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WHY DO THEY DO IT? — PROPOSALS FOR A THEORY OF INUIT SUICIDE¹

JØRGEN THORSLUND*

1. The suicide problems among Inuit youth are well documented

In recent decades a major problem of suicides among Inuit has developed. Young men have started to kill themselves in extreme numbers. Although some Indian groups face similar problems, Inuit seem to be the most vulnerable. (Thorslund 1990b²). The problems can be found among Inuit in the Arctic and Subarctic areas in Alaska, all Canadian territories and in all Greenlandic districts. In the vast amount of literature it has been documented that the high suicide rates represents some permanent problem and not just coincidental peaks. The patterns considering distribution of age and sex seem to be almost identical for Inuit in most areas (Berry, 1990).

We need action! This seems to be the attitude of many social scientists and social workers. Public authorities have implemented a number of programs to avoid suicide. Nevertheless there is a severe lack of knowledge concerning suicide and some major taboos still exist among the general population and local authorities. This might limit the effects of many initiatives. A study made on behalf of the Greenlandic Council of Health promotion, PAARISA (January 1988) has tried to

- a) describe the suicide problems among Inuit in Greenland
- b) find some causes of the suicides among the youth and
- c) suggest possible means to help reducing the number of suicides.

In this paper I shall briefly point out some limitations of existing studies and present some results of my own. The main concern will be to develop some ideas for a general theory to help explaining the suicides of Inuit youth in Greenland. Finally I shall describe some suggestions for suicide prevention. To avoid any misunderstandings, I shall make clear that I agree on the above statement — we need action — although we lack knowledge. At the same time it is possible to continue further analysis, in order to ensure that prevention schemes are not social engineering technocratic manipulations of human beings — but instead, help based on cultural understanding and scientific knowledge.

¹ This study has received grants from The National Research Council of the Social Sciences, The National Board of Health, The Greenlandic Council of Health Promotion, The Institute of The Nordic Countries in Greenland and from the Greenlandic Banks.

* North Atlantic Regional Studies, University of Roskilde, P.O.Box 260, DK-4000 Roskilde, Denmark.
² Due to lack of space, only few references will be mentioned. Generally I will refer to the publications from this study (Thorslund 1989 and Thorslund 1990abcdef). Unfortunately only few are translated into English, but it is my plan to have the final material published in English.

2. Limitations of existing studies

The vast amount of literature on Inuit suicide quite often has important limitations considering either the empirical basis or the theory used to understand suicide. To this comes that prevention schemes are rarely based on any systematically collected knowledge, but rather are marked by the panic of suddenly finding a generation saying No! to the future. A panic which is easy to understand.

For very good reasons, the figures concerning suicide in most studies are based on small numbers. The problem of the large number of suicides has developed recently and considering the small population of Inuit, most analyses will be based on small and uncertain numbers. This can explain why all interpretations are most uncertain and why most studies include little background information. Even occupation — a most central background information — is hardly ever included, while family background and conditions of living are only considered in few case studies. A demographic-statistical approach increases the material but due to problems of central registration — either the quality of the data or the types of information collected — this does not solve all problems (Thorslund 1989c).

The theoretical approaches to the study of Inuit suicide are either marked by epidemiological traditions of quantitative description and statistical argumentations or by psychiatric examination of individual cases. Unfortunately these approaches are hardly ever combined to a sociopsychological analysis, which both reflects the social patterns and the psychodynamic in the individual. Without some theory of the subconscious, from my point of view, it is most difficult to explain and understand why people commit suicide.

To this must be added the **cultural dimension**. Quite often culture is only understood in terms of acculturation — how Inuit are adjusted to modern western civilization — while the cultural differences between Inuit and Whites and the differences of psychology, are interpreted in terms of individuality or ignored as hardly relevant. In opposition to this approach, anthropologists are most critical towards the imperialism of Western culture, and they obviously interpret suicide in such terms, when they do their fieldwork in local communities. The problem of this different approach is that it tends to forget the complicated character of modernization. Quite obviously modernization includes suppression and transformation of cultures in the third and the fourth world, but at the same time it can give the same peoples hope of less vulnerability towards nature, new liberties and development of a new individuality. New ways of organizing and new political patterns may give means to survive so people do not have to stick to defensive and selfdestructive reactions, but can react more offensively and constructively when oil-industry and mass medias are transforming the interior and the exterior environment of the village.

