008; Mining Association of Canada 2004; MMSD 2002; WMI Leadership Council 1994). The need to move beyond considering environmental concerns in isolation in closure planning, toward incorporating socioeconomic dimensions, has been recognized (MMSD 2002; see also S. Roberts, Veiga, and Peiter 2000). However, these issues continue to receive “relatively little practical or intellectual attention” (Solomon, Katz, and Lovel 2008, 144). Other scholars call attention to the fact that unplanned closures and their consequences are poorly understood (Browne, Stehlik, and Buckley 2011, 720).

In parallel, there exists a dearth of literature on closure (conceptual papers aside), especially given that one study found 75% of mines closed early, or their closure was unplanned (see Laurence 2011). The paper provides further evidence that both the policy and practice of mine operators and public regulators lags significantly behind the sustainability rhetoric now commonplace in the sector today (Browne, Stehlik, and Buckley 2011). It also contributes to better understanding of the social dimensions of closure and so the general call for research in this area (Solomon, Katz, and Lovel 2008; Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999). Further, it discusses dynamics specific to an Indigenous Inuit community affected by mining – an area of increasing importance given the scale of proposed mining in Nunavut, and given its under researched status in general.
3.2. Nanisivik – ‘The Place Where People Find Things’

The Nanisivik lead-zinc mine was located on the shore of the Strathcona Sound on northern Baffin Island in Nunavut, approximately 750 km north of the Arctic Circle. The name ‘Nanisivik’ means “the place where people find things,” likely the pyrite crystals occurring there in outcrop, thought to be valued as a means of fire making (Gibson 1978; McPherson 2003). Nanisivik is significant as Canada’s first high Arctic mine, and the first major industrial investment in the eastern Arctic – what is now Nunavut (McPherson, 2003; Burns & Doggett, 2004).27

The community of Arctic Bay pre-dates Nanisivik by almost fifty years, initially established by the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1926, though the area had been inhabited and utilized by Inuit for thousands of years (Adams 1941). It is located approximately 30 km away from Nanisivik by all-weather road. It has a population of 823 (2011 data; Statistics Canada 2012). As of 2006, 93% of the residents identified as Inuit and claim Inuktitut as their first language (Statistics Canada 2007).

The terms and conditions of the mine’s development were established via the 1974 Strathcona Agreement between the Canadian federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,28 and junior Calgary-based Mineral Resources International (MRI) (Government

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26 Minerals in the Strathcona Sound area were first discovered in 1910 by the prospectors Albert English and Alfred Tremblay, during the government-sponsored expedition of Captain J.E. Bernier. The general area was mapped at this time by dog team with the assistance of local Inuit (Gibson 1978; McPherson 2003).
27 Nanisivik’s only predecessor in the eastern Arctic was the North Rankin Nickel Mine, which was developed then operated at Rankin Inlet, 1951-1962.
28 Now called Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. At the time of signing, Indian Affairs and Northern Development was the department’s official title, though it was referring to itself as Indian and Northern
of Canada and Mineral Resources International Ltd. 1974). In return for CAD$16.7 million in grants and loans for infrastructure construction, the federal government received an 18% equity interest in Nanisivik Mines Ltd., the company formed to develop the lead-zinc deposits. MRI agreed to a number of government requirements, including: a 60% “northern residents” (in effect Inuit) employment rate by the third year of production; a minimum production life of 12 years; special training programs; and environmental studies (DIAND 1974d). Government investment supported construction of an airport, deepwater dock, road to Arctic Bay, and the town site. At closure, the Nanisivik town site infrastructure belonging to the federal and territorial governments included a garage, a Town Centre complex, potable water, as well as utilidor and sewage systems. Infrastructure belonging to Breakwater included mill facilities, storage buildings, emergency power plant, large Dome cafeteria, and fuel tank farm. Residential housing at the site capable of accommodating approximately 400 people was owned mainly by Breakwater and the GN (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002; CanZinco Ltd. 2002; 2004) (see Figs. 1 and 2).

Affairs. For consistency and convenience, this paper uses the older legal title and the acronym DIAND, following Gibson (1978).

29 Housing a school, nursing station, swimming pool, gymnasium, daycare, fire hall, RCMP detachment, Northern Store, maintenance shop, library, and post and other offices.

30 Including: Residential units (54: single and multi-occupancy); PAMO apartment building (28 units); and bunkhouse (54 bedrooms).
Figure 1. Map of Nanisivik town site (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002)

Figure 2. Nanisivik town site, [date unknown, circa 1990]. Photo by Bob Wilson. NWT Archives/Northwest Territories. Dept. of Public Works and Services fonds/G-1995-001: 1379
MRI retained majority ownership of Nanisivik until 1989 when it was purchased by Conwest Exploration Ltd. (Burns and Doggett 2004). Breakwater Resources Ltd. purchased the mine in 1996,\textsuperscript{31} maintaining ownership throughout the reclamation and closure period up until Breakwater’s recent acquisition by Nyrstar (2011). Nanisivik was in production for 26 years from 1976 until 2002 – more than double the original project life agreed to in the *Strathcona Agreement* – as a result of exploration leading to ore-body extensions (McPherson 2003). Breakwater announced the permanent closure of productive operations of the Nanisivik mine in October 2001, to be implemented by September 2002 (at least four early) (George 2001). Breakwater cited exclusively economic reasons as their reason for closure, including “continuing depressed metal prices,” and zinc prices at a “historic low” (George 2001; Heath 2001).

### 3.3. Methods: Understanding the evolving trajectory of closure

In order to better understand the process of mine closure, and the socioeconomic effects of the early closure of a mine such as Nanisivik, a case study approach was adopted. It involved detailed, in-depth data collection utilizing qualitative methods with multiple sources of information rich in context, including community-based fieldwork (Creswell 2003). This ethnographically informed approach involved gathering a “range of sources of data” that would shed light on Nanisivik’s closure (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 3). These sources included interviews (n=29, see Appendix D), a community workshop (n=46), and observations conducted in Arctic Bay and Iqaluit\textsuperscript{32} between July and September 2011.\textsuperscript{33} Discussions with former mine

\textsuperscript{31} Breakwater created CanZinco Ltd. to operate the mine, but we use the parent company name throughout this paper.

\textsuperscript{32} Nunavut’s territorial capital.
employees and their family members, Elders, hunters, and other community members, explored experiences and perspectives in relation to the development, operation and in particular closure of Nanisivik. We also spoke with current and former government and industry personnel involved with the Nanisivik mine.34

A highly experienced local interpreter35 was engaged as the community research associate and lead interpreter, and assisted with the identification of research participants. Purposive, directed sampling was employed and was informed by the input of the research associate, community members and participants themselves. This allowed the recruitment of ‘information-rich’ participants who in turn helped identify the themes important to the study (Creswell 1998; Patton 1990). A “whole-of-community” approach to sampling was taken, as the study’s emphasis was on residents of Arctic Bay, not simply former mine employees (following Browne, Stehlik, and Buckley 2011). Ten women and nineteen men were interviewed, wherein conversations included but were not limited to their experiences and perspectives in relation to Nanisivik (including its closure). A conversational, semi-structured interviewing approach was used (see Appendix E). It generated both descriptions of the thoughts and behaviour of those affected by closure, including

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33 The relatively short field season by ethnographic standards (e.g. Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Menzies 2001) is acknowledged, and we note the high costs of Arctic travel and living as well as the research program’s time constraints as limiting factors. We understand ethnographic methods and social science research in general has deep and embedded ties with processes of colonialism and imperialism (L. T. Smith 1999). We aspired to conduct the research with the requisite depth and respect required of research with Indigenous peoples (Menzies 2001). We make no claim to having employed an explicitly committed and decolonizing methodology in this study (of the type advocated for by Caine, Salomons, and Simmons 2007; de Leeuw, Cameron, and Greenwood 2012; Menzies 2001; L. T. Smith 1999), but within certain limits, we tried, and can only hope to continue working towards these goals in future work.

34 Prior to the first author’s arrival in Nunavut, a Social Science and Traditional Knowledge Research Licence was obtained from the Nunavut Research Institute, after gaining the approval of the Arctic Bay Hamlet and Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO), as required by the Nunavut Scientists Act. Upon arriving in Arctic Bay, meetings were held with the Arctic Bay Hamlet Council and HTO to discuss the research. Due consideration was given to the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies research guidelines.

information about attitudes, feelings and experiences pertaining to the mine (Creswell, 2003). A public forum also took place at the end of the field work. In this venue, participants were presented with and discussed preliminary findings, and communicated recollections, concerns and understandings of Nanisivik’s life cycle, as well as the research project itself. It was considered an important component of the research’s community accountability, and was described by the local research associate as a good precedent in that such report-backs were rare amongst researchers visiting Arctic Bay (Mishak Allurut, personal communication, September 30, 2011).

