

ANTHROPOLOGY IN PRACTICE

News from the Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba (Inc.). SAAM Inc.

January 2008

Towards a manifesto for an applied anthropology of overfishing

Derek Johnson, Department of Anthropology, University of Manitoba

In a recent paper, Boris Worm (Worm, et al. 2006) and his collaborators demonstrated that if current trends continue all global fish taxa will be in a state of biological collapse by the middle of the 21st century. Worm's assessment adds to other strong voices from biology that have predicted similar grim futures for the world's marine ecosystems (e.g. Jackson, et al. 2001; Pauly, et al. 2002).

Biology has clear, headline-grabbing assessments that contribute to its great visibility in and regarding fisheries. Anthropology, in contrast, gets much less of the limelight and has commensurately much less prestige in fisheries management circles. Yet, the future holds much promise for the applied anthropology of overfishing. Anthropology, after all, has as its goal the understanding of human behaviour, and current unsustainable human behaviours are behind the ecological disturbances undercutting global fisheries.

Anthropology's contributions to more effective fisheries governance are in at least the following three areas. First, in concert with other social scientists, anthropologists point out that overfishing is a symptom not the problem. The problem is the complex of reasons driving inappropriate human behaviour. Second, the distinctive comparative and situational sensitivities of the anthropological perspective gives the basis for more robust explanations of what has driven and drives humans to overfish in different contexts. Third, anthropological experience in fisheries leads to specific policy recommendations regarding governance process, particularly in terms of the value of co-governance arrangements, the valuation of different knowledge bases for decision making, building capacity for situational understandings, and increased reflexivity in governance practice.

In my view, fisheries anthropology has three fields of battle if it seeks to exert greater influence on fisheries governance. First, it needs to marshal its considerable fisheries-related expertise to show the value of detailed attention to context.

Second, it must work strategically within the academic worlds, where fisheries governors are trained, to strengthen the role and influence of the anthropological perspective.



Third, it must confront its own demons: the lack of confidence in the policy relevance of anthropological vision and the hesitance to make strategic simplifications with the accompanying responsibility such assertions bring.

References

- Jackson, Jeremy B., et al. (2001) Historical overfishing and the recent collapse of coastal ecosystems. *Science* 293(27 July):629-638.
- Pauly, Daniel, et al. (2002) Towards Sustainability in World Fisheries. *Nature* 418(August 8):689-695.
- Worm, Boris, et al. (2006) Impacts of Biodiversity Loss on Ocean Ecosystem Services. *Science* 314(5800):787-790.

Inside This Issue

- 1 Anthropology of overfishing
- 2 Dedicated service
- 3 Message from the President
- 3 Treasurer's Report
- 3 Message from the AMA
- 4 As he was walking along
- 5 Careers in Manitoba

Special presentation for dedicated service

Comments by Ray Wiest

The Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba owes much to a man who is to be credited with reinstating, indeed resurrecting, an organization whose first able spokesperson was taken away much too soon. **Jean-Luc Chodkiewicz** took up what John Matthiasson had championed earlier on, but could not sustain for health reasons. As SAAM President for a considerable number of years, Jean-Luc committed himself with a unique passion, and a diligence of personal contact with members, potential members, and speakers in a manner that served to rally not only the troops but also onlookers, and to provide SAAM with interesting presentations, discussions and workshops. With a clear vision to engage wide participation, he made a serious effort to assure that SAAM was not University of Manitoba dominated. And he was exceptionally successful in encouraging – even cajoling – students to participate. In addition, Jean-Luc was imaginer and mover of no fewer than two major conferences organized by SAAM, both of which resulted in published edited collections. And finally, he started the SAAM newsletter, *Anthropology in Practice*, and continued to support and contribute to it tirelessly beyond his own period as President.

Upon being cajoled to take over as President when Jean-Luc was scheduled for a research leave, I was fully aware of the personal energy he lent to the organization, knowing full well it was neither within my capability nor my style. He had left a sound legacy, one of which was the attraction of an engaged and committed Executive. Indeed, it was with the knowledge that I could lean on our second award recipient, together with other talented and committed persons, that I followed Jean-Luc as President of SAAM.

