

„Befreiung“ der afghanischen Frauen, die somit noch als Kriegsgrund erhalten mussten.

Das Buch stellt grundlegende Fragen wie etwa „Does Something Called ‘Religion’ Cause Gender-Based Violence?“ (Beitrag von Janet R. Jakobsen) oder auch, wie mit Kinderehen (Dina M. Siddiqi) oder wie mit Gewalt gegen Transgender (Sima Shakhari) umzugehen ist, und gibt darauf Antworten, die nicht notwendig dem Mainstream entsprechen, aber Ergebnisse gründlichen Nachdenkens sind.

Das Buch ist vielseitig und zum Teil mit den vielen sehr spezifischen Abkürzungen schwer lesbar, aber bereichernd, wenn man sich darauf einlässt.

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**Anderson, Wannii W., and Douglas D. Anderson:** *Iñupiat of the Sii. Historical Ethnography and Arctic Challenges.* Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2024. 132 pp. ISBN 978-1-64642-605-8.

Both emeritus professors of anthropology at Brown University, Wannii W. Anderson and Douglas D. Anderson have been working with the Iñupiat of Alaska since the 1960s. Together, they have already published several monographs and numerous articles on these populations of northwest Alaska, who today number over 40,000 inhabitants, two-thirds of whom are living in Canada. The Iñupiat belong to the Aleut linguistic group. Some groups migrated from the Alaskan interior to the coasts in the late 1890s, following episodes of famine and influenza spread by Euro-American travelers. Others live inland.

This short monograph describes and analyzes the transformations that marked the Iñupiat of the village of Selawik, from 1968 to 1994, with a particular focus on the history of the village, which was suddenly and profoundly transformed by the arrival of modernity. The two anthropologists and archaeologists have spent more than 60 years living in this community, and here they restore the sense of belonging to Selawik, taking their inspiration in the work completed by Keith Basso and Steven Feld, among others. They share life stories and testimonies gathered from the elders and the youngest, as well as highlight the work of local historians who have written extensively on their community and its transformations. In Appendix 1, for instance, they provide the excerpts of two of their students, Richard Berry and Beverly Davis. But it is a pity not to have a longer text from them unless they will give birth to another project. Through in situ observations, testimonials and conversations, the two authors highlight the perspectives of the Iñupiat themselves, their views on their way of life at a pivotal period in their history.

The book is structured into ten chapters grouped into two parts. In addition to the prologue where their very

first visit is described, the first part comprises 6 ethno-historical chapters. The first chapter introduces the reader to the Iñupiat of the region. It describes the proto-historic period, when the Iñupiat lived in small settlements scattered along the Selawik river, hunting and harvesting fish. The term “Iñupiat” is glossed as derived from the “place of the sheefish ... (*Sternodus leucichthys*),” a kind of whitefish. The authors also explain that in those days the people of the area were in fact divided into two groups called the Siilviim Kangianigmiut (people of the upper river area) and the Kiitaaḡmiut (people of the lower river and inter-lake area). Chapter 2 presents a brief history of the Iñupiat before they settled in the village of Selawik. The first western contacts are described, and especially the meeting with the Russian explorer L. A. Zagoskin in 1842/1843. Then, the authors report that in the mid-nineteenth century, the entire region was impacted by the arrival of the American whaling vessels (13), an influence that intensified after Alaska was purchased by the US in 1867. In those days, the federal government started assimilating the Iñupiat with the goal of “civilizing” them. In 1884, it established its authority everywhere in northern Alaska. Government schools and missionaries came in, and soon after, in 1898, the gold rush brought about another strong impact on the lives of the Iñupiat. Chapter 3 describes the formation of the village, when the Iñupiat families moved to the village to follow schools and church education. Chapter 4 discusses trading activities between the Iñupiat of Selawik and the Amerindians of the region. Chapter 5 focuses on the fur trade with some elders’ testimonies, but these two chapters are incredibly short with only 4 and 8 pages, respectively. Chapter 6 deals with reindeer herding, a recently introduced activity that started in 1908 (it was introduced elsewhere in Alaska by Sheldon Jackson in 1891) after the US government began a new program to avoid food shortages. Again, interesting elders’ testimonies are brought in. But today, nothing is left from these activities except the Selawik Reindeer Company building now transformed into an Adventist church (46).