An analysis of various media articles (especially Nunatsiaq News, Nunavut’s territorial newspaper), existing literature, and government, regulatory, industry and community studies and documents pertaining to Nanisivik, Arctic Bay and Arctic mineral development was also undertaken. In particular, the comprehensive records of the Nunavut Water Board (NWB)\(^36\) were examined extensively, as the regulatory agency overseeing Nanisivik’s closure. These records included Nanisivik’s closure plans and reports, submissions by interveners and other stakeholders, and full transcripts of public hearings in Arctic Bay in 2002, 2004 and 2009 which, together with the interview data, allowed for analysis and comparison of community attitudes right through the mine’s closure and post-closure phases, in 2002-2011. To understand the mine’s origins and background, the archival record of the project’s development, held by Library and Archives Canada, was consulted.

Data analysis focused on both community claims of benefits, harms, and relations with the mining venture and related government agents, and involved identifying themes inductively from

\(^36\) Available at: ftp://nunavutwaterboard.org/
the data (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). A prominent theme that emerged throughout available and collected research materials was the extensive disappointment, and even resentment, at the failure of the GN and Breakwater to live up to their public statements regarding the promotion of an alternative site use of Nanisivik. Other themes included skepticism towards the reasons given by the government for the abandonment and reclamation of the Nanisivik site, and a range of material and non-material social effects that the mine’s closure had on the community of Arctic Bay.

3.4. The arch of closure

3.4.1. 2002: The stars align for economic diversification at Nanisivik? Promising process in the search for an alternative site use

Economic diversification leading up to and following a mine’s closure, including the ongoing utilization of mine infrastructure, is essentially the ‘gold standard’ for communities dependent upon mining and other extractive industries (O’Faircheallaigh 1992). In Canada, government and industry studies have assessed the key determinants of diversification for mining communities. These included infrastructure and location (including transportation links), nature of existing economic base, advance notice of closure, a designated party responsible for diversification initiatives, attitudes of governments, corporate dynamism, and the attitudes and resources of the community (Keyes 1992, 40; Task Force on Mining Communities 1982, 55). It is also recommended that diversification planning take place as early as possible, be integrated into the mine development process, and that these requirements are the responsibility of both companies and governments (Task Force on Mining Communities 1982). In the context of Indigenous
communities, gathering and hunting activities also typically play a core role in diversified economies.

With Nanisivik, public statements suggested that government and company support for economic diversification was present. The GN Minister for Sustainable Development said in 2001 that he was “…sure we’ll come up with something, [we] still have 11 months to come up with a plan” (Olayuk Akesuk, in George 2001). The mine’s legacy was clearly a concern for the government, and the Minister went on to note that: “The [GN] wants to ensure that Canada’s first Arctic mine leaves a positive legacy for Nunavut.”37 Studies were underway to look at: alternative uses for the town site, transferring infrastructure from Nanisivik to Arctic Bay, and strategies to deal with the socioeconomic impacts on Arctic Bay (GN 2002).

At the 2002 NWB Pre-Hearing, a representative indicated that the GN intended to have an “agreement in principal” in place before the mine closed. He acknowledged Arctic Bay’s wish to preserve Nanisivik’s transportation infrastructure, to find an alternate use for the site, and to acquire some of the housing, stating:

We as the GN agree with the community…that the preservation of infrastructure…is important not only to Arctic Bay but to other communities, the territory as a whole, and the country in general. One of our mandates…is to help mitigate some of the economic impact of this closure and it’s affect on the community of Arctic Bay, and [we intend to] pursue an alternate use that preserves these assets… (Bernie MacIsaac, Senior Advisor of Mineral Development, Department of Sustainable Development, in NWB 2002a, 129).

Breakwater seemed concerned about the mine’s legacy also, with Nanisivik’s General Manager stating: “We would like to leave a positive legacy. We believe that Arctic Bay can benefit from

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37 Canada’s first Arctic mine was actually the North Rankin Nickel Mine.
things at the mine and we are making arrangements. Daycare, school, health and other equipment – we’ll transport it to Arctic Bay” (Bill Heath, in NWB 2002a, 6). Breakwater’s 2002 Closure and Reclamation Plan (CanZinco Ltd. 2002, iv, sec. 6.6.3) acknowledged the strong interest of the GN and the community in finding some alternative use for the town, and the General Manager went on to say:

we do not believe we are being indiscreet if we said that both parties remain confident that a resolution will be found and the majority of the infrastructure at Nanisivik will be saved from demolition and preserved for future use by the people of Nunavut (Bill Heath, in NWB 2002b, 11).

However, reflecting the priority of economic concerns, the company made it clear that if negotiations did not reach a conclusion, they intended to to take apart and sell what they could, and demolish and burn and/or dispose of the remaining infrastructure underground within the mine, as per their 2002 closure plan. Unless releases and indemnities for on-going use of the mine facilities were in place, the company wished to proceed with reclamation activities because of legal requirements, and a desire to minimize ‘care and maintenance’ costs and environmental liabilities incurred through delay (CanZinco Ltd. 2002, sec. 7.2). At the time, Breakwater felt such an occurrence would be a “tragedy,” and appeared “confident that this travesty will not be permitted to occur” (Bill Heath, in NWB 2002b, 12, 16).

Breakwater was upfront about the primacy of the economic imperative in finding an alternate use for the Nanisivik site: “our prime objective is to best serve the needs of our shareholders by minimizing our closure costs while at the same time honouring all of our social, and environmental commitments and responsibilities” (Bill Health, in NWB 2002b, sec. 12). This was in line with that “overriding duty [of corporations] to maximize returns to shareholders”
Reclamation costs avoidable through the transfer of Nanisivik asset ownership, rather than dismantling and burying it, appeared to be in the millions (Rideout 2002b). Nanisivik’s General Manager made it clear Breakwater were “not so altruistic” that they were pursuing an alternate use simply to maintain jet service or create employment opportunities for the people of Arctic Bay (Bill Heath, in NWB 2002b, sec. 12).

As for the community, Arctic Bay’s expectations were perfectly clear. In a meeting with government officials in January 2002, residents expressed fears that Nanisivik’s town infrastructure would be demolished, and buried along with the mine. As the Mayor put it, “The community doesn’t want to see it just bulldozed and covered. They’d like to see something happen with the mine site” (Joanasie Akumalik, in Rideout 2002a). At the meeting, residents made suggestions for future site uses in light of the extensive infrastructure already in place and the region’s need for alternative economic development and employment. The meeting was the first official opportunity for residents to have their say on Nanisivik’s closure, despite having called for discussions with the government and company since the closure announcement in November 2001 (Rideout 2002a).

Mine closure literature suggests that a high degree of community solidarity is a pre-requisite for successful diversification (Task Force on Mining Communities 1982; Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999). This was plainly evident, and Arctic Bay seemed to be living up to the dictum that “those communities which need assistance must actively fight for it” (Neil and Tykkyläinen 1992, 20). This is further evinced by the General Manager’s comment that “…the single message we received, and we received it loud and clear, was that there is a tremendous desire on the part
of the residents of Arctic Bay to ensure that some economic activity be carried on in Nanisivik” (Bill Heath, in NWB 2002b, 11).

Combined with the actions of the government and company, these various efforts appeared to be consistent with best practices for mitigating the socioeconomic impacts of mine closure (Keyes 1992; O’Faircheallaigh 1992; Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999). They would however, ultimately amount to very little concrete gain for the community of Arctic Bay.

3.4.2. 2004 – 2005: Processual failures, evasions of responsibility and vexed outcomes

3.4.2.1. Responsible parties passing the buck?

Many of the key determinants of successful diversification for mining communities seemed in place. But at the end of the day, no party was willing to subordinate their economic priorities and assume responsibility (or liability) for the assets at Nanisivik, or the task of seeing through development of an alternative site use. This outcome was not helped by the fact that the two major regulatory institutions governing resource development in Nunavut – the NWB and Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) – failed to ensure that socioeconomic considerations were included throughout the closure process.

In July 2004 the NWB approved Breakwater’s 2004 Reclamtion and Closure Plan (2004 Plan) (Di Pizzo 2004). It included plans for full demolition and reclamation of the town site. This approach was consistent with the applicable guidelines at the time, which stated that: “Buildings and other structures should normally be removed and the foundations left in a safe condition,
Such guidelines were typical of the restoration and reclamation approaches to closure of the 1980s, which sought to return affected areas as closely as possible to ‘original’ or pre-mined conditions (see e.g. Bowman and Baker 1998). However, it has been argued that these approaches are “not only extremely difficult, [but limit] the opportunities for alternative land uses that may be more socially acceptable and ecologically sound” (Bowman and Baker 1998, 4, citing Doll).