Menno Wiebe, the longest-serving Vice President ever known, is the solid rock on which SAAM is built. His broad real-world experience gives him an endless source of wisdom for engagement in practice. Brainstorming with Menno is like an enticing elixir. He has been the fountain of some of SAAM's most significant undertakings, and author of many ideas that we dreamed of taking on but were unable to achieve. The list is long of accomplishments he contributed to centrally, but also of initiatives still worthy of pursuit. One of Menno's most significant contributions to SAAM has been his steady participation, unflinching attendance, and stimulating questions and observations in SAAM gatherings. All speakers could count on Menno to draw out issues of relevance for applied anthropology consideration. And last, but not least, Menno Wiebe is author of some of the finest poems and essays that grace SAAM's newsletters. These are treasures that I encourage anyone who has not yet noted them to go back to the SAAM newsletter archives to read and ponder.

To both of these able leaders of SAAM, and on behalf of the SAAM membership, I extend thanks, and congratulations to the first recipients of recognition for service to the Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba



Ray Wiest, Menno Wiebe, Jean-Luc Chodkiewicz and Siobhan Kari

At the Society for Applied Anthropology Annual General Meeting on November 22, 2007, Jean-Luc Chodkiewicz and Menno Wiebe were presented with Honorary Life Memberships to SAAM, along with commemorative plaques to thank them for their service to the organization. Ray Wiest presented the plaques, along with special dedications that he wrote for them, which are reprinted at left. The citations read:

*Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba, Inc.
Honorary Life Membership
For your generous commitment
of time, support & inspiration
to the
Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba, Inc.
November 22, 2007*

Message from the President

As we kick off another year I want to take this opportunity to give you a few exciting updates on the Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba.

I am happy to report that the 2007 Annual General Meeting that was held at the University of Winnipeg was an unqualified success. More than thirty people came out to support SAAM, and listen to Derek Johnson, the University of Manitoba's newest professor in the anthropology department, on his experience with bringing the anthropology "toolkit" to fisheries management. The Q&A session afterward was lively and the discussion focused not only in the politics of overfishing, but also how best to collaborate and bring anthropology's resources to contemporary issues. Many thanks to Derek for kicking off this year's speaker series. If you missed it, you can find a summary on the cover of this newsletter

We also elected the executive at the AGM, who have been nothing but enthusiastic and energetic volunteers, dedicated to both applied anthropology and creating networking and professional development opportunities for practitioners, professors and students alike. The SAAM executive includes: VP (Programming) Sarah Piercy, who works with United Way Winnipeg, VP (Communications and Membership) Hani Khalidi, Northern Lights Heritage Services, Treasurer Mark Manzer, Manitoba Hydro, and Brian Myhrre, a University of Manitoba PhD candidate and instructor at the University of Winnipeg, serves as Secretary.

Also at the AGM, two much-deserved honorary life memberships were awarded to Jean-Luc Chodkiewicz and Menno Wiebe. SAAM would not exist as a substantive organization without their energies over the years. Ray Wiest, professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Manitoba, wrote and read citations that captured their contributions and you can read them on page 2. SAAM survives and thrives on the energies of its members and volunteers. Please let us know if you're interested in helping grow SAAM's membership, organize speakers and topics, arrange meetings and workshops, or writing for this newsletter.

We plan on two or three more speakers before the summer comes, and a joint BBQ & get-together with the Association of Manitoba Archaeologists in June. On January 31st, 2008, Justin Gilligan, network manager for the Storm Studies in the Arctic (STAR) research network, will give a presentation on ArcticNet and his research on traditional and scientific knowledge on the impacts of environmental change on off-road transportation in Churchill, Manitoba. This meeting promises to bring anthropologists together with academics and practitioners in environment and geography for a discussion on one of the "hottest" issues of the day, climate change. Come out and join us on Jan. 31, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Cross Common Room of St. John's College at the Fort Garry campus of the University of Manitoba!

Best wishes to all for a successful 2008!

Siobhan Kari
President

Treasurer's Report	
November 1, 2007 - December 31, 2007	
INCOME	
Opening Balance (November 1, 2007)	\$222.57
Membership Fees	\$640.00
Total Income	\$862.57
EXPENSES	
Total Expenses	\$0.00
BALANCE	\$862.57
Mark Manzer, SAAM Inc. Treasurer	
16-Jan-08	

Message from the Association of Manitoba Archaeologists

The Association of Manitoba Archaeologists (AMA) will once again be seeking active members in early 2008. The AMA was first created in 1975 to serve as a forum for communication between professional archaeologists, various levels of government and the public at large. Since its inception, the AMA has been instrumental in promoting the practice of archaeology in Manitoba and preserving the province's heritage resources.

