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Perspective

# Inuksiutiit and the Emergence of Inuit Studies in Canada

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Abstract: At the start of the 1970s, many young anthropologists conducting fieldwork in Inuit communities adopted a new paradigm. Instead of describing communities from the outside, they wanted to mix with local people, as far as the Inuit agreed, living with them, learning their language, and, most importantly, trying to understand their world view in order to convey and explain it to non-Inuit. As a result, the old academic field of "Eskimology" was transformed into Inuit studies. Students from Université de Montréal and Université Laval, in Québec City, who fully shared the objectives of emerging Inuit studies, had been conducting research in the North under the tutorship of a young French anthropologist, Bernard Saladin d'Anglure. From 1970 they became a research team, based at Université Laval, called Inuksiutiit ("Things or people having to do with the Inuit"). In 1974, they founded a non-profit organization, Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit (AIK), with the objectives to promote, develop, and disseminate knowledge on Inuit culture, language, and society while collaborating with Inuit communities. Several projects initiated by Inuksiutiit Katimajiit have played a major part in positioning Canada as the world leader in Inuit studies. Two accomplishments stand out in particular: the *Études Inuit Studies* journal and the Inuit Studies conferences. The initiatives of AIK have endowed the elicitation, dissemination, and promotion of knowledge originating from the Inuit—whether traditional or contemporary—with a global dimension. In this way, Inuksiutiit may have played an essential part in supporting the Indigenous citizens of the North American Arctic in the assertion of their identity and social rights.

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## "Eskimology" and Inuit Studies

Over the last 150 years or so, the Inuit of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), Canada, and Alaska have been extensively researched. Up to the 1960s, this research generally consisted of monographic descriptions of various regional groups and local communities of the North American Arctic, or of studies of their language, or of archaeological remains left by their ancestors. With the exception of the part-Kalaaliq (Indigenous Greenlander) ethnographer Knud Rasmussen (1879–1933), data collection and analysis was undertaken by non-Inuit scientists, who rarely spoke Iñupiatun, Inuktun, Inuktitut, or Kalaallisut (Greenlandic)[1] and almost never shared their findings with the people they visited.

Such "basic research"[2] expanded during the second quarter of the twentieth century, amidst the Inuit as well as among First Nations and Native American communities. As far as the studies of Inuit are concerned, this evolved into a special academic field, dubbed *Eskimologi* ("Eskimology") in 1927 by Danish anthropologist Kaj Birket-Smith. Some years later, the linguist William Thalbitzer defined *Eskimologi* as a multidisciplinary science that combined ethnology, folklore, linguistics, psychology, and sociology to study the Inuit.

The nature of studies of Arctic Peoples started to change radically at the end of the 1960s, when a new generation of Greenlandic, Alaskan, and Canadian Inuit entered into self-government negotiations with their respective governments' national authorities in order to assert their territorial, political, and cultural rights. The Inuit were joining a larger movement of North American Indigenous Nations who had already started to fight for their lands. These communities often relied on research to support their claims, but they soon discovered that existing studies did not generally fulfill their needs. Fields such as "Eskimology" were, thus, largely inadequate, because the researchers' interests had not much to do with the actual perceptions, opinions, and primary concerns of contemporary Indigenous individuals. At the same time, during the 1970s and early 1980s, most scholars studying Indigenous communities realized that, in the new, emerging socio-political context, it was meaningless and ethically wrong to conduct research *on* a specific population without working *with* and *for* this population. As a result, in the North American Arctic, "Eskimology" progressively transformed itself into Inuit studies (Collings 2022, 305).

Inuit studies can be defined as a quest for knowledge seeking to reflect how the Inuit envision and express their own existence, environment, and place in the world. This is to be achieved through the collaboration of Indigenous and Qallunaat (non-Inuit) researchers aiming to bring back to its owners the knowledge elicited from them, while sharing it with the rest of the world. According to

anthropologist Nelson Graburn (2016, xiv), the transformation of "Eskimology" into Inuit studies has "enriched the anthropological mainstream" and "brought the Inuit *into* contemporary anthropological research and scholarly meetings." More importantly, it has also contributed to opening a new field of applied social science where, in addition to the mostly academic specialists in anthropology, sociology, psychology, archaeology, linguistics, and so on, practitioners such as educators, health specialists, social workers, natural scientists, business administrators, and artists, to name a few, also congregate to share their knowledge of the Inuit world.

From 1970 on, the emergence of Inuit studies was facilitated by the proliferation of scholars trained between the 1950s and 1980s as a result of an unprecedented interest in northern research after the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War (Krupnik 2016, 11–12). All countries with national Inuit populations participated in this movement, but Canada played a special part in the development and internationalization of Inuit studies. As we shall now see, this was largely due to the activities of Inuksiutiit ("Things or people having to do with the Inuit"), a team of researchers from Québec City in existence since the 1970s.[3] Relating Inuksiutiit's history in some detail will illustrate how one small group of dedicated individuals was able to achieve remarkable results in the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about the Inuit, thanks, in part, to the creation of a scholarly journal and international conferences, both still in existence.

This single example of a successful development in Indigenous-oriented social sciences is one, among several others, that involved various groups of researchers in Canada and elsewhere during the same period. It is the combined efforts of these people that explain the emergence of the new type of Inuit studies and, more generally, Indigenous studies that is now the norm in North America. As far as Inuksiutiit is concerned, its founders were—and still are—not primarily interested in anthropological or other theories and problematics. They rather believed that their role as researchers was, as far as the Inuit agreed, to live among them and become fluent in Inuktitut, in order to understand how people related to their physical, social, and supra-natural environment[4] and how they conceptualized this relation. The researchers' main objective was not to abide by, prove, or contribute to any theory, but, in a context of accelerating cultural change, to convey to younger Inuit what they had learned and understood from the Elders, while educating a larger Qallunaat audience about the current situation and concerns of Arctic Indigenous communities. For most Inuksiutiit researchers, this was a work of love and dignity, more than of science.

