



U.S. AIR FORCE



ARCTIC RESOURCE COMPILATION

**People, Groups, and Language
around the Alaskan Region**



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Preface

This report creates a catalog of resources for use on the topic “People, Groups, and Language around the Alaskan Region.” This catalog of resources is in response to a request by the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Air University (AU) Academic Centers, USAF Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) at Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB), Alabama and is in support of the AFCLC mission.

The mission of the AFCLC is to serve as the USAF focal point for creating and executing programs that sustain career-long development of Linguistically, Regionally, and Culturally competent Total Force Airmen to meet the Service’s global mission. In addition to providing subject matter expertise and support for Air Force Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) governance, the AFCLC accomplishes this mission by designing, developing and delivering: 1) LREC familiarization education to AU officer, enlisted, and accessions programs; and 2) pre-deployment training and training products.

As a Research Analyst for Metro Professional Services, the researcher has identified open source material on People, Groups, and Language around the Alaskan Region by using multiple sources during his research. This catalog includes academic journal articles, books and other legitimate peer-reviewed, academic resources. Sources are categorized by topic and broken down into relevant sub-topics based on the request of the AFCLC representative or on the discernment of the researcher. Catalog entries include Title, Author, Source, Date and Content Abstract, Summary or Overview that gives the end user a sense of what the author has to say about the selected topic and sub-topic. **The text used in this compilation is taken verbatim from the source, and none of this information is intended to be viewed as a product of AFCLC or Metro Professional Services. Incorporation in this compilation does not constitute endorsement of the source by AFCLC.**

ALASKA OVERVIEW:

“Alaska! Fun Facts about the Land, Oceans and People of our Nation’s Only Arctic State,” Sarah Bobbe, Ocean Conservancy, 17 October 2018 [1]
https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2018/10/17/alaska-fun-facts-land-oceans-people-nations-arctic-state/?ea.tracking.id=19HPXGJAXX&gclid=CjwKCAjw4KD0BRBUEiwA7MFNTWal6rU5OPWI2Svz3Grf-NDI7ktaCXzelnzMf3gBT0kUT5eNrZ-6TRoCTjUQAvD_BwE

Overview:

Before I moved to Alaska to join Ocean Conservancy’s Arctic team, I envisioned a state with plentiful glaciers, bears, fish and mountains. After calling Alaska home for three years, I can say I’ve learned so much more about the people, the land, and of course, the oceans of our nations’ only Arctic state!

Current & Relevant Information:

Unsurprisingly, some of the most interesting facts about Alaska relate to its size. Not only is Alaska the largest state in the United States, but it’s also bigger than Texas, California and Montana combined. Alaska also has more than 34,000 miles of coastline, more than the other 49 states combined. The state even boasts the northernmost, westernmost and easternmost points in the U.S. (If you find yourself wondering about that easternmost point, it’s because the Aleutian Islands stretch into the eastern hemisphere). AND it is the only state that borders two oceans—both the Pacific and the Arctic.

While Alaska and its waters host abundant wildlife, Alaska is the least populated state per capita and has just over 700,000 people. It is home to a rich indigenous culture, including 229 Federally Recognized Tribes and 20 indigenous languages. Alaskan Natives are approximately 20% of the State’s population. Many of Alaska’s indigenous people live a subsistence way of life, relying on Alaska’s natural resources and utilizing traditional knowledge passed down through many generations.

“10 Things You Should Know About Alaska Natives,” Richard Walker, ICT News, 13 September 2018 [2] <https://ictnews.org/archive/10-things-you-should-know-about-alaska-natives>

Abstract:

More than 140,000 people have a unique relationship with the land known as the Last Frontier.

They are Alaska’s Indigenous Peoples, their ties to this place dating back to when Raven made the world and Crow brought daylight to the land.

The Alaska Native story is one of endurance – developing ways to survive and thrive in a challenging environment; overcoming enslavement and disease during the Russian and U.S. trade era; adapting to statehood; and fighting to restore rights and reestablish sovereignty.

“By 1800, the population of the Aleutian region and Kodiak had been reduced by about 80 percent due to Russian atrocities, war, disease, starvation and enslavement,” writes William L. Hensley, former Alaska state legislator, longtime educator and advocate for Alaska Native rights, and author of “Fifty Miles from Tomorrow: A Memoir of Alaska and the Real People” (2009).

Today, Alaska’s Indigenous Peoples comprise roughly 24 percent of the state’s population. Many live in one of 229 federally recognized Alaska Native villages.

What do we know about Alaska Natives? To answer that question, we consulted Hensley; and Mike Williams Sr., chief of the Yupiit Nation, member of the Akiak Tribal Council, and board member of First Stewards, which is addressing climate change and sustainability issues.

Current & Relevant Information:

Indigenous Alaska is comprised of many distinct cultures. Hensley reports: “At the time of contact in 1741, the various indigenous nations of Alaska controlled all of Alaska’s 586,400 square miles – the Inupiat in the Northeast and the Arctic, the Dene (Athapascan) in the vast Interior, the Yu’pik in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, the Unangan (Aleut) in the Aleutian Islands, the Sugpiaq in Kodiak and the Gulf of Alaska, the Tlingit and Haida in Southeast Alaska.”

Russia sold Alaska to the U.S. – without asking Alaskans. Hensley reports: “Despite having fewer than 800 Russians in Alaska at any one time, Russia sold its interest in the Russian American Company to the United States in 1867 for \$7.2 million. At that time, Alaska Natives numbered about 30,000.”

Alaska Natives were not citizens of the United States for 57 years. From 1867, when the U.S. claimed ownership of Alaska, to 1924, when the Indian Citizenship Act was enacted, Alaska Natives “could not own land in their own homeland, could not file for mining claims, could not protect their salmon streams from the canned salmon industry and could not vote – unless they were able to pass a vigorous literacy test and prove abandonment of Native lifestyle and religion,” Hensley reports.

The Alaska Native Brotherhood was formed in 1912 to fight for Native rights as citizens of the United States, Hensley reports. “The Indian Reorganization Act was amended to include Alaska in 1936 and as a consequence, Alaska today has 200 [plus] recognized Tribes.”

The U.S. paid in 1971 for land it claimed in 1867. Hensley reports: The passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in December 1971, signed by President Richard Nixon, was the largest indigenous land and monetary settlement ever passed by Congress, with Alaska Natives retaining 44 million acres and receiving \$962.5 million in compensation for lands taken. The Act established Alaska Native regional and village corporations to manage the lands and funds for its shareholders.

“Alaska Region,” U.S. Department of the Interior: Indian Affairs [3]

<https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/alaska>

Overview:

The Alaska Region encompasses 663,268 square miles of land, an area that would stretch from Atlanta, Georgia in the east to San Francisco, California in the west and to Minneapolis, Minnesota in the north. Within Alaska are a dynamic and varied mix of Tribes, Tribal organizations and natural features. The entire state of Alaska falls under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Region, with the small exception of the Annette Island Reserve, which falls under the Northwest Region. More than 180,000 Tribal members make up the 229 Federally Recognized Tribes under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Regional Office - from Ketchikan in the Southeast Panhandle to Barrow on the Arctic Ocean and from Eagle on the Yukon Territory border to Atka in the Aleutian Chain.

“Alaska,” History.com Editors, history.com, 21 December 2022 [4]

<https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/alaska>

Overview:

The largest state admitted to the Union, Alaska became the 49th state in 1959 and is located in the northwest region of North America. Acquired by the United States in 1867, the territory was dubbed “Seward’s Folly” after the U.S. secretary of state who arranged to purchase the land from Russia. Critics of the purchase believed that the land had nothing to offer, but the discovery of gold in the 1890s created a stampede of prospectors and settlers.

Alaska is bound by the Beaufort Sea and the Arctic Ocean to the north; Canada’s Yukon Territory and British Columbia province to the east; the Gulf of Alaska and the Pacific Ocean to the south; the Bering Strait and the Bering Sea to the west; and the Chukchi Sea to the northwest. The capital is Juneau.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska's Native American History

The first people migrated to Alaska around 15,000 years ago, during the Ice Age. At that time, a frozen land bridge known as Beringia extended from Siberia to eastern Alaska, and migrants followed herds of animals across it. These people split into two groups: One group stayed in Beringia, while the other group migrated down into

North and South America. This second group is considered the ancestors of all Native Americans in the Americas. The first permanent settlements in Alaska date to about 4,000 years ago. Most Indigenous people hunted sea mammals such as whales, although those living inland hunted caribou.

Russians first came into contact with Indigenous people in the mid-1700s. Various tribes met Europeans across different periods. Some Indigenous Alaskans were barely impacted by European colonists. Others, especially those living near the Aleutian Islands, were taken hostage by Russian colonists and forced to hunt. Many were later converted by the Russian Orthodox church. A significant number of Alaskan natives married Russians. Their offspring were called Creoles, a term borrowed from the colonial French that described people of mixed Indigenous Alaskan and Russian heritage.

With the arrival of American settlers and the diseases they brought in the 20th century, the Indigenous population began to plummet, from 45 percent in 1940 to 19 percent by 1959. Yet today, Alaska still has the highest population of American Indians and Alaska Natives of any state in the United States, at around 16 percent. There are 11 distinct Indigenous cultures in Alaska that are grouped in five regions: the Iñupiat and St. Lawrence Island Yup'ik in the Arctic; the Athabascan in south-central and interior Alaska; the Yup'ik and Cup'ik in southwest Alaska; the Unangâ and Sugpiaq (Alutiiq) in south-central Alaska and the Aleutian Islands; and the Eyak, Haida, Tsimshian and Tlingit in the Inside Passage.

