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THE DECLINE OF KAYAKING TRADITIONS IN ARCTIC CANADA

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Abstract

Based on a qualitative methodology situated within an exploratory research paradigm and utilizing grounded theory methods, this study looks to potential reasons behind the decline of kayaking traditions among the Inuit in Arctic Canada. Considered within a conceptual framework emerging from a body of secondary data obtained from film, television and radio documentaries, Northern press reports and newsletters, Inuit recollections, and anthropological and sociological studies, the paper is a starting point designed to shape understanding and lead to further exploration of a specific example of a declining Indigenous knowledge set in a Canadian context. Using a robust revival of kayaking in Greenland during the 1980s for theoretical sampling and comparative purposes, the paper proposes the emergent theory that Canada's Inuit essentially disconnected from the kayak during the course of the twentieth century. Appearing to result from changing senses of identity in combination with marginal levels of cultural persistence of the tradition, the disconnection has problematized revival efforts over the last quarter of a century. Absent of a strong national consciousness and pockets of cultural persistence--guardians of the kayaking tradition in twentieth century Greenland--Canada's Inuit may well be fighting an uphill battle to re-engage with their ancient form of water transport.

The Decline of Kayaking Traditions in Arctic Canada

As a recreational kayaker and a professional appraiser who works with Aboriginal material culture, I have a strong personal interest in Inuit skin-and-frame boat-building technology and paddling traditions. It is, however, an interest in an obsolete technology and a bygone way of life. In Arctic Canada, traditional construction technologies and paddling techniques are being lost as elders die off, kayak-related knowledge is not being passed from generation to generation, and with the exception of a few communities involved in outfitting operations and small-scale recreational programs, Inuit interest in the vessel appears to be marginal. As the late adventurer Victoria Jason suggested in the early 1990s, most Inuit youth learn about “their traditional tool through books and school lessons rather than by paddling” (Hossack, 2003, p. 23).

It is a mistake, however, to assume that this declining interest in the tradition is uniform across the Arctic. In Greenland--homeland of the Greenlandic Inuit--the situation is quite different. Prompted by the exhibition of three seventeenth century Greenlandic kayaks at the Museum of Greenland in Nuuk during the early 1980s, a robust revival of interest in boat-building and traditional paddling techniques has grown along the island's southwestern coast. By the end of the 1980s some 25 paddling clubs with over 2,000 active members were involved in kayaking and building the low, narrow Greenland-style boats (Heath ctd. in introduction of Arima, 1991). Interest in kayaking--shepherded by Qaannat Kattuffiat (The Greenland Kayaking Association)--remains strong today (Qajaq USA, 2010a). Kenneth Lister, Assistant Curator of Anthropology in the Royal Ontario Museum's Department of World Cultures, says it is impossible to miss the rows of kayaks stored on beach frames along the shorelines of many

Greenlandic communities (personal communication, June 10, 2010). Unlike the Inuit in Canada's North, a considerable number of Greenlandic Inuit appear to have re-engaged with their ancient technology and tradition.

Any consideration of kayaking traditions in Canada must keep a crucial point in mind: the vessel is a technologically obsolescent form of working water transport. Neither skin-and-frame kayaks nor more modern hard-shell (fibreglass, plastic and kevlar) varieties are used with any degree of regularity as hunting platforms by the Inuit in Canada's Arctic. Kayaks have been replaced by modern freighter canoes and wooden, steel and aluminum-hulled vessels powered by internal combustion engines. These modern boats are larger, safer, more durable--and don't get eaten by dogs if improperly stored (Kenneth Lister, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2010). When combined with the appropriate hunting or fishing gear they can be used to take narwhals, walruses, seals, caribou and various species of fish. Furthermore, if used in conjunction with contemporary navigational equipment, most modern, decked vessels can be operated in conditions where kayaking would be both impractical and hazardous. Indeed, Canada's Inuit people appear to have made the most rational and advantageous decision in dismissing the old and outmoded for the new and improved.

Without ignoring the issue of obsolescence, this project examines a range of circumstances, choices and attitudes associated with declining kayak traditions in Canada during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The paper is a starting point in the examination of this decline--a way to shape understanding and raise key questions for future consideration. But the paper's most immediate goal is to postulate, through the use of exploratory research techniques, a plausible and grounded theory for the decline of the tradition. Through the use of

an emergent conceptual framework defined by identity, cultural persistence and revival--and the application of exploratory research methods--I will engage in the production of “inductively-derived generalization[s]” focussed on theory-building (Stebbins, 1997, p. 423). Theory-building can be defined as “the process through which researchers seek to make sense of the observable world by conceptualizing, categorizing and ordering relationships among observed elements” (Andersen & Kragh, 2010, p. 50). Wholly absent from this process will be any testing of the emergent hypothesis of disconnection from the tradition--a task that will have to rest on the shoulders of future confirmatory work (Stebbins, 2001).

Before discussing this theory-building process and the resulting hypothesis, it is important to touch on why an examination of the decline of kayaking traditions in Arctic Canada has value. Does it really matter if Canada’s Inuit loses touch with a bygone technology? I believe it does for two primary reasons, both related to the state of traditional Indigenous knowledge sets in Canada. First, the potential loss of kayaking traditions should not be regarded as the displacement of an ephemeral transport and hunting technology. Kayaking traditions in the Arctic extend back at least 4,000 years (Laughlin, Heath & Arima, 1991; Mary-Rousselière, 1991), were highly elaborated and connected to Inuit culture, and were an important part of life until the early twentieth century. Primarily a hunting platform used to approach, slay and retrieve large mammals such as caribou, seals, walruses and whales, kayaks also were used across the Arctic for fishing and fowling (Zimmerly, 1978; Arima, 1987). Additionally, despite their tight cockpits and limited storage volume, they were also used as ferries (Birket-Smith, 1929; Zimmerly, 1978). As a result of its ancient lineage and high degree of utility, kayak traditions were deeply embedded in Inuit culture, present in both everyday life and in the

shadowy world of myth and the supernatural (Rasmussen, 1932; Birket-Smith, 1929). Even today, years after motor boats have replaced the kayak in Canada's Arctic, the vessel continues to play an important symbolic role in Inuit graphic art and sculpture. One only has to look at the numerous prints and carvings of kayaks coming out of Inuit art Co-ops--later to be sold at commercial galleries and auction salesrooms--to understand the vessel's deep symbolic meaning. Loss of the kayaking tradition will be a profound disconnect from the past.

The second reason this scenario bears close consideration is that the decline of kayaking traditions might not be a unique trajectory within the realm of traditional Aboriginal technology in Canada. Kenneth Lister points out that Indigenous snowshoe traditions in Canada also are in decline (personal communication, Jan. 18, 2010). Like the skin-and-frame kayak, the snowshoe is a fading Aboriginal technology with fewer and fewer people in Canada possessing traditional skills related to construction. The possibility exists that Inuit "disconnection" from the kayak is part of a broader pattern of decline in traditional knowledge sets in this country. If this is indeed the case, further losses of Indigenous knowledge and technology could be on the horizon.

There is evidence suggesting that Inuit leaders in Canada are aware of the negative impact of disconnecting from the past and losing bodies of traditional knowledge. Since its creation in 1999, the territorial government of Nunavut has instituted policies to preserve, advance and utilize Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit--Inuit traditional knowledge, or IQ as its known. Viewed by the government of Nunavut as an essential aspect of Inuit identity and a philosophical framework for the territory, IQ has both material culture and technology aspects (Department of Human Resources, Government of Nunavut, 2005; Oosten & Laugrand, 2002, p. 24). If kayaking traditions and technology are regarded as component parts of IQ, the theories that

emerge from this study and any future concatenating work have more than academic value.

Potentially, they could alert Northern governments and the Inuit people that a declining tradition of kayaking might be developing into an imperiled one.

Methodology and Methods

Using a qualitative methodology situated within a grounded theory and exploratory research context (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Stebbins, 2001), this study identifies emergent theory in a body of material related to kayaking traditions in Canada's Arctic over a period of time ranging from the early-to-mid-twentieth century to the present (2010). I have chosen to examine the decline of kayaking traditions in Arctic Canada through an exploratory research lens "designed to maximize the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding" (Stebbins, 2001, p. 3). This approach "aims to generate new ideas and weave them together to form grounded theory, or theory that emerges directly from data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 in Stebbins, 2001, p. 9). The research method I use in this project conforms with Glaser & Strauss's initial conception of grounded theory. Now identified as the Glaserian approach, this method seeks to allow theory to "'emerge' naturally from collected data." Later versions of the method articulated by Strauss, where theory is "forced" from data, were not utilized (Durieux, 2005, p. 3).

It is necessary to point out that this project did not involve on-the-ground research in Arctic communities and relied instead on the use of relevant secondary data. Glaser & Strauss make a strong argument for the usefulness of secondary data sources in the grounded theory method:

Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant or the sociologist's interviewee.... In those publications people converse, announce positions, argue with a range of eloquence and describe events or scenes in ways entirely comparable to what is seen and heard during fieldwork. The researcher needs only to discover the voices in the library to release them for his [or her] analytical use. (1999, p. 163)

Other scholars concur on the usefulness of a broad range of non-primary data sources when using the grounded theory method:

With most forms of qualitative research, the sources of data are usually the same. These are most commonly interviews and observations. However, this is where grounded theory starts to differ from other methodology such as phenomenology, which allows only the words and actions of the informants as a source of data. Grounded theory allows for a much wider range of data, including company reports, secondary data, and even statistics, providing the information has relevance and fits to the study. (Goulding, 2001, pp. 23-24)

Secondary data sources used in this project included: documentary films and videos produced or distributed by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and IsumaTV (*sic.*); audio recordings originally aired on CBC radio; articles, stories and letters in Inuit and Northern newspapers and newsletters; published recollections; and scholarly publications. In sum, I utilized 16 motion pictures, television segments, video and radio clips, 24 newspaper and newsletter articles, and approximately 38 anthropological and sociological articles and books. Additional governmental, popular press,

business-related and other Internet sources were also mined for useful data. I looked for and extracted as data the following: relevant quotes by Inuit men and women; specific recollections of Inuit hunters related to kayak use; relevant Inuit activities captured on film or video; reports of Inuit discourse, activities and attitudes generated by various professional observers including anthropologists, sociologists, government functionaries, and documentarians; interpretive material penned by scholars and disseminated in peer-reviewed publications; and observations of Inuit activities and attitudes documented in Northern and other forms of press.

