

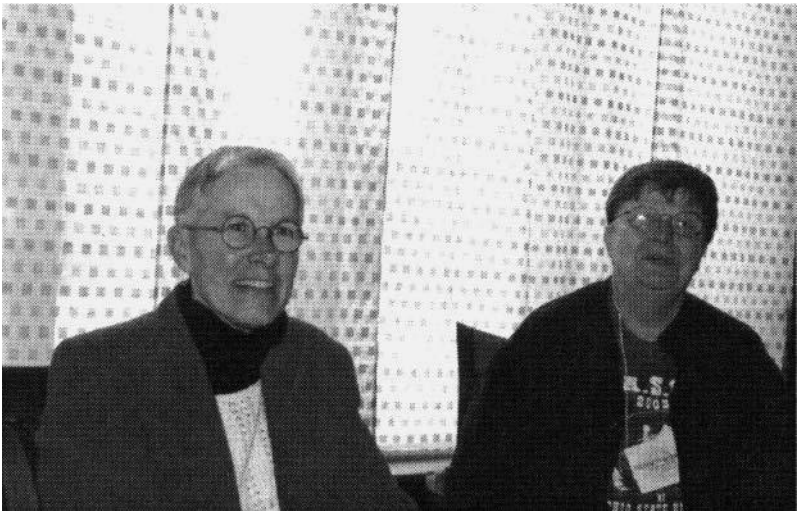
Victoria Paraschak
University of Windsor

**Stubborn Chunks: Persistence in Form and Values,
NWT Recreation and Sport, 1962-2002**

The historical creation, reproduction and reshaping of cultural products such as sport and recreation is ongoing within all societies. However, the labels commonly used to describe these processes and their resultant products differ in keeping with unequal power relations. Marginalized or peripheral groups within mainstream cultures are labeled as having "assimilated" into mainstream culture when, for a variety of reasons, they take on the practices of the mainstream. Meanwhile, mainstream groups adopting aspects of the peripheral culture (which, granted, happens far less frequently) remain unexamined and/or unlabelled in that process. Terms such as "assimilation," and the "melting pot" description accorded immigrant groups particularly in the United States, distort our understanding of the cultural production processes of marginalized groups; it simplifies them into a one-way process where groups either stick to their "traditions," or assimilate fully into the mainstream. Homi Bhabha's The Location of Culture, provides a different way of imagining this situation. He notes that the "notion of the melting pot has been replaced by a model . . . of the menudo chowder. According to this model most of the ingredients do melt, but some stubborn chunks are condemned merely to float. I have been searching for a more effective way to explore and explain the "chunks" of cultural life which complicate notions of "assimilation," and thus will use Bhabha's "stubborn chunks" model to document such practices

over the past forty years of sport and recreation development in the Northwest Territories of Canada.

Government files and reports, interviews with key agents, and relevant policy documents have all been used to explore this history. I first document the professionalization of recreation services in the North, the institutionalization of sport in keeping with southern Canadian practices, and the adoption of many national programs despite their less than fully appropriate fit within the Northwest Territories. These aspects of the history easily support the notion that people in the North have "assimilated" into southern Canadian cultural practices. I reframe this analysis, however, by paying particular attention to the "stubborn chunks," the northern forms and values that continue to make activities distinctive from the dominant ways of "doing" sport and recreation in southern Canada. This paper focuses on three such elements: the prioritization of inclusion over achievement, the legitimacy of traditional Inuit and Dene games and their underlying values as an integral part of the Canadian sport system; and the provision of integrated rather than segregated sport and recreation services.



NASSH Hosts Sally Dellinger and Nancy Wardwell