Humanizing Security in the Arctic

Michelle Daveluy, Francis Lévesque, and Jenanne Ferguson, Editors

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Edited by:
Michelle Daveluy
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Humanizing Security in the Arctic:  
An Introduction

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Climatic conditions, economic development strategies, health and education issues, social relationships, and shifting political agendas all contribute to a sense of on-going change in Arctic societies. Under these circumstances, how can residents of the circumpolar world build a sense of security, in particular at a community level and in their daily lives? A balance between innovation and respect for time-honored values is often required. The contributors to this volume seek to understand issues relevant to various forms of (in)security in the Arctic.

We approach security in a very broad sense. Although security is often limited to military concerns over the control of national territories, we could not restrict ourselves to such a narrow perspective. As a diverse group of people from various countries, we are interested in a wider range of topics, all more or less relating to cultural security (Friedman and Randeria 2004). Neither the militarization of the Arctic nor its demilitarization can be ignored in the research on which we report, but it is certainly not our primary focus. To us, security is dynamic. The situations we study illustrate the continuum of possibilities ranging from sustainable security, relative (in)security and chronic insecurity (Duhaime 2002). In all cases, the level of security changes over time on this continuum of possibilities.

IPSSAS is an international network of scholars, graduate students, and researchers who meet to discuss projects they are conducting in the North. Some have years, if not decades, of experience working in the Arctic while others are just starting promising careers contributing original data on under-documented topics. All are deeply engaged in contributing to research that is of interest both locally and globally. In 2009, we came together as a group at the University of Alberta in Edmonton (Canada). The occasion for our gathering was the 6th Summer Seminar of the International PhD School for the Studies of Arctic Societies. A comprehensive description of the seminar activities is available at the IPSSAS website (http://webarkiv.hum.ku.dk/ipssas). Nine universities were represented (Alaska-Fairbanks, British Columbia, Alberta, Toronto, Laval, Ilisimatusarfik/ Greenland, Aberdeen, Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, Copenhagen).

In keeping with the objectives of the network, several contributors are from the circumpolar North (including Alexina Kublu, Naulaq Arnaquq, Edna Elias and Ron Elliott) and provide invaluable insight to the scholarly discussion of security matters that are relevant for peoples living in the Arctic. Another objective was to critically assess the notion of security in the context of the Arctic. Contributors were specifically called upon to contextualize their research topic, and present hypotheses on widely discussed issues such as global warming, Arctic (de) militarization, economic development, etc., in terms of security as it is understood.
in a local perspective. In that sense, the volume is timely in terms of impacts of
global warming and the anticipated opening of the Northwest Passage that will
trigger increased access and economic activities in arctic areas. In earlier decades,
Inuit\(^1\) lobbied for the Arctic to be recognized as an international peace zone (Simon
1992); today, the expected intensification of human related impacts of northern
development calls for renewed attention to local concerns and opportunities at the
community level.

*Humanizing Security in the Arctic* presents a broad spectrum of participants
and points of view (especially student and northern community-based) as reflected
in the programme of the 2009 IPSSAS Summer Seminar. The volume contains
twenty-two chapters addressing a number of topics including: sustainability in
the Arctic; relations among Arctic peoples; sovereignty and stewardship of lands,
waters and space; food (in)security and resource (co)management; contemporary
linguistic (in)securities; displaced families and communities; development and
(work) safety; training and education accessibility; transnational sociocultural
movements and more. As Nellemann *et al.* (2003) describe, very different
scenarios could develop for each of the issues discussed, depending on whether
sustainability, policy, security, or markets are given priority. The contributions
show that the outcomes of resource scarcity or abundance are equally important to
consider, that disparities in income as much as opportunities deserve our attention,
and that movements of populations to and from the Arctic are meaningful for
those who leave as well as for those who stay.

More specifically, Milton Freeman sets the stage with a broad overview of
issues he has witnessed play out in the Canadian North. He presents the United
Nations definition of human security and the Inuit Integrated Arctic Strategy
which extends the subject matter from strict military threats to categories of
risks lived in the circumpolar region (as opposed to within national boundaries).
Edna Elias further addresses institutional security, describing the creation of the
Edmonton Cultural Inuit Association. In her experience, securing relationships in
urban settings is of utmost importance for those who must live away from areas
where some institutional support may be available. Then, in her account of the
Persistence of a non-scientifically demonstrable phenomenon, Katrin A. Simon
echoes both Freeman’s contested knowledge and Elias’ point on the importance
of relationships through time and space. Simon shows how the fear of *itqirrak*,
fireball sea creatures, remains significant for younger as well as older generations
in a Yup’ik community of Alaska. Those three contributions clearly establish that
security in the circumpolar world is not void of uncertainties that must be dealt
with on a daily basis.

Then, Ron Elliott presents local responses to national agendas and global
security concerns. The High Arctic Council was founded in 2009 by communities
that were created by the Government of Canada to occupy a part of the world other

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\(^1\) We use the term Inuit in a broad sense, including ‘Greenlanders’
and ‘Eskimos’, as they are often referred to in historical documents
and still are in contemporary Alaska. Some authors prefer
‘Greenlanders,’ ‘Eskimos,’ or specific terms referring to a local
group (e.g., Inuivialuit, Nunavummiut, Yup’iiit, etc.).
countries might otherwise claim (Tester and Kulchyski 1994; Lepage 2008). The campaign “Sovereignty Includes Me” put forward by the High Arctic Council reminds the world of the fate of these communities in ongoing activities to control the Arctic.

The research project of Annemette Nyborg Lauritsen on the Greenlandic open prison system further addresses local management of security. She documents the daily lives of those imprisoned in a system that requires them to serve their sentence while maintaining work and other activities with civilians. These contemporary cases are followed by a series of three ethnographic studies of local outcomes of competing approaches to security. First, Francis Lévesque contrasts Canadian Inuit and police perspectives in dealing with roaming dogs in the first half of the 20th century. To this day, the consequences of the administrative policy remain a cause for concern because respective relationships to animals, among other things, were not well understood, nor taken into account at the time. The next contribution focuses on abilities of equal importance for subsistence purposes, i.e., kayaking skills in Greenland. Using census data from the colonial era, Ole Marquardt shows how mixed ancestry became an issue in a national economy based on seal hunting competence. In her study of intermarriage and families transgressing cultural and social boundaries, Inge Host Seiding continues on subjects of colonial rule securing trade and mission interests.

The following three chapters expand the discussion about changes, which started in the previous section in a historical perspective, to consider spatial dimensions routinely crossed by both objects and peoples today. Birgit Kleist Pedersen discusses the safeguarding of the Greenlandic national costume in the context of intellectual property rights. She analyzes internet exchanges on the contentious 2009 remodeling of the kamisat, the traditional leggings of the national costume. In a similar vein, Christopher Fletcher discusses a very familiar object that can now be found all over Canada—the inuksuk. He traces its appearance in France and Afghanistan at war-related sites (the beaches of Normandy and a military base of the Canadian Forces, respectively), showing its use outside the geographical locale where it originated. Sara Komarnisky explores the comings and goings of both peoples and objects in her research with Mexican migrant workers in Anchorage, Alaska. Her work highlights the relationship between arctic security and transnational livelihoods.

Environmental security was no doubt compromised in 1989, when the Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred in Alaska. In the first of three chapters on food security, Irena Connon assesses the impact of the oil spill on Alutiiq subsistence and well-being. She argues that subsistence has gained symbolic value since the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Davin Holen follows with a detailed analysis of salmon fishing in the Alaska subsistence economy. He clearly demonstrates the complementarities of subsistence and commercial fishing at the community level. The mixed economy of food production in Alaska requires the maintenance of water of high quality that proposed mining opportunities might jeopardize. Finally, Zoe Todd presents the issue of food accessibility in the Canadian Northwest Territories from a local perspective. Concerns regarding both traditional subsistence and store-bought items are better understood as a generalized problem of food scarcity dealt with on a daily basis.
The next contributions deal with languages in Canada and Russia. Naullaq Arnaquq presents current legislation in Nunavut from her unique perspective as an educator and administrator born and raised in Iqaluit. Then, current Nunavut Languages Commissioner, Alexina Kublu, plainly lays out unavoidable challenges and the necessity to re-assess some of the goals initially set by the territorial government. Carole Cancel studies the specific challenge of adapting the languages of the Inuit for use within the public sphere generated with territorial autonomy. Finally, Laura Siragusa reports on Vepsian, a Finno-Ugric language spoken in the borderland between Russia and Finland. She describes steps taken to alleviate linguistic insecurity, including the design of a writing system and the development of a publishing strategy.

The final section of the book opens up the theme in various ways. Raila Salokangas tests the notion of educational security among the Inuvialuit of Canada, as defined by the United Nations and developed by the Government of Finland. Then, Lindsay Bell describes the expectations and pitfalls of job training program in the Northwest Territories (Canada). I.S. MacLaren follows with a discussion of Canada’s National Parks that returns to the subject of co-management which was initially introduced by Milton Freeman. In closing, Kennet Pedersen returns to relationships that Edna Elias focused on at the beginning of the book. He stresses the vulnerabilities researchers and their collaborators were and still are subjected to in their attempts to theorize the Arctic.

References


Chapter 1
Contested Knowledge Systems and the Search for Sustainability and Institutional Security in the Arctic

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Abstract: When considering environmental realities, experts frequently disagree; this situation occurs among both authoritative western scientists and indigenous knowledge holders. Disagreements result from inherent limitations in both groups’ ways of knowing, and the complex, chaotic, and ever-changing nature of the ecological realities being observed. Accepting these limitations is a pre-requisite for improving our understanding of environmental realities, and hence the acceptability and durability of environmental policies and programs. However, given the contested nature of resource management in the Arctic today, it can be argued that ‘more of the same’ will not lead to improved understanding and decision-making, unless policy and management goals—and assessments of success in reaching those goals—are re-framed. This chapter discusses this aspect of security/insecurity in the Arctic today, with special attention to some conflicts affecting economic, social and food security issues.

Keywords: Economic and cultural rights, food security, common property, co-management, sustainability, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

Introduction

During the decades following the end of the Second World War, discussions of arctic security focused heavily upon state security issues due to the perceived mutual threats posed by the two nuclear-armed superpowers facing each other across the Arctic Basin. Following the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, researchers began to address other, non-military, security threats. The concept of human security today continues to reflect the framework set down in the 1994 United Nations Human Development Report that identified seven classes of security risks, viz. community, economic, environmental, food, health, personal, and political. This suite of security threats shifted attention away from the earlier emphasis on state security toward individual and community security. The inherent danger, from a policy perspective, is that broadening the focus to include seven identified areas of concern increases the difficulty of developing cogent policy and leads to a concern that ‘if everything is a security matter, then nothing is’ (Brock 1997:20).

One major international research program dealing with peace and security in the post–Cold War era concluded that state-led violence against groups and
individuals may represent the most important current security threat facing civil society (Latham 1995). This research concluded that in regard to state-sanctioned aggression, it is not only the question of basic physical survival that need concern us, but that the **conditions of survival** are also subject to threat, such that “the denial of economic rights pose serious [security] threats to people struggling to construct or maintain vital lives on this planet” (Brock 1997:46). The opportunity to effect serious damage is greatest where such economic threats are directed toward culturally different societies that form a minority political constituency within national, regional, or international political decision-making bodies. Clearly, aboriginal societies in the Arctic are vulnerable to such international security threats.

In 2008, Canadian Inuit produced their integrated arctic strategy (ITK 2008), identifying six major security risks:

- environmental failures
- mounting international tensions
- souring of regional politics
- collapse of aboriginal languages as working languages
- unanswered social and economic problems
- crisis-driven decision-making and conflict management

This document recognizes that an effective arctic strategy requires a high and sustained level of intergovernmental and government–aboriginal cooperation. It also emphasizes the critical importance placed on the maintenance of healthy communities with acceptable levels of economic self-sufficiency and social well-being. In regard to this goal of maintaining healthy communities, the strategy recognizes the importance of the renewable resource economy. The strategy also acknowledges the importance of research and learning and the need for policy-making to be built on sound information (‘facts’), noting that “there is ample scope for misunderstandings between aboriginal and non-aboriginal participants in research for a variety of historical and cultural reasons” (ITK 2009:23).

My comments here offer some observations on two areas of the security threat identified in the ITK arctic strategy report. One relates to epistemological differences that present a security risk to the linked renewable resource-based economy/healthy community relationship. The second is related to this, but concerns the area of research, learning and the need for sound information upon which to build policies and programs and ensure sound decision-making. My understanding of what constitutes a security risk or security threat is that it is an endogenous or exogenous circumstance that quickly degrades the quality of life of a society, or that compromises the choices available to people and institutions within that society (based on Ullman 1983).

**Arctic Resource Use and Management Conflicts**

Within the arctic regions, resource management issues have occasioned disagreement and tension over the years (Freeman and Hackman 1975; Jull 1986; Chance and Andreeva 1995). Such disagreements result from quite different world views possessed respectively by residents of the North and those living
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in metropolitan or urban centres geographically and culturally distant from the Arctic. However, it is in the metropolitan centres where most of the decisions in respect to Arctic resources are made, although today, in some jurisdictions, the locus of political control and decision-making is shifting northward.

We should not lose sight of the reality that both in the North and in the metropolitan centres in the South, there is no unified view of how, and/or for what purposes, northern resources should be managed. Both within and outside the North there are individuals or interest groups who view the region either as a storehouse of great wealth to be exploited for the national economic good, together with those holding the view that the arctic regions should remain pristine—a wilderness (to southerners) or a homeland (to northerners). Of course, there is also every shade of opinion existing between these polar opposites, such that governments in the North, as elsewhere, continue to have difficulty finding a satisfactory balance between their responsibilities to protect the environment and their prerogative and need to create jobs in regions of high unemployment and under-employment, and to obtain revenues from the land and its resources to finance social, educational, health and infrastructure programs that northern residents need and expect.

As noted in the Inuit arctic strategy report referred to earlier, the continuing importance of the renewable resource-based economy is considered to be significant. For example, a recent study of the harvest taken from two of the eleven barren-ground caribou herds in northern Canada estimated the net annual economic value of that harvest to be $19.95 million (Intergroup 2008), benefiting ca. 13,000 aboriginal residents living in 20 small communities. The value of the meat and sale of products from other harvested species (including seals, walrus, narwhal, beluga, polar bear, geese, fish, etc.) has been conservatively estimated to range between $30 and $50 million per year (Conference Board of Canada 2002).

Unfortunately, people in the Arctic (as elsewhere) cannot control world events that may negatively impact their economies, as has occurred following successful fur and sealskin trade boycotts which began in the 1980s and still continue at this time, or when gasoline prices suddenly and significantly increased in 2008. In regard to targeted trade boycotts, these have proven to be very damaging to small and relatively isolated societies that constitute a minority political constituency on the international stage (Wenzel 1991; Freeman 1997; Kalland et al. 2005).

The Nature and Consequences of Some State-Sanctioned Security Threats

A current example of a serious trade boycott is the 5 May 2009 action taken by the European Parliament that has effectively destroyed the seal-product trade (Economist 2009), an action that has been labelled ‘wilful blindness’ (Ward 1993:133). The parliamentarians’ action was subsequently ratified by the European Commission on 27 July 2009 (despite opposition by Canadian and Greenlandic governments and private sector groups) because the social, economic and cultural security that is placed at risk is that of indigenous and local people living outside the European Union (ITK 2009; Simon 2009). Similar restrictions
on importing marine mammal products into the United States were imposed by the US government in 1973 as a result of similar successful animal protection campaigns in that country. On 14 May 2008, these import restrictions into the US were extended to include polar bear products, an action that constitutes a similar serious security threat to many Canadian Inuit families, businesses, and communities (Clark et al. 2008).

Although trade bans are ostensibly intended to affect commercial practices only, for arctic peoples today, commerce is an integral and essential part of subsistence. The connection between commercial exchange of wildlife and maintaining a viable subsistence system has been well established (Wolfe 1983; Peterson 1991; Wenzel 1991; Freeman 1993, and see Holen, this volume). Subsistence is much more than obtaining, processing, distributing, consuming, and celebrating customary foods—which for the Inuit is a metonym for life itself—for, as has been noted: “A rural population once adequately fed by multiple small resources tapped at different points of the seasonal cycle, when it turns over to imported foods … and a less complex diet, loses its delicate balance with the environment” (Douglas 1984:12; see also Freeman 1985, 1988). For arctic indigenous peoples, their relationship with their environment is considered on several levels to be of critical importance for their self-actualization and identity (Wenzel 1991; Lyenge 1992; Freeman 1988, 1996). As a consequence of this economic dependence and maintaining significant relationships variously existing between hunting and a distinctive food culture, and hunting and community economic and social relations, social vitality, and cultural identity, such bans represent a serious security threat to these societies.

Unfortunately for Arctic peoples, their small numbers in remote locations and their relative economic and political marginality on the national and international stage limit the effectiveness of their defence against such damaging actions. To quote a Greenlandic perspective:

For the ever decreasing number of aboriginal hunters and trappers around the globe, the urban world appears to be a formidable adversary representing an overwhelming superpower of money, media mastery, and above all—sheer numbers. How can the aboriginal hunters and trappers ever hope to have their voices heard and their viewpoint understood across this immense gulf of cultural alienation, misinformation, and plain ignorance? (Lyenge 1992:2)

What appears to be beyond understanding among those advocating and imposing these trade-disrupting measures, is that this is not just an economic issue (which they erroneously believe can be fully compensated for by increased government welfare payments or by replacing hunting with eco-tourism). The reality is that stripping away peoples’ opportunity to practice a highly valued, skilled, and meaningful occupation profoundly diminishes the spirit and will of people who are already endeavouring to adapt to other local and regional security challenges that governments are struggling hard, but with limited success, to ameliorate.
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Southern-Based Assaults on Northern Realities

The main reason these southern urban-based attacks on northern peoples’ lifestyle and economic adaptations are so effective results from the widespread ignorance about arctic realities existing outside the northern regions. For example, whereas northerners’ need to kill seals, whales and furbearers in earlier times is generally understood, the reasons why these needs still exist today is generally not comprehended.

The Arctic is represented in the popular media and public imagination as a region where formerly nomadic people now live in modern heated houses in permanent villages and towns where they can readily purchase clothing and all other manufactured goods, as well as imported fruit, vegetables, meat, and a wide range of other packaged foods. Why, under these conditions of material abundance and security, would anyone claim to still need to hunt seals or whales as earlier generations did? For those who campaign against hunting (especially the killing of the charismatic marine mammals that remain essential Inuit daily food staples), claims of need are considered suspect.  

One serious problem for northern peoples trying to correct misunderstandings held by urban people in the countries where opposition to their hunting is greatest (viz., in western Europe and North America), is that in those countries, the dominant society’s diet does not now, nor did it in the past, include marine mammal meat. Indeed, the greatest aversion to eating marine mammal meat occurs in non-northern countries where land-based meat production has ancient historical and culturo-religious roots (Nagasaki 1993; Freeman 1997).

State Management of Northern Resources

However, not all state-sanctioned security threats derive from emotion-based and politically driven ‘wilful blindness.’ Until the land-claim process enabled innovative adaptive management approaches to be implemented in northern Canada, and to some extent in the United States, wildlife management in those countries followed the conventional science-based top-down state-management approach practiced widely throughout the world. This state-management approach to framing resource use issues derived some of its scientific legitimacy from Garrett Hardin’s seminal essay (Hardin 1968) on the so-called ‘tragedy of the commons,’ wherein Hardin suggests that individuals, acting independently of each other and each motivated by individual self-interest, can destroy a shared

1 In some of the campaign rhetoric against hunting, the animals being taken are represented as being over-hunted or in danger of extinction, and the killing may be likened to a blood sport (Moffat 1994; Wray 1995). So in countries where opposition to blood sports is vehement, emotional, and highly politicized, and where politicians and other media-hungry personalities seek to establish a favourable ‘green’ image, it can be easy to persuade them to oppose the killing of marine mammals (Kalland et al. 2005).
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resource even when it is evident that such behaviour serves no-one’s best long-term interest.

Hardin postulated two mechanisms for protecting resource users from their self-destructive excesses: (1) convert the common property to private property; or (2) have the state manage the commons. In effect, Hardin’s essay appeared to give intellectual (‘scientific’) credibility to the notion that resource users are inherently greedy and incapable by themselves of sustainably using natural resources, and so hunting regulations (e.g., quotas and closed seasons) are to be applied by state management agencies to resource stocks considered by them to be at risk now or possibly in the future.

As plausible as Hardin’s analysis and recommendations appeared to be, especially to government wildlife and fishery managers and management-agency scientists, Hardin’s analysis ignored the many known examples where common property users successfully avoid over-use of common property without resorting to privatization or state control of the resource. The relevant literature that would have informed Hardin’s understanding appeared in journals that Hardin (a biologist) was unlikely to read. For example, a decade before Hardin’s essay was published, the eminent economist H.S. Gordon, writing in a leading social science journal, analysed the same commons situation that Hardin had based his essay upon, but with greater attention to historical accuracy:

… the manor developed its elaborate rules regulating the use of the common pasture, or ‘stinting’ the commons: limitations on the number of animals, hours of pasturing, etc., designed to prevent the abuses of excessive individualistic competition (Gordon 1954:135).

Moreover, Gordon was equally aware that such rules for curbing individuals’ excessive use of common resources also existed in aboriginal societies. However, despite Hardin’s errors of history, ethnography and theory, his essay remained important in practice because of its influence on a generation of wildlife managers and their scientific advisers, and on those training future wildlife and fishery professionals. This influence occurred for decades, despite Hardin’s essay being widely recognized as theoretically flawed and empirically ill-informed in the decades following its first appearance (e.g., Cox 1985; NRC 1986; Berkes et al. 1989; Feeny et al. 1990).

What is the lesson here for our understanding of security-threatening conflicts that arise in respect to northern wildlife management? It would seem, from what occurred in the case of the tragedy of the commons allegory, that in the highly specialized and compartmentalized world in which all professionals work, specialists have little time to discover or absorb the knowledge generated by relevant experts working outside of their own necessarily narrow disciplinary areas of expertise. Thus Hardin’s essay is still accepted as scientific ‘truth’ by many scientists and managers trained in the years following its publication in 1968—despite the existence of an extensive body of scientific literature that provides descriptions and analyses of the diverse institutional arrangements that effectively regulate unbridled self-interest and, as a consequence, make orderly social life possible (Ruddle and
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This is not to deny that unsustainable resource use also occurs, or that some individuals engage in self-serving and anti-social behaviour (Berkes 1999; Wilkinson et al. 2007). However, many of the well-known examples frequently cited to demonstrate the occurrence of unsustainable resource use are often examples that characterize frontier development, colonial economies, and other examples of laissez-faire industrial (or state) capitalism—situations in which pre-existing indigenous property rights are dismantled, ignored, or rendered unenforceable (Berkes 1996).

Thus, there appears to be a serious information breakdown between different fields of expertise, a breakdown that affects both the quality of wildlife management and the well-being of hunters’ and fishers’ communities whose dependence on wildlife may be seriously and adversely impacted by poorly informed management decisions. Furthermore, if resource economists, sociologists, political scientists, ecologists, and legal scholars working in the fields of resource and environmental management are unable to effectively communicate their knowledge and understandings to other wildlife professionals, then how much more difficult must it be for indigenous resource users to communicate the reasons for their own concerns about questionable management decisions and practices?

Moving Beyond the State Management Paradigm

In Canada, beginning in the mid-1980s and continuing into the 1990s, successful negotiation of Inuit land claim agreements in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut created institutions and conditions encouraging a greater degree of cooperation and mutual understanding between government resource managers and indigenous resource users about how sustainability can best be achieved and maintained (Binder and Hanbidge 1993; Freeman 1999; White 2008). Contributing in these developments was the increasing recognition that state management systems are not the only institutional arrangements available to ensure the rational use of living resources, together with the growing understanding that indigenous (“traditional”) ecological knowledge can contribute to sustainable resource use practices (Hunn and Williams 1982; Freeman and Carbyn 1988; Johnson 1992; Inglis 1993; Berkes 1999). Thus, in the jurisdictions where these new understandings have been institutionalized, a more co-operative form of adaptive management (often referred to as co-management) began to replace top-down state-management arrangements (Pinkerton 1989; Usher 1995; Spaeder and Feit 2005). Implicit in the notion of co-management is that government resource managers and indigenous resource users can jointly produce effective management decisions that will be better informed when using both western science-based information and indigenous ecological knowledge.

In the Western Canadian Arctic, the first co-management boards were set up following the signing of the Inuvialuit Final [land claim] Agreement in 1986 (Binder and Hanbidge 1993; Bell 1995). The first co-management board established in the Eastern Canadian Arctic (now Nunavut) was the Beverly–Kaminuriak Caribou
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Management Board (later re-named the Beverly–Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board [BQCMB]) named after two large herds of barren-ground caribou west of Hudson Bay (Usher 1993; Kendrick 2003a). The BQCMB was established prior to the settlement of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement in order to resolve a management crisis that arose when biologists and Inuit hunters seriously disagreed about the population status of these two caribou herds (Freeman 1989). The Nunavut Wildlife [Co]Management Board (NWMB) was established immediately following the signing of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement in 1993. Recent evaluations concluded that, overall, these co-management boards have significantly improved aboriginal involvement in decision-making affecting wildlife and the environment in the Canadian Arctic (Binder and Hanbidge 1993; Usher 1993; White 2008).

However, despite receiving overall, although qualified, positive evaluations, these arctic co-management bodies in Canada, as with the state management systems they replaced, do not satisfy all parties’ expectations. For example, one study concluded that although government managers’ participation in the BQCMB have increased those managers’ sensitivity and responsiveness to users’ concerns, users’ involvement on the boards did not increase the likelihood that users would fully accept or cooperate with management decisions (Kruse et al. 1998). Another study noted that after twenty years of existence, there appeared to be a continuing struggle to include indigenous knowledge into BQCMB decision-making (Kendrick 2003b; see Omura 2005 and White 2008 for comprehensive critiques of co-management in the Canadian Arctic).

Thus, despite the significant differences in world-view and environmental information and understanding that exist between western-science trained professionals and Inuit knowledge-holders, the search for institutional security led to the establishment of wildlife co-management boards as a first important step. The Nunavut Inuit have taken an important second step, rewriting the Nunavut Wildlife Act (http://www.bcmnr.ca/files/Nunavut_Wildlife-Act/pdf) so that it reflects not only internationally-recognized biodiversity conservation principles, but also the principles and concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ).2 The inclusion of IQ in the territorial wildlife act codifies in law the Inuit principles

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2 The Nunavut Working Group on Traditional Knowledge in 1998 developed a new expression, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), to replace and broaden the expression Inuit Traditional Knowledge, noting that IQ is a concept that comprehensively encompasses the notion of Inuit knowledge, together with social and cultural values, practices, beliefs, language and worldview that is passed down from generation to generation. The concepts (Inuit) Traditional Knowledge [TK] or Traditional Ecological Knowledge [TEK] (which IQ was intended to replace), in common usage usually referred to Inuit knowledge of animals and plants and their environment. The expression IQ is intended to apply to all fields of knowledge relating to the natural world, including the human condition and the cosmos (Arnakkak 2000). [Note from the editors: IQ was discussed in a previous IPSSAS publication—Lévesque 2004. See also Wenzel 2004].


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of stewardship and respect for wildlife and the environment that constitute the ethical foundation for maintaining an appropriate human-wildlife relationship. IQ principles and concepts incorporated into the Nunavut Wildlife Act include:

- **Avatimik Kamattiariniq**, meaning that people are stewards of the environment and must treat all of nature holistically and with respect, because humans, wildlife, and their shared environment are inter-connected, and each person’s actions and intentions toward everything else have consequences for good or ill;
- **Iliiaaqaqtailliniq**, meaning that even though wild animals are harvested for food and other purposes, malice toward them is prohibited;
- **Sirliqsaagtittailiniq**, meaning that hunters should avoid causing wild animals unnecessary suffering when harvesting them;
- **Pilimmaksarniq**, meaning that skills must be improved and maintained through experience and practice;
- **Surattittailimaniq** (also called Iksinnaittailimaniq), meaning that hunters should hunt only what is necessary for their needs and not waste the wildlife they hunt;
- **Akiraqtuutijariaqanginniq nirjutiit pijjutigillugit**, meaning that as wildlife and habitat are not possessions, hunters should avoid disputes over the wildlife they harvest or the areas in which they harvest them;
- **Papattiniq**, refers to the obligation of guardianship or stewardship a person exercises toward something that does not belong to that person.

Seeking Sustainability through Increased Co-operation

In 1998, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) convened the 10th Global Diversity Forum in Bratislava, Slovakia. The findings of the Bratislava workshop confirmed that in many cases, there exist two (or more) different systems of resource regulation operating at the same time—one being the state management system (based upon western science), and the other(s) based on quite different locally-based understandings about the nature of resources and how they should be conserved. Participants at the Bratislava workshop concluded that the replacement of customary tenure systems by government (state) management regimes had significant detrimental effects on wildlife conservation. They also concluded that where well-defined tenure and access rights have been devolved from the state back to the local user-community, sustainability of resource use was significantly improved (Oglethorpe 1999).

Although sustainable use of resources based on indigenous systems of tenure has a long history in the Arctic, during the last half of the 20th century these regions came under science-based state management. Consequently, the story that
is more often told—and widely accepted outside of the North—is of recurring resource scarcity, over-exploitation, and the danger of species extinction. Although resource depletion may occur in some localities, it remains moot whether this is despite state management systems being in place, or because such systems are in place. For many northern indigenous peoples, continuing talk of resource overuse is often puzzling to the actual users who—being close to the resources and in effective communication with other resource users—question southerners’ interpretation of what both observe:

As Inuit, we have knowledge about animals vanishing for periods of time. From the Elders, we know … all the [marine] mammals, including beluga whales, are like that. One day there are too many of them, so they vanish for a period of time and come back later on (Simeonie Akpik, in McDonald et al. 1997:6).

Elders say that any kind of animal moves away for a while but, according to the government, animals are in decline. To the Inuit, they have moved, but not declined … From what I have heard, there used to be lots of walrus here. Now there is a place called Ullikuluk where there hardly used to be any walrus. Now, there are many (Peter Alogut, in McDonald et al. 1997:46).

It appears that the sustainability of indigenous resource use practices depends on a number of circumstances being maintained (Young et al. 1994), including the user group possessing shared social and cultural institutions and values that satisfy a variety of non-material aspects of everyday life. In such cases, sustainable resource use appears to require that foraging takes place in an identifiable territory, with socially-reproducible foraging practices and local knowledge of the resource and its environment being transmitted between generations within the same community. It is also necessary that these foraging practices are valued by community members multi-dimensionally, meaning that food acquisition and consumption possess, inter alia, various significant social, economic, cultural, historical, moral and/or dietary and health-related values. It is generally agreed that any institutional means developed to provide an effective mechanism to ensure sustainable resource use must be seen by the users to be equitable and just. This gives encouragement to those who promote co-management regimes as a progressive development in the search for sustainable resource use practices in the Arctic.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Earlier sections of this chapter identified an epistemological stumbling block (illustrated by the allegorical, yet influential, ‘tragedy of the commons’ treatise) that has influenced the mind-set of many environmental professionals over at least the last twenty-five years. As wildlife management and conservation programs in most cases manage the human–wildlife relationship (rather than ‘manage’ wildlife itself), inadequate or improper understanding of the nature of that critically
important relationship provides a weak foundation for constructive policy and program development, and indeed, for informed scientific discussion and formulation of meaningful research questions. Moreover, such an erroneous view of the human–wildlife relationship may contribute to the recurring concern many environmental advocates voice about the ongoing and periodically heightened risk of economically-important species’ pending extinction.

The possibility that negative consequences following exposure to misinformation during professional training should not be underestimated, and if not corrected, may contribute to the lack of critical questioning by wildlife professionals of their colleagues’ occasionally dramatic and highly improbable speculations about impending large-scale extinction events (e.g., as proposed by Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1975; Myers 1979, 1983; Amstrup et al. 2007). By way of explanation, it has been noted:

Typically professionals are so deeply embedded in the knowledge systems, personality, worldview, and problem-solving process in which they were raised and trained that they are blind to it. ‘Blind spots’ are invisible. They go unseen, unquestioned, and unexamined… A lack of awareness of ingrained professional ‘blind spots’ has had and is having profound negative impacts on the effectiveness of conservation and sustainability (Wilkinson et al. 2007:5).

Others have warned about ‘trans-science’ statements, which are opinions expressed in public (rather than scientific) fora, where lower standards of ‘proof’ are asked for or offered by scientists (Weinberg 1976). Trans-science utterances made to the media, if sensational enough, may be distributed worldwide in an instant and can lead to unscientific ‘urban myths’ which other scientists—lacking expertise in that particular subject—repeat and come to believe if attributed to a recognized scientist or published in a major newspaper or mass circulation periodical. This is particularly the case when alarming statements are made about iconic or easily recognized wildlife species (Webb and Carillo 2000; Aron et al. 2003; Hilborn 2007; Freeman 2008).

However two caveats need be made at this point. First, no knowledge system has a monopoly on ‘the truth’ or of ‘reality,’ and this applies to the best efforts of western scientists as well as the accumulated knowledge and understanding of highly-respected aboriginal elders and experienced local foragers. The way forward is to continually improve on the stock of information that is used to inform decision-making, for “given that all knowledge is incomplete and tentative, effective discourse among diverse knowledge systems and cultures maximizes chances for a more holistic understanding of problems and likely solutions” (Wilkinson et al. 2007:8)

This call for environmental professionals to engage in discussion with indigenous experts is not new. Almost 30 years ago, a distinguished Canadian polar scientist, speaking at an international marine engineering conference, stated: “it is a truism to say that one of the most underutilized sources of information in
many vital areas of Arctic development is the accumulated practical knowledge that the Inuit possess” (Roots 1981:23). In regard to complex mathematical modeling of environmental events, Roots continued:

We should keep in mind that although we may dress up the estimates with numbers … our general understanding of the overall relationship between Arctic weather and arctic ocean behaviour is not demonstrably better than that of the Inuit who have a feel for it based on long and intimate observations (Roots 1981:22, emphasis added).

The reference to having a ‘feel for it,’ in relation to knowing how a complex system operates, may be troubling to many trained in the tradition of positivist science (viz., a tradition that emphasizes the importance of rigorous empiricism, measurement, reductionist linear thinking, and experimentation). However, many other natural scientists have questioned the relevance and usefulness of positivist science when seeking to understand complex environmental problems, and have recognized the value of incorporating a range of ways of knowing and understanding into their problem-solving activities:

The technique of reductionism in science, although it has been enormously successful, does not (and cannot) illuminate the behaviour of whole interdependent systems… the techniques of reductionism are irrelevant for this order of [ecosystemic] complexity (Ashby 1978:83).

Ecological awareness, then, will arise only when we combine our rational knowledge with an intuition of our environment. Such intuitive wisdom is characteristic of traditional non-linear cultures, especially American Indian cultures in which life was organized around a highly refined awareness of the environment (Capra 1982:24-25, emphasis added).

Not only are local ways of seeing and understanding legitimate in and of themselves, they are absolutely vital to finding and securing sustainability. Local people make connections and gain insights that are typically beyond the purview of western positivistic science… With regard to the accuracy and usability of [this] information, context-sensitive knowledge gained from practical experience is necessary to provide a more complete picture than what can be gained from theory or reductionist scientific research (Wilkinson et al. 2007:9, emphasis added).

The huge advances in many fields of science, especially where physical and chemical laws and laboratory analysis and experimentation operate, rarely apply when seeking to understand complex environmental problems. For example,
two leading arctic ecologists, commenting on the use of mathematical models to predict the impact of climate change on animal populations write:

The limited success of weather forecasting in the presence of strong physical laws should humble ecologists who wish to make predictions of the effects of climate change on ecosystems… Complex hypotheses with predictions ten years ahead are fairy tales (Krebs and Berteaux 2006:149).

Others have cautioned the way in which modelling may be used as a substitute for rigorous empirically-based science:

Most frightening of all, our complete acceptance of this [modeling] approach shows that mathematics has become a substitute for science. It has become a defense against an appropriate humility, and a barrier to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of our… environment. When used improperly, mathematics becomes a reason to accept absurdity (J.M. O'Malley, quoted in Pilkey and Pilkey-Jarvis 2007:xiii).

The head of the International Council for Science (ICSU), in noting that science does not constitute the only system of knowledge, acknowledged the importance of traditional societies’ refined knowledge systems that represent a huge resource of understanding unknown to western science and particularly useful in regard to managing and conserving natural resources (Rosswall 2002; see also Berkes 1999; Oppenheimer et al. 2007; Wilkinson et al. 2007; Carpenter et al. 2009). Although many scientists and resource managers acknowledge (and in some cases advocate) that local peoples’ knowledge, understanding, and practices are important for securing environmental sustainability, most are unsure how to incorporate these understandings into their professional work. It is agreed that local peoples and non-local professionals must show mutual respect for each other’s worldview, but this position may be considered ‘an inconvenient truth’ (and consequently ignored or discounted when serious differences in interpreting an emerging conservation problem occurs). The existence of personal and professional ‘blind spots’ “that exclude, ignore or hinder the vital contributions of others” (Wilkinson et al. 2007:7), was noted earlier. Those authors continue, “anytime we attempt to reduce the complex world around us to a tractable problem and an area of focus, we risk forgetting that we put on blinders in order to be able to focus” (Wilkinson et al. 2007:22).

The reason for reluctance or inability to incorporate diverse viewpoints (and especially community-based expertise) into programs of research has been addressed by several authors. For example, with respect to some scientists’ resistance toward new or challenging ideas and interpretations, or to criticism, one study refers to ‘the dominance of the few’ (Newman 2004). This situation arises because scientific credibility and career advancement, based as it is, inter alia, upon peer review of research funding proposals and journal article submissions,
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is often obtained from a relatively small pool of senior specialists, who in many cases are also collaborators or potential future collaborators (Newman 2004, Carpenter et al. 2009). In such circumstances, it may be very risky (in terms of career prospects) to oppose or challenge senior scientists’ work (Lindzen 2006; Oppenheimer et al. 2007; Pilkey and Pilkey-Jarvis 2007; Spencer 2008).

The cultural differences associated with different ways of knowing that exist among members of co-management boards, maintained by the continually changing membership of such bodies, will likely represent an on-going challenge. The positive assessments of some of these boards’ activities referred to earlier, suggest that members are aware of the potential this management institution possesses, as well as the undesirability (if not impossibility) of returning to the earlier state-management arrangement. The Nunavut Wildlife Act establishes the legal framework for wildlife management and conservation activities in Nunavut, and provides guidance for how wildlife management discussions and actions are to be conducted in accordance with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) principles. According to these principles, the cultural, professional, and personal differences that may exist on a co-management board should be addressed in a creative and flexible manner (Qanuqtuurunnarniq), with board members treating each other with respect while discussing differences in a meaningful fashion (Aajiiqatigiinniq) while working in harmony to achieve common objectives (Piliriqatiingniq) and striving to improve mutual learning and competence in order to best achieve conservation goals (Pilimmaksarniq).

From the evidence available, it appears that considerable progress has been made in developing a more culturally-inclusive management system to sustain the critically important human–wildlife relationship in the Canadian North (however, see Suluk and Blakney 2008). Given the vital importance of this relationship for the aboriginal majority in the Canadian Arctic, and the role a healthy resident population in the Canadian Arctic region plays in local regional and national security affairs, the political will and public support for such an adaptive institution appears reasonably secure. Although the unfortunate actions of external special interests will likely continue to threaten local and regional efforts in Canada to improve wildlife management, the demonstrated resilience of northern peoples and northern wildlife gives promise that both will endure and thrive.

References


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Chapter 2

Securing an Inuit Identity in a Canadian City

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Abstract: The circle is an integral symbol in Inuit culture, and the social circle plays a key role in securing identity and a comfortable, familiar lifestyle in a new environment. This chapter relates my experience of moving from the Western Arctic to Edmonton, and my own process of finding work, friends, and projects by which I could contribute to establishing a safe, friendly environment and community that serves other Inuit. I discuss my work with the Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society, the Aboriginal Awareness workshop program at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and my own consulting business. Creating networks that bring Inuit together and nurturing existing connections forged back to the Arctic are central in establishing feelings of security and Inuit identity in urban southern Canada. Social networks provide people with a context in which to speak their own language, a group to assist in procuring and enjoying traditional Inuit foods, and a forum to express concerns and ideas as they adapt and thrive in their new home.

Keywords: Urbanity, Inuit, Edmonton, identity, social networks, Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society.

The drum, with its smooth round surface, resonates and echoes like a heartbeat—the heartbeat of many cultures. The circle, as well, has critical meaning to all aboriginal cultures, as it depicts many forms in nature such as the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars. For Inuit,\(^1\) it is also the aglu, or seal hole, the agluaq, or ice fishing hole, and the circular tent rings scattered over the land. The circle means motherhood, as the womb forms a secure circle around the unborn. Muskoxen form a protective circle around their young when in a potentially dangerous situation. The circular iglu protected Inuit for thousands of years from the elements of nature. Within that circle they danced, sang songs, shared meals, gave birth, told stories, softened hides to make clothing—they belonged to the group, and they were secure within their group.

Remove any link from a circle and the removal of that secure link causes breakdown, just as removal of rocks around the base of the tent causes the tent to fall in strong winds. Remove any wind direction—be it north, south, east or

\(^1\) I use the term ‘Inuit’ to refer to Inuit people from all across Canada (whether they identify themselves as Inuvialuit, Inuinnaqt, etc.).
west—and the cycle of seasons will be disrupted. Likewise, the removal of any critical member of society or family grouping causes disruption and the loss of leadership. When the link is broken, the sense of belonging and security become uncertain. Insecurity sets in, particularly when one moves to an entirely different environment (such as Edmonton). Strange languages, faces, cultures, customs, the traffic, the lifestyles all add to the feelings of insecurity. This is what happened to me, even though I thought I was prepared to make a life and living in this urban setting.

My first task in Edmonton, after securing a place I would call ‘home,’ was to find other Inuit, or people I knew, to reconnect to familiar faces and build another security blanket. Fortunately, I was also able to secure a job at NorTerra Inc. (www.norterra.com/), an organization wholly owned by the Inuit of Nunavut and the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic through their respective development corporations. Inuit in an urban setting develop a sense of security by joining a network of friends and family, and land claim beneficiaries were accustomed to visiting the NorTerra office to seek help with job searches, to phone their land claims organization, or simply to get advice. After my circle of new friends cemented and I heard some of their concerns, I decided to take action. Inuit had been talking about the need for some sort of Inuit-specific organization to fill the void of a service agency, but first and foremost they wanted to create a social group to which they could belong.

So I called several key Inuit to a meeting to discuss what this group would look like, what it would do, how it would operate, who it would serve, and why it was needed; in other words, to determine its mission. To gather Inuit together, we organized a potluck feast, followed by an initial meeting that had at its sole purpose the appointment of an interim board whose mandate would be to get the Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society registered as a legal entity. To our surprise, more than 80 people attended! I was appointed Chair along with five other members, and all the legal fees were paid for out-of-pocket. After a year of working together, we could proudly announce that the Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society was official.

A membership drive meeting was called, at which time a seven-member Board was elected. I was re-appointed President to serve my first official two-year term. The formal mandate of the Society was to provide a venue for social events for Inuit that would showcase our culture and languages, and provide assistance for our membership wherever and whenever it was needed.

As a fledgling organization without a home base or finances, we advertised by word of mouth, through email chains and phone calls and piggy-backing off the courtesy of Inuit companies operating in the south as well as in Nunavut and the Western Arctic. We went as far as obtaining in-kind support from other Inuit companies, such as First Air, wholly owned and operated by Makivik Corporation of Northern Quebec, as well as Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). Everyone was and is very generous with their support for which we are so very grateful. Their generosity allowed us to contribute to municipal and national events. To name a few, we participated in the National Aboriginal Day weekend in Edmonton, the Taste of Edmonton (2008 was our first year), and Capital Ex (2009 was our second

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2 ITK is the national Inuit organization in Canada.
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I can proudly say that showcases for our Inuit heritage continues to grow, and now organizations are seeking out Inuit participation, rather than our having to approach them to participate.

I have since stepped down as President of the Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society, but under the auspices of my own consulting business, I am still heavily involved with the annual National Aboriginal Day organization and planning. On a personal level, I am also still asked by Inuit for advice or help in obtaining social agency services, support in dealing with Health Canada, or for assistance with letter-writing. These simple gestures make people feel more secure knowing they can get help or support from their own people when they need it.

Inuit are very much a part of this community. Inuit that I have been fortunate to meet come from diverse areas such as Northern Quebec, Nunavut, the Yup’ik region of Alaska, and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories. Surprisingly, there is a growing number of Inuit from the Eastern Arctic. Membership in the Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society also attracted Inuit living outside Edmonton city limits in adjoining counties. The Inuit population grows each fall as returning and new students arrive for their studies. Many Inuit families move to the city to be with their children who are involved in post-secondary education so that they can be there to support, nurture and foster their growth; the security of their children is important enough to move the whole family south. Other Inuit move in order to seek employment or because they have already obtained employment. Inuit also move here for medical reasons as well; some have lived in the south far longer than I have.

Many Inuit who are in Edmonton for medical services make Larga Home their temporary ‘home away from home’ for both short- and long-term stays. Larga Home is one of a few homes built in the south that are co-owned by Arctic aboriginal shareholders and one individual from Edmonton for this sole purpose. It is an amazing and welcoming place for patients! They hire great staff, many of whom are aboriginal people originally from the Arctic, and offer country foods and a safe environment in which to heal. My spouse and I spend many hours there supporting its residents, many of whom, on occasion, are family members or friends; we provide musical entertainment and share many stories.

Particularly for Elders, just coming to the city is shocking enough, let alone having to reside with many strangers. Many people feel insecure in this new, strange environment. Some will not walk across the street to the shopping mall. Instead, they will take a taxi to avoid walking across traffic and lights! But faces light up when they hear someone speaking their language or a ride is offered to Value Village. Long-term patients feel so much better and happier after eating their own Inuit food. My spouse and I invite people over to our home to give them a BIG feed of Inuit food and to let them relax in a real home-like setting. All of these seemingly small gestures add to their sense of security.

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3. At the time of publication, the EICS has a managerial position that supports the board, and a number of activities including craft and language classes.

4. Value Village is a popular Canadian thrift store chain offering second-hand clothing and goods.
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Inuit I have spoken to say that unemployment or difficulty in finding employment, loneliness or homesickness, the threat of homelessness, the loss of their first language, the lack of people to converse with in their first language, and the shortage of finances are all contributing factors to a sense of insecurity. I have known fewer Inuit than the number of digits on one hand who were homeless at one time or another in Edmonton. More Inuit have moved to places like Ottawa, where there is a larger Inuit population and a greater support network and resource base.

I remember how in elementary school social studies classes taught that it was all about ‘me, me, me!’ Everything in the qablunaq world was about ‘me,’ revolved around ‘me.’ This completely clashed with my cultural upbringing! Later in life, as an elementary school teacher, and much later, as a principal, I noticed that this cultural clash continued in the area of curriculum development. In those days we followed the Alberta curriculum. Those studies had a framework that flowed from ‘me,’ to ‘my family,’ to ‘my community,’ and then to a greater world of which we had no sense.

In the Inuit world, it is not about ‘me.’ Our world centres on the family, the group that goes hunting, gathering, and harvesting together. One Inuk alone could not survive in our world; only a collective will survive. In the Inuit world, survival of the group means survival of everyone, including ‘me,’ and the southern curriculum did not reflect Inuit culture, traditions, beliefs and values. But things began to change with the division of the Northwest Territories and the subsequent creation of Nunavut. We regained our destiny, and control over education. The government laws and policies that Inuit Qauyimayatugangit5 and Inuktut language must persist and be used within Nunavut workplaces helped this transition. Legislation that was passed in November 2008—which included the Education Act, the Official Languages Act, and the Inuit Languages Protection Act—put controls back in the hands of the people it was meant to serve, resulting in many curricular changes.

Through my consulting business, I have been trying to bring more Inuit cultural awareness to colleges, namely the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), as at this time it is developing an online cultural awareness course for instructors. Aboriginal students at NAIT were not feeling recognized as aboriginals; they felt misunderstood by their instructors, and were frustrated and discouraged. This misunderstanding went both ways. Instructors also did not and could not understand why aboriginal students were lagging behind their peers, and needed far more support and encouragement. The development of this course

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5 Note from the editors: Inuit Qauyimayatugangit is the equivalent in Inuinnaqtun (the language of the Inuit of the Canadian Western Arctic) of the Inuktitut expression Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, or IQ. The expression was introduced by the Nunavut Working Group on Traditional Knowledge to replace and broaden the concept of Inuit Traditional Knowledge (see Department of Culture Language and Youth 1999). IQ was discussed in a previous IPSSAS publication (Lévesque 2004; see also Tester and Irniq 2008 and Wenzel 2004).
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was thought to be the answer, although unfortunately it will not be a compulsory course for all instructors.

Aboriginal writers, including an Inuit couple, wrote the content. I was involved as an ‘Inuit Elder’ to verify the content and to provide accurate information. In my eyes I am not an Elder. Perhaps I am an Elder-in-training, but certainly not an Elder. Besides, it is difficult to be an Elder-in-training when removed from the Elders from whom I would receive the training! A person becomes recognized as an Elder by other Elders when they deem an individual has become knowledgeable and wise enough to pass on the information and to demonstrate and use that wisdom and knowledge. One cannot just proclaim oneself an Elder; that recognition must come from someone else. I really battled with this title and discussed it extensively with NAIT staff and the other two Elders involved in the project. We came to the understanding that in the absence of an Inuit Elder with the education and teaching background, NAIT would recognize me as an Inuit Elder for this project only. I was happy with that, and the work began once I was able to clear this hurdle. The project is currently at its final stage of shooting video clips of the three Elder-advisors talking about their respective cultures.

When I am in my own element, I feel secure, regardless of the larger environment I am in. I surround myself in my home with Inuit art, dolls made by my late mother and aunts, carvings, and artefacts. Much of my business work involves translation from English to my Inuit dialect, Inuinnaqtun, so I get to think and have conversations with myself or my computer, or imagine having a conversation with my late mother, imagining how she would say something if we were talking about the topic at hand. Sometimes I pick up the phone and call an elderly aunt to seek her advice, knowledge, or Inuit Qauyimayatuqangit; she is my living dictionary.7 During my downtime, I pick up a sewing project. I usually have a couple of kamiks, moccasins, parkas, vests, and mittens on the go! Doing embroidery which my grandmother taught me, whether for family who are still in the North or for sale, keeps me connected to my culture. In the silence of every stitch, I can think back to my days as a child and reminisce of life with grandma and grandpa out on the land, when I didn’t have a care in the world! I can remember my first pair of slippers that I made for granny and how I tried to perfect every stitch. I can remember how I sewed one sole on a kamik with the wrong side facing out, because I was trying to watch hockey as I sewed! That was why my granny always said, ‘Pay attention!’ These crafts keep me connected to the circle of my culture, just as continuing to live on a diet of country food helps me feel secure.

I am fortunate that I get to travel often with my work, and this allows me to stock up wherever I travel home or I have family and friends who bring me ‘care packages’ from home. I guess I am fortunate that I am not lacking in the Inuit things or Inuit foods to help me feel secure. Don’t get me wrong, I do get scared

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6. Note from the editors: In 2010, Ms. Elias was appointed by the Canadian Government as Nunavut Commissioner.

7. Note from the editors: Unfortunately, Ms. Elias’ aunt passed away in 2010.
and insecure on occasion, as when I am driving in heavy traffic, crossing busy streets, or standing alone at an ATM at night, but all these things can make anyone feel apprehensive.

I feel more secure because I have a strong sense of my identity, pride in myself and my culture, my own foods, opportunities to talk about my Inuit culture, and a growing circle of Inuit contacts and friends with whom I belong. Most Inuit living in this urban environment have their circle of relations or friends, made up of other Inuit, other aboriginal peoples as well as people of other cultures. As prepared and ready as one might feel to make the big move to city living, one is never really prepared enough. A person has to quickly learn how to operate and adapt to avoid getting caught up in an undesirable lifestyle or the wrong crowd. Some unfortunate Inuit have experienced this and I have done my share to help them out of it.

All in all, a strong sense of Inuk identity, culture, and the knowledge of one’s roots and background are crucial to feeling secure. Carrying all that with me while I walk tall with pride, confidence and self-esteem adds to my sense of security, most of the time.

Quana, matna, quyannamiik, quyanainni, thank you and merci!

References


Links

NorTerra: www.norterra.com
Larga Home: www.largaweb.com
Chapter 3
The Meaning and Use of Narratives in a Central Yup’ik Community: The Scammon Bay ‘Fireball Story’

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Abstract: This contribution addresses expressions of contemporary Yup’ik culture through varied tellings of an ominous narrative concerning a natural phenomenon, the ‘fireball story.’ In Scammon Bay, a Central Yup’ik community of 450 people located on the southwestern shore of the Bering Sea in Alaska, residents fear attacks by ‘fireballs (itqiïrpak),’ which are dangerous sea creatures who visit the village in the form of fiery balls or burning hands and kill ill-mannered community members. My research demonstrates that Scammon Bay residents employ the ‘fireball story’ to explain social malaise, conflict and death. I hypothesize that the ‘fireball story’ acts as a central metaphor, articulating for the people of Scammon Bay their modern-day social ills in a non-disruptive fashion, thus strengthening Yup’ik peoples’ resilience in circumstances of rapid social change. The ‘fireball story’ is said to provide healing for the community, offering a way to articulate societal tensions. By analyzing the connection between cultural activities, colonial history and conflict resolution, this research explores the way Yup’ik people use narratives to renew relationships to their traditional culture and redefine both past and present.

Keywords: Oral tradition, performance, Yup’ik culture, Scammon Bay, narratives.

Introduction

This chapter addresses the meaning and use of cultural narratives in the settlement of Scammon Bay, a Central Yup’ik community of 450 people on the southwestern shore of the Bering Sea in Alaska. The primary goal of this study is to explore the ways in which contemporary Yupiit use stories to define their history and culture. The analysis will be based on a recurring environmental narrative, the fireball story. During the July–August 2007 and August 2008–April 2009 ethnographic fieldwork in this settlement, the narrative of the ominous fireball was recounted repeatedly. The story, as I heard it most often, is one concerning dangerous sea creatures that visit the village in the form of burning balls or burning hands and kill community members. Scammon Bay locals often employ the fireball story to explain bad luck, social unrest, malaise, conflict, and death. But how exactly is this narrative employed?
My research draws on archival, oral history and ethnographic sources, focusing on the history and perpetuation of the story in contemporary Scammon Bay oral traditions. I am interested in the contexts through which these Yup’ik historic/traditional narratives are maintained. To address this key issue I explore the fireball story as a central metaphor and moral tale for the people of Scammon Bay, one that addresses the social realities of contemporary Yup’ik life. Recent historical anthropological perspectives on dialogue and storytelling, such as those of Dennis Tedlock (1983), Nicholas Thomas (1994), Phyllis Morrow (1995), Dell Hymes (2003) and Julie Cruikshank (2005), describe cultural expressions, such as storytelling, as a form of social action through which people interact with shifting cultural settings. Building on those scholars’ findings, I will explore how the fireball story takes on different forms in relation to the Scammon Bay peoples’ experiences with cultural change.

The history of contact in southwestern Alaska has been one of acute social disruption and trauma, brought on by the introduction of Euro-American economic, religious and social systems. I hypothesize that the fireball story acts as a central metaphor, articulating modern-day social ills for the people of Scammon Bay in a non-disruptive fashion, thus strengthening Yup’ik resilience in circumstances of rapid social change. The moral tale of the fireball is said to provide healing for the community, offering a way to articulate societal tensions that have been brought on by colonial contacts. The telling and retelling of the fireball story provides a rich ethnographic example through which to explore how Yup’ik articulate their history in the context of their everyday lives. In what follows, I present several versions of the fireball story: more contemporary interpretations that I recorded during my fieldwork in Scammon Bay and a historical version that I uncovered at the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Historic Place and Cemetery Sites collection in Fairbanks. In an effort to provide insight into how Yup’ik people employ narrative, I will explore the various scenarios in which Scammon Bay people draw upon the fireball story.

Variations of the ‘Fireball Story’

The Contemporary Versions: The Fireball as an Omen of Death
The first time I encountered the story of the fireball was during my second visit to Scammon Bay, in the summer of 2007. A local resident, Felix Walker, mentioned the fireball to me to explain the drowning of two children that happened there that July. Eight-year-old Dylan and his ten-year old brother David1 were dragged into the cold current of the Kun River only 200 meters away from the village while playing on the river’s shore. The local newspaper reported that the older brother fell into the river while attempting to save his younger brother from drowning (Tundra Drums 2007). The bodies of both boys were found in the river the following day.

1. Yup’ik in the plural form.
2. Names changed.
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When I arrived in Scammon Bay two weeks after the accident, I thought I could see grief and sadness in peoples’ faces, yet I rarely heard Scammon Bay locals talk about the tragic event. I received most information from the local newspaper. Nonetheless, people frequently spoke about a warning sign that had occurred in Scammon Bay before the accident happened. A few days before Dylan and David drowned, a fireball had appeared on the ocean’s horizon. Several Scammon Bay people witnessed a bright crimson light flickering in the West, where the river Kun flows into the Bering Sea. According to locals, the appearance of this meteoric phenomenon directly correlated to the death of the two boys (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2008). It is said that the fireball is an omen which forecasts imminent drownings. People explained that ill-mannered community members, such as people who make too much noise in the village, provoke the appearance of the fireball (F. Walker, pers. comm. 2007). Hence when the fireball appears on the ocean, there will be a death in the community. Over the years, the fireball is said to have foreboded several deaths—such as the death of a young man who broke through the sea ice with his snow machine and drowned, and the drowning of a group of hunters who were traveling by boat on the ocean and lost their lives in a storm.

The stories locals tell about their encounters with the fireball are treated as true and reliable sources of information. Ethnographic literature from Alaska attests to non-human, animal and human beings (e.g., the fireball, ghosts, disembodied spirits, the swallowing shadow, little people) sharing the earth equally (Fienup-Riordan 1994; Himmelheber 1953; Lantis 1947; Nelson 1983). Phenomena such as the fireball, and other non-human apparitions are drawn into human society. Many Scammon Bay people strongly believe in the existence of these non-human forces.

The Older Versions: The Attack of the Male Fireball

According to elder Mike Uttereyuk (pers. comm. 2008), the narrative of the fireball has two variations. The newer version of the story tells of recent encounters with the sea creature, such as the appearance of the fireball in June 2007 described above. The recently seen fireball is described to be female and the wife of a male fireball. However, an older version of the narrative exists, which tells of happenings in the distant past that concern the male fireball, husband of today’s female fireball. "A long time ago," Uttereyuk related, "the male fireball was said to have attacked the neighboring community by burning through the entrance into a qasgiq (men’s house) and killing ill-mannered children" (M. Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2007). While undertaking fieldwork at the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Historic Places and Cemetery Sites archival collection in Fairbanks, I uncovered a detailed version of the older part of the fireball narrative, recorded in 1975, that focuses on the attack of the male fireball, several hundred years ago:

One day, while [the villagers] were out hunting, the children were playing and [making lots of noise] in the qasgiq [men’s house] […]
All of a sudden, a hand came in the tunnel, a hand with a large mouth with teeth in the palm of the hand. The children ran to the opposite
wall, frightened; except for two [orphan] boys who remained calm. The hand caught the children and ate them one by one, dragging them out of the tunnel, so that all they could hear was the crushing of bones.

After all children but the two [orphan] boys had been eaten, the [orphan] boys ran; one to underneath a large dried skin; the other to underneath a large wooden bowl […]. The hand felt and searched but it could not find them.

Once the hand gave up searching for the two boys, it left. The two boys went out to see what the monster was. But all they could see was sheer ice […].

When the hunters returned, they were shocked and blamed the two boys for killing the children. The hunters looked for the children […] in the qasgiq, but all they found was skulls. […] One of the hunters suggested that they reproduce the sounds that the children [had made before the attack of the hand] to see if there was really a monster-hand. They did so and soon a fire appeared out over the ocean. The men then began to believe the story and began to attempt to kill the monster-hand […].

As they were making preparations, the hand was jumping up and down on the ice—coming closer each time and looking like a fire on the ice. First, the hand tried to come in through the window. One man told the monster to go in through the lower tunnel. The hand did so and when it came through the tunnel, a large blade, especially prepared as a trap, was loosened from its mounting and it cut off the hand from the arm before it could reach the men inside the qasgiq.

A wall of clear ice remained where the arm rotated. The cut off hand [looked] like a dying animal. […] Afterwards, the men put the hand up in the qasgiq […] and kept it there until it deteriorated.

The monster’s hand’s name was Itqiirpak and it was the husband of another female hand-monster. This other monster still exists […] When the female hand appears, it is a sign that someone will die. […] The people say that the she-hand still lives by the ice-grave of her slain husband. The grave is a large block of shear-clear ice (letter by P. Kupanik, 1975).³

³ Unpublished correspondence by P. Kupanik dated December 20, 1975, found in the field notebook of Bill Jensen. Archival material. ANCSA 14 (h) (1) collection. Rasmuson Library, Fairbanks.
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Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2007; M. and H. Sundown, pers. comm. 2009). A local 68-year-old health aid worker, Gemma Akerelrea, explains that the older version of the fireball story carries moral sanction and had the purpose to ‘remind children not to make noise and to behave’ (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2008). Recent versions of the story, such as the sighting of the fireball in July 2007, reinforce and simultaneously reinvent the older versions. Contemporary accounts of the story are based on the older versions (P. Kupanik letter, 1975 [see footnote 1]; M. Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2007); however, Scammon Bay people incorporate new elements that speak to current issues in the community. Thus, while the content of contemporary accounts of the fireball reflects the realities of modern village life, they are nonetheless thematically consistent with older versions of the story. Therewith, the story becomes more than a historic legend; it allows contemporary residents a way to communicate traumatic events, such as the drowning of the two brothers, in a non-disruptive fashion. In the next section I will further explore the significance of the fireball story for Scammon Bay residents.

The Perpetuation of the ‘Fireball Story’ in Contemporary Scammon Bay

Scammon Bay elders and adults recount that the fireball shows itself nowadays because most young people do not pay respect to the earth, to their parents or to elders and do not listen to their surroundings. At a storytelling event at the local high school in October 2008, local Peter George told the students, "When you don’t listen, nature out there will visit you and will try to knock some sense into you." George says that people who experience non-human phenomena such as the fireball acquire a greater awareness of themselves and might change their behavior in the future (P. George, pers. comm. 2008). The fireball phenomenon reminds young people to follow yuuyaraq, the Yup’ik way of life (Napoleon 1995). Complying with yuuyaraq means observing the rules, the so-called inerquutet (prohibitions) and alerquutet (prescriptions),4 which stipulate that community members must behave morally, that is, for example, to remember and honor the ancestors, to avoid making noise, to participate in subsistence activities, to speak the Yup’ik language, and to listen to parents and elders’ teachings. Many Scammon Bay locals complain that the younger generations do not follow the Yup’ik ways of life and consequently become dysfunctional community members.

4 The inerquutet and the alerquutet constitute a moral code, which guides people through particular situations and tells them how to act appropriately in the world. According to several Scammon Bay elders, stories carrying the inerquutet and the alerquutet are the cornerstone of Yup’ik education, through which young people learn to distinguish between right and wrong ways to behave (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2009; M. Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2009).
The common saying in the village that "they are making too much noise" is often used as a less accusatory metaphor for bad behavior that youngsters show—young people create noise by consuming alcohol and drugs, by watching TV and playing video games, or by lounging around the pool hall (a gathering place for youth) instead of helping with subsistence activities. Stories, such as the fireball narrative remind young people to avoid making noise and to behave properly.

To this day, most young Scammon Bay people believe in the existence of the fireball and tell their own versions of the story. My 2008-2009 fieldwork included teaching a teen filmmaking workshop, the goal of which was for students to video-record stories from elders and then to reenact the recorded stories. While teaching the workshop, I observed that the students did not show a great interest in listening to the elders’ stories. Furthermore, most teenagers were unable to understand or speak the Yup’ik language. While most elders and adults in Scammon Bay are bilingual and told stories to students in English, a few elders recounted their stories in Yup’ik. Even though family members interpreted the stories into English for us, the students’ attention spans were short. They had more fun filming their games on the ice or their friends’ new motorcycle jumps, than recording elders’ stories. Even so, the youngsters enjoyed telling their own stories, which, surprisingly often, included elements of the elders’ stories about the fireball.

Many young people are as fascinated by the non-human world that they encounter in local stories as they are by similar phenomena encountered on television, video games, and the internet. YouTube clips of ghost-sightings and mystery TV-shows such as The Haunting, where ghost hunters investigate peoples’ encounters with paranormal forces, are popular amongst Scammon Bay’s youth. Their versions of the fireball story often combine elements of these popular videos and TV-shows with historic and traditional tellings about the fireball and their personal experiences. For example, the workshop produced a screenplay and video about the fireball story; the students’ interpretation is based on the attack of the male fireball, as told by Scammon Bay elder Mike Uttereyuk, but modifies this version by focusing on the crueler aspect of the story, the killing of the children by the fireball. The students’ action-based version of the fireball story (to view The Fire Hand—A Scammon Bay Story, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezm1ft-3QOM) shows the influence of contemporary visual storytelling as used in TV-shows and on the internet but also expresses the teenagers’ worldviews (for example about their perspective on non-human forces). This demonstrates how, despite that many young people may not appear to show much appreciation for Yup’ik traditional teachings and values, the fireball story speaks to them and remains relevant to their lives.

‘Feeding with Words:’ The Power of Yup’ik Stories

In Scammon Bay, storytelling plays an active role in peoples’ everyday lives. Locals tell stories while taking a steam bath, while fishing on the river’s shore, while shopping in the grocery store, while in class at the high school, or while having dinner or afternoon tea at peoples’ houses. Scammon Bay elder Gemma Akerelrea describes Yup’ik storytelling as "feeding with words." As much as
people need food to survive, they need words as guidance for their lives (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2009). Historically, in Yup’ik society, most rules were conveyed orally through storytelling (Cusack-McVeigh 2008; Fienup-Riordan 1994; Mather 1995; Morrow 1994). Scammon Bay elders describe storytelling as the cornerstone of traditional Yup’ik education.

In Yup’ik storytelling tradition, there are two different categories of stories, qanemciq and quliraq (Fienup-Riordan 2007; Morrow 1994; M. Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2009). Qanemcit are stories based on peoples’ experiences and true events, such as the fireball story. They can be tales of encounters with animals and/or non-human phenomena, such as the fireball, ghosts and spirits, but they can also be more personal reminiscences of events from one’s own life (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2008; Fienup-Riordan 2007; M. Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2009). While living with elder Gemma Akerelrea and her twelve-year-old daughter Desi during my 2008-2009 fieldwork, I was indirectly advised on morally appropriate behavior through qanemcit many times. Gemma never gave direct commands to her daughter or me, nor did she scold us, but she shared short stories about personal experiences or relatives’ knowledge to teach us alternative ways of behaving. For example, last fall I helped Gemma gather willow branches (willows are used to heat the house in the wintertime) and I started cutting the willows with a handsaw from bottom to top. After watching me for a while and seeing me struggle, Gemma recounted to me the following story: "When my dad was still alive he cut a lot of willows. He always used to start cutting the branches from the very top." I understood the subtle message and thereafter followed her dad’s method, which I discovered was a far less strenuous way to do the job.

While qanemcit provide historical accounts of peoples’ life experiences, such as peoples’ sightings of the fireball, the Yup’ik story category quliraq concern ‘fictional tales and legends’ (Jacobson 1998). Qulirat include origin stories and tales with animal or other non-human characters (Fienup-Riordan 2007; M. and H. Sundown, pers. comm. 2009). Elder Mike Uttereyuk referred to qulirat as ‘bedtime stories;’ they were told to him in his childhood every evening before he went to sleep. Because he usually fell asleep while they were being told, he remembered only very few (M. Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2009). Elder Neva Rivers recalls that qulirat were just like comic books for her—"all the animals and little creatures could speak." Both qulirat and qanemcit are treated as true and reliable sources of information and are used as a way to teach and instruct people how to be a productive member of Yup’ik society. Rivers (pers. comm. 2009) explained that those ‘little stories’ that she so enjoyed hearing from her father were like ‘a bait’ that was used to ‘hook’ her, compelling her to follow established rules. In the next section I will address the role of Yup’ik storytelling in times of culture change caused by religious, social, economic and political movements in Alaska.

Yup’ik Storytelling in Times of Culture Change

The Suppression of Yup’ik Cultural Narratives
In contemporary Scammon Bay, most community members do not question the existence of the fireball; they regard stories about peoples’ encounters with such
phenomena as true. While visiting local James Akerelrea and his family one frosty winter afternoon, he explained to me that phenomena such as the fireball "cannot be proven scientifically, but they are still there." The problem is, as Akerelrea describes, "In the world out there [the Western world] they need scientific proof in order for people to believe that it’s true" (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2008). James Akerelrea and his sister Gemma Akerelrea revealed that they used to feel embarrassed telling stories to cultural outsiders about their experiences with the fireball or other "unexplained" phenomena. Western scientists, pastors, priests, and teachers used to react with disbelief when told of the existence of fireballs. Since the 1930s, when the first Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived and a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school was established, the community experienced a suppression of Yup’ik cultural values and beliefs (Jenness and Rivers 1989). Relocation movements forced Yupiit into permanent settlements. The adjustments from a semi-nomadic lifestyle to community living were accompanied by epidemics of measles, tuberculosis and influenza largely introduced by the Western newcomers. Furthermore, the impact of missionaries and their often dismissive attitude toward indigenous traditional practices transformed Yup’ik cultural traditions (Clifford 2004; Fienup-Riordan 1996; Hensel 1996).