Breakwater’s 2004 Plan on the other hand, was subject to a newly introduced Mine Site Reclamation Policy for Nunavut; a policy intended to encourage “sustainable and responsible development in the North” (Robert D. Nault, in DIAND 2002). The new policy drew on the WMI’s standard of “returning mine sites and affected areas to viable and, wherever practicable, self-sustaining ecosystems that are compatible with a healthy environment and with human activities” (DIAND 2002, 5). This standard allows for, but does not actively encourage, alternative land uses. Breakwater’s interpretation of this policy left their plans for demolition and underground disposal of the town site buildings unchanged. As the company had repeatedly stressed, it had to “proceed with reclamation…in a cost-effective manner…and will continue to do so until formal agreements are in place to the contrary.” But the GN’s intentions for an “agreement in principal” had not eventuated. In sum, this translates to mean that Breakwater’s intention to honour its social and environmental commitments and responsibilities could not be allowed to come at further financial expense unless another party assumed liability for the site.
In approving the 2004 Plan, the NWB evidently agreed with Breakwater’s assessment. The Board’s Executive Director had observed from the outset that it had no mandate to consider “jobs, social and economic impacts, environment and all other issues,” instead describing its responsibilities as “water and waste” (Phillipe di Pizzo, in D’Souza 2001). Given the NWB’s mandate, it is difficult to understand the rationale for proceeding without a review of the socioeconomic impacts of Nanisivik’s closure by NIRB.  

NIRB is an institution explicitly designed to consider types of impacts which the NWB would not. It is unclear how, as NIRB’s Vice-Chairperson claimed, foregoing NIRB review was in line with Section 12.2.5 of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA). That is, a decision “based on socio-economic and ecosystem considerations” which would “protect and promote the existing and future well-being of the residents and communities of the Nunavut Settlement Area…” (St. John 2002, 6). NIRB acknowledged Nanisivik’s “pervasive impact on the lives of the local population.” Yet the ‘specific terms and conditions’ set by NIRB for Nanisivik’s closure made next to no mention of existing or future socioeconomic or community concerns, focusing almost exclusively on environmental concerns instead (see St. John 2002, 8). NIRB’s abrogation of formal responsibilities – electing not to pursue a NIRB review, neglecting intervener status, and simply sending Board members as observers to the 2002 NWB Hearing (and not to any subsequent hearings) – perhaps helps to explain the complete lack of meaningful engagement with the social implications of Nanisivik’s closure.

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38 That is, NIRB’s decision to follow Section 12.4.4 (a) of the Nunavut Land Claim, to proceed without a Part 5 review by NIRB or Part 6 review by a federal environmental assessment panel (Government of Canada 1993, 107).

39 Namely, 69 specific terms and conditions under the categories of ‘environment,’ ‘fisheries and wildlife,’ ‘marine environment,’ ‘fresh water,’ ‘chemicals, fuel and hazardous materials,’ ‘land,’ ‘waste,’ ‘mined areas,’ ‘piping facilities and dump ponds,’ ‘archaeological,’ and ‘monitoring and surveillance.’
NIRB’s satisfaction with NWB-only hearings and belief that “the NWB in the past viewed the water mandate in the broadest possible terms” was clearly misplaced (Briscoe 2002). At the June 2004 Public Hearing on Nanisivik’s closure, the NWB’s Chairman stated that there were issues “coming up here that are outside our mandate, for example, housing and health,” and suggested that the GN organize a separate community meeting for “concerns about…matters other than water-related matters” (Thomas Kudloo, in NWB 2004, 231). In its Reasons for Decision for approval of the 2004 Plan, the NWB dedicated a section to “issues outside the mandate of the Board,” including infrastructure and materials, leaving these matters to the GN (Kudloo 2004).

For its part, the GN’s submission to the 2004 Hearing made it clear that the territorial government would not be pursuing an alternative use of Nanisivik facilities (Hardy 2004). The GN deemed all options (including the most promising, a trades training facility) “non-viable,” citing mainly environmental and economic concerns: contamination, the age and condition of the infrastructure, and the high costs of rehabilitation and upgrading.

Breakwater appeared frustrated and exasperated as a result of their failure to negotiate an agreement with the GN over Nanisivik’s infrastructure. As the mine’s General Manager explained at the 2004 hearing, Breakwater’s earlier optimism that another use for the Nanisivik site could be found had since waned, and was “pretty much extinguished” by the hearing (Bill Heath in NWB 2004, sec. 20). Explicitly acknowledging that Arctic Bay would suffer in socioeconomic terms, he told Nunatsiaq News:

We were of the view that there was still some life left in those buildings. We've been trying very, very hard for almost five years to find some alternative purpose for Nanisivik that would allow the infrastructure to stay in place. It's really the people of Arctic Bay who are
going to pay the biggest price for that decision. Arctic Bay doesn't have an awful lot by way of services…and we're just going to have to get rid of it, that's got to be disheartening for them (in Minogue 2004).

In his message to the 2004 hearing, the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Quttiktuq\textsuperscript{40} referenced this disappointment, calling for justice and a more equitable outcome for his constituent community:

I know that Arctic Bay is frustrated with the lack of success in addressing the needs of the community. Over the past couple of years, we have heard many announcements from the Government [regarding] how the community can take advantage of existing infrastructure in Nanisivik. We have been disappointed that there has been little forward movement…Although we know that the Government does not have unlimited funds, we are entitled to be treated fairly (Levi Barnabas, in NWB 2004, 163).

3.4.2.2. Contamination: Genuine threat, or convenient cover?

The GN sought to raise environmental concerns, and the possible dangers to human health (particularly toddlers and children) as justification for not pursuing any alternative site uses. At the 2004 hearing the GN’s legal counsel suggested that “studies of the houses and the soil and the buildings at Nanisivik showed levels of lead and certain other metals which could be dangerous to…health” (Susan Hardy, in NWB 2004, 201). However, neither the scientific evidence collected, nor the residents of Arctic Bay themselves, supported these reasons cited.

The final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment completed for Breakwater in 2003, following a process of stakeholder review (including by the GN), determined that cadmium, lead, and zinc exposure point concentrations at the site were lower than the Soil Quality Remedial Objectives established, “indicating that there is no unacceptable area-wide impact” (Jacques

\textsuperscript{40} Arctic Bay’s territorial electoral district.
Whitford Environment Ltd. 2003, 87). The report did acknowledge a limited number of “hot spots” with higher concentrations, which Breakwater undertook to target for remediation. The report was approved by the NWB in November 2003 (Di Pizzo 2003), and the independent, external review found that “the overall conclusions presented in the report are reasonable” (Leece 2004). A reviewer and ecotoxicologist suggested the overall impact on the land was probably “not significant,” and that the buildings at the mine site did not appear to pose health concerns (Dr. Ulysses Klee, in George 2003).

Residents were similarly skeptical of the GN’s position on contamination, with one arguing “I don’t think Nanisivik buildings are contaminated…we had workers there who were cleaning the house regularly…I would support getting the houses here…in Arctic Bay” (Piuyuq Tatuapik, in NWB 2004, 226). One former mine worker directly pressed the GN’s legal counsel for her evidence of any health risks posed: “…in some ways I don’t really trust the government…the Inuit who had children in Nanisivik…is there any evidence of that child, when they are born, [having] any liver or internal illnesses?” (Tommy Kilabuk, in NWB 2004, 228).

The legal counsel’s response was far from convincing:

In terms of data about specific children, we don't have that for this site. What we have is an understanding in the metal community of what lead does to people generally, first of all, and also an understanding that Inuit have a particular susceptibility to metals absorption in addition to the average person. So this is a considerably high risk for children. We don't have any complaints from any children, and that could be because they weren't exposed enough to be affected, or it could be because they didn't understand that there was that danger to be working with (in NWB 2004, 228).
If there was a genuine contamination danger to children, it is certainly troubling to think that residents were not made aware of it. It likely did not help that in 2002 Nunatsiaq News reported that GN health officials deemed the lead levels in the community safe (“Lead levels in Nanisivik safe” 2002), only to publish a letter from the GN’s Chief Medical Officer of Health soon after suggesting the lead and cadmium levels were not considered safe, and that further risk evaluation was required (Osborne 2002). As the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation had transferred ten housing units from Nanisivik to Arctic Bay in 1998, the Mayor raised a number of community concerns. He asked, if the buildings were indeed contaminated “…what state of contamination has this transfer…caused to the citizens of Arctic Bay? Furthermore, what assurance can our citizens be given that these units are safe to live in” (Iqalukjuak 2004, 2). No answer was forthcoming at the 2004 hearing. In the assessment of one editorial, “the excuse given…possible contamination of buildings, is weak. No one ever raised that issue during all the years when people ate, bathed, slept and raised their children in them” (Bell 2005).

