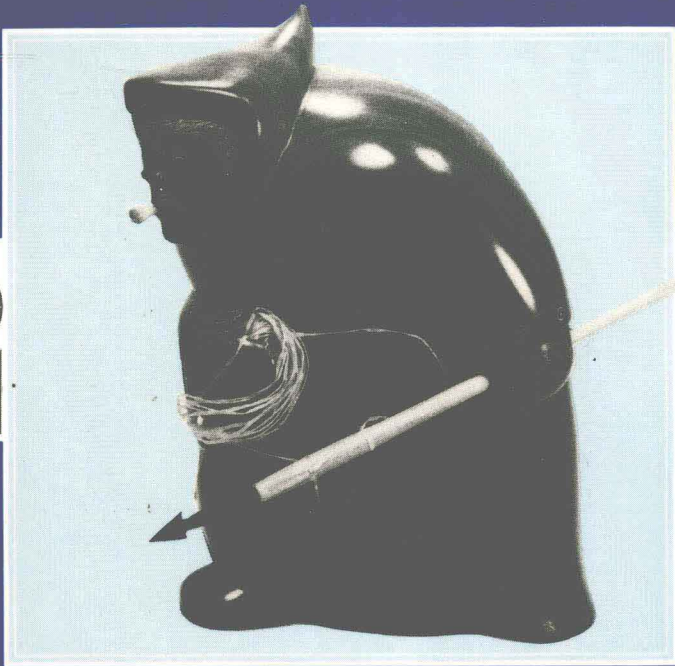


INUJJUAMIUT FORAGING STRATEGIES

Evolutionary Ecology of an Arctic Hunting Economy



ERIC ALDEN SMITH



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Hunting Economy

Eric Alden Smith



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I dedicate this work to the memories of Danieli Weetaluktuk and Davidi Naluktuk: fine hunters, dear friends, and uniquely schooled in the old and new ways, who left us in the prime of their lives.

Preface

In July 1977, my wife and I stepped off a Twin Otter airplane onto the sandy landing strip of Inujjuaq, an Inuit (Canadian Eskimo) village on the east coast of Hudson Bay. I had come to conduct a field study of Inuit hunting strategies, guided by a body of theory developed by theoretical ecologists known as “optimal foraging theory.” Except for a brief interlude, I remained in and around Inujjuaq for over a year, through August 1978.

During my stay, as is typical of fieldwork experiences, what had once seemed simple and straightforward grew more and more complex. I found that hunting strategies could not be studied apart from larger social and economic contexts, that in the modern Inuit economy flows of energy were inextricably linked to flows of money, and that both the natural environment and Inuit behavior were rather more complicated and subtle than I had originally anticipated. Yet the fieldwork persisted, the data poured into notebook and tape recorder, and optimal foraging models—although not sufficient in themselves—remained extremely useful for structuring the research.

This monograph is an attempt to set out what I learned from the dialogue between theory and data, between expectation and experience. The core of the research consists of an analysis of the material investments and outcomes for the approximately 600 foraging trips I studied through interview or observation, as detailed in Chapters 5–9. But to be meaningful, these data must be set in a social, historical, and environmental context, as attempted in Chapters 3 and 4. And to define the intellectual significance of my research, something must be said about its broader theoretical context, which task occupies the first two chapters that follow.

Acknowledgments

Any study involving extended fieldwork, and even more extended (though episodic) analysis and writing, necessarily involves the assistance and cooperation of numerous individuals. Acknowledgment in the abstract medium of written language is small recompense for the many gifts, large and small, that made this book possible. Here I limit

my thanks to those who helped most directly with my field research and subsequent analysis, reanalysis, and writing. I hope any omissions will be forgiven.

For assistance with the field research, I am most grateful to Lorraine Brooke, Bill Kemp, and the staff of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association; Lazarusi Epoo and the Inukjuak Community Council; Danieli Weetaluktuk; Lucasi Tukai and his extended family; Inukpuk Naktialuk, Sara Naluktik, and Caroline Palliser; Brian and Mavis Ford; Davidi Naluktik; and Derek Robertson. Above all, I am deeply indebted to the foragers and other good people of Inujjuaq—*nakurmimarialuk!*

For helpful criticism of the ideas, and for comments on various parts of the manuscript over the years, I thank Mary Anderson, Wendy Arundale, John R. Atkins, Asen Balikci, Rob Boyd, Gardner Brown, Ruth Buskirk, Tom Caraco, Ric Charnov, Elizabeth Cashdan, William Chasko, Jr., Michael Chibnik, David Damas, Bill Durham, Rada Dyson-Hudson, Steve Emlen, Davydd Greenwood, Ray Hames, Henry Harpending, Carolyn Harper, Kristen Hawkes, Kim Hill, Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, Gene Hunn, Marshall Hurlich, Robert Jarvenpa, Art Keene, Dick Nelson, Michael Nowak, Gordon Orians, Stu Plattner, Ron Pulliam, Rick Riewe, Tom Schoener, Monty Slatkin, Dave Stephens, Brooke Thomas, George Wenzel, Richard Wrangham, and most especially Bruce Winterhalder.