Prevention initiatives quite often are influenced by some sudden solutions when a suicide epidemic hits a village or a district. People call for action! Restrictions on alcohol consumption, telephone lines open for youth in crisis and programs for flying in numbers of psychologists and social workers, hardly seems to give any results on a longer term basis. Most promising might be programs which put focus on the community (Rodgers, 1990), while other programs introducing youth to traditional cultural techniques, building qajaq or handling furs may overlook that Inuit youth is facing some kind of problems, not found in the traditional culture.

3. Results from a study of Inuit youth suicide in Greenland

This project has tried to overcome some of the above mentioned problems by using a number of different methods of qualitative and quantitative type. The first phase included collection of information from a number of public files concerning all suicides in Greenland 1977-86. In total 403 suicides. (Some planned interviews among 10-15 persons who had

survived suicide failed due to lack of financial resources). The second phase included interpretations and traditions of suicide among Inuit, as found in traditional tales, in modern prose, poetry, public debate and in a nationwide questionnaire spread among youth aged 15-30. The third phase put focus on the psychology and development of Inuit youth through analysis of the existing literature on socialization among Inuit in Alaska, Canada and Greenland, supplemented by field observations from two years of teaching among students in Nuuk 1986-88.

Results from *the first phase*³ indicates that suicide more often were found among youth with a casual relationship to *both* modern and traditional occupations, and among hunters/fishermen. White-collars and self-employed more rarely did commit suicide. Suicide quite often was found among youth from families with a traditional occupation, among singles with no children. A major part of the suicides seem to have faced social traumatic experiences in their childhood. Adoption into a new family, contrarily, did not seem to be of any importance. Differences between districts indicated, although with some uncertainty, that the *less developed districts* had the highest rates of suicide among youth, while the *more developed* districts had lower rates. Almost everybody were intoxicated by alcohol when they committed suicide. 4 out of 5 were facing some personal crisis and — what could support widely spread ideas of suicide epidemics — almost 3 out of 4 could have been inspired from personal experiences with suicide attempts or another recent suicide, as one could be observed in the same district a short while before (59% could — and in all likelihood did — have faced a suicide among youth in the same district less than 4 months earlier).

The examination of the police reports showed that almost 50% of all suicides were committed in a most aggressive way, where the person choosed to die very close to significant others, e.g. parents, girlfriend, or friends. Some choosed the police. The purpose could be to make these persons feel guilt. This observation supported the aspect of communication, that the young persons not necessarily wishes to die, but may have other motives to commit suicide.

The results from the *second phase*⁴ showed that one can find an old tradition of accepting suicide among Inuit in Greenland. A tradition which can be studied in tales and ethnographical observations. That one can find suicide among aged, ill and hungered people is widely known and commonly described among Inuit; more rarely the phenomenon of *Qivittoq* — people going to the mountains — is considered as a suicide. And these are to be found among both younger and older peoples. If a person faced great shame or anger, he could feel the need to go to the mountains, where some spirit might initiate the person into the realm of spirits. Later the person can then return to the humans and solve the problems by the use of his new strengths. As the escape into the mountains offers a few days to reconsider and then leads to a certain (biological) death this phenomenon is equivalent to suicide, although the motive is not death but handling of social conflict. The general attitude towards *Qivittoq* and other forms of suicide were marked by fear of revenge but at the same time, suicide was accepted as an opportunity, when problems became unbearable.

This wide acceptance of suicide can be found in fictions all through the 20th century. In the first novel from the early century the author — a Greenlandic priest — has great confidence in the future and the making of a national identity, therefore seeing suicide in the form of *Qivittoq* — as an *old fashioned*, but generally accepted solution. The Lutheran Church obviously did not accept such violations of the Fifth Commandment, but a priest could write novels where suicide was seen more as an old-fashioned solution than a fatal sin.