Akerelrea, who is a devout Catholic, describes how the Covenant Church in Scammon Bay had, and still has, a particularly strong impact on Yup’ik cultural practices such as storytelling. To this day, the population is divided into Protestant (Covenant) and Catholic (Jesuit) congregations (Jenness and Rivers 1989; F. Walker, pers. comm. 2007). During my fieldwork, I observed that while many of Scammon Bay’s Catholic church-goers are involved in Yup’ik dancing, practice storytelling and openly tell about experiences with the fireball, most Covenant Church adherents do not participate in Yup’ik dancing and do not tell about encounters with ghosts, the fireball, or other spirits. The reason the latter do not engage in these activities is that the fundamentalist Covenant Church does not support the Yup’ik cultural revival and considers the belief in non-human phenomena such as the fireball as superstition (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2008; Lee 2000). Akerelrea recounts that many years ago, a visiting Covenant pastor from the contiguous United States, who strongly disrespected Scammon Bay’s beliefs in non-human forces, encountered a phenomenon. A non-human creature, described by locals as a black shadow of ‘darker than dark’ color, appeared to the pastor while he was watching television in Scammon Bay’s church building one night. The encounter with the black shadow is said to have frightened the pastor, who subsequently revised his attitude toward beliefs in non-human phenomena. Still, the majority of Covenant Church adherents continue to reject historic or traditional beliefs in such phenomena. The Catholic church, on the other hand, started relaxing strict adherence to its ordinances in the 1970s, thus allowing for Yup’ik cultural practices such as the telling of historic and traditional narratives to be part of their services (Fienup-Riordan 1996; M. and H. Sundown, pers. comm. 2007). Some Yup’ik stories are currently incorporated into Catholic service and the Catholic priest in Scammon Bay participates in cultural activities such as Yup’ik dancing and traditional storytelling.
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The Revival of Yup’ik Cultural Narratives

With the discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay in the 1960s, the passing of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, and voting rights for Alaska’s indigenous people all worked to start a process of heritage preservation and performance throughout the state (Clifford 2004). Alaska’s indigenous groups started to reexamine their historical and pre-contact heritage and expressed renewed appreciation of their unique cultural values (Fienup-Riordan 1996).

The statewide revitalization movement of the 1970s encouraged locals to openly practice their Yup’ik storytelling traditions once again. Many stories, such as the fireball narrative, never faded from the memory of the people, despite forty years of repression of many Yup’ik traditions such as mask dancing and other ceremonial practices. A person’s memories of their cultural heritage, although not actively practiced, still provided strength and hope by connecting people to the wisdom of their ancestors. Anthropologist Cusack-McVeigh (2004) states in her works about storytelling in the community of Hooper Bay, that “Yup’ik ‘people […] have always turned to their own culture in order to survive.”

Many locals saw the revitalization movement as an opportunity to rediscover and celebrate their own culture by reinforcing and, at the same time, reinventing Yup’ik narratives (M. and H. Sundown, pers. comm. 2007). Traditional narratives, such as the fireball story, were changing forms to reflect contemporary Yup’ik experiences. Flexibility and fluidity have always been an integral part of the Yup’ik storytelling tradition (Morrow 1994; Fienup-Riordan 2007). As Johnny Weston, a Cup’ik carver from Mekoryuk/Nunivak Island expressed, "Change is part of our tradition; our elders want us to adapt to modern times to survive" (J. Weston, pers. comm. 2006). Traditional stories, such as the older versions of the fireball narrative, thus acquire new meaning through creative innovation and adaptation to changing settings, as seen in the newer versions of the fireball story (Cruikshank 1998; Hallam and Ingold 2007; Sarris 1993). While in many Western cultures people seek definite meanings in their verbal forms, in Yup’ik culture, meaning is seen as indeterminate (Morrow 1990). The flexibility of Yup’ik verbal arts is exemplified by the narrative of the fireball that changes shape and varies depending on shifting audiences, settings, and storytellers (Cruikshank 2005; Hymes 2003; Mather 1995; Morrow and Schneider 1995; Tedlock 1983; Thomas 1994). The Scammon Bay fireball story is also mediated through influences such as shifting landscapes, fluctuating local and global politics, and colliding belief systems. The story thus moderates the shifting politics and demands of community life in Alaska. The following section will show how stories in Scammon Bay are used as a form of social action.

Communication of (in)Security through Yup’ik Narratives

While cultural revitalization movements of the 1970s did bring a certain level of empowerment to the people of Scammon Bay, the settlement is nonetheless currently experiencing major social disruptions, which in turn affect the

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5 Residents of Nunivak Island and Chevak consider themselves Cup’ik, which also represents the language dialects of Central Yup’ik, which are spoken on Nunivak Island and in Chevak.
transmission of knowledge. Most locals fear losing their Yup’ik storytelling
traditions, which carry important rules and values that are believed to keep their
community healthy (D. Kaganak, pers. comm. 2008; Napoleon 1996; N. Rivers,
misuse, as well as domestic violence, are rampant and the suicide rate is soaring;
since the 1980s, ten adolescents have taken their lives in Scammon Bay and many
other young people have attempted suicide. According to locals, the major cause
of current social struggles is cultural disruption and social traumas endured over
the last century with the introduction of western religion, epidemics, mass-media
and subsequent disruptions to subsistence hunting (P. George, pers. comm. 2007;
Hensel 1996).

A conversation I had with James Akerelrea and his sister Gemma Akerelrea
in the summer of 2008 illustrates this current dilemma: James was in the midst of
describing how life in Scammon Bay had changed drastically over a short period of
time. Gemma’ and James’ father, who passed away ten years earlier, used to advise
them that "in the old days, the earth was thin." More spirits, such as the fireball,
ghosts, and little people, were ‘roaming around’ back then because the travel from
the spirit world to the human world was easier. Gemma picked up a University of
Alaska alumni magazine from the kitchen table and showed me an article about an
archaeological field school with a photo of an excavation site where students are
digging for old tools. She pointed to the many layers of soil that sit on top of the
ancient tools being excavated. Gemma explains: "This is what my Dad meant—
look at all those layers. The earth grew thick." Gemma went on to explain how the
appearance of phenomena, such as the fireball, is getting sparse. Gemma’s brother
James described how the growing thickness of the earth is of consequence to the
Yup’ik people today. People in the village are increasingly disconnected from the
earth and their ancestors’ teachings. James described that "the distractions in the
village," such as TV, cell phones, video games, and the teaching at the school and
church, are mostly responsible for peoples’ separation from Yup’ik values: "We
bought into those ideas that bring us further and further away from our parents’
teaching. Now there is no way back" (G. and J. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2008).

As James and Gemma tried to explain to me, stories, such as the fireball
narrative, seem to play an important role in grounding people in these contemporary
times of cultural upheaval. Many locals consider compliance with traditional
Yup’ik rules and values that are transmitted through the moral tale of the fireball
as the foundation of healthy and successful living, especially in circumstances
of rapid social change. As Elder Neva Rivers expressed, "They say the world
is changing, but the rules are not. They are still there and we got to think about
them and follow them" (N. Rivers, pers. comm. 2009). Young peoples’ lack of
interest in and non-compliance with Yup’ik ways of life is regarded by the older
generation as precarious. Elders expressed deep worries about the safety of the
younger generations:

My grandchildren, my daughters, my son—I’m trying to talk to
them [but] no matter how smart I am, they won’t listen. […] This
is killing a lot of people through AIDS and all those things they are
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using and are not supposed to be using [drugs, alcohol and suicide]. It is in our [Yup’ik] law; we got to let them know about it. This is a very true story. I don’t want to hold it in here only for myself. The things that we know we have to let them know. We have to tell them the true story for their health and to live happier in this world (N. Rivers, pers. comm. 2009).

After decades of suppression (from the 1930s onward) by Western outsiders, Scammon Bay people feel that it is time to draw on their traditional culture and beliefs to deal with community issues. Local James Akerelrea explains, “We can’t depend on outsiders to talk to us and teach us anymore. We have to talk to our children” (J. and G. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2009). While in the community many Western modes of education (such as that of the Lower Yukon School district or the suicide prevention program) failed, the Yup’ik way of transmitting knowledge and cultural values through stories offers a way to address current social problems through a practice that has been employed as a social regulator in Yup’ik culture since historic times. The question that arises is why the method of ‘healing’ through stories is not more fruitful in preventing social ills in contemporary Scammon Bay?

Indeed, the introduction of Euro–American economic, spiritual and social systems has caused acute social disruption and trauma, which the community still struggles to overcome. Cultural traditions have been affected. Elder Gemma Akerelrea says that today the generation gap is widening—“We are growing apart” (G. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2009). While Scammon Bay’s elders integrate cultural practices such as speaking Yup’ik, following Yup’ik rules, and recounting Yup’ik stories such as the fireball narrative in their daily routine, younger people do not undertake these activities to the same extent.

Growing poverty and associated social problems hamper overt efforts at cultural retention. Storytelling within the family often comes second to simply putting food on the table. In Scammon Bay, many families struggle to make a living; households are often large, with parents taking care of five to ten dependents. Alcohol or drug addiction is not uncommon. Locals revealed that they simply do not have time to teach their children the language or to tell them historic and traditional narratives. Local Peter George (pers. comm. 2009) says that he barely gets to see his children: "They are in school until the late afternoon, and then they are playing with their friends or are at basketball practice." TV and video games occupy children in the evenings.

Scammon Bay locals discussed the loss of Yup’ik language, cultural values and practices at a community meeting I attended in February 2009. One proposed solution discussed at the meeting was to change the local school system to incorporate extensive Yup’ik language and culture curriculum. So far, Scammon Bay students attend Yup’ik class at the local school, which teaches them basic vocabulary, storytelling, and other cultural practices. This is held four times a week for one hour. This training is considered insufficient by parents; their children’s Yup’ik language skills are limited, as is their understanding of most Yup’ik cultural concepts. James Akerelrea commented that extensive teachings of Yup’ik language, stories and values to Scammon Bay students might help the community
overcome the effects of this sudden culture loss. In his opinion, however, a revised curriculum can only be successful if Yup’ik ways are supported and taught at home. Families who misuse alcohol and drugs or abuse their children are unable to provide the necessary support for younger people to learn Yup’ik values. The practice of storytelling can only lead to a healthy society when the rules and values that the stories carry are understood and followed by the whole community (J. and G. Akerelrea, pers. comm. 2009).

The fireball story is a narrative that is actively used in contemporary Yup’ik society. Through taking on variations, the fireball story remains meaningful in Scammon Bay and provides a way to respond to shifting cultural settings. The telling and retelling of the narrative has become a powerful tool for Scammon Bay people to mediate socially disruptive events in the community and to motivate the return of community members to their Yup’ik values (M. Uttereyuk, pers. comm. 2007; F. Walker, pers. comm. 2007). Thus, the moral tale of the fireball serves as a form of social action through which community members establish and maintain resistance against colonial forces and gain empowerment in times of cultural upheaval such as the present.

References


Chapter 3: The Meaning and Use of Narratives in a Central Yup’ik Community: The Scammon Bay ‘Fireball Story’


Humanizing Security in the Arctic
Chapter 4

The High Arctic Council: A Canadian Approach to Local Security

Ron Elliott, Member of the Legislative Assembly
Quttiktuq, Nunavut

Abstract: This contribution discusses opportunities and concerns brought up at the inaugural meeting of the High Arctic Council in February 2009. Formed as a venue to help the three High Arctic Communities within the electoral boundaries of Quttiktuq—Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq, Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq, and Arctic Bay/Ikpiarjuk—better communicate, and act as a means of support in solving issues shared by the three communities, the council is comprised of the Mayors and Senior Administrative Officers. The main issues discussed at the first meeting were based around transportation and included the high cost of airfare for travel, flight scheduling and availability, food security, and the high cost of living. Issues regarding the Canadian federal concept of Arctic sovereignty were debated, and a Sovereignty Campaign was proposed to attempt to humanize the issue of Arctic sovereignty, by recognizing the long-time presence of Inuit in northern Canada.

Keywords: Local security, Arctic sovereignty, Inuit, Nunavut, Quttiktuq, High Arctic Council.

‘A responsibility to not greedily exhaust the still, virgin expanse of its natural richness. A responsibility to protect for future generations the cultures that have taken root here. Cultures that must be allowed to perpetuate in a respectful and dignified manner.’

Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada

Introduction

I have been the elected Member of the Legislative Assembly in Nunavut for the riding of Quttiktuq since October 28, 2008. The riding of Quttiktuq is the largest in Canada; like the territory of Nunavut, this riding spans five provinces and the neighbouring Northwest Territories and stretches across three time zones. Quttiktuq includes the three High Arctic communities of Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq, Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq, and Arctic Bay/Ikpiarjuk. On Ellesmere Island it houses the High Arctic Weather Station at Eureka and the most northerly military base at Alert. It includes two national parks, as well as the Northwest Passage. To the east, it includes Hans Island and borders the country of Greenland.

1 Speech given during a luncheon hosted by Helga Pedersen, Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, Tromsø, Norway, Thursday April 30, 2009.
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Figure 4.1. Map of Nunavut.

The inaugural meeting of the High Arctic Council took place on Thursday, February 26, 2009 (see Appendix 1 for a detailed summary). The council comprises the Mayors and Senior Administrative Officers of the three High Arctic Communities within the electoral boundaries of Quttiktuq. The main issues discussed at the first meeting were based around transportation and included the high cost of airfare for travel; flight scheduling and availability, food security, and the high cost of living. The High Arctic Council was formed to help these communities better communicate, and to act as a means of support in solving common issues.

The Cancellation of Kenn Borek Services

One event that spurred the need to get together as a council of communities to discuss issues affecting the region was the cancellation of services by a local air transportation provider. On November 30, 2008, Kenn Borek, a long-time air service provider for the Resolute Bay to Cambridge Bay and Pond Inlet [routes], gave notice that 14 days later service would cease. Costs of transportation for these routes increased as much as fivefold, forcing residents to book with First Air with connections through Iqaluit (formerly Frobisher Bay). Service to the Alert base on Ellesmere, which hires apprentices from Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq and
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Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq, also doubled in price, forcing a possible longer rotation at the base for the students. Other issues are also now surfacing, such as a dramatic escalation of freight prices and the very real problem of curtailed travel between the High Arctic communities and the south; furthering the isolation experienced by these communities. Furthermore, travel to Pond Inlet, a community involved with the formation of Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq and Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq in the 1950s, and has families that span all three communities, has now been severed. The Kenn Borek decision to pull out of Resolute Bay with connections to the west as well as Pond Inlet will have far-reaching consequences in both Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq and Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq for years to come.

The issues of isolation and high travel costs affecting these communities are similar to those across Nunavut. The unique situation of the three High Arctic communities is that they were founded in response to concerns over Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. In the 1950s, the two communities of Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq and Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq were established by the Canadian Government by taking residents from Northern Quebec and Pond Inlet. Thus, issues surrounding the role of these communities in maintaining Canadian sovereignty also needed to be addressed by the new High Arctic Council.

Outcomes of the First Meeting

At the first meeting, representatives included the Mayors and Senior Administrative Officers from the three High Arctic Communities, delegates from the various airlines (First Air, Canadian North, Kenn Borek/Unalik Airlines), Minister Peter Taptuna of the Government of Nunavut Department of Economic Development and Transportation, his Deputy Minister and support staff, and Senator for Nunavut Willie Adams.

The constituency issues addressed at the meeting included: the high cost of transportation and freight, food security, the high cost of living, flight scheduling, and Canadian sovereignty. Through discussion with the Mayors and Senior Administrative Officers, the meeting produced a list of suggested solutions, but most will need follow-up and further work to be implemented.

Suggestions to offset the high cost of transportation and freight included establishing a research center in Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq, since they will have a lot of travelers and researchers going to and from the High Arctic communities—if you can fill up the airplane seats up here, then the seat costs come down. Tied in with the issue of food security was the proposal to use Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq as the regional distribution centre for food and freight. Staggered liquor delivery was suggested, so that huge orders of liquor that have piled up because of no room for freight or bad weather are not coming to the communities all at once. To deal with the high cost of living, subsidies for High Arctic Relocatees—those individuals who had been moved from Northern Quebec or Pond Inlet to populate the High Arctic Communities—were proposed. Concerning the issue of flight scheduling,

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2 For a depiction of the events and stories surrounding the lives of the people affected by the relocation, see the film Martha of the North (2008) and also Tester and Kulchyski (1994).
a milk run flight traveling up and down the island was offered as a solution; this would be useful for both government and family trips. Finally, with regard to the issue of sovereignty, the presence of the Department for National Defense was requested in all three communities: the Alert Project in Grise Fiord/Ausisittuq, flights through Eureka and the Alert military base, Resolute Bay Military Training Centre, and Nanisivik Naval ports.

In response to these suggestions, a number of commitments were made by the Government of Nunavut and the airlines. In dealing with transportation costs and issues, the Government of Nunavut will tender a terms of reference to study and come up with a transportation strategy, while Unaalik Air and First Air will work together on a schedule that will connect the communities in an efficient manner. Meanwhile, the Government of Nunavut will be working with the Federal Government to examine critical infrastructure deficiencies. In particular, it will look at Grise Fiord/Ausisittuq and the possibility of lengthening the air strip to allow for planes other than the Twin Otter to land there. For his part, Senator Willie Adams will return to Ottawa to bring the issues of transportation and Arctic sovereignty to the Federal Government’s attention.

Opportunities and Concerns

Those in attendance at the meeting listed the following as possible opportunities to be examined by the High Arctic Council:

- Northwest Passage
- Mineral Exploration Projects
- Mining Projects
- Oil and Gas Exploration
- Nanisivik Naval Port
- Military Training Centre
- Ranger Patrols
- High Arctic Research Centre

Attendees also cited the following as concerns to be addressed by the Council in the future:

- Change
- Loss of language
- Loss of culture
- Loss of identity
- Exploitation of land
- Exploitation of people
- Change of hunting seasons
- Loss of wildlife
- Personal safety
- Environmental issues

In conclusion, it was established that the High Arctic communities wish to take a proactive approach to solving their problems, and continue lobbying the
government at all levels. Plans were made to undertake the High Arctic Relocation Monument Project as well as a sovereignty campaign, which is detailed in the following section.

**Humanizing Arctic Sovereignty**

The High Arctic Council supported the idea of having a sovereignty campaign, which would attempt to humanize the entire issue of Arctic sovereignty. Nunavut Youth Consulting, a non-profit youth group in Arctic Bay/Ikpiarjuk, came up with the concept ‘Sovereignty includes me.’ They branded a logo and designed a poster and three bookmarks that showcase the human aspect of sovereignty.

Often when people speak of sovereignty, they refer to the actions of the military or patrols such as the Canadian Coast Guard and the Canadian Ranger Patrols. This way of speaking about the concept leaves out the fact that Inuit have lived in the territory for over 5,000 years, and that the communities of Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq and Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq were founded for the sole purpose of asserting Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. The poster and bookmarks created display a youth, a hunter, and an Elder to emphasize the local meanings of sovereignty for Inuit in the High Arctic.

![Figure 4.2. ‘Arctic Sovereignty Includes Me.’ Example of the hunter poster created by Nunavut Youth Consulting, Arctic Bay/Ikpjarjuk 2009.](image)

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Appendix 5.1

High Arctic Council Meeting
Thursday, February 26, 2009, 9:00 a.m. to noon
Meeting Summary

Agenda:
1. Opening Prayer
2. Introductions
3. Approve Agenda
4. Opening remarks by the Chair
5. Opening remarks from Mayors
6. Creation of High Arctic Council
7. Round table discussion on High Arctic travel
   a. Personal and business travel and cargo
   b. Food mail
   c. Medical travel
   d. Solutions and next steps
8. Other issues
   a. For this session, time permitting
   b. For future sessions
9. Next Meeting
10. Adjournment

2. Introductions:
   - List passed around to be signed by attendees
   - Ron Elliott introduction, followed by round table introductions

3. Opening remarks:
   - Senator Adams welcomed everyone to the meeting. He is honoured to be here and is a strong advocate of the formation of the High Arctic Council. He sees it as a way of the High Arctic having a voice in concerns.
   - Ron Elliott spoke on the outcomes of the meetings. A final report will be created that we can use as well as send to the minister’s office.

4. Approve Agenda
   - Nothing to be added to the agenda

5. Opening remarks by Chair

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq
   - First time I’ve had a chance to meet with all three of my mayors making up the three communities of the High Arctic.
   - Honored to have Senator Adams here and Minister Taptuna, great political presence; also great to have the airlines present.
   - In this job of four months as MLA, I have found a recurrent issue of
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transportation: regulation of flights, cost, and sense of isolation felt.

- In the public sector, local, territorial, and federal governments each have different commitments, so it is hard to feel that people are being listened to and heard.
- The objective of the meeting is to let mayors speak to some of the issues that they are having coming from the communities.
- In 2003 transportation was an issue at [territorial] legislative assembly, again in 2005: hoping to get some solutions.
- Issue of transportation affects every community, but it is slightly different for the High Arctic communities, especially due to the idea of Arctic sovereignty and why these communities exist in the first place.
- I hope that this meeting begins something, whether they are teleconferences, to discuss issues that affect communities.
- Looking for a united voice of all three communities.

6. Creation of High Arctic Council

Ron Elliott, Member of the Legislative Assembly [of Nunavut] (MLA) Quttiktuq

- We call ourselves the High Arctic Council because we are mainly council members of the High Arctic.
- Members present agree to name.

Honorable Senator Willie Adams, Senator of Nunavut

- For years, Senator Adams has worked to push for issues affecting the High Arctic. He has worked on many initiatives that have improved the lives of many Nunavut residents. He mentioned continued mapping of the High Arctic; Water Pollution Act Amendment; Military waste dumping in High Arctic.

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- Mention of a research center in Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq.

Honorable Peter Taptuna, Government of Nunavut, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation

- High Arctic travel has been an issue for a long time; commends Mr. Elliott for assembling all the information on things done to date, such as breakdown of cost per kilometer.
- Ron Elliott has been very proactive since he has become MLA.
- One of the responsibilities of this department is maintaining airstrips
- Charter contract done through private industry.
- At this time, and in the past, the Government of Nunavut has not been in a position to subsidize airfares.
- Have been in discussions with carriers about how to decrease the costs for the High Arctic communities.
- The response is usually to lengthen the airstrips.
- But at this time, you talked about putting more effort into lobbying the government.
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- Arctic sovereignty was also mentioned—we are talking about solutions we can come up with to decrease the costs for the people of the High Arctic.

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- This meeting was initiated by telephone calls out of the Hamlet of Grise Fiord, when Kenn Borek stopped services.
- I would like to encourage these types of communication in my communities—so that I have help in getting information.
- My view of the way we will get things done is to continue to communicate.
- I am one voice, but I know I am doing my job because I am hearing things from the communities: an open dialogue with communities allows me to represent them with my ‘external voice.’

7. Round Table Discussions

Saroomi Manik, Mayor, Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq

- We are having problems with businesses and economic development since Kenn Borek stopped their flights.

Flight schedules

- People have to go through Iqaluit to go to Pond Inlet.
  - I knew of one boy trying to go to Pond Inlet who had to stay in Iqaluit for a long time, because it was too costly to go to Pond Inlet and he had no money to get home. He stayed in Iqaluit for a long time, and this is a problem for many people.

Cargo

- Air services that go to the High Arctic, Resolute Bay, have only one plane, and there is not enough room for cargo that we order.
  - For example, we will have more problems now in Resolute Bay because the tourists will be coming in, and they want to start bringing their equipment and their belongings and this takes the space of the cargo we are supposed to be getting.
- As soon as the sun comes out, the tourists come up. We get a lot of tourists.
  - For example, there were 40 people coming up trekking. Their equipment went on the plane and they forgot about the people and the things they ordered. It takes too long for the things to arrive. If I order something from the south, it is three weeks to a month before it arrives.
- And it is the most expensive—we have the highest cost of living. And the people of Grise Fiord, I feel sorry for them. They have gone through a very hard time, especially with the high cost of airfare and they can’t even go see their relatives.

Airfare costs

- The airfares are too high and we have to look at all of the islands
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in our area. I know there are lots of islands there, and we have low populations, but we have to do something because we like living in the High Arctic.

Food
• Food is also a problem for the three towns, especially the produce—we receive them spoiled. My bananas arrived frozen but because I was dying for a banana, I had to eat one!

Liquor
• Also I had a meeting with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). They have an alcohol control committee and only approved applications can be processed, but sometimes they stay too long in cargo, accumulate and all arrive at the same time. This is a problem.
• Liquor orders should be split up. Often when you order liquor, you wait a whole month for it to arrive.
• I don’t know where they are holding this cargo, but this is a problem we have and I think there can be improvement in this service.

Philip Manik, Economic Development Officer, Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq
• We are feeling the crunch up north in the High Arctic, especially small businesses.
• Food is coming in frozen, or it takes so long that we have no bread for a week… we are suffering.
• People have to wait for the food mail program for an extra week now because the freight gets bumped when passengers take up the space.
• As the mayor was saying, it will soon be a busy time for flying for tourism and this presents problems for cargo.
• We seem to be going backwards in time: we used to have 2 jet line services and now we have none.
• If we work together, maybe we can find solutions for the community.

Andrew Tagtu, Mayor, Arctic Bay/Ikpiarjuk
• What I wanted to say has already been mentioned by the Resolute Bay mayor, but I just wanted to add a few things.
• When Nanisivik [the mine] was still open, we had the luxury of jet service and the use of their air strip which is almost at par with Iqaluit’s air strip.
• We got used to these services, all of the food and parts were going back and forth properly and didn’t stay in one place for a long time.
• Once we started using a smaller aircraft, these problems began popping up—it seems like everything has stalled, like we had no more flight service when the jet service stopped.

Cargo: parts
• We’ve had to wait 3 weeks for vehicle parts we need, for the water truck or sewage truck that services the community.
• We only have one vehicle now that we have to use 24 hours a day to service
the houses: Arctic Bay is expanding and the vehicle has to work all night.
- We waited a month for the second vehicle, then it had to be worked on by the mechanic.
- Vehicle parts shouldn’t take that long, we are not happy with this service.
- Our new vehicles are computerized, and often we need a specialized mechanic from outside of Nunavut because there is no one here to work on these vehicles.
- We have had our brand new water truck stand still for a year waiting to be serviced. We can’t use it.
- We have to get water delivery service all night, because we are supposed to have 2 water trucks but only have one.
- Vehicles take too long to get repaired because of the lack of airline services; mechanical parts don’t arrive as quickly as before.

Cargo: food
- We have one plane servicing us, and the wait of the food according to the population is too long. The food does not arrive as quickly as it did before.
- Sometimes they get a jet service to bring us our cargo, when they need to catch up, because the plane they are using is too small.

Lack of availability for passengers; lack of scheduling
- When there are more people that want to travel, or people that have to go back home, often the planes don’t have room—they can’t get on the airplane because the cargo and the people have to be balanced.
- When we had Kenn Borek air, the schedules were very good and we were able to get where we wanted to go. Then, when Nanisivik was established, we had a larger airplane but it didn’t go to Pond Inlet or Igloolik. Now we don’t have enough service coming into our communities (parts and food).

Cabin heat
- Also the airplane we use to travel gets very hot.
- There was an accident recently; last week, a person fainted in the plane because it was so hot inside. This girl, in Iqaluit for a cadet course, cut the back of her head when she fell.
- People try to sit on the floor or even lay down because the plane is so hot and they need to cool off.

Meeka Kiguktak, Mayor, Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq
- We have the smallest population and community and our airstrip is always a problem because it is small and short. Bigger planes cannot come to our community.
- We know we are the furthest community, but we have a very scenic and relaxing community. However I don’t think the future will be too calm.
- People in our community can’t go see their relatives, or if someone is sick, and we have to make improvements for the future.
- It is now more difficult to go to Cambridge Bay, Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay
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and Igloolik. We can’t find any more money to subsidize the costs.
• Also, we have to go through other communities to get places.
  Sometimes our relatives have to go all around Nunavut before they can
  get home, and we can’t find any more money.
• We need support somehow.
• I understand that the airlines have business, and I understand why Kenn
  Borek isn’t flying this route now, but we regret that they aren’t servicing
  the area anymore.
• But we do have to do something, and I’ve been complaining about these
  concerns so much I’m sick of hearing myself.
• When you are from the High Arctic, you spend so much with the high
  cost of living. And when you don’t receive any more VTAs, and there
  is unemployment, and your relative is dying somewhere we don’t often
  go, we need to find money and it is not available.
• This is how we are living now. We don’t see our relatives face to face.
  We feel separated. We have inherited these problems from our relatives
  who were relocated.
• I’d like to see a better future for my grandchildren. We don’t want to let
  them see these problems in such a scenic community because of lack of
  funding.
• Maybe we can help each other because it affects us all. And there is a
  lot of jurisdiction, we can’t do anything.
• Even if people want to move out of the community, it’s so expensive
  that it’s impossible.
• This could be unhealthy spiritually and otherwise.
• How can we work it out so that my community can go out and see our
  extended family?
• If we are going to stay close with our family in other places, or know
  our family, we have to see them face to face. It’s not very nice when
  you don’t know your relatives very well.
• People ask me, what are we going to do now? And the only answer
  I have is, I don’t know. That is the situation we’re in right now in our
  community. I am in front of you seeking support to help each other.

Janice Anderson, Senior Administrative Officer, Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq

• From a management perspective, it’s nice to have all the players in one room.
• Transportation was also brought up in the mayors’ meeting, and there
  are concerns in the High Arctic and facing all of Nunavut.
• In Grise Fiord, it’s different in terms of the costs. There are a lot of
  contradictions in how that community is serviced. I recognize the roles
  of the government, the private sector, and the value of a dollar such as
  who is awarded contracts—it’s always the bottom line.
• When things are done without concern for the communities, just the dollars,
  it detracts for the lives of the people—they are the ones that feel that.
• There are cost realities, contract realities, and we end up with a
  short runway. Then we look at suppliers: we have one supplier, no
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competition and no economies of scale to bring costs down.
• We always have to route through the east and through Ottawa, we can’t even take advantage of western parts of the Arctic, and its impacting our bottom line.
• There are also hidden things in our economy. If people that are making bookings for the mayor’s travel or medical travel don’t understand the system we are working with, we can be stuck in a city for over a week for a 3 day thing. People don’t structure meetings around the system we have, they declare them without considering it.
• This impacts our day-to-day life, and participation on a day-to-day level. We lose man-hours, a competitive edge, well-being when we can’t see our families… there has to be some motivation to fix this that isn’t just driven by the bottom line.
• We are told a lot of things, not asked: when the planes fly, where we have to lay over, but I thought you guys were there for us? We want to be a part of these systems but it’s almost structured so that if we can pay, we can participate, and if not that’s too bad.
• I hear this from the people of Grise Fiord: we didn’t move here, we were put here to help the government. There’s got to be some responsibility and sharing of the real costs and hardships of living on Ellesmere Island in the service of Canada. It’s a lived fact for the residents.
• Communities and mayors deal with many issues and hardships with grace, but it’s time to look at the bigger picture.
• If Iqaluit is used as a portal, we are screwed. If they were to use Resolute maybe we have a chance.
• I am here to give support and see good solutions, not just to see things done based on the bottom line.

Saroomi Manik, Mayor, Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq

• Airfare is of concern to many people that were relocated: relocatees should have subsidies on their airfare.
• A reduced rate, maybe 20-25% would be helpful.

Joeli Qamanirq, Senior Administrative Officer, Arctic Bay/Ikpiarjuk

• With the closure of Nanisivik mine, we have less air service.
• We need support from the transportation department, and also the airlines. First Air keeps saying it costs a lot to operate an airline, but as long as these problems exist we will keep bringing them up every year.

Concerns with increased military activity in the North
• As our prime minister indicated, there will be expansion in military and the establishment of a deep sea port.
• They have indicated they will be using First Air or scheduled flights, and this will affect us because the airplanes are small.
• I want this to be considered because it could create more problems with our cargo with all of their equipment, and also for our travelers. I don’t
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know who will take the contract but it is of concern.

Tourism
- Also in spring there are many tourists, I’ve seen about 50 of them, with lots of stuff.

Cost of living: food security and health
- It costs $3,000 to bring in a $300 part.
- Cranberry juice in our community is $65 for one bottle. That is how costly food is. Sometimes we run out of bread, milk, and we run out of frozen meat so that we have to eat frozen meals.
- You will hear about poor health in the High Arctic, because of the food we have to eat. And a lot of us will be diabetic and there will be more medical travel, this will become more of a problem.
- We only receive part of the food mail program. 80%, because they have no employment, can’t use the food mail program. They get some financial support but can only buy things like chicken nuggets since that is what is available.

Accessibility, scheduling and airfare costs
- Nanisivik often has bad weather, and the clouds go right onto the airstrip. Just before it lands, the plane has to return, or it is cancelled because of bad weather. So people being med-evacuated have to wait—we have to make other plans.
- We will probably use skidoos to closer communities and not go by plane as it gets warmer—otherwise we must go via Iqaluit and it costs $5,000-$6,000 to go to Pond Inlet, and it’s only 45 minutes away.
- We would like Canadian North to come and serve part of the High Arctic so that there is some competition—when only First Air is running the service, there is no competition.

Other: increasing population
- The Community and Government Services Minister will be moving to Arctic Bay. We have a population of 810, and that will affect our population.

Janice Anderson, Senior Administrative Officer, Grise Fiord/Ausuittuq
- Being at the end of the supply line, we went 2 years without Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) posted. They were flying cops in every month, that would cost $150,000 a year.
- Now we have RCMP that are permanent. His household goods have sat in Iqaluit for 7 weeks now waiting to get out to the community, because it’s a bump in the norm.
- Everything is pared down so lean in the aviation industry that when there is a bump that isn’t routine, it chokes the supply line and we on the ground pay the costs.

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3. Note from the Editors: Todd, this volume, addresses this matter in the Northwest Territories, Canada.
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Andrew Taqtu, Mayor, Arctic Bay/Ikpiajuk

Community ties
- Repulse Bay, Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord and Clyde River—these communities all have relations with one another.
- For those of us who are living in High Arctic, when one of our loved ones or relatives die, we can’t even go to them although we should.
- We do receive a small amount of assistance from Qikiqtani Inuit Association [regional association], but they can only pay for 2 people to travel. Inuit have large and extended families that would like to attend these funerals, but they are too expensive and rerouted through several places.

Intercommunity flights
- Maybe First Air or Canadian North should have flights 2 times a month from Iqaluit to Igloolik, Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord and Pond Inlet. This would be very much appreciated.
- Kenn Borek used to go back and forth between Resolute Bay and Pond Inlet, and those communities in the middle were able to use that. But those flights have not stopped; they seem to have forgotten about our communities. Our community was quite small at the time that Kenn Borek was still running, and I think it has been mentioned that there were not enough people travelling so they stopped it.
- We would like this to be rescheduled; at least if we had some infrequent flights on the routes to other communities it would improve the travel service.
- I am very pleased for the mayors to be meeting here with the MLA and the airlines so that we can reach some kind of solution. We won’t stop until a solution is found.

Joeli Qamanirq, Senior Administrative Officer, Arctic Bay/Ikpiajuk

- I have been thinking about the airline service: there are people bumped off, and how much is it actually costing? Maybe you can service Resolute Bay twice a week with Jet service.
- I don’t understand how you can fly from Ottawa to Vancouver and it’s very cheap. If I try to go north, why is it so costly? Is the plane using more energy? Maybe because there is no competition? Why is it more costly for things like cargo? Does it cost more if you are flying north of 60? I have heard this but I don’t know if its true.
- How can we decrease the fare for north of 60?

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- All of the mayors have had a chance to speak.

More points on inefficiencies of air travel
- In terms of the government, it takes a person going somewhere to service something a week and a half to travel, and if that person has bad weather or misses the plane, it’s longer. The cost associated in lost
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dollars is very high.
- A boy going to get braces goes from Grise Fiord with an escort, overnight in Resolute Bay with associated costs, then flies to Iqaluit, spends a week in Iqaluit for a 15 minute adjustment. So these are two people on medical travel.

Summaries
- I’d like to summarize what everyone was saying.
- We do understand that airlines are business and the government is the government, but if you start doing this you get into trouble by looking at who should be subsidizing what, etc. But where does that money come from? You only get so much money to run your hamlet.
- The thing that gets overlooked is the human aspect and the reality of living in these communities. You can feel the frustration in the towns, and there is an added ripple: why are the communities here in the first place? Because Canada wanted us here to ensure sovereignty.
- This gets into the Northwest Passage, military, military rights… all of these are so far separated from actually living in the communities for the last few decades.

Solutions
- As we were talking, some possible solutions came out: a milk run, up and down: this would be good for government and family trips also.
- Staggered liquor delivery—I’m sure First Air probably doesn’t want large amounts of liquor on their storehouses either.
- The Resolute Bay distribution center is an interesting idea.
- Subsidies for High Arctic relocatees.
- Department of National Defence (DND) presence in all three communities—Alert Project in Grise Fiord, flights through [Eureka(?)], military bases, ports.
- A research center in Resolute Bay since they will have a lot of travelers and researchers in the High Arctic communities—if you can fill up the seats up here, then the seat costs come down.

Chris Ferris, First Air
- It’s a very big responsibility being a northern airline since it’s a vital service. We are flying into a lot of the small communities.
- We do have the burden of pleasing everyone in that community.

In response to jet services requested
- In response to the issues with services into Resolute Bay, Arctic Bay and Nanisivik: for us to operate a jet service there the prices would have to increase. We are already hearing they are too high. We had to evaluate this when we did our fleet replacement.
- The 727 and 737 combi/gravel equipped aircraft are not available to the same extent as they were a while ago. People are moving towards longer paved airstrips, so no one is making them now. They are more expensive, and they are rare if you can get them at all.
In response to comparing flights Ottawa–Vancouver to flying north
- If you fly the same distance south as north, you end up in Venezuela and the cost is comparable.
- Comparing costs of flying between Vancouver, Halifax, Toronto, Australia… isn’t fair. There are several million people in Toronto, so you can expect that every flight, every day will have a sustainable load of passengers and cargo.
- We have houses, equipment, staff and investment in High Arctic communities, and it is hard to put infrastructure there compared to Toronto or elsewhere.
- Comparisons are also unfair because they can operate the most recent, highly efficient planes due to highly maintained airstrips.
- We choose our aircraft for reasonable operating costs combined with the ability to withstand the rigors of our operating environment, and accommodate passengers and cargo.

In response to requests for more direct flights; more frequent stops
- On the one hand we are asked for direct service schedules with fewer transfers, on the other we are asked for more frequency. These are at odds with one another given the amount of passengers and cargo we have.
- We can’t please everyone, it is more efficient to stop along the way.

In response to concerns for increased military travel
- For the military, if we know we will have increased usage, we can expand.

Other issues
- If we could get everyone to travel the same on every day of the week, we would have enough to sustain more, but people tend to want to go all at the same time, with different levels of advanced notice.
- We have no assurances that there will be full plane loads between smaller communities all the way to Iqaluit.
- We also face some other challenges:
  - One is that Resolute Bay insists on having their own time zone. We have to submit our airline schedules weeks in advance and we’ve been getting time zone changes with 4 days notice.
  - Nanisivik service has been affected by snow removal not happening at the airport, also weather reports, equipment not being available, things beyond our control.
- There will need to be solutions at all levels.
- I think we can find solutions, but it’s not as easy or simple as it may seem. I do understand having to see from various people’s points of view.

Saroomie Manik, Mayor; Resolute Bay/Qausuittuq
- What you just mentioned about Nanisivik not having a snow plow—they are looking after it very well.
- Problems come from directions from the south, there is a communication problem.
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Christie Sinclair- Canadian North

- We don’t fly to the High Arctic communities but the concerns are of importance to us, because we are servicing communities nearby.
- We are always open to working with the communities and hearing your concerns.
- We do have programs that allow for beneficiaries to access cheaper travel throughout the year, as well as access to bereavement type travel. I believe Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated [body managing the land claim agreement, including funds, on behalf of beneficiaries] offers bereavement travel but it’s difficult because they only have so many dollars to distribute.
- We’ve been asked why we don’t stop in communities close to the ones we do service, like Arctic Bay.
- Our service is relatively new and we are learning as we are going. We do base our programs around things like medical travel, and our contracts are dispersed at different times—you win some and you lose some.
- If all is working well and we do expand, we can hopefully meet the needs of the communities. We’re very open to discussion that can enhance the services in the north.

Jimmy Onalik, Unaalik Aviation/Kenn Borek

- I have a bit of a proposal.
- When we dropped service from Igloolik to Resolute Bay, it was a hard decision, but it was sustainable weekly, all year round.
- Maybe we could try providing a charter on a 7-10 day schedule that does a ‘milk run’ and try to fill it up.
- We could try it at a good travel time, like May, and try to make sure those traveling use the service and fill the seats.
- We could try to make it every month or every second month, and we are willing to take a risk on something like that if we could all work together to make something like that work.

Meeka Kiguktak, Mayor, Grise Fiord/Ausittuq

- I have been hearing every reason that the airlines present—they are repeated responses.
- I would like to hear something more positive. Is there something I can bring back home?
- It seems like I’m getting nowhere. I want to see some solutions.

Honorable Peter Taptuna, Government of Nunavut, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation

- We want to get all the facts from the High Arctic to bring to the federal government, and plan a strategy document that we can bring forth.
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- This is one of my main priorities.
- For Arctic Bay, it was okay when Nanisivik was there, but we can’t rely on that to help again, and it would only be short term anyway. We need a long term solution.
- Canada wasn’t built overnight and had a lot of help from the government.
- The Arctic is getting more recognition now, since the Cold War, and we can use these hot issues to step things up again in the north.
- We need to make it economically viable for people to live and do business up here.

Chris Ferris, First Air

- We would perhaps like to discuss some inter-community flights, charters that could be matched with Jimmy [Onalik] and Kenn Borek.

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- In terms of First Air, we do have the service we have right now.
- Food mail—we’re talking about many levels. Food mail is contracted out from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to First Air, so they should be involved, comments should be made to INAC.
- Also, issues should be discussed with First Air; you can be reimbursed for damaged goods.
- It’s important to voice concerns—if First Air doesn’t know about something, they can’t fix the problem.
- The reason for this meeting has been to do just that.

Janice Anderson, Senior Administrative Officer, Grise Fiord/Ausuituq

- I can appreciate the Government of Nunavut’s attempts to lobby the Federal Government, but the federal perspective of what is real for the community is often different from the communities’ perspectives.
- We are able to talk about things here honestly and accurately because it’s not going through all the layers of government.
- We need to keep pushing hot issues to even get the Federal Government at the table. They took over 50 years to apologize for residential schools.
- Look at the relocations to Ellesmere Island for Canada’s convenience—there are two communities (Grise Fiord and a military station). Standard of living has to be spoken about.

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- The government needs some time to figure out its approach and do the research. And it’s the voice, the community concerns that need to keep coming down from the communities so that they can be presented to the Federal Government in terms of key areas like sovereignty.
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Rosemary Keenainak, Deputy Minister Economic Development and Transportation

- The department has been working on updating the transportation strategy.
- One thing identified and indicated by Northern Air Transportation… (NATA) has been runway lengths.
- Improving transportation is expensive, but we are working on it.

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- So with improved runways, more efficient planes can be used.

8. Other Issues

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- The entire issue of sovereignty comes out in all of what we have been talking about. The high cost of living, flights and schedules all seem to hinge around the idea that the High Arctic communities are here because of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. We need to discuss the human aspect of sovereignty. At our next meeting this should be a topic of discussion.

Honorable Senator Willie Adams, Senator Nunavut

- Wondering what Arctic Bay people think about the military coming up, not sure when it will start but there were 6 ships on the budget.
- COAST GUARD DIFICENBAKER won’t be finished until 2017.
- Also wondering what Arctic Bay feels about the dock they are wanting to build, and don’t know if Arctic Bay people have been consulted. Is there approval from Arctic Bay?
- Get your Senior Administrative Officer to write us so I can convey the message and we can work with you.

9. Next Meeting

Ron Elliott, MLA Quttiktuq

- Hoping for a telephone meeting in May with the three mayors to discuss how things are going.

10. Adjournment

Meeting concludes, 11:55 a.m.

Summary of the Possible Outcomes

These were the solutions that came out during the discussion of the Mayors and Senior Administrative Officers. Most will need follow up and further work.
- A milk run, up and down the island: this would be good for government and family trips.
Staggered liquor delivery so that huge orders of liquor that have piled up because of no room for freight or bad weather are not coming to the communities all at once.

The idea of Resolute Bay as regional distribution centre for food and freight.

Subsidies for High Arctic relocatees.

The Department of National Defence (DND)’s presence in all three communities—Alert Project in Grise Fiord, flights through Eureka and Alert military base, Resolute Bay Military Training Centre, and Nanisivik Naval ports.

A research center in Resolute Bay since they will have a lot of travelers and researchers in the High Arctic communities—if you can fill up the seats up here, then the seat costs come down.

Summary of the Definite Outcomes

These were commitments made by the Government of Nunavut and the airlines.

The Government of Nunavut will tender a terms of reference to study and come up with a transportation strategy (tendering to happen in the upcoming weeks with a report to be complete in the fall).

Unalik Air and First Air will work together on a schedule that will connect the communities (possible completion dates of the new schedule for review in two weeks).

The Government of Nunavut is working with the Federal Government to look at critical infrastructure deficiencies. In particular, it will look at Grise Fiord and the possibility of lengthening the air strip to allow for planes other than Twin Otters to land there (this is to be completed in the next couple months but will also depend on the new guidelines under the new Federal Government budget and the Government of Nunavut budget).

Senator Willie Adams will return to Ottawa to bring the issues of transportation and Arctic sovereignty to the Federal Government (a commitment was made to continue to ask questions in the Senate about these issues).

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Chapter 5

Open Prisons and Civil Security: Enforcement of Prison Sentences in Greenland

Annemette Nyborg Lauritsen
Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland)

Abstract: For more than 50 years, the Criminal Law of Greenland has been held up as a unique example in European sociology of law, as the sanctions had to be selected from a perspective that would ensure the most successful rehabilitation of the perpetrator. Prisons had no place in Criminal Law. Instead, rehabilitation usually took place in an open institution (open prison), where the perpetrator could participate in wider society while serving time. Over the years, a large number of inmates have passed through the Greenlandic prison system. Nevertheless, today there is a lack of knowledge about the course of imprisonment, about daily life in the open prisons, and about the role of prison sentences in society. The main objective of my PhD project is to provide new knowledge about the Greenlandic imprisonment system; the purpose of this contribution is to discuss how I have formulated the problems and the methodological approach for this research.

Keywords: Criminology, social anthropology, cultural studies, social exclusion, ‘prisonization.’

Historical Background

In 1948, the Danish Government sent an expedition to Greenland with the task of documenting Greenlandic practices in the area of criminal law. The Judicial Expedition—later called JUREX—consisted of three young lawyers: Verner Goldschmidt, Per Lindegaard and Agnete Weis Bentzon. JUREX found that Greenlandic case law separated the determination of guilt from the determination of penalty. In practice, that meant that, first of all, it would establish if the accused had done something illegal. Once that was established, it was then decided what was to be done to prevent the person from continuing or repeating the undesirable action/s (JUREX 1950).

In light of the observations by JUREX, Verner Goldschmidt was assigned the task of preparing a draft for a criminal law for Greenland. The resulting Criminal Law of Greenland was introduced in 1954; a law that differed strikingly from other Western criminal codes by not using the concept of punishment or stipulating maximum or minimum penalties for specific offences. As well, common preventive considerations were not taken into account. When the law was passed, arguments found their point of departure in both the perpetrator and the concept of rehabilitation as it related to traditional conflict resolution among the Greenlandic Inuit. The Penal Code came into being on the basis of humanistic currents, characterized by special prevention, that reigned in Europe in the middle of the last century. The starting point was no deprivation of liberty except in cases
where criminals could endanger other people. The laws allow a number of diverse sanctions from which the courts can choose freely for any offence. The main objective is to prevent the convicted from committing crimes in the future and to help them reintegrate into society. These humane principles, which were also new to European sociology of law, made the *Criminal Law of Greenland* known as the most modern in the world.

Even before the law came into existence, there was a consensus not to build prisons of any kind in Greenland (Goldschmidt 1953, 1954b). Several factors played a role in this decision. The Greenlandic population was about 25,000 inhabitants at the time the law was introduced; everyone knew each other in their communities. Because of this, it was easy to designate places where offenders could be kept under observation without locking them up. Another reason for not building prisons was the expense involved. Last but not least, experience showed that convicted persons suffered so much that it wasn’t possible to keep them locked up, and they were generally released after a short time.

There was no mention of prisons in Greenland’s Criminal Law. Instead, the system was designed with an emphasis on rehabilitation and avoiding the damaging effects caused by imprisonment in closed prisons. In the majority of cases, imprisonment would take place in an open institution for delinquents. In special cases, a person could be sentenced to placement in a closed prison in Denmark, for example, if a person is assessed as unsuitable for placement in a Greenlandic institution because of a mental abnormality, or if placement in Greenland provides inadequate security (Criminal Law § 102, stk. 3). In practice, this means that they would be sent to a closed prison in Denmark: the *Herstedvester* prison. Though Greenlandic Home Rule Government was introduced in 1979, the judicial system remains Danish; meaning the Greenlandic judicial system continues to be regulated by Danish legislation.

Today, Greenland is still a country without prisons. At the same time, it is a country with an extremely high level of imprisonment compared to European standards. Statistics from the International Centre for Prison Studies shows that the prison population in November 2007 was 33.4 per 10,000 inhabitants. No other country in Western Europe reaches that level; it is terribly high and in sharp contrast to the principles behind the criminal law.

**The Current Imprisonment System**

Today, there are five institutions for delinquents in Greenland, which together can provide accommodation for 123 inmates. Aasiaat and Qaqortoq each have a small institution with ten places. The institution in Ilulissat has 19 places; the one in Sisimiut has 20 places, and the largest institution in the capital, Nuuk, can accommodate 64 inmates. When someone is sentenced to an open institution, the intention is to let the person remain a member of the community. This happens in such a way that it may be possible for a convicted person to find a job and work outside the institution.

The majority of the inmates are convicted for violence, homicide, sexual crimes, and drug crimes; some are convicted for offences against property. In
addition, a number of persons who are waiting for psychological observation or sentencing are also placed in the institutions (Anstaltssektoren i Grønland/Annual report from the Greenlandic Imprisonment System 2007).

Knowledge about life inside the institutions for delinquents is reduced to annual reports from the police, and the prison and probation service in Greenland and the Greenlandic Imprisonment System. Scientific reports about these special Greenlandic institutions are limited. A short report made by the Commission on Greenland’s Judicial System documents how the inmates experience the different sanctions (Brochmann 1997). Danish writer Tine Bryld described daily life in the Greenlandic section of the Danish prison Herstedvester in two books based on life-stories (Bryld 1992a,b), and Norwegian criminologist Evy Frantzsen undertook an archival study called The Greenlandic prisoners in Herstedvester which describes these convicts over the years (Frantzsen 2007).

In 1994, the Danish Ministry of Justice and the Greenlandic Home Rule Government appointed a Commission on Greenland’s Judicial System, assigned to review the entire system. In 2004, the commission’s report was published with proposals for a reform of the system, including the prison structure, which was about to be implemented. A new criminal law was implemented on 1 January 2010 and with that, a new closed prison will be built in Nuuk, along with new small open institutions for delinquents on the east coast of Greenland. Taking into consideration the victims and a sense of justice, the Prison and Probation Service can place offenders under a semi-closed regime for a period after the sentence so that they have no opportunity to leave the institution (The Commission on Greenland’s Judicial System, Report no. 1442/2004). With this reform of the judicial system, it seems necessary to obtain knowledge about the consequences of the imprisonment system of today.

**Main Objective of the Project**

In my PhD project I want to research the Greenlandic imprisonment sentence exclusively; I do not want to include the inmates who are sent to the Danish prison. Although this kind of sentence has serious consequences for the inmates, I have made the choice not to include them because documentation is available about this topic and a scientific study of the consequences of this kind of sentence is in progress (by Evy Frantzsen). As well, it remains that only a small number of individuals who are part of the Greenlandic prison population are sent to Denmark. On the other hand, we have almost no formal documentation about the kind of sentences given to the majority of the prison population in Greenland.

The aim of my project will be to map and analyze the Greenlandic imprisonment sentences in three ways:

**1. Establishment of the Institutions for Delinquents**

In this section, I want to answer the following questions: What was the chronological pattern of the establishment of these institutions? What were the parameters for choosing locations for the institutions? What were the reasons given for the establishments of new institutions? What connections existed between the establishment of the institutions for delinquents and changes in economic and
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social conditions in Greenland? Was there a similar pattern to the appearance of institutions for other social problems like child welfare, hospitals and psychiatric institutions?

2. Composition of the Greenlander Prison Population
First, a description of gender, age, ethnic background, records of previous crimes and present offences will be made. In addition, I will pay attention to data related to resources available for the individual—residence, education, the labour market, economic resources and living conditions during childhood are of central significance to this part of my research.

3. Daily Life in the Institution for Delinquents
In this part, the questions to be answered are: What happens in a typical day for the inmates? To what extent is the institution open? To what extent are the inmates in contact with the local community, i.e., during work or education? To what extent are third parties—family, friends, and professionals—permitted to visit the institution? Are there times when the institution seems like a closed prison? What is typical of the internal life of the institution? What kinds of relationships exist between the inmates and prison officers? What kind of hierarchy, alliances and conflicts arise in the institution? Is there a special culture of the prison population? What kinds of differences and similarities are there to a closed Danish prison?

Theoretical Materials
Several studies about the establishment of prisons and institutions for delinquents exist. They span a vast theoretical foundation; i.e., the classical study by Rusche and Kirchheimers (1939) and the study by Michel Foucault (1975). In their study, Rusche and Kirchheimer connect the appearance of the prison sentence and the use of prisons similar to the conditions of production. My analysis of the appearance of institutions for delinquents will not be based on a Marxist framework like Rusche and Kirchheimer’s; I will also refrain from undertaking a discourse analysis like Foucault. My aim will be less ambitious. I intend to analyze how social conditions, changes in habitation patterns, urbanization and destruction of local communities can be linked to the establishment and development of the institutions for delinquents. At the same time economic conditions will be central because Greenland today is a society with great variations in conditions of production.

Several studies about daily life in closed institutions exist. Among these, Goffman’s study entitled The Asylum (1961) is a classic. In this work, Goffman analyzes the process of infringement (the pressure which prison and prison officers put on the inmates) and different ways in which individuals approach and deal with this infringement. The concept of the subculture of prisons has also had an important position in prison research, especially in relation to an anti-social prison culture. These studies show that inmates go through a process of ‘prisonization’ during their stay. They adapt to the anti-social surroundings, the moral norms, standards of behaviour and values which the other prisoners have (Clemmer 1958)
and after their release they will be more anti-social than before their imprisonment (Wheeler 1961). Thomas Mathiesen (1988) argues that prison is a school for criminals where human beings undergo an irreparable negative transformation. In Scandinavian criminology Bondeson (1961), Mathiesen (1965), and Balvig and Dalå (1969) described the presence of a special culture among prisoners. Concepts like infringement and the ‘prisonization’ process are connected to the whole of the institution (where all activities in life happen inside the institution). This study will focus on the extent to which a prison is ‘locked,’ the presence of and variations of the prisoners’ culture, and the formation of an inmates’ society inside the prison.

In recent prison studies, the material comforts of the individual have been in focus, and studies show that prison makes poor people even poorer (Nilsson 2002; Thorsen 2004). Ødegaardshaugen (2005) coined this process the ‘material prisonization effect.’ Høigård (2007) argues that the penal system is a part of the social division of labour in the reproduction of class division, where the penal system sorts out the poor people and reproduces a criminal underclass. In this study, I investigate if such perspectives on conditions in prisons, poverty and social classes can be generalized when it comes to open institutions for delinquents, where the inmates have the opportunity to work outside the institution.

### Methodological Approach

The establishment of the institutions for delinquents will mostly be presented as a descriptive analysis. The report on the judicial expedition to Greenland in 1948-49 will be an important source for historical material. A great part of the information is published in annual reports from the Ministry of Greenland, and magazines related to Greenland in the period of 1950-57. Furthermore, the Committee of Social Studies in Greenland conducted some research on the criminal law and the sanctions during the first year the law was enforced.

Together with the qualitative part of the study, the section concerning the composition of the Greenlandic prison population will be done through archival research. Upon receiving the necessary permissions, this part will be explored by going through sentences and personal journals from the police, the institutions and the Prison and Probation Service.

#### Methodical Reflections Concerning the Qualitative Research

The qualitative part of the project—the daily life in the institutions for delinquents—will involve conducting anthropological fieldwork. The study will be based on grounded theory, the purpose being to examine the course of events rather than individuals; through this approach, knowledge and understanding will be gained about various social processes. Through participant observation in two institutions, I want to gain insight into the daily life of the inmates, and make observations about the structures of power, hierarchy, unwritten rules and status among the prisoners. I want to shadow the inmates during most of their everyday life (from 7am to 9pm, which is the period when they are not locked up in their rooms). After familiarization with their daily lives, interviews will be conducted with inmates and prison officers. It is important that the informant is able to recognize himself
in the resulting interview material. For that reason all will receive a transcription of the interview for approval.

Planning the qualitative part of the project involves several practical issues including meetings with the Prison and Probation Service about the main objectives of the project. The Chief of Police will have to give his permission for me to enter the institutions, and I have to sign a declaration of professional secrecy.

Prisons and institutions where people have lost their liberty and are kept under surveillance are often marked by suspiciousness and distrust. At the same time it is documented that the environment in prisons is marked by an us-versus-them understanding, with the prisoners on one side and the system and prison officers on the other (Sykes 1958).

It is well known that in prisons and institutions for delinquents a kind of ‘alternative economy’ exists; in Greenland this kind of economy is mostly based on dealing marijuana. To research daily life in the institution presupposes that I can win the trust of the inmates. To be a successful researcher in fields such as prisons or an institution for delinquents, you must be prepared for the informants to test you. You must quickly get to know the unwritten rules, and in many cases the informants will control or test the trust of the researcher (Minke 2008). Remaining safe is also a priority.

It is expected that the majority of my informants will have the Greenlandic language as their mother tongue. Nevertheless, I expect it will be possible to find a number of informants who will be able to carry out the interview in Danish. I am aware that the risk of misunderstanding is more common in situations where interviewer and informant do not share the same language or cultural background. I hope that my knowledge of the Greenlandic language, the Greenlandic culture and nonverbal communication will help me anticipate most of the misunderstandings.

Situations may occur where it is necessary to call in an interpreter. In my selection of interpreter I will make sure the person understands the ethical obligations involved as well as professional secrecy, discretion, and humility.

With these considerations in mind, I started my fieldwork in October 2009 which were completed in July 2010. During that time I spent 8 months in the open prison in Nuuk and one month in the open prison in Ilulissat. In all I conducted interviews with 35 inmates and 17 persons which represented the prison staff, police, social workers and politicians.”

References

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Chapter 6
An Ordinance Respecting Dogs: How Creating Secure Communities in the Northwest Territories made Inuit Insecure

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Abstract: In 1929, the Northwest Territories adopted An Ordinance Respecting Dogs. Considered by civil servants and many non-Aboriginal workers of the North as an effective way to protect local populations against the threat of sick and dangerous dogs roaming in settlements, the dog ordinance made Inuit insecure. Some suffered hunger, others were almost shot at or fell ill because of rotting dog carcasses, many lost dogs they had social ties with, and many dog owners felt they would be the next to be killed. This chapter explores the discrepancy between the goals sought by the northern administration when it adopted and implemented the ordinance and the consequences it had on local Inuit populations of the eastern Canadian Arctic.

Keywords: Dog ordinance, Northwest Territories, Inuit, Inuit dog, dog killing, government of Canada, government of the Northwest Territories, welfare state.

Introduction

The Government and the Police are true friends of the Eskimos. The Eskimos should do as they say because it is right. The Government wishes the Eskimos to be well and happy.

O.S. Finnie, Ottawa, 1st April, 1924

In 1929, the Northwest Territories adopted An Ordinance Respecting Dogs (hereafter ‘dog ordinance’ or ‘ordinance’). Considered by civil servants and many non-Aboriginal workers of the North as an effective way to protect local populations against the threat of sick and dangerous dogs roaming at large in settlements, the ordinance made many Inuit of the eastern Canadian Arctic insecure. There was indeed a discrepancy between the goals sought by northern administration when it adopted and implemented the ordinance and the effect it had on Inuit populations. This chapter explores this discrepancy. It has two main objectives. The first is to recreate the context surrounding the creation, adoption and implementation of the dog ordinance in the Northwest Territories. The second is to show that the ordinance made many Inuit insecure on several levels: 1)

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because it prevented them from traveling and hunting; 2) because the way the control of dogs was carried was often careless; and perhaps most importantly, 3) because it disrupted their communities.

This chapter will first explore the dog ordinance, from the moment it was created, adopted and implemented in the western Canadian Arctic in the 1920s to the time it was finally implemented on Baffin Island almost thirty years later. The second part will explore consequences of the implementation of the dog ordinance on Inuit populations of the eastern Canadian Arctic in the mid-twentieth century. The focus is on the eastern Arctic in the 1950s and 1960s. I chose not to deal with the ordinance’s implementation in the western Arctic in the late 1920s and 1930s because there is essentially no documentation, archival or oral, concerning the Inuvialuit and their dogs prior to 1949. On the other hand, the consequences suffered by the Inuit of the eastern Arctic are well documented. This chapter also focuses on the implementation of the dog ordinance in the eastern Canadian Arctic in the 1950s and 1960s because it happened to take place at a turning point in the history of the Inuit of this region. Dogs, which were still widely used in the early 1960s, had all but disappeared by the end of the decade. The dog ordinance was not responsible for the disappearance of all Inuit dogs. In fact, the implementation of the dog ordinance in the eastern Arctic in the 1950s and 1960s happened to take place at the same time many Inuit moved into settlements (Damas 2002), canine epidemics killed hundreds of dogs (Lévesque 2008:262–4), and the snowmobile was introduced and widely adopted by Inuit hunters (Lévesque 2008: Appendix 3). Although it is important to distinguish between those circumstances, this chapter will focus on the ordinance, for it is its implementation that made Inuit insecure, not the disappearance of dogs per se.

Creating Secure Communities

Canada as a Welfare State

A welfare state assumes responsibility for the welfare of its citizens using regulations and institutions that are consistent with what Foucault (1991) called ‘bio-power.’ Linked to the industrialisation and urbanisation of Europe and North-America between the 18th and 20th century, the welfare state governs over biological processes (life, death, reproduction, etc.) by trying to control external occurrences (accidents, sicknesses, filthiness, natural disaster, unforeseen turn of events, deficiencies, etc.) that threaten the lives of the populations it governs. To achieve this, the welfare state creates hygiene regulations, healthcare policies, education programs, housing projects, and countless laws aimed at limiting the risks populations face in the work place, public spaces and even in domestic environments.

Although Canada already had institutions and regulations consistent with bio-power in the late 19th and early 20th century, the country really became a welfare state after the Second World War. From then until the 1970s, various governments worked toward making Canada one of the most prominent welfare states in the world. For example, in 1949, family allowances were introduced to help women take care of their children. In 1966, the Medical Care Act—the cornerstone of
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the pan-Canadian universal health care system—was adopted. During the same period, the Federal Government encouraged the provinces to take over control of education from the church. It is also during this period that housing programs were established in large Canadian cities and campaigns to provide electricity to the countryside undertaken. Canada was becoming the welfare state *par excellence*, putting forward policies and regulations that deeply relied on bio-power. What is largely ignored is that the policies and regulations that led to the emergence of the welfare state in Canada would have tremendous impact not only in southern parts of the country, but in the North as well.

From the moment it established its first Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) stations at Fullerton Harbour, Fort MacPherson and Hershel Island in 1903 (Jenness 1964:21) until it started building schools, hospitals and houses fifty years later, the Canadian Government tried to create in the Arctic a society similar to that which it was implementing in the South. Indeed, the imposition of regulations and institutions that were consistent with the logic of bio-power and the welfare state happened at the same time in both southern and northern Canada. Inuit and other northern Aboriginals, thus, were not victims of policies specifically designed to assimilate them, but rather the victims of bio-power related policies applied to the country as a whole for the sake of its entire population.

In the second part of this chapter, I will show that what was good for citizens of southern Canada, many of them living in urban areas, did not make sense for the Inuit. In fact, those policies—this is especially true for the dog ordinance—did not suit Inuit values whatsoever. They were imposed without prior consultation and dealt with matters that were not necessarily problematic for the Inuit. Before analysing its meaning for the Inuit populations of the eastern Canadian Arctic however, the next section will address the dog ordinance, including in what context it took form and how it was linked to the welfare-state the Canadian government was putting in place in the mid-20th century.

An Ordinance Respecting Dogs

In 1924, the Bureau of Northwest Territories (NWT) and Yukon Affairs of the Department of the Interior were concerned about the conditions of dogs in the Mackenzie district.² In July 1924, Inspector Fraser of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) discovered at least twelve hungry and sick dogs near Fort Rea and Taltson River and twelve others near Snuff Channel. At the time, the NWT did not have a law to punish the owners, confis cate or destroy their dogs, thus the RCMP had to leave them starving and suffering.³ This worried O.S. Finnie, Director of the Bureau of the NWT, who did not know how to deal with this issue. Soon though, he and others came up with four solutions.

First, it was suggested they use Section 542 of the *Criminal Code*, which stipulated:

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² LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Memorandum,’ September 8, 1924.
³ LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Re: Starving Indian Dogs,’ September 30, 1924.
Every one is guilty of an offence and liable, on summary conviction before two justices, to a penalty not exceeding fifty dollars, or to three months' imprisonment with or without hard labour, or to both, who, (a) wantonly, cruelly or unnecessarily beats, bonds, ill-treats abuses, overdrives or torture any cattle, poultry, dog, domestic animal or bird, or any wild animal or bird in captivity [...].

This solution was quickly dropped, however, because the RCMP felt that "cases of cruelty are so many that most of the Indians would be in gaol [jail] and the Government would have to support their families." Second, it was suggested that the ill-treated dogs should be destroyed so that they would stop suffering. However, this solution was quickly abandoned as well, as the "destruction of cruelly treated dogs would again lead to great expense in relief to destitute Indians who in the winter must have dogs in order to earn their living by hunting and trapping." The third solution was to educate the Natives about the importance of taking care of their dogs. K.R. Daly, Solicitor of the Department of Interior, suggested:

"... something might be done by way of education and reward, if dog shows were held in the various settlements annually, and prizes given for the best trained animals who were in good condition and would not flinch or winch or show other signs of terror when their drivers approached them." Others proposed the creation of posters to be distributed among the trading posts and missions advising the Natives and other dog owners about the necessity of keeping their dogs well fed. However, education, although never completely abandoned, was not seen at the time as the appropriate way to deal with delinquent owners.

The fourth solution, first proposed by the RCMP, was the creation of a dog ordinance that would deal specifically with the dog situation in the NWT. This ordinance would force owners to tie up their animals and empower the police to destroy starving or sick dogs on the spot. The initial reaction of O.S. Finnie was to refuse this proposal. According to him, "[a]fter careful consideration, it

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4 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, 12th September, 1924.  
5 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, 'Memorandum,' October 15, 1924.  
6 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, 'Memorandum,' October 15, 1924.  
7 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, 're: cruelty to dogs,' September 10th, 1924.  
8 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, 're: Starving Indian Dogs,' September 30th, 1924.  
9 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, 'Memorandum,' 15 October, 1924.
was decided that it would be advisable to defer the passing of such an ordinance until an effort had been made to educate the Indians with regard to the treatment of their dogs.”

Finnie nevertheless submitted the proposed ordinance as a draft to the Commissioner of the NWT and Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, W.W. Cory. This draft mentioned that no owners should be cruel to their dogs, underfeed them, let them loose, or be permitted to punish them too severely. The draft also called for the appointment of dog officers whose task would have been to enforce the provisions of the ordinance and whom the Commissioner of the NWT himself would have nominated. Although they had pushed for the adoption of an ordinance, the RCMP changed their position and refused to endorse it, seemingly because the RCMP would not have been responsible of its implementation. Worried that dog officers would have too much power and could easily abuse the ordinance—especially in remote locations—Colonel Cortlandt Starnes, Commissioner of the RCMP, came to the conclusion “[…] that an ordinance in this matter should be held in abeyance.” According to him, “There is always a general shortage of dog feed at any one or more points in the Northwest Territories to contend with and which by necessity must always be taken into consideration.” Thus, the adoption of the dog ordinance was put on hold; the well-being of dogs did not seem to be a sufficient reason to adopt it.