## Young Anthropologists Conduct Fieldwork in Nunavik

In February 1956, a young man from France, Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, spent a few weeks in Quaqtaq, then a small Inuit winter camp and Roman Catholic mission in northeastern Nunavik (Arctic Quebec), to shoot a short documentary film. Four years later, in September 1960, on his way back from a second stay in Nunavik, Saladin d'Anglure was invited to enroll as a student in the new master's program in anthropology that had just opened at Université de Montréal. He completed his MA in 1964, on traditional Inuit culture in Kangiqsujuaq (Saladin d'Anglure 2013).

By the mid-1960s, the presence at Université de Montréal's anthropology department of two faculty members, Asen Balikci and Rémi Savard, specializing in North American Indigenous Studies, had generated a growing interest among students for learning about the Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples. This led the department to facilitate graduate fieldwork in Canadian Arctic and First Nations communities. Accordingly, in early 1965, the students were advised that three of them could take part in a so-called anthropological expedition to Hudson Strait (northern Nunavik) during the upcoming summer. Saladin d'Anglure, back in Canada for a year-long doctoral research stay in Kangiqsujuaq, agreed to lead the expedition.

Each of the three chosen candidates was sent to a northern Nunavik community over the summer. They had to collect data on family ties, including eponymy[5] and godchild-like relations between individuals and their midwife; the birthplace of each resident; land use and occupancy (sea mammal and caribou hunting grounds, traplines, seasonal camps); and local place names. At a period when bilingualism was still unusual in smaller locations, such a program implied that students had to learn basic Inuktitut as soon as possible, being expected to become fluent in due time. They were also asked to stay with Inuit families, participate in community activities, and, more globally, try to see the world through Inuit eyes rather than their own.

Two students from the 1965 cohort returned to their chosen community in 1966 and early 1967. During the summers of 1967 and 1968, one more anthropology student from Université de Montréal went to Nunavik to conduct fieldwork in a southeastern Ungava Bay village. The three received their MA degree within a few months of completing their research. In the meantime, a number of anthropology students from Université Laval in Québec City had shown interest in the Inuit. Accordingly, Saladin d'Anglure (now a doctoral candidate and research assistant in Paris, France) was brought to Quebec for part of the year to teach Arctic anthropology to Laval students and supervise their field research. Between 1968 and 1972, ten Laval anthropologists-in-training researched

Nunavik communities, notably those not already visited by the Montreal students. As with the original group, these students lived with Inuit families and learned Inuktitut, and they collected similar basic data.

In addition to these community studies, three pan-Nunavik investigations were conducted: 1) a survey of Inuit place names (1968); 2) a collection of family genealogies (1969); and 3) the distribution of copybooks to ninety Elders, who were invited (and remunerated) to write in syllabic characters whatever they wished concerning Inuit culture. Between 1967 and 1970, these writers yielded more than 4,000 pages dealing with various aspects of traditional life. Their texts, as well as the genealogies, were later entrusted to Nunavik's Avataq Cultural Institute.[6] These investigations, as well as the community studies, were made possible thanks to the goodwill of the *Nunavimmiut* (inhabitants of Nunavik), who welcomed the researchers into their homes (with a monetary compensation for board and lodging) and generously passed on their knowledge to them.

## The Birth of Inuksiutiit

By 1970, then, Saladin d'Anglure and his students, now based at Université Laval, had collected a substantial amount of qualitative data, such as genealogies, land occupancy maps, and written texts, originating from the Nunavik Inuit. Except for a few scattered and often incomplete monographs (e.g., Stupart 1887; Turner 1979 [1894]; Payne 1899; Willmott 1961; Graburn 1969), the culture and way of life of the Nunavimmiut had never been thoroughly described by ethnographers. Moreover, most previous researchers did not speak Inuktitut and never returned to the field after their initial stay. Therefore, the image they gave of the culture studied risked being partial and unsystematic. By contrast, the Laval team practised a more inclusive form of investigation—later known as community-based participatory research—that was becoming common throughout anthropology during this period. It was characterized by a desire to share the way of life and speak the language of the Inuit; a will to understand their culture as a structured and dynamic whole, rather than as separate domains such as economy, kinship, social organization, and beliefs; a desire to convey to others a true image of Inuit expectations and world view; and a firm conviction that research efforts would remain sterile if they were not useful to the host communities.

This kind of vision marked the advent of Inuit studies, as defined in the first section of this article. The Laval anthropologists were far from being alone to hold such an attitude. It was shared by many young researchers across the Canadian, Alaskan, and Greenlandic Arctic. These included the first Inuit scholars to hold a graduate degree, the Kalaaliq ethnologist Robert Petersen and the Iñupiaq linguist and educator Edna Ahgeak Maclean, for instance, as well as other pioneers of modern Inuit studies, such as anthropologists Nelson Graburn and Jean L. Briggs,

linguist Michael E. Krauss, and archaeologist William Fitzhugh. It is noteworthy that, as already mentioned, similar attitudes towards Indigenous research were also becoming common among a majority of younger specialists in Native American studies.

During the summer of 1970, Saladin d'Anglure travelled to Iqaluit and Cape Dorset (southern Baffin Island) to study the cultural and genealogical relationships between communities on both sides of Hudson Strait. This trip began an extension of his and his team's geographical focus: in late 1971 he would visit Igloolik (northern Baffin region), a community that thence became his main research locus for the next thirty-five years.

In August 1970, Saladin d'Anglure had received a letter inviting him to a scholarly conference planned for mid-November in Civitanova Marche, Italy, the Congresso Internazionale Polare (International Polar Congress), where heads of Arctic research centres would discuss the activities of their organizations. Since he was unable to attend, he asked the author of this article, a former Montreal student who was now pursuing doctoral studies in Paris,[7] to make a presentation on the objectives and findings of the Laval team. In order to identify the group, they agreed on a name for it: Inuksiutiit. Accordingly, at the November conference, the author read a paper titled (in English translation): "Inuksiutiit, a research group in social anthropology on the Northern Quebec Inuit." This presentation revealed how the team envisioned Inuit studies: a collective attempt to better observe and understand Inuit culture, in order to make it known and, if needed, support its bearers in the preservation or recovery of their identity (Dorais 1971).

