

Changing Patterns of Conflict Management and Aggression among Inuit Youth in the Canadian Arctic: Longitudinal Ethnographic Observations

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Over the past few decades, significant changes have occurred in the conflict management strategies of the Inuit. These changes have been initiated by a number of acculturative factors, including population concentration and growth, increased economic security, increased alcohol consumption and value changes resulting from exposure to southern mass media. As Inuit communities become larger and face significant problems of social control, traditional techniques of conflict resolution have ceased to be effective. The younger generation of Inuit appears to be the most dramatically affected by these acculturative influences. This is reflected in dramatically altered patterns of emotional expression, aggressive behaviour and conflict management — all of which are becoming more clearly “southern” in character. Longitudinal research conducted by the author in the Inuit community of Holman since 1978 provides some insight into the nature of these changes among Inuit teenagers and young adults.

Introduction

Anthropologists have long been interested in the conflict management techniques of the Inuit and other dispersed hunting and gathering populations. Among these societies, the marginality of subsistence activities necessitated a high degree of social and economic co-operation within local groups. For the Inuit in particular, mutual dependence in the form of food sharing and co-operative hunting resulted in the development of numerous strategies for avoiding conflict and inhibiting of hostility. Order in traditional Inuit society was maintained through a combination of behavioural norms emphasizing emotional inhibition, non-demandingness,

non-interference, tolerance, a good sense of humour and, in the last resort, physical mobility. When such norms failed to avert conflicts between individuals, a variety of juridical techniques could be used, including song duels, head buffeting, wrestling and other contests designed to bring public resolution to the dispute in question. In dealing with the extremely disruptive or violent behaviour of individuals, a local group might rely on social ostracism of the offender or, in the last resort, group-condoned homicide.

The legal, or quasi-legal, principles regulating civil disputes in traditional Inuit society have been addressed by a number of researchers, including Hoebel (1954), Rasmussen (1929), Balikci (1970), Finkler (1975), and Steenhoven (1959, 1962). In general, there is consensus that traditional Inuit placed a supreme value on avoiding conflict and immediately resolving disputes, suggesting an emphasis on the restoration of peace rather than the administration of justice and/or punishment in the Western sense. Through a value system that emphasized thoughtful action, consideration for the autonomy of the individual, and the avoidance of asserting one's opinions on others, the Inuit were able to maintain social equilibrium, or what Fienup-Riordan has referred to as the "appearance of agreement" (Fienup-Riordan, 1990, p. 74).

Over the past thirty to forty years, however, a number of significant social, economic and political changes throughout the North have led to an undermining of traditional conflict management techniques so that they are no longer an effective means of managing interpersonal disputes in Inuit society. The most important of these changes include: (1) concentration of the Inuit population into permanent settlements and towns, (2) the introduction of the southern system of law enforcement and jurisprudence, (3) increased economic security, (4) the introduction of and increased use of alcohol, and (5) attitudinal changes brought about through increased exposure to southern Canadian values and behavioural norms. All of these factors have been instrumental in increasing the frequency of interpersonal conflict, in changing traditional patterns of emotional expression and inhibition, and in fostering greater dependence on recently introduced (non-Indigenous) law enforcement agencies.

Despite these dramatic changes, many Inuit elders and middle-aged adults throughout the North continue to maintain traditional values concerning conflict avoidance, non-demandingness, tolerance and emotional inhibition. To some extent, among this generation, Inuit values are so deeply ingrained that it has only been with some difficulty that they have accepted recently introduced, institutionalized means of resolving disputes. Among the younger generation, however, there has been a

marked change in behaviours and values regarding conflict management, one that increasingly depends on southern models of litigation, punishment and restitution. Among this younger generation, there has also been a noticeable increase in the open expression of verbal hostility and physical violence.

This paper reports on the changes in conflict management values and behaviours among the adolescents and young adults in one isolated Inuit community, Holman, located in the central Canadian Arctic. Since data on conflict management and aggression have been gathered during three extended field trips over a ten-year period (1978 to 1988), this paper will provide a longitudinal perspective based on interviews and behavioural observations of the younger generation of Inuit (see Condon, 1982, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1990a and 1990b). Given the unusually high rates of alcohol abuse, suicide, crime and juvenile delinquency among young Inuit throughout the North, it is essential to understand the kinds of acculturation pressures that may account for the abandonment of traditional modes of conflict resolution and the concomitant increase in socially destructive and self-destructive behaviour (see North-West Territories, 1983, p. 35). A thorough examination of these processes is essential if we seek a better understanding of the future direction of northern society. While this paper deals with changing patterns of conflict management and aggression in only one community, the findings are to some degree applicable to other Inuit communities in the Canadian Arctic that have experienced similar acculturation pressures.