As information was collected I used a process of constant comparison to identify key concepts, categories and properties associated with the categories emerging from the data. These were used to formulate an initial coding schema. Comparisons took place on two levels-- between like strata (e.g. concept to concept, category to category) and between differing strata (e.g. concept to category, category to property of category). Initial coding occurred as the data was generated and was subject to an iterative process resulting in subsequent rounds of research and re-coding. The final coding schema formed the basis of the conceptual framework I use to discuss the emergent theory.

My early mention of the differences existing between Greenlandic and Canadian Inuit attitudes to kayaking was more than an introductory narrative device. Although comparison of the two Arctic societies' attitudes to the kayak is not the focus of this paper, it does play a role in hypothesis development through the process of theoretical sampling--the collection and consideration of data outside the area of primary focus. I used Greenlandic data to both help shape the grounded theory building blocks--concepts, categories of concepts and the properties

of those categories--and to heighten or maximize the conceptual differences between the various elements.

An additional way of considering the various theoretical building blocks is achieved through the use of sensitizing concepts. Although exploratory research requires scholars to be receptive to whatever emerges from the data, there is accommodation for “defined concepts” (Stebbins, 2001, p. 19; Durieux, 2005, pp. 29-30). Stebbins notes that “established theoretical frameworks are frequently used to help organize and interpret data during the analysis and write-up phases of particular research projects” (1997, p. 429). Grounded theory “transcends by inclusion and integration at a higher level than previous descriptions and theories about an area and uses them to create a dense integrated theory of greater scope” (Goulding, 2001, p. 24).

An obvious sensitizing concept to consider in this project is the colonizer-colonized relationship explored by postcolonial scholarship. Indeed, the Inuit in Canada can be viewed as being colonized on several levels. Jack Hicks’ presentation “On the Application of Theories of ‘Internal Colonialism’ to Inuit Societies” (2004) to the Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association in Winnipeg cites a number of works discussing the intense levels of colonization of the Inuit in Canada. Additional sensitizing concepts utilized include Taylor and Laughlin’s theory on cultural commitment to kayaking (1991) and Eugene Arima’s theory of “bicultural” kayaking revivals; these will be discussed in detail below. Finally, I paid close attention to the tension between tradition and modernity in Arctic Canada--a point of friction that will show up in my discussions of several of the conceptual categories used in the development of the grounded theory.

Biases and Limitations

In the interest of full disclosure, my personal views on the decline of kayaking traditions in Arctic Canada need to be aired. As a person with an interest in circumpolar skin-and-frame vessels, I am concerned about the trajectory of decline of the tradition in Canada. I make no secret of the fact that I believe the potential loss of the tradition should be addressed in some way, and if possible, prevented. Although I entertain no illusions that the kayak can be re-established as a contemporary hunting platform, I am hopeful that the skills involved in building a skin-and-frame kayak will be preserved and that recreational or other types of paddling can become a part of Inuit life in Canada, as they are in Greenland. Throughout the study I have endeavored to keep this bias in check.

As well, at the risk of stating the obvious, I am not an Inuk, nor a resident of Canada's North. I am an urban Eurocanadian living far from the Arctic--a Qallunaaq in the parlance of the Inuit. I will not pretend to be anything other than an outsider attempting to theorize on issues that are foreign to my everyday experience. I cannot speak for the Inuit and will not presume to fully grasp their cultural relationship to kayaks and the associated traditions. Further, as I have not personally experienced the huge changes the Inuit went through during the last half-century, nor personally interviewed those who have, I recognize that secondary sources are mere echos and reflections of what occurred. Many of the voices I refer to in the paper have been filtered through non-Inuit film makers, reporters, editors, translators and anthropologists. Although not a bias per se, this indirect perspective does have limitations. Some people or groups leave little or nothing in the way of recorded traces, documenters and scholars can be misleading and it is possible for events to be reported inaccurately (Glaser & Strauss, 1999, pp. 180-182; Goulding,

1999, p. 168). These limitations underscore the fact that this paper reports on exploratory, theory-building work of a preliminary nature.

Literature Review

The concept of a literature review in a project hinged on exploratory research and grounded theory is somewhat problematic. Inductive research techniques focused upon the generation of new theory place primacy on the data collected and analyzed. Less weight is given to pre-existing studies and the views of authorities. The idea behind this is that the researcher should remain open to what the data reveals and should try not to take preconceived notions into the information-gathering and conceptualization stages. In essence, the researcher tries to avoid theoretical contamination, as well as any biases that might originate in the literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Stebbins, 2001). This is in contrast to confirmatory research where detailed literature reviews form an important part of defining a research project.

Although this study uses grounded theory methods, I found the review of relevant literature to be a highly productive enterprise. To begin, a number of the literature sources included material rich enough in content to qualify as data for the project. Documented comments by Inuit people as well as observations by anthropologists were therefore included in the data pool. Second--and crucial to the *raison d'être* of this study--the literature served to confirm that there have been no published studies focusing exclusively on the decline of kayaking traditions in Arctic Canada. The literature has therefore been useful as both a source of data and a roadmap indicating where voids in the scholarship exist.

Integrated kayak studies in a Canadian context is a relatively recent field that ties in to work done at what is now known as the Canadian Museum of Civilization from the 1960s

onward. The work hinges on the institution's excellent collection of skin-and-frame kayaks and the dedicated work of several scholars, of whom Dr. Eugene Y. Arima is the most noteworthy. Indeed, it would be impossible to explore almost any aspect of kayaking traditions in Canada's Arctic without being familiar with Arima's work. Although specific in title, the scholar's *A Contextualized Study of the Caribou Eskimo Kayak* (1975) provides excellent general background on the boat's use across the Arctic. Arima notes that even in areas where they were not used intensively, kayaks were "the means, among others, of expressing as well as attaining social eminence." Moreover, they were regarded as one of most valuable items of exchangeable property in Inuit societies (Arima, 1975, p. 49). Perhaps the most relevant exploration of the kayak's fate in a Canadian context is Arima's "Revival in Canada: A Bicultural Presentation," an article contained in a highly useful collection of papers titled *Contributions to Kayak Studies*, issued as part of the Mercury Series (1991). The paper deals specifically with three attempts to revive kayak-building and use in Inukjuak, Mittimatalik and Igloolik during the 1980s--the same period when the Greenlandic revival was taking hold. The anthropologist's concept of revival is a broad one and modern-style, fibreglass-covered kayaks manufactured in the North by Inuit builders factor into the discussion. But the paper also provides good background on the relative rarity of kayaks in Canadian Arctic communities by the 1960s and discusses, in great detail, how the revival attempts were initiated, how they related or failed to relate to traditional kayak construction techniques, and how they tended to lose steam after outside institutional funding dried up. Arima also makes a highly relevant comparison of the Canadian revival attempts with the more robust renaissance in Greenland, indicating that intensity of use, the length of the paddling season, and geographic, political and social factors should be considered. Finally,

Arima makes a reasonably strong argument that the Canadian revivals were “bicultural presentations” with both Inuit and Eurocanadian input.

Taylor and Laughlin’s “Sub-Arctic Kayak Commitment and ‘Kayak Fear’” (1991) is a short paper with a high degree of relevance to any examination of Indigenous kayak use. The authors discuss the variances of cultural commitment to the kayak across the Arctic. This paper has clear relevance to consideration of the decline of kayaking in Arctic Canada, but is more rooted in the past than the late twentieth century; it does not refer directly to the revivals and revival attempts of the 1980s, nor does it pay any attention to the social, political and economic dimensions raised by Arima in “Revival in Canada: A Bicultural Presentation” (1991).

Nonetheless, I will refer back to this paper a number of times as the issue of cultural commitment is relevant and should not be glossed over.

Sources on Greenlandic Inuit kayaking proved to be useful in the theoretical sampling process. Harvey Golden’s *Kayaks of Greenland: The History and Development of the Greenlandic Hunting Kayak, 1600-2000* (2006) is the definitive publication on historical Greenlandic skin-and-frame boats. Although most of this large volume deals with technical data on surveyed boats, both the introduction and conclusion contain contextual information on kayak use in Greenland through time. Robert Gessain’s “The Ammassalimiuit Kayak and its Demographic Evolution” (1968) charts Greenlandic use of the kayak during the nineteenth century, its twentieth century decline as a working hunting platform, and discusses the survival of the kayak in certain areas. Although this 1968 study precedes the Greenlandic revival in the 1980s, it indicates the island should not be treated as a whole in any assessment of the retention

of kayaking traditions. In many areas of Greenland the kayak was abandoned by the mid-twentieth century in much the same way it was in Arctic Canada.

A number of general studies on Canadian Arctic communities, as well as the recollections of Inuit elders, proved to be highly useful as data sources. *Remembering the Years of My Life: Journeys of a Labrador Inuit Hunter* by Paulus Maggo (1999), provides an excellent account of the period of huge change in Canada's North during the early-to-mid twentieth century--including the shift from kayaks to motor vessels. *Living on the Land: Change Among the Inuit of Baffin Island* by J. S. Matthiasson (1992) looks at Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) during the early 1960s and again in the 1970s and 1980s, providing insight on Arctic modernization. A perspective on how politics and Ottawa's agenda affected life in the eastern parts of Canada's North is provided in R. Q. Duffy's *The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit Since the Second World War* (1988). R. G. Condon's *Inuit Youth--Growth and Change in the Canadian Arctic* supplied insight on how education systems have left their imprint on the North.