Upon being awarded doctorates, Saladin d'Anglure and the author were hired by Université Laval as full-time faculty members, the former in 1971, the latter in 1972. Laval's anthropology program had been granted departmental status in 1970, with the provision that Inuit studies would become one of the three leading axes of the new department, the other two being French Canadian and First Nations studies. Departmental research activities were therefore divided into various sections of a "Laboratory of Anthropology," one of which, "Section Inuit," was supervised by the Inuksiutiit group. In 1975, a third specialist in Inuit studies was hired as a professor, François Trudel, who was a member of the late 1960s team of Laval anthropology students conducting field research in Nunavik.

### Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit

As mentioned earlier, the turn of the 1970s witnessed the emergence of Inuit political activism. In Canada, a first generation of young men and women educated in the federal school system, fluent in English, and cognizant of Qallunaat ways, decided to claim their territorial rights as Indigenous residents of the Arctic at a

time when the region was threatened by impending industrial development. In 1970, the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic established the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE), and 1971 saw the creation of a national Inuit organization, Inuit Tapirisat Canada (now Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami). In Quebec, the provincial government launched in 1971 a massive hydroelectric development project in the James Bay area. After this development was challenged in court by local Cree and Inuit, who had not been consulted, the government began negotiating. On the Inuit side, the Northern Quebec Inuit Association (NQIA), founded in 1972, conducted the negotiations that led to the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) in November 1975.

In order to support their land claims, NQIA needed maps and other documents showing that the parents, grandparents, and earlier ancestors of present-day Inuit had occupied the entire Quebec territory north of the 55th parallel, rather than just the coastal areas where modern communities now stood. As shown in the preceding section, the Inuksiutiit researchers had already collected this type of data, which they were willing to share with NQIA. However, the Inuit negotiators were reticent to collaborate with Université Laval for two reasons: 1) they saw it as a huge bureaucracy with which it would be difficult to get along, and 2) they suspected Laval to be an ally of the Quebec government, the opposing party in the negotiations.[8] These reservations were conveyed to Bernard Saladin d'Anglure by Charlie Watt, NQIA's founding president (and later a Canadian Senator, 1984–2018), during a chance encounter at a northern airport (personal communication of B. Saladin d'Anglure, 2019). Watt mentioned that NQIA highly preferred to work with smaller, independent research organizations not linked to big institutions.

Upon returning to Québec City, Saladin d'Anglure discussed the matter with his co-researchers, suggesting they should create a non-profit organization, duly incorporated and, therefore, legally independent from Université Laval. They all agreed and decided to call it Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit ("Those who meet on matters pertaining to the Inuit"). Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, Jimmy Innaarulik Mark (a research associate from Nunavik), and Louis-Jacques Dorais were proposed as founding members of the organization. Accordingly, they drafted and submitted the required documents to the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The new entity was incorporated as Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit Inc.[9] (hence AIK) on January 31, 1974 (see Figure 1). AIK immediately signed a contract with NQIA, transferring to them the data that was collected by Inuksiutiit researchers and needed for the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement negotiations.

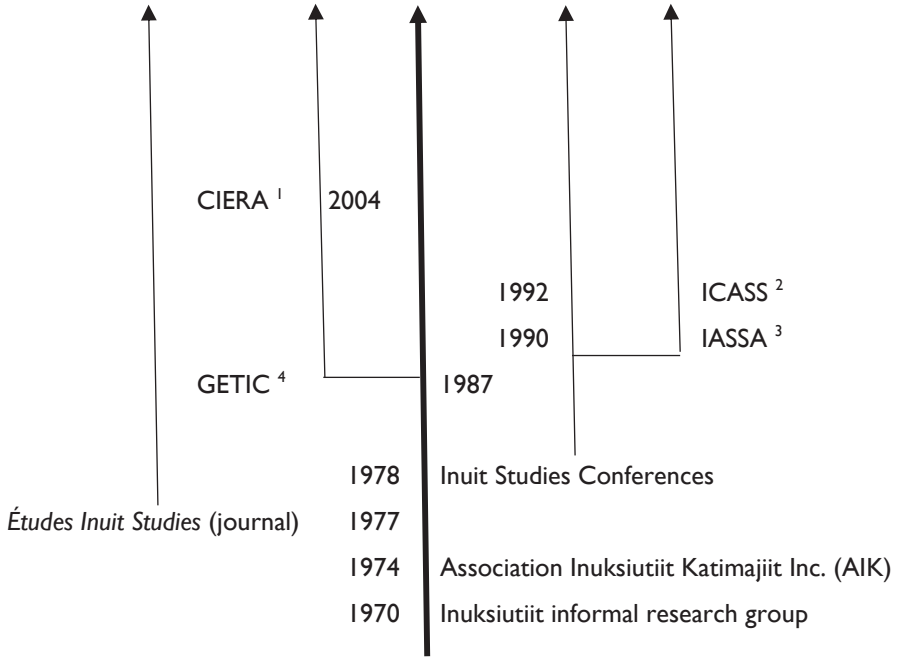


Figure 1. The Timeline of Inuksiutiit.

1. Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de recherches autochtones (Interuniversity Centre for Indigenous Studies and Research)
2. International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences
3. International Arctic Social Sciences Association
4. Groupe d'études inuit et circumpolaires (Inuit and Circumpolar Studies Group)

Source: Adapted from Dorais and Saladin d'Anglure (2023, 147)

The new association was to be headed by a six-person board of directors, elected annually by the general assembly of members. New members had to be proposed and accepted by the general assembly ( 2005a). Over the years, the actual size of Inuksiutiit Katimajiit has fluctuated, hovering between six and twenty members. In 1975, a formal agreement between AIK and Laval's Laboratory of Anthropology stipulated that in exchange for using departmental research space for its office, Inuksiutiit Katimajiit would supervise the students connected with Section Inuit of the laboratory, allowing them to make use of AIK's typing, photocopying, and other facilities. AIK would also administer the budget of most departmental research projects concerning the Inuit.