On November 4, 1927, C. Bourget, Health Officer and Indian Agent in Fort Resolution, NWT, wrote two long letters in which he described the death of the daughter of William Pinsky, a Resolution trader, who was attacked in October of that year by loose dogs belonging to the RCMP. He followed this account with other terrible stories of young children molested by loose dogs and asked about the possibility of adopting regulations that would force dogs owners to tie up their animals. Those letters caused shock waves in Ottawa. Territorial administrators, civil servants working in the communities, and the RCMP all agreed that actions should be taken to protect the populations of the North. Still, nobody knew exactly how to proceed.

The RCMP, still not wanting a dog ordinance that would give too much power to dog officers, but having to deal with the fact that its own dogs were responsible for the death of a girl, proposed the adoption of a ‘Pound District Ordinance’ that would allow for the capture of loose dogs. An administrator of the Department of the Interior (whose name is unknown) suggested the creation of

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11 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Memorandum,’ 22 octobre 1924.
13 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Starving Dogs in the N.W. Territories,’ November 6, 1924.
14 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘November 4th 1927 and November 12th 1927.’
15 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Control of dogs in the N.W. Territories,’ December 13, 1927.
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of two ordinances—"one dealing fully with dogs owned by white men and the other modified to meet the existing conditions dealing with native owned dogs."16 This would allow the control of dogs owned by non-Natives and reduce the toll on Native families. Indeed, he believed:

Should a similar ordinance be applied to them [Natives] and thereafter the laws dealing with cruelty to animals be enforced, it would lead to numerous prosecutions with resultant fines which the natives would not in all likelihood (sic) be able to pay, or imprisonment which would lead to destitution of the owners’ family. Should the native dogs be impounded, it is certain that in many cases the natives would be unable to redeem them, and would thereby be handicapped in securing a living for his family, thus creating a condition that would be quite as great a menace to the community as now exists from dogs being uncontrolled.17

The idea of adopting a dog ordinance resurfaced when the Commissioner of the NWT and Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, W.W. Cory asked O.S. Finnie to come up with a new draft in February 1928.18 Pressured by the Territorial and Federal administrations—who sent him the report written by C. Bourget to show a dog ordinance was needed to protect the public19—and by his own staff, V.A.M. Kemp, the Inspector Commanding the Western Arctic Subdivision, thought that “our hands would be considerably strengthened if an ordinance were passed, making it an offence for the owner or person in charge of dogs, to allow some to run at large, and that a few persecutions under this ordinance would soon stop the nuisance”20—the Commissioner of the RCMP had no choice but to agree to support the dog ordinance. Supported by all the governmental actors, but not by the Inuit who were not aware of the discussions taking place concerning their dogs, the dog ordinance was finally adopted during the spring of 1928 and became effective on October 1, 1929.21

The first version of the dog ordinance stated, among other things:

4. No dog shall be permitted to remain unfed or unwatered sufficiently long to amount to cruelty or cause such dog to become a nuisance.

17. LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Control of dogs in the North West Territories,’ January 5, 1928.
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5. No dog shall be punished or abused in a manner or to an extent that is cruel or unnecessary.
6. No dog shall be permitted to run at large in the North West territories within any area defined by the Commissioner, unless muzzled.\textsuperscript{22}

To enforce the ordinance, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories needed to nominate dog officers whose task was to seize roaming dogs. To get a dog back, owners had to pay the expenses incurred in catching and feeding it. After five days, the dog had to be auctioned. If nobody bought it, only then could it be destroyed. Thus, at first anyway, dogs could not be killed on the spot. At this time, and for the next 25 years, RCMP members acted as the \textit{de facto} dog officers.\textsuperscript{23}

The Department of the Interior and the RCMP did not agree on how the ordinance should be interpreted and implemented in the NWT. On one hand, W.W. Cory of the Department of the Interior suggested that “the Police be advised that a great deal of discretion be used and as much leniency shown as is possible when the facts point that there might be some excuse for the dog being at large.”\textsuperscript{24} Cory was worried that dogs that gained their liberty through no fault of the owner would be captured and that would cause undue suffering for many families. Finnie and Cory also made sure to restrict the implementation of the ordinance to the settlements only and leave out other areas such as camps and hunting grounds.

On the other hand, the RCMP wanted the ordinance to be enforced absolutely everywhere in the NWT, in the settlements and camps alike. Citing examples of a child who had been attacked and killed by roaming dogs, Colonel Starnes was “of opinion that the ordinance should go into effect throughout the Territories.”\textsuperscript{25} Finnie could not disagree more. To him, it was useless to enact the ordinance everywhere in the NWT as people did not tie up their dogs in camps anyway.\textsuperscript{26} In the end, the administration had its way and the ordinance was applied only in the areas designated by the Commissioner of the NWT.

At first, it was decided that the ordinance would be implemented in the Western Arctic only. It was recommended both by civil servants in the field and by administrators in Ottawa that the ordinance should not be applied on Baffin Island.\textsuperscript{27} This did not seem to cause problems at first. In fact, many thought it...

\textsuperscript{22} LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘An Ordinance Respecting Dogs passed by the North West Territories Council in the year 1928.’
\textsuperscript{23} LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘R.A. Gibson, Deputy Commissioner North West Territories,’ 31 May 1929.
\textsuperscript{24} LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Memorandum,’ 3 April 1929.
\textsuperscript{25} LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Letter to the Director of the NWT & Yukon,’ April 5, 1929, and ‘Memorandum,’ May 7, 1929.
\textsuperscript{26} LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘Memorandum,’ 15 May 1929.
\textsuperscript{27} LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1,
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was a good idea not to force Inuit of the eastern Arctic to tie up their dogs. For example, A.G. MacKinnon, medical Officer in Pangnirtung, asked in 1935 that the ordinance not be applied in Cumberland Sound for the sake of Inuit as “it would be unjust to enforce any regulation that would interfere with […] their economic life.”

By 1937, however, Caporal R.G. McDowell of the Pangnirtung RCMP detachment started to worry. That year, he wrote to his superiors asking for the dog ordinance to be enforced in the settlement of Pangnirtung itself. He said in his letter that the community had a permanent population of about 75 dogs. In winter, this number grew to more than a hundred and to more than two hundred in summer. Although there had not yet been incidents related to dogs, he justified his request by stating that actions needed to be taken to protect the white children. Indeed, he wrote:

In previous years, there were no white children at Pangnirtung, but within the past year the number of White children who have arrived here now number four, all of them being under the age of seven. It has been found necessary to hire older Native children to look after the White kiddies while they are at play outside.

In 1937, roaming dogs killed John Thomas Smith, a young orphan from Hay River, while he was on his way to school. This accident prompted Constable A.S. MacNeil, of the Providence Detachment, to propose amendments to the dog ordinance that would have allowed the RCMP to nominate individuals to act as dog officers in settlements where there was no detachment. He justified his request saying, “It has been found that as soon as a patrol leaves, this ordinance is evidently disregarded with the possible consequences to the children.”

He then proposed that whoever was in charge of making sure the ordinance was complied

‘Memorandum,’ 3 May 1929, and ‘Memorandum,’ 13 May 1929.


What seems to matter the most for the RCMP was that non-Inuit children be protected. This was still true fifteen years later when W.T. Larmour, the officer responsible for the Arctic Patrol said that in Repulse Bay, “[t]he dog ordinance is not being complied with but dogs are not considered a problem, since the community has no white children” (Archives of the Northwest Territories, Alexander Stevenson Fonds, Box File 39-5, ‘Air Patrols and Inspections 1956–1960,’ « Report on some aspects of the Central Arctic Patrol 1957 », p. 40). In 1937, the protection of white children was again invoked to place Yellowknife within the meaning of the dog ordinance (LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, April 12, 1938).

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with be allowed “to shoot loose or unruly dogs on sight at his own discretion. This would prove a strong deterrent in the opinion of all to the nuisance of strays and continually loose dogs.”31 His superiors refused to accept his demands. According to them, the dog ordinance was adequate and the right to shoot stray dogs on sight would not have prevented the killing of young Smith. Furthermore, they claim that civilians should not be appointed dog officers.32

In 1942, an 18 month-old baby named Bryan Smith was attacked and almost killed by dogs in Yellowknife. However, “There is every indication that the dogs were tied at the time. There would appear to be no violation of the dog ordinance […]”33 This event demonstrated that the dog ordinance was not able to fulfill the goals sought by those who had created it. In April of 1945, Helen Whiteford, a young girl of six, was attacked near Fort Smith by dogs pulling a sleigh driven by a 10-year-old boy. As he was driving his sleigh down a hill, the girl tried to jump in it, making it turn over. The lead dog jumped on her, biting her leg. Fortunately, she could escape with the help of the boy.34

After those two accidents (and others not reported here), those working in the North started wondering if the dog ordinance should not be amended. A.L. Cummins of the Northwest Territories and Yukon Bureau first proposed to forbid the driving of sledges inside the limits of settlements. He also suggested that dogs be muzzled at all times.35 Despite criticism from civil servants in the settlements who claimed that muzzled dogs would not work (dogs need to keep their mouths open to perspire, especially when they work),36 an amendment was made to the dog ordinance in 1946 that stated:

No person shall have a dog or dogs in harness within any settlement or within a half-mile of any settlement in the Northwest Territories unless each dog is muzzled, or is under the immediate custody and control of a person over sixteen years of age who is qualified to ensure reasonable safety to the public and to prevent nuisance.37

33 LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 1, ‘The Dog Ordinance, Yellowknife,’ January 8, 1942.
This amendment proclaimed that dogs that were harnessed to a sleigh were loose in the eye of the law. This meant that dog owners had to remove the harness from their dogs and then tie them up properly each time they were returning from a drive.

In 1949, a new version of the dog ordinance was adopted, which provided the opportunity for more direct intervention by dog officers and RCMP members for it stated, in section 9(6) that:

Where, in the opinion of the officer, a dog seized under this section is injured or should be destroyed without delay for humane reasons or for reasons of safety, the officer may destroy the dog as soon after seizure as he thinks fit without permitting any person to reclaim the dog or without offering it for sale by public auction and no damages or compensation may be recovered on account of its destruction by the officer.38

This new version of the ordinance gave a great deal of power to dog officers, who could decide on the spot whether a dog presented a danger or not. In fact, the very nature of the ordinance ensured that roaming dogs were inevitably considered dangerous. Indeed, if a dog was not considered to be dangerous, the officer had to go through the procedures established in the first version of the ordinance (seize the dog, keep and feed it, and then auction it). Thus, it was much easier to shoot them and then claim they presented a danger to the local population.

Not satisfied with the new version of the dog ordinance, the RCMP asked for additional amendments in 1950. The RCMP claimed that it was practically impossible to seize loose dogs as they were almost always running in packs.39 Therefore, the RCMP proposed the following amendment:

Where the officer is unable to obtain information as to the ownership of a dog found running at large, and is unsuccessful in his efforts to seize it, he may, in his discretion, destroy the dog, and no damages


39. In the Western Arctic, the impossibility of catching roaming dogs could be a source of fun for the local population, which the RCMP could not accept because it undermined its authority: “Nothing presents a more spectacular sight than to see a policeman or two chasing loose dogs which cannot be caught. This causes great enjoyment for the Natives and some of the white residents who stand by watching the performance, placed in an embarrassing (sic) position” (LAC RG85, volume 1404, File 530-25, part 4, ‘N.W.T. Dog Ordinance, Enforcement of:- Aklavik N.W.T,’ 13 January 1950).
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of compensation may be recovered on account of its destruction by the Officer.⁴⁰

In November, the amendment was adopted.⁴¹ In 1951, the Council of the NWT adopted yet another amendment that gave power to the dog officer to destroy the dog of an owner convicted under the dog ordinance.⁴²

In 1955, two changes to the ordinance were introduced. First, it was decided that the Ordinance should be implemented everywhere in the NWT. From the time of its adoption in 1929 until then, the Commissioner of the NWT had handpicked the settlements where the ordinance was implemented. But in 1955, R.G. Robertson (who was Commissioner from 1953 to 1963), decided as follows:

The areas described hereunder are defined as areas within which no owner shall permit a dog to run at large:

a) The Mackenzie District;
b) Within a radius of one-quarter of a mile from any building at a station of the Distant Early Warning Network;
c) Within a radius of one-quarter of a mile from any dwelling in any settlement in the Keewatin and Franklin Districts.⁴³

Second, RCMP members would no longer act as de facto dog officers within the communities; rather, civil servants would be appointed.⁴⁴ In larger settlements where there was no Northern Service Officer (NSO), i.e., civil servants hired to administer Federal programs, teachers could be appointed. However, less than five years later, the then Administrator of the Arctic, C.M. Bolger, thought that NSOs and other civil servants should not be appointed dog officers, as there was a contradiction between their mandate and their obligations as dog catchers and killers. He recommended that the RCMP members be reappointed dog officers, but administration decided otherwise. To prevent either RCMP members or NSOs to act as dog officers, it was decided that civilian be appointed in that role.⁴⁵ From that time forward, the Commissioner of the NWT nominated civilians—both Inuit and non-Inuit—as dog officers in the settlements of the NWT.

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⁴⁰ LAC RG85, Volume 1404, File 530-25, part 4, ‘Memorandum for Mr. Lecapelain,’ 9 May 1950
⁴⁴ LAC RG85, Volume 1321, File 530-25, ‘Memorandum to Mr. F. Fraser,’ 18 July 1955.
⁴⁵ LAC RG85, Volume 1220, File 530-25-2, part 1, ‘Memorandum for Mr. C.M. Bolger,’ 23 August 1960.
After the amendments of 1951 and the changes in philosophy of 1955, there were few changes to the dog ordinance until today. So much so, in fact, that the *Nunavut Dog Act* of 1999\(^{46}\) is a replica of the dog ordinance of 1951.

### Making Inuit Insecure

Between 1929 and the late 1960s, when the snowmobile replaced dog sleds, several hundreds of dogs at least were killed in the Northwest Territories in accordance with the dog ordinance. However, the ordinance was not always implemented systematically. Circumstances and people working in the settlements (civil servants, teachers, RCMP members, etc.) played a crucial role in determining how it was implemented. If the settlement was mostly Inuit, if there were few dogs, or if there had not been an incident involving dogs in some time, the ordinance could be loosely implemented. However, during epidemics, after an incident involving dogs or when settlements experienced a great influx of newcomers, the tolerance of the authorities was lower and the ordinance enforced more zealously.

Three of the most important episodes related to the implementation of the dog ordinance took place in Aklavik, Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit) and Cumberland Sound. After the Second World War and the collapse of fur prices on international markets, many Inuvialuit moved to Aklavik in 1949–50 to get federal assistance.\(^{47}\) Because they had no means to feed their dogs, they let them fetch their own food by leaving them untied. To control the risks related to the influx of loose dogs in the community, the RCMP enforced the dog ordinance, which meant that dogs were killed and dog owners prosecuted and put in jail.\(^{48}\) In Frobisher Bay, hundreds of dogs were killed in 1959 following an influx of Inuit into the settlement to find work on various construction sites (Yatsushiro 1960:16–17, 1962:21–2).\(^{49}\) In Cumberland Sound in 1962, following an epidemic of infectious canine hepatitis that killed nearly 80% of the dogs of the Sound (the population went from an estimated 900 dogs to a mere 273 in a few weeks), the RCMP toured Inuit camps and shot the remaining dogs so that they would not spread the disease to other regions of the Arctic (Lévesque 2007:106–7, 2008:403–9; Damas 2002: 142–5).

Those dog killings, and countless others not discussed here, made Inuit insecure on three different levels:

1. **Economically insecure**: Without dogs, they could no longer hunt and travel. In the mid-1960s, when Inuit adopted the snowmobile, this was no longer a problem. But most dog killings took place before the introduction of the snowmobile. They were deprived of their means to hunt and travel, and

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\(^{46}\) S.N.W.T. 1998, c.34.  
\(^{47}\) Gwitch’in also moved in Aklavik at the same time. However, this essay focusses specifically on Inuit and will leave other natives aside.  
\(^{49}\) BAC RG85, volume 1220, dossier 530-25-2, ‘No Need for Dog Officer Frobisher Bay,’ 21 September 1959.
many said that for this very reason, they suffered hunger. As an Inuk from Iqaluit told me during fieldwork:

We [the Inuit] were very hungry. No money to buy any food from anywhere. The RCMP never gave us any food or anything like that. We are really longing for the country food. We are very hungry. Because we are very hungry we have to go to the dump to eat. We were doing that for three years. After, March of [1959] we become nothing, really. Because without dog team [an] Inuk doesn’t become nobody, really (E-014, pers. comm. 2004).

Second, many Inuit felt insecure because of the methods used by the RCMP and other dog officers to carry the provisos of the dog ordinance. The manner in which the ordinance was implemented very often contradicted its very objectives. For example, it happened that dogs were shot near Inuit tents. Yatsushiro noted that in Frobisher Bay in 1959,

… the police were shooting the dogs between Eskimo tents and houses. Eskimo boys were out that night where the shooting was going on. It was very dark. It was very dangerous, for the police could have missed the dogs and hit an Eskimo, or the shots might have ricocheted off a rock and hit an Eskimo. They should not do their shooting close to Eskimo tents. No Eskimos were hit last time, but it could have happened. It is very dangerous (Yatsushiro 1960:16–17).

The same was done in other settlements and camps (in the NWT as well as in Nunavik) and Inuit still hold a grudge over what they feel endangered their lives and that of their loved ones.

Another example of the carelessness shown by those responsible for the implementation of the ordinance was that many harnessed dogs were killed. Although after 1946, harnessed dogs were not technically considered tied up by the dog ordinance, their killing raised major issues. The problem was that the harnessed dogs often did not belong to Inuit who lived in the settlement where they were killed, but rather to some living in distant camps. Those Inuit would come into a settlement for a few days to trade, visit the mission or meet relatives, and then had no means to get back to their camps but by foot. This seriously threatened their lives and that of those left behind in the camps.

One of the most striking examples of carelessness, however, is that of dog carcasses left to rot where they were killed. When the dog ordinance was amended in 1950 to allow dog officers to kill dogs on sight instead of catching them first, no proviso was added to the effect that carcasses had to be dealt with. Therefore, carcasses were left to rot. This situation happened in 1959 in Frobisher Bay. An Inuk retells that after some of its members killed dogs:

The RCMP never removed the dead dogs. […] they were rotting after one week. It was rotting, and the smell… All over town! […]
My father was so shocked that he just sit there numb, for two days. Because that was [the] only way to get our country food. Our way of life. The rotting animals! It was so bad that every single place, everywhere, you had to go around the dead dogs to get home. […] And the stinks and the oil, the oils from dead dogs was spreading all over town. Our roads, around our homes. […] We don’t have any means of moving the dead dogs anywhere, we don’t have any vehicle to remove them or anything anywhere. Four months after that, the maggots were all over the place, and on the roads and everywhere. Very true, I’m not lying (E-014, perso. comm. 2004).

J.F Delaute, who was the Northern Service Of fi[353x536]cer (Federal civil servant) working in Frobisher Bay at the time, confi[309x524]rms parts of this testimony. On June 22nd, 1959, he wrote the following to his superiors in Ottawa:

Within the last few months dogs have been shot outside people’s front doors at Apex Hill [near Iqaluit] and along one road close to the airbase D.N.A. quarters; the carcasses, left to lie there, unclaimed. From a sanitation point of view the Engineering Division here has arranged for the garbage collectors to pick up the carcasses and dispose of them. Since the Dog Ordinance says nothing as to disposal of a carcass, the Police, of course, in the strict legal sense, have no responsibility—but the practice nevertheless causes resentment everywhere. The doctor himself questioned the method used, from a sanitation point of view. I can see that in the wide open space farther north, circumstances might be different but here, in Frobisher Bay, it seems to me that a more serious effort might be made to seize the dogs and, when caught, the owner found. If this is unsuccessful then they should be brought to a dump and shot there. Failing this the Police could inform D.N.A. Engineering of the location of the carcasses so that steps may be taken to remove the evidence as quickly as possible […]. (Memorandum quoted in RCMP 2006:223–4)

The third, and most important consequence of the dog ordinance, yet the least discussed, is the cultural insecurity suffered by those who lost their dogs. No-one ever denied the economical importance of dogs for Inuit. As early as the 1950s and 1960s, the administration of the Northwest Territories was fully aware that dogs played an important economical role. This explains why dog owners were encouraged to tie up their dogs, why pups were flown from one settlement to another and given to those who had none remaining, why inoculation campaigns were organized against canine epidemics and why hundreds of bags of dog food were sent to various Arctic settlements. No-one ever denied either the consequences suffered by the carelessness of the dog officers who shot dogs near tents or left carcasses to rot. However, the cultural insecurity suffered by the
Inuit who lost their dogs was ignored at the time the dogs were killed and is still disregarded today.

For example, never did it come to mind of the administration of the Northwest Territories that tying up dogs made no sense whatsoever for the Inuit. Traditionally, the Inuit of the eastern Canadian Arctic let their dogs loose at all times, except when they were pulling the sleigh. Inuit thought that free dogs were less dangerous because they had the habit of being around human beings and because they had no territory to defend. Inuit accepted the risks associated with living with loose dogs. They never thought about tying them up. When a dog was considered dangerous, was sick or did not work well any longer, it was simply killed. Never would it have come to the mind of Inuit to tie their potentially dangerous or sick dogs. So, when Inuit were forced to tie up their dogs up, they did not see what the problem of loose dogs was and could not understand how this non-existent problem would be solved by tying them up. Many Inuit I met in Iqaluit in 2004 still could not understand more than fifty years later how it was possible that they were asked to tie up their dogs. To them, it was complete nonsense because they thought the administration of the Northwest Territories was imposing a culturally inadequate solution to a non-existent problem.

The administration of the Northwest Territories never realized either that by killing roaming, sick or allegedly dangerous dogs, it was not only getting rid of potential threats, but it was killing members of the Inuit communities and threatening the lives of their owners.

For the Inuit, the dog is a full member of the community. It is the only animal that is given an atiq (pl. attit), or name-soul, which is an autonomous entity that possesses its own attributes and kinship relations. Attit are given to newborns. Generally, a recently deceased person will appear in dreams to the future parents and expresses the wish that his or her own atiq be given the baby to be born. When given an atiq, the newborn integrates the attributes and kinship relations of the person who bore the atiq before him or her (Saladin d’Anglure 1977, 1998). For example, a girl who receives the atiq of her maternal grandfather will be addressed by her mother as ataata (father) and raised as a huntress until she reaches the age of puberty. Dogs have attit as well, which means they share attributes and kinship relations with the Inuit. They can be fathers, grandfathers, mothers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts and so forth (Jenness 1959:120; Mitiarjuk 1994:76–7). Hence, dogs are full-fledged members of the community. In fact “the community as a whole consists not only of people but also of the dogs they own” (Laugrand and Oosten 2002:101). Thus, by implementing the dog ordinance and killing loose dogs, the RCMP actually killed members of the community, many that had kinship ties with the Inuit. The impacts of the killings were thus extremely detrimental for the Inuit for whom, Elias reminds us in this book, “the removal of any critical member of society or family grouping causes disruption and the loss of leadership. When the link is broken, the senses of belonging and security become uncertain” (this volume).

Furthermore, all animals have an inua, also referred to as master or indweller (Thalbitzer 1930:89; Laugrand and Oosten 2002:101). For example, the inua of the sea mammals is called Tûkânâluq Arnâluq (or Sedna). She was a young
woman who was married to a petrel (and, in some regions, to a dog), and was then betrayed by her father who had come to take her away from her spouse’s camp. While kayaking back to his camp, a furious storm forced the father to throw her in the water. As she tried to hang on the kayak, he cut her fingers. She fell into the bottom of the sea and her fingers became the sea mammals while she became the inua of the sea mammals. Animals and their inua form a whole; they cannot live without one another. When one part of the whole is destroyed, the life of the other is threatened. This is why hunters are very respectful of the animals they catch. Dogs also have an inua: their owner. Thus, a dog and its owner form a whole (Laugrand and Oosten 2002:101). Hence, when their dogs were killed, many Inuit felt their own life was threatened because the whole they were part of was broken. This explains why some Inuit thought that “[i]t looks like there was an attempt at genocide when our dogs were killed, an attempt to annihilate us” (George 1999) and why some thought that when all the dogs were killed, “the police will kill Eskimos then, just like the dogs” (Yatsushiro 1960:16–17).

Thus, the implementation of the dog ordinance, which was meant to increase security in Arctic settlements, had the opposite effect for most Inuit.

Conclusion

The dog ordinance was never about killing dogs for the sake of killing dogs. Nor was it adopted to impose a new way of life upon the Inuit. It was about protecting local populations by removing a potential threat represented by sick, dangerous and loose dogs. The first attempt to adopt the ordinance had failed, not only because the RCMP feared dog officers would have too much power, but also because it was then understood solely as a means to protect ill-treated and starving dogs from their negligent owners. This did not seem to have been an excuse strong enough to justify its implementation. However, with urbanization of the Inuit—first in the western Arctic in the 1920s and 1930s and then in the eastern Arctic in the 1950s and 1960s—the ordinance ceased to be about protecting the dogs and started to be about protecting (mostly white) humans. It became, in other words, the tool imagined by bureaucrats in Ottawa to limit the risks they thought Arctic populations were facing by living with roaming dogs. For this reason, the ordinance was thoroughly consistent with the logic of the welfare state that Canada was implementing in the mid-twentieth century.

By wanting to create secure settlements however, the dog ordinance made Inuit insecure. First, the ordinance was used to justify the killing of dogs that were still used to hunt and travel. Plus, those carrying out the ordinance were sometimes careless. Finally, the ordinance ignored several important cultural facts about Inuit of the eastern Canadian Arctic. For example, roaming dogs had never been a problem. They accepted the risks associated with living with loose dogs. For them, the dog ordinance made no sense whatsoever because it was attempting to resolve a non-existent problem with a solution that had no cultural significance. Furthermore, the administration of the Northwest Territories totally ignored the fact that dogs shared kinship ties with Inuit and formed a whole with their owners. Thus, the implementation of the ordinance had important cultural impacts: many
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Inuit lost dogs they had kinship ties with, and most dog owners thought they would soon be killed because a part of their whole was killed. Thus, the ignorance of administration concerning the role of the dog in Inuit culture and the carelessness with which some dogs were killed (and their carcasses not taken care of) totally undermined the effect the ordinance should have had on Inuit populations. Instead of creating secure communities, the ordinance caused Inuit to be insecure.

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Chapter 7

Competent Seal Hunters or a Useless Lot Threatening National Economic Security?

The Discourse on the Population of Mixed Ancestry in Colonial Greenland

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Abstract: As Danish residents working for the trade company or the Christian mission made up a considerable sector (3 to 4 percent) of the overall number of inhabitants in colonial Greenland, the offspring of relations between Danish men and native women soon came to constitute a considerable portion of the country’s total population. This chapter describes the extent to which fears about the ‘mixed bloods’ lacking proficiency in the seal hunt reflected racist ideas about differences in the natural endowments of the two sectors of the population. It finds that in the discourse on who could achieve the standing of a qualified kayak hunter, racial purity was not considered to have any important, let alone decisive influence. Instead, the educational environment and the township/countryside dichotomy were held to be the decisive factors.

Keywords: Greenland, colonialism, mixed blood populations, security, economy, hunting.

Introduction

Greenland’s colonial history began in 1721 and lasted until 1953. This chapter presents a discourse1 which was prominent during the first two centuries of colonial history—a period during which the national economy continued to be what it had been prior to 1721, namely, one that was based almost exclusively on the seal hunt.2

The subject for investigation is the extent to which the country’s rapidly growing population of mixed ancestry was deemed to be void of that special

1. As is known, to study the discourse on a topic is different from studying the topic itself. Hence, in the following discourse analysis we investigate how different observers looked upon the mixed bloods’ gift (or lack of the same) for becoming qualified seal hunters—but not how they actually performed as seal hunters.
2. To be exact, the introduction of modern fisheries in Greenland actually started a few years before the end of the second century of colonial history.
Savagery, Civilization and Race

To believe that the members of one race are endowed with natural faculties that are denied members of other races is the essence of racism. It was not until the mid-19th century that the so called ‘scientific racists’ presented a genuine racist theory which refuted the ancient monogenesis theory\(^3\) and its insistence that all mankind had a common origin and belonged to the same species. Instead, the scientific racists (Berkhofer 1979:55–61) argued that mankind consisted of different species (races) with separate and independent origins (polygenesis) and with different genetic dispositions.

The famous theory of the three stages (savagery, barbarism, civilization) of human evolution and progress,\(^4\) which rose to prominence during the Enlightenment (Berkhofer 1979:33–55; Høiris and Ledet 2007), was based on the doctrine of monogenesis. Consequently, despite its ethnocentric bias it abstained from teaching that the (in most cases) coloured savages or barbarians, by virtue of their inherent and deficient genetic material, were prevented from learning how to live and behave in a civilized manner.

But even if their theory was not racist in the modern sense of the word, advocates of the monogenesis doctrine did not, by any means, deny that blood and inherited natural endowment were important when explaining why some nations were positioned higher up the ladder of evolution than others. According to the theory of monogenesis, the reason some societies had achieved an evolutionary stage of civilization while others lived at the stages of savagery or barbarism, was first and foremost a matter of whether the surrounding environment stimulated or barred material and spiritual progress and improvement. In that sense, the theory of the three stages of human progress was an optimistic one. Its lesson was that people who lived as savage hunters and gatherers could learn to live and behave in accordance with the standards of civilization—if only civilized and compassionate persons of good will were allowed to act as their educational mentors, and if sufficient time and effort was given to produce a new environment that favoured civilized lifeways.

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\(^3\) In the 18th century the monogenesis theory existed in two versions—the traditional Christological version, which sought to harmonize its arguments with the Book of Genesis, and a secular one which explained the existence of peoples of different colour and cultural evolution without referring to Noah and his sons or to the Tower of Babel.

\(^4\) In 1877, American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan presented a seven stage version of the theory (Berkhofer 1979:52–5 by distinguishing between three subdivisions of both savagery and barbarism.

But the journey toward civilization was not one-way. If things went badly, a nation could ‘degenerate’ and slip down the ladder of human evolution.\(^5\) It was not only environmental factors that could lead to a decrease in civilization. Blood, or as we would say today, ‘genetic material,’ could also play a role, and bad combinations of parenthood, such as when near relatives mated and produced a common offspring, could bring about degeneration.\(^6\)

When the Danish–Norwegian colonizers arrived in Greenland, they considered the local natives to be savages who lived at the first stage of human evolution. In our context, the interesting question is what the outcome was deemed to be if someone born and bred in the (civilized) society of Denmark–Norway mated and had children with someone who was born and bred in the (savage) society of Greenland? For almost two centuries colonial authorities in

\(^5\) Thus, when the Christian missionaries in Greenland in the 18th century sought to explain the fact that Greenlanders lived in a more savage way than their first ancestors—that is, before the dispersal consequential to the construction of the Tower of Babel—when they had lived as herders together with all the other children of Sem, Cham and Jafet, they explained this increase in primitivism and savagery as resulting from the fact that, after the dispersal, Greenlanders came to live in a natural environment that stimulated savagery instead of civilization (cf. Kjærgaard 2009).

\(^6\) Advocates of the optimistic monogenesis theory, which stressed environmental factors’ primary importance, never were quite clear about the secondary importance of genetic inheritance. An example can illustrate this. In the late 19th century, the US Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Thomas Jefferson Morgan, who monitored an ambitious educational program for the Indian population, said in a speech entitled ‘A Plea for the Papoose,’ “Our native endowments are the gifts of the Creator and in their essential elements do not differ. All human babies inherit human natures, and the development of these inherent powers is a matter of culture, subject to the conditions of the environment. The pretty, innocent papoose has in itself the potency of a painted savage, prowling like a beast of prey, or the possibilities of a sweet and gentle womanhood or a noble and useful manhood. Undoubtedly, there is much in heredity. No amount of culture will grow oranges on a rose bush, or develop a cornstalk into an oak tree. There is also, undoubtedly, much in the race differences between the Mongolian and the Caucasian, and between these and the African and Indian. Yet the essential elements of human nature are the same in all and in each, and the possibilities for development are limited only by the opportunities for growth and by culture forces. We are all creatures of culture. The Indian babies have all those inherent powers by virtue of which they may become orators, statesmen, philosophers, poets, financiers, warriors or scientists” (Morgan’s speech in Prucha 1978:24–42).
Greenland were convinced that the country’s economic security depended on the continued and competent performance of an economic activity—namely, the traditional seal hunt—that in evolutionary terms belonged to the stage of savagery. Consequently, it was a matter of prime importance whether the infusion of blood from his (civilized) father made the (mixed blood) boy less qualified for a savage activity like the seal hunt than the boy whose parents were both savages.

**Mixed Ancestry in Colonial Greenland**

Before Denmark–Norway began to build up its colonial empire in West Greenland in 1721, casual relations between European whalers and native women had produced an unknown number of children of mixed ancestry. With Danish colonialism, the Christian mission also came to the country. As more and more Greenlanders were baptized, more children were registered by the Church as the legitimate offspring of marital relations—or the illegitimate offspring of extramarital relations. In both cases, colonial authorities were thereby informed about the ancestry—pure or mixed—of the child in question.

Seiding (2009) tells us how the so-called mixed marriages between Danish men and native women soon became a common feature in the colonies. She also informs us how such marriages throughout the years were submitted to various restrictions—and what it took in terms of parental lineage to be counted as of mixed ancestry by the colonial administration. As time went by, the initial version of mixed marriages where a Danish husband married an Inuit wife was supplemented by two other versions: when individuals of mixed ancestry themselves decided to marry, or when one person of mixed ancestry and one (pure) Inuit decided to do so. The result was eventually regarded as a mixed marriage—and offspring of the union as children of mixed ancestry.

Throughout the 19th century official censuses that made separate counts of persons of mixed ancestry (blandinger) and Inuit (grønlændere) were organized by the Danish authorities. The last census of this kind was held in 1901. In that year, the population of mixed ancestry made up 65 percent of North Greenland’s and 29 percent of South Greenland’s population (Census 1901).

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7. Danish men and native women were motivated by a number of reasons besides love to form legal (mixed) marriages or to cohabitate. Danish missionary Kragh, who served in Aasiaat in North Greenland from 1818 to 1828, mentions one such reason. In 1824 the native woman Paulina preferred cohabiting with a Danish trader to marrying a native hunter because of “the comfortable and carefree life as the housekeeper for a factor or deputy factor, which implies that the daughters of the natives will be fed on a Danish diet and in every respect live a better life than if they married even capable hunters” (Kragh 1875:275, translated by Marquardt).

8. **Editors’ note:** See Seiding note 3, this volume for a discussion of the translation of original terms used in the census.

9. One of the reasons the population of mixed ancestry was greater in North Greenland than it was in the south was the zeal
Having recognized that Greenland was not home to a group of surviving descendants from the medieval Norse, the administrators of Denmark–Norway’s new colonial empire on the banks of the Davis Strait eventually realized that the local population consisted of people closely related to the so-called ‘Esquimaux’ living on the opposite banks.

As mentioned, typical for their time the Scandinavian colonizers held the Inuit to be savages. As it was, these savages seemed to live exclusively from the hunt—and first and foremost from the hunt of seals. The seal hunt was practiced in two different ways: by kayak or on the ice. Except at the bottom end of the fjords, the waters in South Greenland were open all year round. Consequently, in this part of the country the kayak hunt was the only type practiced.10 In North Greenland, kayaks were used when the sea was open for navigation from late spring to early autumn, whereas during the remaining six months of the year, seals were hunted from the frozen ice, using the dog sledge as a means of transportation.

The ice hunt certainly was a dangerous enterprise when storms, currents, thaw or capsizing icebergs caused the ice to break unexpectedly. But as regards the risk of mortality which a hunter was exposed to, the kayak hunt was in a class of its own. Drowning when winds were strong and waves were high, capsizing when the hunter on calm seas fell victim to a sudden attack of ‘kayak dizziness,’ or simply dying from diseases such as pneumonia, which were natural consequences of the frequent exposure to precipitation, wave spray and cold weather that the kayak hunt implied, turned the trade of a kayak hunter into something resembling a ticket to an early death.

According to David Cranz, who in the mid-18th century inspected the Moravian Brethren’s mission stations in Greenland, the local kayak hunters spent the first part of the morning sitting on the hillsides in a melancholy state, observing wind and weather and thinking about “the daily task they have to accomplish and the dangers they have to meet” (Cranz 1770:179–82, translated with which the Moravian Brethren mission tried to uphold the racial purity of its flock, preventing its members from entering into any form of mixed marriage. The Moravian Brethren—known locally as the Herrnhutians—were licensed to preach the Gospel in only three of South Greenland’s six colonies. They started their activities in 1733 and they left Greenland in 1900. In the mid-19th century their congregations comprised one third of South Greenland’s total population. All of them were—at least officially—held to be pureblood Inuit. For further details about this, and about the trustworthiness of the racial purity of their congregations of which the Brethren boasted, see Hansen (1893:169–170) and Marquardt (n.d.). 10 With the exception of the northernmost part of the Southern Inspectorate, in the district of Sisimiut, where seals were also hunted from the ice and dog sledges used for transportation.
by Marquardt). Considering the dangers inherent in the exercise of their trade, one easily understands why their mental preparation for work was done in a melancholic mood.

Simultaneously with Cranz, Niels Egede—the chief factor and second son of Hans Egede, the founding father of Denmark–Norway’s colonial empire in Greenland—spoke about the death-defying courage a hunter had to mobilize every day (Egede 1942[1769]:19). In the same vein, a good hundred years after Niels Egede and Cranz (namely in 1882), the former governor of South Greenland H. J. Rink also spoke with admiration about the “courage and self-denial with which capable hunters still exercise their dangerous trade” (Bobé 1918:63, translated by Marquardt). Twenty years earlier he had compared the kayak hunt in Greenland to the institution of compulsory military service in Europe (Rink 1862:106). It was in the interest of national economic security in Greenland that hunters in rough weather put their lives at stake when setting to sea in their tiny kayaks—just as it was in the interest of national political security when soldiers in Europe put their lives at stake in times of war.

In short, along with physical sturdiness and a highly developed proficiency in all the technical aspects of the art, a courageous audacity was the indispensable professional virtue of a successful seal hunter. Happily, it seemed that nature had endowed the (‘savage’) Greenlanders with a carefree and dauntless spirit which in mental terms, equipped them well for their dangerous trade.

European observers of the time were struck by the carefree attitude displayed by the Inuit. Compared to the mental comportment favoured by the observers themselves, Greenlanders seemed to care next to nothing about the requirements of tomorrow—and to be mentally unprepared for building up stocks in times of plenty so that future situations of scarcity could be coped with (e.g., Egede Saabye 1942[1770–8]:45; Mørch 1942[1800]:105). This attitude made the Greenlanders seem lazy when compared to the ever-busy stockpiling Europeans (Janssen 1913[1844–49]:73–4). But it also made them well disposed to an occupation which required a state of mind that did not meticulously calculate survival odds before the kayaks were put into the rough sea. Clever premeditation is the sister of caution and the mother of fear. Hence, it was because nature had not endowed the (again, ‘savage’) Greenlanders with a premeditative mind similar to that of the (‘civilized’) Europeans that the hunters showed to be exactly those daredevils their dangerous occupation required them to be.

In 1922, on the eve of Greenland’s transition from a society based on the seal hunt to one based on fishing and land-based industries, chief factor Hastrup warned the colonial authorities, “We Danish colonizers must take care not to expose the Greenlandic population to a cultural influence which will make it unfit for the seal hunt” (Bendixen 1922:59, translated by Marquardt). Hastrup’s words of warning represent a late echo of what many Danish colonizers had said during the two preceding centuries. There was among them a perennial fear that the many new cultural traits which colonisation had introduced in Greenland would inevitably—albeit without intent—make the seal hunters ‘weak and soft,’ thereby depriving them of the sturdiness and courageous audacity that were a sine qua non for a nation that lived by the kayak hunt.

One possible softening influence was the Christian mission, which traditionally prided itself for its ability to soften a maverick mind and turn ferocious heathens into meek and compassionate believers. To forestall accusations about the Gospel’s negative influence upon the professional efficiency of converted hunters, missionary Sverdrup from North Greenland undertook a statistical survey in 1776. In the period of time he studied, 39 baptized hunters had caught 65 seals, whereas 77 pagans had only caught 80. “Hence, it is quite unfair, unfounded and unfriendly to proclaim that the Greenlanders adhering to the Danish Mission are in general the most unqualified and the most lazy to be found in the nation” (quoted in Egede Saabye 1942[1770–8]:106, translated by Marquardt).

A second possible softening influence was the growing importation to Greenland of European clothing, nourishments and other trade goods. This argument was frequently used among the Herrnhutian missionaries, who claimed in 1852, for example, that coffee and similar “European articles of consumption and luxury bring about a weakening of the Greenlanders, which leads to poverty and material destitution” (NadB 1852–6:881, translated by Marquardt). But it was also a common argument among observers from outside the narrow confines of the Herrnhutian mission stations (Fenger 1882:104; Mørch 1942[1800]:123).

A third possible softening influence was the influx of European blood that might dilute the genetic inheritance from Inuit ancestors. So far, this genetic inheritance had disposed the country’s kayak hunters to an occupation that offered many risks and few rewards. But one could fear that blending with genetic material from Europeans might have a negative impact upon the professional proficiency of hunters of mixed ancestry. If this was the case, the increasing proportion of population of mixed ancestry in the country presented a growing threat to the nation’s economic security.

Mixed Ancestry and the Usefulness of Seal Hunters in Greenland

Opinions about the qualities—or absence of qualities—of the population of mixed ancestry in Greenland differed. In the following section, we investigate the extent to which the fears voiced about the future of the seal hunters’ trade in Greenland mirrored ideas about fundamental differences between the natural endowments of pure and mixed ancestries. More specifically, we investigate whether ideas about the depraving consequences of (racial) interbreeding caused people to assume that the Greenlanders of mixed ancestry were less savage and therefore not endowed with the same natural faculty for becoming competent seal hunters as were their compatriots of pure ancestry.

11 For an extensive discussion of the theory about the destructive consequences of the consumption of imported European dainties such as coffee, sugar, dried figs, etc., see Marquardt (1999b).
That Danish men could find any attractions in Inuit wives was an inexplicable enigma for the abovementioned chief factor Niels Egede. Undoubtedly, when he decided to marry, the Danish groom dreamt about raising children who could support him and his wife when they grew old. “But instead of an economical and tidy wife, he will have a destructive slut [literally: sow]. And instead of useful children he will have useless ones, since they are good for neither one thing nor the other and cannot provide for themselves as an ordinary Greenlander can, but have to buy everything they need from other Greenlanders” (Egede 1942[1769]:20, translated by Marquardt).

On other occasions, Egede expressed his reservations concerning the qualities of Inuit women in a less fulminating manner. But in general, he stuck to his line of opposition when mixed marriages were on the agenda. For the Scandinavian groom, the marriage with his Inuit bride spelled personal disaster. As regards their common offspring, he feared that the children would be, as the quote goes, ‘good for neither one thing nor the other.’

The possible general incompetence of the children of mixed ancestry was a standing fear among many observers. In 1809 in Nuuk, missionary Wolf considered the different partners who in that year joined in mixed marriages in his district to be scum (Wolf 1907:478–9, 487). Wolf was not alone in having this low opinion about the type of human material which was joined in mixed marriages. But even in the numerous cases in which nothing bad could be said about the Scandinavian groom and the native bride, many observers feared that their common offspring would turn out to be what chief factor Lars Dalager in 1752 called a bunch of ‘good-for-nothings’ [Danish: tvetuller] (Dalager 1915[1752]:77–84).

However, generally speaking, in situations where persons of mixed ancestry were living examples of a general good-for-nothingness, European observers in Greenland did not use racist references to refer to the low quality of the genetic material inherent in the children who had European fathers and native mothers. In contrast to the abovementioned scientific racists from the 19th century, they held environment and upbringing to have a far greater impact on the development of personal traits than blood and race. Even in cases where sons and daughters of mixed ancestry were born as the result of a marital or extra-marital union between the worst specimens of both European and Greenlandic scum, they could grow up to become diligent and admirable persons—if only sufficient care was taken to ensure that their upbringing was correct.

The very infusion of a European’s civilized blood did not prevent the mixed bloods from practising economic activities that in evolutionary terms belonged to the stage of savagery. With the proper training, boys and girls of mixed ancestry could become perfect kayak hunters and perfect hunters’ wives. Likewise, the savage blood in the mixed bloods did not prevent them from becoming qualified practitioners of economic activities that belonged to the stage of civilization. If they were trained well, they could become capable employees with either the trade or the mission and perfect wives for such employees. But if they received no proper training whatsoever, they would almost certainly end up as useless good-for-nothings.

In 1802 the retiring governor in South Greenland admonished his successor, "The upbringing of mixed bloods to become Greenlanders must be a very important part of your care and efforts" (Bull 1942[1802]:138, translated by Marquardt). When saying that the mixed bloods should be raised to become 'Greenlanders,' Bull had their education to become qualified hunters and hunters’ wives in mind. In the same vein, the Rules of Conduct (Instruxen) issued by the Royal Greenland Trade Department (RGTD) in 1782 repeatedly insisted on this. Thus, the text meticulously prescribed how the two governors and the local chief factors should take every care that the male offspring of mixed marriages be trained to become skilled seal hunters. Likewise, the rules repeatedly underlined the importance of avoiding a situation in which children of mixed ancestry grew soft and became spoiled through excessive habituation to a European diet, thereby losing the sturdiness required by anyone aspiring to be a successful member of the class of seal hunters (Rules of Conduct 1782: ch. 1,2, and 4).

Seiding (2009) tells us how the RGTD wavered in its educational policy toward children of mixed ancestry. Sometimes, they were to be raised for a future life at the evolutionary stage of savagery—that is, to be raised as seal hunters and seal hunters’ wives. At other times, the RGTD put more emphasis on the alternative strategy of training them to become qualified employees—and wives of such employees—with the RGTD itself or with the Danish (Royal) mission. In this case, they were trained to perform economic activities that belonged to the topmost step on the ladder of human evolution. The first strategy—which was also the preferred strategy when RGTD issued a new set of Rules of Conduct in 1873—made the mixed bloods a pool of recruitment for what was called the National Trade. The second one qualified them for occupations in the so-called European Trades. In both cases, the mixed bloods were, in principle, considered to possess the required human material. In the eyes of the RGTD and most observers, the influx of European blood did not per se disqualify a child of mixed ancestry for a future as a kayak hunter or a hunter’s wife. Similarly, having European blood in their veins did not qualify them de facto for European trades or for the more delicate life of an employee’s wife. In the end, it all depended on the proper upbringing.

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12. The Royal Greenland Trade Department (RGTD) in Danish: Kongelige Grønlandske Handel, or KGH

13. A catechist employed with the Herrnhutian mission was given merely a symbolic remuneration.

14. Anthropologist H. P. Steensby, who conducted ethnographic research in North Greenland in 1909, considered the mixed bloods to have a more innovative mind than the pure bloods. According to him, they even contributed important ameliorations (e.g., the ‘riffl bag’ and the kayak rudder) to the kayak hunt. “One gets the impression that a pure race and a stubborn will to stick to the old ways are two sides of the same coin. I received a spontaneous and strong impression that it was the mixed bloods who thought about things and experimented” (Steensby 1912[1909]:152, translated by Marquardt).
Now, one might ask, how does this comply with frequent allegations that the mixed bloods were weaklings as compared to their pure blood compatriots—and therefore less qualified for the rough life of a hunter or a hunter’s wife? Allegations like this one were in line with the opinions of Jehu, the hero in a short story published in 1888 by Signe Rink, the wife of H.J. Rink. Here, we learn how the sons of RGTD employees—who with few exceptions were either Danes or mixed bloods (Marquardt 1996)—were afraid to take their kayaks out into the open sea outside the protecting skerries and small islands. Instead, they paddled around in the protected waters near the colony township, where they hunted for sea birds instead of seals. In contrast to this, “Jehu is a genuine Greenlander and a ‘Great Hunter,’ and despises the feebleness which rejects the genuine Greenlandic life and the hunt on open sea that is part of it” (S. Rink 1888:121, translated by Marquardt).

On second look, however, such allegations about the mixed bloods’ delicacy and failing competencies as seal hunters appear to be embedded in a more general allegation about the consequence of living in, or in close proximity to, a colony township. In each of the thirteen colonies, the township acted as the commercial, administrative and ecclesiastical centre, and this is where the main trade station was located. In the colony township, people had easy access to a wide assortment of imported trade goods, and to positions as full-time employees or day labourers with the RGTD. Finally, there was a local market where hunters could sell country food to others who lived mostly or fully from their wages and engaged in hunting activities only on a small scale, if at all.

Compared to metropolitan life in contemporary Europe, the sophistications of the small colony townships in Greenland were few and insignificant. However, in the eyes of a good many European observers, elements of city life that could be found in such townships had a very negative impact on the seal hunters who settled there. The quintessence of civilized city life in colonial Greenland was Nuuk, the present capital of the country and the then–provincial capital of South Greenland. En route to his expedition on Greenland’s East Coast, naval lieutenant V. Garde visited this township in the mid-1880s.

Nuuk colony is one of the poorest colonies in the country. That the colony is ‘poor’ means that the local Greenlanders are generally bad seal hunters and poor as well, and that the trade in Greenland’s main product, seal blubber, is therefore spasmodic. The reason why the inhabitants are more destitute than elsewhere is the fact that they have been in contact with the Europeans for a longer time—and that the latter’s presence has had a disadvantageous influence on the Greenlanders. They acquire a taste for civilization. However, they cannot attain to the good sides of this civilization, and that is why they so much more eagerly embrace its bad and easily accessible sides. They devote themselves to the enjoyment of coffee and tobacco with a zeal that is beyond description. To buy these goods, they must have

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15. In Danish, both the colonial district and its ‘capital’ (the ‘colony township’) were called koloni.
money. To obtain money they sell everything: the skins they need for preparing clothes and for boat construction, the blubber they should eat so that they could become fat and which should give fuel to their lamps; and in addition to this they frequently sell the birds and seal meat which they should have eaten themselves. Presently, Nuuk colony is surviving on its ‘outposts,’ the small trade stations which are situated at a distance from the colony township and where the Greenlanders still do practise the seal hunt—and understand how to set limits on their consumption of luxuries. The inhabitants in the colony township live mostly as domestic servants for Danish families or as employees of the RGTD. And while in the majority of the smaller settlements practically all the Greenlanders possess a kayak, a lot of the men who live in the township of Nuuk do not own this indispensable piece of equipment—and those who do, use it mostly for fishing [instead of seal hunting] on the fjord (Garde, quoted in Kleivan 1961:441, translated by Marquardt).

Pureblood Inuit also lived in the colony townships, but a disproportionate majority of the townships’ native inhabitants consisted of mixed bloods. Among the native employees of both the RGTD and the mission, the mixed bloods also made up a disproportionately larger majority. What’s important is that when we hear about the mixed bloods’ failing qualities as seal hunters we are in almost every case referred to the situation in the colony townships, where many of them lived as wage earners. Besides, when a European observer voiced his low opinion of the hunting skills of mixed bloods living in a township, he in most cases also had a low opinion about the hunting skills of those pureblood hunters who happened to live there. Similarly, when praise is given to the proficiency of the hunters who lived in the small settlements, one often forgets that hunters of mixed ancestry also lived in such places.

To summarize, then, only in very rare cases do we meet observers who bluntly considered the mixed blood population segment a hopeless bunch of no-goods. In many cases the mixed bloods were raised and lived in the colony

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16. The argument about civilization’s influence on dissolving the proficiency of the seal hunters who came into close and frequent contact with it was expressed by many others. To quote just one such example, the Danish natural scientist Engell, who visited one of the small settlements (‘outposts’) in the Disco Bay area, wrote in 1904: “As it is, it is difficult to neglect the fact that the greater the distance between you and civilization with its representatives, the trade shops and the priests, the more qualified are the Greenlanders” (Engel 1909:207, translated by Marquardt).

17. This was the case everywhere in Greenland, but particularly in North Greenland, where the sheer size of the mixed blood population meant that many of them had to live outside the confines of the central colony township.

18. One such instance we find in the book written by the Danish
townships, and a childhood, adolescence and mature life spent in one of these local vanguards of civilization was not the best choice of habitat for someone who wished to become a skilled kayak hunter. But this held good for mixed bloods as well as pure bloods. The ‘savage’ virtues of a kayak hunter, i.e., the sturdiness, carelessness and courageous audacity, could be cultivated and brought to perfection in a mixed blood as well as in his pureblood compatriot. And the truth of the allegation that ‘city life presented a counterproductive educational environment for someone who desired to excel in the art of the kayak hunt’ was as valid for the purebloods as it was for the mixed bloods.

Had the purity of Inuit blood been decisive, the strategy of sending mixed blood boys out to be raised by family relations living exclusively from the hunt would have been void of any meaning. But throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, naval officer C.E. Bluhme, who in 1863–4 spent a year in Nuuk and other parts of central South Greenland. Bluhme criticized the Herrnhutian missionaries for their policy of what we today would call race segregation. Having noted that the history of the Herrnhutian mission in Greenland knew no example of a marriage between a European man and a native woman, he continued: “This is not to say that the mixed marriages have been particularly useful. The mixed blood offspring is mere rubbish, but part of the extremely high number of women are through them provided for, and I also admit that the ambition to catch a Danish husband at some places can have nourished a higher moral purity” (Bluhme 1865:129–30, translated by Marquardt).

19 In RGTD’s Rules of Conduct (Instruxen) from 1782, the missionary—and in cases where the district had no missionary, the chief factor—was obliged to send a boy born outside of wedlock whose father was an employee of the RGTD to a hunter’s family, where he could be raised to become a qualified seal hunter (Chapter 1 § 4). As regards the offspring of mixed marriages where the father was an employee of the RGTD below officers’ rank, two options were possible. If the father was Greenlander, the chief factor was vested with the same obligation to send the boys to be raised in a hunter’s family (Chapter 4 § 6). If the father was a European, the chief factor was not allowed to send the boy away from his father and mother, but he should see to it that the boy was raised as either a seal hunter or a cooper or carpenter (Chapter 2 § 7).

It is interesting to note that in 1873, when the RGTD issued a new set of Rules of Conduct, the chief factor was no longer allowed to send the boys from mixed families of RGTD employees below officers’ rank and native women to be raised in hunters’ families. But when circumstances made it expedient, the chief factor was to ‘try to persuade’ the parents to accept a solution in which ‘such boys are sent to be raised at other settlements,’ which constituted a better educational environment for someone who was destined to become a qualified seal hunter (Rules of Conduct 1873 § 19).

Local as well as metropolitan authorities were convinced that a boy of mixed ancestry who was raised by a proficient seal hunter could in the end become just as capable as his mentor—and that a girl of mixed ancestry raised in the same family could likewise become as skilled a hunter’s wife as was her daily teacher. The influx of European blood inherent in the mixed bloods did not per se prevent them from living the life of ‘genuine Greenlanders,’ who braved the rough seas in their tiny skin boats. Thus, the mixed bloods in Greenland were not considered to be people who inherited the vices of both races and the virtues of neither.

Conclusion

In the discourse on who could achieve the standing of a qualified kayak hunter, racial purity was not considered to have any important, not to mention decisive, influence. Instead, the educational environment and the township/countryside dichotomy were held to be the decisive factors. A boy who received the proper training, and who was raised in a family that had settled at a safe distance from the dissolving influences of civilized city life, could become a proficient hunter, regardless of his ancestry. For this reason, the rapid growth in the number of mixed bloods in colonial Greenland was not held to be equal to a corresponding growth in the number of good-for-nothings who would jeopardize the economic security of a nation living by the (‘savage’) seal hunt.

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20 Preferably, ‘mentors’ chosen to educate mixed blood boys as seal hunters were relatives of the mother.
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Missionen, sammenskrevet ved Friedrichshaabs Colonie i Grønland anno 1752, ed. L. Bobé. Copenhagen. Grønlandske Selskabs Skrifter no. 3.


Rules of Conduct (Instruxen) (1782). Instrux hvorefter Kiøbmændene eller de som enten bestyre Handelen eller forestaae Hvalfanger-Anlæggene i Grønland, i særdeleshed, saavelsom alle der staer i Handelens Tjeneste i Almindelighed, sig for Fremtiden haver at rette og forholde. RGTD.

Rules of Conduct (Instruxen) (1873). Instrux til Iagttagelse og Vejledning for de i Den kongelige Grønlandske Handels Tjeneste staaende Indvaanere i Grønland angaaende hvad der deels af dem i Almindelighed er at Iagttage, deels i visse Tilfælde paaligger dem efter Enhvers Stilling i Særdeleshed. RGTD.


Humanizing Security in the Arctic
Chapter 8

Intermarriage in Colonial Greenland 1750-1850: Governing Across the Colonial Divide

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Abstract: After the initial, mission-oriented colonization of Greenland and the increase in trading company activities in the late 1700s, many Greenlandic women and European men (mainly trading company employees) married. This chapter explores how the regulation of intermarriage challenged social settings in the emerging colonial societies on the west coast of Greenland. It shows how the administration of marriages affected local family structures and challenged existing modes of social security. These challenges are regarded from both sides of the colonial divide: intermarriage and mixed families are examined as subjects of colonial rule securing trading company interests, and also analyzed in terms of the changing social setting for families transgressing cultural and social boundaries.

Keywords: Colonialism, cultural encounters, intermarriage, gender, Greenland.

The Administrative Apparatus and Colonial Governmentality

Drawing upon recent scholarly work on archival research, it is useful to consider the structure of the archives and the shifting practices of collecting information in the colonies. As argued by Ann Stoler (2002), the historian’s change of focus can be described as a shift from an archive-as-source to archive-as-object approach. This can be applied to the study of intermarriage in colonial Greenland in terms of considering the formal registration and administration of the marriages. The argument that intermarriage was an instrumental part of the colonial project is based both on the information contained in the archival material and on how this information is prioritized and structured by colonial administrators. This approach is also connected to a study of colonialism applying the concept of governmentality as phrased by Foucault (1991[1978]), who spoke more generally about the historical development of governing strategies and techniques. The concept has been applied widely in colonial studies that have analyzed how the rationalities of colonialism worked as the ‘conduct of conduct’ i.e., how colonial governing controlled and shaped behavior (Rud 2007, 2009; Scott 1995; Thomas 1994). As suggested by Rud (2007), one aspect of colonial governmentality in the Danish-Greenlandic case is manifested in the type of registration and census-making performed. What did administrators want to know? Why did they want to know it and how was this knowledge applied? With a focus on intermarriage, the concept of governmentality is useful when considering Foucault’s definition of the primary governmental technique as manifested in ‘apparatuses of security’ (1991[1978]:102). In the case of intermarriage in a Greenlandic colonial context,
this includes the detailed system of welfare constantly developed and ‘fine-tuned.’
In the following sections, this view of colonial governing and its effect on the
security of its target population groups will be explored.

An inherent problem in studying colonial history through the archival
sources of a colonial administration is managing the imbalanced representation
of the people involved. In such cases, important stakeholders are silent and only
represented through the eyes and pens of others. This calls for an increased
awareness of the nature of the answers the source material provides. How does
it provide insight into the social reality of the women, men and children that
were affected by shifting attitudes and policies surrounding the overseas colonies
and their inhabitants? Choosing marriage and intimacy as a topic of research in
Greenlandic archival material creates a focus on sources providing information
about families in a colonial setting.

Information retrieved from the documents of trading company administration
and mission goes beyond a mere monologue of colonial administration: opinions
and strategies expressed in the source material are also reactions to the shifting
social reality in the Greenlandic colonies.1 Historian Nancy F. Cott describes this
administrative dialogue as a circular process of expressing both social demands
and public authority. She argues that this enables social and cultural insights
through legal records despite the one-sided nature of the source material and its
coercive nature (Cott 2000:8). The circular aspect of colonial administration and
social reaction offers an entry point to knowledge about the colonial, cultural
encounter between men and women and its challenge to colonial common sense
and pragmatics. The colonial subjects that stand out in a focus on intermarriage
are those least present in the classic historiographies on the colonial trading
companies: common staff, representing the majority of intermarriage grooms
in Greenland, and Greenlandic women. These groups were central in shaping
colonial societies as they developed from trading stations and factories to settler
societies, expanding colonial rule from trading company pragmatics to social and
educational policies and rationalities. Viewing these actors within the circular
process of colonial administration allows an insight into their agency and their
subjugation within increasingly stratified levels of society.

**Governing Categories: Registration and Administration of the Colonial Population(s)**

The instruments of control and regulation were developed and refined over
time, a development that today is visible in the vaults of the national archives in
Copenhagen and Nuuk. Censuses were undertaken annually by missionaries and
chief colonial factors (CCF), and both reported their results to the metropole.

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1. The factories along the Greenlandic west coast were referred to as ‘colonies,’ in plural.
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Censuses specifically counted the indigenous population, including mixed-blood subjects, the latter becoming an increasingly difficult category to define. In general and until the mid to late 19th century, anyone with European ancestry was categorized as a mixed blood person. Later, persons of European ancestry more than a generation back were categorized as Greenlanders. In the early 20th century the ‘mixed’ category ceased to exist in the census material. The most intense period of categorization was the early 19th century as it relates to an intense preoccupation with marriage regulations and attempts to put an end to intermarriage, as well as differentiating between local and European employees in the trading company. In addition to categorizing the indigenous population in either of the two ethnic groups, census material provided administrators with details on household members, age, occupation, biological kinship relations, and skills. Mission censuses also included information about literacy and an assessment of moral behavior. The censuses reflect how administrators, secular as well as clerical, collected knowledge about the state of affairs of the population: How many, who, where and how fit to work? And in the case of the missionary: How advanced was the christening of the Greenlanders—who needs special attention? In households of mixed Greenlandic–European couples, only the Greenlandic wife and children are listed. A note identifies the woman as the wife of a European man mentioned with name and occupation.

The material in the colonial archives that redundantly repeat the categories of Greenlander and mixed blood tell the tale of an administration governing a society by those categories. Knowing how and with whom mixed families lived was important information: How were the children raised? Would boys become capable hunters and girls functional as wives in a Greenlandic household? The welfare system relied on detailed information on every single person in the colonies. Knowing who was entitled to a widow’s pension, child support and extra food rations required detailed headcounts including information about marital status and biological relations. Children born out of wedlock received maintenance fees from their biological fathers; therefore, knowledge of relations was needed to retrieve the fees and penalize the fathers. For the missionary, information about extramarital sex was used in lecturing individuals on Christian lifestyle. Correspondence between missionaries and governors often show the missionary as the primary source of information about intimate relations in the colonies. The mission censuses often have a higher degree of detail when it comes to biological family relations. Securing the 1782 prohibition of marriages between Europeans and ‘unmixed’ Greenlandic women relied on knowing exactly which individuals were of mixed ancestry.

The repetitive discourse on ‘mixed’ and ‘unmixed’ in the administrative source material brings to mind racial discourses of a later period. The concept of ‘race as type’ emerged much later, but race in the period in question is a topic of

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2 The direct translation of the Danish term *blanding*, which was used in the colonial period, is similar to the meaning of the French word *métis* used in Canada. The category *blanding* was used in censuses until the late 19th century. In this text, ‘mixed ancestry’ will be used to convey the colonial sense of *blanding*.  

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intellectual thought and debate. Racial discourse amongst philosophers in the late 18th century is focused on race as national character (e.g., Hannaford 1996). The idea about the ‘national’ in Greenland is expressed often, and Greenland as nation in all cases refers to cultural or character traits as perceived by the Europeans. Also, this concept of race deals with race mixing as problematic, because it weakens the national character (Hannaford 1996:222); this idea parallels the discussion in Greenland. However, the idea of national character in Greenland goes beyond discourse and terminology within the Royal Greenlandic Trading Department (RGTD). The hunting skills of Greenlanders were crucial to sustaining the trading company; they constituted subsistence for both Greenlandic societies and the colonial trading company, with the latter depending on the former because a starved population would decrease production and increase social expenditure. In Greenland the remedy for what is called ‘an inappropriate mix of Danish upbringing’ is, as the quotation itself reveals, very much a matter of environment and less of inherent character. This is in tune with Hume’s 1748 writings on a national character based on human beings “communicating to each other their vices as well as their virtues” (1748:1.XXI.9), which opposes existing views on national or racial character shaped by the physical environment and instead emphasizing the significance of social relations. That said, it is important to bear in mind that the influence of contemporary intellectual thought was at best scarce and sporadic. However, it is worth considering when dealing with ideas coming from the metropole, in this case through the connection between the Board of Managers in Copenhagen and the well-educated top management in Greenland, the Governors. An investigation of this source material and its racial discourses confirms that race was rarely talked about as an isolated factor. As the following will show, aspects of race, gender and class were intrinsically connected in the shifting governing strategies and practices over time.

**Interracial Marriage in Colonial Greenland**

**1750–1850**

Writing about early 19th-century intermarriage in British Columbia, Canada, Jay Nelson (2003:23) argues: “The prevalence of this institution—as well as its animating principles and widespread acceptance—derived primarily from the unique social, economic and political fabric within which it was intricately enmeshed.” To a certain extent, this description fits the Greenlandic colonial setting with regard to intermarriage. The period before the establishment of the RGTD was characterized by an ongoing discussion about marriages between Greenlandic women and European men, the opposite being absolutely inconceivable, despite

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3 A phrase used in the early 1800s in the so-called marriage conditions, a marriage contract signed by the groom (translated by Seiding from the original source).

4 These men were mainly Danes but also many Norwegians, and a few Swedes and Icelanders.
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the fact that a few European women lived in Greenland around this time. This discussion has been described by historians as a pragmatic, mercantile discussion (e.g., Gad 1969, 1974). Arguing that the discussion reflected concerns about the productivity and sustainability of the trading company cannot be disputed, but rather elaborated. The discussion reflects attitudes toward women, as well as the indigenous Greenlandic population and constant reflections on the framework and boundaries of the colonial administration itself. As in Canada, intermarriage remained accepted and even encouraged in Greenland despite debate and restrictions. The latter depended on the recognition of its rootedness in the development of the colonial society that in time made intermarriage an instrument of colonial rule.

1750–1782
A rough outline of the pre-RGTD shifting attitudes shows an initial insecurity about the new families and their potentially conflicting positions both within the trading company and between mercantile and clerical interests. Marriages were discussed around 1753 in a letter to the missionary in Claushavn from the Mission College which states that, as previously, it would not recommend a total ban as it would result in ‘sinful and scandalous’ behavior among the employees in the trading company. The official clerical viewpoint was that marriages should not be banned and that sexual relations could not be stopped, but only controlled. The instrument of control was marriage, securing proper conduct between men and women. Contrary to the colonial chronology in Canada, the mission was a significant part of the colonial project from the very start in Greenland. Intermarriage in Greenland was, from the beginning, marriage in the Christian sense of the word, as opposed to fur trade ‘country marriage’ in Canada. Missionaries ensured that only christened and confirmed women were allowed to enter marriage. Given the fairly small colonial populations in the trade colonies, the number of intermarried was significant. Roughly 25% of just under 300 senior staff biographies compiled by Ostermann (1940b,c) are about Chief Colonial Factors (CCFs), missionaries and deputy chief colonial factors married to Greenlandic women in the 18th and early 19th centuries. In his description of the Greenlandic colonies from 1769, former chief factor Niels Egede mentions that at some colonies all Danish trading company employees were married to Greenlanders. With the founding of the

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5. In the 19th century, more senior staff members brought their wives with them to Greenland and a few also brought maids/nurses.
7. The biographies are not complete and, apart from a few exceptions, cover only senior staff. After 1782 only common staff members were formally allowed to marry Greenlanders.
8. Four factories—Egedesminde, Christianshaab, Jakobshavn and Ritenbenk—had all-Greenlandic married trading company staff. Egede notes that in Jakobshavn, the catechists and the missionary are also married to Greenlandic women. In 1792, 5 out of 7 Danish employees in Christianshaab are married to Greenlanders, making 5
RGTD in 1776, a new staff hierarchy within the trading company was introduced. The chain of command in the administration went from the Board of Managers in Copenhagen to the two governors9 in Greenland, and from them to the CCFs in the colonies. Governors, Chief Colonial Factors (CCFs) and Deputy CCFs were regarded as overbetjente ‘senior staff,’ whereas coopers, smiths, cooks, boatmen and other categories of workers were regarded as underbetjente ‘common staff.’ As the following will show, the structure of the trading company employee hierarchy played a significant role in the administration of intermarriage.

1782–1850
In 1782, six years after the founding of the RGTD, a set of rules for trade in Greenland was issued. This included, amongst several other rules connected to intermarriage, an official prohibition of marriages between European men and Greenlandic women of unmixed parentage. Despite an ongoing discussion about the value of the prohibition, it remained formally in effect with exceptions. Historian Finn Gad (1974:190–8) states that it was strictly followed. However, in 1824, the missionary in north Greenland asked the Governor for permission to let Europeans and Greenlandic women in Upernavik marry, ‘[…] since it is possible that the Danes at Upernavik make some of the girls who are taking lessons (preparation for their christening) pregnant, I would like to be informed whether they could hope to marry them as soon as the missionary arrives up there.’10 Between 1827 and 1861 at least nine weddings between Europeans and Greenlandic women of unmixed parentage took place in Upernavik. This relates to the re-colonization of the place and, consequently, pressure from the mission. It is also an example of how the mission actively supported mixed marriages as the only way to control sexual activity in the colonies.

