

15. InuitStudies today: New Approaches to old Issues

16237 - A comparative perspective on the resilience of Inuit and Norse communities in the north-western margins of the North Atlantic

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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Viewed from the traditional, cultural ecology-dominated perspective of archaeology, the Inuit have typically been regarded as uniquely well adapted to the particular challenges of life in the Arctic. Their success has been attributed to the flexibility of their subsistence economies and social organization, and to the versatility of their technologies and environmental knowledge, attributes that have allowed them to concentrate their populations and secure circumscribed resources despite their highly variable environmental context. In contrast, the European Norse and Medieval settlers of the North Atlantic margins of the Arctic are typically viewed as the polar opposites of the Inuit; sedentary communities with a fundamentally flawed adaptation dependant on dairying and imported domestic species. The differential success of these two groups following the onset of the "Little Ice Age" circa. the mid 13th century AD is cited as proof of the effectiveness of their adaptations; the Norse settlements of Greenland were eventually extinguished and those in Iceland reached a demographic and economic plateau and then declined between the 13th and 16th centuries, while the Inuit maintained their geographical range in the Eastern Arctic and even extended it.

Recent and on-going archaeological research programmes by members of the North Atlantic Biocultural organization (NABO) and the Global Human Ecodynamics Alliance (GHEA), involving Inuit and Norse-Medieval sites in Greenland, Iceland and Labrador offer new perspectives that challenge this somewhat simplistic adaptive model and suggest that these groups shared strategies that afforded each group capacities for resilience, including dependence on marine resources, modes of sustainable exploitation of certain resources, institutionalised distribution of subsistence resources and mobility. This comparative study also suggests that the Inuit and the Norse and their descendants shared some particular points of vulnerability related to their positions as peripheries in world economic systems, as much as to climatic challenges. For the Norse, a particular vulnerability revolved around specialized hunting and fishing and access to markets; the end of the Greenland colonies may in fact be related to the collapse of their ivory market. The Inuit of northern Labrador and Greenland experienced a similar position of vulnerability in the 19th century, while reorienting their economies and communities around the production of market goods at the same time of those required to sustain their own communities.

16038 - The Phenomenon of 'Return': Multiple Identities and Affiliations (Siberian Yupiget and Chukchi people, Chukotka, Russia).

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Panáková, Jaroslava (Comenius University in Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovakia / Slowakei)*

This study aims to address the phenomenon of return, which has been a classical subject of Inuit studies but has not yet received enough attention of the Siberianists. I aim to approach it as a phenomenon interwoven with concurrent realms of the system of kinship and social networking. The empirical data stem out of the research conducted among Siberian Yupiget and Chukchi people of Providensky region, Chukotka, Russia.

In traditional belief system, a deceased person can come back to the realm of living; this may happen five times at most. This is secured by the name given to the new-born descendants. The naming mechanism reflects the circular conception of the universe divided into two modes of natural and supernatural where nothing can be added – what gets lost from the world of living returns to the world of dead and vice versa (Hamayon, 1990; Bodenhorn, 2000; Vaté, 2003, 2007).

At the same time, personal names represent a significant feature of community cognition; the name serves as an important mnemonic device enabling intergenerational transmission and continuity. Inata came back for the first time through his nephew, Dmitry Seliakin. Then he returned as Ekaterina Nutanaun (Inata's brother's granddaughter who is still alive) and as Vladimir Seliakin (Dmitry's sister's son who is deceased). In 7 years, Inata supposedly came back again with the birth of Nadezhda Povolskikh (Inata's sister's granddaughter who is still alive). While being herself, Nadezhda is simultaneously regarded as a returned deceased relative, Inata, and therefore, she is not only a daughter to her mother but also her mother's uncle. From early childhood, people learn the identities of those they are named after and acquire a knowledge of the various relationships that link them to an intricate pattern of genealogical and affinal kin.

Moreover, the name sets several name-sharers in the close social association. In this example, all the name-sharers come from the same locus but this might not always be the case. Nadezhda, for example, is the name-sharer of all those who have the same name. The relationship is, thus, established between all the holders of the name Inata. Thus, the phenomenon of return inspires a specific mode of classification; beside the genealogical system, there is another system of relationships by name, which extends beyond genealogical kin to encompass a wider social network of people.

The complex social classification preserves both, the bond between the dead and the living as well as produces additional affiliations (and thus responsibilities) among the living. The mechanisms behind the phenomenon of return are noteworthy to explore as they can shed light on social organisation, solidarity, reciprocity, and in a long run challenge the insufficient explanations of the high suicide rates in the circumpolar region.

16024 - The sea ice as a site for multiple economies in Qaanaaq

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Flora, Janne (University of Copenhagen, Department of Anthropology, Copenhagen K, Denmark / Dänemark); Andersen, Astrid (University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen K, Denmark / Dänemark)*