Given that general Greenlandic data factors into the theory-building process in this paper, work comparing the former Danish colony with Arctic Canada, as well as more focussed studies, proved to be useful. Yvon Csonka's "Changing Inuit Historicities in West Greenland and Nunavut" (2005) raises some interesting and relevant questions about the differences between the Inuit in Greenland and Nunavut. J. Dahl's *Saqqaq: An Inuit Hunting Community in the Modern World* provides background information on hunting communities in Greenland and discusses a number of relevant issues including de-colonization, local schooling and the preservation of tradition knowledge. Ib Goldbach's "Greenland: Education and Society Between

Tradition and Innovation” (2000) discusses the general history, trends and educational practices in Greenland from early colonial times to the late twentieth century.

Findings and Discussion

The theory I postulate for the decline of kayaking traditions in Arctic Canada emerges from a pool of data organized into three key concepts and ten subset concept categories. These elements of the conceptual framework--and their relationships to one another--are indicated below.

Table 1.

Emergent Conceptual Framework

Concept	Category
Identity	Traditional Inuit
	Hunter
	Modern
	National
Cultural Persistence	Marginal
	Functional
Revival	Bicultural
	Restorative
	Symbolic
	Recreational

In the following sections I will discuss each concept and its categories in turn, paying particular attention to the specific properties of each of the subset groupings. An overview of the grounded “disconnection” theory follows in the paper’s conclusion. But the first issue to consider in a theoretical exploration of the decline of kayaking traditions in Arctic Canada is the role Inuit self-identification parameters might play in the process.

Identity

People identify themselves on a number of levels using criteria such as age, gender, language, ethnicity, nationality and many other defining aspects. These various elements of identity have cognitive content that permit a worldview. This in turn allows sense to be made of conditions and circumstances (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston & McDermott, 2006). Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov (2004) suggest that cognitive perspectives “...are ways of understanding and identifying oneself, making sense of one’s problems and predicaments, identifying one’s interests, and orienting one’s action” (qtd. in Abdelal et al., 2006, p. 699). If identity is regarded as a metaphorical lens through which the world is viewed and considered, it follows that the focus is variable. Identity can be used to define and understand narrow issues such as Inuit relationships to kayaks and kayaking traditions.

Data collected in this study indicates that the Inuit in Canada relate to the kayak and kayaking traditions in terms of three identity categories. These are: traditional Inuit identity; hunter identity; and modern identity. A fourth conceptual category--national identity--is very much a factor with the Greenlandic Inuit, but only present in a nascent form with the Inuit in Canada. This fourth category will figure prominently in the theory behind why kayaking traditions remain strong in Greenland and relatively weak in Arctic Canada.

Traditional Inuit identity. Three chronologically defined phases define traditional Inuit relationships to the kayak during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In the first phase--running from the early part of the century to the middle--there is a diminishing relationship with the kayak as a result of the growing availability of new transport technologies and the shift away from large, co-operative sealing operations to small family groups hunting foxes for their pelts (Duffy, 1988). Properties of this phase include a continuing, though weakening, connection with the old ways coupled with technological progress and social and economic changes. Importantly, the loosening connection with the kayak does not appear to be viewed by the Inuit as a threat to traditional identity.

Inuit men and women growing up in this period lived through a time of great change and were the last generation to have direct daily working contact with the kayak. Depending on how traditional their families were, where they were located, and what type of interaction they had with Eurocanadian functionaries, it is highly possible that they continued to use kayaks into the 1940s and early 1950s. As a consequence, they were a transitional generation familiar with both kayak traditions and new transport technologies.

Old perspectives on the kayak are illustrated in documentary films and in published recollections. An elder woman interviewed in the film *Amorkok's Song--The Journey to Nunavut* (MacDonald, Pageau, Epp, et al., 1998) speaks of how the kayak was responsible for the formation of sea ice in the distant mythological past--demonstrating awareness of the vessel's ancient ties to the supernatural. In *Tuktu and the Big Kayak*, a forty-three year old National Film Board motion picture, the elder participating in a staged construction of a kayak remembers that his father spoke of the kayak as a "fine thing." His solid knowledge of construction techniques

suggests he paid close attention to his father's actions as well as his words (Bairstow & Hyde, 1967).

Paulus Maggo, born in 1910 and a man who lived in the Nain area of Labrador, illustrates the shift from this old perspective to a new one. He notes that when he was a boy his father always had a kayak. As a result, he learned construction techniques, hunting practices and a whole series of associated myths and taboos (Maggo, 1999). The old hunter, however, makes no secret of his preference for other vessels over kayaks, commenting "I don't know how Inuit managed before they had motor boats" (p. 122). Maggo's opinion of the kayak is not isolated. Duffy (1988) indicates that the Inuit were clear about their desire for boats with outboard motors and larger Peterhead whalers driven by diesel engines. But kayaks were also abandoned for open whalers simply equipped with sails and centreboards, canvas freighter canoes and small dinghies (Manning, 1944). Given the considerable labour involved in building and maintaining a kayak and the danger of hunting larger animals like walruses (Manning, 1944), the shift away from kayaks appears to be a rational decision. As an Inuit man recorded in the NFB documentary *My Village in Nunavik* states, the old way of life was simply "too hard" (Lamothe & Kenuajuak, 1999).

This seemingly ambivalent attitude to the kayak--one that involves both a knowledge of the past and an acceptance of modern substitutes--does not appear to reveal any sense of loss of traditional Inuit identity. Indeed, Matthiasson (1992) points out that the Inuit in Mittimatalik were quick to pick up on new and efficient technologies without seeing the changes as a challenge to their sense of themselves as a people. As kayak use waned during this period, the

practical benefits of technological progress were of more concern than the loss of an outmoded tradition.

A second phase of this identity parameter occurs from the 1970s through to the 1990s. The properties of this phase include an increasing disconnection from kayaking traditions, the beginnings of a sense of loss, and the emergence of an undercurrent desire to revive the vessel--an impulse played out in several bicultural revival attempts. By this point in time, it is fair to say that kayaks are no longer being used in Canada's North, with even traditional communities having abandoning them entirely (Arima, 2004; Matthiasson, 1992). Matthiasson points out, however, that initiatives like the Mittimatalik revitalization movement during this period are signposts of a "new and objectified" conception of Inuit identity being formed (1992, pp. 128-129). This plays out in several ways. Arima (1991) notes that from the 1970s onward there is a gradual increase of interest in traditional Inuit culture--including the kayak. Additionally, by the late 1980s the Northwest Territories' government started to pay attention to the issue of cultural loss, with specific focus on facilitating the transmission of traditional life skills and language through calibration of the education system (Duffy, 1988).

From the perspective of this study, the most interesting indications of interest in the kayak are the early 1980s revivals, which took place in Inukjuaq, Mittimalalik and Igloolik. Although only one of these bicultural revivals extended into the 1990s, they are indicators of the existence of desire to reconnect with kayak traditions as a material expression of Inuit identity. Arima notes that kayaks are an intrinsic part of Inuit identity and that there is a clear need for them to express who they are through material culture (1991).

The final temporal phase of the traditional Inuit identity perspective on the kayak appears to be associated with this desire to reconnect with the vessel as a means of cultural expression. Very possibly a product of the “new and objectified” conception of Inuit identity Matthiasson (1992) postulates, this phase begins during the lead-up to the creation of Nunavut in 1999 and is amplified by the new territorial government’s adoption of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) policies, as well as by focussed efforts to eliminate internal colonialism (Petrovich, 1999). The properties of this phase include a longing for past traditions, a recognition of the symbolic importance of icons like the kayak, and an efflorescence of locally-organized kayaking programs with bicultural, restorative and symbolic characteristics.

Recreation-oriented paddling programs, small-scale kayak-building projects, and broader cultural inclusion programs occur in a scattering of schools and heritage centres across the Canadian Arctic from 1999 on: in Kangiqiniq (Rankin Inlet) and Qamani’tuaq (Baker Lake) in 1999 (Greer, 2001; Greer, 1999); in Kivalliq Hamlet in 2003 (Greer, 2003); in several communities in Nunavik (Arctic Quebec) in 2005 (Minogue, 2005); at Kugaaruk (Pelly Bay) in 2007 (Power, 2007); in Sanikiluaq in 2008 (Tyler, 2008); in Ikaluktutiak (Cambridge Bay) in 2009 (McKeon, 2009); and in Igluligaarjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) between 2003 and 2009 (Greer, 2009; Berger, 2006).

This reinvigorated perspective on traditional material culture generates Inuit commentary directly related to the kayak. Elder Paul Quassa states:

Look at the things that we used to use today, they just put them in museums.

Look at the things that we used to use, some of them are in museums now but we still use many of our traditional tools, to this day. This is how strong Inuit culture

is. Things were made since time immemorial, are still being used. Qajak are now used all over the world (*sic.*). (2007)

Indeed, there is a sense that Inuit material culture has been raided and appropriated--and that it needs to be reclaimed (Blackduck, 2001). Taqralik Partridge opines:

The world at large seems to find so many aspects of Inuit culture--the animal skins, the food--unpalatable. Yet it tries to imitate so much of that culture. Inuit-derived icons are everywhere. First is was the kayak and anoraks. Now inukshuks are as ubiquitous as dreamcatchers.... (2006, pp. 47-48)

In spite of increased interest in the kayak as an element of Inuit identity, the data does not indicate that these attempts to re-engage with the tradition are as focussed and deliberate as the revival in Greenland in the 1980s. They are played out on a relatively small scale, do not appear to interconnect with each other and fail to have widespread, popular impact. That said, they do indicate that some degree of interest in kayaking as a tradition exists in Canada's North early in the twenty-first century. In view of this, I have regarded some of these initiatives as revivals or revival attempts and they will be discussed more fully under the revival category later in the paper.