3.4.2.3. Advance planning and alternative use options imagined and squandered

Despite an almost 20-year-lead-time to prepare for Nanisivik’s closure, with closure and alternative site use plans dating back to the 1980s, effective economic diversification measures were not implemented. A report prepared for the GN explored a number of alternative use options in detail (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002). These options included a vocational or multi-purpose training centre, a correctional centre, and a military facility. These options had in fact already been examined by an industry and government sub-committee in 1986, then expanded on by DIAND (1987a; 1987b) in a series of reports on abandonment, one year out from the originally expected date of closure, 1988. As Brubacher & Associates noted: “Apparently no
progress was made in addressing [the alternative use] issue during the fifteen year period following that report, until the mine announced that it was about to shut down” (2002, 75). Advance planning had obviously taken place. An opportunity to mitigate the “socially and psychologically wrenching experience” often involved for both mining communities and their residents at closure was therefore clearly wasted (Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999, 92). Early economic diversification measures typically dampen these and other negative effects, including the need for complete relocation of employees and associated costs (O’Faircheallaigh 1992; Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999). This was not to be at Nanisivik.

Two key criteria established for assessing alternative uses are economic feasibility, and stakeholder support (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002). On these grounds, the vocational training centre and correctional facility were deemed non-viable. The military facility option at Nanisivik was not new, having been included in the earlier DIAND study (1987a). A former federal Defence Minister had gone so far as to announce that a high Arctic base would be open within five years (Perrin Beatty, in M. Fisher 1988). This base did not eventuate, but as of 2002 the Department of National Defence (DND) were investigating military uses of the Nanisivik site following closure (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002).

Though the vocational training centre option was declared unfeasible, a multi-purpose training centre option was assessed and considered the greatest prospect for year-round use of the Nanisivik facilities. It was recommended that this option receive additional exploration and

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41 It should be noted that these were not the same criteria applied to the original Nanisivik mine proposal in the 1970s. Nanisivik was not deemed economically feasible without considerable financial support from the federal government. Further, Arctic Bay was not explicitly treated as an official stakeholder in the Nanisivik development negotiations, so their genuine support would have been impossible to assess.
feasibility study, through further consultation with government agencies and Arctic Bay (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002). This option was supported by the community, with the Mayor explaining that one had “seemed a certainty” until it was revealed that the community of Rankin Inlet\textsuperscript{42} would be receiving such a facility instead (Iqalukjuak 2004). In reference to the various studies, working groups and reports examining Nanisivik issues, the Mayor expressed frustration: “Although the intentions are greatly appreciated, we have yet to see any of the benefits for our community.”

Any benefits would not be readily imminent. In their 2004 submission, the GN decided that:

…”the costs to establish and maintain [a training centre at Nanisivik] are prohibitive, particularly when the necessary upgrade to facilities and equipment was taken into account. From a perspective focused on delivering quality education programs, these funds would be better invested in people, and training, not buildings (Hardy 2004, 2).

Here, the GN deployed both economic and social arguments for their decision, though as far as the social goals go, little of this investment in education programs, people and training appears to have gone to the community of Arctic Bay. Ironically, some limited training was provided to locals desiring reclamation work – demolishing the very infrastructure required to support education and training, including the Nanisivik school, and the other buildings proposed for use as a multi-purpose training centre.\textsuperscript{43}

While economic diversification “has the advantage of decreasing the vulnerability of mining communities, it has often proved difficult given the small size and remoteness of many mine

\textsuperscript{42} Former home of the North Rankin Nickel Mine and main community servicing the Meadowbank gold mine.

\textsuperscript{43} The total costs to the GN of the disposal of its infrastructure at Nanisivik could not be determined, but an additional $500,000 had to be authorized for this purpose in its 2005-2006 Budget (Department of Finance 2005).
settlements” (Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999, 92). In order to best achieve economic diversification, mining communities must pursue a “horizontal” approach wherein the local economic base is expanded beyond mining, into new sectors such as manufacturing or services (Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999). The small and remote communities of Nunavut, like Arctic Bay, face particular challenges to achieving conventional economic diversification (though as discussed in the previous chapter, Indigenous gathering and hunting activities are inadequately understood, or supported, as economic activities). They lack primary industry alternatives such as agriculture or forestry, or strong manufacturing or tourism prospects (O’Faircheallaigh 1992). Keyes has observed that:

…the unfortunate reality is that for many Canadian mining communities, diversification into other industrial sectors is not likely. Size and especially geographic location, virtually eliminate the possibility. Their best hope lies in more mines, not in attracting an alternative industrial enterprise (1992, 38).

Keyes’ solution of building yet more mines is curious given the problems identified with mine closure, but not unexpected from a government representative involved in the mining sector. However, this seems a more pragmatic attitude than the optimistic and long-standing claims that mining community diversification is not only desirable, but achievable (e.g. Veiga, Scoble, and McAllister 2001).

The industry pattern has historically been to pursue exploration close to existing operations, in theory boding well for the future of existing mining communities, though several communities in Canada have experienced decline without new mines starting up nearby (Keyes 1992). Planning for closure was recognized as an important task at the signing of the Strathcona Agreement in 1974, but the Polaris and Mary River projects were cited as economic opportunities to “take the
place of Strathcona Sound” (DIAND 1974d, 3). However, as a fly-in/fly-out site, the Polaris mine would contribute even less to the socio-economic development of its closest community, Resolute Bay, than Nanisivik contributed to Arctic Bay (Bowes-Lyon, Richards, and McGee 2009). As for Mary River, Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation has only just received NIRB approval to develop its contentious mine (“Multibillion-dollar iron mine” 2012; Murphy 2012b). Closer to Arctic Bay, residents had hoped that a “proposed diamond mine…will keep us alive” (Joanasie Akumalik, in Rideout 2002c). These hopes went unfulfilled, with no diamond mine developments in the region to date. Though apparently “rare in Canadian mining history that a mining region has completely ceased to have a presence” (Keyes 1992, 38), Arctic Bay and the high Arctic must be included among these rare cases.

3.4.2.4. Relinquishment and Reclamation: Seeing through the excuses and the abandonment of Arctic Bay

Given the failure to find an alternative use for the Nanisivik site, at the very least some salvaging of the site’s infrastructure could have been expected. Veiga, Scoble and McAllister suggest that traditionally, infrastructure was considered a major contribution by mining companies, who would generally leave “infrastructure such as roads, power, and housing to local communities when the mine was closed or, in remote areas, demolish it” (2001, 199). Mining operations are frequently accompanied by major infrastructure which can support development beyond closure (Rocha and Bristow 1997). In theory advance notice of closure also reduces the likelihood of stranded or wasted infrastructure and equipment, which can often be retooled for community purposes (O’Faircheallaigh 1992; Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999).
However, citing now-familiar economic and environmental concerns, the GN submitted in 2004 that the relocation of housing units to Arctic Bay was “neither logistically nor economically feasible,” noting elevated metals levels and the special cleaning required to decontaminate the residences (Hardy 2004). The study conducted for the GN on the housing contamination levels did indeed find high lead dust levels, however, the “special cleaning” referred to by the GN largely consisted of a thorough vacuuming and washing down of the houses, followed by resampling. The engineering consultant in charge of the study estimated that it would take a four-person crew a full day to decontaminate one unit, at a cost of $2,000-10,000 per unit (Ron Kent, personal communication, August 9, 2012).

The GN’s legal counsel cited an assessment made by GN housing officials that relocation costs for a single house were in excess of $900,000 (Susan Hardy, in NWB 2004, sec. 208). It is unclear how this figure was arrived at. When the ten houses were moved from Nanisivik to Arctic Bay in 1998, the cost per unit was $239,080. The highest component of this cost was retrofitting and rehabilitation at $160,857, while in 2002 the estimated cost to retrofit houses to make their use possible was only $60,000 (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002, 114). In their abandonment report series, DIAND had recognized the severe shortage of social housing stock in impact area communities such as Arctic Bay. They had assessed the costs of moving a home, “resetting [it] on new foundations and completing all necessary hookups” as being “in the area of $5,000” (1987b, 71).

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44 Indicative estimate only. At this rate, the 54 single and multi-occupancy housing units at Nanisivik could have all been decontaminated and kept useable with the $500,000 supplementary appropriation authorized by the GN for Nanisivik’s reclamation.

45 According to information provided by the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC), cited in (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002, 42). The NHC did not respond to our requests for reports or documentation relating to this issue.
Based on the results from the ten-house pilot project in 1998, the GN’s alternative use report suggested that “the cost of moving and rehabilitation may not be justified for structures of this design and age…,” pointing out that the cost of building a new, three-bedroom housing unit in Arctic Bay would be similar (2002, 43). However, the report did suggest that “other options for moving at least some of the houses should be further investigated. For example, placing the houses on skids and moving them to Arctic Bay across the ice” (Consilium Nunavut Inc. 2002, 43). DIAND had recommended “using a cat train (bulldozers)” to pull the houses to Arctic Bay over the ice during winter months (1987b, 71).