According to its founding Charter, the objectives of Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit are scientific and social, and its aims threefold: 1) to organize into an association people interested in studying and promoting Inuit language, society, and culture; 2) to hold conferences and meetings promoting, developing, and disseminating knowledge in the abovementioned domains, and to establish a documentation centre; 3) to conduct scientific research on Inuit language, culture, and society, and publish its results (Association Inuksiutiit 1974, 2). What the Charter does not mention is that AIK's members must have fieldwork experience

in Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit homelands), and are expected to speak Inuktitut, or any other Inuit language, at least minimally. Other than that, as shall now be seen, the Charter contains all that has made the strength of Inuksiutiit up to now: research, publishing, and conferences, without forgetting the valorization ("promoting") of Inuit language, society, and culture.

Over the years, AIK has included several Inuit members and hired collaborators, often young men and women who later left their mark on northern communities. These include, amongst others, the following individuals:

> Joe **Ataguttaaluk** (Igloolik): held several elected positions within the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and played an important role in the creation and completion of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (cf. Obituary, www.qia.ca, April 1, 2022); QIA has established an Inuktitut language award in his memory.
>
> Leah **Idlout/Illauq** (Mittimatalik/Pond Inlet): "an accomplished interpreter, translator, author, teacher, editor, seamstress, artist, and activist" (Petrone 1988, 225).
>
> Lisa **Koperqualuk** (Puvirnituq), MA in Anthropology (Laval): thought leader and communicator; President Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada and international Vice-Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Council; Vice-President (since 2019), Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit.
>
> Jimmy I. **Mark** (Ivujivik): was researcher for the Quebec Government and adult education manager at the Kativik School Board; he also worked for the Nunavik health services; one of the three founding members of Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit.
>
> Sarah **Silou** (Qamanittuaq/Baker Lake), MA in Canadian Studies (Carleton): researcher for the Quebec Government, educator, member on the Nunavut Water Board and the Qamanittuaq Justice Committee.

## Conducting Research

When Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit was formed, some of its first members had already been engaged in various research projects, including a large-scale applied study on housing in Nunavik mostly funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and a linguistic survey of Inuit dialects in the Canadian Eastern Arctic.[10] Other projects were planned, on wage work and on community radio for instance, but also on more specifically ethnographic topics such as *katajjaniq* (throat singing) and traditional Inuit cosmology. After the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975, when the Northern Quebec Inuit Association was replaced by the Makivik Corporation, AIK offered to work on collaborative research schemes with the new organization. However,

because Makivik was fully occupied with business linked to the implementation of the agreement, and since it established its own Inuit-led cultural body in 1980, the Avataq Cultural Institute, the envisioned collaboration was replaced by data sharing between AIK and Avataq. Such sharing of research data already collected by Inuksiutiit researchers or through new collaborative projects was later extended to other Inuit organizations, in the Northwest Territories as well as in Nunavut and Nunatsiavut (Labrador).

At the outset, there existed some confusion at Laval's Section Inuit between the projects negotiated and run by Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit Inc., and those conducted through research grants awarded to Université Laval but administered by AIK. Some research personnel felt ill at ease when, as members of AIK's general assembly or board of directors, they were invited to discuss the budget and staff of projects that hired them. Inuksiutiit's research associates, students or Inuit,[11] were those mostly concerned with this confusion.

The situation of confusion was to last until 1986, when Laval's anthropology laboratory was abolished and its 1975 agreement with AIK became obsolete. Faced with the real possibility of losing their premises—which now included space for producing the scholarly journal *Études Inuit Studies* (see below)—the board of directors realized it was now time for Université Laval to establish its own research unit in Arctic social sciences, independently from AIK. This had become especially important because for the last few years Laval's leader in northern research, the Centre d'Études Nordiques, had decided to focus uniquely on natural sciences. The board discussed the matter with colleagues from different departments, who agreed on the idea of a new unit. They then joined together to formally propose to Laval's academic authorities the establishment of a research entity attached to the Faculty of Social Sciences, where senior scientists, junior researchers, as well as students, would meet to discuss northern topics and collaborate within transdisciplinary research programs (Dorais 2005b). The new unit was established in September 1987 as Groupe d'études inuit et circumpolaires (Inuit and Circumpolar Studies Group), or GETIC (see Figure 1).

From then on, all Inuit-focused projects funded through grants awarded to Université Laval were administered by GETIC. The group also took over the documentation gathered by AIK over the years and became co-publisher of *Études Inuit Studies*. In return, AIK retained ownership of the journal and preserved an office in the premises of GETIC. It continued to run and administer its own specialized projects, such as the production of the Inuktitut syllabic version of the telephone directory for the Eastern Northwest Territories (the future Nunavut) and Nunavik (1978–1997) or for Nunavik alone (1998–2021). At the start of the new millennium, GETIC decided to extend its field of interest to all the

Indigenous Peoples of the world. Therefore, in 2004, it was transformed into the Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de recherches autochtones (Interuniversity Centre for Indigenous Studies and Research), or CIERA, welcoming students and researchers from outside the social sciences as well as from Canadian and international universities other than Laval. CIERA soon became Canada's leading francophone group of scholars on Indigenous matters.

## Publishing

One of the original objectives of Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit was to publish material resulting from research on Inuit language, culture, and society. When AIK was founded in 1974, the Inuit organizations that would soon devote themselves to social, cultural, and linguistic promotion and development had just started to operate. No outlet existed in Canada for disseminating material in Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, or Inuvialuktun apart from *Inuktitut*—a magazine originally published from 1959 by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and now published by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, in various Inuit dialects and in English—as well as a very few local publications such as *Inummarik*, issued in Igloolik by a group of cultural activists. This is why AIK deemed it essential to bring back to the Inuit at least part of the research data collected in the North, and to give a voice to those among them eager to publish in their own language.

AIK had first planned to issue every two months a magazine in Inuktitut containing excerpts from the 4,000 pages of text written by Nunavik Elders between 1967 and 1970 at the invitation of Bernard Saladin d'Anglure (see above), but this project was soon realized to be unrealistic. The Inuktitut periodical originally planned was thus replaced by a series of books in syllabic characters titled *Inuksiutiit allaniagait* ("Writings Dealing with Inuit"). Five titles appeared between 1977 and 1988, including the original version of *Sanaaq*, a novel—the first fictional work of some length in Inuktitut—written in 1954 by Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk,[12] and *Sivulitta piusituqangit* ("Old Habits of our Ancestors"), an encyclopedia of traditional Inuit life by the Nunavik Elder Taamusi Qumaq.