Hunter identity. Like the traditional Inuit identity parameter discussed above, this conceptual category reveals a change in attitude towards the kayak as the twentieth century progresses. The key property of this category is the hunter's perceptions of the efficacy of the kayak in the hunt; later the very relevance of the hunter in Inuit life will be challenged as communities shift to new food sources.

Paulus Maggo once again provides a good indication of how utility factored into the shift away from using kayaks as hunting platforms. Although taught how to use the vessel by his father, he says "...I tried using the kayak to hunt seals but I never really learned how to handle it" (1999, p. 71). Maggo indicates that kayaks were still being used in Nain in the late 1920s, but he buys a motor boat as soon as he is able and becomes adept in its use. Elder Taamusi Quamaq (1914-1993) observes that kayaks could not be used on stormy days and that jagged freshwater ice could rip through a kayak's sealskin hull (1995, pp. 48-49). And Manning (1944) reports that by the early 1940s Inuit hunters on the west coast of Hudson Bay and the Melville Peninsula depended entirely on imported canoes and boats and had lost the art of making kayaks. These Inuit hunters appear to be choosing the best technology for the job.

Although Inuit hunters adopted kayak substitutes without regret, the tradition does not disappear overnight. Documentary films shot during the 1940s and the 1950s confirm that kayaks and motorboats were used together to hunt walruses, whales, seals and polar bears. Both harpoons and rifles were used in these hunting expeditions (Boulton, 1944; Spencer & Wilkinson, 1952). In Boulton's film, which was shot in Mittimatalik--then called Pond Inlet--an Inuit hunter comments "in summer we still hunt seals from our kayaks and canoes" (1944). By the 1950s, however, kayak use as a hunting platform was fading quickly. In fact, hunting of any type was beginning to clash with the new reality being imposed on some Arctic communities. In McLean and Howe's NFB film, *Our Northern Citizen* (1956), a group of Iqaluit (Frobisher Bay) Inuit truck drivers employed on the US base suggest that they would much rather be out hunting than working for wages.

Yet in spite of the government-induced movement of Inuit people into settlements during the 1950s, and the shift towards a currency-based economy (Raymont, Sears & Greenwald, 1990), hunting would continue to be important across the North and a pivotal food source in traditional communities such as Ulukhaktok (Holman) and in settlements like Puvirnituq where store-bought food was regarded as too expensive (Duffy, 1988; Lamothe & Kenuajuak, 1999). Hunting is a relatively economic way of supplementing the diet and “country food” is enjoyed by many (Loring, 1996). Moreover, hunting appears to have recuperative value to Inuit men, as demonstrated in the NFB film *My Father, My Teacher* (Malenstyn, Jacob & Allen, 2005). Hunting also has an “expressive dimension” connecting elders with the young (Condon, 1987, p. 41).

By the 1980s, however, there are indications that Inuit youths in some communities were only tenuously connected to hunting traditions. A 1987 documentary on CBC’s *The Journal* indicated that students in Iqaluit schools were being sent out on “cultural enhancement” outings to show them how to hunt seals (Abel, 1987). An elderly Mittimatalik woman states “our children no longer know how to hunt, they are stuck in school. So because they don’t know how to live as Inuits, they must keep on going to school. There is no other way today” (*sic.*) (Matthiasson, 1992, p. 146). And, a 1980s Ulukhaktok study indicates that out of 25 boys in the community, only three expressed a desire to become hunters (Condon, 1987). With the widespread use of motor boats and the weakening connection to hunting in some communities, the idea of pursuing seal, walrus and narwhal from a kayak must seem very remote indeed.

Modern identity. Before discussing how the Inuit use a modern lens to regard the kayak, it is first necessary to define modern perspective. David Boruchoff, Associate Professor

at the Department of Hispanic Studies in McGill University, suggests that modern self-consciousness and technological change are tightly interwoven (Cayley, Handler, Mahoney et al., 2010). Those who see themselves as modern often distinguish themselves from the pre-modern past in technological terms. Louis-Jacques Dorais' postcolonial understanding of modernity is less reflexive. He defines modernity for the Inuit as the "more or less brutal inclusion" into contemporary society and elaborates by suggesting "the inclusion forced on them economic, political, and cultural institutions (such as money, wage labour, government, Christianity, schools, and the mass media) suited perhaps, to Western Capitalist societies, but not necessarily reflecting aboriginal values and attitudes" (*sic.*) (Dorais, 1997, p. 4).

The idea of a technological, economic and cultural break with the past due to the influence of Eurocanadian values shows up in Inuit discourse. Filmmaker Bobby Kenuajuak regretfully notes that "today we are white men" (Lamothe & Kenuajuak, 1999). Suzy Muckpah of Mittimalalik states that "life on the land was as alien to her as it would be to the average southern teenager" (Matthiasson, 1992, p. 10). A woman interviewed for a 1969 CBC radio program indicates that she was never taught about traditional life and the old ways (Anderson, 1969). Sanikiluaq elder Mina Inuktaluk suggests that "once the children start school, academics... [students] don't want to learn the traditional ways" (Tyler, 2008, p. 328). As these comments suggest, the Inuit conception of becoming modern appears to relate directly to absorbing Eurocanadian ways of life and technologies, which in turn amplifies the severity of the break with the past.

It is difficult to identify a point in time when individual Inuit men and women started to look at their world from a self-consciously modern perspective. Certainly, by the beginning of

the twenty-first century, many young Inuit men and women--a generation who grew up with the Internet and satellite television--appear to be decidedly modern or perhaps even postmodern in their outlook, as suggested in the following comment made by a Kangiqsujuaq secondary school student:

But the world around us is also changing and if Inuit want to be part of modern society, they need to adapt to change. No one lives in igloos anymore, and its never going to happen again, we can't go back (*sic.*). We can preserve what we already know but we can't make it a lifestyle anymore. As long as the world is changing, we will always continue to change as well. (Nunavik Government n.d.)

The process of moving towards this perspective on the world from a viewpoint defined by traditions and old technologies appears to take place during the latter three-quarters of the twentieth century. Paulus Maggo, for example, who was born in the early part of the twentieth century, witnessed change ranging from “the classic image of Inuit hunting in kayaks or by dog team from isolated homesteads to modern families assembled in sprawling communities linked to satellite communications and permeated by the sounds of high-powered snowmobiles, outboard speedboats, and aircraft” (1999, p. 12). These changes have generated a form of modern identity for the Inuit. As R. Q. Duffy states, “[t]he traditional Eskimos, whose demise we have witnessed over the last three or four decades, have been succeeded by the modern Inuit, a new breed sired from the old by the impregnation of southern Canadian culture (1988, p. xxii).

Consideration of this identity parameter reveals two key properties appearing to stand in conflict with one another--free agency or choice and the sense that integration into the modern world was thrust upon the Inuit people by outside forces. While the former property relates to

the practical sensibility of the Inuit during the twentieth century and their willing adoption of new and advantageous technologies, the latter property ties in to a sense of being colonized. I would argue that both of these properties stem from a self-consciously modern understanding of the world.

As discussed above, acceptance of progress and the technological and economic advantages of the modern world--which included acquiring the vessels that replaced the kayak--was an essentially rational decision. Hunters chose to adopt technologies like rifles, motor boats and later, snowmobiles, because they quickly understood the advantages. This is well illustrated in a mid-1960s CBC News segment reporting on the enthusiastic adoption of the snowmobile by the residents of Iqaluit (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1967). Acceptance of the process of becoming modern, however, was not entirely voluntary. The Canadian government's perspective on the Inuit and their communities is revealed in a late 1950s study commissioned to examine the community of Kangiqiniq--then called Rankin Inlet (Dailey & Dailey, 1961). This ideologically loaded paper reflects the federal government's viewpoint that the Inuit were "a culture in crisis needing integration into modern Canada" (p. 103). Postcolonial scholarship has paid close attention to this process of pushing or dragging the Inuit into the modern world. Scholars such as Condon (1987) and Duffy (1988) have effectively argued that the now notorious residential school system and curricula originating in Canada's South were instrumental in this process, influencing Inuit children into believing that traditional ways of life were inferior and worthy of scorn.

Data considered indicates that by the end of the twentieth century, the Inuit were well aware they were being channelled into a new way of life that might not include their language,

customs and traditional outlook. In *Amarok's Song--The Journey to Nunavut*, the Inuit narrator says that the residential schools were intended to “squeeze the Inuit out of us” and that students were not allowed to interact with relatives (MacDonald, Pageau, Epp et al., 1998). “We gave our children away” and “they were not entirely Inuit,” says an interviewee in *Between Two Worlds*. Another subject in the film, Peter Paniloo, says “we were told the Inuit would forget their culture” (Raymont, Sears & Greenwald, 1990). In *Through These Eyes*, an Inuk subject in the film links the adoption of modern conveniences with the the loss of Inuit culture: “Once we began to live in houses...we began to adopt the white man’s way of life. The Inuit way of life and culture became less desirable and looked down upon.... I felt the stigma of being a traditional Inuk” (Thompson & Laird, 2004). These are all critiques from within a modern Inuit perspective--voices well aware of the past way of life and the modern one.

Both the willing acceptance of new technologies and the reaction to being colonized play a role in cutting ties with bygone traditions such as kayaking. In the former case there is a direct and obvious correlation. Kayaks were an old and inefficient technology that modern Inuit men and women wished to leave behind (Duffy, 1988). Kenneth Lister reports that in Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay), Tugak Tunraluk told her husband “get rid of the kayak, we will have that boat” (personal communication, January 18, 2010). This Inuit woman recognized that kayaks meant more work--and for her in particular as a result of the unbalanced division of boat maintenance chores.

The latter property of the modern identity parameter--the reaction to being colonized--plays a more indirect role in cutting ties with old traditions. Although the Inuit rightfully express deep dissatisfaction and even anger over the process, and understand that their traditional culture

was devalued by Eurocanadian politicians, government functionaries and teachers, they also believe that the clock cannot be turned back in Canada's Arctic. Even in the midst of the 1980s kayak revival in Igloodik, hunters in the community indicated that they preferred open boats to kayaks (Arima, 1991). More pointedly, film maker Jacob Allen comments, "[y]ou can't go back to the culture; that's bygone" (*sic.*) (Malenstyn, Jacob & Allen, 2005). Like the acceptance of new technology in life, this adaptive response to the process of being aggressively colonized is perhaps a reflection of being modern. And in Canada's Arctic, the kayak is not part of modern Inuit life.

