

Economic changes, household strategies, and social relations of contemporary Nunavik Inuit

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ABSTRACT. This article examines current economic practices of the Inuit of Nunavik and the consequences of these practices on social relations. In western societies, recourse to market and increasingly frequent use of money have been identified as major factors related to a decline in household production. These practices are also associated with a reduction of interpersonal dependency and with the emergence of instrumental rationality. In Nunavik, like in many Arctic regions, money and commodities represent an increasing portion of the economic resources of Inuit households. Household production also contributes substantially to their resources. An examination of the Inuit household budget shows a diversity of lifestyles supported by various economic activities and strategies that aim at satisfying material needs of family members. These strategies demonstrate that Inuit are economically rational and make use of monetary calculation. This rationality does not influence all economic behaviours, which are also motivated by traditional values and customary obligations. However, the emergence of diversity in lifestyles indicates the existence of a greater margin of self-determination for individuals.

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Introduction

Many studies have paid attention to recent transformations of the Inuit economy and the impact of these changes on economic activities. Very few, however, have tried to interpret the direction of these changes or their effects on social relations. Today, money and commodities are part of the economic resources of the contemporary Inuit economy. Monetary income represents a significant and increasing portion of the economic resources of Inuit households (Conference Board of Canada 2001; Myers and Forrest 2000; Caulfield 1993; Knapp and Morehouse 1991; Quigley and McBride 1987). These resources have allowed Inuit access to an increasing number of consumer goods, which reflect changes in their way of life. Current economic conditions in the Arctic have by no means eradicated household production, and especially that of food, which is mainly a subsistence-oriented production aimed at satisfying the immediate needs of the family and community. It continues as a central feature of the economy and society today. In fact, monetary resources, especially from wages, have greatly benefited household production, rather than having caused its disappearance (Condon and others 1995; Kruse 1991; Mackey and Orr 1987; Wolfe and Walker 1987; Kruse and others 1982; Hobart 1982a, 1982b). However, household production alone requires substantial monetary investments (Condon and others 1995; Caulfield 1993; Wenzel 1991; Smith

and Wright 1989; Ames and others 1989; Mackey and Orr 1987) and only satisfies a portion of the households' material needs, which correspond more or less with the consumption of meat and fish. How can these changes in the household economy of Inuit be interpreted?

Polanyi (1981) has shown how the development of the market economy entails corresponding transformations in social organization. In this view of economic changes, monetarization and commoditization bring about the decline of household production by fostering dependency on the market. When traditional societies engage in the process of industrialization and in market activities, they develop a dual nature. Dual societies are characterized by the coexistence of two economic sectors: a market and a traditional sector; the former is associated with an urban lifestyle, and the latter is based on household production in rural areas. At the beginning of the process, the market sector is superimposed on existing mentalities and social structures but begins to transform the society. Gradually, wage-work impacts on the organization of everyday life, as industry superimposes new values essential to the development of the capitalist system of production (Scardigli 1983). As the market slowly replaces the subsistence-oriented economy, industrialization brings about the end of the domestic group as a unit of production in which income is undifferentiated (Goody 2001).

Transformations in the economy also suppose fundamental changes in the motive of social action (Polanyi 1981). Simmel (1987) and Weber (1971a) argued that because commodities and money are not identified with specific individuals, their use tends to objectify and depersonalize social relations. This is in consequence to the application of the principle of instrumental — or economic — rationality, and of monetary calculation in all exchanges. Furthermore, because money is a neutral medium of exchange that is not directed to specific purposes other than exchange itself, it allows transactions

to encompass a greater number of goods and exchange partners, thus reducing interpersonal dependency. Indeed, while the market gradually replaces social networks in satisfying individuals' needs, the community loses its functional role in assuring individuals' survival. As a consequence, the dependence between community and individuals gradually erodes (Weber 1971b). Individualist behaviours and a belief in personal freedom thus develop as individuals cease to depend on their community for their material needs. Social mobility becomes private and a new stratification emerges based on monetary assets.

These sets of transformations undermine the social foundation of any society, and non-western societies are no exception (Scardigli 1983). Anthropologists, such as Murphy and Steward (1968), have proposed a similar model to interpret the transformation of pre-capitalist societies. They found that the desire to acquire commodities creates dependence on market exchanges.

Many social scientists have argued that the consequences of generalized use of money and commodities are much more complex than those expressed through these theoretical standpoints. Hamilton (1994), for example, asserted that this perspective is the result of a Eurocentric vision of social change, which minimizes the power of cultural particularities of a society. Others have suggested, in the case of pre-capitalist societies, that a dual economy is not necessarily transitional. Rather, in many cases, market and non-market economies are inextricably bound together, mutually complementing and interpenetrating without losing their distinctive features. Their viability rests on their reciprocal structural integration providing the necessary flexibility to living conditions in a context characterized by the fluctuation of resources and of the labour market (Dahl 1989; Langdon 1986).

Far from being economically rational, increasing monetary wealth in these societies has not lessened sharing practices, and members still retain a collective access to the means of production (Peterson and Matsuyama 1991; Dahl 1989; Langdon 1986). Furthermore, the desire to maximize income is not the primary motive influencing the continuation of production activities in many pre-capitalist groups (Caulfield 1993; Peterson and Matsuyama 1991; Langdon 1986). The persistence of the gift in industrialized societies is an indication that economic motivations have not transformed all exchanges into market exchanges. The gift is still a current practice, although different rules and motives may apply in contemporary acts of giving (Godbout 1992; Cheal 1988). Another assumption, that money is a purely rational means of exchange, has also been challenged. Zelizer (1997) has shown, in the case of the American society, how money can be shaped and reshaped by social relations. Currencies, for instance, can be turned into gifts, following certain rules, and used to earmark the creation, celebration, and sustaining of intimate ties.

Weber (1971a) agreed that instrumental rationality is not the only driving force of economic actions, and that other forms of rationalities dictate social behaviours today

as they did in the past. Conversely, he also indicated that instrumental rationality is not exclusive to modern societies and influences behaviours in pre-capitalist societies as well. To that effect, Sahlins (1974) suggested that exchange could follow utilitarian motives when partners are socially distant. However, Weber (1971a) argued that because of the heterogeneity in the nature of resources exchanged in a barter economy, instrumental rationality is a difficult concept to apply. Money, allowing calculation and therefore comparison of values, has facilitated the penetration of economic rationality.

It appears that existing social practices and values can be very persistent and resilient to change and can be affected by new trends in the broader economy.

An examination of the household economy of the Inuit of Nunavik provides new insights into how they participate in contemporary economic life and how monetarization and commoditization of economic resources affect their social relations.

A case study in Nunavik

Nunavik is located in the northernmost part of the Canadian province of Quebec (Fig. 1). The 10,000 inhabitants, mostly Inuit, live in 14 villages scattered along the shores of the Hudson and Ungava bays. With the exception of Kuujuaq, where the population is about 2000 (with a quarter of its population being non-Inuit), most Inuit live in small settlements where they represent the dominant ethnic group (90–95%). The economics of the villages do not differ significantly from one another in that their economic activity is based primarily on the provision of services to the population: 62% of all wage employment of Inuit in 1998 was in the public and para-public sectors (Lefebvre 1999). Also central to the village economic life is the production of what is known in Nunavik as 'country food,' *niquitinnag* (literally 'real food'), that is, food coming from local resources (such as wild game, fish, and plants), the acquisition of which is mostly undertaken by individuals and their families.