To Inughuit in the Avanersuaq region northernmost parts of West Greenland the North Water is a hunting ground, while it to biologists is a polynya of rich animal diversity. Recent changes in climate are causing uncertain sea ice conditions for hunters who depend on the ice edge as site to access game. Likewise, animals orient themselves according to the ice edge, causing their migration routes to change. In addition quotas and restrictions are imposed on the advice by biologists. All combined this has caused two concrete and interrelated problems of economic character: access to food on the one hand, and decrease in monetary earnings through production and trade in meat and bi-products (fur, carvings, tusks). Hunting is thus becoming an increasingly insecure livelihood, and as a result the area is experiencing depopulation. Under these conditions, biologists' research activities are intensifying in the area. Their presence has created ideological and physical spaces of cooperation with the local community. They work together with local hunters to catch animals for research purposes, in exchange for cash, and theories of knowledge. Biologists have in other words become an ambivalent resource for the hunters. This paper is based upon ethnographic fieldwork in the region during the summers of 2014 and 2015 as part of a large interdisciplinary research project on the human responses to changes in land, sea and the living resources around the North Water. Departing in the interactions between Southern scientists and Inughuit hunters on the sea ice adjacent to Qaanaaq, this paper thus explores the overlaps and clashes in local and scientific productions of knowledge and economies. Rather than viewing scientific and indigenous knowledge as reified and separate, we aim to show how the sea ice as a site of encounter gives rise to new forms of collaboration, exchange and friction.

16023 - The sea ice as a site for multiple economies in Qaanaaq

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): Andersen, Astrid (University of Copenhagen, København K, Denmark / Dänemark); FLora, Janne (University of Copenhagen, København K, Denmark / Dänemark)

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16003 - Inuit Women and Subsistence Adaptation

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): Quintal-Marineau, Magalie (McGill University, Montreal, Canada / Kanada)

This presentation aims to provide a deeper understanding of Inuit women's contemporary role in subsistence practice. Increasingly across the Arctic, women are becoming the main monetary providers for their household. Recent research in Nunavut shows that women's expanding role in the wage-economy has increased their importance as monetary providers. By sharing, redistributing and transferring money, Inuit women are instrumental in securing both traditional and modern resources for their household and beyond.

This presentation first explores Inuit women's labour force participation and work patterns in Nunavut. Socioeconomic and sociocultural factors are examined to illustrate that gender plays a crucial role in understanding the changing division of labour. Indeed, in Nunavut, this shift to female wage-earners has, in many households, resulted in the creation of a female/wage-earner and male/hunter model. While many studies have demonstrated that households with greater access to wage earnings produce, distribute and consume more wild foods, the model female/male can be seen as a strategy both culturally and economically relevant. Data on women's contribution to harvesting activities at Clyde River, Nunavut, are used to analyze this model. Overall, it appears that through their monetary transfers, women are a key asset in the maintenance of harvesting activities and more largely to Inuit subsistence.

Finally, this presentation explores the meanings associated with this profound gender reorganization in terms of sharing practices, division of labour and modern understanding of subsistence adaptation. Using data collected from Clyde River, Nunavut, between 2011-2014, this presentation suggests that women are often positioned at the centre of food production; connecting land production and market economy .

Key words: Inuit Modern Subsistence, Gender, Money, Wage-Economy

15867 - Looking Back to the Future: Traditional Resources, Harvest Data and Inuit Food Security

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Wenzel, George (McGill University, Montreal, Canada / Kanada)*

Hunting and use of wildlife has long been a dominant element in the literature on Inuit. However, a recent trend in writing about Canadian Inuit is that a dietary transition from traditional to market foods is well underway. Among the reasons postulated as drivers of this change are: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and land skills are in severe decline; equipment, fuel and other costs are prohibitive; the biophysical environment has been radically altered by climate change; and, simply, the desire for traditional foods is waning. Whether taken together or singly, the overall conclusion tacitly suggests that wildlife is no longer (or soon will cease to be) a critical element in the Inuit food system. Despite this assertion, there is considerable, albeit mainly anecdotal, evidence that traditional resources remain materially and culturally critical to Inuit. This paper is based on the analysis of recent historical data on Inuit wildlife harvesting in the Qikiqtaaluk (formerly Baffin) region of Nunavut for two periods, 1980-1984 and 1996-2001. The analysis indicates a downward trend in traditional resource availability with respect to the considered consumer population and relates this reduction to:

- 1) demographic changes in the Qikiqtaalummiut population;
- 2) weakness in the monetized sector of the regional mixed economy;
- 3) minimum rate of growth in the harvester population.

Keywords: Inuit Food Security; Traditional Resources; Country Food Availability; Diachronic Analysis

15862 - Understanding the Relationship between Health, Well-Being, and Food Insecurity in Ulukhaktok, NT, Canada

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Collings, Peter (University of Florida, Gainesville, USA)*

Five decades of research among Eskimo peoples in North America has established a trend of declining health and increasing health disparities that corresponds with the rapid socioeconomic and environmental changes occurring in the region. Most research is descriptive, documentary, and epidemiological. Recent work on food insecurity in the Arctic follows this trend, focusing on the issue at the community level and attending to imported food and market systems while ignoring the continued importance of sharing networks and the contribution of country food to local economies.

This paper reports on fieldwork conducted during June and July, 2014, in the Inuit settlement of Ulukhaktok, in the Northwest Territories of Canada. Data collected include (1) Cultural Consensus data on Inuit models of well-being; (2) Self-reports of depression and anxiety via the Hopkins Symptom Checklist; and (3) Perceptions of food insecurity as measured by the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS). This paper addresses the links between these three assessments, focusing in particular on how Inuit responses to the HFIAS are informed by cultural understandings of well-being. This presentation also examines the implications of these results for linking culture and cultural practices to the perceived stresses of contemporary settlement life, and to the longer term health consequences of chronic activation of the physiological stress response.

Keywords: Food Security, Inuit, Health, Well-Being