Russian Exploration and Colonization

Russian explorer Mikhail Gvozdev mapped Alaska and the North American coastline in 1735, although strong winds prevented him from landing. In 1741, Danish-born explorer Vitus Jonassen Bering and his crew sailed between Russia and North America for Russian Czar Peter the Great and became the first Europeans to explore parts of Alaska. For the following decades, private traders known as promyshlenniki returned to hunt seasonally in Alaska for furs.

In 1784, Grigorii Shelikhov created the first Russian settlement on Kodiak Island, though he died before fulfilling his dreams of creating a fur trading empire. In 1794, Catherine the Great sent the first Russian Orthodox monks to Kodiak Island. Along with missionary priest Ivan Veniaminov, who was sent to the Aleutian Islands, they created a Russian Orthodox community that remains vibrant in Alaska.

Alaska's fur-trading business took off when Russian czar Paul I created the Russian-American Company in 1799. The company conducted its fur-trading business from Sitka Island in Alaska and sold to wealthy Chinese. One of its founders, Nikolai Rezanov, helped the Alaskan colony survive by trading with the Spanish in California.

After British navigator James Cook sailed around Alaska in 1778, British and American fur traders established operations in Alaska. Russia eventually created trading treaties with its competition, and widespread trapping almost led to the extinction of several species.

Alaska Purchase

Russia controlled most of the area that is now Alaska from the late 1700s until the mid-1800s, when the fur trade began to fail for ecological and commercial reasons, and Russia decided to focus its efforts to the east. After losing the Crimean War to Great Britain in 1856, the Russian government didn't want to sell Alaska to the British, who wanted to add to their territory in British North America (modern-day Canada). Instead, Russia began looking to sell Alaska to the United States.

At first hesitant to make a big purchase in the aftermath of the Civil War, secretary of state William Seward eventually decided to acquire the territory under the pretext of "Manifest Destiny." In 1867, Seward purchased Alaska for the United States for \$7.2 million, or about two cents an acre. Seward was ridiculed for the purchase, and American expansion into Alaska was slow. Presbyterian and other religious missionaries began migrating to the territory and "Americanizing" Indigenous people. Nearly 100 years after the territory was purchased, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the declaration naming Alaska as the 49th state on January 3, 1959.

The Alaska Gold Rush and Exploration

Gold was discovered in 1872 near Sitka, Alaska, leading more than 60,000 people to arrive in Alaska in 1888. After gold was discovered near the Klondike River in Canada's Yukon Territory, prospectors began flooding into Alaska from 1896 to 1897. The Klondike Gold Rush brought more than 100,000 prospectors to Alaska, including author and journalist Jack London. It led to more than 50 gold-mining camps over the next decade. While many prospectors came up empty-handed, major strikes in Nome and Fairbanks led to the development of larger towns.

American railroad magnate Edward Henry Harriman turned a hunting trip into one of the most famous scientific explorations of his time when he brought 126 researchers and artists on a two-month trip to Alaska in 1899. Known as the Harriman Expedition, the group discovered 240 species of plants and published stunning photos of the landscapes and Indigenous people that raised national interest in the territory.

Civil Rights Movement

Women have long played an important role in Alaskan society. The wives who accompanied their husbands to Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries were often educated, self-sufficient and enterprising. During the Klondike Gold Rush, working women were standard in Alaska. Women ran boardinghouses, restaurants and mining companies. Some established boarding schools, hotels, banks and telephone

and water companies. Indigenous women frequently married immigrant men and helped them survive by providing food and clothing and establishing relationships with local people.

Given women's role in Alaskan society, it's perhaps no surprise that women's suffrage passed in Alaska in 1913, seven years before the 19th Amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution. In the 1940s, Tlingit activist Elizabeth Peratrovich fought to end discrimination against Indigenous Alaskans, who didn't have the same access to businesses and rights under the law as white citizens. Her engagement helped ensure the passage of the Alaska Equal Rights Act of 1945, which preceded the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by nearly two decades.

Industry and Immigration

As fur trading declined in the mid-1800s, fishing and canneries became the predominant industries in Alaska. By the early 1900s, Alaska produced half of the world's canned tuna.

When the Alaska Railroad was built between 1915 and 1923, with Anchorage as its base, new workers and merchants migrated to the area. The installation of military bases and defense industries in Alaska during World War II reshaped the local economy. But it wasn't until oil was found in Prudhoe Bay in 1968 that significant numbers of new people migrated to Alaska, mostly white people from the west coast of the U.S. Beginning in the 1980s, the population diversified as more Filipinos and Pacific Islanders began migrating to Alaska.

Date of Statehood: January 3, 1959

Capital: Juneau

Population: 733,391 (2020)

Size: 664,988 square miles

Nickname(s): The Last Frontier; Land of the Midnight Sun

Motto: North to the Future

Tree: Sitka Spruce

Flower: Forget-me-not

Bird: Willow Ptarmigan

Interesting Facts

- During World War II, the Japanese occupied two Alaskan islands, Attu and Kiska, for 15 months.

- Alaska contains 17 of the 20 highest peaks in the United States. At 20,320 feet, Mt. Denali (formerly known as Mt. McKinley) is the tallest mountain in North America.
- Alaska has roughly 5,000 earthquakes every year. In March of 1964, the strongest earthquake recorded in North America occurred in Prince William Sound with a magnitude of 9.2.
- The most powerful volcanic explosion of the 20th century occurred in 1912 when Novarupta Volcano erupted, creating the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes in Katmai National Park.
- The temperature dropped to a record -80 degrees Fahrenheit at Prospect Creek Camp in 1971.
- The state of Rhode Island could fit into Alaska more than 420 times.
- More than 100 million acres of land throughout Alaska was preserved and protected with the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980.
- Over 11 million gallons of oil poured into 1,300 miles of Alaska's coastline when the Exxon Valdez oil tanker ran into a reef in the Prince William in 1989. The spill killed thousands of animals, including seabirds, sea otters, killer whales and seals, with lingering oil pockets found in the waters more than three decades later.

“Alaska Overview,” Adventure life [5] <https://www.adventure-life.com/alaska/articles/alaska-overview>

Overview:

Alaska has long been the last outpost of the wilds of the United States. It was the 49th state to be incorporated, recognized in 1959. It is a land of bountiful resources, from wildlife and wilderness to gold and oil reserves. Its frigid lands have been crossed by the best mushers and dog teams, and its skies are graced with the celestial Aurora Borealis. An Alaskan cruise can reveal the landscape that Jack London worshiped, the wilderness that Mardy Murie worked her whole life to protect, and the unique modern culture that combines First Nation, Asian, and Western influences. Travelers to the northernmost state of the US should be prepared for breathtaking scenery, mouthwatering seafood dishes, long winters, and short but stunning summers.

Current & Relevant Information:

History

Many people wonder why and how, exactly, Alaska became a part of the United States. Why is Alaska a part of the U.S rather than Canada, or even Russia? The 586,000 square miles now known as Alaska were purchased by Secretary of State

William H. Seward from Russia in 1867. His peers all thought he was crazy, but he was certain America would benefit from the natural resources found in Alaska.

Not until the 1890s when gold was discovered in Dawson, Fairbanks, and Ester did many Americans consider venturing there. Not surprisingly, the U.S. government soon began building railroads, levying taxes, and sending more legislative and military units to the territory. In 1916, legislation was first introduced to make Alaska a state, but insufficient interest caused it to fail.

By the WWII era, more than half of the people living in Alaska were U.S. troops. The land was being mined, fished, and drilled barren by industrial interests with no concern for the wildlife, natural beauty, or indigenous peoples. Ironically, it was public interest in this plight that forced the government to consider statehood for Alaska. In 1959, Alaska finally became a state.

Ancient History

The earliest human inhabitants of the region of modern-day Alaska were Asiatic groups who crossed the Bering Land Straight approximately 40,000 years ago. The vast majority of pre-Columbian peoples of the Americas crossed on this land bridge, and those who stayed in what is now Alaska became the region's indigenous groups. The largest group is the Inuit, and they are accompanied by the Aleuts, Northern Athabaskan, Haida, Yup'ik, and other peoples. These people survived the harsh winters using their fishing and hunting skills. The whale provided the most productive kill, with its considerable meat and blubber benefiting each member of the community. They also hunted (and still hunt today, in many instances) walruses, caribou, musk oxen, seals, and polar bears. The Inuit used dog sleds for transportation, and the husky dog breed is credited to those people. Inuit sea hunters are also credited with the creation of the kayak; their fur-covered boats could easily be righted by a single person, and so Europeans copied the utilitarian design.

Alaska's Legacy of Fur Trading, Gold, and Oil

Alaska was discovered by European explorers in 1741 by Danish explorer Vitus Bering, aboard the Russian Navy ship St. Peter. The Russian-American Company began hunting otters soon after, and engaged in an unsuccessful attempt to colonize the region; shipping costs to the far north were too high, and the colony was a drain on profits. The region became a place of competition for resources, claims, and exploration between Russia, United States, Spain, and England, though Russia held on tight to her claim.

In 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William Seward negotiated the Alaska Purchase; the entire chunk of land was sold for just \$7.2 million, less than 2 cents for acre. The acquisition was deemed "Seward's Folly", because next to nothing was known about the region other than its cold climate. Instead, it came to be perceived as a treasure

trove where every pick struck gold, whales swam into harpoons, fur abounded, and oil came seeping out of the ground.