Besides the *Inuksiutiit allaniagait* series, Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit published a number of basic handbooks on the grammar and lexicon of various dialects of Inuktitut, edited from material provided by local Inuit language scholars.[13] They were primarily aimed at students, either Inuit enrolled in Indigenous language classes or Qallunaat wishing to learn Inuktitut. AIK also signed an agreement with the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE) to distribute its series of basic grammar books and dictionaries (six books published between 1983 and 1985) on each of the three dialects—Siglit,

Uummarmiut, and Kangiryuarmiut—spoken in the Inuvialuit Region of the Northwest Territories. These books had been researched and edited by Ronald Lowe, a member of AIK, at the request of COPE and in association with local speakers.

Finally, other titles included a facsimile edition of Lucien Turner's 1894 monograph on the Inuit and Naskapi of eastern Nunavik, *Ethnology of the Ungava District*, and also Taamusi Qumaq's *Inuit uqausillaringit*, co-published with the Avataq Cultural Institute. This dictionary in Inuktitut syllabics defines some 15,000 Inuit words. Written by an elderly monolingual speaker, it opens an otherwise inaccessible door on the way Inuit understand the semantics of their language. A few years before publishing Qumaq, AIK had entered into a contract with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to undertake the orthographic standardization and English translation of Lucien Schneider's Inuktitut–French dictionary. This work (Schneider 1985) remains the most exhaustive bilingual dictionary in any Canadian Inuit dialect.

With the passage of years, outlets for disseminating written and oral Inuit texts, as well as video, audio, online digital media, and other expressions of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ, i.e., Traditional Knowledge), became relatively numerous. Indigenous organizations, educational and cultural institutions (e.g., Nunavut Arctic College and Nunavik's Avataq Cultural Institute), research centres (including Laval's GETIC), and private publishers (some of them Inuit-owned) began to issue, and are still issuing, a large and diversified number of publications authored by Inuit, or elicited from Elders and other bearers of IQ. This explains why, after 1992, except for a lone title in 2001, AIK stopped publishing books. Its initial efforts to disseminate written materials in Inuktitut—and Inuvialuktun if the distribution of COPE's linguistic publications is included—as well as on Inuit language and culture, were now being carried on by the Inuit themselves.

## Études Inuit Studies

Most activities and publications of Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit discussed to this point had a Canadian scope. However, right from its creation in 1974, AIK had wished Inuit studies to become part of a worldwide forum where scholars would share their concerns, methodologies, and research results with each other as well as with the communities they studied. Such an international perspective is quite natural, since the Inuit and their Yupik cousins from southwestern Alaska and Russian Chukotka are citizens of four different nations: Denmark, Canada, the United States, and Russia (Soviet Union until 1991), plus Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), now autonomous from Denmark. Moreover, due to their reputation

as one of the best known Indigenous Peoples in the world, the Inuit have long aroused scholarly interest in several other countries, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan.

Bernard Saladin d'Anglure and his colleagues deemed that one effective way to set up an international forum was to launch a peer-reviewed journal dealing exclusively with Inuit issues. This is why, two years after its creation, AIK undertook a survey of existing scholarly periodicals publishing on Arctic social sciences, in order to assess the desirability and feasibility of a new venue. AIK also contacted specialists from several countries, inquiring if they would actually publish in a journal devoted to Inuit matters.[14] The survey showed that indeed, the proposed periodical on Inuit Studies would fill a void. Moreover, the response from the specialists was highly positive.

Therefore, in 1977, AIK launched *Études Inuit Studies*. It has been a bilingual peer reviewed periodical appearing twice a year. The articles, research notes, and book reviews are published in either English or French, with bilingual abstracts of the articles, but all other content—introductory pages, scientific information, abstracts of recent articles and dissertations on the Inuit—appear in both languages. Over the years, articles in English have tended to exceed those in French by a ratio of about 70 to 30.

The word of the editor opening the first issue of the journal summarizes how its publishers envisioned Inuit studies:

> Open to the widely different perspectives of the social sciences, *Études Inuit Studies* hopes to encourage the development of a general anthropological approach to the study of Inuit societies and to become a centre of serious debate and theoretical reflection concerning these societies. … We hope that the Journal will become a link in a communications network between individuals and organisms working in this field. … Finally, we intend to accord a special priority to the specific interests of the Inuit in putting at their disposition materials which they may use according to their own particular preoccupations. It is for this reason that we attribute a great importance to the publication of original source documents … ("Éditorial/Editorial" 1977a, 4)

The first editorial board of *Études Inuit Studies* had six members, four of them from Canadian universities. They represented various anthropological sub-disciplines: biological anthropology, social and cultural anthropology, ethnolinguistics, archaeology, and ethnohistory. The board grew rapidly, in number as well as in terms of disciplines and geographical origins. It had reached

eight members by 1979 (Volume 3), including an American anthropologist affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution and a geographer from McGill University. From 1994 on, its size hovered between eleven and thirteen people. By way of example, in 2013 (Vol. 37), the editorial board of the journal comprised twelve members originating from six countries: Canada (four), the United States (three), France (two), and Greenland, Denmark, and Switzerland (one each). Seven of them were anthropologists, two linguists (including an Inuk scholar), two geographers, and one a specialist in education. There was an equal number of men and women. In 2022 (Vol. 46), out of a combined total of twenty-four members on the editorial board and the international consultative committee, four were Inuit, three of them from Canada (Naullaq Arnaquq, Heather Igloliorte, Karla Jessen Williamson) and one from Kalaallit Nunaat (Carl Christian Olsen).

Due to the efforts of its successive editors and editorial boards, *Études Inuit Studies* has developed, over almost fifty years of existence, a competent and diversified network of contributors, either senior specialists or more junior researchers. During the first twenty-five years, collaborators were predominantly Qallunaat scholars, but since 2002 a growing number of Inuit and non-Indigenous practitioners in northern education, health services, social work, public administration, and so on, have published in the pages of the journal. Table 1 lists all sixty-five Canadian Inuit who have authored or co-authored articles between 1977 and 2022. This does not include at least two dozen Iñupiat, Kalaallit, and Yupik contributors from outside Canada.

