

Plenary II: Hunter-gatherers in a changing world

16546 - The death of master of peccaries & the Apurinã and game scarcity Brazilian Amazonia

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Virtanen, Pirjo Kristiina (University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland / Finland)*

For several indigenous peoples in Amazonian rainforest areas, increasing forest extraction has resulted in a lack of game and fish resources. Furthermore, several large-scale economic activities, such as logging, mining, overfishing, overhunting, transportation systems, and more recently oil exploration, are contributing to environmental degradation. This paper addresses how the current scarcity of game and fish are being experienced and reflected by the Apurinã in Brazilian Amazonia. The paper looks particularly at the changing web of socio-cosmological relations as well as identity constructions of the Apurinã people. In indigenous Amazonia, the body is determined through various substances, such as game and herbs, and is produced through forms of sociality. Different types of diet and social practices are thought to construct people's bodies and thus personhood, with certain animals, plants, and trees having contributed to the Apurinã "humanity" over many generations (as exchanges). For the Apurinã, certain animals, such as peccaries, are also regarded as persons, and have their own chiefs. Moreover Apurinã oral histories tell how certain animals are in fact their ancestors who have transformed into animals. Several shaman ancestors who have taken an animal form send other animals as their messengers. When the number of animal-ancestors decreases, the way in which the forest is experienced changes. Moreover, the birds that usually tell the Apurinã about the presence of different types of game are quieter. Now some ancestors are reported as dead - one of the cosmological explanations for game scarcity. This paper addresses especially the narrations on the chief of peccaries, its death and new revival.

16545 - Why Pumé Foragers Retain a Hunting & Gathering Way of Life on a Transitional Landscape

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Greaves, Russell D (Harvard University, Harvard, USA); Kramer, Karen L (Department of Anthropology, University of Utah, Utah, USA)*

Despite the economic alternatives, hunting and gathering remains a viable strategy for mobile Pumé foragers living on the llanos of Venezuela. Political instability, geographic isolation and a poor terrestrial environment no doubt buffer the Pumé from encroachment. But they also make active decisions to maintain a hunting and gathering way of life instead of moving to agricultural communities. In this paper we analyze why the Pumé choose to remain hunter-gatherers. Although the regional economy is transitioning, we find that 1) the economic returns to foraging provide equal or higher returns compared to the horticultural alternative and 2) the social costs are too great to abandon foraging. Wild foods are associated with Pumé sharing patterns, food security, group stability, the status of women and cultural institutions that promote group cohesion. These findings have implications for the long-term stability of foraging and mixed economies seen both ethnographically and in the archaeological record.

16544 - Forest Reforms and Livelihood of Baka Hunter-gatherers in Southeastern Cameroon

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *ICHIKAWA, Mitsuo (CAAS, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan); HATTORI, Shiho (Tenri University, Japan); YASUOKA, Hirokazu (Hosei University, Japan)*

The impacts of recent forest-related reforms on hunter-gatherers' livelihood are examined based on data obtained in southeastern Cameroon. This paper shows how these reforms disregard the actual situation and impose adverse impacts on the people's livelihood. On the one side, hunting methods, target animals, and hunting grounds are restricted for wildlife conservation. On the other side, commercial hunting has expanded due to improved road networks and developing consumer economy, which is threatening long-term hunting sustainability. Baka people are caught in a dilemma between conservation and development/forest exploitation, while claiming for their customary rights to the forest to secure long-term sustainability. In such a context, we have been engaged in a project aiming to establish a sustainable livelihood strategy. Specifically, through a participatory mapping project carried out in collaboration with the Baka hunter-gatherers and Bantu villagers, we are studying (1) the ecological potential of NTFPs, (2) the sustainability in the actual use of forest land and resources, and (3) the social (management) system that facilitates sustainable forest use. We will report some of the major findings from this project.

16543 - Hunter-Gatherers, Land and Fishing Rights in Alaska and Siberia: Contemporary Governmentality, Subsistence, and Sustainable Enterprises.

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): Thornton, Thomas (, Oxford University, Oxford, Un. Kingdom / Ver Königr.); Momontova, Nadia (University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland / Finnland)

This paper looks at the processes by which Alaska and Siberian indigenous peoples have been rendered as political subjects, “traditional” hunters-gathers, and sustainable enterprise owners amid their respective colonial and post-colonial industrial economies. The comparison is instructive because, despite being part of diametrically opposed (Soviet versus USA) national political systems, policies toward the welfare and development of indigenous peoples have proceeded along similar lines. In the post-colonial era, these lines have converged around neoliberal and social development policies which support indigenous “self-determination” through minimal subsistence rights and the creation of ethnic enterprises and partnerships with non-indigenous capitalist corporations. On both sides of the North Pacific, however, this transition has come about without formal recognition of the well-developed systems of aboriginal marine tenure and fishing rights, as has been recognized in other indigenous-state Treaty regimes (e.g., Canada and New Zealand). The lack of such protections, we argue, has led to poor management of coastal zones as socio-ecological systems, making sustainable indigenous livelihoods and small enterprises based on marine resources difficult to develop or maintain. We examine, in particular, the relationship of Sakhalin and Southeast Alaska indigenous hunter-fishers as strong, independent peoples whose fishing rights were usurped and their corporate groups reorganized to fit notions of modern industrial and neoliberal social-economic organization.