The years between 1800 and 1850 generally saw dispensations from the prohibition. Of a total 59 registered marriage dispensations11 after 1782, 46 are entered in that period and occur in an evenly distributed pattern over time. In the case of Upernavik, the mission convinced administrators from the trading company that intermarriage was an inevitable part of colonization. In other cases, permissions were given on the grounds of the bride and/or groom’s personal qualities, the latter especially with regards to skill and loyalty to the RGTD. A total ban of marriages in Greenland was discussed and the Governor’s instruction recommends a further restraint on intermarriage. It mentions: ‘The Governor should be very reserved in allowing marriages between Europeans

out of the 22 households in the colony mixed.

9 One in Godhavn, North Greenland, the other in Godthaab, South Greenland.
10 Translated by Seiding from the original source. Letter from Missionary Kragh to Governor West dated March 9th 1824.
11 The count of these marriages has been done using a number of different archives and types of archival material, and is not complete. Only marriages where the bride is certain to be of unmixed parentage are counted. Staff biographies kindly provided by senior archivist Niels Frandsen.
and Greenlandic women of mixed parentage, since experience has taught us that these marriages are neither advantageous for the man himself nor for the trading company." The passage informs us of a more general opposition to intermarriage beyond the prohibition expressed in the instructions. However, orders from the metropole were often more uncompromising and restraining than local practice in the colonies. Governor Wille in North Greenland bent the rules and allowed marriages in the 1780s consequently receiving one reprimand after another from Copenhagen. His successor, Governor Schultz, a somewhat more accomplished negotiator, was the first to put the discussion with the Board of Managers on the official agenda. In the process of debating it with the administrators in the metropole, he permitted several marriages between unmixed Greenlanders and European trading company workers.

The 1782 RGTD instructions allow both senior and common staff to marry Greenlanders of mixed ancestry, but this was not the case in practice. The above mentioned governor Schultz who actively promoted intermarriage in general and even beyond company rules, stated in 1793 that ‘it is my immovable Principle that a Chief Colonial Manager may never be married to a Greenlander,’ without further explanation. Before the founding of the RGTD, senior staff and missionaries married Greenlandic women of both unmixed and mixed parentage. Governor Schultz’ statement confirms that intermarriage in the senior staff group was not encouraged by the trading company administration. The above-cited report to the Board of Managers in Copenhagen also tells the story of two men who are considered for promotions to manager status on the condition that they abstain from marrying Greenlandic women. Some Chief Colonial Factors (CCFs) and their partners chose to live in so-called natural marriage similar to Canadian marriages by ‘custom of the country’ (Brown 1980; Carter 2008; Nelson 2003; Perry 2002; Van Kirk 1980), a few of them marrying late in life. Following the outline of unwritten trading company rules, however, intermarriage was something attributed to common staff. Administration of the prohibition reveals a colonial ambition to secure an all-European senior staff group. Eventually, with the slowly growing group of European wives, a predominantly European upper class was created in the Greenlandic colonies. This development resembles the one in Canada following the arrival of the first missionaries and an increase in the number of European wives in the first decades of the 19th century (Brown 1980; Nelson 2003; Van Kirk 1980; Vibert 1996). Official opinion about the marriages vacillates between damage control, i.e., how to avoid the most unfortunate consequences (sinful living, abandoned dependants, Greenlandic children raised as Europeans), and counting the benefits (loyal employees, increased contact with

12. The Governor’s Special Instructions is a manual explaining the most important features of rule to the Governor; it originally belonged to the Governor in North Greenland, B. J. Schultz, 1790.
13. Letters from the Board of Managers 1782–1790.
14. Letters to the Board of Managers 1782–1796, 9th report, 30 August 1793.
15. Translated by Seiding directly from the Danish naturlige ægteskaber.
the Greenlanders, local common staff workers) from the unions between two populations living in an increasingly complex colonial society.

**The Gendered Cultural Encounter**

Drawing on more recent historical colonial studies, the Danish colonial project in Greenland can be further understood through a study of the policies surrounding the marriages and partnerships between Greenlandic women and European men. Perry (2002:7–8) argues that “gender is key in charting the particular trajectories of local colonial projects.” This also applies to the Danish colonial project in Greenland, which, as a cultural encounter, was an encounter between what Kathleen Brown (1993) has termed ‘gender frontiers,’ describing colonial encounters as merges or meetings between divergent gender systems.

A Greenlandic woman married to a Danish man had several, sometimes conflicting, roles to perform: daughter in a Greenlandic family, wife of a European trading company employee, and mother of children of mixed ancestry. The relevance of the gendered encounter in this case relates to the fact that within intimate relations, gendered roles were multiple and at times conflicting. As Van Kirk (1980) argues was the case in the Canadian fur trade company societies, women in Greenland were at the forefront of the colonial cultural encounter as wives of Europeans. Just as Greenlandic masculinity was viewed in the light of its functionality within the trading company (see Marquardt, this vol.), Greenlandic femininity was an object of scrutiny as a potential sexual partner for European men in the colonies and a necessary support for the hunting men.

Rønsager (2006:239) mentions the relevance of further exploring the role of women of mixed ancestry and more specifically their roles as middle persons in the colonization process. In the eyes of the administrators, the women in-between took on a dual character in the case of both intermarried women and their daughters. An intense debate about women of mixed ancestry reflects the difficulties experienced by colonial administrators anxiously trying to secure a group of women raised to know the skills needed in a Greenlandic household. Women unwanted as marriage partners were regarded as potential dependants, and the general opinion was that women of mixed ancestry were unwanted as wives by Greenlandic men. In a letter from 1786 suggesting rewards to Greenlandic men willing to marry women of mixed ancestry, Governor Schwabe writes that these women are the sole reason why intermarriage of any kind is still allowed (Ostermann 1940a:98).

Boys of mixed ancestry fit more easily into the categories of either ‘trading company worker’ or ‘hunter’—the former preferred before 1782 and the latter being the absolute preference in the early RGTD era. If a woman of mixed ancestry was raised without being taught the skills needed to function as a wife for a hunter, she fell outside her important role in the subsistence hunting society. Consequently, child rearing and education were of great interest in the trading company administration as the population of mixed ancestry increased. Until the 1820s, when a number of Greenlandic women, many of mixed parentage, were educated and hired as midwives (Rønsager 2006), there was literally no room for the women who did not fit into the feminine categories on either
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side of the colonial divide. In 1789, the Board of Managers, in a reply to the Governor, allows a housemaid of mixed parentage to travel with her employer, a Danish widow, to Denmark. They state that ‘it must rather be desired due to the aforementioned difficulties in providing for these women in marriage to either a Greenlander or a European.’\(^\text{16}\) Shipping ‘Europeanized’ Greenlandic women to Denmark was never an official strategy, but the letter reflects the difficulties these women posed to the administrators. Missionary Lassen’s article in the journal *Minerva* from 1795 is a summary of the discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of intermarriage. The missionary lines up both pros and cons in the discussion providing an example of the male of mixed ancestry as a most unfortunate combination: European heritage making him a useless hunter and Greenlandic heritage making him unfit for trading company work. This echoes the racial discourse on mixed, weakened national characters on the con argument list described as curable with the right cultural upbringing. In favor of intermarriage, the focus is on men of mixed ancestry despite the fact that women were dominantly present on the list of arguments against, confirming the difficulties in dealing with mixed blood femininity in the colonial setting.

Marriage contracts of the 1840s for trading company workers state that the groom and his family were expected to live among Greenlandic families in large households, so as to ensure proper education in kayak hunting for the sons.\(^\text{17}\) This was the administrative strategy to secure a cultural upbringing of children of mixed parentage. The concerns about men of mixed ancestry were fewer than for their female counterparts: if the desired upbringing failed, trading company work was a realistic alternative. Marriage contracts and correspondence from the trading company management of the General Trading Company in Copenhagen predating the RGTD shows a preference for boys of mixed parentage as trading company workers for the recruitment of common staff locally.\(^\text{18}\) Greenlandic men, both of unmixed and mixed parentage, appear in the staff muster rolls as nationals marking their category within the colonial society, equally marked by a lower salary than their European peers.\(^\text{19}\) The administrative tools to reproduce a population of hunters and hunter’s wives were focused on the upbringing of children. In a presentation and discussion of European views on childrearing in Greenland around colonization, Hanne Thomsen (1992) argues that the main divide between Europeans and Greenlanders on the matter of child-rearing was class-based rather than cultural. Thomsen explains how child-rearing in the Danish rural population was described similarly by members of the bourgeoisie. The often condescending views on Greenlandic childrearing are not expressed in

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16 Translated by Seiding from the original source. Letters from the Board of Managers 1782–90.
17 Marriage conditions 1847/1848. These contracts have slightly different wordings: in some the groom is encouraged to live with other families in order to lessen the financial burden for his employer, in others the educational purposes are in the forefront.
18 Several letters with the same wording from 1767. One example is the letter to Chief Factor Deputy Hind, May 8, 1767.
19 Muster Rolls 1790–1901.
the administrative practice. On the contrary, Greenlandic upbringing as cultural learning is central in regulations concentrated on mixed families. Thomsen also points out that the increase in Greenlandic trading company workers and catechists\textsuperscript{20} introduced a bourgeois, long childhood in the Greenlandic families (Thomsen 1992:252–3). The European upbringing of children seems to have been more common in senior staff homes differing from other mixed families by a higher degree of patrifocal childrearing. Sources to verify this are scarce, but do inform us of a number of cases where senior staff fathers facilitate European education for their sons. This sheds further light on administrative attempts to secure matrifocal upbringing for children of mixed ancestry. By allowing mainly common staff intermarriage and demanding upbringing in Greenlandic houses amongst Greenlandic families, mixed families were somewhat distanced from the influence of European bourgeois culture that was more dominant in senior staff homes.

\textit{Distributing Security—Colonial Welfare and Social Categorizing}

The colonial welfare system was created and developed to make people do as they ought, ‘ought’ denoting the sense of what would make society work according to colonial administrators. The introduction of the colonial ‘apparatuses of security’ (Foucault 1991[1978]:102) affected existing modes of social security in West Greenlandic societies. For a Greenlander in the late 1700s, security was kin-based. One relied on a complex social network in which marriages were important in maintaining and developing these networks (Petersen 2003:62, 90–1). As men grew into adulthood, they were expected to participate in providing for their family and the community. Women equally contributed to the subsistence system by producing and caring for tools, taking responsibility for childrearing and the production of clothing. A woman often moved to live with the family of her husband, and daughters, according to Petersen, therefore an investment that rewarded her husband’s household. Intermarriage and the consequential regulations affected social, kin-based network systems by introducing the trading company working father/husband and a system of social benefits and restrictions. As the following will show, the 19th century also saw the introduction of RGTD based attempts at education and modernization targeted specifically at the Greenlandic population.

A letter to the Governor from the Chief Colonial Factor (CCF) in Uummannaq in 1798\textsuperscript{21} concerning a request from a Danish common staff worker reflects the difficulties his family faced. In order to provide for his family, he requests a transfer to Uummannaq where his brother in-law, a good hunter, lives. Additionally, he states to be willing to engage in net-sealing, an occupation that many married colonial workers relied on for sufficient amounts of food and blubber. A married trading company employee was unable to hunt efficiently to supplement the inadequate

\textsuperscript{20} Thomsen (1992:252) informs us that the number of Greenlanders working in so-called non-Greenlandic trades is 15–16\% in the period between 1834 and 1930.

\textsuperscript{21} Letter no. 33, 15 March 1798.
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salary while at the same time tending to his work for the trading company. When entering a mixed marriage, groom and bride also entered a new sphere of social regulations. The RGTD instructions from 1782 introduced a new welfare system reflecting the changing population resulting from intermarriages. This included a widow’s pension, food rations (part of the salary) and various kinds of relief from poverty. The regulations included the Greenlandic woman within this system. She would receive a pension if her husband died, her family members (husband and children) were allowed to buy extra food rations if necessary and her husband received, against payment, extra food rations to support his wife. The widow’s pension rates in the 1782 Instructions reflect both trading company worker hierarchy and ethnic classifications (Table 8.1).

According to the 1782 Instructions, common staff of mixed ancestry was not included in the trading company welfare system nor required to apply for permission to marry. Unmixed Greenlandic employees are not mentioned in the instructions. The pension rates (Table 8.1) reflect the difference in salary between senior staff and common staff as well as the distinction between mixed blood and European employees. Furthermore, it shows a difference in pensions for widows of European senior staff members. According to the rates, it was less expensive for a European CCF or Senior Assistant to marry a woman of mixed ancestry than a European woman, the RGTD expecting continued support from the family of the woman.

Table 8.1. Annual pension rates, RGTD staff, General Instructions 1782.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Wife’s Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Annual Pension Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior staff</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>60 Rigsdaler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior staff</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>40 Rigsdaler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common staff</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>25 /20 Rigsdaler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior staff</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed/Greenlandic</td>
<td>25 Rigsdaler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common staff</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed/Greenlandic</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The description of the trading company worker applying for a transfer shows the difficulties faced by families despite trading company welfare. The sources accordingly inform us that regulations were interpreted and applied locally and adjusted continuously to influence behavior. As an example, in the late 1780s prevention of intermarriage was attempted through a drastic increase in the price of the extra half ration of food for a common staff member from 14 to 30 Rigsdaler annually (Gad 1974:195). The extra self-funded food ration that married men, particularly those who had children, were entitled to in times

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22 50–100% of the annual salary of a common staff trading company employee in the 1780s.
of need was not always available. In 1785 three married common staff workers wrote the Chief Colonial Factor in Frederikshaab with a recommendation from the missionary and a reference to the relevant passage in the instructions. They ask, in vain, for permission to purchase extra food for their families.\textsuperscript{23} In 1823, the CCF in Egedesminde equally denies mixed families poverty relief. He compares it to Greenlandic community sharing principles that, in his opinion, rewards the lazy and impoverishes good hunters (Kragh 1875:278–9). In 1834, the food rations for married men were only increased if the husband was a superior staff member. Additionally, Sveistrup and Dalgaard (1945:60) state that married common staff members relied on the families of their Greenlandic wives to provide for their wife and children. As the example from Uummannaq shows, a further problem was the obligation to follow trading company directions with regard to workplace. Following a transferred husband in many cases meant moving away from relative and kin relations for a Greenlandic woman. And since one of the conditions when entering marriage was agreeing to be moved wherever needed, transfers were commonly imposed upon married trading company workers.\textsuperscript{24} Staff biographies confirm that most employees worked at least at two different sites during their employment period.

RGTD support for trading company families was, at best, a supplement to subsistence for mixed families in the lower trading company hierarchy. These families relied on sharing within the community and especially within the system of close kin in the wife’s family. Trading company workers in the northern colonies often engaged in sea-ice based net sealing as a way to obtain food, skins and blubber for the family. However, nets needed tending according to sea ice/weather conditions, making it a troublesome task for a full-time trading company employee.

**Mixing the Families—Housing and Cultural Mediation**

Married men were expected to live in a Greenlandic house with their family and, preferably, other Greenlandic families. In the early marriage contracts\textsuperscript{25} the groom is ordered to do so and if unwilling, the Chief Colonial Factor (CCF) will choose a house in the colony for the family. Census lists from the 1790s show one-family houses with intermarried couples as well as multi-family houses. The first is frequently the case in households with families of older, senior trading company workers, the latter amongst the families with younger men with a lower income.

Housing and living conditions in Greenland were on the agenda of the Commission of 1835, established by resolution from the Danish king to evaluate and improve the Greenlandic colonies (Sveistrup and Dalgaard 1945). The debate and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Letter from Christian Kleist, Peder Olsen and David Kleist to CCF Sandholdt in Frederikshaab, April 1, 1785.
\item Marriage contracts 1753, 1796 and 1847. The pre-RGTD marriage contracts mention that the groom will be preferred when workers are needed for establishing new production and trading company outposts.
\item Marriage Conditions 1753, Jakobshavn.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
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its conclusions provide insight into a colonial administration attempting to change a specific behavior by mobilizing mixed families as cultural mediators in the process. The Danish Government even suggests to the Board of Managers that common staff workers should be encouraged to marry Greenlandic women in order to set a better standard of housing amongst Greenlanders. Eventually it was concluded that housing conditions could only be improved by building better houses, still with the intention to “convey to the Greenlander some Culture” (Sveistrup and Dalgaard 1945:326) as a member of the Board, Graah, expresses it. Each new house was to provide a home for a European staff worker with a Greenlandic wife and family and a Greenlandic hunter (preferably of mixed parentage) with family. The purpose was double: the RGTD was formally only obliged to accommodate unmarried employees (common staff) which forced the married men to live in turf houses under conditions that were now heavily criticized. Equally this was one of the first secular colonial projects of cultural mediation, something that otherwise was formally regarded as part of the mission projects in Greenland.

Census lists from the 1850s describe the new house types as ‘house of a newer construction’ or ‘Danish–Greenlandic house.’ The lists also confirm that the houses were inhabited by European trading company workers and their families, in some cases sharing the house with a Greenlandic trading company worker and his family. The Chief Colonial Factor (CCF) in Egedesminde expressed his verdict of the desired educational effect of the initiative as well as his view on Greenlandic households responding directly to the Board of Managers in 1837: “Whether the desired Properness and Cleanliness is achieved with the introduction of these Houses is difficult to determine; this relies very much on the degree of Authority the Master of the House has over his Women; only where there is a Danish Man can this be achieved.” This contradicts earlier discourses that anxiously expressed the importance of downplaying the European influence in mixed families. The housing project is an example of an initiative by the administration in the metropole in the early and mid-1800s that attempted to change specific social behaviors in the colonies. Within the scope of my research topic, it shows how intermarriage was mobilized as a governing tool: in this case, European men are regarded as useful bearers of culture and instrumental to the colonial administration as such. This echoes the discourse of later Danish colonialism; ambiguous modernizing projects aiming at creating a population of “correct admixtures” as phrased by Rud (2009) arguing that this was the hallmark of the 19th century civilizing project in Greenland.

Conclusion

Initial research findings in the colonial archives confirm the significance of intermarriage in the colonization of Greenland. It was, at all times, a double

26 Translated by Seiding from Danish.
27 Lutheran as well as a Moravian mission.
28 Translated by Seiding from Danish. Census lists from Egedesminde 1856 and Jakobshavn 1855.
29 Translated by Seiding from Danish from source cited in Sveistrup and Dalgaard 1945:337.
edged-sword in the eyes of the administrators; the blurring of social and cultural boundaries in the colonial society destabilized and challenged colonial administration in the colony as well as the metropole. At the same time, it provided a tool for intimate rule and cultural mediation in support of colonial projects both secular and religious. At once, intermarriage and the consequential expansion of the colonial administrative scope in society destabilized aspects of kin-based social relations in the Greenlandic communities. Gendered labor division changed with the introduction of trading company working sons-in-law and later with the growing group of mainly mixed blood Greenlanders of both sexes working for the trading company or mission. Trading company welfare placed mixed families between dependence on the relatives of the wife and the restrictive and socially categorizing rules of the RGTD. Marriages across the colonial divide transformed Danish colonialism in Greenland from strictly business and a mission project to a cultural encounter affecting all aspects of the lives of the colonial population.

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Chapter 9

Security and Exoticism in Greenland: The Debate over Fur and Intellectual Property Rights

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Abstract: This chapter focuses on various aspects of exoticism in a Greenlandic context, partly inspired by the intense debates on intellectual property rights in the Greenlandic media during spring 2009, and partly by current activities of Facebook groups concerned with how to define a Greenlander—even if, as declared, it is just for fun. This will be addressed from the perspective of exoticism, and a case study of an ongoing public dispute concerning the use, or misuse, of the Greenlandic national costume.

Keywords: Greenland, exoticism, national costume, nuilarmiut, kamisat, intellectual property rights

Introduction

On 23 March 2009, one of the headlines of the on-line version of The Independent (United Kingdom) stated that “Danish fashion designer Peter Jensen has become the object of a surprising, and rather unusual protest” (Long 2009). A few days earlier, under the headline “A Controversial Fashion,” the British fashion magazine Vogue revealed that the Danish designer had even received a death threat (Bumpus 2009).

Photos of Jensen’s autumn/winter collection shown at London Fashion Week in February reached Greenland soon after the event, and a heated dispute followed in various media, such as national newspapers, radio news, and television news, as well as in some newspapers in the United Kingdom and Denmark. Soon after, groups of protesters and supporters turned up on Facebook, arguing their points of view, as follows:

Support group: Go Peter Jensen! :) These days, many Greenlanders are raising objections to Peter Jensen’s new design, which is inspired by the Greenlandic national costume. But not all are against it. This group has therefore been established for those who like the new creations of Peter Jensen :) (translated by B.K. Pedersen)
Protest group: Kalaallisuumit mitallerneq? (Blasphemy against the national costume?)

The national costume which we proudly have inherited from our ancestors, who have developed and transmitted this magnificent and impressive piece of clothing from generation to generation and not least the mastering of the extraordinary handicraft, has been imitated and described as ‘innovative’ under the theme “Past meets present.” Can this be regarded as an insult to the national costume? Take part in the discussion. (translated by B.K. Pedersen)
A group of university students took the initiative to call for a protest against what they claimed to be a misuse of the national costume. The poster calling for demonstration urged action as follows:

- Defend your national costume!
- Defend the makers of the national costume!
- Defend the hunter!
- A protest manifestation will take place on 18th March at 3 pm, starting from Kittat [local fur processing workshop in Nuuk]
- EU is going to introduce an embargo on seal on 1 April. In spite of our kamisat being praised, they are going to forbid import of seal.
- Let’s protect our intellectual property rights!!
- If you own a national costume, wear it and come participate in defending our rights (*Kalaallisutit illsukkit*, poster translated by B.K. Pedersen)
Thirty to forty people demonstrated to object to the folkloristic ‘ready to wear.’ In their opinion, the designer had simply copied parts of the national female costume details (see Figure 9.3; note the ® on the nullarmiut (beaded collar) and kamisat). They also felt that the designer was insulting the Greenlandic culture, of which “they are fiercely protective,” as expressed in Vogue (Bumpus 2009). “It’s about intellectual property rights, not feelings,” one of the initiators of the demonstration claimed in the newspaper Atuagagdluittit (Sermitsiaq 2009d). On campus, reference to the ‘movement’ also found its way to the students’ work space, which is not surprising, since a number of the protesters were students from many different departments at the University of Greenland. All the protesters were female, perhaps because there were no male garments in Jensen’s collection.

**Figure 9.3. Female Greenlandic costume April 2009** (Photo: Birgit Kleist Pedersen)

In May it was revealed in one of the two nationwide newspapers, Sermitsiaq, that the (former) Minister of Culture, Tommy Marø, aimed for Greenland to be a pioneer in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in all of the Arctic (Kristensen 2009b:30). Specifically, he was working on a plan to establish an arctic centre of documentation, research, communication, and training that would involve Alaskans, Canadians, and Siberians. The centre would be modelled on the regional centre that UNESCO had established in Peru for ensuring the
Protection of intangible cultural heritage in Latin America. The declared goal was “A centre for indigenous peoples, run by indigenous people,” that is, of course, by Greenlanders. An expert committee had already been established to analyze the possibilities for such a centre (Kristensen 2009 a,b, and c). The Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage thus gained immense political attention, which, against expectations, did not arouse much interest during the subsequent election campaign until the actual election on 2 June 2009.

**Exoticism**

Originally, the concept of exoticism was derived from art history, and characterized by “an imitation of elements from other cultures that are unfamiliar or far-off in time and space in relation to the local tradition” (cf. www.denstoredanske.dk). Examples of exoticism can be seen in Western tradition and dating back to a Roman fascination with Indian motifs. Most often exoticism is connected in art history with chinoiserie and orientalism in the romantic period, and with primitivism (e.g., form and elements of style originating from African art in particular), especially in the early phases of European modernistic painting. In anthropology, an extension of the concept of exoticism has occurred—both in a positive direction, as a methodological approach to transform the familiar (typically one’s own) culture into the exotic, and in a negative direction, as a critique of the tendency within anthropology to dissociate itself from all unfamiliar societies, seen from a postulated ‘normal’ Western culture. In other words, it is a tendency to see these cultures as primitive, underdeveloped, and deviating from normal development, i.e., as exotic.

A very effective example of such a criticism of the Western approach to unfamiliar societies and cultures as being eurocentric is Edward W. Said’s well-known deconstruction of orientalism (Said 1994[1978]). Pushing it to extremes, such a criticism concludes that the western view, ruled as it was by colonialist, evolutionistic, as well as supremacist ideologies, represented other cultures in such a way that these cultures primarily functioned as a platform of contrast with one’s own culture; as a ‘bogey’ as well as a fantasy for a diffuse Western identity policy with hegemonic interests.

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1. This definition of exoticism is the one my colleague, anthropologist Kennet Pedersen, and I have defined for our joint class in “Exoticism—Greenland and Arctic,” Autumn Semester 2009, Ilimmasarfik/University of Greenland (Pedersen & Pedersen, Lektionskatalog E2009, www.uni.gl). Our cross-departmental class (Cultural & Social History and Language, Literature & Media) has been dealing with how to pinpoint ‘articism’ by including a wide range of examples from art, literature, music, movies, ethnographic and archaeological exhibitions, etc. Furthermore, we have focused on the culture bearers’ reactions to the exotic images of themselves as crucial elements of a current cultural and/or ethnic identity negotiation between self-perception and others’ interpretations.
It is well known that Greenland and other Inuit areas have been exoticized in art, in cultural analysis, and broadly within popular presentations and exhibitions, by others as well as the culture bearers themselves (Pedersen and Pedersen 2009). In this context, the question of inspiration versus imitation is at stake. The Danish on-line encyclopedia offers the following definition of the concept of exoticism:

Exoticism within art and cultural history is imitation of elements from other cultures that are unfamiliar or far-off in time and space in relation to the local tradition. [...] One must distinguish between searching for inspiration and making pure imitation of the unfamiliar culture or art. In addition, one distinguishes between genuine exoticism and interest in a culture of which the local tradition is based upon. For example: In Pompeii the presence of an Indian figurine can ascribe to exoticism, but not if it is a local copy of a famous Greek painting, because Greek art is the basics of art in Pompeii. [my emphasis] (www.denstoredanske.dk).

In the case of the fashion kamik boots, the dispute among other things, has been about this issue: is it a case of inspiration, as the designer and his supporters claim, or is it pure imitation? The protesters claim that “they cannot accept that the designer has copied kamik patterns in detail and that he has created a boot out of it with the purpose of mass producing it” (Laue 2009). At the same time, the protesters claim that they support the idea of artistic liberty: “We don’t want to suppress artistic liberty. On the contrary, we want to support the artists and help them protect their property rights. We support innovation and the artists’ freedom to find inspiration from other works” (Laue 2009).

One could argue from the above definition that the fashion kamik boots represent exoticism. They are presumably meant to be worn by women in, for instance, London, who are unfamiliar and far-off in time and space in relation to Greenland and Greenlandic tradition. These women may not know or care to ponder whether the design was inspired by, or an imitation of, a tradition of the world, not to mention which particular tradition. In the first place, the Danish designer himself expressed to the magazine Eurowoman.dk that the source of inspiration derived from:

... my aunt Jytte from Jutland, and life in Greenland (...). In the beginning of the 70s she moved to Greenland and arrived there, a bit naively, in miniskirts and stilettos. While staying in Greenland her style eventually was influenced by the traditional dresses (Ulrich 2009).

Presumably as a consequence of the fierce protests from Greenland, the designer elaborates on his source of inspiration a month later, expressing to Vogue.com magazine that:
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The collection and the boots were made out of pure love and meant as a celebration of the trip which we went on in November. That I am now getting death threats is really blowing this thing out of proportion (Bumpus 2009).

Further on, the designer argues:

In paying homage to my aunt Jytte, who was made so welcome by the people of Nuuk in the late Sixties, we hoped to bring the world’s attention to the beauty of the Greenlandic national costume […] Here at Peter Jensen we are shocked and outraged that our loving tribute to their kamik boots could be construed as in any way exploitative. We hoped that […] the people of Greenland would embrace the attention their heritage has received, in the form of our re-worked kamik boots (Bumpus 2009).

Here we witness the development of a shift from a politically incorrect statement declaring the designer’s Danish aunt Jytte (sic) to be the source of inspiration to a politically correct statement praising and honoring the cultural heritage of Greenland.

Immediately after the update in the fashion magazine Eurowoman.dk in February, a torrent of comments appeared, pro et contra, regarding the fashion kamik boots. Worth noting is that one (and the only) male Greenlander is among the first to react with indignation, focusing on the designer’s transformation of the skin kamiks of the national costume, called kamisat, into plastic kamik boots, and that the designer has almost committed a sacrilege by separating the kamisat from the rest of the costume (exact wording is preserved in the following excerpts):

Respect!:
25.02.2009 KL 07:35 AF Hans Heilmann
Peter you should respect our Woman National Costume. Greenlandic Woman National Costume is not for fun, this is National Costume. Do remember.” (www.eurowoman.dk)

On the other hand, women, self-reported Greenlanders, as well as other unidentified geographically, all praise the boots as illustrated in comments that were first expressed on Eurowoman.dk:

Thank You Peter Jensen!:
09.03.2009 KL 09:02 AF Yes!
Peter Jensen, thank YOU for bringing so positive, happy and beautiful clothes to life with inspiration from Greenland! I am proud to see you showing the whole world that Greenland have more to give than just that negative talk about fur-coats, starving children and drunk people. I would be proud to wear your clothes and especially the boots! :-) and show All that Cool and Fun fashion actually can be made with inspiration from Greenland. (hope
also that it will help the tourism in Greenland and get people around the world more curious about Greenland and the traditions here.) Good luck to YOU and Your designs!” (www.eurowoman.dk).

While the fashion kamik boots might represent an exotic touch to non-Greenlanders, the case for Greenlanders is quite different. The issue is couched in the fear that the cultural heritage of Greenland is being endangered, and is connected to the idea of stewardship: what we have is for us to protect and guard from loss. On the other hand, supporters of the boots welcome this kind of innovation, and they do not feel that the culture is risking any kind of damage or loss, as expressed by some artists:

It is a question of feelings for what we have as a nation. Hard work is behind the making of the national costume, but you have to realize that it has nothing to do with Peter Jensen. He did not create a national costume, but a collection which will be outdated next season. However, we will keep the national costume for ever (Dahl 2009:6).

The artists who have taken part in the dispute all seem to agree that no limits should ever prevent the free creative spirit to develop, and that inspiration from other cultures makes one stronger “…if culture does not undergo development, it will die out,” as they say (Dahl 2009:6).

For the protesters, these fashion kamik boots represent an insult to the Greenlandic people; an insult to the costume tradition, especially concerning the kamisat, which Greenlandic women have developed from generation to generation with their own creativity. Moreover, the protesters argue that the fashion kamik boots are designed disrespectfully, by pure copying, imitating, or even stealing traditional embroidery patterns, traditional skin mosaic work, and traditional collar bead patterns. They are not persuaded by the argument that the designer has altruistically been inspired by the costume out of respect and admiration for Greenland.

Property Rights

The protesters refer to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was adopted 13 September 2007. They explicitly refer to intellectual property rights that they interpret as the frame within which “(…) indigenous peoples fight for their rights” (Jane Petersen in Go Peter Jensen ;, Facebook, 18 April 2009, 7:24 PM). It is appropriate, then, to define this concept,

On 12 March 2009, Greenland was asked to decide whether it wanted to be included in the State of Denmark’s forthcoming ratification of this convention. The convention was circulated for comments among the institutions that the Home Rule Government considered relevant to include, with a deadline of 17 April 2009. Acceptance is very likely, considering the (former) Home Rule Government’s support of the decision-making proposal on the ratification of the convention made at the general government assembly in 2008.3

According to UNESCO General Provisions, Article 2 (2003:2), the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage defines intangible cultural heritage as:

§1. The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (…)

The intangible cultural heritage, as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

(a) Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage;
(b) Performing arts;
(c) Social practices, rituals and festive events;
(d) Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
(e) Traditional craftsmanship


3. It was accepted and it is now the responsibility of The National Museum (Nunatta Katersugaasivia, Nuuk) to implement the ratification and the staff has already started projects to safeguard the intangible heritage starting with the Greenlandic ’stone age’.
The latter point is particularly important in this context, focusing on the case of the fashion kamik boots, which somehow (deliberate timing or not) has become part of a central issue, not only at a national level but also at the international level as to the ongoing debates on intangible cultural heritage (Kristensen 2009c).

**Safeguarding Cultural Identity**

Security can be defined as: 1) All precautions that are taken to protect a country from spying, to protect people from being attacked; 2) Safety from possible harm or loss; 3) A feeling of being safe and not having fears or worries (Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary 1987:1307). However, referring to my case story, I have chosen to think of security in this context as ‘safeguarding,’ which means:

… measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of various aspects of such heritage (UNESCO 2003:3).

All of these measures speak to the core of the arguments of protesters against the fashion kamik boots. Among their numerous arguments, the matter of safeguarding cultural identity arises (Dorais 1994; Kishigami 2002:184). It is expressed in the protesters’ declaration, in which they repudiate each of the supporters’ accusations against them: “(…) if we sell out [our cultural heritage] in order to profit in the global world, eventually we will lose our identity” (Jane Petersen and Aili Liimakka Laue in Facebook group *Kalaallisuunut mitallerneq*?).

French-Canadian anthropologist Louis-Jacques Dorais distinguishes between cultural and ethnic identity. According to him, cultural identity is: “a fundamental consciousness of the specificity of the group to which one belongs in terms of ways of living, customs, languages, values, etc” (Dorais 1994; here quoted from Kishigami 2002:184). ‘Ethnic identity,’ Dorais defines as being “connected with the political domain and becomes manifest in relation to and confrontation with others within the context of a larger political arena, state” (Dorais 1994).

(... ethnic is a politicized cultural identity (…) Ethnic identity, one of a persons’ identities, develops and serves as a frame for social practice only in multi-ethnic societies (with ref. to Lambert 1986; Dorais 1994—here quoted from Kishigami 2002:184).

At this point, it is tempting to interpret the concern of separating parts from the costume, and transforming it from raw material or sealskin to artificial plastic material, as covering a concern of losing the idea of a unified cultural Greenlandic self—the anxiety of oneself becoming a fragment in the feverish celebration of the globalisation process. As if the world outside is forcing its way into the country, using international market mechanisms, in order to ‘steal’ what is left from the
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colonial era (1721–1953)—an issue which also appears among the comments from protesters on Facebook.

However, the issue concerning the national costume is not a new debate; it has stirred up public opinion before. Along with the Women’s Association’s outrage over the everyday use of beaded wrist warmers in the late 1980s, criticizing their use when separated from the unified costume (Burkal 2008; Petersen 1992:4), a dispute of a similar kind occurred in the early 1990s.

A Parallel Case: The Wedding Dress of the Premier’s Wife

In an article concerning culture and conceptions of culture in Greenland, Danish anthropologist Bo Wagner Sørensen (1997) deals with the case of the wedding gown and evening dress of the Danish first lady of Greenland in 1991, which also caused a heated public dispute (see Figure 9.4). In short, when this Danish woman married the Premier she chose not to wear the Greenlandic national costume, probably for personal reasons; instead, she designed two gowns inspired by the national costume. The wedding gown was made of flowered white satin with a matching beaded collar and trimmings of arctic fox fur, symbolizing a combination of the two cultures, and the groom’s annoraaq was made of the same flowered satin, matching his bride’s dress. Despite the unusual fabric used for the latter, no one seemed to be offended by it.

Figure 9.4 “The Wedding of the Year.” Newspaper coverage of the wedding of the Prime Minister of Greenland (1991-1997), Lars Emil Johansen and his Danish wife Dorthe Reimer Christensen (Atuagagdiitit/Gronlandsposten 1991).
The evening dress, which the First Lady wore at the royal couple’s silver wedding gala dinner, was made from deep purple-coloured satin and also had a matching beaded collar. Both gowns, as Sørensen (1997:169) points out, “were seen as an insult to many local people who seemed to believe that the gowns dishonoured the national costume, Greenlandic women, and ultimately Greenlandic cultural tradition.” Supporters of these creations argued: 1) that everyone had a right to wear whatever they wanted, as it was a private matter; 2) instead of being criticized, the dresses should be admired as creative needlework; 3) that the national costume itself is not very old, and used to be the object of individual experimentation until it became frozen in its present shape; and, 4) that “the national costume consists of European elements such as lace and floral embroidery, and it is partly made of materials such as silk or other factory materials and beads for collar and cuffs, which makes it hard to talk about a pure and original Greenlandic cultural tradition” (Sørensen 1997:178).

Sørensen offers different explanations to the dispute. The ‘too neat and telling’ explanation, as he points out, is in terms of tradition and modernization polarity. He argues:

In this perspective, modernization appears in the guise of a representative of another culture that more or less unknowingly modifies local cultural characteristics. It can further be argued that the recent Greenlandic historical experience is one of rather drastic cultural change, and perhaps also loss, according to many people (…). No wonder, then, that people react so strongly and defensively to what they regard as threats to their culture (Sørensen 1997:169).

Sørensen claims that the less tidy explanation, or the real content, of the issue is that first you cannot characterize any place in Greenland for having a traditional lifestyle in an objective sense—the traditional/modern opposition is, however, an important aspect of thinking about popular culture, and as such needs to be taken seriously (Sørensen 1997:170).

True Greenlandic culture, he says, is “often thought of (…) in terms of cultural heritage,” i.e., “things and ways of the past” (Sørensen 1997). The past, however, is generally understood as the period before modern Greenland. More specifically, 1950 has often been seen as the dividing line in literature about Greenland (Sørensen 1997:174). Further on, Sørensen argues:

Culture (…) is something one has, and what one has can logically be lost. Popular culture thinking in Greenland has thus been characterized by fears of cultural loss in the wake of “modernization,” and cultural work accordingly has been preoccupied with collecting, preserving, and regaining “tradition” in a race against time (Sørensen 1997:170).

As for the national costume, Sørensen argues that in the period of 1950-1980, the general view was that it was seen as part of cultural tradition opposed to modern times. There was a general concern that the traditional crafts were dying
out, and before it was too late to recreate an interest, Arnat Ilinniarfiat, a women’s
high school for crafts and needlework, was established in Sisimiut in 1977
(Sørensen 1997). The same concerns are apparent in the case of the First Lady’s
dresses and the one from 2009. One of the declared goals of the young protesters
is to establish a school for national costume-making, in order to preserve and
rejuvenate traditional crafts. Sørensen points out that the ‘root metaphors’ are
parts of the cultural discourse, and that:

People speak of cultural roots which are believed to guarantee true
Greenlandicness. At the same time people believe in the dangers of
derooting; that roots can be cut or wither away, leaving people in
a state of cultural decay or ultimately in a cultural no man’s land.
They also tend to think that dangers can be prevented or countered
by policies directed towards guarding, fencing, nurturing, and
preserving that which is perceived as representing cultural tradition,
the essence of Greenlandicness (Sørensen 1997:171–2).

This could be another explanation for the heated dispute regarding today’s
case of our fashion kamik boots.

Then, referring to Berger et al. (1973), who made a pioneer study on
modernization in which modernization is dealt with as an objective driving force
based on technological innovations with radical consequences, Sørensen argues
that:

Even the human mind is deeply affected, and feelings of
helplessness, frustration, and alienation creep in on the modern
individual who tries to counteract modernization from developing
into full modernity. This is where cultural resistance sets in, taking
different forms such as, for instance, traditionalism, cultural revival
and nationalism. According to the authors, modernization is only
endurable to the individual to the extent it can be held at bay by
counter modernization (Sørensen 1997:174.)

Sørensen finds that this concept helps makes sense of the dispute regarding
the national costume back in the 1990s, while referring to the movements of
‘counter-culture’ in the late 1960s. This counter-culture opposed modernization,
as it was believed that the dominant culture was turning Greenlanders into Danes,
or perhaps rather into cultural neither-nors, resulting in a severe identity crisis, as
the two cultures were perceived as extremely distinct.

This so-called ‘Danification’ provoked a new wave of national sentiment
and ethnic awareness, in frustration at losing the idea of Greenlandic culture and
Greenlandic identity as well as seeing the Greenlandic language being given lower
priority. A counter-wave against the Danification process since 1950 manifested
itself in an intensification of the ‘Greenlandisation’ during the 1970s, working
toward the final establishment of Home Rule Government in 1979 and even after.
In terms of Greenlandic literature, it meant an intensive use of ethnic and national symbols—the fight for Home Rule was in full swing, with author and politician Moses Olsen as a central figure. He introduced the kayak as a symbol of ‘Greenlandicness’ in his short story from 1970, *Ama uvagut taimaipugut* (Are we also like that?). The glorious past and the homely ‘noble savages’ from the pre-colonial past were the most worshipped. The fight for greater autonomy was strongly reflected in the literature, particularly in poetry and music lyrics that encouraged rebellion well into the 1980s, often directly addressed to the Danes—and therefore also written in Danish (Pedersen 2005). As the process of implementing the future Home Rule Government had already taken the first formal steps in 1975, one cannot argue that this focusing on traditional culture in the glorious past was part of the political struggle for obtaining Home Rule, but rather as a means of creating a new self-concept as “us / indigenous people / exploited people” versus “them / the White Man / the exploiters” (Pedersen 1997[1991]).

**Frantz Fanon Revisited**

The issue of counter-culture, one may argue, is in line with the concepts expressed by the Afro–European philosopher, psychiatrist, and revolutionary author Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) from Martinique, who is one of the most influential thinkers in the field of post-colonial studies and psychopathology of colonization. In his work *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963, orig. 1961: *Les damnés de la terre*), he sketched out three stages in the decolonization process, which cover the concepts of the ‘triple A’s’ (*cf.* Fanon 1968[1961] Danish edition; Jørholt 2004ab; Kghinde q. 2004): 1) Assimilation: at this stage, the colonized intellectual aims to become like the colonizer by pleasing; 2) Abrogation is the stage where the colonized try to recover the lost cultural ‘roots’ by submerging themselves in the pre-colonial past. The intellectual wishes to withdraw from Western culture, as he feels he is being swallowed up by it and is losing himself. This stage is characterized by denigrating and rejecting the colonizers’ values; and finally 3) Appropriation, which is characterized by a prosperous rebellious literature, revolutionary literature and (authentic) national literature. An increasing number of men and women engage in social action, appealing to their countrymen and urging them to work directly toward a new reality (Fanon 1968[1961]:144). At this stage, exoticism is at its peak and Fanon warns:

(...) clinging to tradition or reviving abandoned traditions is not only to move against history, but also against your people (...) for example the visual artists, the aboriginal artist (...) locks himself up in a stereotypical reproduction of details (...) forgetting that creation of thoughts and what these are nurtured by, together with modern technology, language and clothing have re-organized the intelligence of the people, and that the basic characteristics of the breastwork operating in the colonial period is in a process of undergoing radical changes” (Fanon 1968:145, author’s translation from Danish).
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Fanon believes that genuine art must develop on the background of the national reality as it appears at the moment.

However, as Danish post-colonial media researcher Dr. Eva Jørholt points out, the third stage has not been followed by a revolutionary fight as might have been expected; instead, it seems as if—across the post-colonial world—a ‘hybrid cultural appropriation praxis’ has emerged (Jørholt 2004a,b). This means that one mixes together one’s own intellectual property with whatever useful things are found out in the world to make new creative composition, influenced by global media (Jørholt 2004a,b).

Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, the former Minister of Culture, Tommy Marø, declared that Greenland should be the pioneer in the field of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of the whole Arctic under the auspices of UNESCO by creating a centre for indigenous peoples run by indigenous people themselves. Until the governmental shift in June 2009, the issue of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage gained political attention. However, against all expectations, it did not receive much attention at all during the election campaign.

Figure 9.5. Tukuma (first row, far right) dressed in a modern—if one dare say—national costume, 3rd May 2009, Nuuk (Photo: Poul Egede Jensen)
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From this perspective, one might argue that the case of the fashion kamik boots could have been a heaven-sent opportunity to make a political standpoint which would have been difficult to disagree with no matter which political party one supported. One may further argue that in this issue of safe-guarding within the frame of security, the convention is used as a sort of weapon, to breathe new life into a unified ‘us-ness’ on the threshold of the realization of the next step of autonomy—self-governance—in order to protect people from external international exploitation.

More responsibility also means more challenges, as competition within the international market exists in regard to material as well as immaterial matters. Heated debates on potential international mining businesses have shown that there are sincere concerns among people as to the drastic consequences of what mining business will bring with it—such as small towns being invaded by thousands of newcomers from around the world, which will probably outdo the local or regional cultural characteristics. The dispute has focused on the issue of choosing wealth at the expense of cultural characteristics. On the other hand, we also have the debate on the European Union’s embargo on seal, which, despite the exception of Inuit game, inevitably will affect the hunters’ and the country’s economic situation drastically, as possibilities for the export of goods are thereby narrowed.

As for the case of the First Lady’s wedding gown from the early 1990s and the present, ongoing fashion kamik boots case, there is a shift in content of the dispute. While in the 1990s the case was more directed at the claimed misuse of one of the national symbols, namely the national costume, and thereby was perceived as an insult to Greenlandic women and ultimately, Greenlandic people, today’s dispute is based explicitly on the grounds of the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Intellectual Property Rights. One of the loudest messages is: “We cannot just keep silence, for too long we are getting used to let things take their own course, also when the bounds of our limits have been transgressed—it is a very powerful feeling,” as the leading initiator expresses it to national television (Aili L. Laue in Larsen 2009).

This leads me to refer to Franz Fanon and the three stages described above, well aware that I risk being reductionist or trivial. While the protesters of the fashion kamik boots might be between the second and third stages of the decolonization process, where they are mourning the loss of the concept of cultural identity and clinging to the concept of tradition and ‘Greenlandicness,’ the supporters, especially the young visual artists and the diaspora Greenlanders living abroad have transgressed this stage and seem to have incorporated the hybrid cultural appropriation praxis, at the same time being confident about and conscious of their cultural heritage. The supporters seem to see the world outside as a place where you are allowed to find inspiration, free of local social control, and where you are allowed to combine your sources of inspiration with well-known symbols to create a new form, which mirrors the time and place you are part of, as a citizen of the world. Or, expressed in Fanon’s terms of understanding, international consciousness provides the freedom to create genuine, or authentic
national art, but freedom from the colonized voice comes first, especially when it is disguised as your own peoples’ tongue.

As for the question of exoticism, the issue of Greenland being a victim of oppressive colonial power for so long seems to me to represent an exotic self-worshipping and cultivation of the concept of being colonized: it seems people suffer from amnesia when they do not acknowledge that the colonial period ceased in 1953. This sentiment was expressed by Anda Uldum, the up-coming politician born in 1979 who ran for the election on 2 June 2009 and actually got elected: “I was just in time for tasting the colonial times, and it did not taste good!” (Kristensen 2009a:40-41).

References


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Web-sites


**Facebook groups visited:**


Chapter 10

Security, Sovereignty, Symbol:
The Inuksuk in Global Position

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Abstract: In a relatively short period of time, the inuksuk has taken on a wide range of positions within the popular, political and visual culture of Canada. An Inuit invention that helps circumscribe Arctic geography and orient people in the landscape, in its indigenous usage the inuksuk inscribes Inuit history, knowledge and action in place. This chapter examines how the inuksuk has moved beyond its northern homeland to undertake new roles that, while clearly different than those of its origin, still call on its effectiveness to define and locate places so that people may orient themselves within them. The several kinds of orientation I address here are concerned with notions of security and sovereignty in rapidly changing conceptual geographies of Canadian identity, history and culture, as well as the very physical geography that constitutes this country.

Keywords: Inuksuit, Inuit, symbols, visual culture, Canadian identity, geography.

Introduction

As I sit down to write this chapter I have laid out in front of me three objects: One is a small canvas bag roughly embroidered with the outline of an inuksuk and containing six small stones of no particular noteworthiness; the second is an approximately 2 by 4 inch plastic bag holding an Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) emblazoned sheet of paper entitled Sharing A Story: The Inuksuk. The paper is folded over a credit card sized piece of plastic with 15 smaller pieces precut so that they can be punched out of the form and assembled into a plastic inuksuk. The bag also contains a choking hazard warning. And, finally, I have a three-inch-tall greenish-yellow soapstone carved inuksuk given to me by a relative when I finished my PhD (see Fig. 10.1). Each of these objects has a particular history, and each embodies an intended purpose. It is the articulation of object histories and intents that I want to explore in this contribution.

The inuksuk in its current globalized guise is my foil. That is to say, I follow the paths of inuksuit (plural form of inuksuk) that exist outside of the north or, in one case, which are brought to the north by southern Canadian social, political, and cultural forces. I have been documenting the extent and locations of inuksuit that appear outside of the north for several years now. What began as an occasional find in a gift shop or on the side of the road has turned into a flood of examples of every possible kind. There are so many incarnations of inuksuit now that there is no hope of doing a systematic accounting of them. I start with a brief microanalysis of my own engagement with the three objects just introduced. I extend this outward into the broader national and international spaces in which
inuksuit increasingly take up residence and with which they interact. I describe a number of cases where inuksuit are deployed to bolster national security and sovereignty issues. While I am interested in the intent and purposes of these cases, I am also interested in a broader issue of why it is that particular symbols/objects take on salience within social contexts and what effects they may engender.

Figure 10.1. Three small inuksuit (Photo: Christopher Fletcher).

The subject of mobility of objects in personal, intercultural, transnational and political contexts has occupied scholars of many disciplines for some time. In anthropology, understanding the production and distribution of objects has been a major feature of the discipline since its inception. Accounts of how others have organized their economies, hoarded and redistributed things, attaching value or not, have given way to research on the intercultural movement of things as part of all encompassing global flows of ideas and cultural currencies and for what they tell us about object and symbolic agency.

Levi-Strauss’ (1982[1975]) work on the Canadian west coast Salish and Kwakiutl masks, for example, situates the meaning of the objects within the structural logic of decoration and how they are worn, by whom, and to what effect. The look and the meaning of the masks are transformed or inverted as they move between societies. Those same masks have also been subject to an analysis of political economy in which their circulation among aboriginal people and state-sponsored museums is situated within a framework of colonial relations, tutelage and subjugation (Seip 1999). Globally, the trade in indigenous symbols, arts, relics and ideas is a massive industry that brings both positive and negative repercussions. Objects pick up and cast off meaning as they circulate within and
between peoples such that they aren’t neutral, inanimate things but one among
many social beings sharing the processes of making sense and place (Apadurai
1986).

I have very different relationships with the three inuksuit in front of me.
Touching and looking at the carved inuksuk encourages me to recall the enormous
relief I felt in navigating my way through the writing and defending of the
dissertation. I also recall the surprise of receiving the gift from a relative and
how, now that she has passed away, this inuksuk holds the specific memory of
the episode of the gifting and calls forth the more expansive and fond memories
I hold of her. This is a very specific, idiosyncratic and affect-laden history of an
object—a history that unfolds as new events intersect with the original moment of
receiving the gift. This same inuksuk has had previous direct relations with others:
the person who carved it, the chain of relations that lead to it becoming a salable
object and the events that led to it standing out among very many other potential
gifts as the one that made sense for that time and that meaning.

My relationship with the inuksuk in a bag is a bit hazy. I think I know where
it comes from and, I believe it was another gift, but the rationale behind it is lost. I
do remember it being a kind of irony-laden gift and that both the giver and myself
recognized that there is a kind of absurdist-opportunism in the production of a bag
of stones for sale in Kuujjuaq. Beyond the trilingual (Inuktitut, English, French)
label and a seemingly homemade quality of the entire thing it isn’t terribly clear
where or why this inuksuk came into being. It appears to have been created with a
commercial purpose and it isn’t difficult to imagine this inuksuk following the path
of many smaller carvings in the north—a means to make a little bit of money when
needed. Like the carving, I imagine this inuksuk as a kind of self-produced Inuit
currency, exchangeable for paper money or other goods. I have taken the stones
out several times and they are frankly not very suited to piling in any form. There
is, however, the pleasure of touching stone and imaging where it came from and
the trajectory it has taken over a great deal of time. The bag, itself emblazoned
with a red outlined inuksuk is of good quality canvas and sewn competently and
with some care. It feels like the sugar bags that people will pack with them on a
trip on the land.

The INAC inuksuk takes the commercial dimension of inuksuk-in-a-bag a
step further. Far from home made, this inuksuk is remarkable for how profoundly
manufactured it is. Barely two millimetres thick and made of plastic, one has to
transform it from two to three dimensions. Like the previous inuksuk you are
supposed to assemble it, and in my hands at least it does stand up. It is tempting to
read into this inuksuk the many kinds of relations that people have with INAC, a
large and historically powerful bureaucracy that is widely seen as ineffectual. Note
the choking warning. This inuksuk is dangerous for children! Like INAC, it seems
oddly unaware of its own ideological dimension—the government is sharing the
story of the inuksuk. With whom and why does this sharing take place? By what
chain of events did this one come into being? What cultural or other legitimacies
are at play? INACsuk takes its place among the extensive panoply of logo-ized
trinkets, gewgaws and trucs that flow out of corporate and government offices. As
a class of objects, the meeting giveaway is a particular genre that widely invokes
derision,1 yet all of our offices seem to harbour them. Their ubiquity belies their inutility.

I hope I have established that these three inuksuit occupy different affective registers and, as objects, they are individuals with specific connections with me over time. Their intents are equally variable. From gift, to currency, to ideological marker these inuksuit are, like all other objects, bearers of meaning and radiate this outward. Running through all of this specificity is the reality that all three of these inuksuit are recognizable as inuksuit. They are singular in their relations to individuals and plural in their inclusiveness as examples of a sort or class of thing. Likewise, each of these three objects is a twice-removed representation—twice-removed in that they are representations of something that represents something.

On the tundra across the Canadian arctic the inuksuk represents the human form2 and the three objects I have described represent the actual functioning inuksuk. We have here a multiplication of representations of the same object that, in each iteration, are quite different from each other. Yet, each of these inuksuit impacts on personal and social meanings by making appeals to a larger social imaginary of nationhood and nordicity.

**Nation and Spectacle**

Thus far, I have elaborated on the dialectic of the individual experience with inuksuit and only alluded to the other end of the spectrum, which is the mass meaning, and effect of the inuksuk. In the next section of this essay I explore how the inuksuk has come to play a role in the expression of Canadian identity and, through the logics of identity politics, a means to exert sovereignty over what we take to be Canadian territory.

That the inuksuk is an emblem of this country at large is a relatively recent phenomenon. Its uptake appears to have been a largely spontaneous event spurred on by a variety of factors. It is worth noting that this is a unique event in that I know of no other Canadian aboriginal symbol that has burst its culture-specific boundaries in quite this way. And this, despite the widespread familiarity, and potential symbolic weight of such things as totem poles, tipis, head dresses, dream catchers, and so on. I argue that at least some of the reason for success of the symbolic efficacy of the inuksuk can be attributed to two things: 1) the historical relations between the Inuit and the state—Inuit have strategically and quite widely embraced the notion of Canada even when they have had relatively little concrete interaction with its representatives and citizens; and 2) the importance of the idea of north in a conceptual geography in the collective consciousness of the southern

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1. One of the more inventive things I ever received was a logoed fishing lure. The only problem was that it was handed out the same week the NWT went officially ‘barbless.’ It was barbed. There is an aesthetic pleasure in imagining where logos may go and to what end they may be put.
2. I am aware that there are several different forms of stone cairns not all known in Inuktitut as inuksuk. For the sake of this argument, I will gloss over this variability.
Canadian public; a subject that has garnered considerable attention in literary and cultural studies (Grace 2001; Atwood 1972; Frye 1971; Hulan 2002). As one member of the Canadian military has aptly put it when discussing Canada’s engagement with northern sovereignty:

The appeal of the Arctic has always been rooted in Canada’s national mythology, rather than in any compelling substantive interests that might have prompted a long-term strategy or a significant investment. In the place of action—or even a workable plan—Canadians had largely chosen to admire the Arctic from afar—either in literature or in film’ (Killaby 2006:33).

The case for national northern territorial integrity is increasingly being played out in the real politics of recognition and occupation. Russia has designs on much of the offshore Arctic Ocean floor based on the political significance of the extent of contiguous continental landmass under the sea floor.3 In 2007 a Russian submarine planted a flag on the sea floor at the North Pole sending a direct challenge to other northern nations to make their cases for the extent of their countries; something that has been done, until recently, in a largely theoretical and indifferent manner in the case of Canada. The much-discussed possibility of commercial ocean traffic through the arctic also challenges the country to define its territory more effectively.

The 2010 Olympics also adopted the inuksuk as an official games logo. Heavily protected through copyright, and personified as Ilangoaq, this stylized multicoloured inuksuk draws legitimacy from the growing comfort that Canadians at large have with the inuksuk as a pan-Canadian symbol.4 The object and its meaning have been effectively decoupled from the north, and from Inuit, and reasserted as a true Canadian agent with a global system of transnational meaning making.

The Olympics are symbolically and politically redolent events. They emerged out of the optimism of the modernist era and could only have happened as true multinational events once the tenuous nature of nation-states was resolved in the early 20th century (see Roche 2000 for a full treatment of this era). Ilangoaq takes up conceptual residence (he/she is a largely virtual presence emanating as a witness to corporate largess vis-à-vis Olympic sponsorship from packaging, on our television and bank machine screens, cereal boxes, toilet paper and so on) in Vancouver where there is no traditional Inuit territory5 and the relationship between the symbol and Inuit people or the Arctic as a place is tenuous to nonexistent.

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4. In its original guise the inuksuk is an Inuit technology for marking a variety of qualities of the arctic landscape. These include travel routes, fish lakes, meat caches and a number of other practical and cosmologically significant sites.
5. There are of course many Inuit in Vancouver for whom this city is no less home than any other place they chose to live.
A design firm created Ilangaaq as part of a Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee (VANOC) sponsored competition. The decision in favour of Ilangaaq was made by a panel of at least nine judges who, together, can be considered to reflect a kind of collective consciousness about the viability of a new national event symbol. The choice was indeed quite controversial for several reasons, not the least of which was the perceived snub to the great artistic traditions of west and northwest coast aboriginal peoples who are present in the Olympic territory. Nevertheless, the choice suggests that there is a symbolic salience where a big Canadian-hosted event is watched over by the warm embrace of the inuksuk.

Ilangaaq is a social force and an historical entity. Each of us will interact with Ilangaaq in our own way, whether that is with distaste, indifference, pleasure, confusion, and so on. We will have a personal set of relations with it and Ilangaaq will occupy a larger place of significance as an emblem of a massive sporting event involving thousands of people on site and millions around the world. As each of us works our way between these historical realms and scales, we position the personal and social meanings of the object in question against each other and, in the process, we situate ourselves in relation to the object at hand and to social meaning generally. With respect to history, we could take several paths to mapping the specifics of each object’s trajectory. One way would be to look at the personal interactions individuals have with the objects and what affective dimensions are engaged in that process. I will begin with several examples of inuksuit living outside of Canada. If, as I contend, the inuksuk bolsters national territorial integrity arguments, it does so by declaring and demarking territory as inclusive to the country and exclusive to others. Inuksuit stand for Canada in these examples, and by analogy proclaim and reiterate the coherence of the nation.

**Inuksuk Diplomacy**

I visited two inuksuit installed on the Normandy coast of France: one in Bernières-sur-Mer and the other barely three kilometres away in Courseulles-sur-Mer. These inuksuit are situated on French soil as emblems of Canada and serve to orient visitors to the Canadian role during the Second World War, particularly the heavy loss of life during the D-Day invasion (June 6, 1944) that began the process of liberating France and ending the war. Looking at these inuksuit we see important clues as to how this object takes on and extends meaning in social space. Additionally, the particular histories of the inuksuit draw us into a complex encounter with ideas of authenticity and indigeneity. In this section I offer an ethnographic encounter with the Courseulles and Bernières inuksuit. The vantage point is the 63rd anniversary of D-Day when I took part in ceremonies (as a spectator) in both towns with my family and interviewed Maryvonne Mottin, Mayor of Bernières.

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At first glance inuksuit seem out of place here; we are in Europe after all, and not Inuit or even Canadian territory. The Bernières inuksuk sits at the edge of what could be an occasional soccer pitch or marching field close to the town hall and under two Canadian flags (see Fig. 10.2). At its foot is a plaque with dedication. The full translation is: ‘This Inukshuk, landmark for travelers in the Canadian North, is dedicated to the memory of the Canadian soldiers who fell at Bernières-sur-Mer June 5, 1944.’ In smaller text: ‘Conceived and created by Pierre Lebaron 6 June 2004.’ This is a small town of less than 2,500 people and the ceremony at Bernières involves perhaps 250 people and takes place at the official war monument next to the beach. It is solemn and brief, attended by local political and administrative personal, a small group of active military, a few veterans, a group of school children, local families, and a few, very few, tourists. The inuksuk is several hundred meters away and does not feature in the visual organization of the ceremony.

Figure 10.2. Inuksuk in Bernières-sur-Mer (Photo: Christopher Fletcher).
This ceremony in Bernières was resolutely local in its scope and intent. My impression was that this was a familiar part of the annual cycle of official events in the town and, judging by the din during the reception afterward in the nearby town hall, the town residents know each other well. During the reception, I speak with Madame le Maire about the inuksuk and its presence in her town. I remark on how it seems like an odd thing to have in a small French coastal town. She nods and says that it is perfectly logical if one takes into consideration how important Canada is to this part of France now, and in the past. ‘Here,’ she says, ‘we are really in the centre of Juno beach, which is to say, the Canadian sector.’

She receives many Canadian visitors each year, and over the course of her tenure in office she has accumulated a significant collection of inuksuit given as gifts by Canadians. The first she was given by a Canadian veteran while the preparations were under way for the important 60th anniversary celebration. They took the gift as a model to construct a larger one ‘for Canadians,’ thus reciprocating in kind. Honouring Canadian soldiers, and indeed the Canadians who visit the town, with a full-size inuksuk on the soil of her town makes perfect sense, since it is recognition that this is how Canadians represent themselves.

By chance, M. Lebaron, the creator of the inuksuk, is close by and joins the conversation. The inuksuk he designed is simply a scaling up of the Mayor’s gift, coupled with inspiration of some others he found on the internet. He retrieved the stones used from a site 70 kilometres away and brought them back to town in his car ‘two by two.’ He seems proud of his work and both Mayor Mottin and M. Lebaron reiterate that the logic of the Bernières inuksuk is the logic of the Canadian gifting the French with the same. We are, the Mayor says, really in the heart of the Canadian section of the D-Day invasion. Juno beach is where we fell. I find it interesting that during our conversation they also list the locations of other inuksuit they know of in France, the first one inside a church in a nearby village, the neighbouring one in Courseulles, and another in Brussels. The discussions bring to mind how one inuksuk calls the traveler to the next, in the north and in Europe, and how in encountering them we enumerate them, as a category of objects unto themselves. In effect, the Bernières inuksuk concentrates history and diverse geographies, drawing people today into its representational and evocative wake.

Shortly after the events in Bernières draw to a close, we drive to Courseulles-sur-Mer for another ceremony that afternoon. In contrast to Bernières, Courseulles hosts a large event and is a significantly larger town (pop. 15,000+). The streets closest to the waterfront are lined with condominiums; there are gleaming motor and sailboats in the marina and a strong commercial centre. The ceremony in Courseulles takes place in front of the Juno Beach Centre (JBC), a large interpretive centre, museum, and gift shop created to house the memory of Canada’s role in D-Day. Hundreds of people are present, packing the available chairs lined up in front of the JBC. The Canadian Ambassador, a broad range of

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7 Translation from French by Chris Fletcher.
8 It should be noted that the inuksuk is also a fixed feature in the template for the town website (http://www.bernieres-sur-mer.com/index.php).
dignitaries, many Canadian visitors, a substantial group of war hobbyists driving carefully restored World War Two (WWII) era vehicles, and a high school group from Calgary (Canada) are among the people in attendance. Regalia of many sorts are being worn and it seems that war commemoration serves to animate a number of contemporary activities in surprising ways. In contrast to the sombre decorum of the Bernières ceremony, there is a festive feel in Courseulles. The hobbyists come from many countries, the furthest I noticed was Greece and seem to make up a militarist sub-culture. 

The *inuksuk* at the JBC is just to the west of the building entrance at the edge of a patch of dune grass. It was built by Peter Irniq, the former commissioner of Nunavut and respected Inuit cultural advocate, when the Aboriginal veterans were honoured on the 61st anniversary of D-Day. Mr. Irniq explicitly linked the Inuit use of *inuksuit* as cultural practice with the one he created so far from the Canadian north. Like some other *inuksuit*, this one is understood to communicate with, and through, the souls of people now deceased. The top section of the *inuksuk* forms an open-ended square that is literally a window between the Canadian and French territories, connecting the families, memories, and histories of the Aboriginal veterans. The Courseulles *inuksuk* seems to participate in the formal ceremony that day. Standing nearby, in effect watching over, the events its window open to the activities in front of it bringing them to … who knows where.

While the Bernières ceremony seemed concerned exclusively with the village participants, the one in Courseulles appears oblivious to them. Who is commemoration being enacted for here? I wonder. The celebratory side of events is reiterated by activities of the students from Calgary’s Juno Beach Academy. Once the ceremony has closed, they and some of their instructors run down the gently sloping beach into the cool waters while still wearing their formal attire. The school visit is the culmination of their studies and marks their graduation. In Courseulles, the ceremony seems to be about the future as well as the past. During the ceremonies, one of the founders of the JBC speaks passionately about how much work went into securing funds for it and how they continue to require support. The Ambassador strikes an oddly folksy discourse that seems out of place with the solemnity of the place and event.

Where a Frenchman made Bernières’ *inuksuk*, an Inuk made the one in Courseulles. Others in the north and beyond inspire these *inuksuit*, and both serve to connect Canada and France in time and sentiment. In one sense, the Bernières ceremony is local and, insofar as local equates to notions of genuine, registers as part of the landscape in which it takes place. The Courseulles ceremony is oriented to a non-local audience yet grounded in the very intense and palpable history of Canadian sacrifice on the very soil where we stand. Both ceremonies and indeed both *inuksuit* offer forms of ontological reassurance about the nature of that loss and, at least in the case of Courseulles, remind us that military capacity needs to

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9. Juno Beach Academy comes under the auspices of the Calgary Board of Education and offers an alternative curriculum oriented to Canadian citizenship and history. The school is supportive of the Cadet movement and is oriented to promoting military careers.
be reproduced over time. Comparison of the photographs taken on the day of the unveiling of the Courseulles *inuksuk* with those I took three years later shows that visitors to the site are interacting with the *inuksuk* by placing small stones around the base and on its horizontal surfaces. This is reminiscent of the Jewish tradition of leaving small stones on gravesites and points to the ability of the *inuksuk* to stand-in for a gravestone and more significantly to evoke ritualized action which grounds the sentiments of loss in specific places (see Fig. 10.3). Elsewhere (Fletcher 2009), I have argued that an *inuksuk* built on the military base in Kandahar occupies a very similar conceptual space in the emotional registry of the soldiers who constructed it. In all cases, it is a shift for the *inuksuk* to take up the position as *monument* to particular times and events.

![Figure 10.3. Peter Irniq’s inuksuk at Courseulles-sur-Mer](Photo: Christopher Fletcher).

The French *inuksuit* may be said to be holding the beaches that the Canadians took so long ago. Loss in war requires that we secure those memories to places, even if the individual stories lose their adherents over time. There are
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some parallels here in what it is that inuksuit do in France and what they do in the Canadian North. For one, they are meant to fix geographies as knowable and implicitly historicized places. All inuksuit declare that people were at that place and all provide some way-finding potential even if that is only to draw people to them. These inuksuit are serving as historical repositories and also function in a diplomatic capacity. They declare allegiances, reinforce ties in the present and, at least in the case of Courseulles, foster rapprochement between Canada’s indigenous and settler populations. The inuksuit in Normandy are diplomats, in other words. This diplomatic role is well demonstrated in another inuksuk whose story I have followed.

The Hans Island case presents a curious instance of an inuksuk being built in the north by Inuit to effect the goals of Canadian international diplomacy. Hans island is an uninhabited, 1.3-square-kilometre piece of land in the middle of Kennedy Channel between Ellesmere Island and northern Greenland. It is claimed by both Canada and Denmark and has seen a number of understated efforts to assert national sovereignty by both countries. These have taken the form of occasional landings by military personnel and flag raisings. The island stands as disputed territory that straddles the border between Greenland and Canada. While the island itself has no real importance to either country, the dispute is significant for two reasons. The first is that its location may impact on the ownership of mineral and gas resources located under the sea floor. Both countries would like to have access to those reserves (Killaby 2006). The second is that Canada has only a tenuous grasp on a legitimate claim to sovereignty in much of the arctic. Changes in sea ice density and extent, coupled with increasing pressure for northern resources and technological improvements of northern shipping capacity, challenge the country to make a stronger case for its northern borders. The Hans Island case thus stands as a potential precedent and catalyst for the northern claims of other countries.