The basic theoretical premise of this paper is that, given the lack of any centralized and coercive forensic institutions (or political bodies) within traditional Inuit society, it stands to reason that external law enforcement agents would be brought in to cope with the increase in interpersonal conflict resulting from population concentration, population expansion, alcohol abuse and economic marginalization. Techniques that were effective within small, highly mobile groups simply do not work in larger communities where social interdependence and intimacy have become undermined. The same is true of other foraging groups throughout the world who have become settled, either voluntarily or involuntarily, through government intervention (see Burbank, 1988, pp. 38-41, for a discussion of such processes among Australian Aborigines).

Ethnographic Background

The community of Holman (Ulukhaktok) is located on the western coast of Victoria Island in the North-West Territories of Canada, approximately 300 miles north of the Arctic Circle. The residents of the

community (who now refer to themselves as Ulukhaktokmiut) are mostly descendants of the northernmost groups of Copper Inuit (the Kanghiryuarmit and Kanghiryuatjagmiut, as identified by Stefansson, 1919, pp. 26-32). In general, the Copper Inuit were adapted to one of the more marginal and less productive habitats of the central Canadian Arctic (Damas, 1969, 1984). Due to their extreme isolation, the Copper Inuit of the Holman region were among the last Inuit groups in Canada to be contacted and influenced by the outside world. As a result, they retained many features of their traditional subsistence economy into the 1930s and 1940s, when trapping gradually increased in importance. The community of Holman was officially established in 1939 when the Hudson's Bay Company built a trading post on the north shore of Prince Albert Sound (Usher, 1965). In the same year, a Roman Catholic mission was also built there (Buliard, 1951).

During the early years of the settlement, the regional population remained dispersed in relatively isolated hunting and trapping camps for much of the year, but made periodic trips to the Hudson's Bay Company post for the purposes of trade and social intercourse. Beginning in the 1950s, more and more families were attracted to take up at least part-time residence in the community of Holman, often living in snowhouses, tents and scrap houses. In 1963, the federal government shipped prefabricated housing units to Holman to facilitate the process of population concentration. By 1967, when the last Inuit family moved in from off the land, regional population concentration had been completed (see Condon, 1983, for a detailed ethnographic summary of Holman).

With population concentration complete, the physical expansion of the community occurred at a rapid rate through the construction of a federal day school, an arts and crafts co-operative, a nursing station, a community hall, an airstrip and more public housing units. At the same time that this expansion was taking place, a substantial increase in the Inuit birth rate occurred, giving rise to the North's first "baby boom." Similar increases in the live-birth rate occurred throughout the North and may be attributable to improvements in prenatal and postnatal care, better nutrition and the introduction of bottle feeding (Condon, 1990b, pp. 271-72). In any event, Holman's baby-boom generation (now reaching its late twenties and early thirties) has the distinction of being Holman's largest age cohort as well as the first generation of Inuit to be raised exclusively within the confines of an artificially created, but rapidly expanding, settlement. Rapid social change has been one of the noticeable features of settlement existence since the early 1960s and it is this generation that has benefited as well as suffered the most from its consequences.

Contemporary Patterns of Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Traditional Copper Inuit society, like many other Inuit societies, maintained a delicate balance between the emphasis on self-reliance and the need for co-operation between individuals, households and groups. In the absence of a formal system of conflict management and social control, equilibrium was maintained by the relative homogeneity of local groups combined with the preponderance of primary kin relationships binding individuals together in a network of social and economic obligations (Finkler, 1975, p. 13). The importance of these social and economic obligations was reflected in a behavioural system that minimized potential conflicts through tolerance, non-interference and emotional inhibition. As Honigmann and Honigmann (1965, p. 242) aptly noted:

Because Eskimos are non-interfering, they don't undertake to tell others what to do or how to do it, unless help is requested. In Euro-Canadian society, people's dependence on each other accompanies intense demandingness in interpersonal relations that often leads to resentment and open friction. Eskimos live together far more equitably, partly because they demand little of one another.