National identity. Even today, after Nunavut has been in existence for eleven years and some thirty-four years after the Inuit Brotherhood (now the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) started its initiative to have land claims settled, it is difficult to see an Inuit "national" identity in Canada comparable to that of the Greenlandic Inuit. There are a number of demographic, geographic and cultural reasons for this. To begin, the Inuit population of 55,000 is scattered across a much larger area than that of Greenland--a nation where a similar number of largely urbanized people live in towns and smaller communities clustered on the island's southwestern shores (Simon, 2010; Greenland, 2010). Also, Canada's Inuit live in three territorial and two provincial jurisdictions as opposed to the single political entity in Greenland. Although approximately 85 per cent of the Inuit population lives in Nunavut, there are sizable minorities in northern Quebec's Nunavik and Labrador. Populations of Inuit also reside in both the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. The Greenlandic Inuit have both a geographic and political unity that does not exist for the Inuit in Canada.

Perhaps more important than geo-political considerations are the differences between the Canadian and Danish colonization of the Inuit. While Greenland's Danish masters sent medical staff, teachers and missionaries to the Arctic, Canada's northern overseers sent policemen while at the same time allowing commercial interests free reign within the confines of the law (Duffy, 1988). Indeed, the Canadian government did little in the early-to-mid twentieth century to address how the Inuit might contend with the rising tide of influence from the South. By the middle of the century, the Inuit in Canada were in a state of "cultural disintegration and psychological instability" (Duffy, 1988, p. 33). They were inadequately housed, eating poorly, suffering from a spectrum of diseases related to overcrowding and sub-standard public health policies, badly educated, and the victims of policies promoting assimilation into Canadian society. Duffy identifies Canadian government policies as "piecemeal, stop-gap, butterfly methods in an Arctic social environment facing economic and demographic destruction" (1988, p. 153).

In contrast, by the mid-twentieth century the Greenlandic Inuit were functioning as a province of Denmark, managerially "controlled," living in a centrally planned economy, and slowly moving towards Home Rule--a marked difference from the loose, laissez-faire approach in Canada (Duffy, 1988). Although intensely colonized and closed to the outside world prior to 1963 (National Film Board of Canada & Schuurman, 1973), it can be argued that Danish colonialism--and the decolonization process--created the conditions for the rise of strong late twentieth century national consciousness in Greenland (Csonka, 2005). K. Langgard maintains that Greenlandic consciousness already existed in the mid-nineteenth century due in part to high levels of literacy and the development of a national literature based on a single writing system.

In contrast, Canada's Inuit have shown marked reservations towards the two written forms of Inuktitut (Langgard, 1998 ctd. in Csonka, 2005; Csonka, 2005). Csonka argues that the Greenlandic body of literature--a tangible result of the Danish education system imposed on colonial Greenland--has played a substantial role in nation building, existing in tandem with oral hunting culture traditions (2005).

While the Greenlandic Inuit were slowly "striving toward more knowledge and competence in European culture" and managing "the impact from outside through internal debate" in the pre-1950s colony (Langgard, 2008, p. 50, 54), "Danification" and aggressive industrialization after 1953 generated "culture shock, alienation, and an experience of powerlessness" (Goldbach, 2000, p. 263). The resulting protest movement generated a intensified national consciousness and demands for independence from Denmark; this would culminate in the movement towards Home Rule (Goldbach, 2000). During this period, the antipathy to Danish policies and attitudes prompted the search for "a true and authentic Greenlandic culture" (Langgard, 2008, p. 54). This desire to connect with Greenland's "authentic" identity included a "nostalgic longing back to the noble way of the Inuit past" (Langgard, 2008, p. 54).

Occurring only a few years after Home Rule had been attained in 1979, the Greenlandic kayaking revival appears to be very much connected with this nationally-oriented search for Inuit roots. As a lens on the kayak and kayaking traditions, this national identity perspective is characterized by intense pride, a sense of custodianship (Qajaq USA, 2010b) and a desire to look back into Greenlandic history--a task facilitated by the existence of a national literature, museum exhibits like the one in Nuuk that sparked the kayak revival, and the work of scholars like H. C.

Petersen (1987; 2004). In a 2002 CBC television news report titled “To Save a Language,” a Greenlandic politician suggests that the country’s language preservation policies and body of literature were intimately linked to the growing strength of their culture. He comments that 20 years ago (in the 1970s) “we had lost our kayaks.” After fighting for their culture, he suggests, “now the kayak is back” (Tilden, 2002).

If one considers the fact that the Inuit in Canada are “a century or more” behind the Greenlandic Inuit in terms of the development of an “ethnic and national consciousness,” (Csonka, 1992, p. 332), and if one accepts that popular national movements can be a powerful connection to the past, the truncated trajectory of the 1980s kayak revivals in Canada perhaps makes some degree of sense. Without popular support, the revivals could not extend beyond their local contexts. I will discuss the nature of these and early twenty-first century revival impulses in Canada later in the paper.

Cultural Persistence

Cultural persistence can be understood as the retention of traditions or material culture in the face of acculturative forces from the outside. Scholars working within a postcolonial paradigm, such as Gail Valaskakis (1993), argue that cultural persistence has undercurrent meaning: “First Nations' resistance is cultural persistence; the social memory and lived experience of traditionalism continually negotiated in the discourse and practice of everyday life.” Data reviewed in this study did not reveal any overt connection between retention of kayaking traditions and resistance of the type Valaskakis postulates. Conversely, the shift to new transport technologies did not appear to be viewed as acquiescence to a dominant culture. As

indicated in my discussion of the identity concept and its various categories, the Inuit in Canada generally embraced technological change without regret.

It is useful to consider how cultural commitment to the kayak relates to cultural persistence. The two have crossover meaning, but are not synonymous. While a high level of cultural commitment is required for cultural persistence, the former can occur without the latter. The theory of cultural commitment to kayaking proposed by Taylor and Laughlin (1991) suggests that commitment to kayaking traditions is determined by the length of the open water season, the presence of particular game species and their habits and seasonal movements, and the presence of kayak substitutes that might provide hunting opportunities of greater economic advantage. A high level of cultural commitment is associated with the development of more than one type of kayak, elaboration of equipment, the development of sophisticated rescue techniques like rolling, the presence of supporting practices such as the training of children, and good interregional communication. West Alaska, south of the Bering Straight and Southwest Greenland are identified as the areas with the highest degree of commitment to kayaks, but both East Baffinland and Labrador also are flagged as localities with strong levels of cultural commitment in the past. While the tradition never really disappeared in Greenland (Arima, 1991), and use continued in West Alaska until at least the mid-1970s (Zimmerly, 1978), kayaks had fallen into disuse in the Eastern Canadian Arctic by the mid-twentieth century (Arima, 2004). This suggests that cultural commitment to the tradition is not the only factor behind persistence in Greenland and the weaker state of the tradition in Canada.

Persistence of the tradition in Greenland does not mean that kayaking flourished during most of the twentieth century. Quite the contrary, in fact. Like the Inuit in Arctic Canada, most

Greenlandic Inuit who remained engaged with hunting adopted modern substitutes, recognizing the advantages of motor vessels. “Hunters consider the introduction of boats with outboard motors as a leap forward from the much more dangerous kayaks of older days,” Jens Dahl states (2000, p. 55). Additionally, ecological changes in the early-to-mid twentieth century had caused a marked decrease in the seal population, making hunting a less viable occupation (Golden, 2006). An old hunter quoted by Greenlandic kayak scholar H. C. Petersen stated:

It would be all too sad if the kayak, which has made it possible for our forefathers to exist in this harsh country, that vessel which developed out of our experiences and which has also formed the basis for the existence of my generation, should be lost forever when we die.” (Petersen, 1987 qtd. in Watson, 2006, p. 17)

This somewhat mournful comment suggests the hunter views the kayak as imperiled. There were, however, holdouts in Greenland and these would contribute to the later revival of the tradition.

Two categories of cultural persistence emerge from the data collected in this study: marginal or insignificant persistence--observable in late twentieth century Arctic Canada; and functional persistence--evident in some parts of the Canadian North until the 1950s, in parts of Greenland until the 1970s, and in the northern Thule District of Greenland into the twenty-first century.

Marginal persistence. This category is associated with low levels of cultural commitment to the kayaking tradition; exceptions include East Baffinland and Labrador, as noted above. The category is characterized by early and enthusiastic acceptance of modern substitute transport technologies and by an ever-declining pool of builders and paddlers able to pass the

tradition on to younger generations. Both Taylor and Laughlin (1991) and Arima (1991) indicate that the tradition did not have high levels of cultural commitment in most of Arctic Canada. And certainly by the 1940s the tradition was already seriously eroded, with most Inuit hunters having abandoned the kayak (Manning, 1944). As Inuit film maker Bobby Kenuajuak states in *My Village in Nunavik*, “on the water, motor boats have replaced the umiaq and kayak and to be honest, no one minds” (Lamothe & Kenuajuak, 1999). Finally, without the transmission of construction methods, paddling skills, and associated hunting techniques from one generation to the next, the tradition’s knowledge base was diminished. Kenneth Lister notes that not all families had the ability to make kayaks and if a noted builder decided to switch to a modern wood boat, construction knowledge was effectively lost (personal communication, January 18, 2010). An Ikaluktutiak (Cambridge Bay) kayak construction project in 2009 is a case in point. A number of the elders participating in the project had no practical experience whatsoever in kayak construction. Elder Mabel Etegik stated “I have never made a kayak before. I have never seen a kayak being made before. This is my first time.” Others had memories of merely watching old builders when they were very young (McKeon, 2009). The hand’s-on knowledge required for the task had not been passed on to them because kayak construction had evolved into being an irrelevant skill set.