The Hans Island inuksuk steps into this complex political and territorial dynamic as a symbolic marker of Canadian territory. Built on July 13, 2005 by three Inuit Canadian Rangers10 who were part of a Canadian Forces exercise (Operation Frozen Beaver) in the area. It is meant to impart a contemporary Canadian presence to the island and, I believe, implicitly to assert a Canadian historical occupation of the territory generally. I use the term ‘Canadian’ rather than ‘Inuit’ intentionally here to signal the very complex relationship that plays out between notions of indigenous and national identities in the North. While there isn’t space to elaborate on this here, it is important to note that identity politics at the personal and possibly community level are potentially significant to the determination of national territory in that Canadian and Inuit may coexist as identity markers much of the time, but they are also readily separated allowing pan-Inuit political and personal identities to come to the fore.

At any rate, the Hans Island inuksuk is clearly designed to be a Canadian emblem first and foremost. Its construction added a new wrinkle to the occasional capture-the-flag politics that slowly play out on the island. There is an irony here that Inuit land-use practices in the high arctic predate the existence of Canada

by a millennia or more yet the *inuksuk* is being employed to suggest territorial occupation by *Canadian citizens*. There seems to be a somewhat opportunistic forgetting of Inuit cultural history, not to mention Canadian national history, that elides attention from the complex internal political arrangements that has produced Inuit as indigenous peoples within Canada. And, I should add, Greenland as the Inuit who have historically used this part of the arctic presumably moved freely between what are now two countries. As a symbol, the *inuksuk* seems to have an effect on how time is configured in Canadian national history. In effect, it makes the case for the timelessness of national existence by associating the national construct with indigenous occupation of the land ‘from time immemorial.’ It thus extends nationhood backward in time, bolstering its conceptual legitimacy along the way.

At the very least, this case begs the question of what, if anything, determines a genuine *inuksuk*. Built in the North by Inuit, the intention of the Hans Island *inuksuk* has nothing to do with an Inuit usage of territory, nor an Inuit usage of *inuksuit*. It has been placed to help secure Canadian northern sovereignty over a portion of land that is only nominally in anyone’s frame of mind. Indeed, the potential irony of an *inuksuk* being evidence of both Greenlandic and Canadian Inuit occupation of the island seems to have not been noticed. The campaign “Sovereignty includes me (Elliott, this volume), specifically addresses the lack of awareness of the presence of Inuit in the High Arctic.

**Conclusion**

This contribution has explored a small number of examples in which a very simple configuration of stones has come to perform some rather important feats in the national and international realms. From presenting Canada to the world in the Olympic logo, to memorializing the greatest acts of sacrifice this country has ever seen, to defending the disputed shores of a rocky outcrop in the High Arctic the *inuksuk* takes up the position of sentinel through our willingness to see ourselves within its geographical reach, wherever we may find it. It is a popular symbol in the sense that it emerges from the cultural cachet native art can hold, bridging the realms of trinketry and beauty, genuine and ersatz versions of Arctic cultural practice. The *inuksuit* puts substance to our conceptual geography. It appears on the horizon and we recognize where we are. It is only relatively recently that the *inuksuk* has become something of an official Canadian symbol yet, unlike the official regalia of the country and its monuments and spaces of public reflection, there is no overarching organization of that process at any level of government, no strategy. No office of *inuksuk* management. The *inuksuk* retains its conceptual independence, symbolic fluidity and readiness to occupy new positions. There are certainly other examples of *inuksuit* that speak to other issues. The one I have delved into here concerns its relationship to several forms of security. In the case of Hans Island the *inuksuk* is asked to secure the territorial integrity of the country, and extend its reach over the resources nearby. In France the *inuksuit* on the coast of Normandy concentrates an essence of Canadian-ness as that is seen by ourselves, and consequently how others have come to see us. In the cases I discussed at the
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start of this chapter, we can see that the security offered by the *inuksuk* may be of deeply interpersonal significance, grounded in the shared sentiment that gifts concentrate. Conversely, as in the case of the plastic INAC *inuksuk*, completely failed attempts to gather up the positive associations of the object.

In this chapter, I have not dealt with the complex issues of cultural appropriation that quite legitimately accompany the movement of an indigenous symbol such as the *inuksuk* into the cultural repertoire of the mainstream population (see K. Pedersen, this volume, for such an example). It is worth noting that Inuit do engage thoughtfully and openly with ideas of what it means to be Canadian, and their place within that ongoing process. The use of the *inuksuk* can, at times, invoke pride, and at others frustration, depending on the context and association. The physical nature of the *inuksuk* is important here as it is, in the first instance, a construction drawn from the stones at hand. In balancing stones in this way, something is created but something that may be undone by weather and other forces effectively evaporating evidence of human intervention. It is this quality of lightly reorganized nature, which is another appeal of the *inuksuk*, and one that complicates notions of cultural ownership and property. The *inuksuk* presents to us a kind of symbolic slipperiness that allows its inclusion in some unusual contexts. Ultimately, all of these *inuksuit* are in dialogue with each other. They speak about the space of the North and how that may be configured; they speak about human relations with place and how deeply important that can be; and, they make appeals to human allies to reinforce the historical and cultural foundations on which the idea of Canada is grounded. In the cases I have discussed here, *inuksuit* make multiple appeals to our sense of what it means to be Canadian, how that may be anchored in specific points in time, and emplaced in particular geographies. We know this to be the case and collectively play with the form, improvising new meaning in the process, but always referring back to the original. *Inuksuit* intervene with and for us in matters of Arctic sovereignty, security, and the larger and thornier issue of national territory.

References


11 In a letter to the editor of the official publication of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Peter Irniq (2006) eloquently asks for a more thoughtful and respectful approach to *inuksuit* by southern Canadians.
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Chapter 11
‘¡Vamos al Norte!’: *
Transnationality and Security in Alaska

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Abstract: In accounts of Alaska as a state and Anchorage as a city, little mention is made of the many recent migrants and immigrants to Alaska. And indeed, in the popular imagination, Alaska is often seen and presented as a mythic frontier space (Kollin 2001): wild, majestic, and untouched. This is strange, especially since the 2000 United States Census reported that of a population of about 265,000, 8.2% of Anchorage residents were foreign-born, and 13.4% spoke a language other than English at home. Anchorage School District (2008) students speak 95 different languages at home, with English, Spanish, Hmong (Miao-Yao), Tagalog, Samoan, and Korean as the most frequently used. In 2007, nearly 11,500 (~4.2%) Anchorage residents were of Mexican origin (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). In this chapter, I describe my research with Mexican migrant workers in Anchorage, Alaska, and begin to explore the relationship between arctic security and transnational livelihoods.

Keywords: Transnationality, Alaska, Mexico, security.

Introduction

In accounts of Alaska as a state and Anchorage as a city, little mention is made of the many recent migrants and immigrants to Alaska. And indeed, in the popular imagination, Alaska is often seen and presented as a mythic frontier space (Kollin 2001): wild, majestic, and untouched. For most people, it is ‘a romanticized and imagined area, not a naturalized place for everyday life’ (Keskitalo 2004). However, the circumpolar north as a region, and Alaska specifically, have been reconfigured as a global space, not only because of heightened concerns about arctic sovereignty and climate change, but also because of the history of occupation and the people who live there.

In this chapter, I will provide a brief description of the cultural complexity of Anchorage before moving on to introduce my own work with transnational Mexican migrant workers and their families in Alaska. Transnationality implies not only interconnections between places in different nation-states, but also processes of identity-creation, particularly among people who maintain important social relations in different national geographies and move regularly between

1. Translation: Let’s Go North!
2. I use the terms ‘Circumpolar north,’ ‘the Arctic,’ ‘the North,’ and ‘northern spaces’ more or less interchangeably.
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them. For transnational migrant workers and their families who live their lives in both Alaska and Mexico, national and economic security issues are of foremost concern. Exploring the relationship between arctic security and transnational livelihoods may add another dimension to our understanding of security in the circumpolar north. Hopefully, this will also encourage us to re-think the north and re-imagine the diversity of people now living in circumpolar places.

Diverse Alaska

Since 2007, Anchorage Daily News, the main newspaper in Anchorage, has published an occasional series called ‘New Faces, New City.’ On the website for this series it says: “In the past decade, Anchorage has become more ethnically diverse than many larger cities Outside [of Alaska]. In occasional stories we’re looking at what the changes mean to Alaska’s largest city.” Here, you can read stories about Sudanese refugees and Tibetan exiles that have made their homes in Anchorage. There is a story about Fireweed Lane, also published in the Korea Times, where many Korean immigrants have opened businesses. All of the stories speak to the cultural diversity in Anchorage—from stories about Alaska Native migration from small remote villages to the city, to how Hmong, Lao, Mexican, or Pacific Islander people transition to life in Alaska.

The 2007 American Community Survey reports that of a population of about 362,340, 8% of Anchorage residents are foreign-born and 13.4% speak a language other than English at home, the most common of which is Spanish (34%) (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). The Anchorage School District (2008) reports that 51% of the students in the Anchorage School District are ethnically diverse (meaning not white), compared to 13% in 1976. The multi-ethnic and Asian/Pacific Islander categories (13% each) are the largest, followed by the Hispanic (10%), Alaska Native/American Indian (9%), and African American/Black (6%) groups.” According to the Anchorage School District (2008), students speak 94 different languages at home, with English, Spanish, Hmong (Miao-Yao), Tagalog, Samoan, and Korean as the most frequently used.

Despite increasing immigration and migration to Alaska, Kerry Feldman, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, notes:

The focus of anthropological studies in Alaska has been almost exclusively about Alaska Native peoples in rural areas … even though Anchorage today is the largest ‘Native village’ in the state. Absent … are interests in the stories and living situations of the 95 ethnic and language groups now residing in Anchorage, many since the early 1900s such as Filipinos, African Americans and Alaska Natives (Feldman 2006:9).

In general, it seems that research about the Circumpolar North excludes cities and the possibility of ethnic complexity in the North. According to Feldman (2009:6), “[w]hat is missing are ethnographic and applied studies in and regarding urban Alaska [and other northern spaces] that reflect the global village and transnational living processes underway.” What is missing is the chance to explore
northern cities. Are they somehow different from southern ones? Are there unique processes underway? How do definitions of northern spaces change if they are reconfigured as global villages? What is lost and what is gained?

Transnational Mexican Migrant Workers in Alaska

In 2005, I visited Anchorage to complete my field research for my Master’s thesis in Anthropology. I worked with Mexican migrant workers and their families from Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacan, in Mexico who live and work in Anchorage. I was in Anchorage from July to November 2005 and in Acuitzio for November and December of that year.

The first migrants from Acuitzio to Alaska, as far as I can tell, were lured to the far north by the prospect of high-paying but difficult work on the Trans-Alaska pipeline system as early as 1950 (Wiest, pers. comm. 2004). When oil was discovered on the remote North Slope of Alaska in the mid 1960s, drilling began soon afterward and contentious plans were made to build a pipeline “from Prudhoe Bay south roughly 800 miles to the ice-free port of Valdez” (Borneman 2003:473). Construction began in 1974, and ‘job seekers descended on Alaska after reading articles that quoted $1,200 weekly wages for pipeline workers’ (Tower 1999:158). Work was available for both skilled and unskilled workers, from heavy equipment operators, pipe fitters, welders, truck drivers and surveyors to labourers, cooks, bakers, housekeepers, and assorted camp followers (Borneman 2003). By the time of the pipeline’s completion in 1977, more than 70,000 men and women had worked on its construction (Borneman 2003), some of whom were from Acuizio del Canje, Mexico. Word of possible pipeline work, or the need for workers in the service industry during the oil boom, likely brought people from Mexico slightly earlier; participants to my research repeatedly stated that they knew individuals who had been in Alaska in the 1960s, some of whom had been there as early as 1964 to experience the devastating earthquake that happened in April of that year. My advisor, Ray Wiest, made a passing reference to Acuitzences in Alaska in a journal article published in 1973 (Wiest 1973:185), noting that at that time, some Acuitzences were working in bakeries or construction in Alaska.

In Anchorage, Hispanic/Latinos now comprise 6.9% (24,889) of the population (US Census Bureau 2007). Estimates about the number of people from Acuitzio currently living and working in Alaska vary, but of the roughly 12,450 (3.4%) individuals living in Anchorage who are of Mexican origin according to the 2007 American Community Survey (US Census Bureau 2007), participants to my research estimated that about 1,000 men, women, and children in Anchorage are from Acuitzio, a number that fluctuates depending on the season, with the largest number there in the summer. It is notable that on September 15, 2008 a Mexican consulate was opened in Anchorage. Previously, the closest consulate was in Seattle.

With the economy in Alaska driven by oil, tourism, and commercial fishing (and likely in that order), the jobs available for migrant workers and new immigrants are tied to the steady economic growth in those three industries that make up the ‘core triangle of Alaska’s economy’ (Borneman 2003:528). In my research, most participants worked in the food service industry, whether as waiters
or waitresses, cooks, dishwashers, bakers in chain stores like Costco or in small businesses like the French Oven bakery. Some are even restaurant owners. Other participants work in landscaping, something that can be convenient due to the seasonal nature of the work where people can take a job for the summer, then go to Mexico for the winter with the promise of full-time employment again the following summer. Still others work in construction (for which knowledge of English is a necessity), in painting, or cleaning houses, and some have been employed outside Anchorage in salmon canneries or other seafood processing, where, in 2004, 75% of all workers in that industry were non-residents of Alaska (Hadland et al. 2006). Other Mexican migrants, although not from Acuitzio as far as I know, work in Alaska’s vast and isolated backcountry, picking morel mushrooms for sale on the global gourmet food market (LeVaux 2005), while others live and work in camps in Barrow or other remote locations.

Within the wider context of transnational subjects, my research population fits in somewhere between immigrants and guest workers, between relatively permanent to more or less temporary residence in Anchorage. Of those who live most of the time with their families in Anchorage, nearly all have homes in Acuitzio and Anchorage, and also possess more than one vehicle, televisions, computers, and cell phones. Some own and operate their own businesses. Most take annual vacations to Mexico and some take additional trips elsewhere: Florida, Niagara Falls, Vancouver, or California. Those participants whose families live in Mexico while they live and work in Anchorage have comfortable and modern homes in Acuitzio and well-maintained rental accommodations in Alaska, as well as a car or, more often, a truck.

While some research participants were illegal migrants to Alaska or elsewhere in the United States at first, nearly all did have some legal documentation and right to work in Alaska, with many holding both Mexican and American citizenship. For these legal migrant–immigrants especially, mobility is a fact of life, and while they are not as wealthy as Ong’s (1999) very rich and extremely mobile Chinese elite, they can and do travel regularly and flexibly between Mexico and the United States.

Everyone that I spoke to and got to know maintained a connection to their hometown, both through telephone conversations and regular travel back. The maintenance of this connection is the basis of the use of the term ‘transnational’ to describe these people’s lives and identities. I was surprised by how mobile some of these people are, how often they travel back and forth between Mexico and Alaska, and how major life events such as weddings, funerals, baptisms and quinceañeras continue to take place in Acuitzio. Phone calls ranging in frequency from daily to weekly also connect the people in these two places. Video recorders and cameras taken back and forth between the two places allow family members and friends to experience aspects of the lives of those who are far away. As well, the internet and cell phones help migrant workers in Alaska and elsewhere remain connected (Jonasson 2008).

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3 Celebration of a young woman’s fifteenth birthday marking her transition to womanhood.
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My thesis work focussed on the place of food in maintaining a transnational identity, and indeed, I found that people literally and figuratively traveled with foods from Mexico to Alaska so that eating, cooking, and talking about Mexican food also served to connect people in Anchorage to Acuitzio (and vice versa). Transnationality implies a connection between places, drawing attention to the nation–state and to the specific relationships between places in ways that globalism does not. I use transnationalism to refer not only to the ‘condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space’ as Ong (1999:4) does in her study of flexible, multiply displaced Chinese subjects, but also to emphasize, as Michael Levin does, that:

Transnational processes are not worldwide, but are anchored in places, i.e., states, both homelands and nations of settlement. Both migrants and corporations whose journeys and activities cross borders of two or more states are best referred to as transnational (Levin 2002:3).

More than a connection between places, transnationality describes processes that occur between places. The daily lives of transnational migrants “depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation state” (Glick-Schiller et al. 1995:48). As such, these transmigrants are in a state of in-betweenness (Basch et al. 1994), building social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders (Basch et al. 1994:7) and boundaries (Kearney 2004). They “take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities that connect them simultaneously in two or more nation–states” (Basch et al. 1994:7).

Thus, as Nina Glick-Schiller et al. (1995:50) write, “transnational processes are located within the life experiences of individuals and families, making up the [fabric] of daily activities, concerns, fears and achievements,” so it can be said that “migrants live transnational lives.” This is emphasized by Roger Rouse’s (1992) transnational migrant circuit and his notion of cultural bifocality. Referring to his work with migrants from Aguililla, Mexico and Redwood City, California, Roger Rouse writes:

Aguilillans have forged socio-spatial arrangements that seriously challenge the dominant ways of reading migration. First, it has become inadequate to see Aguilillan migration as a movement between distinct communities, understood as the loci of distinct sets of social relationships (Rouse 2002:162).

Kin and friends may live thousands of miles away or in the immediate vicinity. Migrants are able “to maintain spatially extended relationships as actively and effectively as the ties that link them to their neighbour” (Rouse 2002:162). With thanks especially to the growing use of the telephone (and other technologies, I would imagine), people can not only keep in touch periodically but also participate in household decision-making and familial events even from a considerable distance. Rouse proposes the concept of ‘transnational migrant circuit’ (Rouse 2002) to refer to the fact that “through the continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information, the various settlements have become so closely woven together that, in
an important sense, they have come to constitute a single community spread across a variety of sites” (Rouse 2002:162). The other socio-spatial arrangement forged by Aguilllan migrants is that these migrants orchestrate their lives within the circuit as a whole rather than any one locale; they are living and working within a transnational framework, a transnational space where they maintain two (or possibly more) distinct ways of life. As a result, Rouse (1992:41) refers to their “cultural bifocality, a capacity to see the world alternately through quite different kinds of lenses.”

The idea that transnational migrants are living their lives in transnational space is also emphasized by Michael Kearney’s (2004) ‘articulatory migrant network’ and by Alison Mountz and Richard Wright’s (1996) description of a transnational community where “alterations in the conceptualization and utilization of space and time enabled the creation of a single transnational locale, “so that the space that once divided two physically distant and distinct places—San Agustín, a village in the state of Oaxaca, and Poughkeepsie—has been eliminated” (Mountz and Wright 1996:404). Additionally, Peggy Levitt (2001:2) writes of social remittances that flow between and connect Mirafloros and Boston with “fashion, food, and forms of speech, as well as appliances and home decorating styles, attest[ing] to these strong connections” (Levitt 2001:2) between places. Each of these examples allude to the fact that transnational subjects are living their lives in two or more societies simultaneously, societies which may become so interconnected through frequent long-distance communication, the media, the imagination, and the movement of people, money, and things that they may be conceived of as a single transnational space such as ‘Oaxacalifornia’ (Kearney 2004) or Oaxaca–Poughkeepsie, or OP for short (Mountz and Wright 1996). Transmigrants “draw upon and create fluid and multiple identities grounded in both their society of origin and in the host societies” (Glick-Schiller et al. 1995:11). As such, their identities also link them simultaneously to more than one nation.

Material reminders of Mexico can be found in Anchorage, evident in the many Mexican restaurants, the groceries available, the annual Latino festival, the art and culture group Xochiquetzal-Tiqun, and the people who live there. Reminders of Alaska can be found in Acuitzio too. Souvenir clothing with images or locations from Alaska are seen on town residents with surprising regularity, as are license plates from Alaska and many other American states. Retired men who live in the town may have spent time in Alaska many years ago. During my time in Acuitzio, I was almost constantly reminded of locations por el otro lado (on the other side) of the border. This indicates the interconnectedness of Alaska and Acuitzio, and possibly the creation of a transnational social space. Living transnationally means regularly crossing international borders; for Mexican migrant workers and others who live in Alaska or other Arctic regions, changing national and economic security concerns could make living transnationally easier or more difficult.

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4 Xochiquetzal is the Aztec goddess of art and culture, and Tiqun means ‘wolf’ in the Athabascan language Dena’ina.
Transnationality and Security

So, how might arctic security help or hinder transnational livelihoods? How does considering transnational migration and ethnic diversity in Alaska add another dimension to our understanding of security in the circumpolar north? Moreover, whose interests should be considered when making decisions about security in the Arctic?

One way to understand arctic security is in terms of national security or sovereignty. Aihwa Ong (1999:225) argues that “sovereignty—the existence of a final, highest, or supreme power over a set of people, things, or places—remains key to our understanding of the shifting relations between state, market and society.” She introduces the concept of graduated sovereignty where “citizens in zones that are differentially articulated to global production and financial circuits are subjected to different kinds of surveillance and in practice enjoy different sets of civil, political, and economic rights” (Ong 1999:215–16). Asserting sovereignty or acting in the name of security draws a line between what is ours and what is not (often territory or resources), and who is allowed and who is not. A case in point: foreign and Mexican migrants and immigrants in the United States have been seen as potential threats to national security, as demonstrated by immigration raids leading to deportation or confinement in prisons (Preston 2008), or more subtly by auditing employment records and forcing companies to dismiss illegal workers (Preston 2009).

Arctic security in terms of sovereignty could become a key issue for transnational migrants who cross national borders regularly, representing more of a concern than an opportunity. To date, Alaska has not engaged in the kind of discourse about arctic security in terms of sovereignty that Canada has (Griffiths 2009) but I wonder, would more surveillance and enforcement in the North bring more immigration raids and an unwelcome climate for migrant workers from Mexico? If there is increased surveillance and enforcement in the North to assert national claims to the area (Griffiths 2009), would it be much more difficult to travel in and out of the area? On the other hand, if a northwest passage were to open, it could facilitate travel within and out of the circumpolar north.

If we are interested in talking about security in the circumpolar north, we need to find out if things like sustainability (Duhaime 2002) means something else for transnational residents of northern spaces, and what stewardship of the land might mean for them (Griffiths 2009). How might their interests be represented in forging international legal and political relationships (Loukacheva 2007)? And how might these interests be reconciled with those of the traditional residents of the region?

Conclusion

At this point, many of these questions remain as such. As more people move to northern spaces, whether temporarily or permanently, a challenge will be reconciling their interests with those of long-time Arctic residents. I think we need to include a discussion of the urban, multicultural north and how all residents interpret and define ‘the North’ and things like arctic security and sustainability. Consider the group of Mexican migrant workers and immigrants that I work with. They claim
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a nearly 50-year history in the region, with nearly three generations residing there. What role should they play in determining policy in the circumpolar north? What opportunities and concerns does their presence bring? Williams (2002:130) writes:

More people defining what a place … means, destabilizes ‘traditional’ meanings and intensifies conflict. Globalization makes even the most remote and little used wilderness landscapes important sites for cultural or identity politics.

In this chapter, I have drawn attention to the cultural complexity of Alaska and the many immigrants, migrants, and refugees currently residing there. I have also begun to imagine how arctic security in terms of sovereignty might affect transnational populations in the North, in particular the Mexican migrant workers that I have worked with in Anchorage. In my future research, I plan to explore what it is like to grow up transnationally for the children of Mexican migrant workers in Alaska. I am interested in how the identity of these youths depends on connections made between Mexico, Alaska, and places in between, as well as how this is different from the experiences of their parents. Through my work, I hope to add to current understandings of processes of belonging among migrants and immigrants across generations and help with the development of policy and social programs in Mexico and the United States for youth who are growing up transnationally. I hope that this work will add another dimension to how we understand the circumpolar north, and what security means in the north now and for future generations.

References

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Chapter 12
Deconstructing Cultural Loss: The Significance of Alutiiq Subsistence-Based Practices and Values for Conceptions of their Collective Cultural Identity Prior to the 1989 Oil Spill

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Abstract: Alutiiq subsistence-based practices and values are integral to conceptions of their cultural identity and serve to ensure a sense of well-being. This contribution examines how the effects of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill arguably posed a threat to Alutiiq conceptions of cultural identity, by exploring the reasons why subsistence, both as a practice and a symbolic marker, were regarded as inherently tied to the security of their cultural identity in the era leading up to the oil spill. The ways in which subsistence-based practices play a key role in the affirmation and transmission of the Alutiiq worldview are explored, followed by an examination of debates surrounding the authenticity of Native status claims in the period leading up to the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, which influenced internal conceptions of identity. Subsistence took on increased value as a marker of Native status, as it showed evidence of cultural continuity and resistance to colonialism. It can be inferred that the impacts of the oil spill on subsistence practice were perceived to pose a threat to the continuation of Alutiiq identity, as subsistence practices serve a functional role in affirming and maintaining values regarding the interconnectedness of communities with the environment.

Keywords: Alutiiq, subsistence, identity, Prince William Sound, Exxon Valdez.

Introduction

For the Alutiiq of Prince William Sound, Alaska, subsistence-based values are regarded as integral to conceptions of cultural identity and necessary for ensuring well-being. Alutiiq practices of subsistence are therefore considered to be essential for the maintenance of cultural security and involve the harvesting, sharing and preparation of locally harvested food sources. When the Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred on 24 March 1989, it was claimed that it “shook the core cultural foundation of Alutiiq life” (Mulcahy 2001:98). The oil spill affected Alutiiq villages in the Prince William Sound, Lower Cook Inlet and Kodiak regions as 11 tons of crude oil damaged the local maritime ecosystem (Gill and Picou 1997). It was argued that this posed a threat to the foundations and continuation of an Alutiiq cultural identity, which is based on an intimate relationship with the environment. The traditional Alutiiq worldview is based upon the interconnectedness of humans...
and the coastal environmental landscape which are bound through a reciprocal relationship (Crowell and Pullar 2001). As a result of the presence of oil, and due to their inability to participate in subsistence pursuits, elders feared that the younger generations would fail to learn the practices that reaffirm their worldview and cultural identity (Gill and Picou 1997; Miraglia 2002).

This chapter examines how the effects of the oil spill were perceived to threaten Alutiiq cultural identity by exploring why subsistence, both as a practice and a symbolic marker, was regarded as being of upmost importance for Alutiiq cultural identities in the pre-spill era. The first sections of the chapter address how subsistence practices can be integral to the maintenance of cultural values and identities by examining how they reaffirm and transmit environmental knowledge and emphasize traditional values of the interconnectedness of the environment upon which identities are based. Then, the significance of both experiential knowledge and orally transmitted knowledge for Alutiiq ways of learning is explored to add weight to the theory that actions, rather than words, provide the key to the maintenance of cultural values. This is followed by a discussion of how such practices are essential for the maintenance of well-being. Finally, I explore how the practical significance of subsistence pursuits in reaffirming Alutiiq conceptions of cultural identity may not solely account for the perceived sense of cultural loss following the oil spill.

Indeed, the significance placed upon subsistence as a symbolic marker of identity remains unaddressed, because the role external socio-political factors play in shaping conceptions of cultural identity is ignored. Exploring how external assumptions and ascriptions influence internal conceptions of cultural identity, I argue that the increasing symbolic value attached to subsistence can at least, in part, be attributed to previous Native Alaskan processes of self-determination and recognition in the period leading up to the passage of the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act* of 1971. The arguments presented in this chapter are based on theoretical literature pertaining to indigenous subsistence practices and identity politics in Alaska and other regions of the Arctic, ethnographic information derived from both the historical and contemporary anthropological literature of the Alutiiq region, selected archival data, as well as first-hand ethnographic observation of contemporary community practices and interview data undertaken in Prince William Sound in 2008 as part of my initial field research for my studies toward a PhD degree.

**The Significance of Subsistence Practices in Securing an Alutiiq Cultural Identity**

Anthropologists working in the Alutiiq region recognize that subsistence is a definitive marker of Alutiiq culture (Partnow 2001; Pullar 1992; Crowell and Pullar 2001). Popular Euro–American conceptions of the meaning of subsistence tend to define subsistence practices in purely economic terms as a means of ensuring material survival, therefore reducing cultural practices to functional economic necessities (Nelson 1986). Such definitions fail to capture the symbolic, cultural and emotional importance of subsistence for the Alutiiq and for other Native
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Alaskans who imply and often deny outright the notion of economic primacy (Hensel 1996:23). As Native Alaskans, the Alutiiq state that what marks them out from mainstream Euro–Americans is their rich history of subsistence practices. Other studies (Fienup-Riordan 2000, 2005; Hensel 1996; Jolles 2002; Nuttall 1998) also examine how indigenous subsistence practices serve as a marker of identity by exploring how locally harvested foods and practices signal native identity. But while subsistence practice may certainly hold a symbolic value for the Alutiiq as a cultural marker of ethnic identity, such practices are more than symbolic, since they are regarded as having a strong practical purpose for the inter-generational transmission of knowledge and skills which is integral to the continuation of their livelihood. However, what is not clear is how exactly these activities re-affirm and foster cultural values as part of an Alutiiq worldview that is integral to conceptions of identity.

A number of studies about Native Alaskan ethnic groups and indigenous peoples elsewhere in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic have stated that subsistence activities foster ties to the land and kinship relations upon which the continuation of livelihood depends (Hensel 1996; Partnow 2001; Bodenhorn 1997, 2000; Fienup-Riordan 2000, 2005; Nuttall and Callaghan 2000; Schumann and Macinko 2007). Rosaldo (1984) states that it is through actions rather than symbols that people affirm their identities. In her conception of the ‘ecocentric identity’ of Inuit hunters, Stairs (1992) similarly argued that subsistence practices link together the human, the animal and the material worlds, demonstrating that for the Inuit, identity is grounded in environmental and social interaction. In the ecocentric model, she argues that a person constantly creates his or her identity through living a worldview that links the land, animals and community with themselves in a complete, holistic and harmonious way. Lending support to this idea of actions rather than symbols as the key process of identity affirmation Ingold’s (2000) theory of dwelling argues that a person’s sense of identity and belonging is dependent upon the relationships within which persons are positioned in the world. Ingold (2000:52) explains that for hunter–gatherers, the environment is perceived through paths of sensory observation derived from ‘moving through it.’ In a similar way, Alutiiq subsistence practices of harvesting and sharing local food sources can be regarded as active processes through which people directly experience their environment. But to understand how subsistence practices affirm and transmit cultural values demands a closer examination of the practices of harvesting and sharing local food sources. In the following section, I will show how these culturally specific subsistence practices involve the demonstration, reaffirmation and growth of environmental knowledge and as a result, reinforce a worldview grounded in environmental and social inter-connectedness.

Subsistence as a Totalizing Cultural Experience

Traditionally, the Alutiiq diet consisted mainly of fresh and dried fish, sea mammals, berries, plants and coastal marine invertebrates (Crowell and Pullar 2001). Despite worries regarding the presence of traces of oil, hydrocarbon pollution, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and other toxins from industrial waste, the Alutiiq
people to this day continue to rely heavily upon locally harvested subsistence foods. The presence of these foods is dependent upon the Prince William Sound seasonal calendar, which controls resource availability and subsequently all fishing, hunting and gathering pursuits. These practices also involve the teaching of skills, knowledge and stories and are regarded as times when community bonding is strengthened and expanded and when a sense of worth is enhanced as new skills are learned. Pullar (1992:65) explains that “it is during these bonding times that our individual value is placed within our community and we are made to understand what we must do to preserve our lives.” Rather than serving solely as a marker of identity, subsistence can be regarded as a totalizing cultural experience. For the Alutiiq, subsistence activities encompass many aspects of their lived experience as time and energy is spent seeking, killing, butchering, sharing and transforming animals into food. Prior to the oil spill, opportunities to participate in subsistence continued to guide lived experience as jobs and commercial pursuits were organized around subsistence harvesting seasons and involved the entire community in one way or another, and brought the different generations together (Pullar 1992). These activities also combine areas of recreation and work, as free time is spent repairing equipment and processing foods in preparation for hunting and fishing trips (Pullar 1992; Mulcahy 2001).

**Sharing Knowledge, Sharing Food, and Social Cohesion**

Harvesting and sharing pursuits provide a key mechanism for passing on cultural values relating to the environment, animals and kinship by reaffirming ties to the landscape and ensuring the transmission of traditional knowledge and cultural survival skills from one generation to the next. While many people harvest alone, most longer harvesting trips involve having at least one hunting partner, who is chosen from the community. Partners are also chosen on the basis of their experience and skills as well as the necessary ability to cooperate with one another. Longer trips can involve a significant number of people who are dependent upon one another’s skills and experiences. Younger, less experienced harvesters learn by observing the more experienced harvesters, and by trial and error as they imitate their skills (Crowell and Pullar 2001). For the Alutiiq, subsistence is also regarded as a birthright, linking people with ancestors in a sense that it is a way of living passed down from generation to generation, ensuring the continuation of the way of life (Pullar 1992).

The way in which the harvests are shared can reaffirm and reproduce the social relationships and community solidarity upon which these practices depend. Locally harvested foods are shared in three ways. First, food is shared between hunters and fishermen while undertaking hunting and fishing activities, often at the hunting location site or camp. They take enough for themselves and for their family. The remainder is then shared out on returning to the village with other families as fellow villagers are invited to come and get a share of the catch. Food is then either prepared and consumed immediately or prepared for storage for future use during the winter season. Food is shared when served at meals with the immediate family or with members of the wider community at various
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...view: events and celebrations; traditionally, it is also shared when a boy kills his first catch and his family celebrates by holding a feast at their home, where guests partake in consuming the catch, as well as bringing their own foods to contribute to the platter. Additionally, a more generalized network of sharing is built up and reinforced through practices of sharing the catch, as those who receive a share often demonstrate their gratitude in various ways, including sharing the meat and fish from their own catches and through the supplying of petrol, oil or other equipment needed for subsistence harvests, by offering help to repair broken equipment, or help with the general maintenance of harvesting gear. Friends and relatives are often invited to lunch or to dinner and hosting someone involves feeding guests with what is in season locally and sending them off with a gift consisting of local foods. In light of this, social cohesion is fostered through practices of sharing and through these practices, the trust and cooperation necessary to ensure successful future harvests are built up and affirmed.

Reaffirming the Interconnectedness with the Environment

For the Alutiiq, the relationship between harvesters and animals is also tantamount to the success and future continuation of harvesting practices. Demonstrating respect toward animals was traditionally regarded as fundamental to ensuring the continuation of the availability of resources for harvesting (Crowell and Pullar 2001). This is because traditionally, for the Alutiiq, animals were regarded as possessing awareness, intelligence and consciousness and could be offended and withhold themselves if proper respect was not shown during harvesting pursuits and if the catch was not shared with others (Crowell and Pullar 2001). According to Alutiiq traditional belief, the universe had five sky worlds and five underworlds, each inhabited by different beings. Every creature and object, including animals, fish, plants and rocks had a human owner called suk or sua—a powerful sentient spirit who watched over the universe inhabitants (Crowell and Pullar 2001). While it has been argued that traditional Alutiiq beliefs have been largely replaced by Russian Orthodoxy, the Alutiiq continue to believe that the universe is alive and aware and that the plants, wind, stars, animals and the ocean are conscious of and responsive to human action (Lund 2004; Alutiiq Museum Archives 2004). As an Akkhiok Alutiiq interviewee states, “(the) plants, winds, stars and the ocean are watching us and aware of what we are doing—every one of them has a human-like spirit inside and that’s why we have to respect it” (Lund 2004:12). The Alutiiq continue to believe that if they treat the animals and environment well, they will continue to provide food for them. As the above interviewee states, “The animals will only give themselves to us if we use their gifts carefully; if we are not greedy or wasteful” (Lund 2004:12).

While harvesting, it was therefore important to avoid overhunting by observing a hunting etiquette which included avoiding butchering seals near waters, abandoning fish nets, littering and excessive noise; this etiquette also emphasized the need to share the catch widely to demonstrate respect toward the animals. This is similar to Fienup-Riordan’s (2000) account of Alaskan Yup’ik beliefs, where she explains that contemporary elders were taught by their own grandparents that
the animals were aware of whether hunters were generous with their catch or not. Additionally, Bodernhorn (2000) notes that for the Alaskan Iñupiaq, hunters who did not share their catch would have limited success in the future, as animals would consciously choose to withhold themselves from them. Traditional Alutiiq stories also emphasize the ability of animals to perceive effective cooperation and trust between hunters; those who do not get along or have angry, unkind or jealous thoughts toward one another will have limited harvesting success (Crowell and Pullar 2001). Animals were also said to withhold themselves from hunters who hoard foods and do not share with others who are in need (Crowell and Pullar 2001). Sharing and cooperation can therefore be regarded as significant for the affirmation of positive, interdependent relationships.

Awareness and knowledge of animals is fostered through harvesting activities and learning from experienced hunters who know where to find resources and how to hunt in the least intrusive and most careful manner as it is through everyday practical experiences that one becomes aware of animal behaviour, temperaments, and sensibilities. This can be seen in the ways that during the hunt, young harvesters are shown by more experienced hunters how to move around and how to aim successfully so as to avoid missed shots which can frighten animals away. But only through trial and error, by observing what exactly frightens animals off can hunters learn how to obtain successful catches.

Awareness, knowledge and trust in animals are also fostered during meal time discussions which further contribute to knowledge of the environment as necessary for the growth of skill to ensure future success in hunting and fishing pursuits. Over meals where catches were shared, hunters and fishermen would discuss the successes and failures of their pursuits and their experiences of animal responses. When contemporary elders were younger, they were told stories by their own grandparents about the animals that lived in the local landscape (Crowell and Pullar 2001). It can be argued that these discussions foster an awareness of animals on the part of the listener and can help guide them in their own ways of behaving toward animals during future encounters with them. Subsistence also reaffirms ties to the local landscape as it is within the local landscapes that interactions between harvesters and animals take place, as ways of knowing where to find animals is inherently tied to knowing the landscape. In this sense, cultural environmental knowledge is inalienable from the landscape. As a result, Alutiiq cultural identity can be regarded as inalienable from locally based subsistence practices; it is through the practices of harvesting and sharing local food sources that the interconnected relationship to the environment is nurtured, because it bonds together people, animals and the local landscape.

For the Alutiiq, to know the landscape is also to be aware and fully attuned to the risks that it can present to safety during subsistence activities. Referring to Iñupiaq environments, Nuttall (1998) describes the notion of an environment of risk, whereby undertaking subsistence practices carries significant risk to the safety of practitioners. Significant challenges are presented to the Alutiiq in the form of severe weather and high tides. During fishing trips people depend on each other as things can be difficult at times. The weather and tides can change very quickly. Younger, less experienced fishermen rely on those who are experienced with the winds and tides to keep them safe and gradually, by observing the weather for themselves, they
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build up their own knowledge. Less experienced fishermen also rely on the skills of the more experienced for accurate navigation, as only those familiar with the local waters know where rocks are located. Interdependency is therefore key to ensuring survival in the harsh weather conditions.

Knowledge of the weather and changing environment is also affirmed during preparation and sharing practices. During and after meals, people discuss the changes they observed. As foods are produced, hunters share their experiences of the changing tides and ways of coping with the weather. Today, concerns about the lingering impacts of oil on the beaches are discussed and ways of overcoming difficulties relating to scarcity are suggested. Experiential knowledge is shared through discussions and assists in the growth of the practitioners’ fundamental knowledge regarding adaptation to changing weather conditions. In this sense, the cultural knowledge of the landscape and animals upon which the Alutiiq worldview of an interconnected environment is grounded, and from which their collective identity is based can therefore be regarded as inalienable from locally based subsistence practices.

The Significance of Experiential Knowledge

To fully understand how knowledge is transmitted through direct experience, it is necessary to examine Alutiiq systems of knowledge and ways of learning. For the Alutiiq, like other Native Alaskans, it has been noted that learning and the acquisition of knowledge generate from first-hand experience, as guided by practical demonstrations and narrations of the accounts of others (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2005; Bodernhorn 1997). This differs from Western systems, which tend to transmit knowledge in propositional form and legitimise authority through the amount of propositional knowledge a person holds. In that case, knowledge is assumed to be objective and existing beyond a person’s subjective experience and separable from one’s environment (see Ridington 1988). However, Alutiiq experiential knowledge is more likely to be regarded as accurate, reliable and useful, which is why decisions are usually deferred to those with experiential rather than any other forms of knowledge. In her examination of ways of learning, Bodenhorn (1997) shows that, like other Native Alaskans, the Iñupiaq are reluctant to speak on topics in which they lack primary experience or knowledge and as a result are reluctant to accept other knowledge assertions without sufficient justification. Justification requires primary experience on behalf of both the teller and the listener. Similarly, according to Tsosie (1995), people who rely on the knowledge they have received from others are regarded as dependent and lazy, since only through experience can knowledge be accepted as valid or not. Bodenhorn (1997) explains that Native Alaskan children prefer listening to stories in the classroom as opposed to formal instruction, as stories do not impose the authority of the narrator on the listener who can later on confirm the truth of the message through personal experience. She concludes that propositional forms of knowledge taught in the classroom are not accepted by Native school children, partly because the information is presented as facts rather than current opinions, hopes or attitudes, stressing how, for Native people, learning observational skills is regarded as being of utmost importance. Due to environmental conditions, their
survival has meant a literal dependence on the ability to notice minute details. Thus, the best way to learn how to observe is not to be told what to look for but to be put in a situation where you have to do it yourself. Therefore, one can argue that engagement in harvesting practices provides an ideal context for learning about one’s environment.

Lending further support to the significance of practical experience in acquiring environmental knowledge is Rushworth’s (1992) account of the Canadian Dene forms of knowledge. He explains that for the Dene, knowledge is justified only in reference to primary epistemic evidence and cannot be objectified, as everyone’s experience is finite. As knowledge becomes embodied through practical experience, it can be regarded as an assimilated attribute of a person’s being. To be alienable, such knowledge would have to be objectified and its relationship to experience severed. While propositional knowledge can be alienable from an individual, it is not regarded as justified, legitimate or useful knowledge until it is verified. Similar observations are also made in studies of knowledge systems of the James Bay Cree (Feit 2004), the Ojibwa (Black 1977) and Chippewa (Scollon and Scollon 1979, 1983).

Additionally, Ingold (2000) notes that for hunter-gatherers, embodied knowledge is fundamental for learning and for refining one’s hunting and fishing skills to successfully adapt to a changing environment. The successes of one’s hunting pursuits depend on the ability to orient one’s attention to the landscape during encounters with it, for it is only through direct experience of one’s environment that hunters can refine their perceptual system to attend to actual conditions (Ingold 2000:152). Adding support to Rushworth (1992) and Bodenhorn’s (1997) accounts of indigenous knowledge systems, Ingold (2000:66–67) explains that while engaging in activities of speech with other persons, words are spoken in the context of relationships between people and celebrate embodied knowledge of the world and generate new knowledge in that the speaker illuminates some aspect of the world to the listener.

Alutiiq also tend to avoid generalizations (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2005); recital of stories may be legitimized only by narrators talking in relation to their own experiences of animals. While stories do inform others, they do so in the sense that listeners use this knowledge to interpret their own actions, experience and primary knowledge. In this sense, the cultural knowledge upon which their worldview and collective identity are based can be regarded as inalienable from the practices of harvesting and sharing themselves. Knowledge, therefore, is not regarded as something that can be directly received from predecessors in advance of its application in the world. This supports Ingold’s notion that “knowledge therefore cannot exist in people’s minds as representations of reality, ready to be applied in the course of life, existing independently from the universe that people dwell within, for it is only through engagement with one’s environment that knowledge can grow and be applied” (Ingold 2000:52–55). Therefore, knowledge is relational and based on having an interactive relationship with the environment.
Subsistence Practice and the Maintenance of Well-Being

As subsistence practices are integral to the affirmation of cultural values emphasizing the interconnectedness with the environment, they can also be regarded as integral to the maintenance of well-being. While the nutritional benefits of consuming locally harvested foods by Alaskan indigenous people are widely acknowledged and discussed (see Bosworth 1994; Kuhnlein et al. 2000), literature examining the ways in which these practices contribute to other Native Alaskan conceptions of well-being is limited. An exception is Nuttall (1998:184), who argues that there is no clear separation between persons and their social and physical environment in indigenous models of well-being. This is similar to the Alutiiq conception as no separation is perceived between mind and body or humans and their environment.

In their study of 15 Alutiiq communities in Prince William Sound and Lower Cook Inlet, Ritchie and Gill (2007) argued that well-being is ensured through participation in strong social networks, citing the ‘creation of social networks, associations, norms of reciprocity, social cohesion, extended kinships, friendships and the community’ as intrinsic to well-being. Similarly, in his examination of the significance of social ties to conceptions of well-being in indigenous Alaskan communities, Woolcock (1998) demonstrates that well-being rises through increased frequency of contact with family, friends and neighbours. Additionally, Putnam (2000) argues that this rises because community bonding creates a form of ‘social superglue’ which can have “powerfully positive social effects.”

However, as the Alutiiq worldview emphasizes the interconnectedness of humans, animals and landscape, a harmonious existence and understanding of this interconnectedness is necessary to ensure well-being. Where this relationship is disturbed, emotional and physical well-being cannot be ensured. Similarly, Reimer Swan (1999) argued this sense of interconnectedness is necessary for people to obtain a sense of peace and equilibrium in their lives. In her study of well-being amongst 25 Iñupiaq individuals living in the North Slope Borough of Alaska, she also noted that participation in interdependent relationships within one’s wider environmental surroundings is integral to Iñupiaq notions of well-being. The emphasis of this sense of equilibrium and cohesion is demonstrated by Crowell’s (2004) analysis of Alutiiq talking circles, which he argues serve as an aid to healing feelings of depression and social problems by fostering a sense of cohesion between community members and with their wider environment. Therefore, participation in subsistence activities that reaffirm the interconnectedness of one’s environment can be argued to be an effective means of securing a sense of well-being.

The Authenticity of Alutiiq Claims of Cultural Loss

Following the oil spill, residents of Alutiiq villages found that they were unable to participate in subsistence harvests due to the presence of oil on the beaches, lengthy clean-up activities and fears regarding the contamination of local resources (Miraglia 2002). As a result, Alutiiq people relying on subsistence practices filed a class action lawsuit against Exxon (Kirsch 2001). Representatives of subsistence
-based users argued that as the oil damages resources upon which their livelihood depends, the Alutiq should be entitled to receive compensation from Exxon. They argued that the spill threatened the foundations of their very cultural identity and therefore that compensation for the ‘cultural losses experienced’ was in order (Jorgensen 1995:2; Kirsch 2001). However, Judge Holland concluded that the spill “did not deprive Alaska Natives of their culture” (Jorgensen 1995:2), basing his opinion on the views presented by anthropologist Paul Bohannan in support of the opposition, who argued that the spill could not have threatened the cultural survival or identity of the Alutiq since “culture is deeply embedded in the mind and the heart” (Jorgensen 1995:5). According to Bohannan, cultural meanings are internal to their possessors and not something that could be diminished by external events such as environmental disasters.

However, to limit a definition of culture to something that can only exist within people’s thoughts, as separated from the lived environment within which culture takes place, fails to adequately acknowledge how subsistence values are embedded in lived practical experience within local landscapes, which a number of anthropologists regard as necessary for the affirmation, transmission and continuation of culturally specific worldviews based on the mutual interconnectedness of humans and their environments. My argument that subsistence practices provide a necessary mechanism through which cultural environmental knowledge is affirmed and transmitted concurs with the stand made by Alutiiq representatives during the initial legal hearings. As villagers were unable to harvest successfully during the first few years after the oil spill, it can be argued that this posed a significant threat to their cultural security.

Tehranian (2004:3) defines cultural security as “consisting of security of personal and collective identity negotiations,” which includes but is not limited to freedom of thought and ethnicity. Cultural insecurity can be defined as the opposite, when “the right or ability to recreate and reproduce culture—values, knowledge, skills and relationships” is adversely affected (Tehranian 2004:4; Rosenau 2004:26). While anthropologists have recently given more consideration to how indigenous cultural security is affected by issues such as migration and the interplay between global, regional and local politics (see Friedman and Randeria 2004), it is also important to recognize how environmental disasters and destruction, for example natural disasters, technological disasters, as well as resource depletion as a result of heavy extractive industrial development and pollution, can pose a threat to indigenous cultural security. This is particularly significant for the Alutiiq. Like many other sub-arctic and arctic indigenous peoples, their cultural knowledge, values and identities are based upon a worldview where the natural and social environments are perceived as inherently interconnected. Threats to the local environments upon which their cultural knowledge, skills, practices and identities are based, can potentially affect the transmission of local knowledge and skills to younger generations, and therefore pose a threat to the continuation of their cultural livelihoods, upon which their collective identities are based. While other authors focusing on the effects of environmental disasters and resource depletion in indigenous communities acknowledge how environmental disasters, pollution and destruction can affect indigenous food security by adversely affecting their ability to extract local food resources for consumption,
little attention is given to how environmental changes, upheaval and destruction can also affect indigenous cultural security. In the Alutiiq case, as their ability to practice traditional subsistence harvesting and sharing practices was adversely affected by the presence of oil in the environment, it can be argued that this posed a significant threat to the inter-generational transmission of knowledge and skills upon which the conceptions of their collective cultural identities are based in addition to their ability to obtain local foods for consumption.

Still, claiming compensation for culture loss remains problematic. Paul Kirsch (1997) explores indigenous claims about culture loss in the cases of the OK Tedi Copper and Gold Mine in Papua New Guinea, where the dumping of mine waste into the OK Tedi river resulted in the destruction of local waterways, mass deforestation and a loss of wildlife which negatively affected local relationships to landscape, leading to experiences of a sense of profound loss as a direct result of the speed of the change process resulting from the sudden impacts of pollution. He argues that claiming cultural loss implies a static and fixed rigidity of cultural traditions (Kirsch 1997). Indeed, if cultural knowledge continually undergoes change as a result of modifications in lived experience within one’s environment, it can hardly be lost or damaged. As Sahlins (1993:17) points out, defining culture in this way “has the effect of erasing the logical and ontological continuities involved in the different ways societies interpret and respond to changes.” If landscape and its inhabitants are inalienable from cultural values from which identities are based, it contradicts this notion of cultural loss, as to lose something implies alienability.

Referring to the losses of sacred living space by indigenous communities in the Marshall Islands in the 1950s as a result of US government testing of nuclear weapons, Paul Kirsch (2001:174) suggests overcoming this problem by examining how indigenous communities view their land—whether they view it in relation to kinship and belonging, property, or both. When islanders claimed that their heritage and traditional way of life was damaged, their claims were refuted as they were not considered to be sufficiently associated with property in terms of Western legal definitions of property as objects for individual ownership and possession. However, the Marshallese regard their land as an element of one’s person and an integral part of people’s identity; as Kirsch (2001:78) writes, “the sense of self is deeply embedded in the land as it reflects the collective labour of generations of human activity.”

In cases where the environment is inseparable from culture in the sense that local knowledge is directly linked to specific environments, damage to the environment raises questions about the possible alienability of culture and such arguments can be used to support claims of cultural losses experienced by indigenous people (Kirsch 2001:179). As local knowledge is dependent upon continued access to land and resources, he argues that this type of knowledge can be regarded as cultural property, and its value should be recognized within the legal system (Kirsch 2001:182). Appadurai’s distinction between a neighbourhood and ethnoscape also lends support to this argument because it shows how cultural losses of this kind can represent a concrete loss. He explains that a neighbourhood environment is a context within which meaningful social action can be generated and that such meaning is inherently tied to a sense of place. The destruction of a
neighbourhood environment, which he views as an accumulation of experience and identity, represents a concrete loss which affects the production of local subjects (Appadurai 1995:210). Similarly, when an environment that is used for subsistence is destroyed, it can be regarded as posing a threat to livelihood which can, in this sense, be recognized as a concrete loss.

The Significance of the Influence of External Socio-Political Factors in Shaping Cultural Identity

The oil spill was not the first event to impact on the ability of the Alutiiq to participate in subsistence pursuits. In 1964, the Great Alaskan Earthquake and tsunami resulted in major temporary environmental degradation and the deaths of a number of Alutiiq residents in the old village of Chenega (Miraglia 2002). Remaining villagers were forced to relocate mostly to Tatitlek before choosing to rebuild the new village of Chenega Bay in 1982. Despite the mass devastation and upheaval caused by the disaster, it was not perceived to pose a significant threat to the cultural autonomy of the Alutiiq (Wooley 2004). Animals and fish returned to normal levels and behaved in an expected fashion within a few years, allowing subsistence harvests to resume to pre-disaster levels soon after the oil spill (Wooley 1995), but this is unlikely sufficient to explain why community members did not perceive at least short-lived temporary fears regarding threats to their cultural autonomy. While the relocation of Chenega Bay and deaths of community members was a devastating tragedy that resulted in a loss of perceptions of home and led to a temporary decrease in social ties and community relations, villages witnessed an increased level of community bonding which helped to restore their lives in the years after the earthquake (Wooley 2004). New social ties and community relationships were formed as villagers resettled and began to rebuild their lives (Wooley 2004; Miraglia 2002). It seems that the disaster did not result in cultural loss because the impacts of the disaster on the environment and on the community were less severe in the long run and because relatively quick adaptation was possible.

However, to fully account for the disparities in response to the disaster, I believe it is necessary to examine how the significance of subsistence, as a marker of identity is tied to the larger socio-political landscape of the relationship between Native Alaskans and the state and federal governments. While subsistence practice is tantamount to Alutiiq conceptions of identity in that it affirms and transmits reciprocal values that emphasise the interconnectedness of the human and animal worlds, this does not explain how subsistence practices have taken on new meanings for the Alutiiq as a result of their position within the state of Alaska. Indeed, while Ingold (2000) argues that identities are produced through lived experience, he does not consider how external political factors shape lived experience and identities. On the other hand, Jenkins (1997:11) explains that identities are formed through relationships with other ethnic groups and states. Therefore, internal conceptions of identity are interrelated with and often dominated by external factors, such as the relationship between other Native Alaskan ethnic groups and the US Government. Identities may be self-ascribed,
but they are also externally ascribed, which, in turn, can influence self-ascription (Jenkins 1997). Barth (1969) overturned understandings of ethnicity as internally determined, primordially fixed entities; markers of identity can be reinforced or neglected depending on circumstances and the need for a group to express a particular identity at certain moments in time. Similarly, Edwards (1985) notes that identities that provide a means of survival are the ones that will be preserved and reinforced, and markers of identities are asserted to show resistance to cultural shifts by the reinforcement and facilitation of their use.

Therefore, to fully account for the reason subsistence was regarded as important for Alutiiq conceptions of identity, it is necessary to examine how the symbolic value of subsistence greatly increased in the years prior to the oil spill as a marker of Alutiiq identity. It can be argued that this increase in the symbolic value of subsistence can be, at least in part, attributed to Alutiiq and Native Alaskan processes of self-determination and negotiation during and in the years prior to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) of 1971.

**ANSCA and the Rise of Symbolic Markers of Cultural Resistance to Assimilation**

Dombrowski (2001) and Mason (1996, 2002) both point to the increase in the significance of subsistence as a symbolic marker of identity during the period leading up to the ANCSA. Through attempts at gaining recognition and informing state and federal officials of their rights to land, subsistence became perceived as a legitimating factor in securing claims to ethnic status and land rights. The need for land was justified on the basis of a requirement to participate in subsistence pursuits and to maintain cultural traditions and worldviews. Native pressure groups such as the Alaska Federation of Natives included members from ethnic groups throughout Alaska and focused on defending Native rights to ancestral lands to prevent them from being sold off to industry, therefore effectively resisting what they perceived as attempts to assimilate Native peoples into Western society (Dombrowski 2001). Nagel (1996) argues that portrayals of ethnic identity like this can be used strategically as a tool to further claims within the political sphere. Cohen (1993) notes that politicized cultural identities are based upon increasing group solidarity, while simultaneously distancing members of that group from other groups. But how can one account for the significant need to increase cultural distance between groups?

Mason (2002) explains that emphasizing differences between ethnic groups and mainstream society was regarded as necessary to emphasize a lack of cultural assimilation. As Nagel (1996) argues, Euro–American worldviews have a tendency to essentialize cultural traditions while codifying national and ethnic groupings; they assume there must be an intrinsic and essentialist context to any identity defined in terms of oppositions, by either a common origin or common situation, experience, or practice. Then considering unequal distribution of power between governments and indigenous people within a Euro–American legal system based on Western knowledge and values, it can also be argued that the identities and cultural practices asserted by indigenous groups were selectively chosen to signify
difference in a way that would be perceived to be acceptable to the state and federal governments. Preston (1997) explores how Western governments have a narrow and static focus and tend to regard cultural aspects as traditional only if they assume unchanging characteristics with pre-contact practices. In such a view of tradition, claims to cultural authenticity are confined to a historical approach because practices which have been changed or altered in any way are regarded implicitly as evidence of assimilation.

While subsistence practices as grounded in specific landscape are responsive to environmental changes and have to be flexible, adaptive, and changing to be able to survive and continue in a changing environment, Native Alaskans asserted that their ancestors had been living off their lands for thousands of years (Mason 1996; Partnow 2001). Despite the fact that the practices at the time of the ANSCA settlement were different for their forefathers in that technology and cash economies were fully integrated into their pursuits, they continued to assert how the very existence of these practices provided a direct link to the pre-contact era to demonstrate how their culture had resisted assimilation. Arthur Mason (2002) also notes that the US Government’s increasing reception of multicultural diversity further emphasized the need to conceive of cultural identities in terms of opposition to the mainstream Euro–American society, which contributed to the assertions of Native Alaskan cultural values of interconnectedness and reciprocity to illustrate their difference from Western capitalist ideologies. Subsistence practices as integral to continual occupation of ancestral lands and as necessary for transmitting worldviews based on an interconnected and reciprocal relationship with one’s environment, were the common traits which Native people argued had survived colonial transformation and the introduction of a cash economy, and provided a direct continuous link to the pre-colonial past. The widespread practice of subsistence across different regions of Alaska, albeit on different lands, served to bring local practices together as a uniting symbolic means of organizing access to power and recognition.

This demonstrates how self-ascribed identities based on cultural practices were affected by external ascriptions of what could be legitimately regarded as cultural tradition. However, as Jenkins (1997) argues, these external assumptions and political debates surrounding the authenticity of claims to an ethic identity can, in turn, influence internal conceptions of identity. Dombrowski (2007) demonstrates how, in western Alaska, the increasing presence of subsistence foods at political meetings is used to demonstrate political power and serves as a marker of cultural identity, despite the fact that those who are engaged in regional and state-wide politics do not harvest the foods themselves. Rather, these foods reflect a process of internal power differentiation between village leaders who spend the majority of their time residing in the city and those residing in the village and who are most heavily dependent on locally harvested resources to ensure their material survival (Dombrowski 2007). According to Dombrowski, this demonstrates an increase in the symbolic value of subsistence resources as a reflection of cultural traditions. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the symbolic value of subsistence is still tied to the cultural practices, for without the harvesting of these foods, leaders would be unable to display continuation of these traditions. However, the situation
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suggests that assumptions regarding cultural difference have been internalized as increasing degrees of pride is attributed to evidence of the continuation of cultural tradition.

From this, it can be inferred that for Native Alaskans, subsistence has taken on an increased symbolic value as a marker of differentiation between themselves and mainstream Euro–American society. This is directly linked to processes of self-determination and recognition during the period leading up to the passage of ANSCA. As practices of subsistence inherently tied to local landscapes were regarded by Euro-American society as legitimating claims to ethnic status due to their attested link to the pre-colonial past, increased symbolic importance has been placed upon these practices as cultural traditions that legitimate difference and allow native ethnic status to be verified. It can then be argued that fears regarding loss of culture and threats to identity experienced by the Alutiiq as a result of the oil spill may also be rooted in the increased value placed on subsistence as a marker of indigenous status, symbolic of resistance to over 200 years of colonialism and attempts to assimilate Native Alaskan peoples into mainstream society. As the local environment was heavily oiled, it prevented people from engaging in subsistence practices which not only reaffirmed the reciprocal worldview based on the interconnectedness with the local environment but emphasized cultural differences between the Alutiiq and Euro–American society, I argue that the sense of loss experienced was compounded as their marker of resistance to cultural assimilation was threatened by the disruption the oil caused to the continuation of their livelihood. This may also account for why the disruption of subsistence practices due to the 1964 earthquake was not regarded as presenting such a threat to cultural security, since the earthquake occurred prior to the pre-ANSCA land negotiations, and thus before subsistence was imparted with symbolic value demonstrating cultural difference as evidence of having resisted cultural assimilation.

Conclusion

When the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill damaged the coastal environment of Prince William Sound, Lower Cook Inlet and Kodiak Island, this affected the ability of the Alutiiq to engage in traditional subsistence practices of harvesting and sharing of local food sources. The effects of the oil spill on their ability to practice subsistence can be seen to have posed a threat to Alutiiq cultural identity and well-being, as subsistence practices play a key role in the affirmation and transmission of a worldview which emphasizes the interconnectedness of the community and the wider environment. However, like other indigenous peoples worldwide, traditional Native Alaskan cultural identities are also affected by external assumptions and ascriptions of what the dominant Western worldview regard as legitimately representative of ‘traditional culture.’

The symbolic value of subsistence as a marker of Native identity can be seen to have increased in the period of negotiations leading up to the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Subsistence then took on a heavily charged political value as a marker of difference toward mainstream American
cultural practices. Its persistence serves as evidence against the idea that Native peoples had been assimilated into mainstream society through over 200 years of colonial dominance. External assumptions and political debates surrounding the authenticity of claims to Native status appear to have influenced internal conceptions of identity, demonstrated in how increasing degrees of pride are attributed to locally harvested foods as evidence of the continuation of cultural tradition. Therefore, one can infer that the impacts of the oil spill on subsistence practice posed a threat to the continuation of Alutiiq conceptions of identity as subsistence practices not only serve a functional role in affirming and maintaining values of interconnectedness of communities and their environments but also because of the symbolic value placed upon subsistence as a marker of authenticity of their cultural identity.

References


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Humanizing Security in the Arctic
Chapter 13
“We All Drink This Water:” The Contemporary Context of Salmon Fishing in Southwest Alaska

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Abstract: In Southwest Alaska, salmon are the major component of the subsistence economy. Much of the salmon harvest takes place at fish camps located near or in communities. Participating in fish camp is an expression of the subsistence way of life; a way of life that is as much about nutritional needs as it is about cultural identity and social relations. Salmon fishing in Southwest Alaska also provides income through participation in the commercial fishery in Bristol Bay. Salmon is therefore both important for the local subsistence and wage labour economy, providing food security for local residents. A development project (mining) is proposed for Southwest Alaska which will bring more jobs to the area. Over the past 100 years residents have maintained a seasonal pattern of participating in both the commercial and subsistence fishery. This participation has brought adequate food security for local residents. However, in recent years, commercial fishing has been poor and the prospect of jobs in mining development may allow residents to remain in the area and continue their subsistence way of life. Residents worry though about the mine, and whether or not there will be clean water to which the salmon can return.

Keywords: Bristol Bay, Kvichak River, salmon, commercial fishing, subsistence, food security.

Introduction

Subsistence harvest amounts in Alaska are relatively high compared to other Arctic areas (Poppel 2006:68). Since Alaska is a large state, with a wide range of ecosystems, the importance and harvest amounts of specific resources varies across the state. In Southwest Alaska, salmon are the major component of the subsistence economy. Much of the salmon harvest takes place at fish camps located near or in communities, where residents dedicate considerable time each summer to harvesting and processing salmon. Participating in fish camp is an expression of the subsistence way of life, which is as much about meeting basic nutritional needs as it is about aboriginal identity and social relations between kin-related groups (Adelson 2001:292–3; Dombrowski 2007:217; Myers et al. 2005:24).
Salmon fishing in Alaska’s rural communities provides jobs as well as a staple wild food. Commercial fishing in Alaska in the late nineteenth century added a new dimension to the traditional economy, as salmon became a commodity to be caught and sold. In Southwest Alaska, local participation in the Bristol Bay fishery was adapted within the seasonal pattern of resource gathering, and out of this a new mixed economy was established.

As a major subsistence activity in Southwest Alaska, salmon fishing is important to ensure adequate food security in this contemporary mixed economy. Some residents in the communities of the Kvichak Watershed of Southwest Alaska travel each summer to Bristol Bay to commercially fish, and then return to their communities to harvest salmon for subsistence. The money earned in commercial fishing provides the necessary means for paying for items such as boats, fish nets, and fuel. Without an income, it would be difficult to contribute to subsistence in this modern era.

This chapter will focus on the salmon fishery in meeting both subsistence and economic needs of individuals, families, and communities in the Kvichak Watershed of Southwest Alaska. After a short discussion of the research, the historical context of the commercial fishery will be presented. This will be followed by a discussion of subsistence fishing as both an economic and cultural activity, which will lead to salmon fishing as it relates to food security.

Research and Methods

This chapter refers to research from two projects conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Division of Subsistence. The objective of the first project, the Kvichak Fishcamp Ethnographic Project, referred to here as the Kvichak Project, was to better understand the sociocultural, economic, and environmental circumstances of the subsistence salmon fishery in four communities of the Kvichak Watershed of Southwest Alaska: Iliamna, Newhalen, Nondalton, and Port Alsworth (see Fig. 13.1).

The forthcoming results will be published as an ethnography, or cultural description, of residents’ subsistence salmon fishing activities. Three social science research methods were used in the Kvichak Project: participant observation (the primary method) during July 2007, key respondent interviews conducted mainly during fall 2007, and in-person household demographic and harvest surveys conducted in winter of both 2007 and 2008. During participant observation, the research team helped residents of each community pull in salmon nets, process fish, and do other fish camp jobs as instructed. Researchers experienced the subsistence sockeye salmon fishery firsthand, and made observations while asking questions. In October, after the fishing season, in-person key respondent interviews were

1 The Kvichak Watershed Fish Camp Ethnographic Project was funded by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. The ADF&G Division of Subsistence served as principal investigator and partnered with researchers from the Bristol Bay Native Association and the National Park Service’s Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.
conducted with knowledgeable fishers in each of the study communities. Potential respondents were identified during participant observation, after which the research team met to discuss and select respondents, with the goal of recruiting a wide range of ages and participation levels in the fishery. The team also welcomed recommendations from other community leaders and residents, and factored those recommendations into the decision-making process. Twenty-four key respondent interviews were conducted in the study communities. In February and March of both 2007 and 2008, systematic household surveys were conducted in each project community so as to capture demographic information, subsistence salmon harvest amounts and fishing effort, harvest locations, and general concerns. There was an attempt to survey every household in each of the study communities.

Figure 13.1. Pebble Project study communities.

The second project, the Pebble Project, is a wild resources harvest assessment survey of 17 Southwest Alaska communities (see Fig. 1; Fall et al. 2006; Krieg et al. 2009; Holen et al. n.d.-a, n.d.-b) in the vicinity of a proposed open

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2 The Division of Subsistence is conducting the Pebble Project as a continuing effort to document baseline harvest data for communities in the Bristol Bay region of Southwest Alaska. The first year of funding (2004) came from the National Park Service and Stephen R. Braund and Associates (SRB&A), a contractor of Northern Dynasty Mines (now the Pebble Limited Partnership [PLP 2009]). The subsequent three years of study (2005, 2007, & 2008) were funded entirely by SRB&A as part of their contract with the PLP.
pit mine at the headwaters of the major Bristol Bay salmon fishery. The mineral deposit includes gold, copper, molybdenum, and silver (NDM 2005). The potential development of the mine created the need for updated baseline information, not only about subsistence harvests and uses in the nearby communities, but also about demographics and economics. Researchers conducted household harvest surveys in each community and the results were quantitative in nature.

During interviews in both projects, clean water was identified as a general theme. One community resident expressed this theme in a succinct manner: “We all drink this water,” meaning people, fish, animals—’everyone’ (Krieg et al. 2009).

**The Peoples of the Kvichak Watershed and the Bristol Bay Subsistence Fishery**

Two indigenous cultures inhabit this region of Alaska: the Dena’ina Athabascan and the Central Yup’ik. Dena’ina Athabascan generally inhabit the upper part of the watershed, while Central Yup’ik generally inhabit the southern two-thirds of the Iliamna Lake area, the Nushagak River watershed, and other areas of Bristol Bay. Individuals of Euro–American, Asian, Pacific Island, and other descent also inhabit this area of Alaska. Some of these newcomers arrived as trappers, reindeer herders, and homesteaders, but the large majority arrived to work in the Bristol Bay fisheries. These latter individuals, many of Scandinavian descent, made Southwest Alaska their home and married into local indigenous families.

During the early twentieth century, fishing in Bristol Bay increased in importance for many residents of the region. It also increasingly blurred the interethnic lines between Southwest Alaska cultures (Townsend 1979).

The first cannery to open in Bristol Bay was established in 1882 by the Arctic Packing Company on the east bank of the Nushagak River at Kanulik (Unrau 1994:144). By 1903, ten canneries were operating in Bristol Bay. Most of the fishing was done by Euro–Americans, while the cannery work force was provided on a seasonal basis by Chinese labourers. Some Yup’ik were present in the area during the fishing season and gradually they were able to gain employment in the processing facilities (VanStone 1971:22). However, it took a decade before a reasonable number of Yup’ik were working in the canneries.