In 1975, the Inuit of Nunavik signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) with provincial and federal governments. The implementation of this Agreement entailed the development of an impressive governmental apparatus, part of it to be located in Nunavik, creating new wage-work opportunities for Inuit. From 1972 to 1983, full-time Inuit wage employment almost doubled, and this increase was maintained during the following decade (Lefebvre 1999; Duhaime 1991a). The expansion of the labour market had many effects on the monetary income of the Inuit. Indeed, wages multiplied seven-fold between 1973 and 1983. Wages continued to grow during the following decade and were, by far, the principal monetary source of income in 1995 (Duhaime and others 1998; Simard 1996). This increase had direct and immediate effects on the consumption behaviour of Inuit. In 1983 personal expenditure for goods and services was estimated at more than \$9000 per capita;

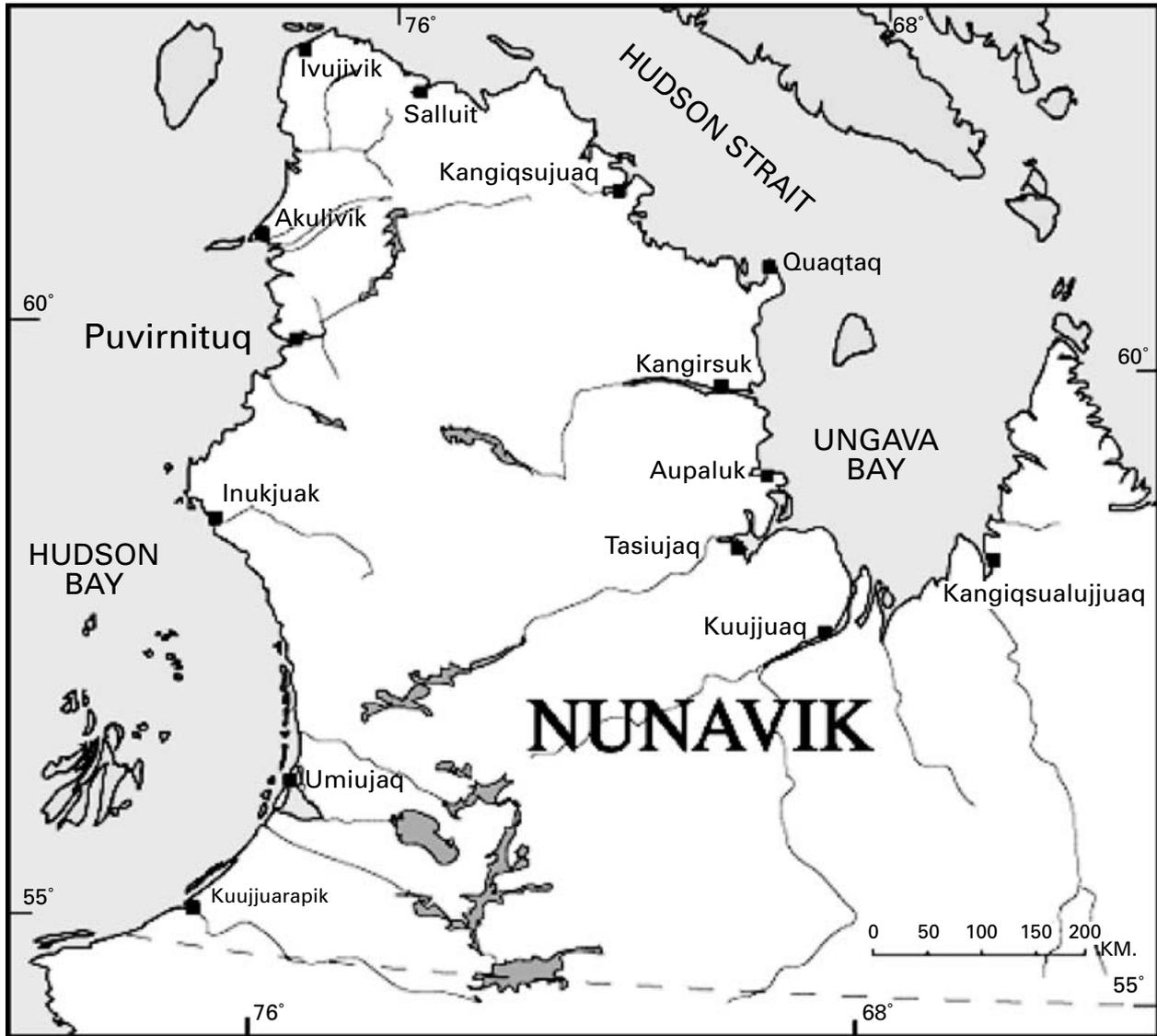


Fig. 1. Nunavik territory. Source: Makivik Corporation (http://www.makivik.org/eng/images/map/01_nunavik.gif).

by 1991 it had reached \$13,000 (Duhaime and others 1999). Although country food accounted for a significant part of the diet in 1995, Inuit households spent, on average, more than \$16,400 for groceries alone (Duhaime and others 1998). The implementation of JBNQA has greatly contributed to the transformation of household economies during the past 20 years. From this perspective, the case of Nunavik exemplifies some of the consequences of rapid change that many native groups are experiencing.

Measuring Inuit households' economy

The basis for this study is an analysis of the budget of Inuit households for a one-year period (July 1994–June 1995). The household budget consists of monetary and non-monetary transactions made by all adult persons of the household. An Inuit household includes all the members, generally related, living in the same house at the time of the survey, according to official lists of population obtained through local administrations. As a

unit of analysis, the household determines a series of economic relations, inside and outside the home, which is consequently relevant to sociological analysis.

Data were collected from a sample of Inuit households selected in two Nunavik villages (population approximately 500 and 1000, respectively). The data collection was based on quota sampling, a nonprobabilistic method of sampling. This method implies obtaining sufficient representation of a sample, by seeking to reproduce, more or less proportionally, a distribution of characteristics relevant to the research problem. In spite of its limitations, this method of sampling, like all nonprobabilistic methods of sampling, has been proven to be very valuable in exploratory investigations (Ghiglione and Matalon 1992).

Using socio-demographic information, which was supplemented with secondary information obtained from key informants, each household of the two selected villages ($n = 316$) was, first, characterized according to

Table 1. Samples according to typology.

Types of household	Households (2 villages)					
	Total		Selected		Used	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female-headed	81	26%	10	21%	9	23%
Male wage-earner headed	114	36%	14	30%	10	25%
Unemployed-male headed	121	38%	23	49%	21	53%
Total	316	100%	47	100%	40	100%

two variables: the presence of a male head, and his occupation. The concept of 'heads of household' is defined as the persons on whom other occupants of the house depend. The relationship of dependence is a function of the capacity of a person to dictate decisions about consumption. This capacity is, in itself, a function of age, status, and income. Considering the traditional division of labour among Inuit, the presence and occupation of a male head of household are considered valid indicators of ability to engage in harvesting activities and, consequently, to influence economic practices (Duhaime and others 2002; Condon and others 1995; Kruse 1991; Smith and Wright 1989; Mackey and Orr 1987). These two variables were used to construct a typology of three types of households, within which all households of each of the two villages were distributed. Forty-seven households were then selected (Table 1).

The data analysed in this study were collected in 1995 and 1996, but mainly from a survey conducted in the two Nunavik villages during the summer of 1995. Semi-directed interviews were carried out with one or more informants in each household, who were generally the heads of household. For that purpose, an interview-guide was constructed in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data on spending patterns, incomes of each adult person living in the house, and harvesting activities. Interviews were conducted in the settlements as well as in a few summer hunting and fishing camps. In addition to the interviews with the adult residents and with officers from local and regional organizations, complementary data from observations and official records were gathered.