Articles have appeared concerning all Inuit and Yupik groups, from Chukotka to Kalaallit Nunaat.[15] At the same time, the topics covered evolved from classical anthropological themes such as "The Work of Knud Rasmussen" (Vol. 12) or "Shamanism/Christianization/Possession" (Vol. 21), to issues more attuned to contemporary Inuit concerns with changing conditions in the Arctic: "Industrial Development and Mining Impacts" (Vol. 37) or "Inuit School Curriculum and the Online Future of Inuit Tradition" (Vol. 40), for instance. Now in its forty-seventh year of publication at the time of this writing, *Études Inuit Studies*, with its international authorship and readership, remains a widely recognized leader in modern Inuit studies. Published at Université Laval since its creation,[16] it demonstrates Canada's world leadership in the emergence and development of a new type of knowledge about the Inuit, either basic or applied, and collaborative, but always respectful of who Inuit are.

Table 1. Names of Inuit in Canada who published in *Études Inuit Studies* 1977–2022

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1977 | Rose Iqallijuq (transcription in Inuktitut and French of a conversation with her) | |
| 1985 | Mary Simon | |
| 1992 | Mary Simon<br>Rosemarie Kuptana | |
| 1995 | Jaypetee Arnakak | |
| 1997 | Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk | |
| 1998 | Gary Baikie | |
| 2001 | Peter Irniq | |
| 2002 | Aaju Peter<br>Myna Ishulutak<br>Julia Shaimaiyuk<br>Jeannie Shaimaiyuk | Nancy Kisa<br>Bernice Kootoo<br>Susan Enuaraq<br>Vera Qulaut Arnatsiaq |
| 2004 | Tommy Akulukjuk | |
| 2005 | Catharyn Andersen | |
| 2006 | Laakkuluk Jessen Williamson | Karla Jessen Williamson |
| 2009 | Quluaq Pilakapsi<br>Monica Shouldice<br>Kim Crockatt | Cayla Chenier<br>Janet Onalik |
| 2012 | Norma Dunning | |
| 2013 | Minnie Napartuk | Kitikmeot Heritage Society (no individual names provided) |
| 2014 | Betsy Annahatak | |
| 2016 | Raymond Mickpegak<br>Dorothy Angnatok<br>Katie Winters<br>Carla Pamak<br>Lena Metuq<br>Jukeepa Hainnu<br>Saa Pitsiulak<br>Elisapee Flaherty<br>Karen Inootik<br>Jennifer Kadjuk<br>Sarah Angiyou<br>Passa Mangiuk<br>Cheryl Allen<br>Marina Andersen | Doris Boase<br>Jenni-Rose Campbell<br>Tracey Doherty<br>Alanna Edmunds<br>Felicia Edmunds<br>Julie Flowers<br>Jodi Lyall<br>Cathy Mitsuk<br>Roxanne Nochasak<br>Vanessa Pamak<br>Frank Russell<br>Joanne Voisey<br>Monica Ittusardjuat |
| 2018 | Luke Suluk | |
| 2020 | Olivia Ikey<br>Jodie Lane | |
| 2022 | Jennifer Ullulaq<br>Barbara Okpik<br>Meghan Etter<br>Jimmy Ruttan | Nellie Elanik<br>Ruth Goose<br>Esther Ipana |

## The Inuit Studies Conferences

When the first issue of *Études Inuit Studies* appeared in June 1977, it included a short message stating that "many individuals and several institutions have expressed an interest in the convening of a regular 'Inuit Conference' … [that] would permit all those from across North America working on Inuit society to meet every two years" ("Projet de conférence inuit" 1977b, 171). The message added that AIK was ready to organize this conference at Université Laval in the fall of 1978, inviting "readers of the Journal and other possible conference participants" to send their suggestions for potential session themes.

The decision to organize biennial Inuit studies conferences had been taken at the general assembly of AIK in March 1977. After Bernard Saladin d'Anglure's announcement that the first issue of *Études Inuit Studies* would appear within a few months, the author of this article suggested it might also be worthwhile to hold scholarly meetings on Inuit culture, language, and society, similar to the already existing Algonquian Conference. The underlying idea was that periodic gatherings would allow researchers to exchange directly with each other about their research experiences. More importantly, they could also discuss their findings with the representatives of Inuit organizations, in order to develop collaborative research projects focused on Inuit needs. It was expected too that some papers presented at the conferences would later develop into articles submitted to *Études Inuit Studies* for publication.

The "Inuit Conference" (i.e., the first Inuit Studies conference) took place at Université Laval from October 19 to 22, 1978. It was attended by some sixty participants, including a few delegates from Inuit organizations. The program included thirty-nine individual presentations—twenty of them in English, nineteen in French—dealing with Inuit archaeology and history, social organization, psychology, linguistics, land claims, mythology, music, literature, biological anthropology, and demography (Editors 1978). The first call for the conference (see above) had been addressed to "all those from across North America." Indeed, thirty papers were read by Canadian researchers and five by American scholars, but four more were presented by European specialists.

As was later realized, the first conference set trends that carried over to all subsequent meetings. These included: 1) a large variety of topics, both academic and applied; 2) international attendance; 3) the presentation of audiovisual documents; 4) the participation of renowned specialists, as well as students and junior researchers; and 5) constructive interaction between people interested in Inuit issues, both scholars and practitioners. More generally, the conference was "successful in initiating communication between people from various disciplinary and geographical horizons, as well as between academics, those practically involved

in Inuit affairs and of course, the Inuit themselves, as representatives from several Inuit organizations attended the Conference" (Editors 1978, 120). What was lacking, though, was Inuit involvement in the organization of this first meeting, an involvement that would only come later.

The second Inuit Studies Conference (1980) was also organized by Université Laval, but from the third conference (1982) onwards, the Inuit studies biennial meetings took place in different locations, depending on the research institution organizing each of them. If a majority of the twenty-two meetings (up to the latest one in 2022) were held in Canada, almost a third (seven out of the total) took place abroad, including three in the United States and one each in Denmark, Kalaallit Nunaat, Scotland, and France. Four conferences were held in the North, in Fairbanks and Anchorage (Alaska), Iqaluit (the then-designate capital of Nunavut), and Nuuk (the capital of Kalaallit Nunaat). Southern and international locations did not prevent Inuit people from attending the conferences in ever-increasing numbers, as keynote speakers, presenters, or participants. At the twenty-second conference (Winnipeg, 2022), the Inuit outnumbered the Qallunaat, with a majority of the 800 attendees reported (Inuit Futures 2022).