From the mid 1960s the question of suicide — both as *qivittoq* and in other forms — has been discussed in almost every novel and in much poetry. The acceptance of suicide as a solution remains, but the interpretation of the youth suicides changes. In the 1960s suicide is

3 Thorslund, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1990a, 1990c.

4 Thorslund, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b og 1990c.

seen as an acceptable submission, when life can't be any different. The 1970s nationalism interprets suicides as victims of Danish imperialism. While in the 1980s the authors are changing towards an understanding of suicide as a sign of defeat in the youth struggling to find a personal identity, — some existential crises. This wide acceptance again can be found in the response to the nationwide questionnaire distributed to 320 youngsters. With the reservation of a low reply rate (49%) the answers indicate, that few are condemning suicide, few understand suicide as sign of psychiatric disease and that the majority interpret suicide as a regrettable reaction towards some common problems of life: conflicts with a girlfriend or with the parents, too much alcohol or some personal problems.

To conclude, I will state that there is a wide acceptance of suicide as the solution, when problems grow too big. This solution is seen as regrettable, but acceptable and not necessarily a major problem of concern. Any blames — and feelings of guilt — are turned towards the relatives, who "drew him into suicide". Such an acceptance is of central importance for youth with some personal problems, as it can ease the transition from suicidal thoughts to suicidal action. Thus, it may lead to suicide instead of suicide attempt. Nevertheless my interpretation should not lead to the conclusion that any moral criticism of suicide can reduce the problem. A moral revival can be hard to obtain, and it is likely to give only a short term effect as the wide acceptance of suicide is most likely closely related to the basic Inuit respect of other peoples autonomy. One is not supposed to interfere with other people's decisions. To this comes that moralistic criticism of youth could widen the gap and increase the isolation, many young people feel.

The results of *the third phase*⁵ showed that youth as a social category is something new among Inuit. Young people among traditional hunters made the transition from child to adult when one could get a regular catch or cook and prepare the catch. This form of transition has been changed dramatically by modernization. Wage-labour, mass consumption and individualization has created a transitional period between childhood and the adulthood. When a man biologically ceases to be a child, but needs further socialization and qualification to be socially mature, a new category is created, youth (*Inuusuttut*) with specific rights, duties and problems.

One of the basic considerations of this study was, that to make an examination of how young Inuit react to the process of modernization, it is necessary to have an idea of how Inuit psychology was before the process accelerated. On such a basis only is it possible to analyze the interaction between the two cultures and their concepts of reality. An interaction which creates the basic frame of youth development tasks.

In terms of methods, it is most difficult to find this "clean" culture. Many racist and stereotypic threats must be overcome. Most strongly is the idea of Inuit living an idyllic life in close relationship with Mother nature without any conflicts and with a "natural" relationship to their children. This faith in "the Noble Savage" is widespread in Denmark and USA and — what is more important — it is influencing the Inuit concept of themselves as expressed in some public statements (Fienup-Riordan, 1988). This could serve political purposes, but some tendencies indicates that people have started to believe this ideology. Studies from N.W.T. in Canada by Jean Briggs (Briggs 1970, 1978, 1979) and others can support the more fragmented description of the Inuit psychic characteristics, including both holistic qualities and internal contradictions. Traditional Inuit were living — as contemporary peoples — a life of complexity, where socialization did take place in close relationship with nature, but where contradictions and conflicts were part of life as well.

By comparing the interpretation of Inuit psychic characteristics and socialization with contemporary studies from Greenland it is clear that traditional socialization still is influencing

5 Thorslund 1990f.

upbringing practices. In villages in particular (Langgaard, 1986) but in towns as well, one can still find many elements of traditional socialization in families — or at least this seems to have been the case for the young people trying to find their way in the rapidly changing society of the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the commonly spread concepts and stereotypes of Inuit seem to be supported by well documented studies — e.g. liberal attitudes in childrearing but in other fields, common views tend to overlook the importance of other aspects of socialization. The children were not brought up with the problems to accept a position as lower class, but they met some other problems e.g. how to handle aggression.

The psychic characteristics of Inuit are basically dominated by the hunting culture ambivalent relation to aggressions — they are necessary for hunting and a threat of relations to fellow human beings. This dilemma, combined with a social structure of small family based settlements without formal statepower, nor chiefs, leads to the development of psychic patterns which at the same time are dependent and empathic toward other peoples reactions, and raising some emotional barriers to keep up some distance. A fear of the loss attachment may bring. Loss of the beloved. Aggressions are understood as something which must be controlled but given some air from time to time. If not, then there is a increased risk of a psychic explosion, which can lead to attacks on fellow beings.