The budgets of 40 households were estimated (Table 1). They were calculated as follows:

1. Monetary income includes wages, transfer payments, and income from production. Monetary income was calculated using data from interviews and secondary material from several official lists. Credit was not measured in this study, although it is widely used and is part of daily household economic strategies.
2. The income from production activities was estimated using the data of the Hunter Support Program. In 1995 income from production activities came from different sources. The first source was the Hunter Support Program, a public program managed by municipal administrations and financed entirely by the provincial government, which allocates to each village a sum of money for promoting

traditional activities. This program aims at reimbursing part of the hunters' production costs, while providing country food free of charge for the community. Municipal administrations, through the Program, can also hire a person to perform different tasks related to traditional activities. Second, products could be sold to local co-ops. Third, hunters could sell their production to one of the processing plants operated by a subsidiary company of the Makivik Corporation, called Nunavik Arctic Food Inc. Four plants were built between 1993 and 1994. Although their commercial activities have fluctuated during the years, they were in operation at the time of the survey. Hunters, on a voluntary basis, brought in their products and were remunerated according to the weight of the catch. The animal was then processed and sold to southern markets. According to an interview carried out with one of the directors of the processing plant, very few hunters took part in this project. Fourth, some people could sell their products outside this network, for example, to tourists. Apart from the Hunter Support Program, no detailed information could be obtained about sales made by individual producers. Nevertheless, after having considered the proportions of income earned from these four sources — based on regional data (Chabot 2001a): Hunter Support Program: 71%; co-ops: 24%; Nunavik Arctic Food Inc: 2%; other: 3%) — it was assumed that participation in the Hunter Support Program could constitute a valid indicator of the behaviour of hunters regarding the sale of products.

3. Expenses for production include the purchase of vehicles (snowmobile, ATV, canoe, outboard motor); vehicle maintenance and operation costs (parts, gasoline, etc); and fishing, hunting, and camping gear, including maintenance and operation costs (parts, bullets, etc). These were estimated using data from interviews.
4. Production consists of the harvest of main local resources calculated in edible weight (based on Juniper 1989). These measures were estimated using data from interviews and do not include expenses and production resulting from expeditions organized by local administrations.

The resulting estimates were compared to official data, when possible, and corrected accordingly.

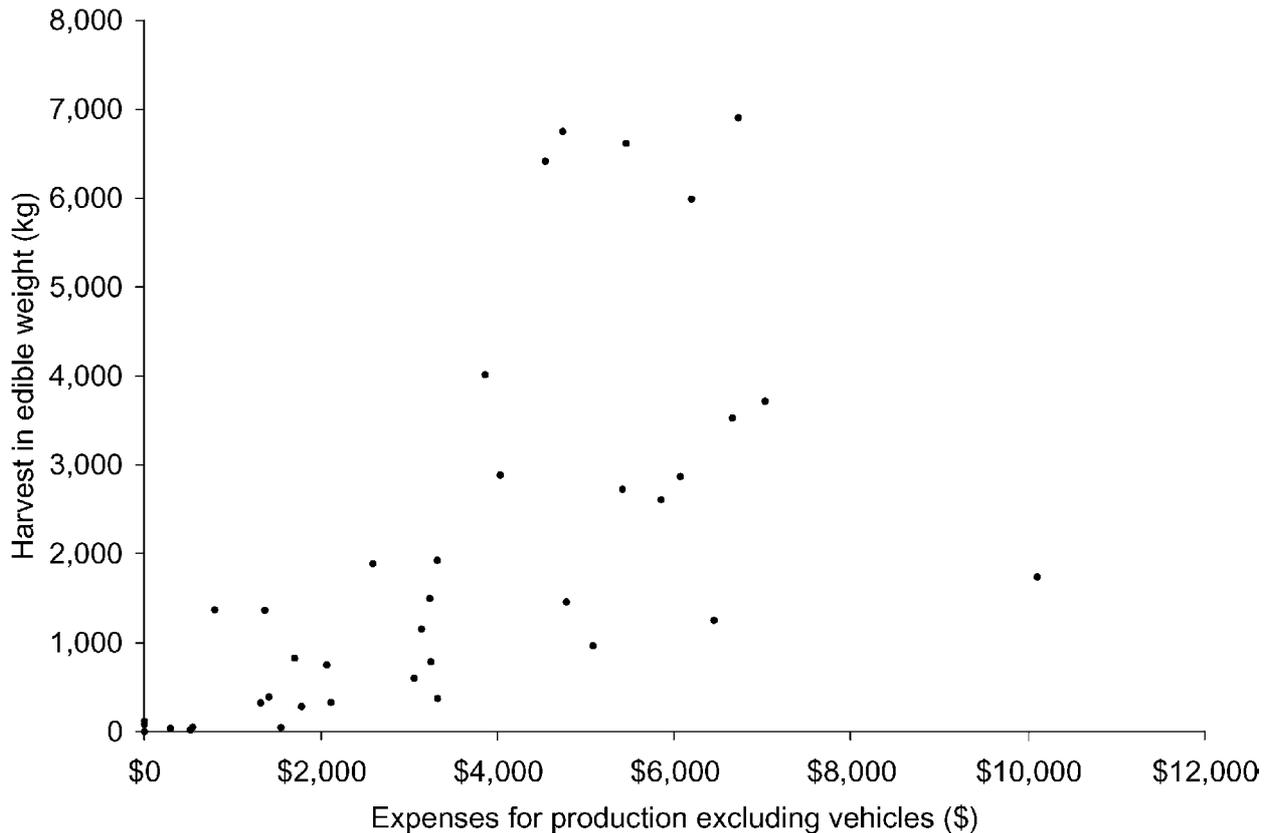


Fig. 2. Distribution of sampled households according to their expenses for production (excluding vehicles) and their total production in edible weight, 1995.

Some comments about the representativity of the sample are relevant. Households headed by an unemployed (or occasional wage-earner) male are over-represented, whereas households headed by a male wage-earner are under-represented. A special effort to gather data from active hunters may explain these characteristics of the sample. Therefore, it is possible that the data tend to over-represent the number of families that were engaged more intensively in traditional activities.

Results

Costs of production and harvesting

Food production continues as a reality in Nunavik. In a recent study, each household had produced, on average, 1175 kg of edible products and had expended almost \$4000 in 1995 in order to do so (Duhaime and others 1998). A look at the expenditures of the sample of 40 households, however, suggests a wide range of behaviours. In fact, although most households allocated a certain portion of their income to production, these expenses varied considerably from one household to another, that is to say from \$0 to \$24,000. The volume of the harvest also differed, ranging from no production to almost 7000 kg. In order to understand household practices with regard to their production, households were distributed according to their monetary expenses for production and the volume of harvest (Fig. 2). In this graph, expenses related to the purchasing of vehicles have

been subtracted from the total expenses for production in order to neutralize the effect of such a purchase on overall expenditures (considering the sums of money required to buy a vehicle and the lifespan of this equipment, it is more likely that the purchase of a new vehicle in 1995 was accidental).

Two major findings emerge from Figure 2. First, the distribution of households suggests a relation between the volume of harvest and expenses: households with a larger volume of food had spent more money. Second, this distribution also shows a cluster of households that have both very high expenditure and harvest. This group ($n = 12$) consists of households in which the male head of household was, in most cases, unemployed at the time of the survey. In these households, the male head was almost exclusively responsible for the production of the food recorded. These characteristics suggest that hunting and fishing were the main occupations of the male head. For these reasons, these households will be called 'super-hunter households.' The other households ($n = 28$) have more diverse behaviours, characterized by much lower expenditures and harvest. These households will be identified as 'other households'; these have been divided into three sub-groups according to the presence of the male head of household and his occupation: households headed by a single woman, households headed by a male wage-earner, and households headed by an unemployed (or occasional wage-earner) male.