These suggestions resonated with the community’s own thinking. Recognizing Breakwater’s intention to demolish all the housing units at Nanisivik, the Mayor decried the social injustice demolishing the housing would represent. He expressed Arctic Bay’s desire to salvage the units, whole or for materials to make shelters on the land, and the willingness of residents to do the work themselves:

I indicate this as all the residents feel that just burning the units without offering them to the residents beforehand would just be inexcusable. The waiting list for the Housing Association is long and just burning the units in Nanisivik is just too unbearable to the residents of Arctic Bay (Iqalukjuak 2004).

Many Arctic Bay locals echoed the same sentiments at the 2004 hearing. One resident made a case for recovering the buildings or materials for use in constructing the cabins that remain an important part of the Inuit hunting complex (Laugrand and Oosten 2009), stating:

…in Arctic Bay, we are the only community without…hunting cabins. So these buildings, materials, although the plan is to demolish them…I will be upset if they do that…even myself, I can go up there and dismantle a building. And because it is very close…we can load [them]
onto a sled and just haul them here… there must be a way for us Arctic Bay residents to gain those materials (Tootalik Ejangiaq, in NWB 2004, sec. 135).

One resident astutely observed the financial rationale underlying the GN’s final decision, saying “I don't really believe the reasons…I think in some way we are being ignored…I suspect that they don't want to spend money, and perhaps that's the reason why they don't want to give us the buildings (Tommy Kilabuk, in NWB 2004, sec. 137). Another resident and former heavy equipment operator felt that whereas the mining company had supported Arctic Bay via the provision of jobs and income, “[the] government, to my eyes, is not willing to help us.” His view was that Breakwater was unfairly having to shoulder all of the burdens in providing benefits to the community (Moses Oyukuluk, in NWB 2004, sec. 133).

Breakwater’s Corporate Manager of Environmental Affairs speech at the 2004 hearing rang more like a eulogy, despite his attempt to emphasize the successes of Nanisivik. He lauded the long life of the mine, the employment provided, its pioneering role in paving the way for resource development in the north, the transport and town site infrastructure built, and the “community” which grew at Nanisivik, where “People came together…brought their families, had babies, raised and schooled their children…” (Bob Carreau, in NWB 2004). Nearly every aspect this Breakwater executive had raised has ceased to be cause for celebration in the following years.
3.4.3. 2009 – 2011: Who declares a mine a ‘success’? Nanisivik – A legacy of betrayal and social scarring

3.4.3.1. Employment as greatest loss at closure?

A study of the closure of the Ravensthorpe mine in Western Australia found that, while their interviews were rife with emotional narratives, this was “seldom in reference to a loss of income or concerns with future employment” (Pini, Mayes, and McDonald 2010, 563). In the present study, research participants certainly made reference to the struggles of those who lost their jobs, including loss of hope and “outlook for the future” (Jonah Oyukuluk, former miner), and reduced ability to purchase food and hunting equipment. “…it was financially, emotionally, mentally, hard on…[t]he Inuit employees” (Sheena Qaunnaq, local government employee). Further, effects beyond the individual were recognized, hinting at the institutions of sharing and exchange that remain central in Inuit communities (Dahl 2000; Kulchyski 2005b; Stevenson 1997), as well as the more typical economic flow-on effects: “Yes, [it had an effect] because when you’re making income it affects the whole community and when you use it, it has an impact” (wife of former Nanisivik employee).

However, consistent with the Australian study, loss of jobs and income was not in fact the main source of strong reactions to Nanisivik’s closure. Instead, most respondents expressed concern over the fate of the “transportation and town site infrastructure” that Breakwater’s executive had held up as a great accomplishment. It was this infrastructure that had provided the basis for community advocacy around alternative site uses or relocation to Arctic Bay. This challenges assertions in the literature that 1) although lost infrastructure “is a tragic waste…the more
disastrous consequence is the unemployment created through mine down-scaling or closure” (Rocha and Bristow 1997, 15); and 2) the most adverse effects of mine closure fall upon “those rendered unemployed,” not ready to retire but unable to find new employment quickly (Neil and Tykkyläinen 1992, 16). In the case of Nanisivik, this situation might be partly explained by the strong aversion of gatherer-hunter cultures to waste (Sahlins 1972). Further, whereas in such Indigenous communities wage labour is often utilized in order to support the hunting economy, in communities wholly dependent on mining wages, labour is the only economic activity.

3.4.3.2. The destruction of a community

The demolition of Nanisivik’s town site infrastructure was unmistakably wasteful, and had an obvious, haunting effect on residents of Arctic Bay. This is strongly evident in the 2009 NWB Public Hearing transcripts and our interviews in 2011, more than five years after the major site reclamation had been completed. Ten years on from the mine’s closure in 2002, this outcome remains a source of considerable disappointment and resentment for the people of Arctic Bay, made especially painful given the severe shortage and overcrowding characteristic of existing housing in most Nunavut communities, and the deficient infrastructure in the territory generally (see e.g. Berger 2006; Cusack and Jakub 2007; Terriplan Consultants 2008; Tester 2006). As one community member described, “it was heavy for me especially when you leave here…by demolishing and throwing away usable materials, [it] is hard to take…here, we have a housing shortage…but then at the same time, you just demolish and throw away usable houses” (Tootalik Ejanqiaq, in NWB 2009, 184). One former miner interviewed stated:
Twice, they offended us. Firstly they didn't compensate us for the damage they did to the environment or for the contamination of the land. Besides that they didn't want to give us any of the materials or buildings or furniture, so it was like a double-edged offense (Jonah Oyukuluk).46

3.4.3.3. The half-life of a contamination myth

As discussed, the threat to human health posed by the building contamination levels did not seem cause for particular concern. As noted by one consultant involved in coordinating Nanisivik’s closure, the industrial complex (mill and storage facilities) was deconstructed, shipped south and resold, now situated “around the world, bought by other mining companies” (Arlene Laudrum, environmental geologist; see also NWB (2009, sec. 40)). This detail was far from adequately explained to the residents of Arctic Bay. In fact, contamination seems to have been used as a primary justification, impressed upon the community, for the GN choosing not to relocate housing. In 2011 interviewees remained skeptical, stressing either that this was simply what they had been told, or emphasizing the inconclusiveness of the contamination. “We were told that the buildings were too contaminated to be brought here, so the contamination was the problem – why they didn't give us any buildings” (Olayuk Kigutikajuk, emphasis added). Another reported:

…the reason why they…demolished it was because the company didn't want to be at fault…they became contaminated or they think it might be contaminated…so therefore they decided to demolish them… Although people from Arctic Bay didn't like the idea, the company didn't want to have…any problems afterwards (Juda Oqituq, emphasis added).

As a local government employee surmised: “They said they had chemicals that MAY be harmful. They weren’t sure. They thought it might be and I guess, didn’t want to be sued in the future” (Sheena Qaunnaq). Residents seemed well aware of the desire by responsible parties to

46 Midgley (2012) examines some of these environmental considerations around Nanisivik’s closure.
avoid any liability concerns that could arise from the possible contamination.\footnote{It is interesting to note that this desire to avoid liability was mainly ascribed to the company, who at least during negotiations were strong advocates for infrastructure transfer. It was the territorial government who made the final decision in 2004 not to relocate assets to Arctic Bay.} However, this rationale was also met with some skepticism. One Elder made a distinction between the treatment of infrastructure at the production and expansion phase of the mine, versus the closure phase: “When it was upgrading…all the equipment and the buildings seemed to be okay. But when they were closing they said they are hazardous or contaminated, therefore they demolished them”. One former Arctic Bay resident raised the following concern:

I was saying, “why on earth are you guys destroying all of the houses and the furniture,” they said it was because they don't want to be sued if there was any high content of lead levels or any contaminants in the housing. How come that's an issue though, does that mean we all have contaminants since we lived there for many years. So where is the truth? (Kataisee Attagutsiak).

In reference to the housing units moved previously, one former mine employee suggested that “if they were determined to give us the houses they could've done it” (Jonah Oyukuluk). One resident’s understanding of the decontamination that would have been required was largely congruent with the engineering consultant contracted to assess the contamination:

if you rinse it with water, you can clear the surface from contamination… So those materials, they were aluminum and wood – you could wash it, get it clean, you know. I don’t buy that contamination [story]… I think they just wanted to get rid of it, and not be held liable… I think they were protecting themselves more… Or they didn’t want to pay for moving it here (Mishak Allurut).
3.4.3.4. The cold comfort of economic logic

The other primary factor was of course the costs involved with relocation; well recognized in the above quotation, and by other community members. One former resident observed that:

“Breakwater, [they] wanted to sell the whole thing to the government for several million dollars… But because they didn't want to give it away for free...they destroyed it, that's what I heard” (Kataise Attagutsiak). Breakwater had previously seemed attentive to its corporate responsibility and to the social concerns involved, apparently hoping to donate the housing, provided that the government took responsibility for managing the process (see Harris 2002). At the end of the day however, the company’s financial considerations overruled their ‘social responsibility.’ It seems the company could not “be persuaded to sell the buildings to the government of Nunavut for one dollar,” as one editorial had suggested (Bell 2002).