The Ego-structure is developed in close interaction to the family, mainly the mother, but with her and other relatives carrying an ambivalence towards aggression, which leads to both empathy, fear of separation and emotional containment. The Ego insists on autonomy, but remains emotionally dependent on others. The tensions of aggressions, which need to be handled indirectly give a latent risk of sudden explosions, manifest if the weak Ego is offended. In the traditional culture a number of institutions have been developed — besides the central hunt — to give a number of acceptable alternatives for aggression to be expressed. The question is what happens if these alternatives are removed and the tensions increased.

The concept of modernization can — in opposition to both liberal theories of development (e.g. Rostow, 1959) and anthropological theories of interaction (e.g. Barth, 1981) — be understood as a complex and ambiguous process, which changes, breaks down and creates new possibilities, not necessarily fulfilling all promises. The global dynamics of capitalism break down and transform, not only economical and political, but also social and cultural relations in still more parts of the world. To this comes that the process of modernization is also transforming conditions of socialization and hereby the development possibilities of the psychic structure.

In Greenland, capitalism was imported in the form of Danish colonialism characterized by a policy of protection and liberal tolerance. Not until the end of World War II was this policy replaced by a dynamic expansion and officially formulated modernization, supported by the Greenlandic elite. The conditions of living were changed dramatically, with wage-labour, urbanization and higher standard of living. Some problems were reduced, but new ones came instead. Among these were the problems of the new social category, youth, which had existed in low numbers since turn of the century, but now became a common phenomenon in towns and later in villages.

Youth is a most critical developmental phase (Erikson, 1963,1968), which includes a number of vital tasks concerning individual independence and identity. To this general aspect comes that Inuit youth at the same time were to carry the societal transformation into modernization and all this was on the basis of a socialization from a culture of tradition. A culture not familiar with the phenomenon youth and with much different concepts of autonomy, aggression and individualization. Hereby making the handling of youth identity problems most difficult. The result has been more youth problems than found in central capitalistic societies: problems of sexual aggressions, alcohol abuse, violence, unfitness for work and suicide. A common feature of these youth problems is that they all someway seek inspiration in cultural traditions, but at the same time the acting out is transformed. The results are heavy burdens

physically and mentally both for the youth and for society. Young men seem to carry the most heavy burdens, likely because the women have been forced to a more offensive strategy of modernization and at the same time to keep up traditions in the fields of housekeeping and childrearing (Dybbroe, 1988). Young males on the contrary only stick to traditional fields maybe even in a radical form as macho. Some similar development has been described in both Alaska and Canada.

But how can suicide be understood in this context? A theory is necessary, but what demands must be fulfilled in a theory to explain Inuit youth suicides?

4. Demands of a theory

Since Durkheim published his classical work "Suicide; a study in sociology" (1897/1951) wide consensus among psychologists and sociologists has been, that suicide is not only an individual phenomenon but in particular reflects some central social conditions. Such causes are calling for *an explanation*. On the other hand it would be an example of sociological reductionism to make the individual only a product of its conditions without any options. The subject has a consciousness, some dreams, motives and he acts purposively, with motives, although the motives can be difficult or impossible to understand for another. This subjective meaning calls for *an interpretation* — an understanding of the meaning of the acts.

More specifically the **explanation** should be capable of covering at least the dimensions and answering some questions in each field:

- * a *cultural field* — why is it particularly Inuit who commits suicide in high rates?
- * a *social field* — why is it young male with a weak occupational position?
- * a *psychological field* — why suicide is the solution?

The **interpretation** should be able to contain several types of meaning, including conscious and subconscious motives and the relationship of the subject both to himself and to others. Due to this, the act of suicide should be considered in terms of verbal and nonverbal communication.

The link between the social scientific explanation and the hermeneutic interpretation is the *specific personality*, meaning that the theory is unable to explain the individual suicide. To do this one needs to use clinical psychological approaches, which I have not tried in this project. For me there is an unsurmountable barrier between the knowledge on an individual level and knowledge on an aggregated social level.