Table 2. Sociodemographic characteristics of households according to types of household, 1995.

Types of household	Households (n = 40)	Families	Persons	Males aged 17–70 years old	
				Wage-earners	
	n	n	n	n	n
Super-hunter	12	1.3	6.3	1.9	0.8
Other					
Female-headed	9	1.0	4.2	0.7	0.4
Male wage-earner headed	9	1.0	6.2	1.2	1.7
Unemployed-male headed	10	1.2	5.4	1.3	0.4
Average		1.1	5.6	1.3	0.8

Characteristics of the four types of households — super-hunter, female-headed, male wage-earner headed, and unemployed-male headed — are shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

The super-hunter households

Table 3 shows that super-hunter households harvest on average 4.6 metric tonnes of edible products annually. Their harvest consisted of caribou (39%); marine mammals, that is, seal, beluga whale, bear, and walrus (31%); and fish (28%) (Fig. 3). The volume of marine mammals distinguishes the super-hunter households from the other

households. Their expenses for production were very high, on average, and amounted to more than \$10,000 in 1995; none of these households had spent less than \$3900, including sums for the purchase of vehicles. When expenses related to the purchase of vehicles and their amortization, according to their probable lifespan based on an intensive use, food production of super-hunter households required an annual minimum investment of approximately \$9300 (Chabot 2001a). In addition, significant, but not measured, resources (time and energy spent to maintain equipment, material obtained through social networks, and an estimated \$1000–\$2400 for

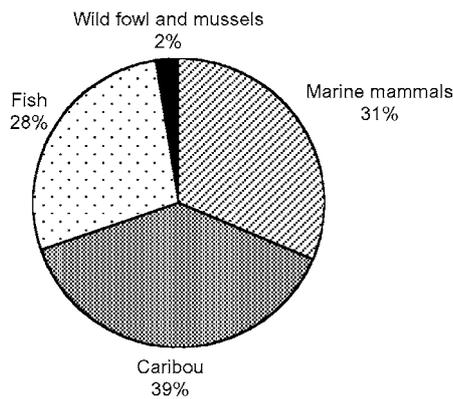
Table 3. Subsistence activities according to types of households, 1995. *Average of households that have recorded a harvest (n = 37).

Types of household	Total harvest in edible weight kg	Expenses for production (excl. vehicles) Can\$	Total expenses for production Can\$	Cost of production Kg/Can\$
Super-hunter	4584	\$5543	\$10,335	\$2.25
Other				
Female-headed	110	\$508	\$1572	\$14.23
Male wage-earner headed	920	\$3897	\$6939	\$7.54
Unemployed-male headed	1035	\$2407	\$3541	\$3.42
Average*	2017	\$3520	\$6379	\$3.16

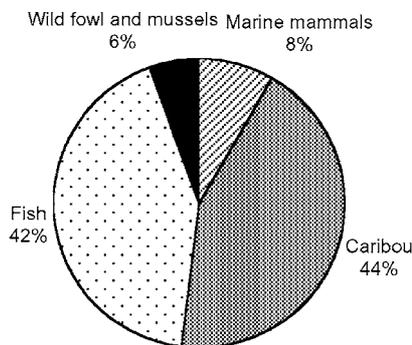
Table 4. Sources of income according to types of households, 1995 (in Can\$).

Types of household	Sources of income					Percentage of income earned by adult children
	Hunter Support Program	Wages	Transfer payments	Income (per capita)		
				CAN\$	%	
Super-hunter	5%	59%	36%	\$45,808 (\$7329)	100%	38%
Other						
Female-headed	1%	51%	48%	\$25,506 (\$6041)	100%	23%
Male wage-earner headed	1%	87%	12%	\$52,927 (\$8506)	100%	10%
Unemployed-male headed	1%	58%	41%	\$36,151 (\$6695)	100%	26%
Average	2%	66%	32%	\$40,428 (\$7252)	100%	25%

Super-hunter households



Male wage-earner headed



Unemployed-male headed

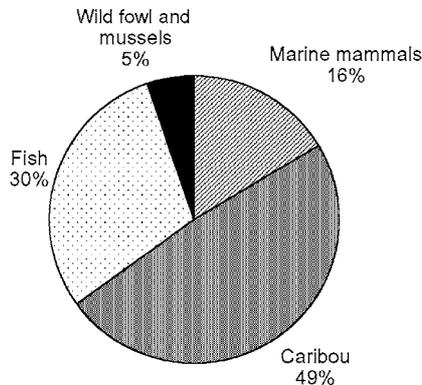


Fig. 3. Distribution of harvest according to main species (%). Types of households: top: Super-hunter; middle: male wage-earner headed; bottom: unemployed-male headed.

imported food brought along during hunting and fishing trips), could be included in this sum of money.

It was stated earlier that, in order to satisfy their current material needs and to sustain production, these households had to maintain a constant cash flow. Table 4 shows that the super-hunter households had access to various sources of income. First, part of their income came from the Hunter Support Program, which represented 5% of the total income of the super-hunter households, that is, \$2000 on average. However, this amount only takes into account the income from the Hunter Support Program.

Consequently, it is probable that the total income earned by super-hunter households from production activities is under-estimated. According to interviews, a few hunters among the group of super-hunter households earned the equivalent of twice of what they received from the Hunter Support Program from the sale of sculptures and other products to co-ops. The income from production activities of super-hunter households might therefore be higher than the previous estimates. However, these sums of money are more likely to remain generally lower than all other sources of income.

The distribution of households, according to income earned from the Hunter Support Program and total harvest, confirms the conclusion of the above analysis. Indeed, as shown in Figure 4, a large harvest is associated with a higher income from the Program. The necessity of maintaining a cash flow in order to finance the organization of production might have been a motivation that incited these hunters to create a surplus of products for sale purposes. However, Figure 4 also shows that many super-hunter households (that is, the ones that produced more than 2500 kg) received little or no income from the Program. As a matter of fact, records from the Program suggest that it provided substantial incomes to only a minority of participants. For instance, in each of the two villages sampled, a dozen households (about 15% of those participating) received altogether about half of the funds available through the Program, that is, each of them earned between \$1800 and \$7400 in 1994–1995. Among these households, seven were in the super-hunter group. The proportion of total income, which is derived from household production, distinguishes the super-hunter households from the group of other households (Table 4). However, in general, income from the Hunter Support Program only appears to have represented a supplemental source of income, which covered less than 20% of expenses for production incurred by super-hunter households. Furthermore, these households never sold more than 28% of their production (in edible weight), suggesting that they kept and gave away a large part of their harvest. A hunter who sold almost 1400 kg of country food to the Program explained how it worked:

I bring my seals to the community freezer but I keep some for my family. I put some in our own personal freezer. I give some to my sister, my daughter, and to other people. . . I hunt and my wife gives away the meat [laughing]! I usually keep half of what I take, sometimes more, sometimes less. (Household 60)

Thus, it can be concluded that the necessity of maintaining a cash flow in order to finance the organization of the production was not the sole motivation in harvesting large quantities of food. Indeed, many households maintained a high level of harvesting even if they could not or would not sell it.