Nor could Breakwater or the GN be persuaded to allow residents to relocate any of the buildings or materials themselves, as had been requested. This continued to be a source of regret for residents in 2011: “…because they were pre-fabs, the buildings…you could easily take them out, take them apart and move them here…some of the built condition of some of the units were even better than the ones we have here in town” (Sakiasie Qaunaq, carpenter at Nanisivik, then Arctic Bay). The comment about conditions is not hard to believe. In 2006 more than half of Arctic Bay’s dwellings were constructed before 1986, and roughly one third were in need of “major repair” (Statistics Canada 2007). One former Housing Association employee explained further:

You know…locally we had a plan, ten guys could take apart the building on our own, we could ship them by qamutiks [sleds] and skidoo…because we moved one or two buildings
from Nanisivik beach here...if they were given the authority yeah, they could have taken them apart, get the materials or wood they need, and build shacks, or even houses (Mishak Allurut).

3.4.3.5. Bureaucratic and cultural barriers faced by the community

Some antipathy was directed toward the Nanisivik community liaison person present at the time the infrastructure demolition was occurring: “There was a lady...contracted for one year to be the Nanisivik coordinator...but she didn't want anybody to take furniture or household items...she said they may be contaminated. I wonder whether [she] did the right thing, by refusing to give furniture to the people” (Olayuk Kigutikajuk, Elder). Residents commented on the difficulties of dealing with this liaison and the bureaucratic processes in general, including the language barriers involved – apparently even getting into legal difficulties:

We were even charged with criminal acts, like taking property, after it closed down... I tried to ask for a house up there – there were a lot of rules and laws, I couldn’t pass through...and all kinds of reasons they came up with; it costs too much, it was contamination. ...being Inuit not knowing the Qallunaat way, we didn’t know... We didn’t know that it was illegal or, somehow impossible I guess to take them, due to regulations or laws.

there were a lot of problems trying to get those buildings...when you're – when you don't speak English...[the] bureaucratic system made it impossible for us to get our views across. But they just told us, “Go to that person.” And when we go to that person, they say, “Go to that person” (Tootalik Ejanqiaq, in NWB 2009).

Residents of Arctic Bay could have effectively made decisions on the distribution of materials from Nanisivik, had they been provided with the information and authority to do so. However, residents also felt that beyond the language difficulties associated with negotiating in English, other cultural differences (including financial ones) hindered Arctic Bay’s efforts to gain infrastructure. One Elder interviewed stated: “…Inuit culture and tradition is different from Qallunaat tradition and culture, and since Inuit didn’t have any money back then that’s why they
didn’t get anything they couldn’t buy.” Several respondents felt that a lack of an agreement was central to the final outcome: “…the company said they never had an agreement with Arctic Bay to provide the infrastructure or the equipment or the buildings…so they didn't do it” (Jonah Oyukuluk).

3.4.3.6. Community and emotional attachments to place

More than simply a town site made up of infrastructure, Nanisivik was also a community in all senses of the word, as Breakwater’s Corporate Manager of Environmental Affairs acknowledged. Former residents of that community who relocated to Arctic Bay expressed a sense of sadness and loss over Nanisivik’s absence, as well as the memories evoked by the place: “I recall the time [Nanisivik] was full of life…all the services there... But when I went there…after the mine closed…and saw the vacant, empty lot where the community used to be, I got emotional about it. I missed it…” (Sakiasie Qaunaq) (see Fig. 3). One woman who grew up in Nanisivik said:

[I was] born and raised there. It was home. Last time I went there was about 2 or 3 years ago in the summer. I just pictured all the houses that used to be there and all the other buildings that were there. All these memories from childhood came back…I miss that community (Sheena Qaunnaq).
Analogous to research with former residents of the Pine Point company town in Canada’s Northwest Territories (Kendall 1992), former residents of Nanisivik indicated emotional difficulties experienced over the shutdown of a community that was ‘home’; where friendships and families were nurtured for over 26 years. As one former heavy equipment operator explained, it was “Not the buildings, but the people that were there” (Johnny Attagutsiak). In a letter to Nunatsiaq News, one resident conveyed his resentment over the relative transience of Nanisivik, and what this meant for his family:

My two daughters have birth certificates from Nanisivik. The school there is named after my father. … Nansivik was a temporary community with no real status. Yet, lives were lived and life continues even in the midst of being demolished or vaporized. So, my daughters’ birth certificates are temporary? Thank you Nanisivik Mines Ltd. for everything (Allurut 2002).

Place of birth is of particular import to Inuit, and so those born at Nanisivik clearly experienced some psychological impact from their home’s disappearance. One former employee explained:
There is a young lad here who was born at Nanisivik, and recently...he said that whenever he
goes out to Nanisivik...he always feels at home, even though it's empty now...because that's
where he was born, and that's where he grew up too. ...for Inuit, where they are born is very
important... (Juda Oqituq).

3.4.3.7. A problem of shifting goalposts

Though closure literature cautions against underestimating the attachment of residents to place,
some have argued that those recruited to mining communities are typically cognizant of the
limited lifespan of mines, and “have often accepted the inevitability of closure when it occurred,”
moving on to pursue other opportunities (Kendall 1992; Neil and Tykkyläinen 1992, 15). This
position does not adequately account for the fact that this “limited lifespan” varies widely with
each mine, and is in fact unpredictable, subject to the vagaries of mineral markets. Nor does it
account for the long-term attachments of Indigenous communities to land and place. At the
Baffinland Mary River Project community meeting in Arctic Bay in 2011, residents were told the
proposed iron ore mine would operate for at least 20 years (Lim, 2011), yet media reports
suggest it could operate anywhere between 37–100 years (George 2012; Murphy 2012a). In
Nanisivik’s case, the expected closure date varied from 1988 to 2005. However by 2001, ore
reserves were adjusted due to declining metal prices, and so rather than purchase further supplies
for the site, Breakwater decided to run out existing inventories and operate for just one more year
(Bob Carreau, in NWB 2009, 24).

For residents of Arctic Bay, Nanisivik’s closure came as a shock, as they seemed to have
assumed it’s permanence: “we didn’t realize that it was a temporary establishment...[we]
thought it would last forever...we thought [we] would always have Nanisivik...but right now,
people are saying “oh, we shouldn’t have bothered with that. Because it will disappear””
(Koonoo Oyukuluk). Another resident described the ever-shifting closure date, and the effects this had on the community:

Every year they said there’s only five more years left in the mine. But after five years, they said “oh, there’s another five.” [Then] they suddenly said “no, we’re shutting down next year.” So, they shut down... In 2001, yeah.

It spoilt the community and the people. They were expecting “oh, Nanisivik will last forever, so we won’t have to make savings for it,” or plan for that loss (Mishak Allurut).

3.5. Conclusions

This case study of Nanisivik’s closure illustrates the gap that persists between the rhetoric of sustainable mining and socially responsible mine closure on the one hand, and the actual practice of companies and public regulators dealing with mine closure on the other. Initial prospects for some alternative use and economic diversification to take place at the site had been promising, in terms of Breakwater, GN and local community commitment. Yet this would all amount to naught. This result is in large part attributable to the privileging of economic concerns by governments and companies.

Social or socioeconomic concerns at the community level – a common focus of sustainable development approaches – were in contrast largely neglected. The outcome for the community has been feelings of disappointment, loss, and even resentment. These linger within Arctic Bay over the handling of the mine’s closure, ten years after operations ceased. Can mining operations in settings like Nanisivik really bring “long-term biophysical and socio-economic improvement to a region in a way that is consistent with holistic principles of sustainability,” as Veiga, Scoble and McAllister (2001, 201) advocate?
Given the unprecedented mineral exploration taking place in Nunavut today – an estimated $502.3 million in exploration investment in 2011 (the fourth highest jurisdiction in Canada) (NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines 2011) – it is clear that expanded guidelines for mine closure must urgently be put in place regardless, across all resource governance levels. Expanded closure regulation must address the means of realizing improved, community-driven social outcomes at closure. These might include: the fate and transport of materials, the use of infrastructure post-closure, the conditions that provide for future use and economic development at former mine sites, and a vastly improved understanding of the legacy and betrayal effects of consequential decisions that go well beyond material loss. Perhaps most critically, expanded regulations in such contexts must reflect and provide for the Indigenous character of Inuit communities.