Fienup-Riordan has made similar observations for the Yup'ik Eskimos of southwestern Alaska. According to her, successful coexistence is the result of a kind of non-demandingness that emphasizes avoidance of "injuring the mind of another" (Fienup-Riordan, 1990, p. 74). Individuals should not force values and opinions on others, nor should they admonish in a direct or forceful fashion. "A reticence to hasty verbalization as well as the value placed upon a person's ability to retain equilibrium in a tense situation derived from this belief. Ideally, smoothness and acquiescence were the appropriate masks for a person's emotions" (Fienup-Riordan, 1990, p. 74).

Among most Inuit groups, diffusion of hostility through humour, joking and gossiping was also an important component of conflict management (see especially Briggs, 1970, 1968; and Chance, 1966, p. 78). Where conflicts did occur between disputants, the emphasis was on the immediate restoration of peace rather than the administration of justice in the Euro-Canadian sense. As Finkler (1975, p. 13) notes:

In conclusion, the traditional system of control within Inuit society was characterized by its effectiveness stemming from primary relationships among people, its intervention aimed at the restoration of peace rather than justice, its flexibility in reaction to conflict dependent more upon an assessment of the scarcity of

resources available within the community rather than on punishment, and finally, by its lack of forensic institutions for litigation and adjudication.

The rapid social and economic changes in Holman and other Inuit communities throughout the North have made obsolete most traditional forms of conflict resolution. Physical withdrawal or social ostracism of chronic offenders, for example, have ceased to be functional mechanisms of punishment in a society that is no longer highly mobile and in which people are forced to reside in large and densely populated communities. In addition, the transition from a subsistence hunting economy to a wage economy has eliminated the need for co-operation and sharing, which was characteristic of precontact Inuit society and was a primary consideration in traditional conflict management. Despite population growth and community centralization, social and economic trends have led to an individualization of households and a decreased reliance on traditional kinship and alliance networks.

This individualization process is most pronounced among the younger generation of Inuit, whose exposure to traditional patterns of food sharing and economic co-operation has been significantly curtailed in a community where wage labour and social assistance have helped make such practices obsolete. As a result, the social and economic realities of contemporary Inuit life have not only given rise to new forms of social upheaval and interpersonal conflict, but have also patterned to some degree the specific behavioural responses to these social stressors.

In the contemporary period, almost all interpersonal conflict among young Inuit adults and older teenagers occurs either within the context of uncontrolled alcohol use or during competitive sports play such as basketball, hockey and baseball. There is no doubt that alcohol abuse has become one of the major social and psychological problems facing contemporary northern society. Alcohol abuse is responsible for the significant increase in all forms of violence, especially domestic violence, homicide and suicide. It has been estimated that 90 to 95 percent of all serious accidents and injuries in the North-West Territories occur in conjunction with the consumption of alcohol (Finkler, 1975, p. 24). These figures are as true today as they were in the 1970s and 1980s. While accidents and injuries resulting from competitive sporting events are usually not as severe as those that result from alcohol use, they have nevertheless become a significant source of ill-will among the young people participating in such athletic events. More importantly, they reflect changing values on the part of the young generation concerning the appropriateness of aggressive behaviour, both physical and verbal.

To elaborate on these recently introduced sources of conflict in Inuit society, I will describe in some detail three distinct periods in the recent history of the community of Holman, corresponding to each of my three extended field visits.

First Period (1978-1980)

During my first visit to Holman, the community was significantly smaller, more traditional in orientation and much more isolated from the outside world. Hunting and trapping activities continued to be important economic pursuits for all members of the community, including many young and teen-age boys who accompanied their fathers as trapping partners. Other than these relatively traditional pursuits, young people had few activities available to pass the time, and one of the most frequent complaints was that life in Holman was "so boring with nothing to do." Entertainment among this age group was limited primarily to frequent social visitation between households, a variety of card and board games, and unorganized sporting events such as street hockey, baseball and football. While the settlement had a rather run-down community hall that could be used for indoor recreational activities, it was closed most of the time due to the lack of community funds to heat it.