Functional persistence. A second category of cultural persistence emerging from the data is of a functional variety. The key property of functional persistence is that it is tied to the real world needs of the hunter and provides some form of advantage on the water. But it is also associated with higher levels of cultural commitment to the tradition. T. H. Manning (1944) notes that during the 1940s--a period when most Inuit in Arctic Canada were giving up on

kayaks--hunters on South Baffin Island and in the Hudson Straits area continued to use the craft because it was quiet and inconspicuous on the water. Additionally, they found that kayaks allowed them to quickly retrieve slain and sinking seals. Practical considerations such as these did not, however, dissuade most mid-twentieth century Inuit hunters in Canada from shifting to motor boats. Arima states that by the mid-twentieth century only a few kayaks were being built in the Canadian Arctic--and these tended to be either for institutions or non-natives. "More rarely," he says, they were built "for individual recreation by a younger person who had missed the tradition of kayaking" (2004, p. 112).

More lasting examples of functional persistence occurred in Greenland. Greenlandic Inuit hunters in remote areas of the west coast continued to use kayaks in concert with larger motor vessels into the 1970s (Jensen, 1979; Petersen & Ebbesen, 1987; Golden, 2006). The kayaks were used for retrieval purposes, for hunting in smaller bodies of water inaccessible by larger boats, and as a back-up if help was required--again all very practical reasons for staying engaged with the tradition. Additionally, a small number of "old seal catchers" who were expert in Greenlandic kayaking skills kept the tradition alive by continuing to hunt and paddle along the southwest coast. Manasse Mathaussen (1915-1989) was the best known and later toured the country giving advanced Greenlandic kayaking demonstrations. Mathaussen learned to kayak on Greenland's east coast, but spent most of his hunting career on the island's west coast. When he died at 74, he had been kayaking for 56 years and had vast knowledge of traditional building and paddling techniques (Holst, n.d.; Phillips, 2002). By the time the revival occurred in the 1980s, Mathaussen and a number of other old seal catchers were being identified as experts in the highly technical Greenlandic paddling style (Winning, 2004). Essentially, these older

paddlers were the last generation in Southwest Greenland to use kayaks for everyday hunting. Very closely engaged with the tradition, they would prove to be instrumental in infusing the 1980s revival with knowledge and technical skill--even inspiring younger Greenlanders to hunt seals using the old methods (Golden, 2010).

Perhaps the best example of functional persistence of the tradition is the case of the Inughuit people living in the Thule District of Greenland. The people from this far northern location are unusual in that they had lost the kayaking tradition in the nineteenth century and had it "returned" to them via a migration from Baffinland in the 1860s (Arima, 1990; Golden, 2006). Late adopters of motor vessels (Dahl, 2000), they have remained partially engaged with kayaking traditions and have incorporated the vessel into local game protection strategies:

Hunting has been carried out in the same way for ages; thus, kayak and harpoon are still used for narwhal hunting. This is an ancient measure of local resource protection of which the hunters are very proud (Qujaakitsoq, 1990); and which actually date back to the Thule Law--first established in 1929, when the early effects of centralisation took their toll on the prey, and made a measure of explicit protection expedient. (Hastrup 2009, p. 87)

Like the 1970s-era seal hunters, who used kayaks in tandem with larger motherships, the Inughuit use larger boats to transport kayaks to hunting grounds, demonstrating a mix of old and new technologies (Nielson, 2009).

With the exception of the Inughuit the functional persistence of the tradition in Greenland was very much a subtext--but enough to reinforce the revival in the 1980s and provide a core of knowledge and experience for those interested in the recreational paddling renaissance. In

contrast, functional persistence in Arctic Canada did not really extend beyond the 1950s. By the time the Canadian revivals started up in the 1980s, the tradition was essentially moribund.

Revival

As the twentieth century progressed into its final quarter, the kayak had slipped into being a bygone technology in Arctic Canada and most of Greenland. With the exception of the scenarios discussed above, Inuit populations in both countries had effectively disconnected from the kayak as working platforms. In Greenland, the kayak was unsuitable for use in the growing and profitable cod and shrimp fisheries and largely discarded as a working vessel (Golden, 2006). In Canada it had been displaced by freighter canoes and larger motor vessels by hunters looking for safe, adaptable and reliable transport.

Given the separation of kayaks from their original principal function as hunting platforms, the revival concept needs to be defined. In a narrow sense, I have regarded revival as the construction and use of kayaks of traditional design or influence. These are skin-and-frame boats, but the hull can be hide, canvas or fabric covered in fibreglass. Frames tend to be milled wood worked with modern tools rather than the collected driftwood of earlier times. In a broader sense, I view the concept of revival as sustained recreational or business-oriented use of kayaks of any type by Inuit people in Arctic communities. Although the paddling of modern hard-shell kayaks by the Inuit in Canada's North might not appear to be a revival per se, I believe this classification recognizes the origins of the vessel, as well as the intent of the paddlers to reconnect in some way with the tradition. Arima's concept of revival (1991) is similarly catholic, though perhaps more focussed on construction initiatives than use.

Despite its everyday meaning, the revival concept should not be confused with an attempt to turn the clock back. Csonka and Schweitzer state:

Throughout the Arctic, “although it does make reference to roots in the past, cultural reaffirmation is not a ‘return to tradition’ in the sense of a simple reactivation of previously existing customs. It is an active re-creation of culture and symbols whose functions in current contexts differ from the ones they had a few decades earlier.” (ctd. in Csonka, 2005, p. 331)

With this comment in mind, I regard kayaking revivals as “re-creations” of certain aspects of the tradition and not as “reactivations of previously existing customs.” Although connected to the past, these revivals and revival attempts are very much of their own times.

In Arctic Canada and Greenland four categories of revival emerged from the data collected in this project; I identify these as bicultural, restorative, symbolic and recreational revivals. It should be pointed out that the categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, it is possible for a revival initiative to be both symbolic and bicultural. Similarly, it is possible for a bicultural revival to have recreational qualities. In view of these fuzzy sets, I have looked to dominant properties in the revival manifestations I discuss.

Finally, before exploring the four categories of revival emerging from the data, it is essential to discuss how I have evaluated the “success” or “failure” of the revivals. In general terms, I used the Greenlandic renaissance as a benchmark of success in the revival of kayaking traditions. In this revival, popular support, sustained activity over a number of years, cognizance of historical antecedents, institutional participation in the form of clubs and competitions (both local and national), and relatively large numbers of paddlers in many communities are all

present. That said, it should be pointed out that this rather high benchmark--which has both qualitative and quantitative aspects--might not represent how Canada's Inuit would regard the concept of success in a kayaking revival. Ethnohistorian James Axtell (1982) makes a strong argument that perceptions of success by Indigenous populations do not necessarily align with opinions expressed within the dominant discourse. It is certainly possible that an Inuit community in Arctic Canada might regard the re-activation of elders' memories, relatively small-scale skin-and-frame kayak construction projects, and interaction on these projects between the young and older generations as a "successful" revival of a tradition (Winona Wheeler, personal communication, Sept. 9, 2010). Once again, this possibility illustrates that concatenating studies have the potential to further shape the grounded theory explored in this paper. Understanding the Inuit measure of revival "success" will add a further theoretical dimension to the consideration of the trajectory of the kayaking tradition in Arctic Canada.

Bicultural Revival. Arima's conception of revival as a "bicultural presentation" refers to organized kayak-building projects of the 1980s that had both Inuit and Eurocanadian input. The concept can be applied, however, to later projects in Canada and to at least one revival attempt initiated by Briton Gareth Burnell on the east coast of Greenland; obviously this last instance has British rather than Eurocanadian input (Nuttal, 1999). The properties of this category are Inuit participation in either planning or executing the projects, direction or funding from non-Inuit personnel, some type of institutional template and a mixture of both traditional and contemporary building materials. The Canadian projects during the 1980s were not intended to build kayaks to be used for hunting purposes; rather, they were demonstration projects oriented around education, cultural renewal, or northern employment. In the case of the most recent initiatives in

Arctic Canada, a combination of cultural renewal, fitness and recreation objectives are observable.

In both the 1980s Inukjuak and Mittimatalik revivals the initial impetus came from Inuit men interested in connecting or re-connecting with traditional culture. Moses Nowkawalk in Inukjuak indicated that cultural deprivation made him eager to explore traditional Inuit culture such as kayak traditions (Arima, 1991, p. 112). And brothers Peter Paniluk and Paul Idlout--one of whom had experience with kayaks in the 1950s--were instrumental in getting the Mittimatalik revival started (Arima, 1986; Arima, 1991). Both projects depended on government funding, used the expertise of knowledgeable elders, and were well documented. The Inukjuak project was intended to promote Quebec tourism, while the Mittimatalik initiative was focused on preservation of the tradition and education. A handful of kayaks were produced in each location with the Mittimatalik models being more true to traditional form and material use. By the mid-1980s the projects were finished and no one appears to have picked up on them since. Arima suggests that the two revivals were hampered by the fact that they were “organized not individually but institutionally” and that the kayaks were not built to be paddled (1991, p. 124).

Like the Inukjuak and Mittimatalik projects, the Igloolik revival originated in cultural renewal interests. An adult education program focussed on kayak construction, co-operation with Inukjuak’s Moses Nowkawalk, and some experimentation with a kayak fibreglass mold transported from Iqaluit resulted in a number of boats being built. Arima indicated in 1991 that recreational use was continuing on a limited basis (1991), but nothing in the Northern media record or the scholarly literature indicates the revival continued into the twenty-first century, or

for that matter into the late 1990s. As with the other communities, it appears that the revival is either stalled or dead.

