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**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
HIGHER LEVEL  
PAPER 1**

Wednesday 19 November 2014 (afternoon)

1 hour

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the passage carefully and then answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[20 marks]*.

*Texts in this examination paper have been edited: word additions or explanations are shown in square brackets [ ]; substantive deletions of text are indicated by ellipses in square brackets [...]; minor changes are not indicated.*

*Extract adapted from Aporta, C. and Higgs, E. "Satellite Culture: Global Positioning Systems, Inuit Wayfinding, and the Need for a New Account of Technology", **Current Anthropology**, Vol. 46, No. 5, December 2005. **Current Anthropology** © 2005 The University of Chicago Press. Used with permission.*

Inuit<sup>1</sup> hunters of the Igloodik region [of Arctic Canada] have traditionally oriented themselves on the land and sea by understanding a wide range of environmental factors including wind behaviour, snowdrift patterns, animal behaviour, tidal cycles, currents, and astronomical phenomena. Inuit wayfinding methods are difficult to learn, requiring years of tutoring and experience, but are perfectly reliable. In recent years, Inuit hunters have added the use of global positioning system (GPS)<sup>2</sup> units to their wayfinding resources.

Much has changed in Igloodik in recent decades. Formal education, stores, commercial transport, electronic communications and wage labour have transformed social patterns and structures. Adaptation is found in every aspect of life: people still hunt for food, for example, but often on weekend trips by mechanized vehicle. But it has become more difficult to socialise the young Inuit in methods of navigating on land and sea, and many younger people today do not have the depth of knowledge to move about safely.

Inuit hunters learn to navigate while travelling with elders and through conversations with relatives and friends. Before snowmobiles came into use, the slower and more silent travel pace of dog sleds made travelling itself an ideal context for teaching and learning environmental knowledge. Today, while travelling with snowmobiles, younger boys can only be instructed about the environment during tea breaks, in a pause after a hunt, during conversations at camping spots, or after pursuing animals.

The increase in affordable and more accurate GPS units has led to their increased use. Inuit elders see the benefits of GPS. Knowledgeable full-time or part-time hunters of various ages use them as a supplementary navigational tool. A frequently mentioned positive use of GPS is hunting for walrus, a principal food source. It is easy for a hunter to become disoriented while concentrating on the hunt itself, and finding the route back to camp can be time- and fuel-consuming. With GPS a hunter can easily find the shortest route. GPS units are also considered useful in certain weather conditions, as one hunter and occasional GPS user describes: "The need would arise if I'm travelling in fog, and if I don't know where I am going. For example, on a calm day in a boat, where you don't have a ripple, seaweeds are not there, then it would become handy".

But concerns arose in the 1990s that younger, less experienced hunters are relying too heavily on GPS units. Elders' main concerns are that a GPS receiver can break in extreme Arctic conditions and it would be dangerous to rely on an instrument that breaks without traditional wayfinding skills as backup. A particular concern is that GPS units often direct users in a straight line without consideration for the changing nature of Arctic conditions. There is the possibility of being directed into ice ridges or over dangerously thin ice.

35 The debate surrounding the introduction of GPS technology reflects concerns over the loss of some very important skills. This deskilling is accompanied by a diminished relationship with the land and one increasingly mediated by GPS and other devices. The use of fast means of transportation and the existence of new spheres of work and leisure and formal education amplify the impact of GPS technology.

40 Younger hunters, especially those who have relatively little knowledge of Inuit wayfinding methods, are more dependent on GPS. What is less clear is the extent to which GPS technology will enhance Inuit methods of wayfinding or, alternatively, cause disengagement from long-term local knowledge. Inuit who are enthusiastic about the technology seem to regard it as an extension of classical tools, that is, devices that amplify human ability. Those who are suspicious or cautious are worried about the loss of understanding of the land handed down from one generation to  
45 another or the interlocking consequences of multiple technologies such as the GPS, snowmobiles, radio communication, and computers. Both accounts are plausible, but it strikes us that despite the well-known Inuit ability to adapt to new technologies and new circumstances, GPS technology has the potential to deeply modify and cause disengagement from a well-established approach to the geographic surroundings and to the environment in general.

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<sup>1</sup> Inuit: indigenous peoples living north of the Arctic Circle

<sup>2</sup> global positioning system (GPS): provides location, including geographic coordinates and time information to users anywhere on earth using various GPS satellites

1. Describe the way in which Igloolik Inuit wayfinding has changed as a result of the increasing use of technology. *[6 marks]*
  
  2. Using theoretical perspectives, explain the consequences of the increasing use of technology on social relations and culture among the Igloolik Inuit. *[6 marks]*
  
  3. Compare and contrast how modernity and tradition co-exist among the Igloolik Inuit with how modernity and tradition co-exist in **one** society that you have studied in detail. *[8 marks]*
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