Since participation in the Hunter Support Program was obviously insufficient to satisfy all material needs, the super-hunter households relied on various other sources of monetary income. Apart from sales of household

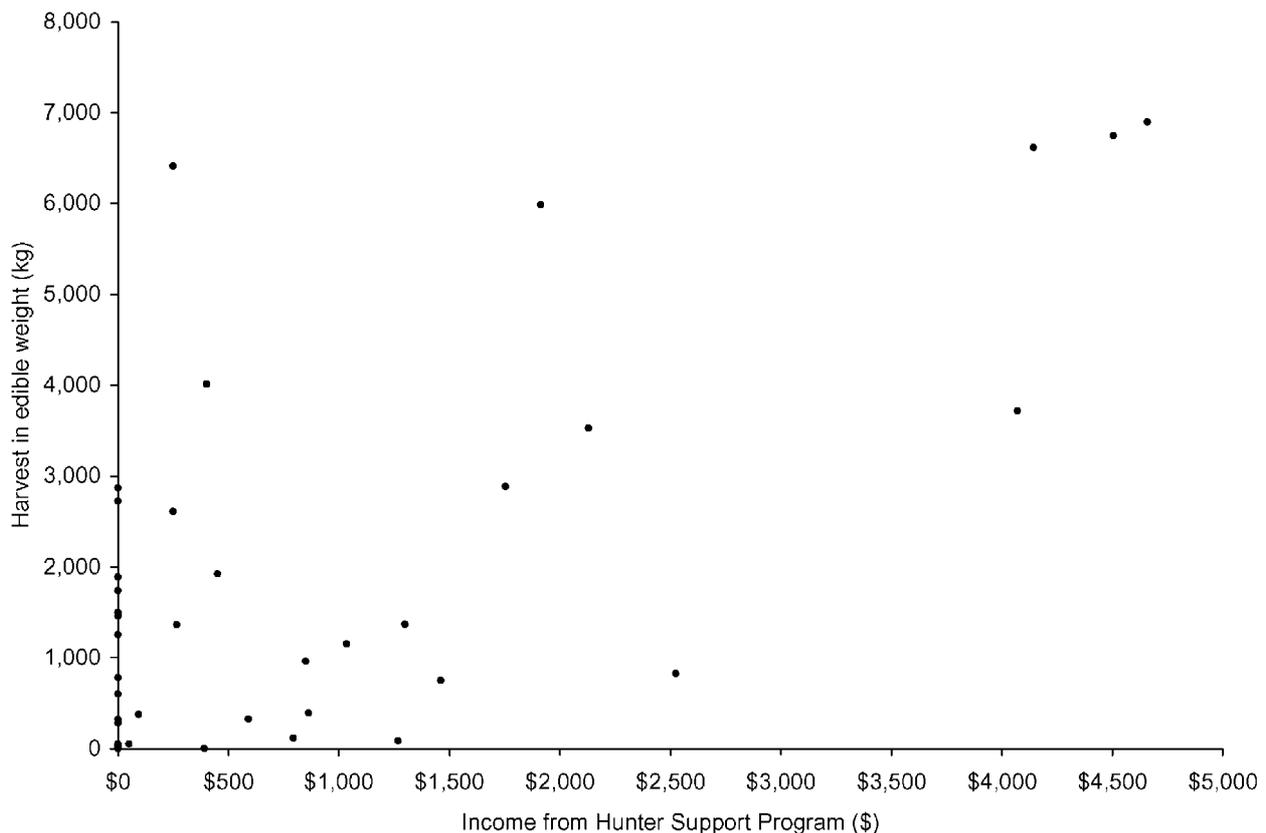


Fig. 4. Distribution of households according to the production sold to the Hunter Support Program and to their total production in edible weight, 1995.

production, these households received transfer payments (welfare, unemployment insurance, family allowances, retirement plans) and salaries. As shown in Table 4, wages were an essential source of money. Indeed, most of the heads of the super-hunter households relied on occasional or seasonal waged employment. One renowned hunter explained:

I am a carpenter. This coming fall, I will work as a carpenter for the construction of the new nursing station and for [this organization]. Last year, I worked for a month. I was earning \$400 every two weeks.

When I don't have a job, I receive social welfare, about \$1000 every month. It is not enough. (Household 13)

In Nunavik, the labour market is characterized by part-time, seasonal, and occasional employment. After a relative decrease of these types of jobs between 1983 and 1993, the proportion of part-time jobs stabilized during the 1990s. In 1995 they accounted for half of all waged employment, men holding around 40% of them (Lefebvre 1999). It is problematic to attribute this phenomenon to the economic structure of the region. Rather, this feature of the labour market seems to result from a preference for part-time waged employment, which better suits a lifestyle partly based on production activities (Duhaimé 1991b). Indeed, as seen for super-hunter households, not having regular waged employment is a strategy that allowed the male head to maintain a substantial harvest.

Both the necessity of maintaining a high income through waged labour, and the constraints related to participation in the labour market, have resulted in a division of labour inside the household. Indeed, the main contribution to income in the super-hunter households came from salaries of other family members or housemates. The data on household composition, in Table 2, show that the size of the super-hunter households was larger, many of them comprised of more than one family. They also had more adult men (males aged 17–70 years old) potentially capable of producing food. According to the interviews, each of them had at least an unmarried son or a housemate (related or not) who hunted and fished or contributed directly to the financing of production. In other cases, the female head of household was the main breadwinner. The contribution of family members to the household monetary resources appears to be a determining factor that distinguishes the super-hunter households from the other households. The following accounts illustrate the typical organization of resources within super-hunter households. This 62 year-old man described his situation:

I was working before. However, I have been receiving social welfare for the past year. I get \$700 every month. One of my sons, [24-year-old] Joannassi, earns \$300 gross every week. He drives the garbage truck. He shares his salary. If he was not doing it, we would be very poor. (Household 26)

According to estimates, his son's contribution was 62% of the total household income. Another successful hunter explained how resources were managed:

I bought a ski-doo, and I shared the cost with other people. I paid \$7000 for the ski-doo, and I bought it with my son Markusi who works at the Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec-Petro [a regional fuel company]. Furthermore, my wife makes beautiful dolls. This is how we were able to buy a ski-doo. But it is Markusi who paid for most of it. (Household 13)
His wife said: 'Sometimes, I work at the school and for [this organization] where I teach traditional culture. I am receiving family allowance. . . I also make handicrafts, but I have not sold anything this year' (Household 13).

In sum, the pooling of resources and the combining of various sources of income was a typical strategy that allowed households to satisfy their current material needs and to maintain a large harvest.

Sharing of resources was not delimited by household boundaries. Sharing the costs of operation and the maintenance of equipment was a widespread practice among super-hunter households — and was mentioned by many. The loan of equipment was also common among co-residents, as well as with people living outside the home. Sharing of equipment appears to be a strategy used by producers who have a hard time finding monetary resources to buy their own. In many regions of the Arctic, loss of income caused by the fall of prices of sealskin in the 1980s was partly mitigated by greater sharing between individuals (Wenzel 1991; Richling 1989). In addition to these strategies, which allowed many poorer households to cope with a lower income, households opted to utilize used parts and equipment or did their own fabrication and repair of equipment rather than expending cash. One good hunter explained: 'This year, I had to repair my outboard motor. Someone gave me the parts and I repaired it myself. I have not paid anything for the repairs' (Household 12). Rarely do Nunavik Inuit use traditional equipment, as opposed to imported technology, which would contribute to reduced costs: 'I use dogs to hunt caribou or to go fishing mussels. I use my dogs twice a week. It is better than a ski-doo when one does not go too far' (Household 17).

In summary, the super-hunter households, the activities of which revolved around household food production, were largely cash-dependent. The participation of all family members in the production of country food, as well as their access to a large social network, appear to be key components of their resource-management strategies. The occupation of the male head appears to be another determining factor, however, as many unemployed male heads maintained a much lower harvesting level.