Just as the fur trade diminished, gold was discovered on Gastineau Channel by Richard Harris and Joe Juneau in 1880, and the city of Juneau was founded. Alaska's heyday of gold mining gained serious momentum in the late 1890s, during the Klondike and Nome Gold Rushes.

Alaska's oil production dates back to 1902, the same year that President Theodore Roosevelt established the Tongass National Forest. Prudhoe Bay's oil deposits were discovered in 1968.

Alaskans began lobbying for statehood in the early 1900's, but those calls fell by the wayside with the onset of World War I when many residents traveled south for high-paying jobs. When islands off Alaska's coast were bombed during World War II, the United States turned its energy back to Alaska to defend its northern outpost. Those defense efforts resulted in much of the region's infrastructure, including Alaska's only overland link to the rest of the states, the Alcan. This energy rejuvenated the drive for statehood, and President Eisenhower declared Alaska the 49th state in 1959.

On the morning of Good Friday in 1964, a massive earthquake hit that measured 9.2 on the Richter scale. One source stated that the earthquake had ten times the force of an atomic bomb; several villages and the city of Valdez were completely leveled. Fortunately, only 131 people were killed in the disaster.

In recent years, Alaska has been the focus of intense environmental and political debate due to its immense oil resources and pristine landscape. It remains to be seen whether the U.S. can balance its dependence on oil with preserving dwindling wild lands.

Introduction to Alaska Politics

Alaska is generally described as a Republican-leaning state, although over half of registered voters are under the term “non-partisan” or “undeclared”. Libertarian undertones characterize land use issues, and travelers to Alaska will find a strong focus on individual rights is apparent in political issues. The longest-serving Republican in the Senate is Alaskan Senator Ted Stevens, nicknamed “Senator-For-Life”; he was appointed in 1968 following Bob Bartlett’s death and hasn’t lost a re-election campaign since. Senator Lisa Murkowski and sole representative Don Young are also Republican.

Cultural Alaska

Alaskan culture is unique to the United States because, although its status as a state is relatively new, the area’s history is long and colorful. Museums throughout the state feature native history and crafts, the state’s legacy of the Gold Rush, and its past of trapping and trading.

Alaska's native population makes up 15 percent of the overall population, and there are hundreds of villages where communities live traditionally and share their history with the willing visitor.

Alaska's most famous sport is, without doubt, the Iditarod. In this annual dog sled race, mushers and their dog teams cover about 1,151 miles in eight to fifteen days. The race began in 1973 as a way to test the best mushers and teams, and is a way to reach out to and keep alive the early history of the state. The Iditarod Trail covers portions used by the Athabaskan and Inuit natives centuries before the arrival of Europeans, and was later used by coal and gold miners in the early 1900s.

As the last great frontier of the American West, Alaska has inspired great writers like Jack London, who wrote *White Fang* and *Call of the Wild*. Alaska's raw and wild landscape influences its residents in much the same way, and Alaskans are generally known for their resilience and strength.

"Alaska," U.S. News, 2024 [6] <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/alaska>

Overview:

Overview of Alaska

Area **665,764 SQ. MI.**

GDP **\$67 Billion**

College Educated **40.5%**

Population **733,406**

Capital **Juneau**

Median Income **\$47,357**

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska was inhabited for thousands of years by [indigenous groups](#), including the Aleuts, Northern Eskimos, Southern Eskimos, Interior Indians and Southeast Coastal Indians, before European colonization in the 1700s. These and other native peoples faced severe [smallpox outbreaks](#) from the late 18th through the mid-19th centuries, which destroyed some and ruined other communities.

Secretary of State William Seward purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867 for \$7.2 million, or about [2 cents an acre](#). Critics of the purchase, often referred to as "Seward's Folly," quickly changed their minds when gold was discovered in the Yukon and settlers flocked to the land in the 1890s. The Last Frontier became the 49th state in 1959.

Oil was discovered at Prudhoe Bay in 1968 and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline was completed in 1977, and the resource has since contributed to about [90%](#) of the [state's economy](#).

Alaska is home to some of the most stunning geography in the U.S., boasting 17 of the nation's 20 highest peaks, as well as the Tongass National Forest, which is the largest in the country. The state contains more untouched land than anywhere else in the U.S.

While Alaska is the largest state by area, it's among the smallest in population, and it boasts the [lowest population density](#) in the nation.

[Anchorage](#), the state's [largest city](#), accounts for much of the state's total population.

“Alaska Overview,” Infoplease: The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2024 [\[7\]](https://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/places/north-america/us/alaska)
<https://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/places/north-america/us/alaska>

Overview:

Alaska, largest in area of the United States but one of the smallest in population, occupying the northwest extremity of the North American continent, separated from the coterminous United States by W Canada. It is bordered by Yukon and British Columbia (E), the Gulf of Alaska and the Pacific Ocean (S), the Bering Sea, Bering Strait, and Chukchi Sea (W), and the Beaufort Sea and the Arctic Ocean (N).

Sections in this article:

- Introduction
- Statehood to the Present
- Territorial Status
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- Early Years as a U.S. Possession
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- Facts and Figures

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska Overview: Facts and Figures:

Area, 656,424 sq mi (1,700,135 sq km), including 86,051 sq mi (222,871 sq km) of water surface. Pop. (2020) 733,391, a 3% increase since the 2010 census. As of the 2020 census, the state's population was: White alone, 65.3%; Black alone, 3.7%; Hispanic or Latino, 7.3; American Indian and Alaska native alone, 15.6%; Asian alone, 6.5%; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 1.4%; Two or More

Races, 7.5%. Capital, Juneau. Largest city, Anchorage. Statehood, Jan. 3, 1959 (49th state). Highest pt., Denali (Mt. McKinley), 20,310 ft (6,190 m); lowest pt., sea level. Motto, North to the Future. State bird, willow ptarmigan. State flower, alpine forget-me-not. State tree, Sitka spruce. Abbr., AK

Alaska Overview: Government, Politics, and Higher Education:

Alaska operates under a constitution drawn up and ratified in 1956 (effective with statehood). Its executive branch is headed by a governor and a secretary of state, both elected (on the same ticket) for four-year terms. Alaska's bicameral legislature has a senate with 20 members and a house of representatives with 40 members. The state sends two senators and one representative to the U.S. Congress and has three electoral votes. Following statehood, the governorship changed hands between the Democrats and Republicans, but the Republicans have dominated the office for the last two decades.

Alaska's educational institutions include the University of Alaska and Alaska Pacific Univ., at Anchorage.

Alaska Overview: Economy:

Alaska has very little agriculture, ranking last in the nation in number of farms and value of farm products. The state's best arable land is in its S central region, in the Matanuska Valley N of Anchorage and the Tanana Valley (around Fairbanks). The state's most valuable farm commodities are greenhouse and dairy products and potatoes.

Alaska leads the nation in the value of its commercial fishing catch—chiefly salmon, crab, shrimp, halibut, herring, and cod. Anchorage and Dutch Harbor are major fishing ports, and the freezing and canning of fish dominates the food-processing industry, the state's largest manufacturing enterprise. Lumbering and related industries are of great importance, although disputes over logging in the state's great national forests are ongoing. Mining, principally of petroleum and natural gas, is the state's most valuable industry. Gold, which led to settlement at the end of the 19th cent., is no longer mined in quantity. Fur-trapping, Alaska's oldest industry, endures; pelts are obtained from a great variety of animals. The Pribilof Islands are especially noted as a source of sealskins (the seals there are owned by the U.S. government, and their use is carefully regulated).

In 1968 vast reserves of oil and natural gas were discovered on the Alaska North Slope near Prudhoe Bay. The petroleum reservoir was determined to be twice the size of any other field in North America. The 800-mi (1,287-km) Trans-Alaska pipeline from the North Slope to the ice-free port of Valdez opened in 1977, after bitter opposition from environmentalists, and oil began to dominate the state economy. The Alaska Permanent Fund, created in 1977, receives 25% of Alaska's

oil royalty income. The fund is designed to provide the state with income after the oil reserves are depleted and has paid dividends to all residents.

Government—federal, state, and local—is Alaska's major source of employment. The state's strategic location has generated considerable defense activity since World War II, including the establishment of highways, airfields, and permanent military bases. Alaska's tourism increased dramatically with the help of improvements in transportation; it now follows only oil among the state's industries. The Inside Passage, Denali National Park, and the 1000-mi (1,600 km) Iditarod sled-dog race are major attractions.

Alaska Overview: Land and People:

Nearly one fifth the size of the rest of the United States, Alaska is, at the tip of the Seward Peninsula in the northwest, only a few miles from the Russian Far East; the two are separated by the narrow Bering Strait. The Seward Peninsula, chiefly tundra covered, is sparsely inhabited. The Bering Strait widens in the north to the Chukchi Sea, which slices into Alaska with Kotzebue Sound; in the south the strait widens to the Bering Sea, which cuts into Alaska with Norton Sound and Bristol Bay.

Toward the south the state again extends toward Russia in the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands, reaching a total of 1,200 mi (1,931 km) toward the Komandorski Islands; together they divide the Bering Sea from the Pacific. The Aleutian Range, which is the spine of the Alaska Peninsula, is continued in the grass-covered, treeless Aleutian Islands; the climate there is unremittingly harsh—foggy, damp, and cold in the winter and subject to violent winds (williwaws). Once traversed by Russian fur traders hunting sea otters, the Aleutians are now chiefly of strategic importance. They contain several active volcanoes.