5. A theory of youth suicide

From the classical psychoanalytic studies of suicide by Karl Menninger convincing arguments have been put forward claiming that suicide often has an aggressive element (Menninger, 1938). Menninger separated three subconscious motives often mixed up in a suicide: the wish to die, the wish to kill and the wish to be killed. Besides the wish to disappear from this world or to go to a better world, quite often elements of symbolic punishment are common, where the suicide is an attack on a psychic representation of the other. Similarly the subject can wish to punish himself for acts or thought-acts not acceptable in the culture⁶.

⁶ The Menninger tradition has been further developed in a fruitful sociological direction by Douglas (1967) and Taylor (1982).

For me aggression — particularly the common aggressive arrangement of the Greenlandic suicides — is a key to explain the problems. This is not the least seen in the light of the above mentioned analysis of Inuit socialization, where aggression is a central theme. I will now describe some central points of the theory. A schematic model can be found below as figure 1.

The cultural dimension is central in its interaction between the traditional forms and the modernization forms. The Inuit culture is interfering with modernization in both the social and the psychological field. In the *social field* the Inuit culture represents a strong ambiguity concerning aggression toward fellow human beings. At the same time the modernization leads to a cultural emancipation, where traditional values, occupations and practices are broken apart not necessarily to be replaced by other fixed structures. On the contrary, modernization can produce through its accelerated dynamics still new offers in terms of mass media, mass consumption and the dream of a better job (Ziehe, 1982). The interaction between traditional Inuit culture and modernization can be rather smoothless in certain matters, hunting technology for example — as Inuit are more than willing to use all available technologies — but in terms of social norms greater problems arise. The disappearance of traditional norms, the breakdown of the family, development of the new youth in a social vacuum etc. all lead to isolation of the individual and still more frequent confrontations. (The bargains of the shop, the employers' demand of overtime work, the friends' regular suggestions of having a little drink, all demands that one can say "No!" to keep going on. This is very bad manner from a traditional point of view.)

Young male seem to have a poor background compared to women, maybe because women have (been forced to) keep up responsibility for housekeeping and childcare while they at the same time have been forced to take over a number of new occupations. The male functions have been changed as well, but they have been less open to interfere in traditional female affairs, resulting in a greater loss of identity.