Most literature on mine closure agrees on at least one thing: mine closure planning should ideally take place from the outset, at the development phase of a mine, in order to minimize the impacts of decommissioning on mining communities (Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999). Closure planning continues to be frequently overlooked at these early stages, yet constitutes a critical component in improving sustainability in the sector (Hilson and Murck 2000). In Nunavut, Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements (IIBAs) are ideally suited to this task. Project proponents must negotiate IIBAs with regional Inuit Associations under the NLCA before they can receive necessary permits and licences. In the Kivalliq Inuit Association’s IIBA with Cumberland Resources Ltd. for the Meadowbank gold mine, having observed the lessons from Nanisivik and not wanting communities “left high and dry” like Arctic Bay, right of first refusal in the purchase
of the mine’s assets after closure was negotiated (Bell 2006). The agreement-in-principle also
specified that Cumberland prepare and fund a ‘Post-Closure Inuit Wellness Strategy’
(Cumberland Resources Ltd. and Kivvaliq Inuit Association 2006, 8).

While this ‘Wellness Strategy’ sounds like a positive step, as is typical of Impact and Benefit
Agreements, its details are confidential. Neither the strategy nor IIBA in general appears to have
prepared the affected community of Baker Lake for Meadowbank’s projected closure in 2017,
three years early, with the Hamlet of Baker Lake declaring that the closure will “have a
devastating effect on the community both socially and economically as the community goes to
80 per cent unemployment” (“Early closure of Meadowbank” 2012).

There is a clear need for processes such as IIBAs and NIRB reviews to explicitly account for the
soecioeconomic impacts mine closure will have, at the evaluation stage, before a project can be
approved for development. Even in the now well-established processes of environmental impact
assessment (EIA), which NIRB oversee in Nunavut, EIAs:

tend to be limited to a prediction of impacts at the development and the operational phase of a
mining project, but do not extend beyond the proposed life of the mine. Planning for closure
would require that the time frame for an EIA be extended to the time of closure and the period
after closure when impacts are expected (Warhurst and Noronha 1999b, 25).

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is recommended as a tool specifically designed to facilitate, for
proposed projects like mines: (1) the identification and understanding of the project’s likely
impacts, (2) the prediction and mitigation of likely impacts, and (3) the development of
appropriate monitoring programs to identify and manage unanticipated social impacts (Warhurst,
Macfarlane, and Wood 1999). Yet even in the newer field of SIA, a similar emphasis on the early
stages of a mine is evident, “with little or no ongoing monitoring or evaluation of actual impacts and their management during the project’s operating life or closure” (Solomon, Katz, and Lovel 2008, 145).

Since its emergence in the 1990’s, SIA has typically been a subsidiary, even “inconspicuous” component of EIA process (Brudge 2002; Joyce and Macfarlane 2001; Warhurst, Macfarlane, and Wood 1999, 88). EIA therefore, “often fails to address the impacts of project development on human communities and culture” (Noble and Bronson 2005, 396, citing Burdge (2002) and Joffe and Sutcliffe (1997)). It is clear then, that EIA must be extended to more fully and proactively integrate the closure phase, and social impacts.

Although the introduction of a new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 via the conservative Harper Government’s 2012 Budget Implementation Bill, leaves the rigour and strength of EIA in Canada uncertain (Ecojustice 2012), as stated in the 2008 amendment to the NLCA, under Sub-section 12.12.7: “The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and any successor legislation replacing that Act, shall not apply” within the jurisdiction of Nunavut (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2010). Instead, projects must follow the EIA process set out by NIRB, which has a specific mandate to “review the ecosystemic and socio-economic impacts of project proposals” (Government of Canada 1993, sec. 12.2.2, emphasis added). 48 Sub-section 12.5.5 of the NLCA directs NIRB in which matters to take into account according to its mandate, and there is clear directive to consider the well-being of and socio-economic impacts on residents and communities. However the wording of Sub-section (h),

48 Unless the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development under Sub-section 12.4.7(a) “decides to refer a project proposal to the Minister of the Environment for public review by a federal environmental assessment panel.”
“Steps the Proponent proposes to take, or that should be taken to restore ecosystemic integrity following project abandonment” is significant, as it does not explicitly require NIRB to account for socio-economic matters at the closure phase. Not only must NIRB incorporate these issues into their project appraisals at pre-development but, as the Nanisivik case demonstrates, NIRB cannot defer responsibility to the NWB, and must instead conduct its own full review upon closure.
Chapter 4: Conclusion

The Nanisivik mine served as the biggest employer in the Canadian high Arctic, and provided certain services and infrastructure during the 27 years it operated. Yet consistent with Blaser, Feit and McRae’s (2004) thesis introduced in chapter 1, these conventional socioeconomic benefits were both minimal and short-lived, as concerns long-term social and community development in or near Arctic Bay. When a mine is closed for myriad economic or material reasons, it persists as a site of accumulated capital. Yet little tends to be left behind for those whom this value has been generated from, in terms of their land and labour. For these reasons, it is highly unlikely that mining will provide a model for genuinely sustainable community development in the Arctic – or anywhere for that matter. Coates and Powell state well the inherent limitation of employment in mineral extraction: “The greatest, and inescapable, problem for the mining industry is that development contains the seeds of its own destruction. As soon as production begins, the clock begins to tick towards the mine's eventual demise” (1989, 40).

That said, there are many ways in which mines might be engaged – as sites of capital, as agents of imposed economic transitions, and as sources of legacy and impact as yet poorly understood. This project has highlighted a range of the historical and contemporary effects of mining on the Indigenous Inuit community of Arctic Bay. A better understanding of the complex relationship that exists between industry, government, Inuit and other actors involved in resource development projects has emerged herein. As Inuit communities increasingly become the focus of mineral development, studies emphasizing consequences, as well as the best community- and
policy-level approaches available to address these consequences, are critical to the generation of locally relevant research and regulatory outcomes.

Marxist theory continues to provide critical purchase in the analysis of social and economic change driven by colonial State and capitalist interests, as demonstrated in chapter 1. The return of recent scholarship to Marx’s primitive accumulation thesis is both warranted and welcome. Its value lies in its potentially systematic outlining of the conditions, means, and totality or not of economic transition. This research has sought in particular to illustrate that the interdependent concepts of modes of production and their articulation are deserving of revitalization also. We find that these concepts are essential to a fuller understanding of the processes of dispossession and exploitation of noncapitalist modes of production by the forces of capital – including what that looks like, when it can be said to have unfolded or not, and why.

Such delineation of economic transition, including its non-subtle guise as colonialism, suggests that these heretofore dormant concepts are well suited to analysis of the social history of the high Arctic, and the sequential and overlapping economic systems that can be found across history in its textual and oral forms. At the very least, major periods of economic change become patently evident. We argue that resource-based industrial capitalism, such as the Nanisivik mine venture, signify a stark and totalizing structure through which the capitalist mode of production imposes itself within social formations where a noncapitalist mode is dominant – as in Inuit society. When contrasted with merchant capitalist activities like that characterized by the whaling and fur trading economies, the qualitatively different level at which the State and industrial mining capital sought to impose capitalist relations of production is laid bare. Our archival analysis
reveals DIAND’s clear intention to institute the wage relation in the high Arctic via Nanisivik. But the State’s overriding agenda of dispossessing Inuit of their lands and resources, in order to facilitate capital accumulation by mining companies, proves a greater driver than producing Inuit labour at Nanisivik.

This supports the understanding of Coulthard and others that “when related back to the primitive accumulation thesis, it appears that the history and experience of dispossession, not proletarianization, has been the dominant background structure shaping the character of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state in Canada” (2013, 8). Nanisivik’s development was also a clear instance of DIAND favouring the interests of their constituents seeking to exploit northern resources, more so than their Aboriginal constituents. This raises important questions about which interests continue to hold primacy now within Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, given their ongoing influence over northern resource development.

Three decades after Nanisivik’s development, even with the settlement of Canada’s largest land claim and the creation of Nunavut, Inuit interests and desires continue to be neglected within resource governance decisions. This fact is highlighted by our discussion of the process and outcomes of the mine’s closure in chapter 3; events which included the reprehensible demolition of over $50 million worth of infrastructure at Nanisivik. Even in the face of local pleas for some ongoing use of this infrastructure – at a bare minimum, scrap wood for hunting cabins – neither the government nor company were willing to support such social closure outcomes at their financial expense.
Our research demonstrates the gap that exists between company practice, and government and industry rhetoric, around so-called sustainable mining and socially responsible mine closure. Talk of the mining sector’s supposed contribution to sustainable development, and the rise in (largely voluntary) guidelines requiring greater consideration of social concerns during a mine’s closure and post-closure phases, were commonplace by the time Nanisivik reached these phases in 2002. The Government of Nunavut and Breakwater Resources at least paid lip service to these concerns early on the in closure process, but were ultimately unprepared to invest their efforts to ensure some form of socially responsible closure outcome for Arctic Bay. As such, no economic diversification or alternative site use occurred, and Arctic Bay received negligible resources or infrastructure from the mine at closure. The result has been a legacy of social scarring for the community that witnessed Nanisivik come, and then go.