Before discussing the next group of household, a last point needs to be made. It seems unlikely that the proportion of super-hunter households (30% of the sample) corresponds to proportions in the general population, and the chances are that these households were over-represented in the sampling. There are many indications

that this might be the case. For example, according to a survey on human resources done in 1990 in Nunavik, only 10% of the participants in the survey affirmed that they were hunting and fishing on a regular basis (Lamothe and Lemire 1992). In the case of one community, Dorais (1997) estimated that in 1990, eight out of a total of 51 men older than 19 years devoted themselves actively to food production. Moreover, this proportion corresponds to the percentage of households that earned the highest incomes from the Hunter Support Program.

The other households

The second group of households forms the majority of the sample. As shown in Figure 2, it is the smaller harvest that differentiates these households from the super-hunter households. Their harvesting expenses were also less, although a few households invested large sums of money for means of production (Fig. 2). Further differences distinguish the group of other households from the super-hunter group: the species harvested constituted mostly of fish and caribou (Fig. 3), and the income from production activities, in proportion and in absolute number, was much lower (Table 3). Despite these differences, which indicate a lower participation in production activities, most of the other households (with the exception of those with a female head) were able to produce substantial quantities of country food. As shown on Table 3, with an average volume estimated at between 900 and 1000 kg of edible products, most of them were theoretically able to meet their food needs and to give away a good portion of their catches as well. Indeed, consumption of country food in Nunavik was estimated in 1995 at 343 kg annually per household, which accounted for 60–70% of all meat consumed by individuals on average (Duhaime and others 1998, 2002).

In the following pages, the behaviours of the other households will be examined. To do so, the following analyses will be based on the three sub-groups of households presented earlier. Because occupation and presence of a male head of household influence the economic characteristics of Inuit households, the typology offers a relevant base to examine their economic practices.

Female-headed

A few households produced very little or no food at all. This is the case for most of the female-headed households, which include single-mother households with their children, or a female living alone. These households accounted for 23% of the sample, as shown in Table 2. Their small harvest can be explained in part by the fact that the women interviewed provided little quantifiable information about their food production. Although it cannot be concluded that their harvest was nil (see Chabot 2001b for a discussion), the traditional division of labour between man and woman continues to influence behaviours, especially in regards to the hunting of big game, which is very rarely undertaken by women. Inuit women are mostly involved in the processing of raw products and the distribution aspects of food production.

According to the interviews, women from female-headed households obtained much of their food from their relatives and also from the Hunter Support Program. Nevertheless, some of these female-headed households produced food, at least enough to meet their needs. One young woman explained:

My nephew Elijah, who lives with me, goes hunting every weekend. He gives some of the country food that he brings home to his parents and gives some to me too. Usually, Elijah uses the ski-doo of his father Johnny. I share the costs of gasoline with Johnny and Elijah. That costs me \$60 per month. Twice a year, I give \$400 to Johnny for hunting and maintenance of his ski-doo. I do not pay for repairs of vehicles but I contribute nevertheless. (Household 10)

This case illustrates the fluidity regarding the movement of goods, money, and people. It also exemplifies an act of reciprocity in which money serves as a contribution to the financing of activities of a more productive household and not to buying food directly. Many of the informants mentioned this practice, which has also been observed elsewhere (Wenzel 2000). In this example, it cannot be said if the gifts were compulsory, recommended, or completely voluntary. Regardless, the economic organization of the two households was connected in many ways: the unmarried adult nephew was helping his aunt, and in return she was contributing to her sister's family income. With regards to food-production activities, even if many of these households had at least one male adult (Table 2), it is the presence of a male head that seems to influence household productivity.

Male wage-earner headed

In almost a quarter of the sample (Table 2), the male head had regular wage employment. In Nunavik, full-time wage employment accounted for half of all jobs held by Inuit in 1995 (Lefebvre 1999). Furthermore, according to another study carried out in 1991, about half of these full-time jobs were held for more than two years (Lamothe and Lemire 1992). Considering the productivity of these households, wage-work appears to be a determining factor in household production. As shown in Table 3, their harvesting level was low compared to super-hunter households. As some have already suggested, advantages gained from earning a wage income do not compensate for the time lost for hunting (Condon and others 1995; Kruse 1986; Hobart 1982a). For example, Smith and Wright (1989) have demonstrated that the harvesting level of the full-time wage-workers, who considered themselves occasional hunters, was half that of full-time hunters. Furthermore, these authors have highlighted the fact that production costs of the full-time wage-earners were five times higher than those of the full-time hunters. According to Table 3, the production costs of the wage earners of the sample in this study are about three times that of the super-hunters. These conclusions make it possible to suggest, following Wenzel (1991), that greater investments in means of production could counterbalance, to a certain

extent, disadvantages related to the lack of time for hunting by wage-earners. Indeed, a few households in this group spent a considerable amount of money on production (Fig. 2). One informant, a full-time employee, described his situation:

During summer, I come to [this camp]. The rest of the year, I drive out a little everywhere. As I am working full-time, I go to my camp only on the weekend . . . Sometimes, when days are longer, I go to hunting after work. . . I stay in my camp during my summer holidays. We spend three weeks there. We must, however, go very often to the village because my daughter is a secretary at [this establishment]. (Household 16)

In this example, the lack of time appeared to be a major constraint to harvesting activities. Frequent trips between the village and hunting grounds implied reliable transportation and large purchases of gasoline, increasing, consequently, the expenses for production. Another full-time employee, whose expenses for harvesting were exceptionally high, but who did succeed in harvesting 1.7 metric tonnes of edible food, commented: 'When I have a major problem on my ski-doo, I go to [this enterprise]. However, when it is a small problem, I get the part to be changed and I repair it myself' (Household 05). Thus, the access to goods and services, thanks to income, mitigated lack of time. High expenses of these households can also be attributed to the fact that the equipment used for production, especially vehicles and gas, also served for other purposes. One informant described his situation:

I use my ski-doo in the winter to do tours. I buy approximately 15 to 20 gallons of gasoline per week. That does not include the gasoline that I buy to go to my camps. . . My wife uses one of my camps where she goes on weekends with our children. She uses it all year, but goes there only from time to time. She does not fish and goes there only to distract herself. (Household 51)

Therefore, regular wage employment of the male head has an effect on the organization of food production. It also influences the kind of animals hunted. Some authors have suggested that regular wage-earners were orienting more and more of their harvesting activities towards species that are easy to catch and therefore monopolize less time. Seal hunting, for example, requires special abilities and time, as opposed to caribou or goose hunting, and mainly full-time hunters would occupy themselves with seal or polar bear hunting (Condon and others 1995; Kruse 1991; Wenzel 1991). The chart of Figure 3 confirms this hypothesis, as the harvest of households with a male head wage-earner consists mostly of fish and caribou (86%), which are fairly abundant everywhere in Nunavik.

Regular wage-earners tend to subordinate their hunting activities to their work schedule, although they managed, in most of the cases, to produce enough country food to satisfy their needs. Although many occasional producers provide a lot of food, their surplus seemed to

be mostly shared with close family members, as indicated by this informant wage earner: 'When I go hunting, I share my catches but not a lot. I keep most of it and give it to my parents only' (Household 15). Sporadic hunting would have repercussions on the distribution system, a phenomenon observed elsewhere in the Arctic (Collings and others 1998).

Even in households where wages were the main resources, this condition did not seem to confer total financial independence. Another informant mentioned his summer production: 'Last summer, I went seal hunting with my family-in-law, once or twice. I killed two seals that I left to my father-in-law. I do not pay for gasoline, but my wife gives part of her family allowance to pay gas' (Household 21). In this case, as in many others, this household was not excluded from sharing networks. Indeed, as in the case of female-headed households, their direct monetary contributions to production activities of other households allowed them to receive a share of the hunt. It was, however, impossible to estimate the frequency or the amount of these contributions, nor could the extent of the phenomenon be measured. Nevertheless, they can be considered important. Indeed, in his recent study on the case of Clyde River (Nunavut), Wenzel (2000) reported cases where the size of these contributions in kind was so large that they were threatening the standard of living of the giving household.