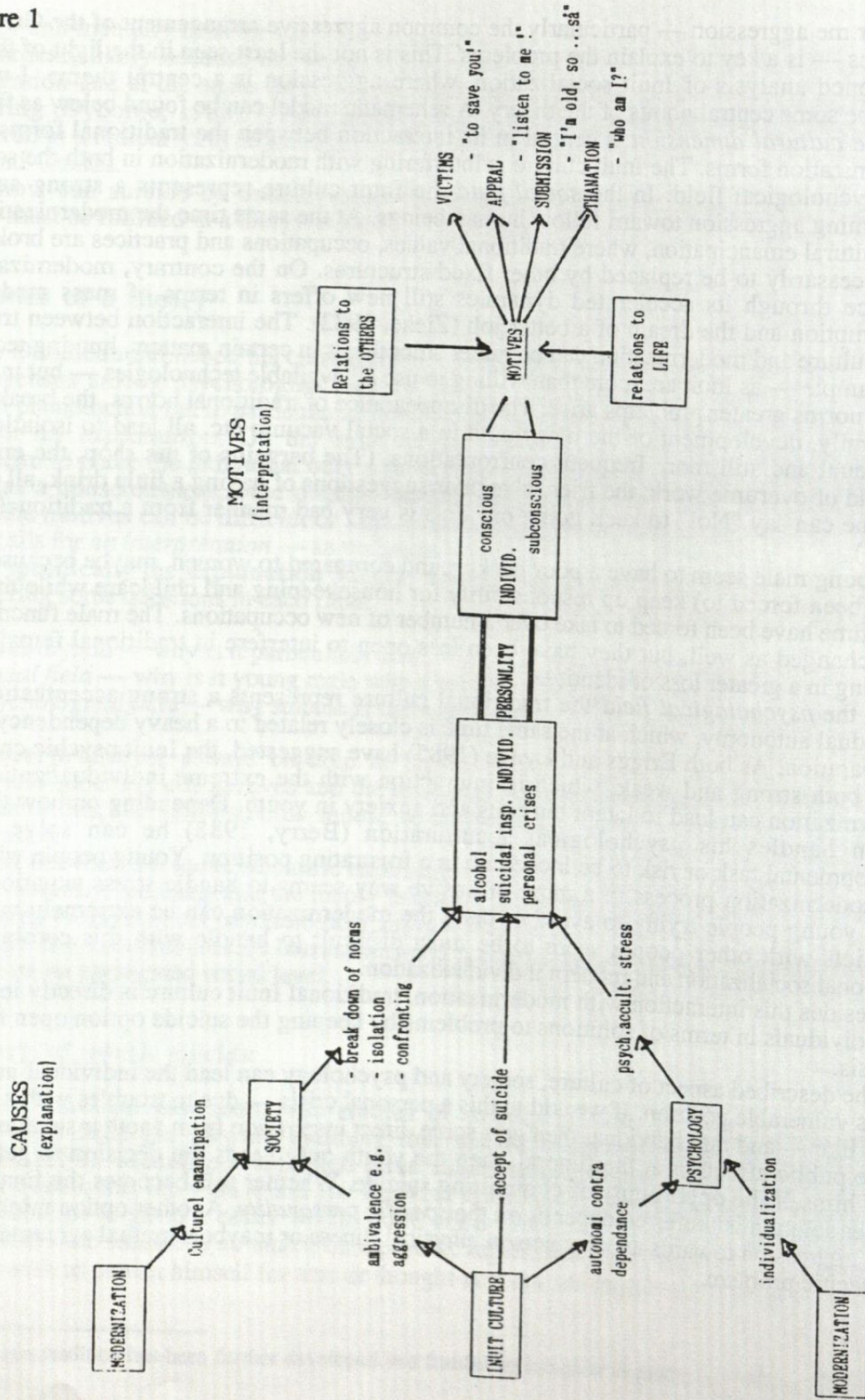
In the *psychological field* the traditional culture represents a strong accentuation of the individual autonomy, which at the same time is closely related to a heavy dependency and fear of separation. As both Briggs and Lyng (1985) have suggested, the Inuit psychic character is often both strong and weak, which in interaction with the extreme individualization of the modernization can lead to latent tensions and anxiety in youth. Depending on how the young person handles his psychological acculturation (Berry, 1988) he can solve his own developmental task or risk to be locked up in a frustrating position. Young people who handle the modernization process in a more offensive way seems to handle stress situations better, while young people trying to avoid or deny the modernization can be extremely vulnerable. Conflicts with other people seem to be most difficult to handle with this combination of traditional socialization and modern individualization.

Besides this interaction with modernization, traditional Inuit culture is directly influencing the individuals in terms of solutions to problems by keeping the suicide option open for people in crisis.

The described aspect of culture, society and psychology can lead the individual into a more or less vulnerable position. If we add to this a personal crisis — due to troubles with a girlfriend or the like — and the individual then gets some direct inspiration from another suicide, showing all the public affection at the funeral, then the youth only needs the decision to get drunk to allow himself the opportunity of committing suicide. Whether this becomes the final result or another solution is preferred depends on the *specific personality*. Another option might be more direct aggression towards another person, physical illness or maybe a mutual agreement solving the specific problem.