The southern coast of Alaska is deeply indented by two inlets of the wide Gulf of Alaska, Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound; the Kenai Peninsula between them extends southwest toward Kodiak Island. The narrow Panhandle dips southeast along the coast from the Gulf of Alaska, cutting into British Columbia. It consists of the offshore islands of the Alexander Archipelago and the narrow coast, which rises steeply to the peaks of the Coast Range and the Saint Elias Mts. Winters in the Panhandle are relatively mild, with heavy rainfall and, except on the upper slopes of the mountains, comparatively little snow.

The interior of Alaska, on the other hand, has very cold winters and short, hot summers. In Arctic Alaska, north of the Brooks Range, the temperature in winter reaches -10°C to -40°C (-23.3°C to -40°C). The land there is mostly barren, cut by many short rivers and one long one, the Colville. Alaska's major river is the Yukon, which crosses the state from east to west for 1,200 mi (1,931 km), from the Canadian border to the Bering Sea. The northernmost reach of Alaska is Point Barrow.

Alaska's climate and terrain (rough coast and high mountain ranges) divide it into relatively isolated regions, and transportation relies heavily on costly airlines. The Panhandle is the most populous region; Juneau, the state's capital and third largest city, is there. The Panhandle's connection with Seattle is by ships, which ply the Inside Passage between the coast and the offshore islands. In S central Alaska, Anchorage, the state's largest city, is the center for the Alaskan RR and for airways; it is also connected with the Alaska Highway. On the Seward Peninsula and Norton Sound, Nome, founded when gold was discovered (1898) in the sands of local beaches, is now a small, isolated settlement. Southern ports including Seward, Anchorage, and Valdez are linked by highway with Fairbanks, the state's second largest (and largest interior) city. Cordova and Kodiak depend upon the ocean lanes. On the North Slope, the entire Arctic coast is icebound most of the year, and the ground remains permanently frozen.

The state abounds in natural wonders. In the Panhandle, the scenic beauty of the mountains and the rugged fjord-indented coast are augmented by such attractions as the Malaspina glacier and the acres of blue ice in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. In the Alaska Range of S central Alaska stands the highest point in North America, Denali (Mt. McKinley) in Denali National Park and Preserve. The Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands have numerous volcanoes; Katmai National Park and Preserve contains the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, scene of a volcanic eruption in 1912.

In the mid-1990s slightly over three quarters of the state's population was white and some 15% was Native American (largely Eskimo and Aleut).

Alaska Overview: History:

Russian Colonization

The disastrous voyage of Vitus Bering and Aleksey Chirikov in 1741 began the march of Russian traders across Siberia. The survivors who returned with sea otter skins started a rush of fur hunters to the Aleutian Islands. Grigori Shelekhov in 1784 founded the first permanent settlement in Alaska on Kodiak Island and sent (1790) to Alaska the man who was to dominate the period of Russian influence there, Aleksandr Baranov. A monopoly was granted to the Russian American Company in 1799, and it was Baranov who directed its Alaskan activities. Baranov extended the Russian trade far down the west coast of North America and even, after several unsuccessful attempts, founded (1812) a settlement in N California.

Rivalry for the northwest coast was strong, and British and American trading vessels began to threaten the Russian monopoly. In 1821 the czar issued an ukase (imperial command) claiming the 51st parallel as the southern boundary of Alaska and warning foreign vessels not to trespass beyond it. British and American protests, the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine, and Russian embroilment elsewhere resulted (1824) in a negotiated settlement of the boundary at lat. 54°40'N (the present

southern boundary of Alaska). Russian interests in Alaska gradually declined, and after the Crimean War, Russia sought to dispose of the territory altogether.

Early Years as a U.S. Possession

In 1867, Russia sold Alaska to the United States for \$7,200,000. The U.S. purchase was accomplished solely through the determined efforts of Secretary of State William H. Seward, and for many years afterward the land was derisively called Seward's Folly or Seward's Icebox because of its supposed uselessness. Since Alaska appeared to offer no immediate financial return, it was neglected. The U.S. army officially controlled the area until 1876, when scandals caused the withdrawal of the troops. After a brief period, during which government was in the hands of customs officials, the U.S. navy was given charge (1879). Most of the territory was not even known, although the British (notably John Franklin and Capt. F. W. Beechey) had explored the coast of the Arctic Ocean, and the Hudson's Bay Company had explored the Yukon.

It was not until after the discovery of gold in the Juneau region in 1880 that Alaska was given a governor and a feeble local administration (under the Organic Act of 1884). Missionaries, who had come to the region in the late 1870s, exercised considerable influence. Most influential was Sheldon Jackson, best known for his introduction of reindeer to help the Alaska Eskimo (Inuit), impoverished by the wanton destruction of the fur seals. Sealing was the subject of a long international controversy (see Bering Sea Fur-Seal Controversy under Bering Sea), which was not ended until after gold had permanently transformed Alaska.

The Gold Rush

Paradoxically, the first gold finds that tremendously influenced Alaska were in Canada. The Klondike strike of 1896 brought a stampede, mainly of Americans, and most of them came through Alaska. The big discoveries in Alaska itself followed—Nome in 1898–99, Fairbanks in 1902. The miners and prospectors (the sourdoughs) took over Alaska, and the era of the mining camps reached its height; a criminal code was belatedly applied in 1899.

The longstanding controversy concerning the boundary between the Alaska Panhandle and British Columbia was aggravated by the large number of miners traveling the Inside Passage to the gold fields. The matter was finally settled in 1903 by a six-man tribunal, composed of American, Canadian, and British representatives. The decision was generally favorable to the United States, and a period of rapid building and development began. Mining, requiring heavy financing, passed into the hands of Eastern capitalists, notably the monopolistic Alaska Syndicate. Opposition to these “interests” became the burning issue in Alaska and was catapulted into national politics; Gifford Pinchot and R. A. Ballinger were the chief antagonists, and this was a major issue on which Theodore Roosevelt split with President William Howard Taft.

Territorial Status

Juneau officially replaced Sitka as capital in 1900, but it did not begin to function as such until 1906. In the same year Alaska was finally awarded a territorial representative in Congress. A new era began for Alaska when local government was established in 1912 and it became a U.S. territory. The building of the Alaska RR from Seward to Fairbanks was commenced with government funds in 1915. Already, however, gold mining was dying out, and Alaska receded into one of its quiet periods. The fishing industry, which had gradually advanced during the gold era, became the major enterprise.

Alaska enjoyed an economic boom during World War II. The Alaska Highway was built, supplying a weak but much-needed link with the United States. After Japanese troops occupied the Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska, U.S. forces prepared for a counterattack. Attu was retaken in May, 1943, after intense fighting, and the Japanese evacuated Kiska in August after intensive U.S. bombardments. Dutch Harbor became a major key in the U.S. defense system. The growth of air travel after the war, and the permanent military bases established in Alaska resulted in tremendous growth; between 1950 and 1960 the population nearly doubled.

Statehood to the Present

In 1958, Alaskans approved statehood by a 5 to 1 vote, and on Jan. 3, 1959, Alaska was officially admitted into the Union as a state, the first since Arizona in 1912. On Mar. 27, 1964, the strongest earthquake ever recorded in North America occurred in Alaska, taking approximately 114 lives and causing extensive property damage. Some cities were almost totally destroyed, and the fishing industry was especially hard hit, with the loss of fleets, docks, and canneries from the resulting tsunami. Reconstruction, with large-scale federal aid, was rapid. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1971) gave roughly 44 million acres (17.8 million hectares; 10% of the state) and almost \$1 billion to Alaskan native peoples in exchange for renunciation of all aboriginal claims to land in the state. In 1989 the tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground in Prince William Sound, releasing 11 million gallons of oil into the water in the worst oil spill in U.S. history up to that time and severely damaging the ecosystem. A jury in 1994 found Exxon Corp. (now ExxonMobil) and the ship's captain negligent, but the amount of punitive damages (\$507.5 million) to be paid to some 33,000 commercial fishermen and other plaintiffs was ultimately fixed by a Supreme Court decision in 2008, which severely reduced the original award (\$2.5 billion).

“People No Longer Want to Move to Alaska for the First Time Since World War II; Here’s Why,” Cristina Silva, Newsweek, 14 March 2018 [8]

<https://www.newsweek.com/people-no-longer-want-move-alaska-first-time-world-war-ii-heres-why-843609>

Overview:

Alaska's population is shrinking for the first time in decades. The drop in residents suggests the state could be facing an unprecedented economic struggle as fewer people are opting to move there as they stay home or look for jobs elsewhere, according to a new state labor report.

Current & Relevant Information:

For the past five years, Alaska has lost more people than it has gained residents, representing the longest streak of population loss since World War II, when researchers first started tracking the yearly numbers. In all, nearly 29,000 more people have moved out of Alaska since 2012 than have moved into the state. The state had a net loss of nearly 9,000 residents in 2017, its largest population loss since 1988, the report from Alaska's Department of Labor and Workforce Development found.

The problem isn't necessarily that more people are leaving Alaska. Roughly 50,000 people have left every year. Instead, the issue is fewer people are moving to Alaska, with a drop to about 40,000 from 50,000 new residents in 2013, the report found.

Alaska has the most unstable population of any state in the U.S., with residents coming and going every year. While there are more native-born Alaskans than ever, with 41 percent born in Alaska these days versus only 32 percent in 1980, most residents arrive from other states.

