

HENDERSON, Ailsa, 2007 *Nunavut: Rethinking Political Culture*, Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 254 pages.

Natalia Loukacheva

Volume 32, Number 2, 2008

Franz Boas et les Inuit
Franz Boas and the Inuit

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/038223ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/038223ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Association Inuksiitiit Katimajit Inc.
Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de recherches autochtones (CIÉRA)

ISSN

0701-1008 (print)
1708-5268 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Loukacheva, N. (2008). Review of [HENDERSON, Ailsa, 2007 *Nunavut: Rethinking Political Culture*, Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 254 pages.] *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 32(2), 190–192.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/038223ar>

dynamique du processus de résistance, d'incorporation et de recréation qui mène à la naissance d'un objet métis, dans l'acception gruzinskienne du terme» (p. 127).

En conclusion, je dirais que la thèse développée dans cet ouvrage, dont on appréciera le style élégant et érudit, mérite que l'on s'y attarde. On regrettera, peut-être, que la démonstration soit plus théorique que concrète. En effet, à part quelques dizaines de pages réellement consacrées à l'analyse d'objets spécifiques, la plupart de l'argumentaire est développé à partir de textes ethnographiques. De même, on aurait souhaité que l'analyse déborde de ce que l'auteure appelle l'époque historique, c'est-à-dire celle qui s'étend de 1770 à 1940, pour faire le lien avec la production contemporaine des sculptures-souvenirs et avec les tentatives actuelles d'investir l'art destiné à l'*Autre* d'un sens culturellement enraciné, dont les sculptures-récits sont une des manifestations.

Thibault Martin
Département de travail social
et des sciences sociales
Université du Québec en Outaouais
Case postale 1250, succursale Hull
Gatineau (QC), J8X 3X7, Canada
thibault.martin@uqo.ca

HENDERSON, Ailsa

2007 *Nunavut: Rethinking Political Culture*, Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 254 pages.

Is there a unique political culture in Nunavut? How is it influenced by the Inuit ways of decision-making and a Westminster political tradition? *Nunavut: Rethinking Political Culture* by Ailsa Henderson focuses on the emergence and development of political culture in this Canadian Northern territory populated by an Inuit majority. In an attempt to understand the political culture of Nunavut, the author looks at the process of institutional creation and its impact on Northerners. In many ways, institutions created in Nunavut were based on the Southern models with some Northern modifications. Those structures had little legitimacy among Northerners as they were established "by elites within the Canadian political system" (p. 3). At the same time, in parallel with the gradual institutional adaptation, the process of the political adaptation of Northerners took place. Thus, this book embarks on a further inquiry into the collision of different political cultures within Canada's North. By using various original (*i.e.*, fieldwork in Nunavut) and secondary materials, employing the methodology of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and training in political science, the author focuses her study around three questions: "1) how has the pre-existing model of governance and the process by which Inuit were integrated into the Canadian political system influenced the current operation of political life in Nunavut? 2) to what extent does the institutional structure of political life affect the political

behaviour of its citizens? and 3) is there a distinct political culture within Nunavut?" (*ibid*).

In part one (chapters 2-4) the author focuses on factors that influence contemporary political culture in Nunavut; the process of the Inuit integration into the political system; and their involvement and participatory opportunities. Chapter 2 looks at historic and political developments that impacted the Inuit before and after the creation of Nunavut and the negotiation of their land claim. Henderson also presents statistics on social, health, human manpower, and economic indicators that reveal the array of surmountable challenges in Nunavut. Chapter 3 deals with a pre-institutional Inuit political culture. It analyses the dominant Inuit values and behaviour patterns in pre-contact and post-contact traditional Inuit society that were relevant to emerging political institutions. Chapter 4 is focused on policies of the Canadian government mainly in the 1960s and 1970s directed at the integration of the Inuit into Canada's political system. The author reveals how government officials were unprepared to embrace the rapid adaptation by the Inuit to the rules of political life and their persistent attempts to secure Inuit's interests and political rights. She also explores government decisions regarding Northerners and political institutions and the role of different actors involved in the institutional design of the North.

