The commercialization of country food and food security: The case of Greenland and what Nunavut can learn

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Food security exists “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2009). Access to adequate food has been identified as a major challenge in the Canadian Arctic, particularly for Inuit communities, where levels of food insecurity are consistently higher compared to Southern Canada (Huet et al., 2012). In Greenland preliminary studies indicate relatively secure food systems in communities of comparable size to those in Nunavut, albeit with emerging stresses in-light of climatic and socio-economic change. Qualitative work has pointed to the potential of country food markets in providing relatively affordable sources of traditional food in communities (Ford and Goldhar, 2012). Herein, open air traditional food markets (kalaalliiaraq) are common in Greenland in communities of diverse sizes, providing both a source of economic returns for hunters and secure access to food for those in waged employment or who do not have access to networks through which food is shared. In-light of the relative security of food systems in Greenland, the project presented here investigates the role of commercial country food markets in enhancing food security within Greenland, and explores whether or not it is feasible to develop and promote similar markets in a Nunavut context. The project used a systematic literature review alongside semi-structured, in-depth interviews with decision makers, civil society organizations, the Kalaallit Nunaani Aalisartut Piniartullu Katuffiat (Organization of Hunters and Fishermen in Greenland), researchers, and representatives of Inuit organizations (e.g. ICC) in Nuuk, Copenhagen, and Iqaluit. The operation of commercial country food markets in Greenland, their impact on food security, and transferable lessons from the Greenland experience will be discussed.

References

FAO. Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security. Proceedings of World Summit on Food Security; 2009; Rome, Italy; 2009.