Alaska has always been sparsely populated, but it did attract a rush of new residents starting in the 1970s as it began embracing its oil economy, and a recession in the rest of the country in the 1980s helped make the cold, northern state more attractive to residents in the Lower 48. Alaska was largely unaffected by the Great Recession in the late 2000s, which also helped it lure new residents.

But as state economies have improved in recent years, Alaska has struggled to maintain its allure to new residents. December marked the 27th consecutive month of job losses for Alaska and the state now has the highest unemployment rate in the nation, the report found.

Most people leaving Alaska are heading to Washington because of its proximity. California, Texas and Florida are also popular alternatives, according to the report. Many of those fleeing are young people looking for jobs, starting college or entering the military. But older people are increasingly leaving Alaska, too, especially residents over the age of 50.

Others factors include the growing death rate as the state's population ages and a decrease in births. In fact, Alaska's working-age population dropped for the fifth consecutive year in 2017 as more residents entered retirement or moved away.

Heidi Drygas, commissioner of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, said in a statement in the report that she was concerned about non-

Alaskans taking jobs in the oil and gas industry from state residents. "History shows that without concerted action, too much of our oil wealth will leave Alaska, including the billions of dollars in wages we're losing to nonresident workers. During a time of rising unemployment, it is unacceptable for oil companies to continue hiring outsiders instead of skilled, experienced Alaskans. Let's make it clear to producers and support contractors that they must do better," she said.

Alaska's unemployment rate was 7.3 percent, according to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics report in March. New Mexico, which has the second highest unemployment rate in the U.S., had a rate of 5.9 percent.

1. People: Alaska Natives:

"Alaska Native Peoples," Alaska Federation of Natives, 2024 [9]
<https://www.nativefederation.org/alaska-native-peoples/>

Abstract:

For thousands of years Alaska Natives have lived throughout the vast land that became the 49th state. A traditional subsistence lifestyle of hunting, fishing and gathering food has enabled Alaska Natives to thrive in some of the world's harshest and most challenging environments.

Current & Relevant Information:

We are many nations and tribes, with ancient traditions that continue to be practiced today and adapted for the modern world. We are comprised of widely variety of cultures, languages, life ways, art forms and histories, but we share many core values that have guided us for millennia. Eleven distinct cultures can be described geographically: Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian peoples live in the Southeast; the Inupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yupik live in the north and northwest parts of Alaska; Yup'ik and Cup'ik Alaska Natives live in southwest Alaska; the Athabaskan peoples live in Alaska's interior; and south-central Alaska and the Aleutian Islands are the home of the Alutiiq (Sugpiaq) and Unangax peoples.

HIGHEST STATE AND CITY NATIVE POPULATIONS:

According to the 2014 Census update, 18% of Alaska's general population is American Indian or Alaska Native – the highest rate for this racial group of any state. Alaska's largest city, Anchorage, has the greatest proportion of Native peoples among places with over 100,000 residents, at 12%.

NATIVE PEOPLE IN STEADY SHIFT FROM RURAL TO URBAN AREAS:

The 2010 Census reports a slight majority of American Indians or Alaska Natives residing in the state's urban cities as compared to its rural villages. This was up from about 4 in 10 in 2000 and 3 in 10 in 1990.

YOUNG NATIVE POPULATION:

American Indians and Alaska Natives are a young population, with a median age of about 27 in 2010. In addition, the young adult Native population is expected to dominate growth over the next decade, increasing rapidly after 2010.

HOMELAND SECURITY FOR ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLES:

Alaska's rural Native villages represent an important part of the state's heritage. But our villages disproportionately bear the brunt of cultural, economic and environmental change. To ensure that our grandchildren enjoy the benefits of village life, AFN works at the federal and state levels to strengthen the foundations of those communities.

Very serious problems continue to exist for Alaska Natives, including attacks on our subsistence fishing and hunting rights, high energy costs, a stalled economy, and lack of education and training opportunities, all of which make remaining in our villages and home regions difficult. High energy costs for residential heating and electricity and a lack of infrastructure severely limit rural residents' cash income; hunting and fishing opportunities are shrinking due to intense competition from non-Native sport and commercial operations. Rising health costs due to high rates of diabetes and substance abuse among Native populations continue to challenge our cultural and economic survival. Educational opportunities drastically differ between schools in urban areas of Alaska and rural Alaska - a problem exacerbated by school closures when community populations become too small.

ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT (ANCSA):

Enacted in 1971, ANCSA transferred 43.7 million acres of land and \$962.5 million in compensation for extinguishment of Alaska Native claims to additional lands based on aboriginal title.

ANCSA created 13 regional corporations (1 of which is based in Seattle) and over 200 village corporations. Each corporation was granted land and money. These corporations administer federal and state health, housing, and other services to Alaska Natives in their respective regions. AFN was instrumental in securing this far reaching and unique settlement.

ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT (ANILCA):

In 1980, ANILCA reaffirmed land claims under ANCSA, and title VIII of ANILCA created a "rural" subsistence preference rather than a "Native" one. However, the State of Alaska's Constitution includes a provision for equal access to natural resources for all citizens, thereby making the "rural" preference in violation of State law. Since 1989, all efforts to amend the State's Constitution in order to protect Alaska Natives' way of life as ANILCA intended have failed.

“Seeing the Protective Rainbow: How Families Survive and Thrive in the American Indian and Alaska Native Community,” Charlotte Goodluck and Angela A. A. Willetto, Northern Arizona University, October 2009 [10] <https://nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/aecf-howfamiliesurviveindianandalaskan-2009.pdf>

Abstract:

This brief summarizes a longer paper American Indian and Alaskan Native Family Resiliency: A Protective Rainbow that breaks new ground in several ways. As one of the few empirically based studies on Native American family resiliency which included members of numerous tribal groups, the study explores the nature of family resiliency in tribal life today. Using first-person narratives combined with other data, the study looks at the unique resiliency themes, factors and characteristics of Native American families that allow them to respond to adverse situations. Told from a Native perspective, the research provides practitioners, policy makers, and community-based organizations with a nuanced view of how American Indian and Alaskan Native American communities have survived, what they value, and how deeply rooted practice and beliefs have sustained them for generations.

On its own the study is not conclusive, but rather provides guidance for a broader research agenda and opportunities for more culturally responsive engagement in these communities. It opens the door to further research and development in a host of areas, including family policy, social networks development, and cultural competency.

Current & Relevant Information:

Overview:

Context is critical in understanding Native American culture and society and is influenced by historical issues of federal-Indian law, traumatic effects of land loss, relocation to other states, tribal identity and enrollment, boarding school experiences, pressures to assimilate, and social and economic changes. Their context is also infused by strengths, abilities, opportunities, and behaviors to handle problems in their own families and communities in the Native American tradition.

Native Americans have been historically traumatized and are the victims and survivors of colonialism (Brennan and Mackey 1973). As individuals, families, communities, and tribes, they have overcome numerous physical, psychological, social, religious and cultural abuses caused by insensitive or even intentionally harmful federal actions and policies. As a result, children were removed from their families and communities, families destroyed, and tribes separated from their land. Native American approaches to coping with these radical social and cultural changes are the foundation for the study summarized in this brief. The study looked in detail at family resiliency and includes many examples of resilience promoting behavior in individuals and families. These examples and stories paint a powerful

picture of how family strengths and resiliency support the development and well-being of individuals, families, and as a result the community in general.

Family resiliency provides a powerful lens for disassembling the components of culture and practice and a compelling means to understand social networks in Native American communities in a new way. This study explores the complexity of family resiliency and connects an array of factors without elevating any single one as a solution to complex problems. This discussion and analysis illustrate the intangibles and other factors that might be written off as idiosyncratic or situational but are elements of a metaphorical rainbow that has served to protect these communities from over 500 years of historical and institutional trauma.

Rainbow as Metaphor: Native Resiliency:

The narratives in this study drew out an overriding theme; the protective nature of resiliency in the personal, familial, community, and tribal environments. The ability to be resilient in difficult times has allowed the individual, family, community and tribe to survive and provide for its members and to go forward in spite of difficulties. Seven other themes developed from the data, as follows and not presented in any hierarchal form: ethos and values, religion and spirituality, language, extended family, responses from culture, sense of humor and moving forward to the Seventh Generation. These seven themes are distinct and interwoven, representing the often invisible social and cultural context in which Native Americans live, play and work.

Native American belief systems often rely on elements from nature and the environment to illustrate their connections to the earth, animals, humans, unseen realities and other beings. Drawing from these beliefs, we used the rainbow as a metaphor to present these themes in a culturally relevant manner. The rainbow shows that the cycle of life continues, and demonstrates that the stories of Native people are part of an unending pattern of earth, sky and air.

Working More Effectively with Native American Communities:

Using these seven themes as a context, partners to Native communities can build trust to develop lasting relationships with community members over time. This study provides a useful entry point to understanding how these unseen forces operate. A deeper understanding of resiliency in tribal communities can inform the development of culturally responsive family strengthening approaches and models.

Federal, state and local policymakers, as well as, philanthropic organizations, can use this study to more effectively understand family resiliency across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, leading to deeper knowledge about the distinctions of communities and regions. This understanding can further inform public policies, program development, and engagement opportunities. For example, The Annie E. Casey Foundation used much of its learning about Native family resiliency and asset-based approaches when developing its Native American Initiative.