Observations and interviews collected during this field-work period suggest very few incidents of open conflict or aggression among teenagers and young adults. The basic tenor of adolescent and young adult interaction was one of mutual compatibility and flexibility. Conflicts that did occur on rare occasions were shrugged off immediately by the antagonists, often under the guise of humour, and activities would resume their normal course. Alcohol abuse was not a source of conflict since very few young people could afford to purchase it. Even if they could afford it, the process of ordering it all the way from the territorial capital of Yellowknife was a significant constraint. What alcohol-induced violence did occur seems to have been limited solely to the older adult members of the population. Even among this age group, drinking of alcoholic beverages was less common than it is today and was characterized by a high degree of seasonality (Condon, 1983, p. 175).

In sporting activities, very few opportunities for verbal or physical conflict occurred among young people. In fact, most sporting events were organized in such an informal and impromptu manner that nobody played in a terribly competitive manner. For many sporting events, there was a poor understanding of the rules of play, which undoubtedly contributed to the lack of competitiveness. What was more important was the enjoyment of playing the game with friends and relatives rather than seeing which team could win. Many sporting events were not even accompanied by any

official time keeping or score keeping.

In sum, interpersonal relations among young Inuit at this time were clearly traditional in orientation, with a greater emphasis on mutual co-operation than competition. Since Holman was still relatively unexposed to the competitive value system of southern society, its young people were able to maintain a typically Inuit style of interaction and conflict avoidance. More importantly, the dearth of entertainment prospects served to reinforce the importance of the peer group as a source of recreation and social interaction.

Second Period (1982-1983)

After a two-year absence, I returned to see a number of significant changes in the community as a whole and in the behaviour of young people in particular. Perhaps the most significant of these changes was the introduction of television and radio service in the fall of 1980. Not only did this new television service provide an important source of entertainment, but, perhaps more importantly, it offered a window to the southern way of life. While television had a significant impact on all age groups within the community, young people seemed to have been the most heavily influenced by the southern attitudes, life-styles and behaviours beamed daily into their households. The behavioural changes on the part of young people were immediately noticeable. Young teenagers, primarily boys, were much more boisterous and competitive in their interactions with one another, behaving more like southern adolescents than the Holman teenagers I had observed just two years before. Competitive sporting events assumed greater importance, with ice hockey (which was almost never played two years before) becoming a veritable passion among teenage boys and young men. In observing these sporting events, it became apparent that a significant shift in attitudes had occurred. Where the sporting events of two years before were organized primarily for the participants to have a good time, these new activities were clearly oriented towards determining which team had the best players. Thus, playing the game for enjoyment was secondary to playing the game to win. In addition, the number of verbal and physical confrontations during sporting matches was much greater (undoubtedly a consequence of this changing attitude towards winning and the desire to mimic the behaviour of professional hockey players), as was the number of injuries resulting from these confrontations. What is particularly interesting, however, is that, despite the increased frequency of verbal and physical conflict, a relatively traditional attitude towards conflict management seems to have prevailed: specifically that conflicts on the ice were quickly forgotten by the antagonists.

Several informants insisted that feelings of ill-will did not continue off the ice, and my own observations indicate that individuals who had been fighting with one another one day could be socializing and joking with each other the next. Overall, an important aspect of interpersonal conflict during this period was that it was limited solely to the context of competitive sports play and was never apparent in any other social activities.

Lastly, while my research shows a slight increase in adolescent and young adult alcohol abuse during this period, it was still relatively minor in comparison to adults who were drinking (and fighting) much more than during the initial field-work period.

Third Period (1987-1988)

On my return for a third field-work visit, after a four-year absence, I encountered a community that had changed substantially in physical appearance. Recent construction had added a new school (with fully equipped gymnasium), a new hamlet office building, a games arcade, a lighted outdoor hockey rink, a new Co-op craft shop and office, as well as a large number of recently constructed public housing units. Compared to the dearth of entertainment activities that characterized the community in years past, Holman now seems to be a paradise of recreation. The school gymnasium was open six nights a week, offering a variety of recreational activities to all age groups. The games arcade provided video games, pool tables, table hockey and an assortment of other games. Even the television service has been expanded from one channel to five.

Sporting competition among young adult males (and to a lesser extent among young females) has risen to new heights across all activities played — including outdoor ice hockey, indoor floor hockey, basketball and volleyball. Since the construction of a lighted outdoor hockey rink in 1986, young males (both teenagers and young adults) are able to play hockey on an almost continual basis. Observations of hockey matches, especially, revealed a dramatic increase in the number of verbal and physical confrontations. Data collected over a ten-month period on interpersonal conflict indicate that the vast majority of conflicts occur within the context of competitive sports play. Rarely does a hockey match or basketball game take place without at least one incident of conflict, either a heated verbal confrontation or a physical fight.