More recent revivals or revival attempts are documented in the Northern and popular press. In 1997, after paddling across the Arctic, Victoria Jason returned to Kugaaruk and worked with Koomiut Co-op manager, Michael Hart to “reacquaint” local residents with kayaks purchased through the Northwest Territories’ Brighter Futures Program. Twenty hard-shell kayaks were eventually acquired and a small tourist-oriented business was established (Hossack 1999). After Jason died, her daughter Teresa Davey and partner Phil Hossack continued to work with the Co-op growing the idea. As of 2002, Hossack and Davey indicate that children in the community could be seen paddling kayaks, but there is nothing recent to confirm if this local revival persisted or not (2002). A 2007 kayak-building course in the community was not well attended according to a press report (Power, 2007). That said, sea kayaking adventure tours are still operated out of the hamlet and visitors can paddle with elders or attend a kayak-building workshop at the local hotel (Inukshuk Inn, Kugaaruk, n.d.)--a demonstration that the business end of Jason’s dream to reintroduce kayaks to Kugaaruk is still alive. Additionally, as Hossack (2003) states, people in the community are now familiar with their ancient vessel--albeit, primarily in a modern form.

Working in a program set up by teacher Glen Brocklebank, students at the Victor Sammurtok School in Igluligaarjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) built twenty-two skin-and-frame kayaks, which they used in paddling trips (Greer, 2009). Brocklebank says that as a result of the multi-year program, kayaking has become popular in the community (Greer 2006, Sept. 13). This assertion has not been confirmed through other sources, but the length of the program and its

scale does suggest some degree of staying power. Other kayak-building and/or paddling programs were run at the Nuiyak School in Sanikiluaq (Murphy, 2002, Nov. 22), at the Baker Lake Inuit Heritage Centre in Qamani'tuaq (Greer, 1999), at the Rankin Inlet Kayaking Club in Kangiqiniq (Greer, 2001), and at the Kitikmeot Heritage Society in Ikakuktutiak (McKeon, 2009).

All of these programs fit into the bicultural model. According to the Northern press--in articles largely penned by Eurocanadian reporters--the programs have popular support from the students and elders involved. Possibly related to the new focus on Inuit heritage and relationships with the land now present in school curricula (Bruschtein, 2010), these bicultural revival efforts are encouraging indications that some attention is being paid to kayak traditions. That said, on-the-ground research will have to be undertaken to ascertain whether the Inuit population is as enthusiastic about these programs as Eurocanadian reporters and teachers. Additionally, there does not appear to be any linkage with revival initiatives in other communities. Although this might be related to the scattered nature of these revivals, it could also be an indicator that the initiatives have not progressed beyond their local, bicultural roots. Certainly, the most recent Canadian revivals do not appear to have the characteristics of a popular movement, as the kayaking renaissance in Greenland does. Finally, unlike the Greenlandic revival in its current incarnation, these recent Canadian revivals have not attracted international input or attention. Greenlandic kayaking competitions in the capital city of Nuuk attract a significant amount of attention from paddlers traveling from all over the world (Qajaq USA, 2010d). Nothing comparable exists in any of the much smaller communities in Arctic

Canada. It is clear, however, that there are indications of interest in the tradition as a result of bicultural revival efforts.

Restorative Revival. Robert Gessain states that “[i]n traditional Eskimo society [in East Greenland above the Arctic Circle], an adult male without a kayak was considered to be a sick man” (1968, p. 5). Although directly connecting kayaks and wellness is not evident in late twentieth and early twenty-first Inuit society in Canada, a category of revival associates the vessel with curative or restorative potential. This perspective appears to be rooted in the belief that a return to traditional Inuit values and activities can offset or address the profound social problems found in Arctic Canada. And indeed, Arctic Canada has its share of problems. Oosten and Laugrand state, “[w]hile modern Inuit societies are still adapting themselves to the new lifestyles required by the integration into a global economic market and the life in much larger communities, many social problems affect them such as unemployment, drugs and alcohol, spousal abuses, and suicides” (2002, p. 23).

Both the Nunavut and Canadian governments view IQ as a possible solution to some of these problems--and the opinion is shared by some Inuit people. Jose Angutinngurniq, a member of the 1999 Government of Nunavut Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Working Group opines, “[i]f Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is properly recorded, it will be very useful to Inuit and to Government” (Oosten & Laugrand, p. 23). Although IQ and the use of the kayak as a restorative vehicle are not explicitly linked, the connection between traditional knowledge sets and the vessel is obvious.

The properties of this revival category are a mixture of both individual and institutional initiatives and tie-ins to traditional education. In several instances, Eurocanadian input helps to bring the projects to fruition, adding a bicultural dimension.

One of the earliest documented instances of this impulse to connect with the past through a revival of kayaking traditions is the case of Inukjuak resident Moses Nowkawalk, who not only spearheaded a 1980s building project in his own community, but aided the effort in Igloolik. As indicated above in the discussion of bicultural revivals, Nowkawalk identified “cultural deprivation” as the motivation behind his efforts (Arima, 1991, p. 112). Nowkawalk would later participate in an umiaq construction project, which was recorded in a short documentary film (Soukup & Weetaluktuk, 2008); like the traditional kayak, umiaqs are skin-and-frame boats, though larger and associated with different functions.

A much smaller-scale example of the desire to use kayak-building as a connection to the past--and possibly a way to escape the boredom of incarceration--was reported in a 2002 article published in the *Nunatsiaq News*. While imprisoned in the Baffin Correctional Centre, Mittimatalik resident Joseph Koonoo worked on building an 18-foot (5.49 metre) kayak rather than learning, with other prisoners, to produce stone carvings. “I just want to go home and hunt narwhal” states the man (Murphy, 2002, Jun. 14).

And, although not a kayaking revival per se, a woman’s interest in applying traditional sewing skills to kayak construction is another example of looking to the past as a way to contend with a changing world determined largely by Eurocanadian values and technologies. Working through a Canada Council grant with her aunt to make caribou-skin tents, Vera Avaala of Qamani’tuaq expressed the desire to make a kayak with her new-found sewing skills. “I want

everything Inuit used long before we had the Qablunaaq lifestyle of noisy machines and TV and a big house that has to be cleaned all the time,” she says (Greer, 2006, Oct. 25).

In addition to efforts devoted to building traditional boats--or boats influenced by traditional designs--a textbook example of the perceived restorative qualities of kayaking traditions occurred in Arctic Quebec only a few years ago. Organized as a multi-year program by the Saputiit Youth Association of Nunavik, young Nunavimmiut travelled along the northern Quebec coast by kayak to bring attention to the plight of suicide and to set a “positive example” (Minogue, 2005; Irwin, 2007). Using contemporary hard-shell kayaks, and drawing on some Eurocanadian assistance, the Living Life program also was secondarily intended to promote the kayaking tradition. Two frame and fibreglass boats were built early in the program, but their use in the trips was not confirmed. Saputiit president, Jonathan Eppo stated “[t]here’s a buzz going around in some of the communities they’ve been going to....” In the report, he goes on to say, [l]ater down the road we hope to see more interest in the kayaks and more use of it (*sic.*). It’s a very important tradition” (Minogue, 2005).

The desire to use traditional values and technologies as a way to deal with the stresses and problems of integration in the modern world is certainly bigger than a small number of kayaking initiatives that appear to be revival efforts. But the linking of the tradition with the impulse is worth considering within the revival concept. Cultural enhancement programs inclusive of kayak-building or lore have occurred in Kivalliq (Greer, 2003, Sept. 24), Igluligaarjuk (Greer, 2006, Sept. 13) Kugaaruk (Power, 2007), Sanikiluaq (Tyler, 2008), and Ikaluaktutiak (McKeon, 2009). I would argue that many of these programs have a restorative motivation and that some might be regarded as revival attempts. That said, follow-up research is

required to ascertain whether or not the tradition's profile in Arctic Canada has been affected by these efforts.

Symbolic Revival. Within the body of revival categories explored in this paper, symbolic revivals are the least numerically significant. Conceived as one-off kayak-building initiatives intended to commemorate particular events, symbolic revivals are characterized by their ceremonial or display properties. They fit, however, within a larger context of the affirmation of traditional Inuit identity--and quite possibly within a growing sense of national identity. Joan Russell suggests that symbols of the Inuit people's subsistence past are now plentiful in Nunavut's public spaces. She says, "school lobbies, libraries and other public spaces are adorned with pelts, knives, kayaks, kamiks, and other cultural artifacts that are daily reminders of the economic, social, cultural and symbolic importance of hunting" (Russell, 2006, p. 238). And indeed, the prominent placement of a kayak frame against a display wall at the Nuiyak School in Sanikiluaq does suggest the vessel has symbolic value within an educational context (Tyler, 2008, fig. 123, p. 362).

Two examples of symbolic revival merit mention. In 1998, Bill Fraser and Moses Novalinga, Jr. of Sanikiluaq formed a committee to commemorate an epic two-month long voyage by four Inuit kayakers from the community in 1943. Working with the local kayaking club and recreating skin-and-frame boats, the committee hoped to use the event to bring attention to a new tour and outfitting company on the island. With local guides receiving \$350 a day for their services, re-activation of the tradition would have tangible benefits for the community (George, 1998). Fraser's outfitting firm is still functioning as of 2010 (The Mitiq Co-op, n.d.). Clearly bicultural and seemingly business-oriented, it is unclear whether this initially symbolic

revival goes beyond tour operations or not. However, the existence of a kayaking club prior to the building initiative does suggest some degree of continuity of interest in the tradition.

A more modest revival involving the building of two skin-and-frame kayaks to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen's extended visit to the hamlet of Gjoa Haven early in the twentieth century occurred in 2003. Focussed on ceremonies held at the hamlet, elders supervised the creation of traditional clothing and kayaks for the event (Lippa, 2003; Puglia 2003; Woodall, 2003). Although there are no follow-up stories in the press record, it is worthwhile noting that Gjoa Haven also has an outfitting business, but kayak tours are not offered.