The research was supported by a National Institute of Mental Health predoctoral fellowship No. 1 F31 MH05668, by two grants-in-aid from the Arctic Institute of North America (with the financial assistance of the Firestone Foundation), by a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellowship, and by the University of Washington Graduate School Research Fund. The bulk of the final draft was completed during a sabbatical leave granted by the University of Washington. This leave, and three subsequent summers, were spent on Shaw Island, and I am grateful to Bob and Dottie Osborne, Lynette Trucco and the Shaw Island School Board, and Kath Melville for graciously providing secluded writing space free from distractions.

Lorraine Eckstein and Kris Nyrop spent long and often tedious hours in computer programming, data analysis, and number checking; I would still be working on this project (or have given up) if it weren't for their contribution. Shannon Erickson expertly typed an early version of the manuscript, and Dana Smith (no relation) assisted with word processing in later stages. Dana also did much of the work involved in the immense task of assembling the bibliography. The figures were drawn by Terry Trudell, April Ryan, and Jim Pullen. Sara Nelson assisted with the index.

Carol Poliak was my adviser and companion throughout, put up with my incessant labors and nasty moods, and made it all worthwhile.

A Note on Terminology and Orthography

For nonspecialists, a brief note of clarification on the terms "Inuit" and "Eskimo" is in order. "Eskimo" is a term of debatable origin (see Woodbury 1984) used by scholars to designate an ethnolinguistic category: speakers of an Eskimoan language, and members of an Eskimo society. The languages in question fall into two groupings: Yu'pik languages, spoken in Western and Southwestern Alaska and on the Northeast tip of Siberia, and Inupiaq, a single multidialect language (or chain of dialects) spoken across the vast expanse of North Alaska, arctic Canada, and Greenland.

Since Eskimo is not an indigenous term of self-reference for any of these people, and is sometimes held to have pejorative connotations, many favor the term Inuit as a replacement. However, Inuit is a self-referential term (meaning, literally, "the people") only for certain dialects of Inupiaq, in particular those spoken in Canada east of the MacKenzie Delta. Thus, at present it is properly applied only to the Canadian Eskimos, including the Inuit of Inujuaq (but excluding the MacKenzie Delta *Inuvialuit*). The term "Eskimo" is the only one suitable for referring to all native Eskimoan speakers collectively, and should be reserved for this purpose. This is the procedure followed in this monograph. If the recent tendency of pan-Eskimo organizations (such as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference) to refer to all Eskimos as Inuit becomes more widely accepted, then perhaps scholars will abandon the term Eskimo, but until that time we must make do with the latter term as the only accurate one to include all the arctic peoples referred to in this note.

The orthography employed in this book is the one developed by Lefebvre (1960) and Gagne (1961), and currently considered standard for the Canadian Eastern Arctic dialects of Inupiaq (commonly referred to as Inuttitut), including the Ungava Peninsula (Gagne 1958; Dorais 1975). In conformity with this orthography, I have spelled the name of the settlement where I did my fieldwork "Inujuaq" and that of its inhabitants "Inujuamiut" ("people of Inujuaq"). In practice, the settlement name is more commonly written as "Inukjuak," and I have retained this in cases where it is part of an official title (e.g., "Inukjuak Cooperative"). (The francophone spelling of the settlement is "Inoucdjouac," while the older anglophone name is "Port Harrison.")

In the Eastern Arctic, Inuttitut is considered to have 3 simple vowels and 13 consonants; diphthongs, elongated vowels, and consonant clusters are also recognized in the standard orthography. The basic orthographic glosses that English speakers can employ in sounding Inuttitut words are as follows (after Dorais 1975):

Single consonants

k, l, m, n, p, t, and *v* have values close to standard English
g is given a velar articulation (midway between English *g* and *k*)
j occurring singly is sounded like the English *y* in *yes*
ng is a nasalized *n*, as in *sing*
q is a velar fricative, as in the Spanish *j* or the German *ch*
r is articulated in the throat
s is given its English value except when preceding *u*, when it sounds
sh

Consonant Clusters

jj is similar to the English consonant cluster *dj* as in *adjoin*
ll is similar to the English consonant cluster *dl* as in *peddler*
ss is sounded as English *ts* or (less commonly) *ks*
 Various other consonant clusters or double (elongated) consonants
 take their approximate English values in most cases.

Vowels

a is sounded as in *law*
i is sounded like the second vowel in *marine*
u is sounded as in *flute*
 Various diphthongs and elongated vowels also occur, generally
 sounded as combinations or lengthenings of the above three pri-
 mary vowels.

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