Even the spectators who gather to watch these events are affected by this change in attitudes about openly expressing emotion, and can be heard frequently yelling and screaming epithets at both players and referees. This applies especially to adolescent girls and young women, who stand by the sidelines and loudly pronounce their loyalties to one team over

another. I was quite surprised when I first attended one of these hockey matches and observed these young people (and even a few adults) engage in behaviour that was unheard-of just five years before.

Formal and informal interviews with adolescents and young adults indicate that aggressive behaviour on the ice is viewed almost as a desirable feature of sports competition. One informant noted, "a hockey game would just be too boring if there were no fights" — an observation that most certainly would never have been made several years before. Similar evaluations were offered by other players, suggesting that a further change in attitudes towards physical and verbal conflict has occurred. Other interviews revealed that conflicts engendered on the ice now frequently continue "off the ice" well after the conflict had occurred. This represents a significant shift from the preceding field-work period, when most young people would insist that conflicts on the playing field were quickly forgotten and were never extended to other areas of social interaction.

Along with changes in the open expression of conflict, there has been a change in the method of conflict resolution. In the recent past, the most typical manner of resolution was a traditional pattern of forgiving and forgetting. Now, however, more structured means of resolution and litigation have been instituted. This new pattern is the result of a system of rules and regulations instituted by the Holman Recreation Committee, which organizes and oversees all recreational and sporting activities in the community.

Recognizing the need to control the increase in violence on the ice and the incidence of unsportsmanlike conduct, the Committee, with the encouragement of a non-Inuit recreation director, has established a system of penalties and suspensions to deal with such behaviour. Thus, individuals fighting during a sporting event are expelled, and in some cases are prohibited from participating in all recreational activities for a one- to two-week period, depending on the severity of the violation. Since offenders are quickly punished for sporting transgressions, the traditional responses of forgiving and forgetting are no longer operational.

While these rules and regulations have been designed to discourage interpersonal conflict during sporting events, they have been largely ineffective in eliminating such behaviour. In fact, to a limited degree, they may encourage such behaviour since many players perceive that their status is enhanced somewhat by being thrown out of a game.

Off the playing field, the amount of verbal and physical violence has increased as well, all of it due to the dramatic increase in alcohol use and abuse. (I should note that, over the past ten years, I have been able to

document only one physical/verbal conflict that occurred outside the drinking or sporting context, and this particular incident took place during the third research visit.) The young adults who, as teenagers, rarely drank at all four to five years ago are now drinking more heavily because many have a steady source of income with which to purchase alcohol. Today, the most extreme forms of violence in the community are perpetrated by these young adults and older teenagers, the latter of whom are able to obtain alcohol from older brothers and sisters. Of the twenty incidents of alcohol-related violence that were documented during the third field-work period, six involved older adults and the remainder involved teenagers and adults under thirty years of age. These ranged from relatively minor verbal confrontations to nearly fatal assaults, including spousal assault, which is becoming an increasingly common form of alcohol-related violence in Holman and other northern communities.

The increased incidence of conflict and aggression among young people is a function of demographics as well as changing values concerning alcohol use and emotional expression. Since they occupy the largest age cohort within the community, it is to be expected that they would account for the greatest percentage of violent acts. Not surprisingly, this is also the age group that, at least in modern industrialized societies, is responsible for most criminal violations.

Accompanying the increase in alcohol-related violence is a change in attitudes regarding the accountability of intoxicated offenders. Until recently, it has been common to excuse alcohol-induced acts of violence (whether directed to individuals or to property) because, as many people informed me, "the drunkard didn't know what he was doing." In 1979, for example, I documented an incident wherein an intoxicated person stole another man's snowmobile and drove it into a utility pole, damaging the snowmobile beyond repair. Oddly enough, the owner of the snowmobile made no attempt to press charges or to coerce the offender to pay damages. Today, however, there is less of a tendency to forgive the alcohol-induced transgressions of individuals, most especially in cases where the person is a repeat offender. While people recognize that certain individuals do not know what they are doing while drunk, they are nevertheless responsible for drinking and losing control in the first place. As a result, there is a greater tendency for drunkards (as they are called locally) to have charges pressed against them. A relatively traditional attitude, however, continues to persist. Very rarely does the victim of such violations lay charges. Rather, a third party (such as the local by-law officer, a council member or a concerned citizen) will bring the matter to

the attention of the R.C.M.P. (until recently based in Coppermine), who will investigate the matter and decide whether or not charges should be laid. There is no doubt that many victims prefer that charges be laid, but are unwilling to file a formal complaint themselves.