The Nanisivik experience makes clear that expanded regulatory guidelines must be established for mine closure, in Nunavut and beyond. This regulation should include requirements for early closure planning, social impact assessment at closure, fostering the conditions for economic diversification, and attentiveness to the specificities of Indigenous communities that both exist before and endure after the coming and going of mining operations. In Nunavut, these requirements must be addressed at all levels: through IIBAs, NIRB reviews, and revision of the federal Mine Site Reclamation Policy for Nunavut.

Our study is also consistent with recent scholarship examining the social dimensions of mine closure in Western Australia (Browne, Stehlik, and Buckley 2011; P. McDonald, Mayes, and
Pini 2012; Pini, Mayes, and McDonald 2010), adding the Indigenous context and new geographical area to an otherwise under researched field.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Mineral exploration projects in NWT and Nunavut 2011

Appendix B: Map of Nunavut featuring Nanisivik and Arctic Bay

Source: http://www.rankininlet.net/resources/
Appendix C: Map of Inuit Owned Lands

### Appendix D: List of interview participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mucktar Akumalik</td>
<td>Elder, worked at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aseena Allurut</td>
<td>Government of Nunavut employee, lived at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishak Allurut</td>
<td>Interpreter, lived at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sipuraq (Aapak) Allurut</td>
<td>Receptionist, lived at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Husband worked at mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Elder, hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Hunter, worked at mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Worked at mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Attagutsiak</td>
<td>Lived and worked at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kataisee Attagutsiak</td>
<td>Government of Nunavut employee, lived at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiporah (Qapik) Attagutsiak</td>
<td>Elder, seamstress, lived at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi Barnabas</td>
<td>Qikiqtani Inuit Association community director, former MLA for Arctic Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne Covernton</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Demcheson</td>
<td>Former Settlement Manager and Senior Administrative Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Elliott</td>
<td>MLA for Arctic Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenn Harper</td>
<td>Businessman, former resident and Settlement Council member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olayuk Kigutikajuk</td>
<td>Elder, seamstress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare Kines</td>
<td>Community economic development officer, former RCMP officer at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipeelie Koonoo</td>
<td>Elder, hunter, worked at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlene Laudrum</td>
<td>Environmental geologist, Nanisivik mine closure consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernie MacIsaac</td>
<td>Former Government of Nunavut employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon MacKay</td>
<td>Government of Nunavut employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank May</td>
<td>Mayor of Arctic Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juda Oqituq</td>
<td>Worked at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah Oyukuluk</td>
<td>Hunter, worked at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koonoo Oyukuluk</td>
<td>Elder, hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakiisas Qaunaq</td>
<td>Elder, carpenter, lived and worked at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheena Qaunnaq</td>
<td>Government liaison officer, lived at Nanisivik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Swoboda</td>
<td>Psychiatric nurse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Sample semi-structured interview questions

Note: Certain questions will be asked based on their applicability to the specific participant being interviewed. Many are open-ended and serve as a starting point for discussions. Questions will not necessarily all be asked, or in the order presented below, but rather, will be asked as appropriate in relation to the directions the interviews take.

Discuss research overview and objectives as per Letter of Introduction and Consent Form.

Clarify subject’s confidentiality status – consent to use of name, or request for anonymity.

Tell me about yourself

• Where were you born?
• Have you always lived in Arctic Bay?/When did you spend time in Artic Bay?
• What is your relationship to the land?

What comes to mind when I say ‘Nanisivik’?

What was your connection to Nanisivik?

• What did you think of Nanisivik? What are your feelings about the mine?

[For ex-workers:

• What did you do at Nanisivik? How long did you work there?
• What was your work schedule? (Did you work on rotation?)
• How did you find the schedule? What would you change about it?
• Did you have enough time off?
• What was it like working and living with non-Inuit at Nanisivik?
• To your knowledge, were Inuit wages the same as non-Inuit wages?
• Would you work in a mine or company town again?]

Why do you think the mine started out, and at that time?

• What do you think the community expected to gain from the mine? To what extent were these expectations met?
• Do you know if the government or mining company consulted with Arctic Bay before work on Nanisivik began (i.e. with the Settlement Council)? Was there enough consultation in your opinion?
• How have Inuit interests and concerns with Nanisivik been represented? Do you know whether the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami has been involved at all?
  o Was an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement ever signed for Nanisivik?
• What do you think the government expected to gain from the mine?
• What do you think the first mining company (Mineral Resources International) expected to gain from the mine?

How did Arctic Bay change once the mine started up?

• Do you remember/know what life was like before the mine came?
• Do you think the Nanisivik townsit/company town was a good idea, or would you have preferred a different arrangement?
  o What about the method of tailings (mine waste) disposal?
• Did the mine bring many new people into town (both Inuit or non-Inuit?)
• Did Inuit want to work at the mine? Were jobs available for those who wanted to work?
  o What happened with the local employment situation?
  o Did Inuit women want to work at the mine? Were jobs available for women who wanted to work?
• What sort of skills and experience did Nanisivik provide for community members?
• What changed once locals started making wages at the mine? i.e.:
  o Did Nanisivik work reduce the time available for hunting?
    ▪ But did the wages mean hunting equipment like skidoos could be purchased?
    ▪ Did the wages mean store food could be bought, to replace country food?
    ▪ →How did the balance between living from money and living from the land change?
  o Did family and community relations like sharing networks change? (What was your experience with the sharing of wages, and country food?)
    ▪ Have the roles of Elders, parents, or others changed with wage employment?
• Why do you think numbers of northern workers declined from the early days (late ‘70s/early ‘80s) till when the mine closed in 2002? (i.e. northern populations increase; increasing numbers of non-northern workers; etc?)
• What effects did Nanisivik infrastructure have on Arctic Bay, i.e.:
  o Jet service
  o Access to more shipping
  o The Allurut School
  o (How have things changed now that the mine is closed?)
• Did alcohol at Nanisivik cause any problems for Arctic Bay at all?

Present map of Arctic Bay and Nanisivik area:

• Can you indicate on the map areas that have a special significance to you and explain why?
• Please indicate on the map locations where members of your family traditionally:
  o hunt
  o trap
  o fish
  o other
• Did these patterns change once Nanisivik was developed?
• Nanisivik’s legacy
• How do you think Nanisivik has contributed to Arctic Bay’s development?
  o What do you think would be different about Arctic Bay if Nanisivik had never been set up?
• How has the loss of jobs and income affected you and your family, and/or the community?
  (i.e. loss of both direct and indirect wages, unemployment? Applies to ex-workers, local business workers, carvers, etc.)
  o (Financial stress? Productivity, confidence, other psychological effects?)
• Have many other job opportunities arisen to replace work from the mine?
• Has there been government or company support for Arctic Bay to help with any changes that Nanisivik’s closure brought? (i.e. socio-economic impacts – transitional job creation?)
• Do you know where the remediation/reclamation process is currently at?
  o Have you found it to be satisfactory?
  o Have there been jobs available for residents of Arctic Bay in this process?
  o What would you like to see done with the Nanisivik area now?
  o Do you know why most of the Nanisivik buildings were bulldozed? How did you feel about this?
• Was a ‘Nanisivik Commemoration Event’ or similar celebration ever held?

Opinions on major industrial developments

• What do you think of mining as a means of development in Nunavut?
  o What would you like to see done differently if a mine was to start up now?
  o What should mining companies do before they can build their mines? i.e. community consultation and engagement
  o Who benefits from mining projects in Nunavut? (Do the communities benefit?)
  o Would you have preferred that the mine stayed open, or are you happy that it closed?
  o What should happen once a mine closes?
• What do you think about other major industrial developments in the Arctic, like oil and gas?
• How have you felt about the Canadian Coast Guard’s ongoing use of the Nanisivik port?
• What do you think about the proposed Canadian Forces naval facility going in at Nanisivik’s deep water port?
  o Do you think people in Arctic Bay would like to work on the development and construction of the facility?
  o The assertion of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic is a ‘hot topic’ in the media these days – do you know if this was the case back when Nanisivik was being built? (1970s)
    ▪ What do you think about this issue now?

Do you have any questions of your own about Nanisivik that you would like answers to?

Have I left anything out that you think I should be asking?

Thank you for your time. Are there others that you think I should speak to about these issues?