Furthermore, Organic Philanthropy, the Foundation's philanthropic model for working in Native and Southwest Border communities, is rooted in the belief that each community has inherent strengths, wisdom, resiliency and hope upon which to build a better future. In this model, Native communities possess the capacity and wisdom to find innovative solutions that allow them to meet their challenges head-on.

If we can understand what helps some people to function well in the context of high adversity, we may be able to incorporate this knowledge into new practice strategies (Fraser et al 1999).

“American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian People,” Beth Boyd, Psychology Education and Training from Culture-Specific and Multiracial Perspectives: Critical Issues and Recommendations, July 2009 [11]

<https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/education-training.pdf>

Abstract:

There are currently 562 federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages in the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2002). As sovereign nations, these tribes possess the right to form their own government, enforce laws (both civil and criminal), tax, establish membership, license and regulate activities, zone, and exclude persons from tribal territories. Another 245 tribal groups are not recognized by the federal government (approximately 47 are state recognized, and many have petitioned for federal recognition). The 2000 Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) reports that 4.5 million people in the United States identify themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native. One third report living on federal or state reservations or state-designated American Indian or Alaska Native statistical areas, and two thirds report living in urban areas. Although it is estimated that hundreds of Native languages may have vanished, there are approximately 175 distinct Native languages still spoken in the United States. The Native Hawaiian language is still the primary language spoken in 13% of Native Hawaiian homes.

There is often confusion about the appropriate or preferred label for indigenous people in the United States. The term Indian was first used for Native people of the Americas following Christopher Columbus's mistaken belief that he had landed in the West Indies in 1492. The term Native American, first used in the 1960s, is sometimes thought to be preferable because it does not perpetuate Columbus's mistake. However, most indigenous people prefer to refer to themselves by their specific tribal names (e.g., Lakota, Dine, etc.). Many tribes use the word in their own language meaning "The People" as their name for themselves. For many tribes, the commonly known English name is not the name the people would use for themselves. For example, Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people are often referred to as "Sioux," which is actually a derogatory reference ("little snakes") in the language of a neighboring tribe and altered by the French. The people of these tribes refer to

themselves as Lakota, Dakota, or Nakota, and even more specifically by the name of their band (e.g., Isanti Dakota).

When referring to any large ethnic group, there is always the risk of “ethnic glossing.” Trimble and Dickson (2005) defined an ethnic gloss as an overgeneralization or simplistic categorical label for an ethnocultural group that gives the false impression of homogeneity and discounts the variability present within the group. At a minimum, ethnic glossing provides little or no information about the richness and variability of the cultures, languages, lifeways, levels of acculturation, geographic locations, and worldviews of the people within the category, and, at worst, helps to perpetuate stereotypes. The likelihood of ethnic glossing is great when speaking of American Indians in a general way. It is important to remember that American Indian actually refers to hundreds of very varied nations, and one must know about the specific culture, history, and experiences of the tribe or nation.

Current & Relevant Information:

When teaching about the indigenous people of the United States, one must understand the history and impact of U.S. government policies. Although every tribal nation has its own unique sociopolitical history and experiences with the mainstream culture, all Native people and communities have been affected in devastating ways. A few historical events and their consequences are discussed in the following sections.

It is estimated that prior to contact with Europeans, Native people numbered approximately 15 million in North America. Between 1500 and 1900, federal policies of extermination, removal, relocation, and assimilation led to the death of roughly 95% of the population. Many Native people died because they had no immunity to diseases that unintentionally came from Europe, but there are also numerous reports of deliberate introduction of smallpox-infected blankets in Native communities as a form of biological warfare (Stiffarm & Lane, 1992). As American settlers moved westward, tribes were forced to move further west. In 1830, the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which allowed for the relocation of tens of thousands of Native people west of the Mississippi River. These forced relocations resulted in the deaths of thousands of Native people. The Trail of Tears relocation of five tribes from the southeast to “Indian Territory” (what would later become Oklahoma) resulted in the deaths of approximately 8,000 Cherokee, 6,000 Choctaw, and 50% of the Creek, Seminole, and Chickasaw nations. On the Great Plains, when nomadic tribes resisted confinement to reservations, President Jackson issued an order to kill as many buffalo as possible to cut off the tribes’ main source of food and force them onto reservations. Thousands died from hunger, disease, and encounters with military forces.

In the late 19th century, federal policy focused on “civilization” and assimilation of Native people. During this time, it was thought that the “Indian problem” could be

solved by assimilating Native people into the mainstream American culture. Thousands of Native children were sent to boarding schools run by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or Christian missions in an attempt to eradicate their Native cultures and languages through what might be called Western sociocultural and educational “reprogramming.”

Threats of incarceration and restriction of food and supplies were often used to force families to send their children to boarding schools far from their homes. Children were given English names, punished for speaking their languages or practicing their cultures, and many experienced severe physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Children often did not see their families for years, and when they returned to their communities, they had no experience of living in families and were ill prepared to live within their culture and community with a positive sense of themselves as Native people. Children, parents, and their home communities experienced a devastating sense of estrangement.

Millions of acres of communally held tribal lands were opened up for White settlement when Congress passed the Dawes Act of 1887, which allotted 160 acres of land to individual Native families who agreed to register and Anglicize their names. The Urban Indian Relocation Program, begun in 1952 by the BIA, promised to relocate Native families to large urban areas and provide vocational training. Many of these programs did not materialize, and although many relocated families eventually returned to their reservations, approximately 64% of Native people still live in urban areas.

In Alaska, Native villages came into contact with Russian fur traders in the late 1700s. They experienced devastating disease epidemics and losses of land, resources, and subsistence lifestyle. The Alaska territory was purchased by the United States in 1867, and an influx of whalers, fur traders, gold miners, settlers, and missionaries ensued. The BIA began removing Alaska Native children from their villages to boarding schools in the 1940s, creating the same trauma experienced by American Indian people. Alaska became a state in 1958, but Native Alaskans continue to lose access to their traditional ways of life.

The traumatic losses that generations of Native people have experienced have been described as the American Indian “holocaust” (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998) and meet the United Nations definition of genocide. The devastation of loss was compounded because traditional spiritual and ceremonial ways of healing were outlawed by U.S. policy until 1978, leaving Native people with no mechanism for healing from these historical traumas. The resulting “historical trauma response” includes high levels of substance abuse, suicide, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, anger, difficulty recognizing and expressing emotions, and unresolved historical grief.

Today, Native people have the highest poverty rate of any ethnic group in the United States and experience serious health disparities compared with other Americans, including infant mortality (2.3 times higher), diabetes (2.6 times higher), liver disease (3 times higher), sexually transmitted diseases (6 times higher), unintentional injuries (2 times higher), and youth suicide (3 times higher). The Indian Health Service, charged with providing health and mental health services for members of federally recognized tribes, estimates that federal appropriations provide only 55% of what is needed for adequate services (Indian Health Service, 2007). However, to truly understand this picture, one must remember the historical context in which these conditions developed and recognize the tremendous resiliency of Native people. It is the specific tribal cultures, values, and worldviews of American Indian and Alaska Native people that provide the most important source of this resiliency.

There are a number of key cultural values that should be understood when teaching about the Native people of the United States. Although each tribal group has its own specific culture and value system, there are some values that are common across tribes and interconnected. Some of these include connection, family, respect, spirituality, harmony and balance, community well-being, and generativity.

“Climate-Induced Displacement of Alaska Native Communities,” Robin Bronen, Brookings-LSE: Project on Internal Displacement, 30 January 2013 [\[12\]](#)

<https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/30-climate-alaska-bronen-paper.pdf>

Summary:

Alaska has warmed twice as fast as the global average during the past half-century, and temperatures are projected to rise 1.5-5° F (1-3 °C) by 2030 and by 5-18° F (3-6.5 °C) by 2100. Less sea ice covers the Arctic Ocean today than at any time in recent geologic history. At the same time, the land itself is also affected by temperature increases. Permanently frozen subsoil – permafrost – keeps the land intact and habitable along the northwestern Alaskan coast, but is melting. These environmental phenomena are resulting in accelerated rates of erosion and flooding which damage or destroy infrastructure and threaten the livelihoods and well-being of people residing throughout Alaska. Since 2003, federal and state governments have documented these climate change impacts on Alaskan communities and the need for immediate action to protect populations. State and federal government agencies are struggling to respond to the enormous new needs of these communities. Despite spending millions of dollars, the traditional methods of erosion control and flood protection have not been able to protect some communities. For several Alaska Native communities, protection in place is not possible and community relocation is the only adaptation strategy that can protect them from accelerating climate change impacts. This paper presents a brief overview of climate change in Alaska, examines the impact of climate change on Alaska Native rural villages, and analyzes the state, federal and community responses. Outlined below

are highlights from the full report, which can be consulted for further information and analysis.

Current & Relevant Information:

Overview of Climate Change Effects

Flooding and erosion threaten the habitability of a significant number of Alaska Native communities. Rapid climactic changes are occurring faster than many of the climate models predicted, affect the totality of the environment where humans exist in Alaska, and present Alaska Native communities with unprecedented challenges to adapt (Markon 2012). Historically, the ancestors of the current residents of Alaska Native communities migrated seasonally among several coastal and inland hunting and fishing camps in order to follow the wild game and fish on which they depended for their survival (ANTHC 2011; Berardi 1999; Schweitzer et al. 2005; USACE 2008b, Marino 2012). The Alaska Native population consolidated into permanent settlements primarily because of the requirement by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Education that Alaska Native children attend school (Berardi 1999; Darnell 1979; USACE 2008b, Marino, 2012), the location of which was determined by barge accessibility to transport construction materials (USACE 2008b). The building of schools and sewage, water, and electricity infrastructure led to a change from seasonal migration to the establishment of permanent communities at school sites selected by the federal government. The below climactic changes are among those that Alaska Native communities face.