One extreme example should demonstrate this attitude. In 1987, a young adult in a state of uncontrolled intoxication severely beat a friend who was also drunk. The victim incurred substantial head wounds and was flown to a hospital in Edmonton, where he was in intensive care for about a week. Although the young man recovered, he did sustain some permanent brain damage that still affects his speech and levels of concentration. Charges were not laid by the victim himself, but by the R.C.M.P. constable, who reconstructed the incident through bystanders' reports. At the trial, the victim publicly claimed that the defendant was his good friend and that he forgave him for his actions. Clearly, this young man was making a statement reflecting the traditional attitude towards forgiving and forgetting in spite of admitting to me later in personal interviews that he felt the offender should pay for his actions.

It is clear that traditional forms of conflict resolution (namely forgiving, forgetting, avoiding direct confrontation, etc.) have not disappeared completely but have become minimized with the introduction of southern Canadian forms of jurisprudence. This can be seen both in the management of conflict in sporting events and the management of more extreme forms of alcohol-induced violence. While, on the surface, people can claim to abide by traditional forms of conflict resolution, they now rely more heavily on introduced systems of conflict management than ever before. This is due both to the increase in interpersonal conflict as well as to changing attitudes regarding the accountability of offenders. Thus, it appears that many young people are trying to maintain a precarious balance between traditional values of avoidance and forgiveness, on the one hand, and a more modern attitude based on southern Canadian concepts of jurisprudence, on the other.

This shift to dependence on external law enforcement agencies is also reflected in the movement on the part of Holman residents to have a permanent R.C.M.P. detachment in the community. Ten years ago, most community members did not see any value in having a permanent detachment in what they perceived as a relatively law-abiding community. With the increase in alcohol-induced violence during the 1980s, however, there was a more concerted effort on the part of residents to have a permanent detachment in the community. Just as young people in Holman have recognized the need to establish a system of regulations governing conflicts on the playing field, so the members of the entire

community have also realized that traditional mechanisms of social control are no longer effective in managing the increasing violence of a growing community.

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, the R.C.M.P. resisted the call to establish a permanent detachment in Holman, partly due to monetary constraints and partly due to the realization that a full-time constable placed in Holman would not have much to do. These requests were made repeatedly not only by the Holman Hamlet Council but by the nurses at the local health facility who, by default, were the ones who had to deal with the social problems associated with increasing levels of drug and alcohol abuse. From the perspective of the R.C.M.P., however, levels of criminality and juvenile delinquency in Holman paled in comparison to larger population centres such as Coppermine and Cambridge Bay, where law enforcement resources were in more urgent demand. Divisional Headquarters ("G" Division) in Yellowknife finally relented and established a permanent detachment in the fall of 1988. While the detachment has not been in Holman long enough to assess its long-range impact, the immediate impact (as assessed during the author's two-month visit during in summer of 1989 and another brief visit in the summer of 1991) seems to be a decreased tendency for people to manage conflicts on their own and an increased reliance on the services of the resident constable. This would suggest a further erosion of traditional forms of conflict management. Thus, forgiving and forgetting are no longer the preferred response to interpersonal conflict since community residents can now rely on someone else, the R.C.M.P., to maintain social control through coercion. It also allows many community residents the luxury of espousing traditional values of forgiveness and forgetting even as they rely increasingly on outside law enforcement agents.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper has provided a general overview of changing patterns of aggression, emotional expression and conflict management among young Inuit in the community of Holman. While an extensive data base is still being analyzed, interviews and observations conducted over a ten-year period indicate a substantial transformation in how people perceive and react to interpersonal conflict of varying degrees. Some traditional attitudes continue to be espoused, but there is also evidence that young people (and many adults) are relying more heavily on institutionalized means of resolving conflicts. These changes can only be due to the increasing size of the settlement population (which is undermining the degree of social cohesion of Inuit society), exposure to southern values

and standards regarding conflict resolution (through television and radio) and the increased use of alcohol, which, perhaps more than anything else, is undermining the balance of social relations within many Inuit communities.

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