The salmon industry affected the Dena’ina in two ways. First, the Bristol Bay fishing industry and its seasonal cannery jobs drew Dena’ina from the interior, a migration especially evident during the influenza epidemic of 1919, when seasonal migration to the canneries contributed to the spread of the epidemic to the Iliamna Lake–Lake Clark area (Unrau 1994:159). Second, fish traps used by the canneries in the early years blocked the return of salmon to the Kvichak River system. The use of traps was quickly identified as a problem for adequate spawning migration; their use was soon outlawed to protect the fishery and to allow for upriver residents’ subsistence fishing activities, including the Dena’ina’s (Unrau 1994:146).

Cannery work was one of the few employment opportunities offered to local Yup’ik and Dena’ina residents in the early part of the twentieth century. Although
they provided a significant labour force, they still experienced considerable racial prejudice. Involvement in the actual harvest of fish was limited by ‘outside’ fishers, who had formed such a monopoly in the fishing activity that it prevented local populations of all descents from selling to the canneries. Fishing was reserved for Euro–American fishers from Seattle and San Francisco who traveled to Alaska to fish after a downturn in their own fisheries. During World War Two, many of the outside fishers left to join the war effort, which allowed local Euro–American and indigenous fishers to participate in the fishery, both as independent operators and as cannery employees. Thus, local residents finally gained a foothold in the fishery (Peterson 1983:72).

Presently, residents of the Kvichak watershed continue to travel each spring to Bristol Bay to participate in the commercial fishery, both as fishers and as processors in the fish packing facilities (Townsend 1979). On the coast, commercial fishers meet their subsistence needs either by removing a portion of their commercial salmon harvest for household use, or by setting a gill net on the beach on days when the fishery is closed (Holen et al. n.d.a,b). Participation in the commercial fishery, therefore, ensures that Bristol Bay residents from communities such as Naknek or King Salmon have the economic and food security necessary to survive the winter months, when jobs are scarce. For Kvichak watershed residents, however, the commercial fishery does not provide a ready answer to their subsistence needs, as it is expensive to transport salmon from Bristol Bay to their home communities. For example, in 2004, Newhalen residents reported that only 5.6% of their subsistence sockeye salmon harvest was retained from commercial catches, while 94.2% of their harvest was obtained near the community (Fall et al. 2006:83). Thus, fishing locally, especially the effort which is directed at participation at fish camps, is important for Kvichak Watershed residents’ food security. However, as discovered during the two research projects, local residents have assigned a deeper meaning to fish camps.

Fish Camp as Physical and Social Space

Fish camps in the Kvichak Watershed are located in or near communities. The fish camps used by Nondalton residents, for example, are located at the mouth of Six-Mile Lake, where it empties into the Newhalen River (see Fig. 13.2). This area is about a five-minute boat ride downstream from the community.

Researchers for the two projects noted that ‘fish camp’ did not refer exclusively to a location; it was an important cultural activity that incorporated family and community. Many residents of Nondalton, for example, related that they looked forward to returning to fish camps in the spring in order to escape the modern distractions of the village and to spend quality time with family members, while participating in an annual subsistence activity.

Residents of Nondalton said they begin early to prepare for salmon fishing. They went to fish camp in mid-June in order to cut the grass that had grown high around the buildings, as well as to conduct necessary repairs to the structures. Camps in Nondalton are located on land traditionally held by resident families,3

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3. Title to these traditional lands was conveyed to Alaska
and often hosted more than one nuclear family. Although residents appeared to enjoy spending time at fish camps, these camps were not for recreation. One of the goals of fish camps, according to residents, is to harvest enough salmon to get through the winter. In 2004, for example, the Pebble Project found that Nondalton households used an average of 13.7 different resources; one household used 48 different resources (Fall et al. 2006:28). Salmon constituted 62 percent (92.4 kg per person) of the overall harvest of these wild resources (Fall et al. 2006:193, 205). The 2007 survey for the Kvichak Project found that residents harvested 74 sockeye salmon per person (157.1 kg). In 2008, the second year of the Kvichak Project survey, residents harvested 68 sockeye salmon per person (143.6 kg). Although harvest amounts vary per year, this is still a significant harvest.

Fish camps in Kvichak Watershed communities, often include participation by more than one nuclear family. Most families used set gill nets which were generally ‘picked’ once in the morning and once at night until the desired harvest amount was reached. Nondalton and Newhalen residents also used seine nets to harvest salmon. Intensive fishing effort usually lasted four to six weeks in summer, although in fall there was a second period of fishing for late running sockeye salmon. In most cases, men and boys in the family were responsible for setting and picking the fish nets. Once the harvest arrived in camp, women directed the

Native regional corporations under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Under this act, residents could apply for title to lands they had traditionally used for subsistence.
processing, which appeared to take most of the effort and time. Processing salmon usually involved cutting the salmon into fillets or thin strips, depending on the family’s preferred style, drying the meat on an outdoor rack, and then moving it to the smokehouse (see Fig. 13.3). Following this, the salmon were placed in jars and pressure-cooked. A few salmon were filleted and fresh frozen; however, freezer space was usually reserved for other subsistence resources, such as moose and caribou.

Figure 13.3. Salmon drying in Nondalton, July 2007 (Photo by Davin Holen).

During both projects, 23 fish camps were used by residents of Nondalton, which had a population of 151 people in 2008. In the community, houses are small, about 100 square meters including three bedrooms, one bath, and a main room. These are usually occupied by two generations. In fish camps, however, it was common to see three or four generations of large extended families, often comprising family members who lived in other communities who had traveled to the camp. One camp’s social structure, for example, was represented by five related nuclear family groups participating in fishing in one time period. In each camp, there were kin relations based both on marriage and on blood. Many camps had several permanent structures; including cabins, steam baths, smokehouses, and storage buildings. Each camp usually had more than one cabin, as seen in Figure 13.2, with multiple generations often occupying each cabin. Sometimes there were up to 10 to 20 people in a camp at any one time. Camps of related kin were also located next to one another. Figure 13.4 shows a kinship diagram for two Nondalton camps that were related by kinship and where multiple generations were present. This diagram demonstrates some of the social spaces of fish camp: how multiple generations were present in a fish camp as well as typical kinship relations between camps.
In three of the four study communities in the Kvichak Project, Iliamna, Newhalen, and Nondalton, there was a definite pattern of separation of labour by gender. Men set and picked the nets—often picking nets for more than one woman or camp—while women processed the salmon. This pattern was particularly evident in these communities when the men were absent from the community due to work obligations, such as participating in the Bristol Bay commercial fishery. In Newhalen, for example, a single male harvested fish for 11 households (see Fig. 13.5).

Of the eleven people (each representing distinct households) that this fisher delivered salmon to, nine were women whose men were unable to harvest salmon because they were fishing commercially, working at another seasonal or full-time job, or they were lacking the funds needed to repair inoperable equipment. The processing of salmon is directed by women in traditional salmon fish camps. In two of the Newhalen cases, it was observed that men were participating in the processing of the salmon, but only under the supervision of the women, usually a single female elder, who directed all the processing. Men were often given the preliminary processing jobs, such as handing salmon to women, who would cut them, or removing the salmon heads and viscera.

This distribution of labour was also observed in Nondalton fish camps. In one case, a female elder who was working alone at her camp, which is located just outside the community, received her fish from one of her sons, who had set and picked the net for her. In this case, as in the Newhalen case, in a reciprocal

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**Figure 13.4. Kinship diagram of two related fish camps in Nondalton, 2007.**
action, some processed fish were then given to the fisher who had delivered the salmon. Even though in many cases the net was owned by the female, picking the net and delivery of the harvest was seen as the role of males in the community. The ownership of the harvest, and its processing, or the direction of that processing, appeared to be the place of the eldest female. In addition, as seen in Figures 13.4 and 13.5, these fish camps appeared to be organized into matrilinetal kin-related households working together. This pattern may be the result of girls who grew up together and who learned how to process salmon under the direction of an elder woman. When the elder passes on, the direction of processing appears to progress to the next eldest, and so forth. It may also be that, as seen in Figure 13.4, it was simply the females in the households who processed salmon. Therefore they were the only ones present in the fish camps.

**Figure 13.5.** Newhalen distribution of salmon by local fisher, 2007 and 2008. Diagram by Davin Holen and Jory Stariwat.

**Salmon: Important for Economic and Food Security**

Today, salmon used both for subsistence and to provide wage labour, forms an integral part of life for the residents of the Kvichak watershed. As discussed above in Nondalton, salmon comprised 61% of the resource harvests in 2004, the most recent baseline study year (Fall et al. 2006:205). In fact, in terms of the percentage of the total harvest of all available resources, Nondalton had the lowest salmon harvest of the five study communities during that study year. Compare this to
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a community like Iliamna, which demonstrated a greater reliance on salmon in 2004 as a part of the total, year-round harvest of wild resources (79%). Both communities also saw their residents travel to Bristol Bay to fish commercially, in addition to remaining home to fish for subsistence purposes.

Over the past 10 years, low prices offered by salmon processors have caused some commercial fishers to sell their fishing permits and boats and search for labour elsewhere. In Kokhanok, for example, residents related that they had sold their boats and permits because they were not earning enough money during the fishery to break even. In other communities in the region, fewer young people reported that they were entering the fishery, as there were fewer crewmember jobs or cannery jobs. However, in the past two years, prices paid for salmon by processors have steadily increased as Alaska’s wild salmon have become popular. Interviews conducted during the Kvichak Project suggested that the younger generations in the four study communities were beginning to see the Bristol Bay fishery as a lucrative source of summer income; many had taken jobs in the canneries and as commercial crewmembers (Fall et al. 2006). In 2007, some residents who had kept their boats and permits had actually made a small profit.

Commercial fishing continues to be an important economic driver of the local economy. Figure 13.6 demonstrates that in Newhalen in 2004, 24% of residents participated in the commercial fishery, 52% of households had at least one family member involved in commercial fishing, and 22% of the community’s income came from commercial fishing (Fall et al. 2006:64). In Kokhanok, on the southern shore of Iliamna Lake, residents were still marginally active in the fishery in 2005. Commercial fishing provided 16% of the income for the community as a whole. In terms of jobs, 21% of residents were participating in commercial fishing and 40% of households had at least one family member who was commercial fishing (Krieg et al. 2009:71).

The salmon resource is a necessary component of the subsistence economy and plays a key role for food security in these communities. Resident incomes are not as high as in urban communities in Alaska such as Anchorage or Fairbanks (Table 13.2).

A recent increase in already high fuel prices has driven up the cost of store-bought food brought in by plane. Nonetheless, salmon harvests at the community level have been maintained, although, especially in the case of Nondalton, the population has declined over the last ten years and salmon returns to the Kvichak system have also declined over the last 35 years. According to residents, in most years they are able to harvest enough salmon to meet their subsistence needs. In 2002, however, there was a lower than normal return and residents of Nondalton were not able to harvest enough salmon to meet their household’s needs. They said that they were able to make up the difference by harvesting moose, but that this took a tremendous effort on the part of some members of the community. They also said that several ‘super hunters’ broke the law and harvested more moose than were legal in order to provide food to the entire community (Holen et al. 2005). According to the Division of Wildlife Conservation at ADF&G, both populations of moose and caribou have drastically declined since this time.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Annual Wild Food Harvest per Household (kilograms)</th>
<th>Estimated Wild Food Replacement Value per Household (@$15US/ kilo)</th>
<th>Mean Household Cost of Annual Food Purchases</th>
<th>Annual Household Income</th>
<th>Resident Responses of Percentage of Annual Cash Income Spent on Food</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Igiugig</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>$10,778</td>
<td>$8,110</td>
<td>$32,755</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokhanok</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>$14,533</td>
<td>$7,452</td>
<td>$30,007</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koliganek</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>$14,554</td>
<td>$7,279</td>
<td>$34,800</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levelock</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>$4,715</td>
<td>$4,213</td>
<td>$28,459</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Stuyahok</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>$5,926</td>
<td>$7,104</td>
<td>$27,572</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kreig et al. 2009:25.27; Holen 2009)

*Unpublished data

Figure 13.6. Newhalen jobs by industry, 2005.

Because of their large contribution to subsistence resource harvests, salmon are therefore vital in ensuring adequate food security for residents in these communities. As seen in Table 13.1, the store-bought food replacement value
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for wild foods harvested in rural southwest Alaska communities is US$4,715 to US$15,554 per household (at $15 per kg) (Krieg et al. 2009:25, 27; Holen 2009). Residents are already spending 15 to 26 percent of their household income on store-bought food, with the average household spending from US$4,213 to US$8,110 annually. Therefore, the harvest of wild foods, and salmon in particular, is paramount in maintaining food security.

Discussion

The salmon fishery continues to be a major part of life for many residents of the Kvichak watershed in terms of both subsistence and jobs. In 1890, when fish traps were seen as impediments to salmon migration in the Kvichak system, they were removed, which allowed the annual migration of millions of salmon to continue to the present. These salmon have ensured food security for area residents.

Measuring food security in Alaska, as well as across the Arctic, is only recently becoming widespread in scope. Recent efforts, as reported in the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) and the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), are beginning to address food security and how customary harvesting practices are important both culturally and economically (ACIA 2004; AHDR 2004; Duhaime 2002; Duhaime and Bernard 2008). These reports are broad in scope and focus on the circumpolar Arctic region. More attention needs to be directed at the mixed economy of Arctic food production systems. One such report, the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA), is the outcome of a survey that takes a more holistic approach to understanding community well-being in the Arctic by measuring living conditions in a way relevant to Arctic residents (www.arcticlivingconditions.org). The SLiCA report, however, remains focused on the high Arctic and is broad in scope, addressing an extensive range of conditions. In order to understand the Arctic region, there need to be more research projects that expand the geographic area under study while also investigating wild food harvests and food security at the local community level.

Surveys on the local level need to account for differences in access to subsistence and store-bought foods (Bickel et al. 2000; Magdanz et al., in press) to adequately measure “food security—access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life” (Nord et al. 2008:2). One recent harvest assessment where food security was measured as part of the survey was in the Northern Alaska communities of Noatak and Kivalina (Magdanz et al., in press). This project is an example of work that should be expanded to other areas of Alaska and across the north. The replacement value at today’s prices of about US$15 per kilogram would come out to over US$71 million for the Arctic region of Alaska as a whole. As part of the survey in 2008 Noatak and Kivalina residents were asked a series of questions from a standardized list, as set out by the US Department of Agriculture (Bickel et al. 2000).

Figure 13.7, for example, shows that in Noatak, 17% of residents reported that store-bought food would run out each month while a slightly lower percentage (11%), reported that their subsistence foods would run out. Although subsistence makes up for lower incomes from which to buy food, there is higher food
‘insecurity’ in rural Alaska households (77%) as compared to Alaska in general (88%) and the rest of the United States (89%; see Fig. 14.8). Subsistence makes a difference in rural Alaska where households earn less than in urban areas and the cost of living is higher. However, these communities are not secure food-wise.

![Figure 13.7. Respondent concerns related to food security, Noatak, 2007.](image)

More research like that done in Noatak and Kivalina to measure the degree of food security needs to be undertaken at the local level in other regions of Alaska, not just the High Arctic which receives much of the research focus. This type of quantitative analysis of food security would pair well with understanding the local context of resource gathering patterns, such as occurs at fish camps, and the importance of subsistence in both the economic and social realms of rural Alaskan communities.

**Conclusion**

Salmon have become a symbol of the resilient nature of the Bristol Bay region of Alaska. Looking back over a hundred years of engagement with the Bristol Bay fishery is one way we can see that these communities have remained resilient in the face of change, by tracing their transformation of a traditional subsistence activity into a new mixed economy. Low salmon prices had driven some residents out of the Bristol Bay commercial fishery. A steady yearly income is important for living in rural Alaska, not only to pay the normal cost of living, which is high, but also to buy the necessary means to engage in subsistence. Jobs are necessary to address the cost of living. During the question and comment section of the
Pebble project surveys, many residents expressed confusion over the potential of a large mine. Everyone depends on clean water and very few are excited about the prospect of a mine in the area, but other parts of the Arctic have seen resource development projects provide jobs for local residents. These jobs have allowed families to remain in their communities instead of migrating to urban centres in search of jobs. One of the prime reasons for remaining in their communities is to continue to participate in subsistence activities in an area they are intimately familiar with, and with people they are related to by kinship. However, in many cases, mine work schedules have interfered with resident’s ability to participate in subsistence pursuits, and the resource development projects have caused environmental degradation that affect local subsistence resources (Bielawski 2003; Crate 2006). Commercial fishing, on the other hand apparently has allowed residents time to maintain their participation in the local subsistence economy. Fish camps, structured by kinship relations and defined gender roles, ensure that an adequate subsistence harvest occurs. If men attached to one nuclear family are fishing commercially or working at other seasonal jobs, other residents ensure that the women, who do the bulk of the processing, receive what they need for food security to occur at the household and community level.

Figure 13.8. Respondent concerns related to food security, Noatak, 2007.

Salmon return to the Kvichak system annually to spawn in clean water, providing residents with both economic and food security through the commercial and subsistence fishery. Commercial fishing today provides local residents the opportunity to continue a traditional gathering activity in the context of a modern economic system. Following the commercial fishing season, most residents return to their communities to fish for subsistence with their families. According to local residents, it’s difficult to describe why fishing each summer for subsistence is important. One resident related: “It’s just what we do, who we are.”
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References


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Chapter 14

Food Security, Arctic Security: Why the Local Cannot be Ignored

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Abstract: Food security is a pressing issue in arctic communities throughout northern Canada. Findings from fieldwork conducted in Paulatuk, Northwest Territories in 2008 suggest that accessibility and affordability of food remains a significant issue, results that echoe findings from similar surveys and research in other arctic communities. Despite programs designed to address food security issues, access to adequate and nutritious food, both traditional and store-bought, remains a challenge in many arctic communities. Environmental changes, such as those attributed to climate change, the presence of contaminants, and proposed resource development in the Circumpolar North may further impact access to traditional foods. It is thus important for all levels of government to acknowledge and address the underlying economic and structural causes of food insecurity in arctic communities. Canada can look to the experiences of other jurisdictions, such as Greenland, in handling issues affecting food security in arctic communities.

Keywords: Food security, arctic security, policy, sovereignty, indigenous rights, Inuvialuit, Paulatuk, Northwest Territories, Canada.

A Sovereign Challenge

Any arctic sovereignty or security agenda must address and respect the rights and concerns of Inuit and indigenous peoples. A nuanced approach is vital as indigenous peoples, including Inuvialuit in Canada, face cumulative social, economic and environmental pressures impacting their lives (Nuttall 2007). Furthermore, indigenous rights must be considered as the impacts of any military, scientific, social, political or economic program aimed at addressing arctic security will have direct, local impacts on northern residents (CBC 2008a,b).

One must only look to the forced relocation of Inuit to remote locales in the mid-twentieth century to find a sharp reminder of not-so-distant national sovereignty actions that had devastating, direct impacts on Inuit (Marcus 1992). As James Eetoolook, Vice-President of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., stated recently at the unveiling of monuments to commemorate the relocation:

At a time when Canadian sovereignty is on the minds of politicians around the world, the media, and opportunistic businesses that look forward to an ice-free Northwest Passage […] there is no better time to issue this reminder: this land belongs to Canada not because of the lines drawn on a map, but because of the Inuit who sacrificed everything to live here (Boswell 2009a).
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This statement both reinforces Canada’s claim to the land while highlighting a key issue in arctic security: the region is inhabited by indigenous peoples who have lived there for thousands of years (Boswell 2009b; McGhee 2004). National sovereignty or arctic security initiatives must proceed only if and when direct, local impacts such initiatives may have on indigenous peoples throughout the Circumpolar Arctic are addressed, and, perhaps equally as important, the possible impacts of a failure to act when warranted.

Differing Visions

Griffiths (2009:3–28) outlines a vision of arctic stewardship that challenges Canada’s current approach with sovereign, unilateral control of the Northwest Passage. He urges Canada to consider a stewardship approach that incorporates cooperation with the United States along with better North–South collaboration within Canada. However, Canada’s administration of arctic sovereignty and/or stewardship (CBC 2008a,b) does not bode well for Griffiths’ arctic stewardship vision. In theory, Griffith’s stewardship approach may better integrate and address local concerns, needs and rights of northern indigenous peoples by taking the focus off sovereignty and concentrating instead on action and engagement within realistic parameters. However, Griffiths’ vision may not pan out, given Canada’s track record for acknowledging indigenous rights in northern governance (Boswell 2009b). The Federal Government’s support of the Arctic has often been through ad-hoc announcements that do not necessarily meet the needs of northern residents (CBC 2008a,b). Witness the lack of a comprehensive science program (Munro 2009; Leaderpost 2009), inadequate funding and infrastructure to address the day-to-day struggles faced by residents, including concerns regarding access to adequate and affordable housing (Collings 2005) and food (Boult 2004; Duhaime et al. 2002).

This is further complicated by the layers of governance affected by security concerns in the region. By focusing on a vertical integration of the US and Canada, Griffiths (2009) does not immediately address the difficulties faced in ensuring that the Canadian Government is cognizant and respectful of the rights of Indigenous peoples when addressing arctic security concerns, such as the issue of control or stewardship of the Northwest Passage. Griffiths (2009:24) acknowledges that "everything I have said thus far will appear to some degree to be disrespectful and offensive to Inuit in its unexamined southern assumptions of the need to rely on hardware and law in maintaining control over a prized but distant domain that’s essentially uninhabited." Thus, the horizontal integration that Loukacheva (2007) describes between circumpolar Inuit organizations and the recognition of the role that sub-national entities such as Greenland and Nunavut can play in arctic governance is a very important factor in building sustainable, effective and responsive policies to address arctic security issues, particularly when addressing the direct, local impacts that national sovereignty agendas have on indigenous peoples.
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Griffiths (2009:25) does go on to point out that "a new dialogue between southerners and northerners about who we are, what we seek and how we ought to conduct ourselves is indispensable." Thus, he does make efforts to address the disparities between nation–state decision-making involved in the cooperation that he urges Canada to adopt in administering the Northwest Passage, which may make his cooperation model more responsive to indigenous voices than the sovereignty model has been thus far. However, it is vital that Loukacheva’s (2007) analysis of horizontal arctic governance be included in such a stewardship model—to flesh out and enact the internal North–South dialogue that Griffiths envisions. Without a solid governance model to act as the substrate for this dialogue, there will be no process to engage and include the concerns of Indigenous peoples in the administration of the Northwest Passage or other arctic security issues.

Ultimately, while Griffiths’ (2009) cooperation approach is pragmatic and may be the only approach Canada can feasibly take in the matter, it is critical that power dimensions between the United States and Canada be considered. Furthermore, other governance models (i.e., horizontal integration and/or participation of sub-national indigenous organizations; Loukacheva 2007) be considered when proceeding in matters of arctic security to ensure that the rights and concerns of Arctic Indigenous peoples—whose lives and livelihoods will be the most directly affected by activity or disasters in the Arctic—are respected by any Northwest Passage or arctic security regime. This echoes the desires of Inuit leaders, who recently urged that circumpolar nation–states address and include Inuit in arctic sovereignty agendas (Boswell 2009b). As Patricia Cochran, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, stated: "We have lived here for thousands and thousands of years and by making this declaration, we are saying to those who want to use Inuit Nunaat for their purposes, you must talk to us and respect our rights" (Boswell 2009b).

Thus, arctic security must be imagined within a space that is cognizant of both power dimensions of core–periphery nation–states as well as the power dimensions between nation–states and the sub-national indigenous bodies that represent the residents who inhabit these northern regions.

Local Impacts: Food Security

What must be addressed, regardless of whether Canada adopts a stewardship or a sovereignty approach, is the local social, environmental, and economic effects that any security agenda will have on arctic communities. Thus, a key to strengthening Griffiths’ approach is determining how such a partnership will address the local impacts that US–Canada stewardship of the Northwest Passage may potentially have on communities. This would mean ensuring that a robust and meaningful way to include and respect the rights and needs of Arctic Indigenous peoples is incorporated into any arctic security regime. One such concern is the impact that sovereignty initiatives, particularly the ad-hoc initiatives announced by the Canadian government in the last few years (CBC 2008a), could have on communities. It is vital that communities receive support to mitigate the impacts of arctic sovereignty initiatives—including support to address the pressing issue of food security.
The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (2009) defines food security as existing "when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Currently, food security is a pressing issue for many communities throughout the Arctic (Boult 2004; Caulfield 2000; Duhaime 2002; Duhaime et al. 2002; Lambden et al. 2006; Lawn and Harvey 2001; Rasmussen 2002; Willows et al. 2005). Concerns over the affordability and availability of both store-bought and traditional foods will only become more urgent as other cumulative pressures, including contaminants in traditional foods (CACAR II 2003), changes accruing from climate change (Nuttall 2007), increased resource development in the Arctic (Byers and Lalonde 2006), and arctic sovereignty initiatives (Griffiths 2009; Loukacheva 2007) strain resources and capacity of northern communities. Thus, the theme of food security that emerged from fieldwork conducted in the community of Paulatuk, in the Northwest Territories (Canada) in 2008 can feasibly be placed within the context of arctic security, as it is one of the existing localized issues that could be worsened if the concerns of Indigenous communities are not included in the arctic security discussion.

Paulatuk: A Case Study

Paulatuk, in the Northwest Territories of Canada, is an Inuvialuit community of 324 people (NWT Bureau of Statistics 2007:1) situated on the coast of the Beaufort Sea. Traditional harvesting and the consumption of traditional foods remain very important (NWT Bureau of Statistics 2007; Todd and the Community of Paulatuk 2008). According to data from 2003, 49.5% of residents harvest regularly and 51.9% of households consume traditional foods (which was defined as ‘all or most meat consumed’ for the sake of the survey) (NWT Bureau of Statistics 2007:3); in contrast only 36.7% of residents of the Northwest Territories harvest regularly and only 17.5% households consume traditional foods (NWT Bureau of Statistics 2007:3).

Throughout 2007 and 2008, a project was developed in collaboration with the Hamlet Council of Paulatuk, the Paulatuk Community Corporation, the Paulatuk Hunters' and Trappers' Committee and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, focused on The Impact of Participation in the Wage Economy on Traditional Harvesting, Dietary Patterns and Social Networks in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. In April and May of 2008, a community Research Assistant and myself conducted 20 interviews with residents of the community between the ages of 20 and 83. Participants were selected in a snowball sampling method (Creswell 2007) based on their experience in the wage economy, and we aimed to capture a range of types of involvement in the wage economy (including full-time, part-time, rotational, seasonal, or other work). Participants were both male (n=10) and female (n=10). Attempts were made to control for education and length of time living in the community. The interviews were semi-guided and followed a three-part survey that attempted to capture information that considered the relationship between employment, harvesting, social networks and dietary patterns. The third part of the survey contained questions regarding store-bought foods.
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The findings from the survey prompted the organization of a half-day food security workshop in August 2009 to further examine concerns in the community and develop ways to address the issue of availability and affordability of both store-bought and traditional foods. Twelve community residents participated in the workshop and two community members were interviewed regarding food security issues following the workshop.

In Paulatuk, food security concerns were voiced during interviews—concerns about availability and affordability, as well as about the impacts of changes in animal populations, such as declining caribou herds and other concerns regarding the affordability of harvesting. These findings corroborate other studies in Canadian arctic communities that indicate that food security is a common and serious issue that all levels of government must address by tackling the economic and structural issues that impact the availability and affordability of store-bought and traditional foods.

Store-bought food prices in remote communities, especially fly-in communities such as Paulatuk, are much higher than communities that are served by other (or multiple) forms of transportation (INAC 2008a,b). One way of assessing the higher costs of store-bought foods in the North is by consulting the ‘Northern Food Basket’ (INAC 2008a) measure and the ‘Revised Northern Food Basket’ (INAC 2008b) measure, developed alongside the Food Mail Program (INAC 2008a). These measures indicate that the cost of food in northern Canada is already much higher than elsewhere in the country (INAC 2008a,b). The 2006 Weekly Cost of the Northern Food Basket for a Family of Four in Paulatuk was $347, placing Paulatuk behind only Old Crow, in the Yukon ($388) and Coral Harbour, Nunavut ($352) in terms of cost of market foods (INAC 2008a). The measure was merely $159 in Yellowknife, NT, for the same year, and $163 in Whitehorse, YK (INAC 2008a), both communities with road access. To provide a context for how these prices compare to southern markets, the value was $155 in Montreal in 2005 and $153 in Edmonton (INAC 2008a). Thus, although it is difficult to compare prices in different communities using only a simple metric, since each community faces unique factors that shape their food security experiences, it is clear that arctic communities face a significantly higher price burden for market foods than southern communities, and remote arctic communities face the highest price burden of all (INAC 2008a).

Despite the high cost of market foods in Canadian arctic communities, researchers have shown that there has been a gradual shift toward greater consumption of market or store-bought foods and a corresponding decline in overall consumption of traditional foods. This dietary shift has caused greater proportions of sugar, carbohydrate and fat to be consumed regularly, which has been linked to increases in the rates of certain chronic diseases, such as Type II Diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Kuhnlein et al. 2004).

The Past: ‘Tough Life, Long Ago’
It is important to put current arctic food security concerns into historical context. In the past, Paulatuk residents worked hard to procure food from the land on which

1. Note from the Editors: see Appendix 1, Elliott, this volume].
they relied (Parks Canada 2004). This meant that people were subject to periods of hunger when animals or plants were hard to access. The 1950s were a difficult time for residents of Paulatuk, with starvation impacting the region.

In the Paulatuuq Oral History Project (Parks Canada 2004), elders shared experiences of food scarcity, which often forced families to relocate in order to increase their opportunities to hunt for adequate food. Moses Agnaoyok remembers difficulties procuring adequate food at the PIN 1 Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line site east of Paulatuk: "We weren’t doing good in east, PIN 1. We nearly... starved a few times so we had to move to another place this way" (Parks Canada 2004:116).

Food security in the past was also highlighted in participants’ responses to interview questions during the course of fieldwork. The difficulty of procuring food from the land meant hard work and uncertainty. Thus, it is not surprising that when families moved to the permanent current location of Paulatuk, at the base of Darnley Bay, households faced hardship. As one participant pointed out:

..., the first few years here it was pretty tough ’cause of no housing. Had to live in tents with snow blocks around. That’s in the wintertime... and you always had to go out to get wood. Every day, work ... those years, you basically had to travel with dog teams (Bob, April 2008).

As an elder pointed out throughout her interview, Paulatuk in the past was characterized by how tough life was before. She recounted her memories of the work and effort that went into ensuring her family was fed:

Lots of ways you could go—oh, we don’t stay in one place, but we hunt anything. As we used to hunt squirrels too... We could hunt anything. Seal, they hunt seal. All, all, all any old way you could—they could do anything, my parents. ... That’s how you used to—tough life, long ago.. (Dorothy, April 2008).

However, these struggles are not confined to the distant past. With wildlife populations shifting over time—on their inherent timeline—community members have long had to be flexible in order to adapt harvesting activities to accommodate migration patterns and population shifts. As recently as the 1990s, the community faced uncertainty regarding caribou populations. As one participant who works part-time pointed out, wildlife population fluctuations affect the availability of food. When it comes to how long it takes to get enough food to meet an individual or household’s needs:

It depends on how.... quick you can get your... char or whitefish. Back in the ’70s, ’80s, you’d be out maybe for a week. ...And same with the caribou hunts. You’re ... out there, in the ’60s, ’70s, and ‘80s you were out there just for about three, four days. ... Now, it’s all coming back though. Our caribous never leave our area year-
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round. We have caribou year-round again. Then, ‘90s, oh, gee, they were hard to come by. Everything left here in the ‘90s. ... Last five years, it’s been really good. We’ve been having our caribous stay ... all year round you get caribous on the east Brock River side and on the west, the Parry Peninsula, you have caribous there year-round (Bob, April 2008).

**The Present**

A recent caribou quota has reintroduced concerns about access to adequate food (Todd and Community of Paulatuk 2008). Although some participants like Bob noted that caribou are easier to come by now than in the 1990s, a quota imposed in 2007 has restricted harvesting to two caribou per household per year. Many participants expressed concerns about the impact this quota would have on household food security. Some indicated that they were replacing caribou with other wild game, while others indicated that the quota forced individuals to rely on more store-bought meats:

Time’s changing, yeah. We’re ready to go hungry pretty soon. Now, I’m better off to stick to the seals ... and muskox. That’s what I’m doing now (John, April 2008).

Like, we can... try and get as much meat as we could, but then there’s just so much that you can get when there’s this restriction on right now. People—two caribous a year is unbelievable, unbelievably crazy. I mean, when you depend on that food and you only can get two. … I guess it’s good for something that they’re doing that, but when you’re trying to survive by wildlife, it’s hard. I mean, if you get a caribou, you can last for a month or so, maybe more if you cut it up and all good and stuff like that. It can last you a long time, but with the Northern [i.e.: storebought] foods, you pretty much have to buy it every day and just, like, people aren’t made of money [laughter] (Melanie, May 2008).

Changes in the ability to harvest caribou create even more pressure on existing resources in the community, which makes it more challenging for households to balance their needs for healthy foods. Thus, it is important that arctic security agendas take into account existing local issues in order to ensure that they do not exert further pressures on arctic communities.

While responses obtained in interviews provide rich narratives that indicate that individuals and households have long been subject to food security issues influenced by location, wildlife populations, employment opportunities and other factors, it is also important to note that the availability of fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, has changed significantly from twenty or thirty years ago. However, cost is a major concern, hampering the ability of individuals to consume the recommended amounts of these foods. As one participant indicated:
Yes, more fresh products than back in the ‘70s, ‘80s. It would cost an arm and a leg just for those things now. You used to get them in the cans ... we were happy with that. Canned vegetables, yes. Now, with these fresh products, they cost us a lot of money just to get that (Bob, April 2008).

Numerous studies indicate that, despite a shift toward greater consumption of store-bought or market foods, traditional foods remain important (Collings et al. 1998; Condon et al. 1995; Minister of Industry 2006; Usher 2002; Wein et al. 1996). Traditional foods are important sources of ‘protein, omega 3-fatty acids, key vitamins, and minerals’ (Myers et al. 2005:27), acting as a key source of healthy nutrients to mitigate the potential health impacts of a greater consumption of store-bought foods. Beyond the simple nutrient value of traditional foods, however, harvesting also plays an important social and cultural role, as the "process of procuring, preparing, and consuming traditional foods has important social and cultural significance" (Wein et al. 1996:256).2

Furthermore, it is evident that certain populations, including communities within Canada (Dietitians of Canada 2005), are more severely impacted by food insecurity than other populations, indicating that governments must address the social, political and economic factors that shape this current disparity. They must also be aware of future factors, such as changes in arctic security regimes, that could further widen the current disparity in food insecurity. This also prompts a need to develop policies and approaches that address the unique circumstances of these populations, rather than trying a ‘one size fits all’ approach to solving food security concerns in arctic communities (Power 2008).

Cost and Availability
Findings from the survey indicate that the affordability and availability of store-bought foods is of concern, as evidenced by participant responses to the questions ‘What foods would you buy more if they were available?’ and ‘What foods would you buy if the cost were lower?’ Table 14.1 illustrates that in the course of the interviews, respondents expressed concern over the availability of meat, fresh produce, staples such as rice and flour in large quantities, seafood and dairy (although when responding to the quantitative question regarding the availability of certain foods from the store, no one chose dairy as a response). Concerns about the availability of fresh dairy products were mentioned during the course of the interviews. In addition, one respondent pointed out that cost was more a concern than availability. Also of note is the fact that none of the respondents expressed concern about the availability of pop and chips or prepared frozen foods.

2 Notes from the Editors: see also Connon (this volume), and Holen (this volume).
Chapter 14: Food Security, Arctic Security: Why the Local Cannot be Ignored

Table 14.1. What foods would you buy more if they were available? (Source: Todd and the Community of Paulatuk 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fruit and vegetables n=5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meats n=3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a n=3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread n=0, dairy n=0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staples n=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional foods n=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>everything” n=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared frozen foods n=0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread n=0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dairy n=0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“fresh”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14.1 further illustrates that cost was of concern to participants, as indicated in their responses to the quantitative portion of the interview. The cost of seafood was also mentioned as a concern. As Chabot (2003:24) found in Nunavik, households that harvest country foods also purchase significant amounts of groceries, indicating a connection between store-bought foods and the procurement of traditional foods. The emphasis on concerns about the cost of staples such as lard, butter, flour, coffee, tea and sugar in the interview responses is interesting, as these foods may also play a role in food production in some households.

Table 14.2 What foods would you buy if the cost were lower? (Source: Todd and the Community of Paulatuk 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>meats n=5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staples n= 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread n=3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“everything” n=3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dairy n=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruits and vegetables: n=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a: n=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared frozen foods n=1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional foods n=1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’all the healthy foods‘ n=1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chips, pop n=0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings are corroborated by participant responses. One female participant who works part-time expressed her frustration with the cost of store-bought produce and the corresponding waste she witnessed because many residents could not afford these items:
The only thing is the prices. The prices get so high you can't afford...
... to get all your nutrients from fresh vegetables. [The fresh is]...
so expensive, and next thing they're ... going to garbage because they're too expensive for most people to buy (Karen, April 2008).

In addition to these concerns about cost, several participants mentioned concerns about the availability of nutritious foods like fresh fruit, vegetables and dairy products. Another theme that emerged was a desire to be able to purchase wild game and fish at the local store. This hints both at the desire many residents have to eat traditional foods and reveals some of the trade-offs those who work full-time must make between the ability to get out on the land to harvest and the time they must spend at work. While it is possible for individuals to access caribou, char, geese and other food from others in the community, it is still interesting to note the desire to be able to purchase ‘land food’ at the store. As one full-time employee pointed out:

... I’d have milk in my fridge every day if the costs were lower. Milk is essential. If they had caribou meat in their freezer shelves, that would be a big sale. If they had arctic char, guaranteed—from our own river—at the shelves, that would be guaranteed. (Janet, April 2008).

There is also tension between the availability of traditional foods and the cost of replacing these foods with store-bought options. One elder indicated that it is difficult for some individuals to ensure household food security “because they don’t get caribou this year... We have no meat. We buy lots of meat from the store now, but [it's] expensive. But we have to eat” (Dorothy, April 2008).

Cost is not restricted to money, however. Time is also a currency that figures prominently in food security issues. Interviewee responses illustrate that individuals must balance their available time with available capital in order to satisfy household food requirements. Interestingly, one full-time hunter indicated that he quit his job several years ago in order to hunt full-time for his family because he could not meet his household’s needs when his harvesting time was restricted by wage employment:

I used to work before, but I couldn’t keep up with my family, so had to quit. I couldn’t feed them enough... (John, May 2008).

It quickly became clear that many factors contribute to household food security. Throughout the course of the interviews and the workshop, the tension between employment, time, harvesting, store-bought foods and other household needs became evident. As one full-time female employee pointed out:

... my boyfriend ...works, and it’s a full time job ..., but with the way things cost in this town—like, we ... own a house, so we pay the fuel, power, utilities, whatever, and then we buy the groceries, and then there’s other bills too that have to be paid. And, ... then
when we think of taking time off without pay, ... we try to balance things out, ... we don’t think we can do that, so it’s harder to go out on the land, so we have to go and ask someone in the community for the traditional foods and stuff like that. ... we can’t go out for it ourselves, and ... for us, it’s a big loss, but there’s only so much you can do when you’re trying to support a family (Melanie, May 2008).

With individuals and households facing cumulative pressures that affect livelihood strategies and food security, the spectre of yet more major, large-scale government activity in the Arctic impacting the physical and social environment is disconcerting. If the government cannot address the pressures northerners currently face in meeting their needs for healthy, nutritious foods, further government intervention that focuses on international security issues and draws attention away from pressing local issues is of concern.

Beyond the cost and availability of food itself, supplies that aid in the procurement of food are also expensive and difficult for some residents to access. One seasonal employee who hunts regularly pointed out that “nowadays, some people [are] finding it hard because the gas costs so much—and the groceries” (Michael, April 2008). These constraints are making it difficult for individuals and households to balance their needs for healthy foods. As one seasonal employee put it:

The cost of living is way, way out of whack. If... we had your prices up here, with the money we make now, we’d be laughing, dancing. As it is now ... Spend $100, you barely have a handful. It changed quite a bit. Back in the ’70s, ’80s, with $100 you [could] get a lot of stuff. Now, you barely get a handful and a little grumbling when you go out the store ... (Bob, April 2008).

These results echo findings from other communities that food security remains a major issue in the Canadian Arctic. Furthermore, the literature reveals that certain individuals are at greater risk of experiencing food insecurity, particularly single mothers (Duhaime et al. 2002; Lawn and Harvey 2001) and individuals with lower incomes (Boult 2004). This indicates that particular attention must be paid to those who are especially vulnerable, and provides guidance for future research in Paulatuk to ensure that whatever strategies are adopted are flexible and adaptive enough to address varying and shifting degrees of food insecurity within the community.

**Addressing Food Security in the Canadian Arctic**

A 2004 position paper published by the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) suggests that in order to truly tackle disparities in food security between North and South in Canada, attention must be paid to consumer protection (Boult 2004). Issues such as monopolies in remote communities (Boult 2004), gaps in the Food Mail Program (Boult 2004; Chan et al. 2006), gaps in income support
programs (Chan et al. 2006) and level hunter support programs (Boult 2004; Chan et al. 2006) are all vital if food security in the Arctic is to be addressed.

Although the Food Mail Program does help to address some of the difficulties in shipping nutritious food to northern communities, "the amount of paperwork and the need for a credit card limits [sic] the number of people who can access the program" (Boult 2004:3). Additionally, the Income Support Program was revamped in the Northwest Territories in 2007 to try to ensure that recipients received more money to allocate to food (CBC 2007). However, in the development phase of the project, it was noted that this increase is still not adequate to meet the needs of many recipients (Todd and the Community of Paulatuk 2008). Furthermore, these changes to the Income Support Program do not address the underlying economic and structural issues that impact the affordability or availability of foods in arctic communities, and may even normalize the price pressures that indigenous communities currently face. Chan et al. (2006) and Boult (2004) also found that in Nunavut, improvements to Harvester Support Programs must be made to help offset the expenses associated with harvesting—including the purchase and maintenance of equipment.

One key to addressing food security in the Arctic is: a) developing policies appropriate to communities rather than trying to import programs from elsewhere (Power 2008); and b) utilizing fiscal relationships that increase community autonomy rather than decreasing it (Brunet-Jailly 2009). All too often, communities are forced to adopt complex, ‘top-down’ (Brunet-Jailly 2009:2) funding regimes that diminish their ability to develop their own sustainable solutions to issues such as food security. A comprehensive dietary intervention program, ‘Healthy Foods North,’ has been launched in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region to educate residents about healthy food choices, including promoting the use of healthy store-bought and traditional foods (Healthy Foods North 2009). However, interview responses from Paulatuk indicate that participants are aware of which food choices they should be making, but the affordability and availability of foods were significant obstacles to making healthier food choices (Todd and the Community of Paulatuk 2008). Thus, in addition to education programs, it is crucial for all levels of government to address the economic and structural issues impacting the availability and affordability of nutritious foods in the Canadian Arctic.

Steps have been taken in this direction in the Northwest Territories recently, including a motion to subsidize dairy products for young children that was introduced in the Legislature in the fall of 2008 (CBC 2008c). However, a more widespread look at the overall food security landscape for all residents of the region, not just children, must be utilized in order to truly mitigate current concerns in the longer term.

It is possible that Canada can look to Greenland for examples of methods that were employed to try and diminish the higher cost of living in remote communities, such as the ‘principle of equal prices’ (Rasmussen 1999:173), which was enacted to help diminish disparities in the cost of living in remote communities.

In this sense, a horizontal integration of organizations of sub-national entities in the arctic sovereignty debate to ensure that Indigenous voices are
heard, as illustrated in Loukacheva (2007) and recently endorsed by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (Boswell 2009b), can be very useful in Canada to address the localized impacts of arctic security initiatives and the cumulative pressures that communities already face.

Thus, food security remains a serious and pressing concern in the Canadian Arctic and other jurisdictions in the Arctic. Some current concerns that must be addressed in order to mitigate the cumulative impacts of increased activity on communities is consumer protection (Boult 2004), gaps in the Food Mail Program (Boult 2004; Chan et al. 2006), income support—including Harvester Support Programs (Boult 2004; Chan et al. 2006), and the overall ability of communities to determine their own food security agendas through funding regimes that strengthen community autonomy (Brunet-Jailly 2009), which will allow communities to address unique local experiences.

With many communities facing uncertain futures shaped by cumulative impacts accruing from climate change (Nuttall 2007), increased resource development (Byers and Lalonde 2006), and concerns over contaminants in traditional foods (CACAR II 2003), addressing the issue of food security is a tangible and meaningful way to ensure that local issues are taken seriously in any arctic security discourse.

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Todd and the Community of Paulatuk (2008). The Impact of Participation in the Wage Economy on Traditional Harvesting, Dietary Patterns and Social Networks in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Unpublished interview transcripts and survey findings.


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Humanizing Security in the Arctic
Chapter 15

*Language Use and Legislation in Nunavut, Canada:* Uqausivut Aturlavut! Pigujaak Atuliqtauningit—Alluriariaq

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**Abstract:** Inuktitut must be kept strong in all spheres of Inuit life if it is to become the language of the government workplace by 2020. Greater fluency in both reading and writing needs to be developed in order to create a capable workforce, and schools are at the forefront of making this a reality. The creation of the territory of Nunavut in 1999 solidified support for Inuit culture and language. With a government that is founded in values that reflect Inuit culture, support for the language can be promoted. The approval of the new language legislation in 2008 led to the Act being instated as a law in 2009. The implementation of the *Nunavut Language Protection Act* is a critical step in this process of support for strengthening Inuktitut, and widening its spheres of usage in everyday life. This contribution discusses some of the history of language usage in schools and the contemporary issues (standardization, curriculum creation) that Inuktitut speakers face today in Nunavut.

**Keywords:** *Inuit Languages Protection Act*, Inuit, Nunavut, Inuktitut, language planning, literacy, standardization, language policy, language maintenance, education.

**Introduction**

I was born in Iqaluit, to unilingual Inuktitut parents working in an English environment. I first realized I was bilingual when phoning south on my father’s behalf. He wanted to speak to my mother, who was hospitalized down south. At sixteen years of age, I became one of the first Inuit educators (see Arnaquq 2008). Later on, I represented the Nunavut Government in co-organising post-secondary education programs like NunaScotia at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I completed a Master’s degree in Education at the University of Prince Edward Island. The course load for my Master’s degree was partially fulfilled in Nunavut since units I had completed during the Executive MBA offered in Iqaluit by Saint Mary’s University were credited by UPEI.

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1. Translation: Let’s Use our Language! Language Legislation Implementation—Moving Forward.
Contemporary Language Situation

Over the last 50 years we have seen both great losses and great developments for the Inuit language. Those Inuit who are now about 50 years old are the first generation to have attended school, and may be considered both bilingual and bicultural, and this has had both advantages and disadvantages for speakers. The degree of language loss or language strength varies by individual. The amount of Inuktitut spoken by this first bilingual generation differs widely; some speak the language all the time, others much less. Much of this depends on the experiences they had at residential schools. Those who had negative experiences often stopped speaking their language entirely.

Inuit educated in day schools began to experience a shift in their educational environment in the 1970s, with the entrance of Inuit classroom assistants and Inuit teachers into the schools. Classroom assistants taught, and also helped reinforce the use of Inuktitut, especially in situations in which the teacher did not speak the language well, or at all. The 1980s saw an even greater increase in the use of Inuit language in the classroom setting, as kindergarten and first grade were taught with Inuktitut as the language of instruction; curriculum development and the creation of new programs became a priority. Some parents worried that this focus on Inuktitut would slow their children’s progress in English. Even now, in smaller settlements such as Talurjuaq, parents are pushing for more English to be taught in the earlier grades.

Between 1996 and 2006, there was an overall decrease in the number of people speaking Inuktitut (see Appendix 16.1). In 2006, 64% of the population of Nunavut reported using Inuktitut at home most often—a 12% drop since 1996. There was also a 5% decrease in the number of speakers reporting Inuktitut as a mother tongue. Overall, less Inuktitut is spoken in the central and western regions of Nunavut, with more language loss occurring in larger communities. For example, in Cambridge Bay (Iqaluituuttiaq), only 30% of the population speaks Inuktitut. In larger centres, intermarriage is also more common, and this can weaken use of Inuktitut in the home. As well, more Inuit youth have become more conscious of the state of their language since the territory of Nunavut was established, and have also been growing more concerned about losing Inuktitut.

Language Since 1999 (the Creation of Nunavut)

The creation of the territory of Nunavut in 1999 solidified support for Inuit culture and language. It used to be that the strength of the language in a school depended on the leadership of individuals. They were the ones who implemented a language policy, but there was nothing to really ensure that it was enforced. But now, with a government that is based on Inuit language and culture, the values are clear. A strong government policy on language affects how all involved—principals, teachers, students, and parents—view their roles in language revitalization and preservation.

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2. ‘Inuit language’ and ‘Inuktitut’ are used interchangeably in this chapter. Both include dialectal variations in Nunavut (see Kublu, this volume, for more on language in Nuanvut).
Chapter 15: Language Use and Legislation in Nunavut, Canada: Uqausivut Aturlavut! Piqujaak Atulïtauningit—Alluriarq

The approval of new language legislation in 2008 led to the Inuit Languages Protection Act being instated as law in 2009 (http://www.gov.nu.ca/cley/english/langleg.html). It applies to all citizens of Nunavut, but it affects Territorial Government services only and does not challenge the Official Languages Act of Canada. It provides legislative tools for positive actions to promote Inuktitut use in many spheres of society; in particular, it is meant to support the goal of delivering government programs in the language, so that Inuktitut can indeed become the working language of government by 2020. Promoting Inuktitut use among Inuit who work in the offices also means that southerners can ideally learn the language better too; they will have a space to immerse themselves in Inuktitut and practice what they are learning.

Despite the overall decrease in Inuktitut speakers in Nunavut over the last decade, there are still many unilinguals in the over-50 generation, and they often struggle with accessing the services they need. In establishments such as postal outlets and banks, there will be no Inuktitut spoken if there aren’t any Inuit working or conducting business there. Many must rely on their grandchildren to act as interpreters for them. Even those Elders who are comfortable in English report that they “prefer to speak Inuktitut,” especially in hospitals, clinics, and other situations that may be emotionally difficult.

Despite Stephen Harper’s formal apology in 2008 to all of Canada’s aboriginal peoples, Inuit face continuing disadvantage, discrimination, and other effects of the historical policies of assimilation. The Inuit Languages Protection Act has been created to empower Inuit in Nunavut. The Act will guarantee access to Inuktitut as a language of instruction in schools, the language of work in the territorial government, and the language in which daily services can be accessed. It supports early childhood education, and language promotion and revitalization efforts.

The Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiiit, or Inuit Language Authority, was formed to promote and protect the quality of Inuktitut. The Taiguusiliuqtiiit will help expand knowledge regarding the highest standards for the language, including the correct use of terminology, spelling and grammar; it will develop new terminology and expressions; it will document and preserve traditional terminology, dialects and expressions; it will support businesses, government and other organizations in delivering quality services in the languages of the Inuit. The Authority will be formed by September 2009 or earlier.

As for education, the right to Inuit Language instruction will come into effect in July 2009 for Kindergarten to Grade Three, and the rest of the grades will be added over the years until the entire system will be complete by 2019 (http://www.edu.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=71). For the Government of Nunavut, Inuktitut will be the language of work in the public service by September 2011, and municipal services by 2012. In the private sector, Inuit language services will be offered to the public in consultation with the particular businesses.

The Languages Act provides a strategy and also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all people. It offers a framework for collaboration with Anglophones, Francophones, as well as other Inuit living in other regions in Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. Issues of standardization of the writing system
are at the forefront of many discussions, as many Inuit are interested in creating effective written communication across dialects. The syllabic alphabet has been in use for over 100 years; a standard form has existed since 1976 (Harper 2005). Many Inuit in the Eastern Arctic, especially Elders, feel strongly about maintaining syllabics, as they associate this way of writing with their Inuit identity (Daveluy and Ferguson 2009). Their attachment to syllabics means that politicians would face great difficulty if they were to attempt to get rid of the alphabet, even if the younger generations were open to switching to a standard form of the Roman alphabet. Most of the support for using Roman letters comes from the argument that it would help bilinguals. Many educators believe that reading Inuktitut in the Roman alphabet would mean that English literacy would also follow more easily. If a decision were made to write all dialects of Inuktitut in the Roman alphabet, a slow and gradual transition to this writing system would be necessary.

**Conclusion**

Keeping Inuktitut strong in schools across the territory is a challenge that needs to be met in order for Inuktitut to be the sole language of government workplace by 2020.3 Greater fluency in both reading and writing needs to be fostered in order to create a capable workforce. The implementation of the Nunavut Language Protection Act is a critical step in this process of support for strengthening Inuktitut, and widening the spheres in which it is used in everyone’s life.

**References**


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3. Note from the editors: Kublu, this volume, squarely addresses this target and deems it unrealistic for a number of reasons.
Chapter 15: Language Use and Legislation in Nunavut, Canada: Uqausivut
Aturlavut! Piqujaak Atuliqtauningit—Alluriariq

Appendix 16.1: Language Statistics in Nunavut

Stats Update

Background: According to the 2006 Census, about 91% of Inuit in Nunavut could converse in Inuktitut, a similar level observed in 2001. Older Inuit were more likely to be able to converse in Inuktitut than younger people. About 86% of those aged 14 and under could converse in Inuktitut compared to 97% of adults aged 45 and older.

In 2006, Inuktitut was the mother tongue of approximately 83% of the Inuit population in the territory, down slightly from 2001. The small decline was observed amongst most age groups. Children aged 14 and under had the lowest proportion of all age groups reporting Inuktitut as their mother tongue.

Detail: Inuit identity population with knowledge of Inuktitut and with Inuktitut as mother tongue, by age group, Nunavut, 2001 and 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Inuit population with knowledge of Inuktitut</td>
<td>22,345</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 years and under</td>
<td>8,030</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 24 years</td>
<td>4,585</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 44 years</td>
<td>6,220</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 64 years</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Inuit population with Inuktitut as mother tongue</td>
<td>20,430</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 years and under</td>
<td>7,085</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 24 years</td>
<td>4,105</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 44 years</td>
<td>5,825</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 64 years</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Reproduced from) Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogues #97-558-X2006015 and 97F0011X-CB01040

Note: Data may not add up to totals due to random rounding.

Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.

Knowledge of Inuktitut refers to the ability to conduct a conversation in Inuktitut.

Inuktitut includes all the dialects in Nunavut, including Inuinnaqtun.
Humanizing Security in the Arctic

Proportion of total population by mother tongue, for Nunavut and its communities, 2006 Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Inuktitut Only</th>
<th>Inuinnaqtun Only</th>
<th>English Only</th>
<th>French Only</th>
<th>Other Language Only</th>
<th>English and Non-official Language Only</th>
<th>Other Multiple Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.

Note: Data may not add up to totals due to random rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population, Catalogue #94-577-XCB2006001

### Total population by mother tongue, for Nunavut and its communities, 2006 Census

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Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.

**Note:** Data may not add up to totals due to random rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population, Catalogue #94-577-XCB2006001

**Total population by language spoken most often at home, for Nunavut and its communities, 2006 Census.**

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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale Cove</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>310</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language spoken most often refers to the language spoken most often at home by the individual at the time of the census.

**Note:** Data may not add up to totals due to random rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada 2006, census of population, Catalogue #94-577XCB2006001

### Proportion of total population by language spoken most often at home, for Nunavut and its communities, 2004 census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Spoken Most Often</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Inuktitut Only</th>
<th>Inuinnaqtun Only</th>
<th>English Only</th>
<th>French Only</th>
<th>Other Language Only</th>
<th>English and Non-official Language</th>
<th>Other Multiple Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>88.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker Lake</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>84.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>45.3</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde River</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gjoa Haven</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Grise Fiord</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.6</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igloolik</td>
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<td>92.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iqaluit</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimmirut</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kugaaruk</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kugluktuk</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>91.2</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pangnirtung</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pond Inlet</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankin Inlet</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>82.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>69.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale Cove</td>
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<td>11.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language spoken most often refers to the language spoken most often at home by the individual at the time of the census.

**Note:** Data may not add up to totals due to random rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada 2006, census of population, Catalogue #94-577XCB2006001

### Total population by knowledge of official languages, for Nunavut and its communities, 2006 Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>English Only</th>
<th>French Only</th>
<th>English and French</th>
<th>Neither English nor French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>29,325</td>
<td>25,830</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>2,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arctic Bay</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arviat</td>
<td>2,055</td>
<td>1,665</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker Lake</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Bay</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>1,405</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Dorset</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesterfield Inlet</td>
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<td>310</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde River</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral Harbour</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gjoa Haven</td>
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<td>1,015</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grise Fiord</td>
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<td>125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hall Beach</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>355</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>355</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kugluktuk</td>
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<td>1,265</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pangnirtung</td>
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<td>1,030</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pond Inlet</td>
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<td>1,180</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qikiqtarjuaq</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankin Inlet</td>
<td>2,340</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repulse Bay</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolute</td>
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<td>220</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>545</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>770</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whale Cove</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge of official languages refers to the ability to conduct a conversation in English only, in French only, in both English and French, or in neither English nor French.

**Note:** Data may not add up to totals due to random rounding.


Chapter 15: Language Use and Legislation in Nunavut, Canada: Uqausivut Aturlavut! Piqujaak Atuliqtauningit—Alluriarit

### Proportion of total population by knowledge of official languages, for Nunavut and its communities, 2006 Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>English Only</th>
<th>French Only</th>
<th>English and French</th>
<th>Neither English nor French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>83.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arviat</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>93.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Bay</td>
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<td>95.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Dorset</td>
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<td>87.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesterfield Inlet</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde River</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral Harbour</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gjoa Haven</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grise Fiord</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>93.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
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<td>9.6</td>
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<td>Kugaaruk</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kugluktuk</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20.0</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>87.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankin Inlet</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>90.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolute</td>
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<td>95.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.3</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale Cove</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge of official languages refers to the ability to conduct a conversation in English only, in French only, in both English and French, or in neither English nor French.

Note: Data may not add up to totals due to random rounding.


Humanizing Security in the Arctic
Chapter 16

Language Diversity in Canada and Nunavut

Alexina Kublu
Nunavut Languages Commissioner

Abstract: Of the two dialect groups of the Inuit language in Nunavut, the largest group is Inuktitut, spoken in eastern Kitikmeot, the Keewatin and Baffin regions. Inuinnaqtun is spoken in the westernmost part of the territory, and its situation is significantly different from that of Inuktitut. For various reasons, there are very few young people competent in the language. Another complication is the use of a different writing system from that developed in the east. There are problems with fluency and literacy throughout Nunavut, and given the current lack of fully qualified Inuit, and the difficulties faced by non-Inuit trying to learn Inuktitut, it appears unrealistic that Inuktitut would be the working language of government by 2020. This chapter presents a look at some of the issues facing speakers of the Inuit language, and how the recently passed Inuit Languages Protection Act aims to support speakers in many different settings and institutions.

Keywords: Inuit, Inuit Languages Protection Act, Nunavut, Inuktitut, Inuinaqtun, literacy, standardization, language revitalization, language maintenance.

Introduction

The Inuit language is one language, spoken across the North from Siberia to Greenland. However, there are many variations in the ways the language is spoken across the Arctic, that it might be grouped into dialects. Of the two dialect groups in Nunavut, the largest is Inuktitut, spoken in eastern Kitikmeot, the Keewatin and Baffin regions. Inuinaqtun is spoken in the westernmost part of the territory. The situation is the Inuinaqtun sub-dialect is significantly different to that of Inuktitut. For various reasons, there are very few young people competent in the language. Another complication is the use of a different writing system to that developed in the east; the eastern dialects use syllabics, whereas the western ones use the Latin script.

Though we want to stress this unity of the Inuit language, we specifically mention the ‘revitalization’ of Inuinaqtun in the Inuit Languages Protection Act. This is because it remains important to recognize the different states of vitality among the ways of speaking the Inuit language. Inuinaqtun speakers will have support for their language as long as people are willing to fight and work hard to secure it against eroding forces.

When Nunavut was created as a territory in 1999, it was stated that Inuktitut would become the working language of the Government of Nunavut by the year 2020. There are a number of challenges that face us in seeing that happen, but the Inuit Languages Protection Act is one positive step in making changes and implementing programs that can help make it a reality.
Language Erosion

Erosion of the Inuktitut language is happening primarily due to the rise in the use of English. The pervasiveness of English usage first really began to be noticed in the North when settlement councils approved television, and this has only increased in the electronic age.

In the ten-year period between 1996 and 2006, a 12% decline was seen in Inuktitut language use in Nunavut. The language surveys show that use has decreased on the whole, even if the number of mother tongue speakers has not. It is critical to stress the importance of Inuktitut usage in the home; I can say that it was the strength of the Inuktitut language in my home that allowed me to relearn and retain my language.1

Among the young people of the territory (those 14 and under—a total of about 8,000), 91% of them had knowledge of Inuktitut and 83% had the language as a mother tongue. This shows that despite the decline, second-language classes are still very valuable. Increasing the amount of Inuktitut heard by younger speakers is also critical—radio programs and such can provide valuable language exposure and allow more people to start to pick up the language.

Inuktitut use remains very strong on Baffin Island. In settlements such as Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung, and Kimmirut, there is a high population of Inuktitut speaking monolinguals. However, this declines the further west one travels. You will find virtually no-one who speaks only Inuinaqtun.

Language, Literacy, and the Inuit Languages Protection Act

There are issues with fluency and literacy throughout Nunavut. Some of this difficulty stems from the way literacy is being taught in schools. Often what happens is students are not becoming fully literate in Inuktitut, because they have to switch in the late primary grades between the Inuktitut-only curriculum to English with Inuktitut as a secondary subject. Thus, it is difficult for these graduates to use Inuktitut to the fullest in the workplace, especially in the government. Given the current paucity of fully qualified Inuit teachers, and the difficulties faced by the average Qablunaaq [non-Inuit] trying to learn Inuktitut, the hope that by 2020 Inuktitut would be the working language of government seems unrealistic.

The Inuit Languages Protection Act has been put in place to revitalize, promote and protect the Inuit language. It will support Inuktitut usage: 1) at school as a language of instruction; 2) as a language of work in the territorial government; and, 3) as a language of daily services. This law calls for a number of new programs and protocols to be put in place in order to help encourage Inuktitut literacy and a wider sphere of Inuktitut language use. A Minister responsible for languages will be designated upon assent of the law. In the realm of education, it calls for the right to Inuit language instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3, and the rest of the grades will follow until they are all implemented by July 2019.

By September 2009, the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtit—the Inuit language

1 Commissioner Kublu lost her mother tongue during hospitalization in the South, to regain it later.
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Authority—will be formed. This council will begin working on the standardization of written Inuktitut and the creation of neologisms, in order to support Inuktitut in the government and develop the levels of literacy in general. We aim for Inuktitut to be the language of work of the public service for September 2011 and in municipal services by 2012. Within the private sector, Inuit language services will be provided to the public over time, after appropriate consultations.

The Act also extended my role as Languages Commissioner, to include extra duties and responsibilities as of July 2009. The role of the Languages Commissioner is grounded in Inuit societal values and shaped by the following principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respecting others, relationships and caring for people); Tunnganarniq (fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive); Pijitsirniq (serving and providing for family or community, or both); Aqjiqatigiinniq (decision-making through discussion and consensus); Piliriqatigiinniq or Ikajuqtigiinniq (working together for a common cause); Qanuqtuurniq (being innovative and resourceful). It is in this spirit that the Inuit Languages Protection Act aims to promote the usage of Inuktitut and Innunaqtun in Nunavut.

Language and New Technologies

In my position as Languages Commissioner, I want to create that environment of innovation and resourcefulness. It is important to remember that access to the Internet and digital technology is not necessarily harmful for Inuktitut—a computer doesn’t think in any one language! It can be used to facilitate use of Inuktitut, too.

During an April language retreat in Arctic Bay, delegates met to strategize ways of ensuring the Inuit Languages Protection Act could be best implemented. For example, one of the suggestions was trying to translate more English movies into Inuktitut, either using subtitles or voiceovers. ‘Translation’ is also a word that I want the people of Nunavut to know. I want them to call in to me and help add to the repository of traditional terms I am collecting. This will help support language vitality, as we will be able to use Inuktitut words instead of English.

It is getting easier and easier to disseminate information now with the use of new technologies, and hopefully these words could be added to the vocabulary of speakers of the Inuit language all over the territory. It is in these ways that this new Act attempts to support speakers and work toward increased literacy and language use within Nunavut.

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2. Note from the editors: Cancel, this volume, specifically addresses translation issues in Nunavut.
Chapter 17

Language Sovereignty Through Lexicology: Documenting Modern Concepts in the Public Sphere (Nunavut)

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Abstract: The processes of translating to and from Inuktitut including terminology development are currently very dynamic in Nunavut; this is particularly true in the public domain, prompted by official languages requirements. The Inuit lexicon developed to describe modern concepts is diverse, as morphemes may derive from original Inuit or non-Inuit concepts; Inuktitut terms may also develop through lexicalization, change of meaning, borrowing or calques. Focusing on non-Inuit concepts translated into Inuktitut, this chapter argues in favour of the development of an analytical lexicon that would integrate morphological and semantic analysis, and detailed information about previously recorded discussions and uses of terms. ‘Sovereignty’ is introduced as an example of a non-Inuit concept translated into Inuktitut to demonstrate how an analytical lexicon may help to circumvent some misunderstandings caused by the confusion currently surrounding the development of translations for these concepts.

Keywords: Inuktitut, terminology development, translation, analytical lexicon, sovereignty.

Development of a Modern Terminology for an Emerging Political Dialogue

In the 1960s, the first Inuit leaders of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories had to learn English political terminology in order to be able to take part in political dialogues with non-Inuit representatives and government workers.

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In 1973, the Interpreter Corps was founded, and major efforts were undertaken to train translators and interpreters as well as develop new terminology (Mallon 1993). In fact, the new political reality that needed to be discussed in Inuktitut in the public sphere created an urgent need for a specialized terminology for administrative purposes.

Since the 1970s, numerous terms have been created by Inuit translators and interpreters as needs arose, even though few of these had been discussed or ‘coined’ as a precise equivalent by Inuit leaders, elders or by other language professionals. Even today, when such discussions occur during terminology workshops organized by the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, only the terms selected are included in the department word bank. Very few workshop discussions are actually recorded. To my knowledge, only the meetings of the group working on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiiit (terminology expert elders working for the Nunavut government), are consistently recorded. As words in Inuktitut are created by combining minimal units (morphemes), discussions arising about the choice of one particular morpheme over another or about the appropriateness of an ancient term used for a modern concept are invaluable and could prove useful. As long as such critical information is not made available to language professionals who play a key role in redistributing the information to the general public, much of the representations, worldviews and meaning behind the selected terms cannot be passed on or used as a basis for future terminology development and educational efforts. Indeed, when the bilingual (English-Inuktitut) education system is established in Nunavut as planned in the Education Act, parts of the Inuit lexicon, including public domain terminology, will need to be explained to young Nunavummiut as part of the development of their knowledge, as part of the history of the Inuit language in their region, and as part of the history of the Nunavut territory.

As regards terminology development, although some terms were standardized by the Nunavut Government such as department and position titles, there is currently no standardized or official pattern for word-building processes (morphology). As such, rules regarding the use of particular morphemes do not exist. Yet, some morphemes are recurrent in the creation of titles or positions, for instance igluliriji (housing officer), uses the morphemes -liri- (work with) and -ji (one whose job is to), to use an example provided by Mallon (1993:26). Yet, the choice of one morpheme over another is meaningful since it provides particular semantic information and may influence the way the general public may consider the institution, the position or the element to which it refers. As Kenneth Pedersen (pers. comm.), from Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland), pointed out, a morpheme might be used purposely as a euphemism, to lessen the markers of hierarchy between a government and its beneficiaries, revealing power relations at play. This choice may be interpreted in various ways. It may result from a need for simplification, or it may be considered as a way to make government bodies more accessible to beneficiaries, but it could also present a paternalistic innuendo directed to the general public. In Nunavut, the issue could be raised with respect to the morpheme –liriji (‘the one to take care of’), which is commonly used in
Nunavut in reference to government departments, such as the Department of Education translated as *ilinnarnirijiit*, meaning ‘those in charge of education.’

The glossaries currently available in Nunavut were developed mainly for administrative purposes. Most were compiled through the Nunavut Arctic College and its Interpreter–Translator program, such as the *Legal Glossary* (Brice-Bennett 1996), or the *Environmental Glossary* (Sammons 1994). So far, equivalents for non-Inuit concepts are not standardized and existing dictionaries are designed with little information about previous uses of terms and few references to synonyms, except for a few analytical lexicons published by academics (Dorais 1978; Bordin 2003). Systematic standardization raises many debates, especially with regard to the variety of dialects and the nature of the language, itself based on a long tradition of orality. Alexina Kublu (pers. comm.) has pointed out that the syntax of official documents in Inuktitut does not necessarily need to abide by the rules of the English language, where preferred written styles often dictate using several synonyms in order to avoid repetition; repetitiveness is not an issue in Inuktitut. She was arguing for literary language to be more relevant to narrative language instead of becoming a mirror image of English. In this chapter, I am not arguing for a systematic standardization of modern terminology, but rather for better documentation and access to various terms recorded in different dialects over time to offer language professionals various possibilities they can either share, use or simply with which to get familiar. As a rather recent literary language, modern terminology in Inuktitut presents its own challenges.