□ **Decreasing Arctic sea ice extent and warmer temperatures are having detrimental effects on many Alaska Native coastal communities**, exposing many to the flooding and erosion caused by storms that originate in the Bering and Chukchi Seas and occur primarily between August and early December (Shulski and Wendler 2007, Hufford and Partain 2005, ASCG 2008).

□ **Permafrost, which keeps the land intact and habitable along the northwestern Alaskan coast, is melting** due to temperature increases, causing infrastructure, including water and sewage systems, to sink into the earth and alters their structural integrity (GAO 2009, Serreze 2008).

□ **Erosion, accelerated by decreased sea ice extent and thawing permafrost, is leading Alaska Native villages to seek relocation of their communities.**

Historically, communities could move away from areas affected by erosion because they did not depend on built infrastructure. However, the construction of public facilities such as power plants, schools, health clinics, and airports, ties communities to the land and limits their ability to move (USACE 2009). Notwithstanding, some communities have sought to relocate their infrastructure to higher ground located close to the original village sites; it is recognized that other communities need to relocate in their entirety because there is no higher ground close to the community and all of the land on which the community is located is exposed to flooding and

erosion. This paper examines 12 of the most threatened communities – located in varied and geographically remote areas in Alaska – which fall under both of these types of relocation strategies (GAO 2009). The phenomenon of erosion facing Alaska Native communities is well-documented. Several communities, including those which are now most threatened by erosion, began documenting the impact of erosion on their community in the 1980s in order to develop a long-term strategy for protection in place (Cox 2007). In addition, during this same period of time, the State of Alaska documented the impact of erosion on communities throughout Alaska (ADOT& PF 1984). More recently, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Alaska Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change Immediate Action Workgroup (IAWG) have each issued numerous reports, documenting the increasing severity of erosion on Alaska Native villages. These reports have used varied methodologies to assess and prioritize the harm to these communities in order to inspire immediate action. The reports have also evaluated the past efforts to protect communities in place and the cost of future protection for threatened communities, including the cost and viability of community relocation (GAO 2009, USACE 2009, IAWG 2009, IAWG 2008b, USACE 2006a, GAO 2003).

□ **Changes in the abundance and distribution of wildlife and marine life** are predicted to occur due to changing climatic conditions. Changing vegetation patterns will impact the migration patterns of animal and bird life, which will affect the ability of the Alaska Native population to gather their traditional subsistence foods (Kofinas et al. 2010). Warmer temperatures also affect marine mammals that are dependent on sea ice for their habitat and hunted by Alaska Native peoples, including bowhead whales, beluga whales, ringed seals, bearded seals, walrus, and polar bears (Simpkins 2010), while less arctic sea ice is projected to reduce marine mammal populations (Adaptation Advisory Group 2010). Warmer ocean and stream temperatures may also be a factor in recent declines of salmon stock (Farley et al. 2005, Mundy and Evenson 2011).

Government Response to Climate-Threatened Communities

The paper examines the steps the state government has taken to assess the impacts of climate change, the programs the state has undertaken to address displacement and the remaining challenges to state and federal response.

□ In 2007, the State of Alaska recognized the need to develop a statewide strategy to understand and respond to the impact of climate change. Former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin officially formed the Alaska Climate Change Sub-Cabinet (Palin 2007), which established the Immediate Action Workgroup (IAWG) in 2007. The IAWG was a collaborative multidisciplinary and intergovernmental workgroup tasked with the responsibility to identify the immediate needs of communities imminently threatened by the effects of erosion, flooding, permafrost degradation, and other climate change-related impacts (IAWG 2008b). The IAWG last met in March 2011; it failed to receive authorization from Governor Parnell or the

Subcabinet on Climate Change to continue its work (IAWG 2011a, IAWG 2011b). No explanation has been given to explain the failure to reauthorize the work of the IAWG.

□ The IAWG identified six communities most imperiled by climate change and in need of immediate action (IAWG 2008). All are communities with a majority of Alaska Native residents. The IAWG facilitated numerous meetings with representatives of these communities to develop a strategy to respond to climate-related threats and was instrumental in advancing to the Alaska State Legislature funding recommendations for so that these communities could receive the necessary financial resources to respond to the changing environment. The IAWG also issued two reports outlining several recommendations to respond to the needs of the imperiled communities located along Alaska's coast and rivers (IAWG 2008b, IAWG 2009).

□ The State of Alaska has implemented two programs to address the emergent needs of communities faced with displacement. Based on the recommendations of the IAWG, in 2008, the Alaska Legislature established the Alaska Climate Change Impact Mitigation Program (ACCIMP) (3 AAC 195.040). Funding from the ACCIMP is limited to two community categories. Non-competitive funding is allocated to six communities designated by name that are currently threatened by climate-induced ecological change. The remaining funds are administered through a competitive grant process to complete hazard impact assessments will then be eligible for additional funding to support adaptation activities, including relocation planning. The second program is funded through the US Fish and Wildlife Coastal Impact Assistance Program. Using the collaborative model, the Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) established for the Newtok Planning Group, funding will be used by DCRA project staff to organize inter-agency working groups, which include tribal, local, regional, state, and federal stakeholders for the three communities. These working groups will develop strategic plans that respond to current and future threats to the well-being of community residents and infrastructure endangered by erosion, flooding and storm surge.

Community Relocation and the Challenges of Government Response

Community relocation may be the only adaptation strategy that can protect residents from the damaging effects of flooding and erosion on a significant number of Alaska Native communities. However, a 2009 U.S. Government Accountability Office report recognized that no government agency has the authority to relocate communities, no governmental organization exists that can address the strategic planning needs of relocation, and no funding is specifically designated for relocation (GAO 2009, 24-27). As a result, none of the 12 villages the GAO identified has been able to relocate (GAO 2009). The challenges to government response are outlined below.

- There is no adaptive governance framework in place to evaluate when communities and government agencies need to shift their work from protection in place to community relocation.
- The Alaska Climate Change Impact Mitigation Program (ACCIMP) and the Coastal Impact Assistance Program are critical first steps to address the needs of communities facing displacement because of climate change. However, as the GAO (2009) noted, no similar initiative exists at the federal government level.
- Government agencies are spending millions of dollars to construct erosion protection devices which have an anticipated lifespan of ten years (USACE 2007; Bragg 2007a; Bragg 2007b). As government agencies are unable to change their approach from protection in place to relocation, communities are further imperiled. Current federal disaster response legislation, the Stafford Act and its amendments, requires that funding be spent on repairing and rebuilding in the original location of the disaster (Bronen 2011). This means that communities whose location is no longer habitable, or that are located entirely within floodplains, are unable to receive government funding to repair and rebuild damaged infrastructure.
- Funding and institutional issues are also a significant issue for communities that have decided that relocation is their only viable adaptation strategy. State and federal governments have various programs to fund erosion protection, hazard mitigation and disaster relief (USACE 2009, GAO 2009, Bronen 2011). Each of these programs has specific fund requirements and limitations. Communities that decide to relocate are faced with numerous challenges because of the lack of an institutional framework for relocation. For example, without clear guidelines or procedures for choosing a relocation site, two communities, Kivalina and Shishmaref, have voted to relocate to sites that government agencies later determined were unsuitable because of the existence of permafrost. Newtok residents have chosen a relocation site and have started the construction of pioneer infrastructure at the site, but continue to struggle with coordinating the efforts of multiple agencies that have different regulatory and funding criteria. The severity of climate impacts on dozens of Alaskan communities demonstrates the critical need to develop a relocation institutional framework.

To overcome these challenges, the author recommends as a first step that Congress amend disaster relief legislation to enable communities to use existing funding mechanisms to construct infrastructure at relocation sites that are not within the disaster area. The author also recommends that Congress enact legislation to provide a relocation governance framework so that communities have the ability to relocate when the traditional erosion and flood control devices can no longer protect residents in place. In this way, the United States can create a model adaptation strategy that facilitates an effective transition from protection in place to community relocation that governments throughout the world can implement.

“Alaska Native Peoples and Conservation Planning: A Recipe for Meaningful Participation,” Melanie B. Jacobs and Jeffrey J. Brooks, Research Gate, January 2011 [13]

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279288958_Alaska_Native_Peoples_and_Conservation_Planning_A_Recipe_for_Meaningful_Participation

Abstract:

Participation by Alaska Native tribes, communities, and individuals in conservation projects on public lands is often inadequate. Increasing the quantity and effectiveness of Native participation in conservation should be of paramount importance to federal agencies in Alaska. Our purpose is to better understand and improve participation in conservation planning for Alaska Native peoples. Our objectives were to inductively develop a model of Alaska Native participation, identify and describe factors that impede and facilitate meaningful participation by Alaska Native peoples, and formulate recommendations for agency planners and managers. The core analytic theme – cultural appropriateness – reflects a lingering divide between Alaska Native cultures and ways of knowing on the one hand, and agency cultures and practices on the other. The findings reflect barriers, facilitators, and logistics related to communications, relations, and involvement. The recipe for meaningful participation requires agencies to develop and maintain capacities for greater cultural awareness and sensitivity, and flexibility in methods of communication and public involvement.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska Native peoples are the descendants of those who inhabited Alaska 10,000 years ago, and many live on lands traditionally occupied by their ancestors. Approximately 16% of the state’s current population is Alaska Native, representing over twenty dialects and about a dozen major cultural groups, including Aleut, Alutiiq, Athabaskan peoples, Cupik, Eyak, Haida, Inupiat, Saint Lawrence Island Yupik, Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Yupik. The United States legally recognizes 229 distinct tribes in Alaska.