In the second part of the book, the two anthropologists share their ethnographic analysis of the village since the 1970s. Chapter 7 is devoted to the fall and winter activities marked by moose and caribou hunting, and some fishing done by women. But the most important activities during these seasons were the ceremonial ones: Selawik Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. These feasts are very well described as marking the dark days of winter, when most people remained at home. Conversely, Chapter 8 deals with the spring and summer activities. The arrival of songbirds at the beginning of April announced the approach of spring as well as the break-up of the Selawik river. Muskrat and beaver were hunted during this period. And soon

enough, the mosquitoes arrived. But summer life in Selawik had its own rhythm with long days. Especially women were at their busiest with fishing and drying fish. School would stop and Sunday was marked as a day of abstinence of work, following the rules introduced by the Quaker missionaries (70). The subsistence cycles are well described in these two chapters. The contrasted rhythm evokes Marcel Mauss's classic essay on Inuit seasonal variations. Chapter 9 addresses a first series of transformations, with the arrival of television and other communications. Iñupiaq traditions declined and were now less performed than told and passed on through recorded tapes and broadcasted through CB radio. In those days, the community had no movie theater, no restaurant, no coffee shop, and no shopping mall, but sport activities took a strong hold on the young generations, especially basketball and ice skating. A spring carnival was introduced in April, as well as a dog-team racing. Iñupiaq art and humor are discussed in detail. Finally, chapter 10 analyzes the situation of the Iñupiat from their discovery of modernity to the period of self-determination. This last chapter offers a fascinating description of a complex process that during the 1970s has had multiple effects on Selawik people and their environment. Houses and urbanization, schools and education, jurisdictions and policies, the exploitation of local resources, everything contributed to change Iñupiaq cultural identity and brought in new critical challenges. In 1988, reclaiming the Iñupiaq language became a priority and knowledge from the elders started to be recorded. Both the village and the landscapes started changing at a great speed, but Selawikers or rather Siilavingmiut maintained their territorial autonomy, showing a strong sense of belonging to a community, and a strong resiliency, "skilled at adapting to new changes and new technologies that might improve their lives" (106). They also continued to exchange babies as they did in the past, keeping strongly their social structure. In fact, these two final chapters are richly illustrated, and they offer a real contribution to our understanding of the many transformations that affected a northern community. Wann and Douglas Anderson conclude, "As the Sii River continues to flow, a significant part of the village life, to be bilingual and bicultural, living as Iñupiat with integrity and dignity and making the right decisions for the future path, continues to pose critical challenges" (106).

This monography offers an invaluable description of Selawik village at a time of cultural and political changes, but it remains a bit short. The book is enhanced by some forty photos and two tables, and that is a real addition. But a map of the village and its region is lacking.

The book provides both an ethnohistorical and ethnographic account. It is a worthwhile read for those who

want to figure out how a small northern community can change and retain its cultural identity.

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**Bargatzky, Thomas:** *Mandala ohne Zentrum. Hierarchie und politisches Zeremoniell in Samoa.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2023. 375 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-12004-3.

Investigating the different forms of "traditional" (pre-European) political organization across the numerous islands of the Polynesian triangle has been at the forefront of scholarly interest in indigenous Polynesian populations for a long time: ethnographers, historians, archaeologists, but also political scientists have long wondered about the astonishingly broad range of autochthonous political systems that had developed in the different Polynesian archipelagos up until contact to Europeans intensified in the 18th century. What struck European observers as particularly remarkable was the huge variation across Polynesia in respect to how much the different Polynesian societies were socially stratified, in how much they were organized hierarchically and the hugely differing degrees to which political power and authority were centralized: from loose associations of seemingly "egalitarian tribes" (Aotearoa/New Zealand) over different forms of "complex chiefdoms" (Samoa) to "kingdoms" (Tonga) and even "state-like" forms of governance (Hawai'i/Tahiti), almost the entire spectrum of known forms of political organization appeared to early Western ethnographers to be represented on the Polynesian islands. To outside observers, this was especially surprising since in a lot of other areas of culture, and in particular in respect to language, the various Polynesian societies exhibited rather strong similarities.

The traditional attention devoted by researchers to this subject remains unabated to the present day, especially as results of archaeology, ethnohistory and other disciplines keep revealing more insights into how the broad range of pre-European Polynesian socio-political systems evolved in time and space in highly complex and intricate ways. Connecting these socio-cultural trajectories to colonial times and onto contemporary developments in the 20th and 21st centuries, Polynesian societies offer fascinating insights not only to anthropologists and historians, but also to comparative political scientists into how indigenous political systems respond and adapt to cultural transformations brought about from outside. Reactions to initial European contacts, the process of Christianization, responses to colonialism as well as the later independence movements and ongoing adaptations to Western-style democratic systems thus make the study of Polynesian political organization through time a worthwhile and highly relevant field.