**Challenges Associated with Modern Terminology in Inuktitut**

Research conducted in the 1980s by sociolinguist Louis-Jacques Dorais (1978:22) established that when in contact with modern realities, the Inuit language resorts to lexicalization 76% of the time (that is, creating new terms based on pre-existing grammatical and lexical elements), while 15% of the time new terms are created by changing their meaning (that is, extending and/or replacing referents found in a pre-existing term). According to Dorais, borrowing from another language occurs much less often (7% of the time). The prevalence of lexicalization was confirmed in a study on urban terminology in Iqaluit conducted in 2004 by Sylvie Teveny, a graduate student from the INALCO Inuktitut language and culture program. Of the 150 neologisms (recently-coined terms) she collected, 82.5% were created through lexicalizations; 10% by changes to an existing meaning; 7.5% were borrowings; there was only one calque (a literal translation of a foreign term).

Inuktitut is a polysynthetic language and as such, terms developed through lexicalization tend to be definitions of the notion or concept to which they refer. The assumption then, is that terms developed through lexicalization are very self-explanatory and easy to grasp for the general public. Yet, preliminary fieldwork research I conducted in Iqaluit in 2005 (Cancel 2006) revealed that the opposite is true. Although this research was undertaken with a small number of participants, all indicated that they have difficulty making sense of Inuktitut modern terminology used in popular media, such as *Nunatsiaq News*, especially in articles describing public policy since they include many modern non-Inuit concepts translated in
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Inuktitut. Reading official texts written in syllabics may already be challenging for many Inuit (Daveluy and Ferguson 2009:79), particularly those under the age of 30 (Dorais 2006:31). However, another difficulty lies in the fact that newspaper articles as well as the non-Inuit ideas they include were originally conceptualized in English and then translated into Inuktitut, and therefore lack a contextualization that would help readers make sense of the concepts being introduced (Cancel 2006). In contrast, radio or television shows originally conceptualized in Inuktitut, such as news broadcasted on CBC Radio Iqaluit or CBC television, somehow seem to be more efficient at conveying the meaning of newly developed words so that listeners can make sense of them, despite the often unnatural style and pace of speech fashioned according to CBC English programs. Grove (2004), a Greenlandic researcher at the University of Copenhagen, argued that the language used by media may even affect people’s attitudes toward the public domain itself. To Grove, some Inuit living ‘closer to the traditional life’ may lose interest and refrain from engaging in political matters because of the confusion and distance created by the language used by media. In this case, the language of media is considered too close to Danish and issues arise in terms of syntax, choice of words or expressions, and long and heavy sequences to explain foreign concepts.

Although media language adds to challenges associated with modern terminology in Inuktitut, political debates in the public sphere and documents produced in the process are at the core of the matter. Let us take the debate of security as an example. If we consider the bigger picture, Inuit representatives have been given more voice over time in a dialogue with their non-Inuit counterparts in Canada. A focus on the Arctic and its increased security threats as well as concerns related to climate change—important issues since the 1990s—positioned the Inuit as partners for the Canadian Federal Government. Together, they address what is officially acknowledged on both sides as the ‘emerging global arctic reality’ (ITK and The Queen 2005). In seeking to fully comprehend the Inuit perspective in this dialogue, the terminology used by Inuit is scrutinized by academics. Keeping in mind the polysynthetic and descriptive features of the language, some academics, including Therrien (2004:249), may use morphological analysis (identification of morphemes, literal translation, and comparison of implicit meaning as per the current most common meaning). Such analysis is very effective, especially when used with semantic analysis, that is, an “investigation of the meaning or multiple meanings encoded in a given word, reach[ing] for synonyms, antonyms, extension of meaning and affinities with other concepts or other fields of experience” (Therrien 2004:250). Therrien showed the usefulness of morphological analysis for complex notions, concepts and representations by applying it to the concept of traditional Inuit law (piqujaq) and comparing it to the Inuit term for ‘Canadian law’ (maligaq). The analytical framework proposed by Therrien is very productive for original Inuit concepts, non-Inuit concepts translated into Inuktitut that went through a fair degree of discussion, as well as concepts that were reconceptualized and agreed upon. Yet, the limits of such analysis need to be acknowledged when applied to the study of the Inuktitut translation of an exogenous term that was developed through lexicalization and that did not undergo a fair degree of discussion. When next to no information is available to translators about previous discussions on a given

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concept and since practical tools for terminology development are still scarce in Nunavut (Dorais 2006:53), then the translator, prompted to develop an equivalent in Inuktitut through lexicalization, will often come up with a definition based on: 1) his/her knowledge of the concept in English; 2) definitions of the original non-Inuit concept; and or, 3) the knowledge of peers or elders. Although the resulting definition may be sophisticated, it provides limited insight into the perspective of Inuit as a group.

Let us use as an example the reference made by Franklyn Griffiths (2009:25), political science specialist of security in the Arctic, to the concept of aulatsigunnarniq or ‘sovereignty.’ In an attempt to reach a deeper understanding of the term in Inuktitut, Griffiths emphasizes the meaning of pairs of morphemes, and tries to make sense of them using their respective common meaning:

Used to translate ‘sovereignty’ into Inuktitut, aulatsigunnarniq is a compound word meaning ‘to run things’ and ‘being able to.’ The ‘sovereign’ in Inuit culture is not, however, the free-standing, self-realizing individual typical of European civilization. On the contrary—he or she is doubly embedded, in community and in nature. She watches, keeps, takes care of and provides for in the running of things. As such, she has much in common with the steward, though not in the European sense of managing a stand-apart environment.

Despite the fact that Griffiths starts with a morphological analysis translating morphemes, it is quite unclear as to what his argument that aulatsigunnarniq is ‘doubly embedded in community and nature’ is based on, whether it is an interpretation of the meaning of the term obtained by a literal translation of the morphemes, or by ethnological information, by complementary information, or by a combination of the two.

He later calls for the inclusion of Inuktitut concepts such as aulatsigunnarniq in a ‘new dialogue between southerners and northerners about who we [Canadians] are, what we seek and how we ought to conduct ourselves’ (Griffiths 2009:25). While understanding the Inuit perspective is certainly beneficial to this necessary dialogue on climate change, making use of morphological analysis for this purpose requires much precaution since we should not overlook the fact that exogenous concepts such as aulatsigunnarniq were coined in Inuktitut without any public discussion defining what it means to the Inuit as a group. In this case, morphological analysis may only contribute to shedding light on Inuit representations and concepts as seen through the eyes and the experience of the translator, unless we take the recurrence of a term in translation or in speeches by political representatives as a sign that consensus has been reached on their meaning. To me, documented team work and group discussions involving language professionals, elders and political representatives who actually use these concepts remain the most reliable indicators of consensus.
Conceptualization, Translation and Degree of Accuracy

Inuktitut terminology currently in use in the public domain in Nunavut comprises terms that were recently developed in various contexts and for particular purposes. The fact that these terms appear repeatedly in documents available in Inuktitut in Nunavut for government use as well as in local newspapers does not imply that they have been standardized or even discussed by Inuit leaders, elders, or by language professionals. In fact, the existence of the Inuktitut version of many documents is due to the obligation of the territorial government to comply with the provisions of its legislation regarding official languages (Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, English and French). Therefore, it is expected to release any official document in all of these languages, even though producing such material remains a challenge.

Terminology from the Inuit lexicon used in Nunavut in the public domain can be arranged into categories according to the degree of accuracy within what might be called a broader Inuit perspective. Classification describes the development process according to the language in which it was originally conceptualized, the extent of discussion it went through and the consensus that may have been reached.

To illustrate, I suggest that accuracy may be classified according to three categories: a) An original concept in its original language has a high degree of accuracy; b) A term for an exogenous concept reconceptualized in the target language also has a high degree of accuracy; or c) The translation of an original concept into another language has a lower degree of accuracy unless the terms were agreed upon by speakers of the target language and such consensus is documented.

In category a) it may be a term for an original exogenous concept in English, a term for an original Inuit concept giving a new meaning to an ancient term in Inuktitut or a term for an original Inuit concept with a new term coined in Inuktitut.

In Nunavut, the term commonly used in reference to a ‘chairman’ in Inuktitut illustrates the second category. Initially, itsiva-uta-q was used (literal translation of the morphemes: ‘sitting down’—which is used for specification). It was a calque, a mere transposition of the English term, without a logical integration (Therrien 2000:298). In 2005, the elders from the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit group asked for this term to be changed to uqaq-titsi-ji (literal translation of morphemes: speak- factitive- nominalization) meaning ‘the one who facilitates speech.’ What used to be an inappropriate calque was changed for a term describing a role Inuit had had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with and which requires to be referred to in the public domain, for instance at the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. Consensus about the term emerged through discussion about the concept.

Examples of the third category include translation of exogenous concepts into Inuktitut (e.g.: aulatsigunnarniq -> sovereignty, killinguqangit nunalit -> boundary or Inuit nunaqtingit -> Inuit owned land) or of original Inuit concepts into English. In fact, very few original Inuit concepts are used in the non-Inuit discourse in the Canadian public domain. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is probably the most commonly used. It is largely known and used by its acronym IQ and
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followed by a short translation such as ‘traditional knowledge’ even though it was actually meant to ‘replace and broaden the limited connotations usually attached to the term Inuit traditional knowledge’ (Nunavut Social Development Council 1998:1). Let us note as well that English speakers in Canada rarely resort to Inuit concepts reconceptualized in English.

Focus on Exogenous (Non-Inuit) Concepts Translated into Inuktitut

Inuktitut speakers working for the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories in Yellowknife in 1978 already came across aulatsigunnarniq (sovereignty), killinguangit nunaliit (boundary) and Inuit nunaqutingit (Inuit owned land). Not specifically coined but rather considered appropriate ‘to convey something ‘new’ that didn’t exist in the way of expressing life before’ they were ‘just descriptive of something new that needed to be talked about’ (Former GNWT worker, personal communication).

Words such as aulatsigunnarniq, killinguangit nunaliit and Inuit nunaqutingit are versions of concepts that are the furthest away from a broad Inuit perspective since they were not discussed (or if they were, it was not documented). This is why it is questionable to use them to get a sense of an Inuit perspective on issues such as sovereignty, for instance.

As I mentioned before, there is a strong possibility that a morphological analysis of aulatsigunnarniq may only shed light on meaning that the translator included in his/her translated terms referring to exogenous realities. Used on its own, these are the elements revealed by such analysis: aulasi- (govern), -gunnar- (be able to), -ni- (result, a notion), -q (specification).

However, using a combination of morphological, semantic and ethnological analysis may be relevant to emphasize certain important elements. For instance, the Inuktitut term for Inuit owned land, Inuit nunaqutingit, is worth being considered with such analysis to examine the way in which the notion of appropriation is transferred to the local context of Nunavut through the choice of linguistic features. The term itself conveys the notion of ‘appropriated land’ which was first expressed with the coming of age of the Northwest Territories and later Nunavut but it was not previously thought of as such by the Inuit. As far as morphological analysis goes, this term may be broken into the following pieces: Inui- (people or Inuit), -t (genitive plural), nuna- (land, region used by hunters), -quti- (appropriation), -ngit (mark of possessive, 3rd person plural). Regarding this term, Michèle Therrien pointed out the contrast between the notion of permanence of nuna (‘the land’) in time and space with the notion of appropriation which in context refers to a ‘territory legally obtained after an agreement’ (translated from Therrien 2000: 293), this appropriation understood to mean symbolically rather than physically both at the individual and the collective level. As Alexina Kublu, Nunavut Languages Commissioner and experienced language professional, mentioned (pers. comm.), the morpheme -quti- actually conveys the idea of something that is not usually owned. The choice of the morpheme -quti- over a
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possessive structure therefore includes and reminds the Inuktitut speaker of the odd nature of the association of land with the notion of appropriation.

Returning to the example provided by Griffiths and his use of morphology, this last comment about *Inuit nunaqutingit* is the kind of observation that can provide clues to academics wishing to get a better understanding of a broad Inuit perspective, even though the term is a translation of an exogenous concept (‘land appropriation’). Morphemes making up terms in Inuktitut are as connected to each other as they are connected to the context in which the term itself is used. Making sense of morphemes without a context does make us, as academics, run the risk of making essentialist statements by ignoring implicit meaning for Inuit as they experience these concepts.

Reflections on a Glossary of Modern Terminology Regarding the Nunavut Public Domain

As it has been observed in other languages based on oral tradition, terminology development in Nunavut raises the issue of the relevance of dictionaries for a modern Inuktitut lexicon. It is true that neologisms can be considered the momentary constructions of the language (Cornillac 1994-1195:204) and that a language like Inuktitut presents many of these constructions since it relies mainly on lexicalization (see Dorais 1978). However, the terminology used in the public domain requires some reflection on terms and concepts as they are developed, used and transferred to the general public. Legislation terminology is probably the most striking example. One of the limits of the newly approved legislation on language in Nunavut is that the bill itself was not drafted in Inuktitut. Some claim that Inuktitut terminology is not stable enough to do so. Working toward the release of an Inuktitut version of legislation such as the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Languages Protection Act* was, in fact, one of the major recommendations proposed by Madeleine Redfern (a graduate from the Akitsiraq Law Program) in her written submission to the Legislative Assembly Ajauqtiit Committee (Ajauqtiit 2007). Stressing the importance of the precision of terminology in drafting legislation, she believes that serious steps should be undertaken to have language specialists of English, French and Inuktitut work with legislation experts in the task. The Quebec *Private Law Dictionary* undertaken in 1978 is an example of such a collaboration (Gémar 2003). I am not arguing for a systematic standardisation of the terminology, rather for better documentation and access to various terms recorded in different dialects to offer options to language professionals.

Inconsistency in the choice of an Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun equivalent for an exogenous concept is generally not an issue except in some areas of the public domain such as in legal matters, or in cases when documents need to be archived in databases by their titles, for cataloguing purposes. Recent research conducted at the Nunavut Legislative Library by library technician Carol Rigby, as part of her M.A. research, emphasized the complexities deriving from lack of consistency with Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun translations of English document titles. It required regular cataloguing procedures to be adapted so that multilingual access to the catalogue would be efficient in Inuktitut (Rigby 2008). To get around this difficulty,
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the Nunavut Legislative Assembly catalogue is currently designed to trace variant translations of a single title, using a uniform title in English pointing at these translations through Machine-Readable Cataloguing and a note to mention that titles vary. Rigby uses the title ‘Public Service Annual Report’ as an example of a title with serveral variant translations in Inuinnaqtun (Rigby 2008:116). Yet, for Inuktitut led research purposes, these multiple variants remain a source of confusion.

Apart from the issue of the stability of Inuktitut terminology, difficulties of access to previously published glossaries and general information about the Inuit language call for the creation of a single location to hold such information when it would be gathered (Alexina Kublu, pers. comm.). Granting Inuit access to data about their own language in a northern location would give them a chance to have access to more resources from which to choose and work. Kenneth Petersen (pers. comm.) noted that Greenlanders face similar issues when dealing with non-Inuit concepts. According to him, when it comes to translating a non-Greenlandic concept into Kalaallisut, there is a tendency to use Danish as a reference, while most of the Danish terminology itself derives originally from English. Petersen believes that this causes imprecision and errors at times, and that it would be beneficial to make two terms available—one derived from Danish and another derived from English—so that people are given the opportunity to choose the most appropriate, like Anglophones do with synonyms derived from Latin, Anglo-Saxon or German.

The efforts undertaken by Nunavut Arctic College to develop word lists in Inuktitut for the purpose of the Government of Nunavut partly provides for the needs of Inuit translators and interpreters. Contrary to Guy Cornelac’s (1994-1995) argument about the nature of neologisms, an Inuktitut glossary is indeed appropriate in the particular case of the public domain of Nunavut. And yet, such a glossary must be designed in a way that reconciles the dynamism of the language and the pressing needs of bureaucracy. It needs to be comprehensive enough and updated regularly, eventually to be used as a long-term tool for literacy.

My PhD provides a compilation of a trilingual (Inuktitut-English-French) Nunavut glossary of about 100 words. This glossary is meant as a matrix, a sample large enough to be scrutinized and evaluated when considered as a whole, yet rather limited for practical reasons. My approach is based on previously developed analytical lexicons such as that of Dorais (1978), and more particularly of Bordin (2003). My methodology draws upon the work conducted on legal terminology by Michèle Therrien and Inuit language specialists Susan Enuaraq, Jaypeete Arnakak, Alexina Kublu, Makee Kakik, Jacopoosie Peter and Lucassie Nutaraluk (Therrien 1996). Their joint effort offers a unique reflection on terminology development and on the process of conceptualization in a modern context. It shows how discussions can be fruitful and can shed light on the form and the meaning of a term as well as revealing some of its unseen meaning. It demonstrates the importance of connecting a term to experiences. For this, I will ask for the contribution of language professionals affiliated with Uqausiit, an online network facilitated by the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and
Youth, as well as Inuit who are involved in the public domain in Nunavut and want to share their perspective and knowledge.

In view of this, the analytical lexicon developed during my PhD programme provides information at three levels:

- **Historical content:** precise documentation of the context in which terms were coined, discussed, approved, and used (including information regarding dialects such as synonyms);
- **Linguistic information:** morphological and semantic analysis with a comment (when relevant), terminology development features (whether the term was developed through a process of change in meaning, whether it involves lexicalization, borrowing or calques from another language);
- **Ethnolinguistic commentary:** comparison with other words or equivalents in other dialects, situating the word according to relevant Inuit cultural features, and linking it with existing resources (academic or non-academic publications, archival documents).

**Conclusion**

To a large extent, the work associated to this glossary is meant to contribute to a reflection about terminology development in Inuktitut. One of the most significant challenges of this glossary is indeed to remain consistent with the fact that neology is a socially integrated activity (Therrien 2000:287–9). Alexina Kublu’s statement about the need to remain true to the Inuit language even in the literary language belonging to the public domain may be understood in a larger sense as a call for Inuit to reconsider English standards and arrive at more appropriate ones. With this in mind, the features of the analytical glossary I introduced in this chapter are designed and adapted to make it as relevant as possible to the Inuit language. Although the format and methodology are meant to be eventually re-evaluated and criticized, this project is meant to contribute to the design of a relevant procedure to document language development in Nunavut.

The current need to name new realities and discuss them takes the Inuit and their languages to new places—to territories that are not yet fully known. Yet, they have priceless resources to draw upon, such as the creativity of Inuit speakers combined with the structure of the language. The phenomenon of motivation enables them to foster a relationship between a given linguistic sign and the reality to which it refers (De Colombel and Tersis 2002:11). As a growing issue, sovereignty over the land places a strong emphasis on Canada’s North and while the Inuit are becoming more involved in the dialogue on land sovereignty, their capacity to guaranty sovereignty over their own language is also at stake.
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ITK—Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (2005). Partnership Accord between the Inuit of Canada and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada.


Chapter 18

Securing a Minority Language: The Veps of Northwestern Russia

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Abstract: Vepsian is an endangered Finno-Ugric language spoken in the Republic of Karelia, and the Leningrad and Vologda oblasti. Over the last century, the number of Vepsian speakers has fallen dramatically. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the local elite made serious attempts to secure speaking Vepsian through writing and publishing. This contribution aims to understand how the macro-inter-community power dynamics have determined the history of Vepsian writing and publishing as well as the current Vepsian linguistic insecurity. No Vepsian writing system was formalized until the early 20th century. On the one hand, the Soviet Union glorified writing and publishing in Vepsian, then changed its policy and repressed it. After the introduction of Gorbachev’s glasnost, the Vepsian elites established a revitalization program. Their program had two main aims, i.e., to determine and enhance the ethno-cultural and the linguistic features of the Veps. In regards to the linguistic focus of the program the elites worked on the codification of the language and Vepsian publishing. This way they hoped to secure speaking Vepsian among the younger generations. The Vepsian activists have developed a dual and often opposite perception on the outcomes of the revitalization program and consequently on the security of Vepsian speaking. Whether optimistic or pessimistic, prevailing views can only be found out during fieldwork.

Keywords: Vepsian, endangered languages, language planning, language revitalization.

Introduction

With the establishment of language revitalization programs around the world and the production of comparative and theoretical literature, it is possible to compare programs and look at possible suggestions for analysis. The recent literature on minority languages has shown that the success of a program depends on variables which involve the whole system in which the program is carried out. The aim of this study is to explore those kinds of analyses by looking at the whole process, from decision-making stages to actualisation (top-down vector) and from expectations and perceptions of the community toward the language itself and the program (bottom-up vector). Alongside this theoretical and comparative exploration, I will present a case study of the Veps.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many languages in the former territories have undergone a process of revitalization. The Vepsian language is an endangered language currently experiencing revival in Russia. The Veps live
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in an area split between the Republic of Karelia, and the oblasti of Leningrad and Vologda. Their language belongs to the Finno–Ugric sub-group of Uralic languages and comprises three different variants, depending on the location of its speakers i.e., Northern, Central and Southern Vepsian. Beside the majority of Russians, other Finno–Ugric groups are situated in the neighbouring territories, i.e., the Finns, Estonians, Karelians, Livonians, Voties and Ingrians (Zaitseva 2007). Since 1989, Vepsian activists have reintroduced the Vepsian language into the mainstream education system. However, does the language used and spoken by most Veps match the one promoted by the elites?

Ways of Speaking and Writing: Languages in Contact

In this chapter I aim to show the importance of investigating the intra-community micro-power dynamics in order to answer one of the main research questions of the present study, i.e., whether the decisions taken by the elite on Vepsian language policy and planning find their correspondence in the actual practice of language teaching at school and among the Vepsian speech communities. This chapter, therefore, is concerned with explaining socio-linguistic factors which may determine the Vepsian ways of speaking and writing (Hymes 1973:67); it also aims to consider what contexts of discourse, means of speech and their (social) meaning can characterise the Vepsian ways of speaking and writing. As regards language policy and planning, then I “need to ask not just what language means in a particular social context, but also how that meaning is accomplished interactionally, and why those particular meanings (out of all possible available meanings) are expressed in that particular case. Once I understand how and why, I may be able to change the whats that reinforce social inequities” (Hornberger 2000:175). Finally, I will suggest a new type of observation, which aims at contributing to the theoretical analysis on language revitalization programs.

In this section, I aim to align my research with the way linguistic anthropology has dealt with languages in contact. Languages are always in contact one way or another; however, the outcome of the contact varies and, the main reason for those differences resides in their history rather than in their structural features (Thomason 2001). Languages in contact may result in the formation of pidgins and creoles, in the phonological and/or morphological changes of a language, and in some cases in language shift or death. When approaching languages-in-contact phenomena, the relationship between language and power is a primary concern in linguistic anthropology. Language use is often referred to as an index of political assertion of difference. As stated by Hymes (1973:78), languages differ as adaptive resources, i.e., depending on what the communities and/or the individual speaker do with the linguistic resources; but he also asserts that languages differ “due to social patterning, according to the institutions and to the values and beliefs of a community.”

This study affiliates itself with the work of Hymes (1973:65) when stating that the way languages are used within and between communities differ depending on the combination of forces in place in a given context. In other words, the
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research looks at language as a register in regard to resources existing on an unequal playing field.

**Attitude and Ideologies**

Expanding on Hymes, Myers-Scotton (2006:109) distinguishes between language attitudes and ideologies and explains that while the former are more unconscious assessments, the latter are more constructed assessments. In essence, attitudes studies observe how a person’s language variety is socially meaningful to others. That is, who uses the variety and where it is used make the difference; whereas, ideology studies observe competing ideologies in the same community and see them as ‘various representations of reality which are pitted against each other.’

When addressing language attitudes, Brody (1991) showed how among the Tojolab'al community, it was highly valued to teach the younger generations the language of the community as opposed to the dominant Spanish language. On the contrary, while transcribing an oral text on language attitude Pike (1945) observed how speaking Spanish was highly valued by the Mexican community he studied. Clearly language attitudes vary depending on the given bilingual/multilingual speech community and the constant remains the connection between attitudes and practices.

The need of language ideology to link linguistic and social theory has been recognised as it connects the microculture of communicative action to political considerations of power and social inequality (Blommaert 2005). Woolard and Schieffelin (1994:72) see language ideology as the link between the social and linguistic aspect of multilingualism as it ties ‘apparently diverse cultural categories as language, spelling, grammar, nation, gender, simplicity, intentionality, authenticity, knowledge, development, power and tradition.’ Clearly both attitudes and ideologies interrelate in a dialogical way with the society and there exists ‘double-conditioning’ (Foucault 1978).

In regard to my project, what are the attitudes that both the Veps and the Russians bear towards the Vepsian language? Which language is valued more by the other neighbouring Finno-Ugric communities? How does this affect the revival of Vepsian?

**Code-Switching**

Code-switching appears to cover multiple facets which language in contact consists of. In general terms, code-switching is ‘the juxtaposition within the same speech event of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems’ (Romaine 1995:121). Blom and Gumperz (1972) stressed the importance of both the individualistic level and the social functionality of code-switching. I share the idea that the study should focus on the social and communicative aspects of the speech act. This means identifying the social forces that determine the speech act and perceiving the audience in some way as co-author of the conversation (Duranti and Brenneis 1986). Similarly, Myers-Scotton (1993:67,69) recognized that ‘both macro-level situational factors and micro-level attitudinal factors must be included in any comprehensive model’ and ‘discussed a
‘complexity of motivations’ for linguistic choices, rather than trying to present ‘a model for which to claim general applicability.’

The second major question that has arisen from the literature on code-switching deals with its internal structural and symbolic operation (Myers-Scotton 1993; Kachru 1978). In her extensive analysis of the phenomena, Myers-Scotton (2006) presents a double perspective, i.e., she addresses the structural switching by introducing the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model and she proposes the markedness theory when dealing with symbolic switching. Structural code-switching refers to the lexical, phonological and morphological features of the code-switching phenomenon; while symbolic switching refers to the social understanding of the phenomenon itself. When addressing code-switching of the peoples of northwest Amazonia in Brazil, Aikhenvald (2003) illustrated how the use of language reinforced ethnic stereotypes. Therefore, if a Tariana speaker used their own native language in the presence of a guest, their behaviour would be considered aggressive by the community; whereas, if the Tariana speaker used Portuguese (the lingua franca and language of the white man) in informal contexts, then he/she would be corrected immediately (Aikhenvald 2003:6–7).

The Tariana case prompts some questions related to the Veps, i.e., what does code-switching index for the Veps and their surrounding communities, either Finno-Ugric or Russian? How does it manifest structurally and what reactions does it provoke? Since the Vepsian population settled in the Republic of Karelia, Leningrad and Vologda oblasti they have been in contact with the other Finno-Ugric groups and the Slavs dwelling in the same area. Both the phonological, morphological and lexical aspects of the Vepsian language reflect this long-term contact. The current literature has focused primarily on studying the influence that the Slavonic languages have had on the structure of Vepsian.

Pugh (1999:17) states that the Russian elements borrowed by Vepsian ‘are primarily lexical in nature.’ This process of assimilation has involved an adaptation in phonology as well. Vepsian has in some cases incorporated the Russian phonemic palatalization:

\[
\text{пилить} \quad (p'\text{il'it'}) \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{to saw} \quad (\text{Russian}) \quad = \quad p'\text{il'}\text{i} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{to saw} \quad (\text{Vepsian})
\]
\[
\text{цвести} \quad (c\text{v'esti}) \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{to bloom} \quad (\text{Russian}) \quad = \quad cv'\text{et'i} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{to bloom} \quad (\text{Vepsian})
\]

(Pugh 1994:47).

This last Vepsian word \(cv'\text{et'i}\) as opposed to the Russian \(cv'\text{est'i}\) indicates another typical phonological phenomenon that has taken place in the process of assimilating Russian lexemes, i.e., the reduction of consonant clusters. A question emerges, i.e., is the Cyrillic or Latin script better at representing Vepsian phonological features? I will return to this matter in the following section.

In regard to morphology, the Vepsian language has borrowed the Russian prefixes for its verbs of motion (i.e., \(u-\), \(pro-\), \(do-\), \(pod-\), \(za-\), \(roz-\), \(ob-)\). Interestingly, as shown by Pugh (1988/89:74), ‘the distribution of prefixed verbs of motion in Vepsian follows very precise patterns. If we were to draw isogloss lines (each representing one or more prefixed verbs of motion) on a map of the Vepsian territory, we would see that the lines form a series of concentric circles, of which
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the innermost reflects the core of the dialect where the most forms have been assimilated. From the outermost circle to the innermost, that is, in descending order of their geographic distribution, we find u- and pro- together, followed by pod- and do- also on the same line, and za- at the very centre’ (1988/89:74). Furthermore, the words ujiti and projti have been assimilated in all the Vepsian dialects; whereas, dojti only by some. The verb vijti, on the other hand, has not been assimilated at all by any of the dialects.

Diglossia and Domain of Use

Besides the notion of code-switching elaborated in the previous section, understanding the concepts of diglossia and domain of use becomes key within the discourse of language and power and of language inequalities. The term diglossia refers to the fact that languages can have a number of varieties, i.e., a high and a low variety. Those who had no knowledge of the high variety would not have access to local social and political power.

While diglossia refers to one single language and its varieties, domain of use can be applied to multilingual contexts, i.e., a number of languages used in the same territory. Specifically, ‘a domain is an abstraction which refers to a sphere of activity representing a combination of specific times, settings and role relationships’ (Romaine 1995:30). Mackey (1968) observes that each domain is controlled by different factors, such as the economic, administrative, cultural, political and religious, and those may determine the language use of the bilingual or multilingual speaker. This implies that in a given multilingual community, speakers may opt for one language to cover certain domains of use and another language to cover other domains of use. The choice is made according to the language ideologies of the communities.

Still, literacy and orality differ in their modes of expression and functions. It is clear that “literacy is not just part of ‘language’ in general; it is a particular manifestation of language use, related to spoken language but different as a field of action” (Blommaert quoting Hymes 2004:644). Furthermore, literacy and orality differ in their structure and production; as, while ‘spoken language is a structured complex of meaningful sounds; […] writing results in crafted artifacts that have—at least typically—the capacity to be lasting, to be archived’ (Blommaert 2004:645).

Languages may carry several social and symbolic meanings which are shared by the community, and they are expected to change as the society and the language transform. Basso (1974) addressed the link between written language and both a language domain of use and of social value. This implies that depending on the economic and cultural value that the community attaches to the various languages, their writing and/or speaking use will apply accordingly.

An exemplar case is the one presented by Jaffe and Walton (2000), who explored how non-standard orthography, due to its socio-symbolic significance, can be stigmatized. They observed how students from the University of Southern Mississippi and from Pfizer College in California interpreted non-standard orthography and what meaning they attached to it. In their study, a noticeable difference was identified between the perceptions of the two groups. The researchers
managed to show how the same linguistic act can be perceived differently by different communities and how, in certain cases, negative connotations can also be attached to it. The purpose of the linguistic anthropologist is, therefore, to find what functions and domains of use languages have and how those reflect the value the communities attribute to them.

It appears clear that the communities consider some linguistic forms more apt for writing purposes and other languages more apt for speaking purposes. This prompts a question regarding Vepsian writing: is Vepsian more inclined to certain genres? To illustrate, the Vepsian poet Petukhov had begun writing in Vepsian just before the collapse of the Soviet Union. His poetry mainly describes nature and is intended for a young audience (Fol’klorno-literaturnaia karta Karelii 2009). Despite those poetic attempts, how is Vepsian poetry valued by comparison with prestigious Russian literature? Which script, the Latin or the Cyrillic is more valued socially? How do these values influence the efforts put into the revitalization program?

Language and Politics
Among other social variables, political attitudes may partly influence language use. Language has often been used as the main identity marker for political purposes. Activists of minority languages have often turned to claiming language rights to gain some sort of political and/or cultural independence within the nation-state. An example is provided by Garipov and Faller (2003) and the promotion of the Tatar language. In Tatarstan, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 the elites introduced new policies that aimed at promoting the Tatar language into the mainstream education system. Moscow opposed this action as it was viewed as a nationalistic action against Russia. Another example of politicized languages use is provided by Woolard (1989) with her explication of the code-switching phenomena in Spain. The use of Castilian by the Catalan community indicates metaphorical code-switching, i.e., ‘for the [Catalan] speaker the Castilian terms carry connotations that the Catalan equivalents might not’ (Woolard 1989:65). Since Barcelona is the Spanish economic centre Catalan represents the language of the economic power; whereas, Castilian represents the language of cultural power (Woolard 1989). Fishman (1999) confirmed this political view of language use by referring to language ‘as a product of state policy.’

The example provided by Woolard also addresses the financial and economic influence on language use. According to Fishman (1999:13) ‘the economics of language and ethnicity refers to the paradigm of mainstream theoretical economics and uses the concepts and tools of economics in the study of relationships featuring linguistic or ethnic variables; it focuses principally, but not exclusively, on those relationships in which economic variables also play a part.’ This also implies that in a given situation being bilingual/multilingual may carry positive connotations and be viewed as an asset by the local community, as it secures economic future prospects; whereas, in other contexts, it may be valued negatively as it can index backwardness and represent a social constraint. Garipov and Faller (2003) showed that the attitude that the parents bore towards Tatar in Tatarstan was not always positive, due to the stigma still attached to it and the fact
that education at tertiary level was only in Russian. Clearly, if a language retains more economic and cultural capital then it is more likely to be successful in the language market (Bourdieu 1989) and this requires efforts from both the elites and the speech community as a whole in the language revival process.

Last but not least, historical considerations need to be addressed by the linguistic anthropologist. Through the study of history, the anthropologist should not aim at looking at the origin of the language, but at how history has influenced the present-day use of language. For example, in the case of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia the local variants of Serbo-Croatian have been emphasized after the collapse of Yugoslavia (Haarmann 1986). Dozier (1956) expanded on the subject providing the example of two neighbouring communities, the Yaqui and the Tewa, had developed opposite views on the Spanish language because of their first encounter with the Spaniards, i.e., either aggressive or peaceful. So, in the case of the Veps, how has the long bellicose history with the Slavs determined the way Vepsian is perceived now? What social values and ideologies are attached to Vepsian because of the history of the territory in which the Veps dwell?

Language and Gender
Linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists have addressed differences in the use of language by male or female speakers. An analysis of the material on gendered language shows that it is impossible to identify universals since its use varies from context to context. At this stage, it should be borne in mind that gender may be a relevant social variable in some cultures but not in others, where several other variables may determine social roles and influence language use (Ochs 1990).

In the case of the Veps, due to the historical and warlike past of the Vepsian territory, what roles did women occupy when the men were fighting on the border? Is this still reflected in daily practices? Whose domains (men’s or women’s) are hospitals, schools, bureaucratic institutions? Who teaches the children through the medium of the school and daily empirical practices? What is socially expected for men and what is expected for women and how does this influence their language use? Furthermore, how has this been taken into consideration during the language status planning and the implementation of the program? Interestingly, most activists of the language revitalization program are women, e.g., Zaitseva, Mullonen and Strogal’shchikova. How is this viewed by the entire community? That is to say, has the program been given the needed support or is it undervalued and underestimated because it is run by women?

Language and Religion
The use of religious language may also create tension (Keane 1997). Religion can be an identity marker of its own, overriding the differences of the local dialects. In the case of the former Yugoslavia countries, ‘what makes Serbs Serbs, Croats Croats, and Bosnians Bosnians is their membership in different religious communities,’ as ‘they can all communicate in the same language (i.e., Serbo-Croatian), despite some specific local differences in pronunciation and vocabulary’ (Fishman 1999:64). Interestingly, in this case when the elites promoted national language they tried to ‘emphasize local features and evaluate them as boundary
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markers to exclude other varieties’ (Fishman 1999:64). In this case, the script applied to write is also different, i.e., Cyrillic for the Serbs and Latin for the Croats.

Religion may be a relevant marker of identity for the Veps as well. The Republic of Karelia is primarily Russian Orthodox; nevertheless, due to past Finnish and Swedish occupation, there are also some Lutheran and Catholic parishes. As claimed by Klinge (1990:10), being Lutheran is an important characteristic of the Nordic identity. So my question is, does having a mainly Lutheran neighbouring country (i.e., Finland) carry a special meaning for the Veps? Is the present-day economic success of Finland also influential in some ways, i.e., is Finland with its social characteristics viewed as a role-model by the Vepsian communities? Furthermore, how does this alternation of religions determine the current faith of the Veps and their attitude towards spirituality? The Leningrad and Vologda oblasti are mainly Orthodox, too. Is the service in the Lutheran churches delivered in Vepsian and/or Russian? What does this mean for the Veps? Ultimately, how has religion been addressed (if at all) by the elite groups when establishing the Vepsian corpus planning? That is to say, are the holy texts being taught at school or elsewhere? I aim to answer all of these questions during my fieldwork.

Differences in language use are particularly interesting when the focus of a study is endangered languages, as often the drop in the number of speakers is noticeable in only one generation. In addition, in the case of the Veps, further questions arise, such as what social function the elders cover and whether or not their ideas are valued socially and are, therefore, carefully listened to. How does their voice influence the reception and implementation of the Vepsian language by the younger generations?

In brief, when observing Vepsian language use, I need to take into account how the various social variables and categories of actors come into play. In other words, I need to keep an open mind since the combination of social variables (macro-scale) and categories of actors (micro-scale) always differ during daily speech practice. What attitude do the Veps and their neighbours bear towards Vepsian ways of speaking and writing? Is there any stereotype attached to Vepsian that may influence the success or failure of the revitalization program, despite its linguistic efforts? That is also to say what social meaning(s) do the Vepsian means of speech, speech styles and their relation with contexts of discourse have? And how do they affect the program?

The above (socio)linguistic analysis prompts several questions. The literature can only answer some of them, i.e., respond to what economic and political situation exists in the territory where the Veps dwell. However, how those forces compete with each other and what can determine the success of the language revitalization program will be found out during the ethnographic research.

The Veps live in an area where other speech communities reside as well. As previously mentioned, other Finno-Ugric groups are settled in the same territory and the Russians constitute the majority of the population. According to the census taken in 2002, the population of the Republic of Karelia can be divided into Russians (76.6%), Karelians (9.2%), Byelorussians (5.3%), Ukrainians (2.7%), Finns (2.0%) and Veps (0.7%) (Government of Karelia 2009). In Leningrad
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The Veps represent only 0.12% of the population. It remains unknown how many Veps reside in the Vologda oblast'.

Furthermore, the Vepsian communities are divided into three groups, i.e., the Northern Veps in the Republic of Karelia, the Central and Southern Veps in both the Vologda and Leningrad oblasti. This presumes differences in the political and economic situation. Due to its status of Republic, Karelia ‘is subject to the Russian Federation. The Republic of Karelia establishes its system of bodies of the government independently according to the foundations of the constitutional system of the Russian Federation and general principles of organization of representative and executive public authorities, and established federal laws’ (Government of Karelia 2009). Sergey Katanandov is the head of the Republic of Karelia. The Leningrad and Vologda oblasti are also subject to the Russian Federation and their Legislative Assemblies ‘are independent when realizing their functions and powers’ and ‘represent the interest of the oblasti when dealing with federal executive bodies and government bodies of the Federation entities’ (Government of Leningrad 2009; Government of Vologda 2009). Valery Pavlovich Serdyukov is the Governor of the Leningrad oblast' and Vyacheslav Pozgalyov is the Governor of the Vologda oblast'.

The economy of the Republic of Karelia is based on the production and exportation of its natural resources, i.e., timber and minerals, and on the tourist industry. Similarly the Leningrad oblast' bases its economy on tourism and natural resources; in particular ‘the main industrial sectors of the region are fuel, oil refining, forestry, lumber, pulp and paper, chemical production, and engineering’ (Government of the Leningrad oblast' 2009). The Vologda oblast' establishes its economy on metallurgy, chemical, wood, textile, pulp and paper industries and is also renowned for stock-breeding and the production of dairy products, especially butter. Due to their peripheral location, it is imaginable that the Veps work primarily for the timber and agriculture industries. Nevertheless, part of the present research aims to figure how they sustain themselves (see Manning 2002 on the identification of slate quarries with the Welsh language, for example) and what future prospects are hoped for the younger generations.

Language Revitalization Programs

In the early 1990s, UNESCO recognised the need to act upon endangered languages as a matter of urgency since it was found that every two weeks a language died out. UNESCO took immediate action and as a consequence many revitalization programs were established around the world with the purpose to save those languages which were endangered. Existing and new language programs began to be closely observed by linguists and anthropologists and much theoretical and comparative material has since been produced. Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) addressed the need for a comprehensive study on language policy and planning and gathered material on Africa, the Scandinavian and Central European countries, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Through their study they realised that the literature on language policy and planning was not yet complete and that a number
of questions arises, due to the variety of contexts where language planning takes place. They insisted that language in education was always a political activity.

Two orientations on language planning studies can be identified, i.e., the literature that addresses how the authorities have acted in regard to language policy (macro-politics) and the literature that examines how the communities involved in the revival process have responded to the language programming (micro-politics). This section, therefore, will look at both the top-down and ground-up perspectives and will raise questions on their ‘double-conditioning’ interaction (Foucault 1978).

Top-Down Perspective: Status and Corpus Planning
In the 1980s and 1990s, the study from the top-down perspective concentrated on language policies and on the planning of the corpus of a language and understanding its status. That is to say, interest focused on the legislation and the codification of the endangered language in terms of its morphology, phonology and lexicon and in terms of its condition vis-à-vis other languages. While it is important to collect the minutes of the first meetings when those decisions were made (Fishman 1999), it is also necessary to look closely at social changes and their interaction with language use and policy.

Hornberger (2000:173) called upon the need to make clear policies and addressed the paradox that stems ‘from ideological tensions between assimilationism and pluralism.’ This implies that if the elite groups promote contradicting policies, those contradictions might be reflected in the educational practices as well. Secondly, Hornberger (2000:175) identified the need to ‘locate linguistic practices as parts of larger systems of social inequalities.’ Thirdly, for her the answer lies on what interculturality means for the elite groups and the communities, why and how they use it; and it is in figuring this out that she sees a solution to the paradox between assimilationists and pluralists (Hornberger 2000).

Through her observation of social inequalities, Hornberger touched on the next consideration, i.e., how to question previous language status planning. With the rise of globalization and the spread of the English language and new technologies, a new kind of analysis is required when trying to secure the speaking of a minority language. Akinnaso (1991:44) observes that language activists need to consider economic factors in implementing policies and to address the continuously changing ‘patterns of language choice and language attitudes of the various ethnolinguistic groups.’ In other words, they need to consider the market value of the minority language. In the case of Nigeria, English was viewed as the window on the world, a door to new opportunities and better prospects (Akinasso 1991).

Another aspect that the language activists should consider is the use of new electronic technologies. However, as shown by Nevins (2004) the introduction of such technologies has to reflect the will of the local communities or it would be perceived as yet another form of oppression. So, what matters is again the how and why people use or want to use the new electronic technologies and English and what could be done to make these technologies functional in the discourse of minority language revival.
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Status planning also involves selecting languages for writing purposes. Liddicoat (2004) points out the importance of defining literacy first and selecting the languages for educational purposes later. In a multilingual context, therefore, ‘which language skills are to be considered as literate capabilities? Which will be the focus of education?’ (Liddicoat 2004:2).

In regard to corpus planning, the main criticism is diverted toward purist linguistic choices on behalf of the elites. A purist approach tries to purge the linguistic interferences from the dominant language, such as phonetic elements, code-switching phenomena and even orthography (Wertheim 2003). Often an extreme purist position when codifying a language indexes a ‘logic of oppositional identity’ (Jaffe 1999:61). Although the motivations behind the purist approach are clear, i.e., to protect distinctiveness of the minor ethnic group identity from the dominant group, it is often the case that those purist choices hamper the realization of the revival aims. First of all, they do not often reflect the community daily language use (Wertheim 2003). Secondly, they may dissuade the younger generations from studying the minor language (Dorian 1981; Hill and Hill 1980). Thirdly, the purist approach is not always shared at the elite level and this may create legislative confusion as mentioned above, i.e., linguistic legislation may provide ambiguous directions due to the lack of clear targets (Hornberger 2000; Dorian 1981). As a solution to this, Dorian (1981:479) suggests that ‘structural compromise may enhance survival chances.’

Bottom-up Perspective
Language revitalization programs are clearly mainly political (Kaplan and Baldauf 2005); nevertheless, after having addressed macro-politics (i.e., the point of view of the elite groups and the linguists on language planning), an analysis of micro-politics should be presented as well. Specifically, when observing the micro scale of a linguistic program three voices should be listened to, the teachers, the students and the community as a whole.

The teacher plays an important role in the success of a language revitalization program. The reasons vary according to where the program is being implemented; nevertheless, the teachers’ educational background and their attitude have been identified as determining factors for the grassroots success of the program. First of all, according to Nunan and Lam (1998), the ideal teacher needs to have a number of teaching and linguistic competencies. Specifically, when it comes down to bilingual education, the teacher is expected to be proficient in both languages and to appreciate multilingual issues (including possible cultural differences of both speech communities) (Nunan and Lam 1988). The need exists, therefore, for a programme that guarantees this kind of professional development. Second, in order to enhance effective language teaching in class, it is important that the teacher maintains a positive attitude towards the minor language. Furthermore, many teachers may complain that they do not comprehend what is being communicated through the circulars and feel that the policies are not implemented appropriately (Adeniyi and Bello 2009; Papapavlou & Pavlou 2005). As a consequence, their motivation diminishes. Taking this a step further, the general attitude towards the
minority language in school appears also relevant as it may dissuade students from learning it.

Just like the audience is co-author in a communicative act (Duranti and Brenneis 1986), so the students can become co-authors of their language revitalization program. This is, at least, the approach taken by Hornberger (2000). She argues that the voice of the students must be included in the research since it can allow the curriculum to develop in ways that are student-centred. Similarly, a few years before, Heath (1983) had pointed out that by engaging students in ethnographic research, the goals of the school and the community were accomplished.

As often stressed in this chapter a combination of forces may influence the achievement of the targets of the language revival. Therefore, a look at what influence the community may have on the program will be investigated. Philips (1972) remarked that a discrepancy between learning practice in and outside school may reduce the children’s participation in class. Similarly, Heath (1983:76) noticed that the parents of the community of Trackton did not explicitly guide the children in their learning, because they expected the children to ‘come to know.’ As a consequence the children experienced difficulty learning in a more hierarchical environment, such as school.

**Veps: Top-down or Bottom-up?**

As mentioned above, in 1989 the Veps established a program that aimed at both codifying Vepsian and teaching it in school, as part of a larger revival of the Vepsian culture. Zaitseva and Mullonen led the linguistic aspect of the program, while Strogal’schikova led the ethnic movement.

What remains unclear at this stage is to what extent the language ideologies and attitudes of the communities (Northern, Central and Southern) have influenced the realization of the revival program. After almost two decades since the establishment of the program, how do the Veps feel about it? Do they still want to save the language? If so, what can be done? That is, what do the parents want for their children? Furthermore, do the three Vepsian communities share the same aims and goals? If not, how do they differ and why? Questions related to teaching also arise. Where do the teachers learn their profession? Are they motivated and do they feel supported by the system? Who are the culture bearers, men or women, and what does that mean at a practical level? What language ideologies and attitudes exist among the Vepsian activists and communities (top-down and bottom-up) and what role do they play in the revival of Vepsian language? All these questions need to be addressed during the fieldwork.

**Conclusion**

When evaluating the process of language revival and both its status and corpus planning and its empirical aspects, an interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach needs to be taken, since it provides the basis for an in-depth analysis (Edwards 1995; Fishman 1999; Msanjila 2004; Akinnaso 1991). I have tried to advance all the possible social variables involved in multilingual contexts
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since ethnographic studies ‘do not […] try to reduce the complexity of social events by focusing a priori on a selected range of relevant features, but they try to describe and analyse the complexity of social events comprehensively’ (Blommaert 2007:682). By looking at all the forces and social variables in place, it is possible to identify more easily which combination of factors determines the Veps’ language use at grass-roots level. And by doing so, it will be possible to see if the Vepsian elites have taken into consideration those forces and acknowledged them during the corpus and status planning of Vepsian and the implementation stages of the program.

With my research I suggest to analyse not only the Vepsian ways of speaking but also and more specifically the Vepsian ways of writing, i.e., to understand what documents are written in Vepsian and what is appropriate to be written in such language. I have also suggested the need to understand how a combination of different social factors has determined this occurrence. This chapter has aimed to explore different social variables in order to appreciate their possible influence on speaking as well as writing in Vepsian and ultimately on the program itself. In doing so, my exploration on language revitalization programs has brought about several questions on the social role of Vepsian writing and its possible consequences on the linguistic revival attempts.

References


Humanizing Security in the Arctic


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**Humanizing Security in the Arctic**


Chapter 19
Hypothesizing Educational Security in the Arctic

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Abstract: The concept of educational security is absent in the discourses on security and the Arctic. In this chapter I hypothesise whether using the term educational security could help Aboriginal peoples in their struggle for formal education based on the needs of Aboriginal students. If the education problem is defined as an educational security issue the discourse changes from prioritizing economic benefits of the nation to enhancing Aboriginal human rights. Reflecting on the educational changes that have taken place for the Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk (Canada), I use the definitions proposed by the United Nations in Article 14 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Government of Finland. I argue that in order for Aboriginal peoples to continue with their self-determination efforts, careful consideration of definitions and contexts are in order, and should be re-assessed as new policy plans are under way.

Keywords: Educational security, educational equity, Aboriginal peoples, Inuvialuit, residential schools.

Introduction

The concept of educational security is absent from current discourses on security and the Arctic that are dominated by national security and sovereignty agendas. Economic security, food security, and safety at home and in communities also have been discussed. This does not mean that education as an issue has been neglected. On the contrary, in Canada’s Arctic, the aim to reduce an education gap that exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students has been declared a top priority for Inuit organizations and territorial and federal governments (Richards 2008; INAC 2008; GNWT 2005; Simon 2008). In Canada, low educational attainment among Aboriginal peoples is often framed in the discourse of rapid Aboriginal population growth and the need for skilled Aboriginal labour. As Arctic Canada has experienced economic growth and political development, skilled and educated labour are desperately needed in order for Aboriginal peoples to break away from Eurocentric domination.

In this chapter I argue that using the concept of educational security could help Aboriginal peoples in their struggle for formal education rooted in the often unique needs of Aboriginal students. If the education problem is defined as an educational security issue, the discursive frame changes from one of prioritizing economic benefits of the nation to enhancing Aboriginal human rights. Article 14 of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) asserts that indigenous people retain “the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their
own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning” (UN 2008). All governments subject to the UN declaration are obligated to work together with Indigenous Peoples to achieve this goal. In addition, Article 14 declares that indigenous individuals have the right to state education without discrimination. Although Canada has long hesitated to sign the declaration, formal education in the territories and provinces has changed to better meet the needs of Aboriginal students.

In this chapter, I shall attempt to answer two questions. First, how has educational security changed for the Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk over the century? Second, I will consider if the UNDRIP Article 14 and the government of Finland’s definitions of educational security are appropriate frameworks to assess the current state of educational security in the Canadian Arctic.

Finland, among other countries, has yet to ratify UNDRIP. Sami in Finland have and continue to struggle with similar human rights discrimination in the education system as the Inuit in Canada (for example, receiving education in ones’ mother tongue and education being founded in appropriate cultural methods). Yet, the education, employment and health gap between the Sami and the Finnish majority (as with Sami and the majority populations in Sweden and Norway) is minimal or non-existent (Young and Bjerregaard 2008). In 2002, the Government of Finland highlighted the need for basic educational security and identified future needs in the implementation of the rights of students. The Finnish Ministry of Education states that the principle underlying schooling from kindergarten to high school is for the public authorities to guarantee basic educational security by ensuring ‘educational opportunities for every citizen, irrespective of their gender, place of residence, age, language and economic means’ (Ministry of Education 2004). Educational security is defined as the right to free formal education, sufficient freedom of choice, and a safe learning environment (Kurhila et al. 2001). Nurminen (2001:45) asserts that the cornerstone of basic educational security is an absence of ‘great differences in teaching, learning and educational outcomes between different education providers and schools.’ Drawing on Article 14 of the UNDRIP and the Government of Finland’s definitions of educational security, I explore how educational security issues have been confronted historically by the Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories, Canada. It is within this historical and contemporary context that I approach the question of educational security.

1 The Inuvialuit—meaning ‘the real people’—live in Canada’s western Arctic. The Inuvialuit are Inuit, and are biologically, culturally and linguistically related to other Inuit that live across the North American continent from the Bering Strait to east Greenland. In this chapter, I use the word Inuvialuit when specifically referring to Inuit of the western Arctic. I use the word Inuit when refereeing to all Inuit living in Canada.
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Context

Aboriginal family life and education have undergone important changes in the past fifty years (Castellano 2002; Durst 1991; Hamilton 1994; Llewellyn 2002). As for the Inuit, most families were moved from small semi-nomadic groups to resettle in communities, in order for children to be assimilated into the Canadian institutionalized education system (ITK 2005; Dorais 1995). The education system conflicted with the Inuvialuit lifestyle that was structured around traveling with the family group (Hamilton 1994) and directly linked to survival skills on the land (Bachmayer et al. 1978). Residential schools played a key function in the government’s efforts to assimilate the Aboriginal peoples to the western Canadian culture (Llewellyn 2002). Children that were taken into residential schools were forbidden to express their culture and visit with their families for extended periods of time with the consequence that some students forgot their mother tongue and became unable to communicate with their parents and elders (ITK 2005; Hamilton 1994). Despite the negative aspects of institutional schooling, some Inuit parents were willing to send their children to school so that they would be better prepared for modern life (Watt-Cloutier 2000).

In 1984, the Inuvialuit settled their land claim and the education system began to evolve by including the Inuvialuktun language in school programs and daycares and preschools were established in the Inuvialuit communities (ITK 2004). Subsequently, the Government of Northwest Territories’ (GNWT) culture-based education policy required schools in its jurisdiction to create, preserve, promote, and enhance their culture. This policy was based upon the principle that culture provides a foundation for learning and growth, and that the GNWT should support individuals, organizations and communities in culture-based education (GNWT 2004; Lewthwaite 2007). Though the educational system in Inuvialuit communities has developed ways to be more pedagogically attuned to culture and context, the Inuvialuit students’ low high school graduation rate—relatively worse than that of other areas of the north (Vodden 2001)—continues to worry families, communities, policy makers and employers (GNWT 2001; Peart and King 1996; Bachmayer et al. 1978; Vodden 2001). Though socioeconomic problems are preventing some Inuit students from reaching their full potential at school, Watt-Cloutier (2000) has found that inadequate school programs propagate this problem. The Inuit are faced with a dilemma of a residential school system that was founded with discipline and strict guidelines which held a rigour that made the children want to learn, compared to the prevailing system that is founded on a paternalistic ethos with little challenge and incentive to learn. According to Watt-Cloutier (2000), neither is the prevailing educational system in Nunavik appropriate to prepare youth to live in their home communities nor in the south and this has left parents confused about the ways they should help their children in regards to education.2

2 Note from the editors: In Nunavik, the Kativik School Board was assessed after 10 years of operation:

Methods

Data consisted of both primary fieldwork and analysis of secondary sources. Primary data collection and verification took place in the Inuvialuit community of Tuktoyaktuk during a three month period in 2007 and 2008. This consisted of participation in community life, individual thematic semi-directed and open-ended interviews, and a focus group with youth. Secondary data from historical documents, scholarly articles, and research reports provided background information about the Inuvialuit and their relationship with learning and the school system. In addition, presentations and discussions of the data in 2009 at the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation meeting and Tuktoyaktuk community hall event contributed in verification of the data and bringing new views to the existing data.

As my previous visits had not been more than a fortnight’s length, the aim of the community participation was to gain a better sense of Tuktoyaktuk community life. Community participation consisted of taking part in: 1) some of the high school classes and spending time at the Mangilaluk School; 2) a caribou hunt, checking the fishnets, and picking berries; 3) organized weekly community events like Adult’s Nights and nights at the youth centre; and 4) organized special events like the Thanksgiving Dinner, MLA Candidate Debate, and Self-Government Information Session. The youth focus group was organized for the high school students. All high school students were invited and 15 participated. The aim of the focus group was to learn more about how high school students perceived living in Tuktoyaktuk, going to high school, and what kinds of future plans the students had.

Key informant interviews included two policy representatives, three high school teachers and two school staff. Participants provided insight to the policy issues impacting the Mangilaluk School and what school life and teaching was like for the high school teachers. Interviews with three generations in six diverse families were conducted to learn more about the student–family relationship and how educational experiences differed between generations. Families were chosen to fit three different categories, that included families with youth participants: 1) that had graduated from high school; 2) were attending high school; and 3) had dropped out from high school. These were purposely chosen so that each participating family had a young adult between the ages of 16 and 19. Youth between the ages of 16 and 19 were either in high school, dropped out, completed recently or have never attended high school. Hence, their experiences of going or not going to school are fresh in their minds and that of their parents and


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grandparents. Alias names for the informants are used throughout the chapter to protect the participants’ identities.

The interview questions with youth, parents and grandparents focused on three broad topics: good life, family, and education and learning. Participants were asked, for example: What is your experience with education and learning? What kinds of support do your parents / grandparents / teachers give you in regard to education / learning? What works / does not work with regards to education in Tuktoyaktuk? What are the barriers to education? Participants were encouraged to speak about their school experiences in story form.

Results

1890s to 1940s—Neglect from the Federal Government

Before the Second World War, the Government of Canada did not offer formal education to the Inuvialuit, leaving the matter to missionaries. The government viewed the Inuvialuit as a primitive people that would not benefit from formal education, believing that Inuit would remain hunters and trappers and that ‘a white man’s education’ was of no use to a nomadic people. The government also doubted whether Inuit were intelligent enough to learn the way ‘white children’ could (Diubaldo 1985:86).

Although the trading opportunities and small scale wage employment brought by the whalers and fur industry increased the income of the Inuvialuit, their life paths were tied to the land and semi-nomadic lifestyle. The best way for children to learn the Inuvialuk way was to travel and live with their parents. Even though this was the case, many Inuvialuit parents wanted their children to learn basic reading and writing skills and sent their children to school for a few years.3 As expressed below in narrative, Persis (one of the interviewees, pers. comm.) went to the Anglican Mission School at Shingle Point from 1930 to 1933. Even though Persis liked school, her parents did not want her to stay in school longer than three years so that she would learn ‘Inuvialuk4 life’:

Some of them [children] just stay one year and quit. They say they don’t like it. I don’t know why… [I went to school for] three years. We really like to go to school long ago. We really wish to learn something, but as soon as we could read little bit and write that,

3. Whittaker (1937), an Anglican priest, reports some Inuvialuit being so keen to educate their children in 1926 that they signed a petition demanding education from the Federal Government. The government response was opening a residential school at Shingle Point in 1929 and providing funding in the form of per capita grants. The school was run by Anglican priests. It is unclear, though, why the Inuvialuit children did not attend the Catholic residential school in Aklavik which was established already in 1925. The reason could be that the Inuvialuit who were Anglican preferred not to send their children to a Catholic school.

4. Inuvialuk is singular for Inuvialuit.
they stop us. Our parents said, ‘Good enough. Not gonna go too far. You’ve got to learn Inuvialuk life too.’ Even if we want to go back we can’t.

Tuktoyaktuk had been a traditional Inuvialuit settlement since the 18th century. In 1934 it became an important harbour in the western Arctic (Alunik et al. 2003) and more families moved there permanently. An Anglican mission school was established there in 1947. As reports from Alaska and Greenland showed that Inuit in other parts of the world were being educated, the embarrassment to the Canadian Government of neglecting some of its citizens changed the view on Inuit education (Diubaldo 1985). The Federal Government’s policy on Inuit education changed in 1948 as it took over the administrative responsibility of northern education (McLean 1997), including the administration of the Tuktoyaktuk Day School. The new policy was to provide equal education opportunities to all citizens by building several federal day schools across the Northwest Territories (McLean 1995). The policy shift was a welcomed change for some Inuvialuit that saw formal education assisting the local people become more successful in their business endeavours. S. J. Bailey, who had been commissioned by the Federal Government to interview northerners on the need for Inuit education in 1948 and 1950, had reported that the Inuvialuit wanted the same rights as other Canadians and this included a sufficient education system (King 1999).

1950s to 1960s—Confusion under Forceful Tactics

In the 1950s, school attendance in the Northwest Territories was not as high as had been hoped. To increase attendance, the government threatened to hold back family allowance if children failed to attend school (Berger 1977). These coercive tactics were dreaded by the Inuvialuit. At times the leaders in Tuktoyaktuk would negotiate with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the church for some of the children to stay home, but others were sent to residential school against their family’s will. Gary, one of the interviewees (pers. comm.), explains how government policy influenced his mother’s decision to send her children to school, even though she wished otherwise:

I was forced to go to school. That’s the only way my mother would collect family allowance. My mother didn’t want me to go to school. We had no choice in order to survive.

Gary went to the Tuktoyaktuk Day School for a year and continued schooling at All Saint’s Anglican residential school where he was punished if he spoke his own language. The assimilation process that had started at residential schools continued at community day schools (Milloy 1999) and the Tuktoyaktuk Federal Day School (later called the Mangilaluk School) acted as a strong agent of change toward Euro-Canadian values as it taught the curriculum designed in the province of Alberta. Inuvialuit culture was included in the teachings by negatively

5 Note from the editors: In Canada, education is a provincial or territorial jurisdiction. However, power over education was transferred to the NorthWest Territories only in 1969.
comparing it to the ‘highly-prized European culture’ (Ferguson 1961). In addition to the school downgrading Inuvialuit culture, physical abuse was considered a discipline method.

Inuvik became the new government center of the western Arctic in 1958 and the Sir Alexandra Mackenzie School was opened a year later (Hepburn 1963). Throughout the 1960s, when Paul was going to school, his parents spent years on the land. Later, while his parents were on the land and he was old enough to attend high school, Paul was sent to the Catholic residential school in Inuvik. Paul had an extremely negative experience at the residence due to abuse and neglect (pers. comm.):

My parents, I believe, thought that it was a safe place for me to go, because it was run by the Catholic Church and my parents were really strong Catholic followers. So in 1962 when they [parents] were going to the bush, [they] sent me, Christine and David [siblings] to Grollier Hall… But during that time I was taken from my bed and physically, sexually abused… that was suppressed so deep that I forgot about it, but it controlled how I began to conduct myself.

As with other parents, religion and spending time on the land influenced Paul’s parents to send him and his siblings to a residential school. Students who received all their schooling in day school found that the time they spent learning with parents continued without as much interruption.

When reflecting on Article 14 of the UNDRIP and the Government of Finland’s definitions of educational security, it appears that by the 1960s the Government of Canada was providing Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk with a single criteria associated with the concept: the right to free formal education. The government was failing to deliver a safe learning environment and education that was respectful of Inuvialuit culture and language. The data does not permit me to elaborate on whether the freedom of choice was sufficient or on the educational outcomes. But as students were not able to finish high school in their home communities, it made it harder for some students to obtain a degree.

1970s and 1980s—Struggle for Self-Determination

Study participants told of the barriers they faced even though they wanted to get educated. Andrew’s studies in Yellowknife were cut short because he did not have the family support he needed while studying there. Homesickness influenced some students to return to their community before graduating. The abuse that some parents experienced at residential school and the abuse their children were going through in Mangilaluk School prevented them from encouraging their children to stay in school. Alice, Rebecca’s mom, wished her children would have stayed in school longer, but her nine children dropped out in grade seven or eight. Alice’s oldest daughter, Rebecca, attended Mangilaluk School in the 1970s. Rebecca’s story (pers. comm.) reflects how the school environment was unsafe both because of physical abuse occurring in disciplining as well as bullying by peers:
I enjoyed that [going to school], but I always tended to be late in the mornings… I would just run, and I got a strapping just for being late, a number of times… I showed my mom my hands and she marched straight to the school and she didn’t let me go back to school for a week. I begged to go back to school and after a week she let me go… I was getting into fights. Even though my parents lived here in Tuk [Tuktoyaktuk] I had been going to school in Inuvik and you know how kids get when there’s someone new in town… So I just got sick of fighting.

In 1982, the education policy in the Northwest Territories was separated from the federal policy, and published as *Learning: Tradition and Change in the Northwest Territories*. This document emphasized community and local control over education and was in concord with the prevailing political atmosphere of demanding Aboriginal self-determination and power (King 1998). The document led to the creation of divisional boards of education and Aurora College (GNWT 2005). Then, in 1984, the Inuvialuit land claim, *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* (DIAND 1984), was approved, which recognized the importance of education, but it was vague in defining the Inuvialuit Social Development Program (which education is apart of) and lacked an implementation plan. Also, commitment and policy from governments hindered appropriate action to plan for education that would meet the needs of the Inuvialuit (Voddon 2001). Some changes did happen though. For example, smaller communities expanded the number of grades they taught, but Tuktoyaktuk did not get a high school before 1987 and some parents, for example Dorothy’s, continued to be against sending children to high school in Inuvik. Stringer Hall (a residence for students in Inuvik) had already closed in 1974, but Grollier Hall operated until 1997. Dorothy’s parents agreed that it was better for Dorothy not to go to residential school at Grollier Hall. A safe home environment was more important than education, as Dorothy’s father explains (pers. comm.):

Most important for a parent is to nurture our children and family has to stay together. Stay together and give children that nurturing they need. And maybe what happened with me [sexual abuse at Grollier Hall], the bad memories… I didn’t want my children to go through that.

By the 1980s the GNWT had moved in the direction of giving local residents more authority over education and education was becoming more respectful of the Inuvialuit culture. However, a safe learning environment and education that was respectful of the Inuvialuit culture and language were still lacking. The choice to complete high school in Tuktoyaktuk made it easier for some students to continue with their schooling. At the same time, the small local school did not offer as many subjects to choose from as the school in Inuvik, Yellowknife or Fort Smith.
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1990s to 2000s—Striving for Better Policy and Results

The 1990s launched an era of culture-based education for the Northwest Territories (GNWT 1994) and the Inuvialuit specifically, this occurred at least in reference material⁶ and organizational help. For example, the Inuvialuit Education Foundation was formed to support Inuvialuit in entering and completing educational studies. The Inuvialuit Cultural and Resource Center was established to develop a language plan for the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and create an Inuvialuktun Language Curriculum. The culture-based education initiative has continued through out the early 2000s with the ‘Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education Departmental Directive’ (2004) and the publication of the third policy plan (GNWT 2005). The official Inuit position on education corresponds with a resentment of policies that the GNWT has launched. In 2008, at the Inuit Education Summit held in 2008 the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami dreamt of a future where more bilingual Inuit were graduating from high school with a firm knowledge and pride in their own culture (Simon 2008). In 2009 the National Inuit Education Accord was signed by the Inuit of Canada, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut governments, and the Nunatsiavut government to establish a National Committee on Inuit Education. The mandate of the committee is to develop a strategy to enhance the educational outcomes of Inuit students.⁷

In the Mangilaluk School, the culture-based education has been implemented by offering Inuvialuktun language classes, a northern studies curriculum, and on-the-land courses. Since 2007, Mangilaluk School has also taught Inuvialuktun for high school students. Janet had already graduated from high school when they started offering Inuvialuktun in high school. Janet had not thought about missing Inuvialuktun classes in high school, but when asked about it, she wished she had the option to learn the language while going to high school (pers. comm.):

I think that’s why, you know, like, I haven’t learned yet … but they never offered it to us in high school. I don’t know how come, they should have, so they could help us learn. But they didn’t, that was kind of upsetting, if you come to think of it right now.

Some of the parents were critical of the way Inuvialuktun was taught in school,⁸ and they preferred their children to take other courses that would be beneficial to them in college or university. This is a dilemma that comes up often: how to balance schooling so that students have a firm foundation in the local

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⁶ Inuvialuit Pitqusiit: The Culture of the Inuvialuit (GNWT 1991) was the first document of one of the Indigenous peoples of the NWT told by themselves. Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective (GNWT 1996) was issued to be used as curriculum in conjunction with other documents.

⁷ The federal government is engaged in the process by an integrated Northern Strategy that promotes social and economic development, and partners with the northern communities in creating the northern economy.

⁸ Studies that were done in the 1980s and 1990s have also brought up this issue (Heimbecker 1994:29; Condon 1987:160).
culture and all the necessary prerequisite courses that are required for entering college and university studies. In 2007, the Mangilaluk high school offered for the first time mathematics and physics courses that are needed to enter certain university programmes. Also, arts and industrial arts (wood shop) classes were offered for high school students.

On-the-land courses are offered a couple of times a year and include hunting, trapping, life skills and a language component. In recent years, on-the-land courses have been canceled due to lack of interest from the students. Many of the families take their children on the land especially during the spring and summer and prefer to teach their children traditional skills in a family setting. The fact that many youth have the opportunity to do on the land activities outside school might influence them not to sign up for the on the land course. Interestingly though, other federal government funded programs that work with the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation (TCC) have had success in getting the youth involved. These include the whale harvesting program (GNWT 2009), berry picking program and youth and elders on-the-land camps. It could be that the TCC is in a better position than the school to provide the cultural programs needed in Tuktoyaktuk and that is why the students do not take part in cultural camps organized by the Mangilaluk School.