If you would like to receive news about upcoming AMA developments, please send your email address to umtenbru@cc.umanitoba.ca.

For more information regarding the AMA's past activities, visit:
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/manarchnet/ama/index.html>.

"AS HE WAS WALKING ALONG..."

(commentary on Ojibwa and Cree legends)
 recorded and submitted by Menno Wiebe

So the time tested stories of Wisahkechak usually begin. Wisahkechak, the mythological hero of the Cree and Ojibwa of Canada's sub-arctic woodlands, plays the lead role in something like a thousand dramatically told legends. In his role as humorous trickster, Wisahkechak, also known as Nanabush in Aboriginal regions to the east, portrayed much of the often elusive, yet original Woodlands Cree and Ojibwa world view.

In patterns of pre-European hunting practices Wisahkechak traversed the northern woodlands following road-less and rail-less pathways in pursuit of daily provisions, seeking to obtain animals, fish and birds, fruits and plant vegetation for his livelihood. In doing so, Wisahkechak followed the shores of steams, rivers and lakes to find his way through the otherwise dense forest lands. With amazing consistency, Wisahkechak employed every means of trickery that came to his explorative imagination, always setting up those he wished to capture or manipulate to his benefit. At no point in the illustrious story telling does Wisahkechak ever seem to run out of his mischievous "bag of tricks." Those whom he succeeded to set up for his trickery included people, animals, birds and fish. Rocks, swamps lakes trees and other vegetation also have their place in the large body of this very original Ojibwa and Cree literature. Similarly, the references to climate, despite its severity, and the rugged landscape of the hunting territories figure into Wisahkechak legends.

Amidst poetry, song texts and other legends these Wisakechak stories represent a substantial collection of Aboriginal literature featuring the most intricate of ways in which kinship based social networks of hunting peoples came to terms with their sometimes hostile sub-arctic environment. The stories themselves were selectively transmitted by elder tellers and listened to by an always entertainment-ready audience of kinfolk who had gathered around a winter fire during the typically long winter evenings.

Not only were the stories intergenerationally transmitted in the context of familiar cabin environments, but the extended family gathering also served as a "literary monitoring" context. Since the listening family, or typically the younger set, had heard the same stories told repeatedly they also knew about any possible deviations that just might slip into the story teller's rendering. Hence the oral transmission of the "atisohkanan" (sacred legends) had a built in system to control both content and form.

Not unlike the academic discipline of "Formgeschichte" employed by German theologians, in their oral transmission of ancient Biblical accounts, a somewhat parallel monitoring device is operative among the Ojibwa and Cree as sacred stories are transmitted from one generation to the next. An example of this "literary monitoring" was observed in my own field work at Island Lake, Manitoba, where, in 1972, a number of legends were recorded as part of a linguistic field assignment, a project supervised by linguist Chris Wolfart of the University of Manitoba. Recording one of the Wisahkechak stories took place in the home of elder Henry Fiddler, on a very cold winter night. The wood stove threw sufficient heat into the small log cabin for the circle of younger listeners to grow sleepy as the night wore on. The elder Fiddler, with his wife close to his side during the story telling became aware that he might eventually lose his otherwise attentive audience.

When the story got into full swing the young listeners began to grow drowsy. And as the drowsiness increased during the telling of the legend old Henry began deviating from the known text. With his spouse sitting by his side, Henry initiated an interesting pedagogical device by inserting a comment as follows: "Just as he (Wisahkechak) was trying to free the animal from its trap he reached into his pocket for his jackknife." That aberration from the sacred story was just enough for Mrs. Fiddler to respond with full alertness, first by giving a punitive elbow jab into her husband's side followed by the exhortative word, "Kaawiin"(no!).

Immediately the story telling came to an abrupt halt. Despite the drowsiness in the gathered circle everybody in the room burst out in hilarious laughter. In his role as story teller grandfather Henry had transgressed. "I did it to check whether they were still listening," the master storyteller-teacher told me afterwards, knowing full well, as all his listeners knew, that Wisahkechak never carried a jackknife in his traveling gear.