In part two (chapters 5-8) the book traces the political development of Nunavut and the operation of its modern political culture. The scope of research questions varies from the analysis of the institutional design in the Eastern and Central Arctic, consensus politics, the particularities of political behaviour among various actors (*i.e.*, legislators, voters, political elites, etc.), to evaluations of political attitudes that shape Nunavut's political culture; analysis of the political situation and modification of the political culture in the territory. In chapter 9, Henderson considers venues for transforming political culture in Nunavut and looks at the role of Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit* ("the Inuit way of doing things..." p. 191), and predictors of support for the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the created territory. Chapter 10 draws conclusions and points at cultural influences (*e.g.*, "a traditional Inuit approach to resource distribution and social control;" a liberal Canadian political culture; and the importance of the institutional development of the NWT (p. 215) that have an impact on the nature of contemporary political culture in Nunavut.

In her analysis of the political development of Nunavut, institutional structures and political behaviour of different actors, the author draws the readers' attention to the broad scope of issues which help us to comprehend the uniqueness of the aspects that shape Nunavut's political life and system. In the meantime, for some parts of this book, it would be useful for the reader who is not an expert on those issues to have a better reference to sources that were used to describe events which took place some time ago. For example, information on page 22 which describes the DEW line developments and suggests several numbers; information on pages 56 and 88-89 which describe territorial boundary divisions of the NWT and their impact on other units of the Confederation; information describing the elections and chronological dates in the NWT at page 59; or

information on financial costs of election campaigns for individual candidates at page 120.

These details aside, in many ways this book fills a gap in existing studies on political issues in Nunavut. Furthermore, by tracking the emergence, development and operation of a divergent political culture of a sub-national unit within Canada, it contributes to our understanding of the “Nunavut project,” the territory’s place in Confederation and lessons to be learned from the successes and failures of this Arctic entity. This book should appeal to those who are interested in the political cultures of Canada, Northern politics and political evolution of Nunavut. It is recommended for students of Canadian Studies and political science.

Natalia Loukacheva
Polar Law Program
University of Akureyri
Solborg / Nordurslod 600
Akureyri, Iceland
natalial@unak.is

HOOD, Bryan C.

2008 *Towards an Archaeology of the Nain Region, Labrador*, Washington, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Arctic Studies Center, Contributions to Circumpolar Anthropology, 7, 365 pages.

Bryan Hood contribue depuis plus de 30 ans à l’archéologie des peuples nordiques. Il a travaillé non seulement au Labrador, mais également sur la Terre de Baffin, au Groenland, dans le nord de la Norvège et en Russie. Il a fait ses premiers pas au Labrador dans le cadre de travaux dirigés par l’archéologue William Fitzhugh qui s’est d’ailleurs occupé de l’édition finale de cette monographie. Bryan Hood enseigne l’archéologie à l’Université de Tromsø en Norvège depuis 1996. C’est d’ailleurs en 1996 que j’ai eu le plaisir de le connaître car il avait accepté de diriger une des équipes devant contribuer à l’étude d’impact archéologique que l’on m’avait demandé de coordonner aux environs de Voisey’s Bay, à quelque 15 km au sud-ouest de Nain, la région qui fait justement l’objet de cette monographie (cf. Hood et Baikie 1998). Déjà à cette époque, il avait été choisi en raison de sa connaissance approfondie de l’archéologie de cette région qu’il avait déjà étudiée dans le cadre de ses études de maîtrise (Trent University) et de doctorat (University of Massachusetts, Amherst).

Cette monographie porte principalement sur les sites archéologiques de l’île Nukasukutok qui occupent huit des 10 chapitres descriptifs alors que les deux autres portent sur des travaux d’envergure plus modeste réalisés aux environs de Webb Bay/Port Manvers Run, toujours aux environs de Nain. En fait, une grande attention est accordée au site Nukasukutok-5 (cinq chapitres) dont l’occupation remonte à l’Archaique maritime. Mais Hood ne s’arrête pas là et s’intéresse également aux Paléoesquimaux de l’Arctique et plus particulièrement aux Pré-dorsétiens et Dorsétiens qui