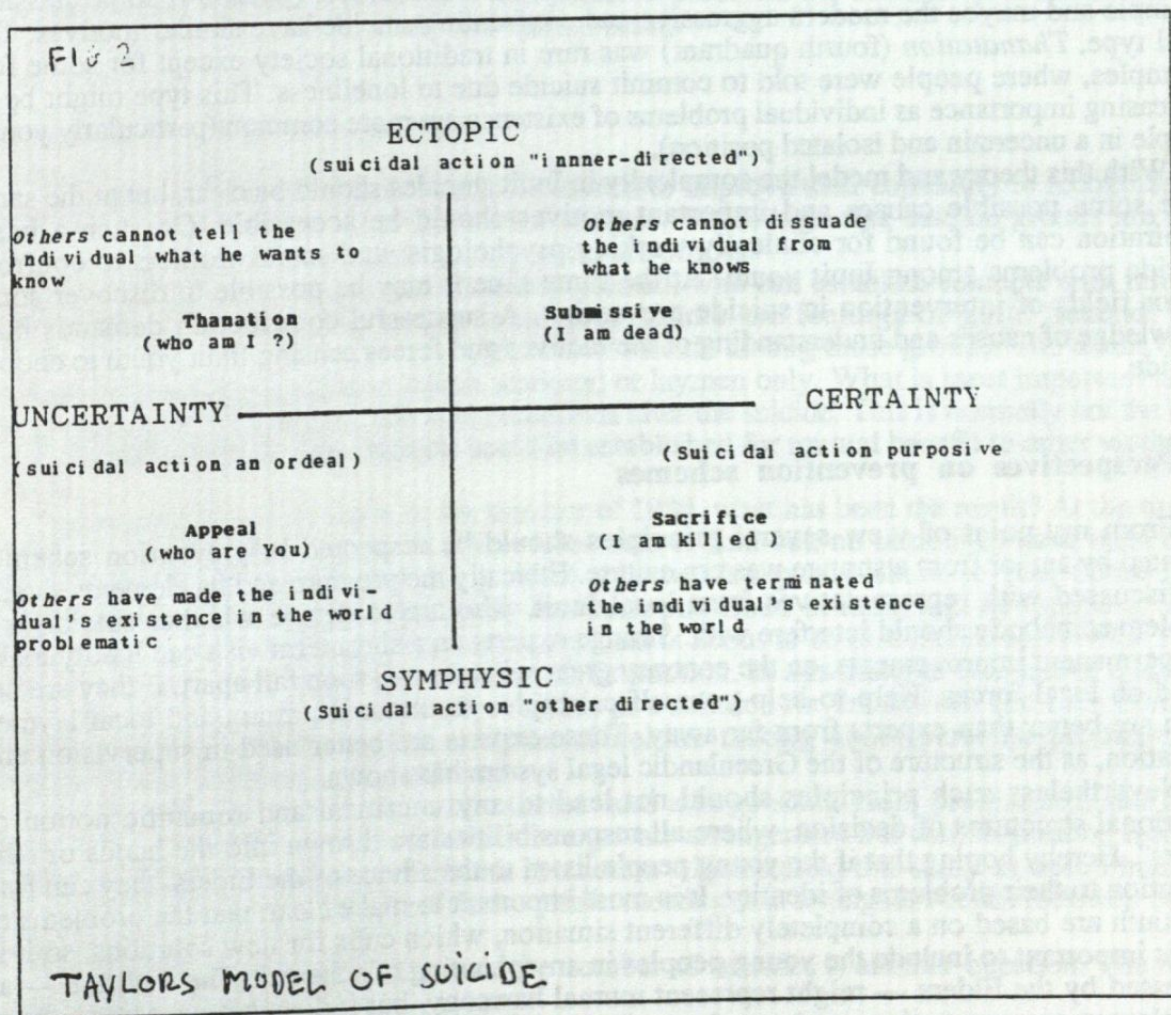
Figure 1

A THEORY OF SUICIDE



As the theory is not intending to explain the suicide on the individual level we shall continue with the interpretation of motives in suicide. The work of the British sociologist Steve Taylor has been most interesting, why I shall introduce parts of his theory.

The basic principles of the analyses will not be discussed here, but his model is most illuminating. He suggests a two-dimensional interpretation so one at the same time is able to conceptualize the complexity of suicide and the basic relations between the subject, the self and the others. Taylor suggests one dimension, concerning *the degree of certainty in the individuals experience of life*. A balanced position is necessary. To great predictability means that life no longer can be *lived*, everything is fixed. There is no reason to keep on living. At the opposite too much uncertainty does result in a life of danger, nothing is fixed. This leads the individual to go for some confirmation of his existence. Maybe some ordeal, where life is at stake.



The second dimension concerns *the relation between the individual and the others*. If one is too closely attached to the others, there is no protection against demands, while too great isolation and lack of emotional relations equally gives vulnerability towards demands and emotions from "within". Combining the two dimensions we can create a model with four main types of suicide (figure 2).