Unemployed-male headed

Another quarter of households in the sample had a male head who neither had regular wage-work nor engaged in full-time production (Table 2). Even if these households were able to satisfy part of their diet and to share a portion of their production, as shown in Table 3, they did not produce large quantities of food. As compared to super-hunter households, also headed by an unemployed male, their harvest was 4.4 times less. Therefore, the occupation of the male head is not the only determining factor of production.

Lack of monetary resources could explain the lower harvesting level. Indeed, Table 4 shows that the total monetary income of these households was relatively low compared to the super-hunter households. Furthermore, as opposed to super-hunter households, the households headed by an unemployed male seemed to have difficulty in assembling the necessary capital to sustain their production activities. One man explained: 'Last winter, I couldn't hunt because my ski-doo was broken. It was broken since fall. . . Because my ski-doo was broken, last fall I could only use my canoe, but I was able to use it until the ice formed' (Household 25). This situation can be partly attributed to the fact that he could not count on the income of a housemate. One man, aged 59, the head of household of eight, whose production was very limited and who received welfare, described his situation:

My daughter Mary [who receives welfare] does not pay for the rent, but she buys food for her child. Sometimes, I give her money because she is my

daughter. . . Sometimes, my son who works for [this enterprise] gives me some money, but it is not very much. (Household 71)

According to Table 3, the size of this sub-group of household was, on average, smaller, as was the number of wage-earners. They had fewer adult males who could perform much of the hunting. It is also possible that adult children refused to share their income with their parents or that they were more dependent on them. According to estimates (Table 4), the contribution of adult children to the household income accounted, on average, for 25%, while this percentage reached 38% in super-hunter households.

Another reason, which may explain the low harvesting levels of these households, is that their social networks were more limited or less functional. As Bodenhorn (2000: 49) suggested, reciprocity is constructed as a flow between equals; it is 'balanced' in that both sides must maintain the flow. This is confirmed through one of the informants' comments:

The poor people can go to get help from the Hunter Support Program. However, very often during the summer, the Hunter Support Program is out of cash, and the Council cannot buy country food. Some families have absolutely nothing and consequently have nothing to share. (Household 13)

Therefore, some households could be trapped in a vicious cycle, particularly if these circumstances persist. Thus, many among this sub-group of households were incapable of pooling efforts and resources to produce adequate quantities of country food.

Lack of monetary resources can also possibly explain the type of animal harvested. Fish and caribou were the main species produced, although the production of marine mammals was not negligible (Fig. 3). According to the interviews, seal and beluga hunts often require long trips, making the operation costs of a canoe with an outboard engine prohibitive. In fact, only some families could afford such equipment, and the majority did not own a boat.

It appears that the financial situation of many of these households is unstable. Thus, it can be suggested that many among these households were formerly in the group of super-hunter households, perhaps the year preceding the survey, but had difficulties in maintaining a high level of monetary resources. Conversely, some super-hunter households might be part of the group of other households if the survey were carried out in a different year.

Discussion

Economic, social, and cultural rationalities

Use of money is an integral part of contemporary economic life of Inuit. Thus, they must be able to assemble enough monetary resources to satisfy the needs of family members. The results of these analyses demonstrate that Inuit regularly use monetary calculation. In fact, the method of data-collection employed relied on the informants' ability to estimate their costs and the resources

available to them. Use of calculation is an essential aspect of the organization of a household's material resources, which are largely determined by market transactions.

Monetary calculation also determines a number of strategies, the motivation of which is, clearly, economic. Household production is a widespread economic strategy and the frequency of hunting, fishing, and gathering activities reveals their economic value. Indeed, country food satisfies a significant portion of the diet. It is considered to be superior to imported food (Collings and others 1998) and is not yet available commercially in Nunavik.

Wage-work is another common strategy employed to sustain the household's material resources and is most of the time combined with production. For many households, wage employment is the principal way of fulfilling their needs. The lifestyle of a male head wage-worker allows him to produce enough food to satisfy the needs of his family and to share part of it with others. Such households can also take part in a reciprocity network within which their monetary contributions may result in a counterpart of food. In this respect, wage-workers appear to be particularly economically rational.

In many cases, wage-work is a strategy integrated with a lifestyle oriented primarily towards household production. Thus, because of the unpredictable nature of production activities, which requires the greatest possible availability of the individuals' time, wage-work is performed as a secondary activity. In these households, wages are combined with other forms of income, including the sale of the surplus of production. Depending on their needs and available resources, part-time wage-earners also rely on a high level of cooperation and support from the immediate and extended family members. In addition, they bank on a reciprocity system that assures a flow of goods and money between producers and consumers. All these strategies clearly demonstrate the economic rationality of Inuit.

Economic rationality is not the only motivational force involved in behaviour, and other rationalities justify seemingly irrational behaviours. In fact, economic practices are motivated by a large array of social and cultural rationalities. For instance, despite substantial sums of money that hunters and households must invest, gift-giving remains the dominant form of distribution of country food. Producers seek neither profit maximization nor compensation of expenses. It can be suggested that if household production shows a financial deficit, the loss is socially rational. Preference for part-time wage employment can equally be perceived as being economically irrational. Indeed, in doing so, individuals voluntarily reduce their chances of increasing their income and, consequently, their living standards. However, for many, the social benefits of being a hunter are more rewarding than having a higher income (Condon and others 1995; Caulfield 1993; Wenzel 1991). With regards to the households that rely more on wages from the full-time employment of the male head, their participation in

household production activities, even occasionally, can stem from a motivation to take part fully in community life (Cheal 1988). Additionally, involvement in production is a way to fulfil their duties, and to gain prestige, thereby confirming the endurance of traditional values and customs.

Thus, behaviours of Inuit in the economic sphere are not solely influenced by economic rationality: apparently irrational behaviours are also deeply rooted in social and cultural values. The strong symbolic value of country food and the acts of sharing provide prestige and social status within the community and contribute to the reaffirmation of social bonds. Furthermore, social status is diffused to all family members, which may also explain the importance of contributions made by children and wives to the father/husband's activities. For instance, according to interviews, wives often play a central role in the distribution of country food, allowing them to consolidate their own prestige and social networks. Economic practices are also stimulated by customary obligations (Nuttall 1991; Freeman 1988).

The act of sharing is often conjugated with indirect reciprocity that also motivates the action. Sharing, to that effect, consolidates solidarity networks and can be interpreted as economically rational. However, as Hawkes (1993) suggested, reciprocity should not be seen as the main impetus in pursuing household production. Sharing is highly valued in itself: 'it is the only way to live,' said one Inuit informant (Household 06). It is also a practice that distinguishes the Inuit from 'White people who do not share anything' (Household 18), and is therefore associated with representations of Inuit identity (Freeman 1996).

It is worth mentioning that direct sales of country food were seldom reported by the informants. It can be argued that the lack of data does not implicitly indicate that the phenomenon of direct sale of food is exceptional, but that people may avoid mentioning it because it is socially unacceptable.