The Mangilaluk School system is still based on the Alberta curriculum and it is questionable how culture-based the education really is. Scholars assert that the curriculums used in Aboriginal education continue to have an assimilationist bent (Castellano et al. 2000; Aylward 2007; Burnaby 2008). For Lipka (1989), who works with the Yup’ik in Alaska, the question of culturally relevant curriculum is tied to a broader question of how the school is seen in the community. According to Lipka, it is not enough to simply use relevant curriculum, the school needs to recognize and function as a resource for the community and not the other way around. Also, as communities differ in ethnicity, history, livelihoods, etc. it is crucial that each community negotiate its own curriculum. This is what some scholars (Stairs 1994; Lipka 1998) refer to as culturally negotiated schooling.

At the high school level, only the Inuvialuktun language teacher is Inuvialuk. Usually, the turnover for high school teachers at the Mangilaluk School has been one or two a year. As many of the teachers are hired from southern provinces with little or no understanding of the Inuvialuit culture, and may not stay in the region long enough to develop an understanding of it, there continues to be a concern that teaching methods are not culturally appropriate either. Also, it takes time for local people to get to know the individual teachers. A mother of a high school graduate hoped that the teachers that come to teach would be tolerant and willing to learn the culture of the Inuvialuit (pers. comm.):

I think it’s the attitude, being both like culture—my Inuvialuit culture—and education more as the white man way of living. It clashes, both cultures. Some people that come up: RCMP [police officers], nurses, teachers, basically they’re all white people. And I see them come and go, and it’s attitude. I believe they come up with willingness to help, to do their job, but some of them have an attitude. Some of them come up and say, ‘Ok, this is the way I’ve
Two parents and a grandparent told about incidents where their child had not been treated well by a teacher and they decided to take their children out of school for the rest of the grade so that they would start with a different teacher when they went to the next grade. It became apparent in the participants’ stories that people in Tuktoyaktuk are very sensitive to how their children are treated in the school setting and especially by the teachers and the principal.

Reflecting on contemporary educational interests, ‘to get a job’ was the most common answer participants gave to the question, ‘why is education important?’ Most of the parents expressed that they wanted their children to get educated so that they would be able to work and provide for their families. More specifically, education is seen as an instrument to economic self-sufficiency, opportunity, security and choices. Hunters are still valued, but people agree that it is better to get formally educated and a job before becoming a hunter, but in reality this dream is not realized for many. Some of the youth that had become hunters had quit school before learning to read. Eric left school in grade seven. He had been passed on to the following grade with his peers though he had major difficulties keeping up and never learned how to read. Now he is the main hunter for his extended family and his parents and girlfriend are proud of him.

Many of the participants criticized the level of education that was delivered in Tuktoyaktuk. A father who had made his son repeat grade two because he had not learned to read talked about self-government (pers. comm.) and the need to get rid of ‘inclusive schooling’ (or ‘social passing’):

First thing out of the door is social passing. How can they ignore communities that say this is where our kids are being ignored? This is where the government system is failing. It’s by your system, just moving them forward, just to keep up with their peers, even though they’re not ready for their next grade. How can they ignore that for all these years the communities have been saying that?

Schools in the Northwest Territories implement the ‘Inclusive Schooling Directive’ (Education, Culture and Employment 2006). The directive is set out to ensure equal access for all students to educational programs. In practice the students are placed into grades according to age rather than educational abilities. Some of the parents, including Richard, blame this policy for not making the students try harder in school but others preferred that their children continued school with their peer group. Participants called inclusive schooling peer promotion or social passing, meaning that students are passed on the next grade with their peers regardless if they are on the same level. Watt-Cloutier (2000) sees the lowered level of educational standards being a reflection of the use of southern institutional programs and the local school boards being accountable to the government of Quebec instead of Nunavik’s own emerging government. For
Watt-Cloutier (2000:115) the new system is implementing cultural racism as ‘the watering down of programs, the lowering of standards and expectations’ are not providing students with the necessary skills for life (see also Davidson 2007).

Andrew criticized the inequities between the communities in regards to education. He thinks that quality of education and what is demanded of the students should be the same in the north as it is in the south. Richard agrees with him. Richard is frustrated that the students graduating from Tuktoyaktuk have had to upgrade before going to university (pers. comm.):

We feel that they’re not getting the proper education. They fall below even what Inuvik teaches… If we can see when the day comes when our kids who graduate can go right to college or right to university if they’re taking just a course without having to upgrade for two years to get up to the level they should be, but that’s a day that’s still coming. Where as if you were at a residential school, with all the studying that you had and the different levels of education in Inuvik, you could probably go right into university from there.

The education attainment in Tuktoyaktuk had increased only two percent in two decades; 34 percent of residents aged 15 years and older were high school graduates in 2006 (compared to 67 percent in the Northwest Territories) (NWT Bureau of Statistics 2007). This is 50 percent less than Non-Aboriginal students in rural Canada (Richards 2008). Inuvialuit Settlement Region communities, with the exception of Tuktoyaktuk, hold a moderate level of satisfaction with education. The majority of the population in Tuktoyaktuk expressed dissatisfaction with education in their community (Cliff 2008:239). Some families in Tuktoyaktuk and other Inuvialuit communities move to Inuvik while their children attend school, because they find the quality of education to be better and the children have more subjects to choose from.

All of the female youth that participated in this study had experienced bullying in school. They agreed that there was more bullying in elementary school and junior high school than high school, but one student was also bullied in high school. Helen quit school in grade 10. Two of her cousins who she went to school with graduated and she did not feel confident enough to go to school alone.

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9 Note from the editors: The Ktivik School Board has been actively involved in ongoing negotiations for a Nunavik assembly to be created. The Ktivik School Board is attempting to warranty current funding for education will be maintained with the proposed governance changes.

Parents and grandparents also talked about bullying in school. A grandmother talked about students making fun of a certain family when she went to residential school in the 1940s, and some participants mentioned a family in Tuktoyaktuk that does not send their children to school because of bullying.

Reflecting on Article 14 of the UNDRIP and the Government of Finland’s definitions of educational security, by 2000s the Mangilaluk School is delivering right to free formal education; education has become more respectful of the Inuvialuit culture and language; and freedom of choice has increased. However, whether the changes have been enough is debatable. The learning environment is still unsafe for many students and the educational outcomes are well behind the average in the Northwest Territories.

Discussion

There are difficulties in using Article 14 of the UNDRIP and the Government of Finland’s definitions when analyzing educational security in Tuktoyaktuk. Article 14 declares that governments are obligated to work together with Indigenous Peoples to establish their educational systems and institutions in providing education in their own languages in culturally appropriate ways. In Canada, where there are over sixty-seven different Indigenous languages (nine in the Northwest Territories hold official status) the resources needed to fulfill the declaration are naturally greater than, for example, the Nordic countries which have only two distinct Indigenous peoples: Sami and Greenlanders (Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Culture 2005).10

Some of the items outlined as main pillars contributing to educational security in Finland are easier to implement and monitor, like the right to free formal education. But sufficient freedom of choice and equity in teaching, learning and educational outcomes are more complex. First, sufficient freedom of choice might be hard to define. In the Mangilaluk School the number of teachers is determined by the number of students (roughly for 17 students there is a staff member). This means that in the smaller communities there will never be the same diversity of choices as there are in urban centres. If the question is approached as a human rights issue instead of an economic issue, the needs of the communities would rule and Arctic (Aboriginal/rural) schools might be able to expand the courses they offer. Second, comparable learning and educational outcomes between different education providers and schools might be difficult to measure depending on how different the Aboriginal educational systems are compared to the mainstream systems. Then again, it is questionable whether the current national and international educational tests really convey students’ knowledge and ability to learn or whether some students are better equipped or trained to answer these tests and thus do better answering them. Aboriginal educational systems have an opportunity to pave the way for new kinds of criteria for not only knowledge, but also measurements of knowledge.

10 There are three main Sami dialects and four Greenlandic dialects.
Finally, even though the Government of Finland’s definitions of educational security is based on human rights and equity, it is still a nationalistic model and does not take into account Article 14 of the UNDRIP. There are concerns that the assimilation process of integrating Sami to the majority culture continues in Finland. Therefore, there continues to be a need for international commitments that raise the awareness of global and local Aboriginal needs in national and regional educational agendas and policies.

**Conclusion**

Using Article 14 of the UNDRIP and Government of Finland’s definitions of educational security, I set out to answer two questions: 1) How has educational security changed for the Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk in 100 years? and 2) Are the Article 14 and Government of Finland’s definitions of educational security appropriate frameworks in hypothesizing about educational security in the Canadian Arctic?

To answer the first question: the educational security for the Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk has changed, but the only measure of educational security that is provided at the Mangilaluk School continues to be free formal education. Before the 1950s, most of the learning took place in a family unit learning the Inuvialuk way. Inuvialuk education was culturally appropriate and free, though there was not alternative. By the 1950s, the forceful tactics of the government and the church to impose assimilative formal education was detrimental to the culture of the Inuvialuit. Abusive behavior at residential schools undermined the security of the children. However, freedom of choice was greater at residential schools than smaller community schools and the quality of education was perceived to be higher. From 1990s onwards the culture-based education policy has paved the way for culturally appropriate education, though some argue that there is still a long way to go. In the 2000s, the Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk had yet to establish an educational system of their own, instead of one based on the Alberta curriculum. Also, the Inuvialuit are not in control of the Mangilaluk School; most of the control is still held by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The educational outcomes of the Mangilaluk School fall way behind the Northwest Territories and Non-Aboriginal students in rural Canada. Unfortunately, some students at Mangilaluk School get bullied and people continue to connect abuse with the school. Thus, educational security in the 2000s remains weak at the Mangilaluk School.

To answer the second question: Article 14 of the UNDRIP and Government of Finland’s definitions help in hypothesizing about educational security in the Canadian Arctic. Article 14 is a powerful statement that highlights education as a human rights issue instead of an economic matter. This is a welcome change not only for Indigenous peoples, but for educational pedagogy worldwide. But as Indigenous peoples continue to be disadvantaged, it is integral that Indigenous peoples are granted the right to establish and control their own educational systems. The Government of Finland’s definitions of educational security seem to resonate fairly well with the concerns of Inuvialuit living in Tuktoyaktuk. The right to
free formal education and a safe learning environment are also a part of human rights. As noted before, sufficient freedom of choice might be hard to define, but as long as the Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk come to a resolution on it, it will be easier for the community to express their needs to the Government of the Northwest Territories and implement those needs at the Mangilaluk School. The main concerns that the study participants expressed is the disparity in teaching, learning and educational outcomes between the Inuvialuit and mainstream Canadians, and that the schools in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region are not providing students with quality education. Thus, the participants’ views highlighted the importance of equity in educational outcomes as does the Government of Finland’s definition of educational security.

Sceptics might say that the phrase ‘educational security’ is just another buzz-word, like ‘lifelong learning,’ ‘social economy,’ or ‘ecotourism.’ Does wording matter when the problem stays the same? I believe that as long as people are conscious of the definitions and connections to certain definitions, buzz-words do not matter. People benefit from defining education in their own perspective instead of recycling frameworks that do not help the cause. This is especially important as new policy plans are under way. The only way to find out whether it is appropriate to use educational security as a framework in educational discourse in the Arctic is to ask the question of the Arctic people themselves. This might be a new research agenda for an old problem, but defining an issue might be an important step of regaining ownership of the matter.

References


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Chapter 20

Economic Insecurity as Opportunity: Job Training and the Canadian Diamond Industry

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Abstract: In 2007, Canada became the third largest producer of diamonds by value in the world. The majority of these gems are harvested from the three full-scale mines located in the Northwest Territories. Large-scale resource projects, like diamond mines, are said to benefit local populations through education and employment opportunities. This chapter provides an ethnographic account of students in a mine training program in Hay River, Northwest Territories which reveals that training for globalized resource industries is unable to provide economic security to those who seek it. It argues that in order to be profitable, natural resource projects require a stratified labour force and therefore mobilize and reproduce existing insecurities (e.g., unsettled land claims, low rates of local literacy, job losses in other parts of the country or the world).

Keywords: Northwest Territories, training, employment, labour, ethnography, aboriginal.

Introduction

This is a story about opportunity—the opportunity to provide global mining corporations with labour. Set in Canada’s Diamond Basin, the story both begins and ends with economic insecurity. It follows a set of characters as they navigate the tensions and contradictions that bind opportunity to insecurity in the subarctic settler town of Hay River in the Northwest Territories. Although many residents and local businesses have either directly or indirectly helped to take 12 billion dollars worth of Canadian diamonds from tundra to market, this story narrows in on details and events that are far more ordinary than extraordinary. It is an account of students in an underground mine training program who are trying to get work, trying to find an opportunity that will allow them to live without constant insecurity. Ultimately, it is a story that makes two main points. First, training for globalized resource industries is unable to provide economic security to those who seek it. Second, in order to be profitable, natural resource projects require a stratified labour force and therefore need to mobilize and reproduce existing insecurities (e.g., unsettled land claims, low rates of local literacy, job losses in other parts of the country or the world).
Setting

Let’s begin by stripping away the elements of the setting which are readily available in your imagination. Box up the ice and snow, bottle up the cold, and tear down the Aurora Borealis like a string of Christmas lights in June. Put them all away. We leave ‘landscape nostalgia’ (and its critiques) (Hogan and Pursell 2008) for other stories. The history and political economy that frame the narrative will prove to be much more illuminating.

It is true that in 2007, Canada was the third-largest producer of diamonds by value in the world, and that the majority of these gems are harvested from three mines located in the Northwest Territories.¹ By 2008, only ten years after the first mine went into production, the Northwest Territories boasted a 79% increase in territorial Gross Domestic Product, making it the highest per capita GDP in Canada and second-highest in the world. Although these facts say more about the sparse population (42,637) than they do about how the wealth is actually distributed, they contribute to strong public support for diamond development in the North. But the physical mine sites are located more than 200 kilometres northwest of Hay River, and are therefore only marginally relevant to the scene which I create here.

Accessible only by winter ice road or air, mine employees are flown in and out of the sites on two week cycles. While ‘in,’ they live in base camps whose facilities often surpass those in their home communities, equipped with internet access, video game consoles, full gymnasiums and home cooked ‘country’ foods. But this isn’t a story that will satisfy our curiosities about life in a diamond mine. It’s a less sensational story of a transportation town on the south shore of Great Slave Lake—a town intimately connected to resource exploitation without ever having been a site of direct extraction.

Unlike most communities in the Canadian Territories, Hay River is accessible by paved road. A 1,000-kilometre highway connects the ‘Hub of the North’ to the urban centre of Edmonton, Alberta. Driving north on the Mackenzie Highway, you arrive in the long, narrow community of 3,500, which stretches alongside the Hay River to Great Slave Lake. The highway was completed in 1949. Its construction was tangled up in the incomplete Canol (short for Canadian Oil) project dating back to the Second World War. The project was, in part, a pipeline from Norman Wells to Whitehorse. The second pipeline was to run south to Alberta. A United States army airstrip had been built to assist in the project by allowing construction materials to be imported by air. By bringing basic goods in and natural resources out, the highway was, and still is, integral to industrializing the Great Slave Lake region (Piper 2009).

Other elements of the industrial past and present of the community lay exposed alongside the Mackenzie Highway. Railroad tracks to the east run through the community to the old town, where their goods, primarily fuel, are unloaded. The Canadian National Railway was extended to Hay River in 1964 to coincide with the opening of the Pine Point Lead/Zinc mine, 60 kilometres west of Hay

¹ BHP (Broken Hill Proprietary) Billiton (1998), Rio Tinto (2003) and Debeers (2008) each have significant operations in the region.
River. Just beyond the railway tracks are the small pieces of the industrial process that work together to keep things, including labour, coming and going from the North. Fuel, lumber, construction, a taxi service, and heaps of scrap metal make a poor first impression to tourists who come seeking unspoiled northern wilderness.  

To the west are the residential areas and a small downtown core. The first houses are not the typical government-issue housing seen in most smaller arctic communities. They are sizeable, prefabricated homes shipped up from Edmonton and then pieced together to make middle-class homes for local business owners or higher-up public servants. The next small stretch is of smaller, one-story homes. Many of these are, or were, federal housing for government employees. They are auctioned off as responsibilities and transferred to the territorial or municipal levels of government. Others are homes transplanted from the Pine Point community, abandoned after the mine’s closure in the early 1990s. A few residents who also migrated from Pine Point can pick these homes out and tell stories about their previous locations and owners.

The downtown square has the trademark Northern Store, a hardware store, a few small shops, two restaurants, an arena, three churches, and four schools. In the middle of the core is an out-of-scale high-rise apartment building that jets up from the sleepy town, earning the title of ‘highest building in the Territories.’ The seventeen-story building was erected in the 1970s, when talks of another pipeline began. The pipe dream continues to come and go, as do most the high-rise residents.

Continuing on toward the lake is the trailer court, comprising 50 mobile homes on rented lots. Next are a second set of mostly trailer-style homes on owned lots. The airport is the last landmark before crossing over the west channel of the Hay River and leaving the ‘new town.’ The old town site is where the headquarters for the Northern Transportation Company Limited (NTCL) are found, the marine shipping company that transports freight by barge up and down the Mackenzie River. In 1959 its headquarters was relocated to Hay River, when a formerly combined uranium mining and shipping operation split into two entities, after demand for Canadian uranium dropped.

Hay River is not, nor has it ever been, the story of direct extraction of resources. In the mid-1800s, Dene Chief Chiatlo moved from the Fort Providence area to establish a permanent site at the mouth of the river. The intention was to harvest fish that could be traded to Hudson Bay Company posts in the area. When the first Hay River post was established in 1892, its primary purpose was not to collect furs, as was the case for most posts along the northern river systems; rather, it was to secure adequate food supplies for the regional posts to subsist through the winter months (Piper 2009). This required Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) officials at Hay River to fish and to trade for fish to be distributed to the nearby fur posts. The post had a life of mixed and meager fortune, opening and closing throughout the better part of a century, expanding and contracting around

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2 In the spring of 2008, the popular Lonely Planet travel guide series published a less-than-favourable review of Hay River in the latest edition of their Canada guide (Bainbridge et al. 2008).
fluctuations in market conditions. To this day, Hay River continues to be at once directly tied into, but at an arm’s length from, natural resource extraction.

A bit ironically, as a settler town, Hay River also moves significant amounts of labour into, out of, and around the territory. In doing so it becomes a destination for migrants looking for work. As the town’s population and infrastructure grew, this increasingly became the work of serving migrants (school teachers, shop owners, service workers). Although the diamond boom follows a long history of nearby mining projects, it has renewed national awareness of the opportunities in the North. Public discourse at the national level usually centers around ideas about the availability of high-paying work and a massive shortage of labour. Opportunity awaits those willing to work, or so the story goes.

Writing Process

The analysis here is part of a larger ethnographic research project that explores the political economic history of the Great Slave Lake region, with special attention to the social implications of the varying property ownership regimes developed following the Comprehensive Land Claims Policy of 1986 and the institution of Impact Benefit Agreements as the primary legal apparatus governing Northern mining developments. As I have argued elsewhere, these agreements shifted questions of property (land claims) to questions of labour, and in the process narrowed the terms of political economic debate with respect to natural resource development and self-government (Bell 2008; Dombrowski 2008).

As a former educator in the region, the work grew out of concerns I had about the increasing emphasis on training (providing labour for employers) in lieu of education (the means to acquire the power of knowledge which enables one to gain greater autonomy in choosing what to do with one’s life). Diamond projects were said to benefit Aboriginal and Northern residents through training and employment opportunities (rather than through, say, revenue sharing or fair rent capture). Taking these opportunities at face value for research purposes, I organized fieldwork around a training program preparing labour for underground mine work to see how, and by whom, opportunity was being lived.

I arrived in the field on October 1, 2008, and watched the security of a sustainable development plan hinged entirely on primary extraction crumble. CBC’s ‘Radio North’ announced more layoffs almost daily as production in the mines slowed to a near halt. With the industry falling into a (predictable) bust cycle, I couldn’t help but wonder whether my dissertation on labour recruitment and training would follow suit. It was with mixed fortune that the key training program I had negotiated access to went ahead, despite worsening conditions. It was fortunate for me in that describing and deciphering the forces that shape(d) uneven insecurities in the region is, in some ways, easier in an ethnographic account of the diamond bust. It was, however, unfortunate for students in the Mine Training Program, for whom the insecurity of opportunity was increasingly fragmenting and multiplying. Finally, it seemed fortunate for capital, as these students are well versed in, but not overly adverse to, such dimensions of insecurity.
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In December of 2008 the ‘Do you want to be a Rocker?’ posters were put up announcing a six-week preliminary underground mine training course to be held in Hay River. The ‘Rocker’ posters generated a fair bit of interest at the local community college. Funded through an Aboriginal employment initiative, a number of young men who were working construction locally or doing lower-paid, unskilled work in the mines had to be turned away for not fitting the program’s enrollment criteria. This was primarily migrant labour from Newfoundland—Canada’s eastern labour reserve, for whom job insecurity is the norm. But this isn’t the story of those who are not in the course, or how and why their insecurities are reinforced.

The ‘Rocker’ training program consisted of two parts: a four-week introductory course on underground mining, followed by a two-week work readiness course. My desire to observe the courses, coupled with my history as a local teacher, meant that I was recruited to be the instructor of the work readiness portion of the program. This story draws on my observations and reflections as the teacher of this course, interviews with students, program organizers, and other educators. It has also involved follow-up work with a core group of students to track their trajectories for one year after program completion.

The Main Characters

It was a Saturday morning in January when I called for a cab to come and deliver me from my high-rise apartment to the laundromat. At forty below it is hard to convince oneself to walk even three blocks. Within five minutes the car was out front, and I raced from the lobby to the back seat, basket of clothes in tow. The driver rushed to put her cigarette out and blew a last puff out the window, smoke gently rolling up and over the ‘No Smoking’ decal pasted to the glass. ‘Smoke doesn’t bother me,’ I said. Given the care she had taken in putting the cigarette out, the remainder was suitable for re-lighting. I asked her about her day. She told me she was the only cab out on the road this morning, and had been quite busy. She had hoped to get some studying done in between calls, but so far no such luck. ‘What are you studying?’ I asked. ‘Underground mining. Me, me! I’m just eager to get work,’ she replied. ‘I’m going to be your instructor!’ I squeaked with disproportionate enthusiasm. I was thrilled to be getting a jump start on gathering ‘informants.’

Initially I had been hesitant to accept the position as the Work Readiness instructor, essentially an extended attendance test, which I had been referring to as ‘Producing Docile Labour: A Perfect Foucaultian Fantasy’ in my field notes. Meeting Barb in the taxi that morning, however, gave me a sense that this was going to be interesting. Barb was probably in her early forties, and was set on getting a secure career. In our short trip she told me about the benefits of mine work: high pay, gourmet food, two weeks off. ‘I just really want out of here,’ she said. I wasn’t sure which ‘here’ she was referring to, and I never got to ask.

3 The comments I make herein are from my position as a researcher and do not necessarily reflect the position of the community college which hired me, or those of any of its employees.
Although there had been ten qualified candidates registered for the program, when I began my portion four weeks later, the initial ten students had been whittled down to seven. Barb was one of the ones who was not there. I came to learn she had been sexually assaulted two days into the first course. A second student had been arrested for drug trafficking, and the third had quit once he had enough money to buy missing parts for his snowmobile. Students received a small stipend for participating in the course. On the second day of my class, Dan showed up with a black eye that he explained was from ‘talking when I should have been listening.’ I never saw him in class again. All of these students were from the immediate region, and lived in complex and tightly woven social webs. But this isn’t the story of those who did not complete the course—and the kinds of opportunities and insecurities their respective social networks provide them with, and how they are incommensurate with most training programs.

First there were ten, then there were six. The remaining students did not share extensive local social networks in the same way as the first four had. Most were migrants—a term almost never associated with Aboriginal populations. First there was David, a young Métis man originally from northern Saskatchewan. After the collapse of a local sawmill, his father had secured work with a sub-contractor in one of the diamond mines during the construction phase. At project completion, the mine offered his father direct employment and a relocation allowance for his family. When his parents’ marriage ended, David’s mom opted to stay in Hay River with her two teenaged sons, as her salary as a homecare worker was higher in the Northwest Territories than it had been in Saskatchewan. David did not complete high school; rather he drifted back and forth between Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories, catching trouble here and there. He saw the training program as, in his words, ‘a cross-road.’

Next, there was Ruth from New Brunswick. Ruth is 50 years old. She has been part of the migrant Aboriginal working class since birth. Her father was born on a reserve in New Brunswick, her mother on a reserve in Quebec. She spent most of her childhood and young adulthood in Boston, where her father worked as a boat mechanic. She moved back to New Brunswick, where she opened a small catering business. She moved North after 15 years of owning and running her business. Exhausted from entrepreneurship that left her just above the break-even point for most years, Ruth took a job in a diamond mine as a cook. She liked the two weeks in, two weeks out cycle. It gave her time away from the duties of marriage. However, she quickly established that 12-hour shifts were no picnic. The high wages she had heard about turned out to be the rates paid to the sub-contractor who hired her. Her wage was only 14 dollars per hour. Being resourceful as she is, Ruth started to figure what higher-paying mine work she could secure. She left the cook position and took her heavy equipment operator’s license and then re-applied for jobs. She never got one. She was told she needed experience. In taking the Underground Mine Program, Ruth was hoping she might gain an edge that would get her hired.

The policies that determined the benefits of diamond exploitation outline hiring quotas using the umbrella term ‘Aboriginal.’ This creates opportunities for work and training for folks like Ruth, David, his dad, and a few others I have met. But this isn’t a story concerned with vague categories in policy. Rather, it’s
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a continuation of the story of Impact Benefit Agreements and Socio-Economic Agreements which fostered a new wave of shifting and splitting collectivities in the North, across Canada, and, arguably, globally (Bell 2008). It is the story of categorization, which interlocks state, capital, and people in very particular ways, ways that make people’s insecurities in one region of Canada opportunities in another—ways that produce a complicated tangle of social relations. Teasing apart this tangle only becomes more difficult with ill-equipped, analytically innocent categories. The solution, however, isn’t improved categories, as classical anthropology and linguistics might suggest. The demands of social analysis require a focus on what Cooper (2005) calls, the work of identification and categorization (self, collective, or imposed) and its contingent reliance on social, political, and economic conditions. Work of this genre in North American settings is limited to Dombrowski’s (2008) compelling study on the praxis of Indigenism and timber politics in southeast Alaska, which illustrates how the U.S. government used the notion of indigenous to alter its own relationships to nonindigenous’ national populations in order to simultaneously improve market conditions for the exploitations of natural resources and to reduce the responsibilities of the welfare state (see also Sider 2003 and outside of North America see Li 2000 and Povenelli 2002).

For the time being, David is trying to get categorized as unemployed, so he can collect employment insurance. He was not selected for the final phase of the training program, although he was successful in my course and the other prerequisite. Federal funding delivered to the training program depends on the percentage of students who complete the program and find employment. The last delivery of this training course led to 100% employment placements (accounting excludes students weeded out by prerequisites). With shrinking employment opportunities, and direct contributions from industry now in jeopardy, the training program was reluctant to accept as large a cohort as they had originally planned. This meant that David, Ruth, and the rest of the students sat between insecurity and opportunity for 7 weeks while the details and their destinies were determined. These were 7 weeks when they no longer qualified for student financial aid, nor could they access unemployment insurance or any other social support, for that matter. David was able to pick up some informal work, painting apartments owned by his stepfather. Ruth, who knows few people in town, tightened her budget and kept her fingers crossed. In the end, she was selected for, and completed, the final phase. I shall return to her story in a moment.

Roberta also completed both prerequisites, but did not move on to the next stage. Roberta is a 25-year-old young woman and a member of Katł’odeeche First Nation (an aboriginal band adjacent to the town of Hay River on the west side of the waterway). She had lots of style and an abundance of attitude. She didn’t strike me as the underground mining type, but who was I to gender her in this way? Two weeks before the program start date, Roberta found out she was pregnant. She knew she had to move out of her parents’ home to get away from “the partying.” She had worked on and off as housekeeping staff at the base camps of resource exploration projects, and occasionally would get taken on by her band to help cater large gatherings. These short, unpredictable contracts made it difficult for
her to save enough money for a rental deposit in the local apartment building. Taking the training class meant she qualified for housing assistance and her own apartment. The poster provided a much-needed way out.

When it came time to help the students with their applications for the full certificate program, Roberta was very anxious about having to fill out a request for student financial assistance. I came to learn that Roberta had burned quite a few bridges financially. She owed student financial aid money from an incomplete attempt at nursing the year before. The training program requires students to get student financial aid to cover the housing costs associated with relocating to Yellowknife for six weeks. I looked into other options. As a member of the local band, Roberta could apply to their educational support program. She did. She was denied. Then, three months pregnant, Roberta decided to ‘take off’ and stay with her boyfriend on a reserve in Northern Alberta. But this isn’t the story of Roberta, a woman who never got to fulfill her dreams of being a miner. I am certain she never had any of those. Rather, it’s the story of someone whose dreams are shaped by the realities of everyday life and the kinds of futures that are possible. Linking social support to jobs in the highly fragile primary sector pushes possibilities down a one-way continuum of confinement and maintains levels of insecurity that are all-too-familiar to people like Roberta.

Dave had also migrated to Hay River; however he had moved from within the Territory. He is an Inuvialuit man originally from Inuvik. He is over forty and had worked in the oil industry in the Beaufort Delta until activity dipped and he lost his job. He then went on to be a security guard at the local community college, where he met his wife, who was enrolled in an administrative assistant program. When her program was completed, the pair moved south to Hay River, where she could take a job with her Band Council on the Katl’odeeche First Nation. Dave got work with a German company that had been sub-contracted by the first diamond mine to do dam construction. The mines are partly in drained lakes and the first stage in their construction is to re-route water. When construction was complete, Dave’s contract ended. He worked for various construction companies and continued to operate heavy equipment. He did much of the care work for his two children, as his wife’s job was much more secure than his. He grows a two-acre garden, which fills with fresh vegetables every summer, and is a member of the Territorial Farmer’s Association. Now that his kids are in high school, he was hoping to get steadier, higher paying work.

Ruth and Dave are half of the cohort selected to go on to the 12-week in-camp training held outside of Yellowknife. Scott and Elizabeth had also been selected. Both Scott and Elizabeth were born in smaller communities not far from Hay River but had moved to town when they were fairly young. Scott, now 40, had, like Dave, already worked in mines. He did pre-production mine construction for one of the diamond sites and he had been involved in reclamation work at a gold mine and the uranium mine at Great Bear Lake. All of this work had been contract work, and when the projects ended so did his position with the companies. He was hoping to work directly for the mine, as the mines were self-forecasting twenty-year life cycles.

Elizabeth (Liz) had no mining experience. Much like myself at 23, she spent most of her time drinking and hanging out with her friends. Originally from
Fort Simpson, she wanted to move on to an even bigger centre, like the capital Yellowknife. The instructor from the introductory course gave me the ‘head’s up’ that Liz was exceptionally talented but needed motivating. It was clear right away that Liz had the strongest literacy skills in the group. She mastered new technology in minutes and committed countless terms to memory with minimal effort. She was distant at first, but her energetic side quickly came through once we established a rapport with each other. She was generous with her classmates and discreetly supported those who needed extra help with literacy-based tasks. Although she never completed high school, her analytical abilities were very strong. Her interest in mining seemed to be more geological than technical, so it was confusing to me why she would be in a course like this one. The truth was, none of us, including myself, really had a handle on what the program was about—specifically, what kinds of skills and knowledge would be acquired over the course of their twelve weeks away.

(Not so Grand) Narrative

First there were ten, then there were six, finally there are four. Dave, Ruth, Liz, and Scott packed their two suitcases and showed up to the airport to start the next phase of their training, the next chapter of their opportunity. Once in camp, they were told that there had been some changes to the funding structures. Each individual would have to pay for their flights over and be reimbursed by their band council later. Not being from the Territories, Ruth did not qualify for much of the funding opportunities. She was never made aware of this until she arrived on the spot. She spoke with her husband on the telephone that night. He works construction in Hay River. Together they decided it would be worthwhile to take out a small loan so Ruth could continue. It is important to underscore that Ruth and the other candidates who moved on to the final phase all had partners (or in Liz’s case, parents) who had steady incomes. While students did receive a stipend of $50 per day in the first six weeks, it was difficult for many to meet their financial obligations on this amount. But this isn’t the story of how to drain surplus capital from households.

Despite some of the financial confusion and hardship, the students were always upbeat when I would make the trip around the lake to visit them at the centre. They were living in a beautiful dorm-style facility nestled in the woods 40 kilometres outside of Yellowknife. Their group had gone from four to 18. Successful phase I candidates from all areas of the territories had been brought in to live, ‘big brother’ style, for twelve weeks. There were house rules, curfews, a security guard and an exceptional chef. The idea was to simulate mine life as closely as possible. The students had grown close with their instructors and diligently studied for exams in mine rescue and first aid. Their days were split between operating heavy equipment in a gravel pit and traveling to town to use a mine simulator at the community college. They began to gel as a larger group and come graduation there were many long faces at the thought of being apart. Liz had fallen in love with a young man from Tuktoyuktuk. They hoped to be hired to the same mine so that they would be able to continue seeing each other.
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The students had heard stories about mine employers being present at the graduation. They were told to have copies of their resumes in hand, as they might be hired on the spot. When the final exam had passed and friends and family were gathered to celebrate the student’s course completion, only one representative from a mine was present. He congratulated the group and talked of the downturn and how they would need to exercise patience. His estimate was that hiring would begin again in 6 months. With that announcement, Ruth tucked her printed resumes into her bag, her husband reaching to hold her hand.

After the course, Scott got a two-month reclamation contract and bought a new house with his wife. He is hoping the reclamation work might extend until the time the mines start to re-hire. Dave and Ruth each called me to help them post their online applications. Neither has yet to get a response. Ruth has started considering catering again, now that the kitchen at Northwest Transportation Company Limited is for sale. Dave has had some short construction contracts and continues to diligently travel to the public library to check his email for a response. Dave had never used email before the course. Liz moved to Yellowknife and works in retail. I gave her a glowing reference for the job, even though I know she could be an engineer. I asked her and Dave about using the skills from the program to work in other industries (e.g., highway construction). Neither of them have a road license for any of the equipment. To work in the mines, road licenses aren’t required. This leaves them with a set of skills that can only be applied in a singular setting, one which isn’t hiring. But this isn’t exclusively a story about the woes of credentialing, or inadequate computer literacy components of vocational programs. It’s a story about what is lost when training (providing labour for employers) becomes exclusive of education (again, the means to acquire the power of knowledge which enables one to gain greater autonomy in choosing what to do with one’s life). It is the story of what happens when industries’ needs drive adult education policy. It continues the story of increased partnerships between the public and private sector in education—partnerships which have been shown to compromise economic stability through tighter links to a market economy (Taylor et al. 2007; Abele 1989).

(Im)Moral of the Story

Like any story, what I have presented here is a selection of elements of something larger. There are many other stories that could have been told. It could have been a story about identity, culture, or tradition. It could have been a narrative of colliding worldviews or issues of sovereignty. Instead, it is a decidedly mundane story of the ordinary business of people trying to get by—people trying to pay their rents or maybe even going out for dinner to the ‘nice’ restaurant; people trying to worry less and live more. As commonplace or everyday as these stories might seem, they are overwhelmingly absent in portraits of the Canadian North.

These stories are an attempt to elaborate the histories of insecurity which brought all of the participants to the program and to show the ways in which insecurities become opportunities for the state, via development policies and training programs, to offer up its citizens as subsidy to capital. These programs
Chapter 20: Economic Insecurity as Opportunity: Job Training and the Canadian Diamond Industry

present the opportunity to legitimize unequal divisions of labour while allowing the state to appear neutral in the reproduction of inequality. They represent an opportunity to replace direct forms of state oppression (land seizure, residential schools) with forms of differential citizenships, some of which come to be named (for example) race, gender, and locality, others are emergent, fluid and nameless to those of us to whom they don’t apply. More than matters of identity, differential citizenships point to the processes of production both lived by, and larger than, the people who inhabit them—the kinds of processes capable of producing continued insecurity and large scale indifference.

References

Humanizing Security in the Arctic
Chapter 21

The North as Seen from Jasper (Canada):
A National Parks Orientation to Security

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Abstract: Since Canada established its famous national parks in the Rocky Mountains one hundred and more years ago, the Federal Government’s policy for reserving wilderness lands as protected areas has come, in the last thirty years, to involve native peoples in a central way. The symbolic security of the state, which national parks ideally and idealistically represent, thus depends vitally on native people. This holds especially for the security of the Canadian North, where co-management agreements between Parks Canada Agency and local First Nations govern the national parks and national park reserves, which are among the most recently established in the national system of parks and protected areas.

Keywords: National parks, national park reserves, Parks Canada, Natives in national parks, Jasper National Park, Ivavik National Park.

Introduction

While Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada, does not lie very far north in terms of our habitual idea of nordinity, it covers the watershed of the upper Athabasca River, and therefore forms part of the vast drainage basin of the Mackenzie River (the world’s fifth-longest), which debouches on the Beaufort Sea off the continent’s northern coastline. The Columbia Icefield sits near the southern boundary of the park at 52°09’59” N and is the source of the Sunwapta River, a tributary of the undammed Athabasca and its southernmost point. The Icefield does not lie as far south as the headwaters of some of the rivers in Ontario that drain into James Bay (for example, the headwaters of the Missinaibi and Mattagami rivers, which, once they meet, form the Moose River, lie south of 48° N), but it occupies the same latitude as the Baikal Mountains, the source of Russia’s great and similarly undammed Lena River (the world’s tenth-longest). So this national park arguably qualifies as one of the most southerly points in the world’s northern drainage. Hydrographically, it is Canada’s first northern park, but due to its historic population by native peoples, it may be distinguished from a northern context that has evolved since 1975, after which time Canada’s northern national parks began issuing out of bilateral agreements between Parks Canada and the nearest First Nations/Inuit.
Jasper National Park

Jasper National Park was established as Jasper Forest Park in 1907, long before such agreements became Canadian policy, long before the expulsion of Acadians from Kouchibouguac National Park, New Brunswick, in the early 1970s produced such bad press for Parks Canada that it reconsidered its policy of creating wilderness by expelling residents, and long before most of us began to think of parks as inclusive of a human presence in one form or another. The glaciers produce northward-flowing rivers, and a host of First Nations have used the valleys of the Athabasca and Miette Rivers to find provisions, make and spend their lives, and contribute to the landscape, just like peoples in the North. The difference is that hunting/gathering and the existence of a national park never coincided in the case of Jasper; the rise of the latter triggered the demise of the former by rendering it illegal (MacLaren 2007).

The Métis families that homesteaded in the upper Athabasca River valley in the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries came from farther east and north, that is, from Lac Ste. Anne outside Edmonton and the area of the Smoky River now known as Grande Cache, Alberta, up the eastern slopes of the Rockies a few hundred kilometres from the Athabasca River. Between 1909 and 1911, Chief Forest Ranger and Acting Superintendent of Jasper Park John W. McLaggan deemed them ‘squatters’ and expelled them from the Athabasca valley. He told them to find land anywhere but in the park. Some found it just beyond the park’s eastern boundary; others went farther north, but their inhabitation of the upper Athabasca River valley lives on in memory, chiefly in the form of a restored dwelling at Ewan Moberly’s homestead, where six Parks Canada panels articulate the history of that man, his family, and his relatives and their homesteads (Fig. 21.1 and 21.2).

Figure 21.1 The fourth of six panels on the site of the Ewan Moberly homestead, Athabasca River valley, abandoned 1910 (Photo: I.S. MacLaren, May 2009).

They were only the most recent native occupants. More than two dozen different native groups number as members of the Aboriginal Forum that park officials established earlier this decade.
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The uses to which the land now occupied by the park were put by many groups ranged from sites for ceremonies to corridors for transportation, from hunting grounds to trading centres. A great many native peoples for centuries knew the area intimately before the advent of the fur trade and contact with Europeans and Euro–North Americans. The establishment of the Dominion of Canada in 1867 made it possible forty years later to establish Jasper as a ‘playground’ for the citizens of Canada and, in the intervening decades, an island refuge for wildlife threatened by industrial development and human settlement in west-central Alberta (in 1905, Alberta came into being as a province of Canada). At nearly 11,000 square kilometres’ area (slightly smaller than Northern Ireland), it is larger than the six other national parks in the Rocky Mountains combined. The wilderness playground had room almost immediately for an elite golf course (with soil for fairways brought in by train from Stony Plain, Alberta, 300 km distant), and the one white homesteader, Lewis Swift, who was not expelled, developed a proposal to turn his homestead into a sub-division (Fig. 21.3). It failed to materialize because a principal prospective investor, railway magnate Charles Melville Hays, died with the sinking of the Titanic in April 1913. Today, the transportation corridor is home to a principal cross-country highway, a railway (there were two in 1916), and an oil pipeline that extends from east of Edmonton, Alberta, to Burnaby, British Columbia, and Bellingham, Washington. ‘Squatter’ Ewan Moberly’s homestead in the valley had involved 200 head of cattle and was successful, but ranching could not find a place amidst railways, accommodation for railway tourists, and a golf course. In time, the tables turned on this sort of event. Whereas in this park native residents lost out to a pipeline, farther north (and much later in the century) a pipeline lost out to the native denizens of the Mackenzie River valley.

Figure 21.2 Ewan Moberly family homestead, Athabasca River valley; restored by Parks Canada (Photo: I.S. MacLaren, May 2002).
Park Making Policies

The policy of excluding permanent residents from wilderness areas was a vogue of the conservation movement that dominated park-making in western North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Called the ‘Yellowstone model’ after the establishment of Yellowstone National Park by Americans in 1872, this policy has, over time, turned parks into insular enclaves, surrounded by settlement and intensive human activity on the land. In 1930, both mining and logging were made illegal by the National Parks Act of 1930, but the town of Jasper was permitted to grow in order to house the families of railway workers, parks staff, owners of tourist accommodation, operators and employees of the hospitality industry, and so forth. For some 3,500 residents, Jasper is a permanent home, but, beyond the activity that their employment requires of them, these residents have no right to interact with the land, except gardening in their flower beds. Still, Jasper is their home, and the lifestyle they lead does not differ markedly from that of other Canadians. If anything,
many complain of Jasper’s geographical remoteness from other communities that they want theirs to resemble.

Besides the Yellowstone model for wilderness protection, another model came into being a little more than three decades ago; comprehensive land claims agreements were an entirely new idea for Parks Canada to embrace in the mid-1970s. Judge Thomas Berger began his inquiry in March 1975 into the feasibility of the construction of a natural gas pipeline in the Mackenzie River valley and amplified his mandate in order to understand better the consequences for native peoples of making the valley a transportation corridor for natural resources harvested on an ultra-industrialized scale. In the process, the concerns of northern Natives about the social and economic viability of their traditional lifeways in the industrial age came to the attention of a notable proportion of southern Canadians (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry 1977).

Two other events in the 1970s coincided with this one. One was the ten-year-long (1969–79) spate of resistance that Parks Canada officials faced from nearly 1,500 Acadian New Brunswickers who were removed from four communities to clear the way for the establishment of Kouchibouguac National Park (Bourbonnais 2006; Rudin 2008; MacEachern 2001:237–9), but only after a long delay and because of local protests which gave rise in 1979 to a change in policy by Parks Canada to the removal of residents from new parks only if the residents approved. The other was the flooding in northern Quebec of a massive area (five reservoirs containing half the volume of water in Lake Ontario and flooding an area the size of Jasper National Park) to make reservoirs for the James Bay hydroelectric development, which forced the relocation of the community of Fort George, QC (population 2,375). However, unlike in Jasper in 1910 or Kouchibouguac in 1970, and thanks to public outrage over the failure of government even to notify native people in the region of the development, an agreement was issued that amounted to token compensation for Cree and Inuit ($225 million, as well as hospitals, schools, and special hunting and fishing rights on the land that was not inundated).

A recent Canadian Parks Council document argues that the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, signed in 1975 by the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec), the North Quebec Inuit Association, Hydro Québec, and the Government of Québec, “marks the beginning of a thirty-year history of the evolving participation of Aboriginal people in parks and protected areas in Canada [because] it established the Northern Quebec Hunting, Fishing, Trapping Coordinating Committee—the first of what are now referred to as ‘co-management bodies’” (JBNQA 1976; Canadian Parks Council 2008:1).

In the High North, a similar process began in May 1977 with ‘Inuvialuit nunungat’: The Proposal for an Agreement in Principle to achieve the Settlement of Inuvialuit Land Rights in the Western Arctic Region of the Northwest and Yukon Territories between the Government of Canada and the Committee for Original Peoples’ Entitlement. These agreements shared a common feature in land that had not fallen under any treaty signed at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries; in this respect, they differed from the arrangements made for the establishment of protected areas in southern Canada. Neither of these agreements issued in the establishment of national parks, but they, together with other such developments, signaled across the North that the fulfillment of
the Federal Government’s mandate to create more parks would require ongoing agreements with northerners who had claims to the land. Then in 1978, in response to the release the year before of Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland, Judge Thomas Berger’s report from the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, the Federal Government withdrew territory for a national park in the westernmost portion of the north slope of Yukon Territory. In 1984, this became Ivvavik National Park (Fig. 21.4), at 10,168 square kilometres slightly smaller than Jasper (10,878 km²) and the first national park resulting from a land claims agreement. From a native perspective, the land passed to Parks Canada from the Inuvialuit of the western Canadian Arctic through the Wildlife Management Advisory Council North Slope. This council’s principal challenge was to balance the interests of people who identified the same land as ‘home’ and as ‘national park’ (Weeks 1986:125). According to its website (http://www.wmacns.ca), this remains an ongoing challenge, but the intervening quarter-century has recorded some success in terms of both action and resistance.

**Figure 21.4.** The National Parks of Canada and Terrestrial Ecozones (Parks Canada 2006), Courtesy Parks Canada Agency, Ottawa, Ontario.
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As one website puts it, “the park would also ensure the maintenance of Inuvialuit historical sites and lifestyle and arrange expeditions for hiking and white water rafting on the Firth River, where the sun remains above the horizon from the last week of May to mid-July” (Great Canadian Parks 2007). Unlike in Jasper eight decades earlier, Ivvavik embraced a vision that saw hunting and recreational use in plausible combination from the time of its establishment. The park’s official website hesitates to announce such a combination, but it does embrace Inuvialuit thinking and includes an epigrammatic adjuration: “We must not forget the vision: ‘The land will support the people who protect the land.’ This Inuvialuit wisdom will be respected by Parks Canada as we work together to protect this unique heritage for future generations” (Parks Canada 2009).

Collaboration in Recent Cases

Thus, a thirty-five-year history has presided over the establishment of most parks in northern Canada, and it is arguable that those parks, together with First Nations and Inuit support for them, symbolize for the rest of Canada a measure of security insofar as parks are protected areas; they are reserved from the insecurity that thinly inhabited regions of the continent experience in the face of resource extractors such as loggers, miners, pipeliners, and hydro-electricians, as well as the corporate interests that employ them. (Tourism represents less of an intrusion in the north than elsewhere in the country.) The seldom articulated but yet fervent Canadian myth of identity that treasures security in the form of a ‘true North strong and free’ (as the national anthem phrases it) finds inchoate expression in the punctuation of the national map with national parks. It has been in the North that Canadians discovered the resemblance between native peoples’ interests in lands and Parks Canada’s mandate to “maintain and make use of [conserved lands] so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations,” as the National Parks Act of 1930 put it. This statement followed from the American Organic Act of 1916, which created the National Parks Service to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (United States of America 1916; Canada 1930). And it is this mandate that the statement quoted above from the website for Ivvavik National Park echoes: “protect this unique heritage for future generations.”

All but the earliest of the thirteen northernmost national parks/reserves were established since the mid-1970s, the exceptions being Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP) on the border of Alberta and the Northwest Territories (1922), Kluane in the southwest corner of Yukon Territory (1972; see Théberge 1978), and Auyuittuq on Baffin Island, Nunavut (1972; see Fenge 1979/80). The latter two of these were established because it was felt that tourism in the North could be enhanced by their existence. One Canadian senator brayed during parliamentary debate that Kluane and Auyuittuq ‘will have landing fields … for huge airplanes’ full of tourists (Canada 1973:483, quoted in Fenge 1979/80:11). Native peoples initially opposed the establishment of Kluane, Auyuittuq, and the Nahanni reserve;
aligning with conservationists of the day, they “perceived the issue as part of a larger developmental jigsaw” (Fenge 1979/80:12). Their opposition prompted an amendment to the legislation that brought two of the parks into being. It ensured that “National Park status for the northern parks was non-prejudicial to native land claims” (Fenge 1979/80:12). But the process took many years, and indeed is not quite yet complete for Nahanni National Park.

Since the early 1970s, then, it is accurate to state that northern national park-making and formal agreement-signing with native peoples have gone hand in hand. This is partly because of the Berger Inquiry sensitization of all Canadians about the need to consult with native peoples, partly because of the amendment to Bill C-6 that formally initiated the establishment of Kluane, Auyuittuq, and Nahanni national park reserves, and partly because of Parks Canada’s ongoing difficulties during the 1970s in establishing Kougibouguac National Park in New Brunswick. Furthermore, given that most parks established since 1975 are located in the North and that the 238,987.1 square kilometres making up the thirteen northernmost parks represents 85.8% of the total area of the country covered by the national parks system, it is also accurate to state that the welfare and future of the parks system is inextricably linked to agreements reached between native groups and federal, provincial, and territorial governments. By 2006, eight out of ten Canadians inhabited urban areas.¹

**Parks and Security**

In contemplating the security of the vastness of the Canadian North, one invariably considers some of the symbolic national presence by which the space is identified. Parks are one such symbol, and with them come the roles played in their formation and management by native stakeholders, their cultures, and their traditional knowledge of land use, which Parks Canada Agency now is ineluctably involved in maintaining unimpaired for the enjoyment, enhancement, and enrichment of future generations. That homesteaders are squatters blocking the way for the enjoyment of the land by recreationists is a spent idea; even if they collide as often as they collaborate, state conservationists and Aboriginal spokespeople now must communicate and cooperate extensively. The land can be claimed as Canadian if there are national parks and native people involved. At present, many native groups experience some sense of empowerment from the establishment of parks. Whereas in the era of Jasper’s establishment the opposite was true—the advent of parks disenfranchised and disempowered them in the name of strengthening a sense of Canadian sovereignty (what natural symbol more commonly represents the noble security of the Canadian state than the towering alpine fastnesses

¹ Urban’ signifies “centres with a population of 1,000 or more and within areas with at least 400 persons per square kilometre” (HRSDC 2009); the HRSDC calculation was based on two aspects of the Statistics Canada 2006 Census (Statistics Canada 2007a,b). A disproportionately high percentage of the two out of ten who did not live in urban areas are native. That is, if you live on the land these days, you’re more likely to be native than non-native.
surrounding Lake Louise or Maligne Lake?)—today the expression of sovereignty in the symbol of national parks depends on these peoples’ historic attachment to wilderness land.

And if the land claims negotiations falter or do not reach an agreement, what then? One solution that Parks Canada had devised in 1972 as it set out to develop more parks in the North was a park-in-the-making concept: the national park reserve. As at the Nahanni National Park Reserve, this designation refers to land which is preserved from further development unless otherwise agreed upon; the boundaries may not yet be finalized and the management may not yet be arranged and instituted. Reserves would come to entail the continuation of Aboriginal hunting and gathering activities, and they would open the prospect of co-management agreements between Parks Canada and leaders of local communities, acting as equal partners, each requiring the other’s support to enact policy. (Delays often occur when disagreements arise among different arms of government, for example the federal Ministry of the Environment, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Canadian Wildlife Service, territorial government representatives, and so forth, or among government, bodies representing non-native northerners, and industrial interests). While the state uses the parks system in this expanded form to further reinforce key elements of national identity such as sovereignty and a nearly infinite multiplicity of cultural identities, it is also the case that this practice has delayed the fulfillment of the mandate of Parks Canada to establish a park in each of the 68 natural regions (39 terrestrial, 29 marine) that the country encompasses (Fig. 21.5).

First set in policy in 1979, this mandate “to protect for all time representative natural areas of Canadian significance in a system of national parks” (Parks Canada 1979:38) does not always align with native interests in protecting and preserving sites of cultural heritage and practices. This statement continues by echoing the long-standing wording: “… and to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this natural heritage so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations” (Parks Canada 1979:38). However, in the statement of objective for Parks Canada’s program policy overall, this document words the initial statement differently—“To protect for all time those places which are significant examples of Canada’s natural and cultural heritage” (Parks Canada 1979:11, emphasis added)—and thereby creates the impression later, in the section on national parks, that the job of protecting natural heritage might belong only to parks, whereas the task of protecting cultural heritage might belong to the other agencies within Parks Canada at that time, namely, national historic sites, national historic parks, and heritage canals. That implication must nevertheless be balanced against a statement in the general introduction of the document, one that signals a shift to some human focus in the overall mandate: “Canadians are beginning to appreciate that protecting heritage resources is part of their international responsibility” (Parks Canada 1979:8).
Conclusion

In fulfilling a native cultural mandate, the older conceptual approach of trying to represent each ecosystem found in Canada, an approach that was “not open to interest group involvement” (Fenge 1979/80:9), finds itself at odds with a mandate of ecological protection. What, then, is it a priority to secure? Moreover, if the priority is given to cultural heritage, does Parks Canada risk making museums rather than parks? That is, if future indigenous generations do not embrace historical cultural practices, prefer well-paying jobs that increasing industrialization of their land offers, and relegate the role of primary stakeholders to a lower priority, will the impetus for the preservation of cultural values fall by the wayside of the mandate of Parks Canada, which, after all, has ecological preservation as its principal goal? Given that land claims negotiations brought together two sets of interests that, when Jasper National Park came into being at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Yellowstone model saw as antithetical, will areas protected under national park designation on the one hand and native cultural heritage on the other continue to find themselves sharing the same bed as global warming apparently hastens to change non-human circumstances and as indigenous interest mounts to prevent the economic benefits of the industrialization of the Canadian North from passing native peoples by? How precariously or securely...
circumstanced will northern parks become if native peoples choose to change their historical relationships to their local ecosystems and if other such changes occur? How might a park’s state of ‘unimpairment’ appear to future generations, whether native or non-native? Just as it is difficult to answer this question with certainty, so it is difficult to assess the extent that parks can symbolically continue to represent the security of the Canadian state.

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Humanizing Security in the Arctic

Abstract: This chapter—a reflection upon the concepts of security and interpretation—examines an issue that has always been constant in the field of anthropology: the vulnerability and insecurity threatening the relationship between anthropologists, the places and peoples they study. Anecdotes contrast the approaches and analyses of Danish anthropologists Knud Rasmussen and Kaj Birket-Smith as they relate to security in the lives of Greenlandic Inuit, and explore the competing notions of constructivism and constructionism with regard to the concept of culture and what that means for anthropologists and their collaborators today—in the Arctic and elsewhere.

Keywords: Security, risk, Greenland, anthropology, concepts of culture, ethics.

Introduction

Before I work through the title of this chapter as it related to the overarching theme of the sixth IPSSAS seminar, I will start with a few naïve observations on the concept of security. I confess that security has never been among the key concepts of my research interests. On the other hand, it has been difficult to avoid the heated debates that followed Ulrich Beck’s book Risikogesellschaft in the late 1980s (Beck 1986), especially in the German arena. But as the notion of risk amazingly quickly became part of public debate and opinion, it also became a journalistic cliché. It is at this point that intellectuals would typically leave this general theme in the pursuit of more refined distinctions. What strikes me is that contrary to the Scandinavian languages, English draws different delimitations—albeit complicated and diversified—within the semantic domain of security and safety. Many of the concepts that are covered by the word ‘security’ in English need to be referred to in Danish (as well as in Norwegian and Swedish) by another term, the typical form of which is tryghet—a not-too-remote cousin of the English true (truth?) and the German true.

The distinction could be described as follows: For Scandinavians, security assumes precautions, defences, measurements and preventions against threats and dangers, as when we discuss hardcore security, radar and missiles, the mega-apparatus to battle terrorism as part of security politics, surveillance technology and special police forces used to fight urban crime, or medical precautions taken to contain a pandemic. This is active or reactive security—the successful outcome of a war against threats, enemies and malevolent agencies. When the war is won, or thought to be won, another type of security ensues, which corresponds to the Scandinavian tryghet: the state of being secure that can be enjoyed results from effective defence mechanisms, that allow one to live safe and sound and in confidence, where one can trust surroundings and take the important things in life
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for granted. And, to take the lines of my argument even further, an environment in which one can trust and confide in one’s understanding and interpretation of the world in which they live. As safe and sound as a home—that is the meaning of a trygt hjem. This notion of security applies, *grosso modo*, to such scientific disciplines as anthropology, even if the scientific ethos might be grounded in a reflexive and never-ending dialectic of scepticism and evidence. Not everything is fully contested or negotiated all of the time.

But it was never my intention in this contribution to indulge in a lofty philosophical discussion about the reliability of epistemologies. Rather, I would like to present a few issues that might have concerned some of us for quite some time: that is, the vulnerability or insecurity that threatens the relationship between anthropologists—or anthropology—and the places and peoples they study. Allow me to illustrate by way of examples—examples in the classical sense, of course: an anecdote, a situation or a story from which something is to be learned.

**An Eskimo Empire**

Consider the very famous scene from Knud Rasmussen’s popular travelogue about the Fifth Thule Expedition *Across Arctic America* (Rasmussen 1927). On a starry night, Rasmussen is standing with his most admired informant, the former shaman Aua. Aua is explaining that his people must lead their lives according to many complicated precautions in order to avoid myriad perils and dangers that might be lurking around any corner: ingenious arrangements of amulets and a tremendous number of taboos, the meaning of which is not at all clear, even to the most knowledgeable. All this because life is inscrutable and fundamentally insecure. Who could claim to fathom the latest reasons and the deepest meanings?

What is enlightening is that Rasmussen—although he would never doubt that he was talking and sharing experiences with a primitive man belonging to a culture that was doomed to change dramatically in the slipstream of an encroaching and irresistible civilization—depicts the scene in such a suggestive way that he succeeds in evoking a deep existential solidarity among two thoughtful and deeply reflexive individuals who share a deep insight into both wonder and vulnerability as these relate to the enigmas of being.

Not quite as enlightening it was that another member of the expedition, Kaj Birket-Smith, made a quite different description. He was to write the popular ethnological account of the exhibition *The Eskimos* (note that I use Birket-Smith’s generic grammatical forms: the Eskimos, the Eskimo culture, etc.). With very few corrections and little editing, this book was published from 1927 to 1971 in Danish and English, and translated into several other languages. His description of the Eskimo society can easily be read in the context of a framework of security or rather insecurity. In fact, he paints this society as one constantly threatened by ‘security problems’ with such descriptions as ‘the struggle against the cold,’ ‘the struggle against hunger,’ ‘the struggle against fear.’

The Eskimo society is essentially characterized by the fragile intellectual means by which its members attempt to grasp their social existence: magic,
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shamanism, superstition, and all the rest. Birket-Smith finds no place for something like an existential, even aristocratic dimension of solidarity across civilization divides, as do Aua and Rasmussen. But he went even further. Birket-Smith insists that the only way to study this Eskimo culture was to gather as much evidential material as possible. An expedition is not field work, but rather an endeavour to collect objects, even intellectual objects (‘documents’), and all these things are to be amassed in a museum—in this case, that of the Ethnographical Department of the National Museum in Copenhagen (where Birket-Smith was to become curator and later director for many years, 1929–63).

There has to be a distance and a distinction made between the place of scientific research in the study of culture and culture history, and the space within which culture is actually lived. This distance became even more real as Rasmussen, who by then had become a national hero, gathered the most reputable and honoured Danish scientists (for instance, Niels Bohr) in a committee to launch a nationwide appeal for funds to support an expansion of The National Museum to create space for the material objects from the Fifth Thule Expedition. As Rasmussen put it, this way Copenhagen at last would become the natural capital of the scientific study of the Eskimo culture (Rasmussen 1932:269). This capitalizing Eskimo culture is of course fictitious in establishing an empire of knowledge, but on the other hand more real in a very self-confident way: as a proof that nations like Denmark didn’t need to be imperialistic in the typical way. They would let other nations act as conquerors and oppressors of colonial populations, because civilized countries struggled only for fame in paving the way for scientific and social progress. This ideology worked for Greenland, too.

Denmark was, to be sure, a colonial power anyway, but a progressive and ‘friendly’ power. Rasmussen himself translated Ethnography of Primitive Societies into Greenlandic (Dreyer 1913), but left out the chapter on Eskimos. The book relied too heavily on evolutionary frameworks to do justice to the Inuit, and he replaced that chapter with his own Greenlandic version of the first part of Across Arctic America. The aim was clear: strengthen the (West) Greenlandic concept of being a nation in transition toward modernity—far ahead of their ‘tribal relatives’ in Canada and Alaska—and guided leniently (the favourite phrase of the time) by their paternalistic Danish compatriots.

Speaking of security and interpretation, the poetics and politics of Danish eskimology between World War I and World War II could take so enviably many things for granted. The original Eskimo culture was primitive (although one preferred the German expression Naturvölker); the living Inuit populations of Canada and Alaska were the royal highway to the prehistory of Greenland. The most proper way of studying the history of Inuit cultures (eskimology), was to collect as many material and immaterial objects as possible and arrange them according to scientific principles in an ethnographical museum; and, in the Danish–Greenlandic case, this was part and parcel of nation-building. Denmark, the motherland, could thereby profile its identity as a progressive and humane nation. Greenland, the daughter–nation, would leniently be assisted in its transition toward modernity with an advanced historical self-conscience.
To Get Out of the Arctic and Culture—A Short Interlude on the History of Danish and Norwegian Anthropology

One of the first students to be tutored by Birket-Smith was Johannes Nicolaisen (1921-1980). In fact, he became the first professor of anthropology (anthropology only became a university discipline in 1945). As for many ethnographers of this formative generation, Nicolaisen looked upon Knud Rasmussen and other polar researchers as the ideal, not to say idol, of a rich adventurous and scientific career. As a student, Nicolaisen had already collected quite a substantial library of Eskimo literature in his humble apartment in Copenhagen during the Second World War when Denmark was occupied by the Germans. Unfortunately, however, near the end of the war, an English bombing squad missed its target (the Gestapo headquarters) and hit a school, causing many casualties and an extensive fire that ruined Nicolaisen’s home, and books. He took this accident as a sign, as I was told by his wife, Ida Nicolaisen (herself a well-known anthropologist), all his interests in Greenland and the Arctic were quite literally burned out. He turned his attention to North Algeria and became a competent camel breeder among the Tuaregs as part of his extensive fieldwork there. With due excuses to the Department of Eskimology at the University of Copenhagen and a few outstanding exceptions, after the war, Nicolaisen and most of his generation turned his back on the North and would work anywhere other than Greenland.

Many reasons would account for pushing Danish anthropological research in Greenland into a phase of latency. On the one hand, Arctic anthropology was, from the 1960s onward, considered to be too traditional, as it relied too heavily on cultural history instead of delving into modern theorizing, and was all too oriented toward museum work instead of fieldwork. On the other hand, working in Greenland was considered too overloaded and prescribed by colonialism. Along with the awakening of a new critical anti-colonial and nativist movement in Greenland, it became for most Danish anthropologists not a subject to research, but a place to support politically.

In the late 1990s, during a seminar in Copenhagen on the finer distinctions between constructionism and constructivism, we ended up (in a pub) in a discussion with Fredrik Barth. I use this only as an example, and most of you could easily replace it with other occasions and characters. It all centred on the concept of culture. One participant referred to the famous metaphor that Karl Marx used to describe the paradise of petty commodity production: a place where all the natural species peacefully wander around among each other—the lion with the sheep—but where another, stranger animal is also there—the Beast itself. Marx of course intended to show the precarious role of money among all the things money could buy. The force of the metaphor seems to be that in some way this ought to be a logically impossible situation.

If we apply the metaphor to ‘our’ discipline, we observe the most successful invention of anthropology—the analytic concept of culture, strutting along the natural species and products of ethnography like Dravidian kinship terminologies, body painting, maracas, cosmology and all the rest. What really has happened is that the anthropological master tool has stepped out of the safe and secure order
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of things—not unlike the sorcerer’s apprentice—and is now part and parcel of
the native assemblage of means of reproduction of their way of life. Even the
advertisement branch of any corporation has keen understandings and strong
emotions about its unique culture.

Around the table in the pub, different solutions to the problem were
suggested. There was of course the usual resentful one: if the informants—
whoever they might be—steal ‘our’ tool, it will be misused and corrupted,
essentialized and politically manipulated in opportunistic ways. Thus, we should
drop it! Others proposed some of the various existing alternatives: habitus, folk
ontologies, meanings as a medium. Barth himself suggested not a renunciation,
but a moratorium, a respite: let’s abstain from using the concept for about twenty
years. (That is, until now.)

But then of course there was no respite and the predicament just grew in
size and debt. While many anthropologists in the last decades have been engaged
in an almost flagellant self-confrontation with ‘culture,’ culture massively entered
the field in many and diverse ways; this can be seen in the importation of the ‘old’
that anthropological culture concept in a host of neighbouring humanistic disciplines,
and especially in the popular university programs for studying popular cultural
phenomena in ones ‘own’ culture. This was accompanied by an increasing
amount of anthropological fieldwork at home (from the subtle dress manners
among extremely rich Mediterraneans to games children play in a kindergarten
sandbox), multi-sited fieldwork and ‘polyscaped’ studies of different globalized
or glocalized processes. But most importantly a re-entry of culture as an asset, a
weapon, a demand in different contexts of identity politics—not the least among
indigenous or indigenizing communities and nations, as in Greenland. And then
one might find oneself to be in a funk when invited to sit on advisory boards that
are planning to build a UNESCO centre for safeguarding the (Arctic, Inuit or
Greenlandic) immaterial cultural heritage with lawyers, politicians, sponsors and
other stakeholders who have very few scruples about their conception of culture.

Forced Back into Culture

It was the experience of being a committee member of such a group that taught
me that perhaps it was a paradise when the Beasts were grazing with the natural
species—when the use of ‘culture’ was just another cultural item. Here I realized
that there were at least 25 Beasts among the ordinary animals. More surprising
was the fact that some of these Beasts were fathered by what I thought were my
anthropological relatives. But then, it is well-known that there is no paradise
without snakes.

I was confronted with a vehement critique by some of my colleagues and
friends as if I was a renegade who had betrayed his army and joined the forces
of the essentialists, cult studs (cultural studies), or worse. And in fact it seemed
as if a war was raging, or at least, an armed neutrality. Very strange security
politics develop when the relationships between an anthropologist and his or
her hosting informants end up existing within a strange kind of terror balance.
When some indigenous activists engage in identity politics, some anthropologists
strike back with accusations like: “when you talk about your ‘culture,’ you are using the concept in the same essentialist or reified way as those who put stock in the dangerous and outdated idea of national characters.” Or worse: “you are unknowingly digging up constructions just like those fabricated by Knud Rasmussen or Birket-Smith.” When indigenous voices stress the need to safeguard their traditions, some anthropologists—often with quite good evidence—will point to historical facts, arguing that these traditions were invented. When some indigenous politicians claim certain rights in land or other natural resources by pointing to the simple fact that ‘their’ people were here before colonists and later immigrants, some anthropologists point to the constructedness of the concept of indigeneity and even compare it with recent developments in the xenophobic part of Europe. There’s a telling debate here between Jonathan Friedman and Adam Kuper (see Friedman 1998; Kuper 2003, 2004; Asch and Samson 2006). Perhaps these discussions never were that pertinent in Arctic studies where anthropologists are often reminded that in doing a regionalized anthropology, they were never avant-garde, nor even mainstream.

All the papers and presentations of the sixth IPSSAS seminar confirmed my impression that there still is a lot to be learned from the study of the concrete lifeways of ordinary people in palpable places and existential serious spaces; persons who might be enmeshed in many facets of global culture even though they can’t afford a flight ticket out. In Arctic studies you might even modestly enjoy the privilege of backwardness, though of course not in the safe and sound relations of supremacy between anthropologist and some cultural dope called the ‘native.’ In these relations there is very little to be nostalgic about. There is still a lot to be learned by being the hosted stranger.

But security of interpretation can never again rest on premises of a simple, circumscribed and exotic ‘otherness.’ Today, a security of interpretation between anthropologist and his or her hosts might be more like a dance on egg shells than a terror balance. But dancing is in many ways more delicate and elegant than trampling on anyone’s home.

**Closing**

So I guess there still is a lot to be learned from elderism—with a critical eye to the possible greater or smaller dangers of gerontocratical abuses. There still is a lot to be learned from indigenous agents in pursuit of safeguarding their traditions—with a critical eye to local elites monopolizing a certain construction of authentic culture as a means in the reproduction of flamboyant social inequalities. The best way of creating secure relations of interpretation still is the mutual trust between guest and host allowing for reciprocal solidarity and critique.
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