Up to the fifth conference in 1986, Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit assisted the organizers in applying for grants and devising a scientific program. But from 1988 onwards, the role of AIK was, and still is, to make sure that every two years (every three after 2016) a professionally and financially reliable group of academics, both Inuit and Qallunaat, organize a meeting open to all presenters, especially Inuit and/or student researchers, desirous to share pertinent and seriously documented information about the Inuit, Yupik, and Unangan (Aleuts). Whenever possible, at the end of an Inuit Studies conference, those who wish to organize the next meeting present their proposal to the attendees, asking them if they agree with it and inviting them to send their suggestions for possible themes to be discussed.

Over the years, the Inuit Studies conferences have gone through different stages, reflecting the evolution of Inuit society between the 1970s and now. The first three meetings were predominantly academic events for Qallunaat scholars, but rapidly, Inuit presence was felt. Starting with the fourth conference (Montreal, 1984), Indigenous keynote speakers became the norm and a larger number of sessions dealt with issues and themes (e.g., the land, art, education, political autonomy) important to the Inuit.

Another stage was reached with the seventh (Fairbanks, 1990) and eighth (Quebec City, 1992) conferences, which played a major part in the internationalization of Inuit studies and their inclusion within the broader spectrum of Arctic social sciences. The Fairbanks meeting was the first to

be attended by Russian Yupiget (Chukotka Yupik). The Inuit and Qallunaat participants from Kalaallit Nunaat and eastern North America then realized that Inuit Nunangat extended far beyond the Canadian and Greenlandic Arctic. It was also during the Fairbanks conference that, at the request of an international group of social scientists, a special session was held to discuss the formation of an International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA), the creation of which was immediately approved by those present at the session (see Figure 1). IASSA's first International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS) took place in Québec City in 1992, concurrently with the eighth Inuit Studies Conference. The seventh and eighth conferences thus acted as catalysts of a sort, facilitating the emergence of pan-Arctic social sciences and their organization at the international level. Indeed, IASSA soon became the Arctic Council's and United Nations's chief scientific respondent on human issues in the Circumpolar World.

Despite this process of internationalization, the Inuit Studies conferences retained and, actually, increased their relevance as an opportunity to express Inuit identity. This was their next stage of development. The meetings that took place in Iqaluit (1994), St. John's (1996)—with a strong involvement of the Nunatsiavut (Labrador) Inuit—and Nuuk (1998) allowed local people to showcase their social, intellectual, and artistic achievements, and discuss them with specialists and practitioners from elsewhere on the planet. This tendency increased over the following decades. Meetings such as the Anchorage (2002), Paris (2006), and Washington, DC (2012) conferences gave the Inuit ample opportunity to expose to a large and receptive audience how they envisioned their culture, their existence, and their position in the contemporary world.

The three latest Inuit Studies conferences—St. John's (2016), Montreal (2019), and Winnipeg (2022)—while preserving their scholarly orientation, can truly be considered fully Inuit events. Their organization and programming were, to a large extent, supervised by Inuit;[17] Indigenous participants were as numerous as Qallunaat attendees, or even more so; some sessions were conducted entirely or, at least, partly in Inuktitut;[18] and Inuit arts, music, traditions, publications, and presentations of a scholarly nature were omnipresent. By way of example, several arts and crafts workshops, exhibitions, and a marketplace took place alongside more traditional academic sessions. The importance and significance that the conferences now have for many Inuit, the young in particular, shows up in the following quotation, from a group of Aklavik and Inuvik teen girls who had taken part in a cultural camp on Yukon North Slope's Inuvialuit lands, and had been invited to share their experience at the twenty-first Inuit Studies Conference (Montreal, 2019):

> We gave a presentation about the Imniarvik camp in a lively, youth-focused session, and met many friends and colleagues from across the North, including those whom the girls knew through their sports, school, and extra-curricular activities. We attended keynote addresses by notable and highly inspirational Inuit scholars, leaders, and activists who spoke about representation, diplomacy, sovereignty, hunting, and other topics central to the health and well-being of circumpolar communities. (Lyons et al. 2022, 46)

## Conclusion

At the turn of the 1970s, joining a movement that had been underway for a decade among other North American Indigenous Nations, the Inuit in Canada and Alaska, and the Kalaallit in Greenland, started to actively assert their rights and advocate for their recognition as self-determining Arctic citizens.[19] At the same time, many young researchers conducting fieldwork in Inuit communities—mostly, but not exclusively, anthropologists—adopted a new paradigm in their relationships with the bearers of the culture they studied. The researchers deemed that instead of describing and analyzing Inuit communities from the outside, they should engage with local people as far as people agreed, living with them, learning their language, and, most importantly, trying to understand the Inuit world view in order to convey and explain it to non-Inuit. As a result, the old academic field of "Eskimology" was transformed into Inuit studies. Such a transformation, also underway among scholars working with First Nations Peoples, was not directly brought on by the socio-political movement mentioned above, but it partook of a similar spirit of respect for Indigenous people, and was seen as a way to support the Inuit in their self-assertion.

More pointedly, from the mid-1960s on, students from Université de Montréal and Université Laval in Québec City, who fully shared the objectives of emerging Inuit studies, conducted field research in Nunavik (Arctic Quebec) and, later on, in the future territory of Nunavut, under the tutorship of a young French anthropologist, Bernard Saladin d'Anglure. In 1970, the members of this informal research team, based at Université Laval, decided to call themselves Inuksiutiit ("Things or people having to do with the Inuit"). Four years later, they founded a non-profit chartered organization, Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit Inc. (AIK). AIK's objectives have been to promote, develop, and disseminate knowledge on Inuit culture, language, and society. This was to be done in a spirit of collaborative research with Inuit communities.