Income and solidarity

The strategies adopted by Inuit, resulting partly from the application of monetary calculation, encourage interpersonal dependency rather than undermining it. This appears to be at odds with the Weberian perspectives exposed previously. However, a similar situation was observed at the beginning of the industrial revolution in many parts of the western world (and currently in many developing countries). In England, for example, participation of all the family members in industrialization was necessary so that the household could assemble enough monetary resources to survive. Solidarity within the household relied on existing social units of cooperation, which were integrated in the agricultural system of production. As income from wage labour increased, a corresponding increase in the number of households able to survive on the earnings of one person was observed (Goody 2001). The Inuit of Nunavik have experienced a constant

increase in personal income during the past few decades. It has recently been suggested, however, that the general standard of living of Inuit households remains barely above the low-income threshold, according to Canadian standards (Chabot 2001a). In other words, Inuit would be considered as collectively poor. Therefore, it can be concluded that the relatively generalized low standard of living of the Inuit contributes to maintaining and reinforcing sharing practices and cooperation.

Monetary income is not the only condition to sustain one's standard of living in Nunavik. In reality, a great number of households depend on both a good monetary income and a functional solidarity system inside and outside the home. Both are essential conditions for households in which the male head wishes to devote himself to household production. However, these conditions are not easy to fulfil. Nowadays, many children living with their parents refuse to share their income or to become involved in the household's production activities. In addition, many of them stay in school until late adolescence and therefore remain longer as dependents of their parents. Some have also found that young Inuit are more likely to have a career-oriented job with more responsibilities, and may not be disposed to subordinate their employment to production activities. Many wage jobs are valued and bring social status (Condon and others 1995; Lamothe and Lemire 1992; Hamilton and Seyfrit 1993; Kruse 1991). Heads can also turn to their social networks and extended families to seek for financial help. However, as suggested, the system of reciprocity may be threatened when exchange partners do not maintain the flow of resources equally.

The loss of income can have dramatic effects on the household budget and may put household members' social position at risk. This situation may explain two concomitant movements: the general downward trend of household production and the polarization of producers in two groups, the professional producers and the occasional ones. It can be suggested that these two phenomena are direct outcomes of the application of economic rationality. Professionalization of hunting is, on the one hand, an economically rational response to risks associated with access to money and social networks. On the other hand, defection of many individuals regarding the production is the reverse response to these problems, also motivated by economic rationality. All things being considered, the social foundations of traditional Inuit society are challenged in a world influenced by mechanisms of market and mass consumption.

These economic behaviours have a few major consequences. The first is an increase in the number of people who are mostly consumers. In the past, the norms ascribed to members of the community depended on their capacity as producers. This analysis showed that this social role remains very important and appears to determine the current social stratification. Nevertheless, lifestyles today are more diverse. It can be suggested that the plurality of lifestyles reveals the possibilities for

expression of individual choices in a changing world, possibilities that are offered by access to commodities. Furthermore, some people, by controlling the nature and destination of their gifts, show an unprecedented capacity for self-determination in the fulfilment of their social responsibilities. Existence of new possibilities to express individual choices could explain, at least partly, the large number of households headed by a single person or a single parent. For instance, demographic data show a significant number of households headed by a female single parent who supports herself and her family mainly through state assistance or from wage earnings. This phenomenon was rather exceptional in the past, when a household usually was comprised of at least a man and a woman (for example, Kjellström 1973). Access to money and commodities seems to offer women alternatives to unwanted marital situations. Nevertheless, as this study shows, the effect of manifestations of individuality should not be exaggerated since access to monetary income has not freed people from all social obligations and customary norms of behaviours, nor has it brought independence.

Another consequence of the decline in general production, and the professionalization of producers, is the commoditization of production, which is seen as breaking the social link between producers and consumers. Indeed, anonymity entailed in market production is supposed to break the reciprocity system, thereby decreasing the level of dependence between individuals (Simmel 1987). In Nunavik, although individuals and households assume a large responsibility for the production and distribution of country food, the government, via the Hunter Support Program, also takes part in these economic transactions. In spite of the intermediary role played by the government, the origin of production is, for the most part, not anonymous because arrivals of country food are announced throughout the community. Furthermore, producers, especially the ones hired through the Program, are identified as 'the hunters,' which generally refers to a few individuals in the community. Although this type of distribution does not follow traditional rules, it can be argued that it is unlikely that the role of the Hunter Support Program will neither result in the depersonalization of social relations nor break the reciprocity system, contrary to the proposition made by Kishigami (2000). In addition, because the producers are unable to cover their expenses by selling their catches to the Program, they must necessarily count on their social network of reciprocity to pursue their activities. In sum, the impacts of change in the functional role of individuals, that is, the shift from a society of producers to a society of consumers, are attenuated by the fact that production is still highly supported by individuals rather than by institutions.

Conclusions

Dual economy is, according to theory, a breach in the societal order. Following Polanyi (1981), the market economy is transforming the social organization of the Inuit. For instance, it can be suggested that the professionalization

of harvesting can be seen as an indicator of a dual society that is expressed, at the present time, more in social terms than on a geographical basis. This phenomenon is the direct result of the generalized application of economic rationality and accounting logic to the management of household resources. Therefore, it can be concluded that the dual economy, in Nunavik, is directly contributing to the emergence of a dual society.

Existence of a dual society was already observed in Nunavik and is not a novelty. For instance, in the 1950s, before the government forced the Inuit to settle in villages, Willmott (1961) described two social universes in Inukjuak: the outpost camp and the village. The differences he observed involved the activities and organization of the material life of the inhabitants, and the nature and intensity of social relations. Similar disparities can be found today within a village. However, different from the Inuit living in camps that Willmott met, the subsistence of those who choose a more traditional lifestyle based upon household production, while living in the village, cannot solely depend on the products of hunting, fishing, trapping, and carving. In order to survive and, further, maintain their social position, individuals are required to participate fully in the market sphere. The fragile economic status of many of them demonstrates that solidarity is insufficient to satisfy their material needs in a world where these are highly commodified. The existence of super-hunter households, which could be associated with the concept of *Inutuinnait*, 'the real Inuit,' confirms the extent of changes in the organization of Inuit society.

Nevertheless, the market economy has not yet been sufficient to disintegrate social structures of the Inuit society. This factor must be accompanied by a change of attitude. Braudel (1985), who examined economic changes in Europe, suggested that money, along with the city, were the two fundamental elements at the source of the transformation of society. They created the essential conditions that modified the individuals' field of actions and, consequently, the motivations behind their behaviours. Money and city were, together, at the origin of the development of a more individual spirit and the spread of instrumental rationality. Durkheim (1994) stated that changes in demographic conditions and the variation within social context, such as an increase in exchange movements, were the cause of the division of labour and of the apparition of a new form of social rapport. The population of the Inuit villages of Nunavik is still very homogeneous and isolated, and, even if regional centres attract a more diverse population, it is hard to envisage that they will become urbanized in the near future. Current demographic conditions in Nunavik contribute to maintaining social bounds between the individual and the community.

In spite of the economic changes, Inuit attachment to a subsistence-oriented economy remains very strong and influences Inuit leaders' contemporary views about social development policies: 'By assisting those involved in traditional activities such as hunting and sewing, Aatami said that Makivik, as the birthright development corporation

for Inuit in Nunavik, is trying to alleviate poverty in the region' (*Nunatsiaq News* (Iqaluit): 22 February 2002). This emphasizes the importance of the traditional economy, and its potential in terms of economic development and as an alternative to perceived under wage employment: 'But this lack of decentralization makes finding jobs in other communities [other than Kuujjuaq] much tougher. That's why we have to come up with innovative ways. . .' (*Nunatsiaq News* (Iqaluit): 22 February 2002). This perspective has also recently been affirmed by the Nunavut government in its search for appropriate economic and social development strategies (Conference Board of Canada 2001). Nobody knows how these measures will integrate themselves in the social fabric of Inuit communities or if they will serve to modify or simply delay the course of social transformations. For the time being, the Inuit's spokespersons tend to advocate economic models that reinforce the search for material abundance, a fundamental vector of social transformations.

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