It is perhaps somewhat on the generous side to identify kayak-building initiatives of a symbolic nature as true revivals of the tradition. As the Sanikiluaq building project illustrates, however, they can have resonance in a community, even if oriented around servicing adventure tourists looking to paddle kayaks in the Arctic. Although kayaks do have symbolic importance to the Inuit in Canada, it is possible that practical rather than recreational applications are the best way to preserve the tradition. Unlike the Greenlandic Inuit who have a strong game-playing connection to the kayak (Petersen, 2004), paddling for recreation might not be an important part of the Canadian Inuit connection to the tradition.

Recreational Revival. This category refers specifically to the Greenlandic revival of the mid-to-late 1980s--a robust, large-scale revival of kayaking that continues today in numerous communities. Prompted by a museum exhibition of kayaks that lasted for three years in Greenland's capital city of Nuuk, the revival was sparked by a sense of national pride and grown into a genuine renaissance by the enthusiasm and effort of local organizers:

Kaleraq Bech, the president of [kayaking club] Qaannat Kattuffiat for many years, was among the young Greenlanders who were greatly moved by an exhibit of three old Greenland kayaks on loan from the Netherlands to West Greenland in 1984. Acting upon their feelings they went on to create Qaannat Kattuffiat in order to preserve and promote Greenland's kayak traditions and to make sure that this knowledge survived to be passed on to future generations of Greenlanders. (Qajaq USA, 2010b)

Within a year the club had a membership of 1,000, whose members wore tee shirts emblazoned with the slogan "QAJAQ-ATOQQILERPARPUT" (KAYAK-WE ARE STARTING TO USE IT AGAIN) (Heath qtd. in Qajaq USA, 2010a). The kayaking expertise of old seal catchers like Manasse Mathaeussen and the scholarly publications of H. C. Petersen served to give the growing revival contextualization in the past (Qajaq USA, 2010b). Connection with other international kayakers interested in the unique technique, the creation of yearly kayak camps, and the introduction of the Greenlandic Kayak Competition also supported the renaissance (Qajaq USA, 2010b). Skin-and-frame boat construction and paddling flourished in the clubs inspired by the exhibit and the Kayak Competition is now a national event of considerable prestige (Amina Anthropological Resources Association, 2007). The annual competition is divided into three classes--traditional skin-and-frame, contemporary skin-and-frame, and fibreglass and plastic boats of Greenlandic influence. Ten competitive groups range from the four- to-six-year-old class to one for seniors over 60 (Qajaq USA, 2010c). Kayaking is a sport for all ages in Greenland.

The properties of this category are a historically strong cultural commitment to the kayak, a sense of national pride about the vessel, connection with pockets of cultural persistence, and a recreational focus with adaptive use of materials. The Greenlandic connection to the kayak is considerable and confirmed in the literature (Taylor & Laughlin, 1991; Golden, 2006), but it had existed as a subtext during the late colonial (1900-1953) and the industrialization periods (1953-1979) prior to the establishment of Home Rule. Csonka states that:

...the symbol of the seal hunter in his kayak was put forward as an icon of Greenlandic identity, and then partially discarded from the dominant discourse in Greenland early in the twentieth century when it was more important to support the transition from hunting to commercial fishing. Later, when the kayak was no longer used as a hunting tool, it became reified as the primary symbol (from the 1960s on) of Greenlandic identity. (2005, p. 331)

Existing as a key symbol of the Greenlandic nation without a means of everyday expression, the popularly-based revival unlocked nationalistic sentiments about the vessel and allowed them to be concretized. Greenlanders could not only paddle Greenlandic-style kayaks on a recreational basis, they could build facsimiles approximating the vessels used by their forebears, drawing on the experience of the old seal catchers. For those participating in the revival, pockets of cultural persistence in the country confirmed that the tradition was a living one and not just a manufactured version of the past.

The recreational focus of the revival both connected to Greenlandic popular culture and reached back into the long legacy of using the kayak for games and sport. Petersen and Ebbesen suggest “it is impossible to mention the kayak and the umiak without touching on their use in

games and competitions, just as it is necessary to mention the importance of the kayak as a challenge to young people...” (1987: 8-9). In the past, “[t]he kayak [was] used not only for hunting and fishing, but also for play. The purpose of all kayak games [was] to train the kayaker in handling the kayak (Petersen & Ebbesen, 1987, p. 68). Local and national competitions allowed the revival paddlers to connect with this tradition.

The balance between tradition and modernity--one of the great challenges of contemporary Greenland (Goldbach, 2000)--is reflected in the way modern materials have found their way into kayak construction associated with the revival. Most kayaks are covered in canvas rather than the difficult-to-obtain sealskin. Plastic ribs, imported timber and other modern materials and design adaptations accommodate contemporary requirements. Other design modifications address the specific requirements of rolling--a key skill set within the Greenlandic technique and an important part of the National competitions (Winning, 2008). That said, the connection to the past is ever-present, especially in competitive paddling. Winning notes, “[t]o retain traditional values, all kayaks used by Greenlanders in the National Championships must be skin (or canvas) on frame, contain no metal fastenings, be fitted with deck straps and be propelled by narrow-bladed Greenland paddles” (2008, para. 25).

These characteristics suggest that this significant revival successfully balances modern requirements and traditional values. Tapping into a historically strong cultural commitment to the kayak, national connections to the kayak as a symbol of identity, cultural persistence of the tradition, and a strong recreational focus, the Greenlandic kayaking revival is both a going concern and a marked contrast to the Canadian experience. Lacking the tentative aspects of the

most recent localized Canadian revival attempts, the Greenlandic revival has re-established the kayaking tradition as a visible connection to the past and an expression of national identity.

Conclusions

Research utilizing exploratory approaches and focussed on emergent theory is significantly different from “armchair” theorizing. It “not only comes from the data, but [is] systematically worked out in relation to the data in the course of the research (Glaser & Strauss, 1999, p. 6). And, unlike hypothetico-deductive work done in the social sciences, exploratory work does not finish off with clear-cut, tested and confirmed conclusions. Exploratory work is an exercise that raises key questions, attempts to shape understanding and offer plausible possibilities that might be further refined by future research. In essence, it is a starting point for following work. All that said, exploratory research involving grounded theory methods does work toward a goal that can be identified as a hypothesis (Stebbins, 1997, p. 426; Stebbins, 2001, p. 25).

The grounded theory I postulate for the decline of kayaking traditions in Arctic Canada can be encapsulated in a single term: disconnection. During the course of the twentieth century Canada’s Inuit appear to have disconnected from the kayak and their kayaking traditions. This shift is related to a complex series of conditions, choices, and frames of reference predicated, in part, by generally low levels of cultural commitment to the vessel prior to the twentieth century. Without a strong cultural commitment to the boat in most parts of Arctic Canada, technological obsolescence appears to have opened the door to a practical re-evaluation of the kayak’s worth and relevance. In the end, individual hunters chose to utilize modern vessels rather than their

traditional watercraft. And importantly, they do not appear to have seen value in retaining kayaks for non-utilitarian uses such as recreation and sport.

This process of re-evaluation and disconnection can be understood through the use of three concepts emerging from the data in this study: identity, cultural persistence and revival impulses. In terms of identity, the data suggests that the Inuit did not see shifting away from the kayak to safer and more efficient modes of water transport as a challenge to their conception of themselves as a distinct cultural entity. Rapidly grasping the advantages of motor vessels, the Inuit incorporated them into daily routines without regret, welcoming new technologies that enabled them to be more productive in subsistence activities. Further, the movement towards the construction of a modern Inuit identity--a process stimulated by both compulsion and free will--de-emphasized the worth of traditional knowledge sets and technology. In the face of the pressure and the desire to become "modern," the Inuit more-or-less abandoned kayaks and kayaking traditions. Antithetical to the Inuit vision of their own developing sense of modernity, the skin-and-frame kayak had no place in late twentieth century life in Canada's Arctic. And, unlike the Greenlandic Inuit--who retained kayaking as a subtext of their well-developed national identity--Canada's Inuit had no comparable metaphorical guardian of the tradition.

Connected closely to aspects of identity, marginal levels of cultural persistence of the tradition meant that by the third quarter of the twentieth century, only a relatively few elders had the knowledge sets required to build, maintain and paddle skin-and-frame boats. Without a strong living context, the tradition languished until a few men in Arctic communities initiated kayak revival efforts in order to re-connect with the past--very possibly an expression of a new and objectified sense of Inuit identity. Probably occurring too early in the growth curve of this

new sensibility--and very possibly limited by institutional and government funding templates--the revivals faded or died-out after a few years. A number of years later, however, after the establishment of Nunavut as a territory in 1999 and the resulting promulgation of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) policies along with efforts to reduce internal colonialism, this sensibility appears to have matured somewhat. An efflorescence of small-scale and localized bicultural, restorative and symbolic kayak revivals might be viewed as one of the results. Although not directly comparable to the robust Greenlandic renaissance of kayaking--and not by any stretch a popularly-based revival--these sparks of interest tentatively suggest that the tradition *might be* resuscitated or reconfigured into a new and contemporary form.

The question remains, however, whether or not these revival attempts will capture the popular imagination of young Inuit in Canada's Arctic settlements and spread to the majority of communities that have little or no contact with the kayak. Absent of the close undercurrent relationship with the kayak of the Greenlandic Inuit, effectively disconnected from the tradition for almost half a century, and perhaps too dependent on non-Inuit (Eurocanadian) input, these most recent attempts to re-connect with the kayak are not, in my estimation, a sure bet. In a discussion with curator Kenneth Lister on this topic--prior to his departure on a trip to both Greenland and Nunavut--he did not express optimism about the future of the kayak in Arctic Canada (personal communication, June, 2010). After considering the data reviewed for this project--and in spite of the most recent revival attempts--I have to concur. For although I would very much like to see Canada's Inuit re-connect with kayaks in some real and lasting way, it would be myopic to see the tradition as anything other than imperiled. Unless the Inuit people in

Arctic Canada are consciously able to re-connect with kayaks on their own terms, it is likely the tradition will continue its current trajectory of decline.

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