Over the years, several projects initiated by AIK have played a major part in positioning Canada as the world leader in Inuit studies. Two accomplishments stand out in particular: the *Études Inuit Studies* journal and the Inuit studies conferences. Launched in 1977, the former has long since become the leading scholarly journal on Inuit issues. In its forty-seventh year as this is written, the journal is internationally respected for its solid contents, widely open to Inuit and Qallunaat (non-Inuit) knowledge, opinions, and contributions. As for the Inuit studies biennial conferences, they have welcomed, since 1978, any presenter interested in discussing well-documented information on Inuit matters. These conferences progressively became identity festivals of a sort, showcasing Inuit art and intellectual achievements, as well as more classical scholarship. At the latest conference in 2022, Inuit participants were more numerous than Qallunaat. Some Inuit studies conferences took place outside Canada, while the majority of them brought an international audience to Canada, eager to discuss with Canadian and other colleagues, and/or fellow Inuit, important social, cultural, language, and other issues related to the Inuit.

In short, the initiatives of Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit, a Canadian organization based in Québec City, have provided a global dimension to the elicitation, dissemination, and promotion of knowledge—whether traditional or contemporary—originating from the Inuit. In this way, it may have played an essential part in supporting the Indigenous citizens of the North American Arctic in the assertion of their identity and social rights. It remains to be seen, though, to what extent the increasingly collaborative research initiatives discussed in the pages of the journal *Études Inuit Studies,* or presented at the Inuit studies conferences, have brought concrete benefits to Arctic communities.

Trying to assess such benefits here would be beyond the scope of this article, but we can rightly assume that the Inuksiutiit researchers—and also most Qallunaat who publish in the journal and speak at the conferences—are primarily concerned with their studies, career, and reputation, and this in spite of their assumed idealism and good intentions. For this reason, they belong to the predominant colonial politico-scientific apparatus that often negates the intrinsic value of Indigenous Knowledge (Stern 2022, 5–6) and, therefore, they objectively have partaken in delaying the assertion of Inuit identity. What can be said in favour of Inuksiutiit, though, is that until the end of the 1970s, in Canada at least, the Inuit had not yet fully established the cultural, intellectual, educational, and political structures that would defend and preserve their way of life and their language. So, up to the early 1980s, every time members of Inuksiutiit collected ethnographical and linguistic data from Inuit Elders and returned it back in different ways—transferring research documents to concerned

Inuit organizations, publishing in Inuktitut, and creating a dedicated journal and the biennial conferences—they contributed positively to emerging Inuit initiatives in defence of Inuit culture and language.

From the 1980s on, the number of Inuit scholars, creators, and cultural activists grew exponentially, as can be seen by the tremendous increase, since the year 2000, in the number of Indigenous men and women published in *Études Inuit Studies* and participating in the Inuit Studies conferences (Table 1). It is therefore reasonable to assert that these two forums have made an international scholarly voice available to Inuit researchers and practitioners, who can thus show that their existence is made up of things other than the social problems too often highlighted by the mass media.

At this point, then, it must be realized that Inuit scholars and intellectuals are now perfectly able to conduct their own research on the topics that appear important to their communities. Thus, it is up to them to decide if initiatives such as those put forward by Inuksiutiit over the past five decades are still useful to the Inuit. They may also ask themselves if the very concept of Inuit studies is not a colonialist artifact—like "Eskimology" clearly was—that must be discarded. If this is indeed the case, they might devise a new scientific paradigm based largely on traditional Inuit Knowledge, as well as new tools for disseminating their findings, with or without the participation of non-Inuit collaborators.

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## Notes

1. On the typology of Inuit languages and dialects, see Dorais (2010, Chapter 2).
2. In the Western scientific tradition, "basic research" is distinct from applied studies, whose objectives are mainly practical (e.g., analyzing a local language in order to teach it to future missionaries), and from strictly narrative productions (such as books aimed at unveiling customs and lifestyles to an educated public).
3. For more complete information on the history of Inuksiutiit, see Dorais and Saladin d'Anglure (2023). Part of the data found in this article are drawn from that study.
4. The supra-natural environment includes all non-human powers and beings, which people consider endowed with isuma (reason), and with which they interact.
5. Naming newborns entails transmitting them the kinship relations already existing between the original bearers of a name (the eponyms) and their own kin.

6. The maps and other documents concerning place names had already been transferred in 1969 to the competent authority in the matter, the Commission de toponymie du Québec. Some 700 Inuit place names were later made official by the Province of Quebec.
7. The author had taken part in the 1965 "anthropological expedition to Hudson Strait."
8. Indeed, Université Laval's leading research centre in Arctic matters was the Centre d'Études Nordiques (CEN), created in 1961 by a decision of the Quebec provincial government. Needless to say, CEN had nothing to do with Inuksiutiit.
9. Under Part II [i.e., without share capital] of the *Canada Business Corporations Act* (S.C., 1974-75-76, c. 29).
10. Both projects yielded useful results: the CMHC study elicited Inuit perceptions of better housing, and a model house was built in Puvirnituq on the basis of these perceptions; the language project allowed AIK to devise a series of basic handbooks on various dialects (see below).
11. Since Laval is a francophone university, it never had a significant number of Inuit students, whose second language is usually English.
12. Sanaaq was published in an English translation (Nappaaluk 2014) sixty years after it had been written.
13. Among them: Martin Martin (Nain), Taamusi Qumaq (Puvirnituq), Naqi Ekho (Iqaluit), Uqsuralik Ottokie (Kinngait/Cape Dorset), Venant Atarjuagusiq and Emile Imaroittok (Igloolik), Barnabas Peryouar (Qamanittuaq/Baker Lake).
14. The specialists consulted included two or three Kalaallit scholars, but unfortunately no Inuit from Canada or Alaska.
15. Some texts also dealt with the Unangan (Aleuts), related to the Inuit through their language and culture.
16. In 2014, AIK transferred its ownership of the journal to Laval's CIERA (Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de recherches autochtones or Interuniversity Centre for Indigenous Studies and Research).
17. In Winnipeg the chief conference organizer was Professor Heather Igloliorte.
18. In Winnipeg (2022), a few sessions were even limited to Inuit participants.
19. This was the period when most Inuit people insisted on "Inuit" rather than "Eskimo."

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