



The Arctic Institute of North America Presents the 2014-2015

Arctic Speaker Series

Housing Adequacy in the Canadian and US Arctic: Comparisons and Measurement Dilemmas



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Date: Wed., April 15, 2015

Time: 4 – 5 p.m.

Place: University of Calgary,
Science B 142

As the population of the people living in the Arctic grows, the provision of adequate housing continues to be key to sustainable economic and social development. A question arises as to how social scientists and policy makers should measure adequate housing. Critics of the most commonly used measure of adequacy—crowding—point out that the measure may have the effect of coercing Arctic indigenous people to comply with the dominant culture's understanding about how many people should live in a house and how that house should be used. Southern-designed houses have seldom met the needs of Arctic dwellers, they have worn out faster than they might have under intended uses, and are now often in need of substantial repair. Using data from the US Census Bureau and Statistics Canada housing crowding in Arctic Alaska and Canada is compared. Problems with the measures and the appropriateness of measurement itself are discussed. Data from the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLICA), Alaska, are used to examine the relationship between objective and subjective measures of crowding.

Bio: Dr. Edwards is Associate Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Although born and raised in Alaska, she completed her studies outside of Alaska. Her BA is in Economics (Portland State University, 1988), her MA is in Sociology (University of Texas at Arlington, 1992) and her PhD is in Sociology (Arizona State University, 2000). Her main interest in Sociology is in area of inequality. She regularly teaches Environmental Sociology, Social Stratification, and Social Science Statistics. Several times she has taught a course on Sociology of the North. Her research interests include environmental justice, perceptions of social inequality, and arctic housing.

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