Transferred to the Greenlandic situation the theory can be explained as follows: *Submissive* (first quadrant) is suicide where persons consider life to have ended, maybe due to hunger or disease. *Sacrifice* (second quadrant) includes suicide where the person might try to become reestablished by death (Maybe get revenge through somebody else who will attack the person "responsible" of driving somebody to suicide). (From other cultures: Japanese *seppuku* restores the honor.) *Appeal* (third quadrant) includes suicide where the person does not wish to die but instead to communicate and get an answer from the others or above. *Qivittoq* is some classical example and maybe the modern aggressive and confronting suicide have similar motives. The final type, *Thanatation* (fourth quadrant) was rare in traditional society except for some few examples, where people were told to commit suicide due to loneliness. This type might be of increasing importance as individual problems of existence are more common (particularly young people in a uncertain and isolated position).

With this theory and model the complexity in Inuit suicides should be clear, but at the same time some possible causes and important motives should be accessible. On such a basis inspiration can be found for clinically working psychologist and social workers to confront suicide problems among Inuit youth. At the same time it may be possible to discover some major fields of intervention in suicide prevention. A successful contribution demands both knowledge of causes and understanding of the motives and forces censing Inuit youth to choose suicide.

6. Perspectives on prevention schemes

From my point of view several principles should be respected in prevention schemes initiated by author from a strange western culture. Ethically the program and its elements should be discussed with representatives from local Inuit, who are to decide whether suicide is a problem somebody should interfere with. Strange experts on a short term visit can hardly make any permanent improvements, on the contrary great schemes can soon fall apart, if they are not based on local forces. Help-to-help-yourself principles are most important and local laymen often are better than experts from far away. These experts are better used in supervision and education, as the structure of the Greenlandic legal system has shown.

Nevertheless such principles should not lead to any uncritical and romantic notion of traditional structures of decision, where all responsibilities are thrown into the hands of "the Elders". Hereby hoping that if the young people listen to the advice of the Elders, they can find a solution to their problems of identity. It is most important to make clear, that the problems of the youth are based on a completely different situation, which calls for new solutions, so it is just as important to include the young peoples in any planning of schemes. The tradition — as expressed by the Elders — might represent mutual harmony, but it does not necessarily have any relevant answers to the questions of contemporary youth. The youth should be supported to develop a relationship to the Elders based on *critical respect* instead of faithful acceptance of authority!

Prevention schemes should be considered on both a general basis, trying to reach the general population, and on a more limited basis trying to reach the high-risk groups.

Proposals for a general scheme

1. A debate should be supported through public meetings and medias on the causes of suicide and the possibility of preventing suicide, if everybody is willing to give help to a fellow human being in a crisis.

2. Teachers and social workers in close contact with youth should be trained to improve their capability of handling suicide and other acts of affection among youngsters. This means in particular supporting young people in their handling of their own problems and problems among friends. Second it could be to introduce acts of affection as topics in school classes.

3. Materials for classroom work on suicide should be produced.

4. Some telephone-advice program should be developed on public radio. This could give some advice but mostly it could show that personal problems are common and sometimes can be solved by being shared with a fellow human being.

Proposals for high-risk groups

1. Social and health workers should be trained to improve their capability to recognize and give advice to persons in a serious personal crisis. These high-risk suicide groups are most common among the clients of the municipal welfare offices.

2. Local teams of two persons should be elected, who can establish contacts with families and friends after a suicide, hereby helping to handle the feelings of guilt. Second, such interventions could reduce the very high risk of suicide among these groups. The teams could include professionals (social or health workers) or laymen only. What is most important is that somebody takes initiatives to talk about emotions after the suicide. This is normally not the case.

3. In connection to this, contacts could be established for mutual benefit to other victims of suicide.

These proposals were made in the summer of 1989, what has been the result? At the time of writing — August 90 — as far as I have been able to find out, no initiatives have been made towards high-risk groups. But the general schemes are partly about to run. Some press information on the results of this study has been published in radio and newspapers. Some material for public debate has been developed and is about to be distributed nationwide in the magazine of the Greenlandic Board of Health Promotion. In this material two sets of questions are raised, a) Do people want to accept suicide as a solution for themselves and each other? b) Do people want to keep up the tradition of neither talking about personal problems nor interfering with other peoples problems?

Besides this, in 1989 some public theater and a large-scale radio programme, did try to improve the public debate on youth suicide: a private arrangement but with inspiration from the original initiative of the Board of Health Promotion which started this study as well. Finally, in one district with a great suicide problem a public meeting was arranged, but not followed by any further initiatives.

Whether these schemes will reduce the number of suicides is another question. The future might give the answer.

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