And so, the time tested tradition of oral Aboriginal storytelling contained built in mechanisms for maintaining content and form in the transmission through millennia. This correcting device contributes to retention of purity in the oral transmission of the legends. The self correcting mechanism also helps to explain the amazing similarity in both form and content when comparing the same legends told in substantially different habitats of other Algonquians distributed over centuries across the extensive environment of Canada.

"What do I do with a master's degree in anthropology? Insights into careers and the application of anthropology in Manitoba

Hani Khalidi, Northern Lights Heritage Service Inc.

As a "freshman" anthropologist working since 2005 within the consulting environment in Manitoba, some insights have become evident to me as a professional that would have made the process of being a student a whole lot easier! As a student, the focus of your studies and ultimately the degree you achieve dictates what direction you can follow as a professional. "Do I want to continue and become recognized as an academic or do I venture into the unknown and take my chances?" Choose wisely, since the age old conundrum "How can I get hired if I have no experience?" seems only too often to steer students into PhD and post-doctoral avenues when this does not necessarily have to be the case. It is not my intention to diminish the importance of doctoral programmes but the key is in the nature of the degree and its applicability.

A strong theoretical base is emphasized in the courses and contents of the university experience, and often overlooked is what Harry Wolcott coined as the equally important "Art of Fieldwork" that one must hone to become successful as an applied anthropologist. One of the best choices I made for my future career opportunities was deciding to make my master's degree a working model in anthropology for interview methods. It was one of the ways of translating the theory crammed in my head into applied anthropology. What I was then able to do was display these "hands-on" methods to potential employers as a valued skill set. An example of this is oral history interviewing, documentation and cultural analysis of indicators for change, a hot topic since Canada's 1997 Supreme Court *Delgamuukw v British Columbia* ruling which made important statements about the legitimacy of Indigenous oral history.

The methods that Anthropology provides are rapidly becoming recognized as a necessity and sought out at the federal and provincial levels, even globally. When we see a province like Manitoba rapidly developing socio-economically through the utilization of its natural resources, mitigation between industry and cultural groups becomes unavoidable. How then does this manifest as a career opportunity for anthropologists? In Manitoba, these take the form of Heritage Resource Impact Assessments (HRIA), part of the federally governed Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) which dictates industry standards. So when it comes to the question of "What should my thesis topic be?" why not consider critical local provincial needs such as northern studies that can ultimately serve as a career opportunity like fulfilling industry's need for cultural sensitivity?

Ed Fread, Northern Lights Heritage Services Inc.

As an undergraduate I volunteered my spare time assisting in zoo-archaeological analyses of assemblages from Eastern Europe and Western Canada. The expertise gained from this extra curricular activity in conjunction with my course work afforded me an opportunity to travel to the Republic of South Africa and expand my archaeological skill set with international fieldwork and lab analysis over two consecutive summers. The theory I was taught in the classroom brought forward a need to "do". I knew that my learning curve increased exponentially when I was able to physically manipulate the information provided to me, in this case through archaeological fieldwork.

During the early stages of my master's degree I questioned "how I was going to use archaeology outside of academia?" I realized that I was not the kind of person who could stay within the university walls doing research and was not ready to move into a PhD. Instead, I began my career as an archaeologist when I was fortunate enough to be accepted to work on contract as a seasonal archaeologist with a private consulting firm. The contracts kept coming and I realized the extra skills I developed by volunteering were sought after in the private and federal sectors.

Aside from working in Manitoba, I spent several years working in southern Ontario as an archaeologist for private firms and as my background in zoo-archaeological analysis and human osteology grew, I was able to work for the RCMP in British Columbia with the Missing Women's Task Force. I worked alongside others with similar education and specialized skills to recover human remains as evidence on specific crime scenes. Archaeologists with the right specialized skills are highly sought after by police agencies. The key is to understand where there is a need for work and to identify how to develop, at an early stage the skills to fulfill the requirements.

I have continued my work in consulting in Manitoba for the last three years and have felt that the field of archaeology in Canada is growing and developing into a viable industry. As the need for archaeological consulting increases so will the demand for trained archaeologists.