Alaska Native peoples have a long history of interacting and coping with other governments and peoples who have come to Alaska from other places, including land managers, natural resource planners, and other government officials and employees. The scope of this paper admittedly does not capture the full and nuanced details of Alaska Native histories, or their levels of participation in conservation projects over decades past. Looking across the state and using a broad lens, our purpose is to better understand and help improve, in a general and preliminary sense, Alaska Native peoples’ participation in federal land use and conservation planning. This paper should be evaluated based on its contribution to increasing the influence of Alaska Native peoples in shaping the future of the land

that is so closely linked to the survival of their varied cultures, beliefs, and traditional ways of life.

Today, the state of Alaska is divided into a patchwork of land ownerships and legal jurisdictions. In a highly politicized atmosphere, Alaska Native tribes, communities, and other groups compete for position and access rights alongside the state and federal governments, corporations, commercial interests, and individuals (e.g., Case, 1989, 1998; Gallagher & Gasbarro, 1989). Most of the federal lands in Alaska have conservation status and are protected and managed by a variety of agencies that use a comprehensive planning document as a general vehicle to direct resource conservation and land-use management (Gallagher, 1988). Comprehensive area plans for agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are often rooted in differing missions and distinct enabling legislation, which can complicate conservation planning and create public confusion. Circumstances are further exacerbated by sheer geographical distance, remoteness, and the absence of roads in many parts of the state.

To meet requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other laws that establish federal planning processes (e.g., Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980), federal agencies in Alaska and elsewhere must conduct participatory planning during the development phase of land management plans and other projects that propose major actions or changes on federal lands—actions that could impact the environment and affect human communities. Participatory planning has been defined as a social, ethical, and political practice in which individuals or groups, assisted by a set of tools, take part in varying degrees during the overlapping phases of the planning and decision-making cycle to bring forth outcomes that may be congruent with the participants' needs and interests (Horelli, 2002, p. 611). At various steps in the planning process, federal agencies gather public input by soliciting written comments and recording spoken testimony at public hearings. When agency planners and managers use these tools alone, they do not achieve adequate and meaningful public participation with Alaska Native peoples living in rural communities.

Traditional ways of life, based in Alaska Native subsistence practices, have been well studied and documented (e.g., Wheeler & Thornton, 2005). Alaska Native subsistence involves more than food and nutrition; it is integral to the cultures, societies, and economies of most, if not all, Alaska Native peoples and their communities, both materially and spiritually (Brown & Burch, 1992; Case, 1989; Thériault, Otis, Duhaime, & Furgal, 2005; Thornton, 1998, 2001; Van Zee, Makarka, Clark, Reed, & Ziemann, 1994). Alaska Native peoples require continual access to the resources present on vast tracts of undeveloped and remote lands to maintain their traditional ways of life grounded in subsistence practices and Native ways of knowing. Ensuring access and retaining the essential link to the land and

subsistence resources is vital to the survival of Alaska Native cultures and absolutely requires that Alaska Native peoples be able to meaningfully take part in the planning and decision-making processes used by federal agencies.

Land management decisions made by agencies can and do impact Alaska Native cultures and traditional ways of life. Accordingly, it should be of paramount importance to federal agencies to increase the quantity and effectiveness of Alaska Native peoples' participation in and influence on these decisions. However, Alaska Native involvement in planning and management of the state's vast territory and abundant resources has been described as inadequate for effecting the real changes that are needed to ensure complete protection of subsistence ways of life (Case, 1989; Flanders, 1998; Hensel & Morrow, 1998; Thornton, 2001). Moreover, Alaska Native peoples often feel that agency planners and managers do not respect, or hold negative and patronizing attitudes towards their cultures and traditional ways of knowing. Traditional knowledge held by Natives tends to be seen as anecdotal by agency professionals unless it has been independently verified using western science (Ellis, 2005; Hensel & Morrow, 1998; Natcher, Davis, & Hickey, 2005). When western science discredits Native traditional ways of knowing, feelings of disrespect are perpetuated. In return, agency workers feel that some Native individuals' disrespect and do not follow their regulations. This may be because Alaska Native peoples do not have ownership and confidence in western sources of knowledge, and feel that the agency planners and managers are disconnected from their traditional subsistence ways of life and do not really comprehend what is happening on the land (Case, 1998).

There remains a critical need for researchers, managers, and other stakeholders to determine the extent and nature of this problem and to work to improve the practice of public participation with Alaska Native peoples. Our research objectives were to inductively develop a conceptual model of Alaska Native participation, explicitly identify and describe concrete factors that impede or facilitate Alaska Native participation in agency projects, and develop recommendations for how planners and managers can enhance the quality and quantity of Alaska Native peoples' participation in conservation projects sponsored by federal agencies.

“Alaska Native Culture,” Travel Alaska [14] <https://www.travelalaska.com/Things-To-Do/Alaska-Native-Culture>

Overview:

In general, there are five groups of Alaska Native people identified by region – Iñupiat & St. Lawrence Island Yup'ik in the Arctic; Athabascan in Southcentral and Interior Alaska; Yup'ik & Cup'ik, Unangaġ and Sugpiaq (Alutiiq) in Southwest Alaska; and Eyak, Haida, Tsimshian, and Tlingit in the Inside Passage.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska Native cultures strongly influence our way of life, from names of rivers, mountains, and communities on traditional lands to art, architecture, and culture in our cities. About 15 percent of Alaska's 730,000 residents are Alaska Native, with 20 distinct cultures and 300 different dialects. Many Alaska Native people live in villages scattered along the coastline and rivers of Alaska, where they still practice traditional subsistence hunting and fishing lifestyles. In all five regions of our state and in communities both large and small, our culture and history are shaped by Alaska Native language, artwork, storytelling, ceremonies, and customs.

A. History:

“Alaska Natives,” Alaska Trekker, 7 March 2020 [15]
<https://alaskatrekker.com/alaska/alaska-natives/>

Abstract:

The indigenous peoples of Alaska, known as Alaska Natives, have varied cultures and have adapted to harsh environments for thousands of years. They are as far north as Barrow (Utqiagvik) and as far south as Ketchikan. Natives are indigenous peoples of Alaska: Iñupiat, Yupik, Aleut, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, and a number of Northern Athabaskan cultures. Ancestors of Alaska Natives are known to have migrated into the area thousands of years ago, in at least two different waves. Some are descendants of a third wave of migration in which people settled across the northern part of North America. They never migrated to southern areas. For this reason, genetic studies show they are not closely related to Native Americans in South America. Throughout the Arctic and northern areas, they established varying indigenous, complex cultures that have succeeded each other over time. Alaska Natives developed sophisticated ways to deal with the challenging climate and environment, and cultures rooted in the place. Historic groups have been defined by their languages, which belong to several major language families.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska Natives History before Statehood:

In the early spring of 1942, when the Army Corps of Engineers arrived to begin building the Alaska Highway, Alaska's population was approximately 73,000. About half of those residents were Native Alaskans, members of indigenous groups who inhabited Alaska before it was colonized by Russia.

First Nations:

A third group of Native Alaskans consisted of several Indian tribes (also known as First Nations). Two of the larger groups were the Tlingit and Haida, who resided in the southeastern inland region of Alaska. While these groups were adept at fishing, they were also known for their mountaineering skills. They were famed for their totem poles and their potlatches, gatherings of friends and family to celebrate

important milestones in an individual's life, such as a first hunt or a funeral. Both of these tribes were seasonally mobile hunter gatherers with their own distinguishing features, most prominently linguistic ones.

Illnesses:

The influx of civilians and military personnel into Alaska had a devastating effect on the Native Alaskans, who had already suffered a negative impact. In the century of Russian and American colonization prior to World War II, contact with outsiders had subjected Native Alaskans to diseases for which they lacked immunity, including meningitis, influenza, chicken pox and whooping cough.

Incursions:

With the newcomers' arrival, Native Alaskans' whole way of living became endangered. Highway-building made travel and access much easier within Alaska. During their recreation time, the Army engineers would go fishing, or go hunting with their military-issued guns, for which they otherwise had little use. Along the narrow corridor of the highway, the outsiders depleted the natural resources on which the Native Alaskans depended for subsistence.

Dwindling Minority:

As a result of disease, cultural confusion and the growing number of whites, the percentage of Native Alaskans in the general Alaskan population plummeted from 45 percent in 1940 to 26 percent in 1950 to 19 percent at the time of statehood in 1959. The highway construction led to a new era for the original Alaskans.

A World Ended:

Historian Ken Coates described the effect of the Alaska Highway on the area's native population: "Construction projects transformed aboriginal life in the northwest very quickly and very profoundly. There was only occasional work to be found, they didn't hire very many aboriginal people to work. The women got involved selling handicrafts and doing some domestic work... There were a lot of attacks on aboriginal people, some rapes of native women, for example. A lot of misuse of alcohol with aboriginal people. So, a world had ended. A lifestyle that had been in place in many ways for centuries, but certainly since the arrival of the fur traders in the middle of the 19th century. It's a hundred years of fishing, and trapping, and sort of casual engagement with the market economy, poof, gone. Overnight."

Subsistence:

Gathering of subsistence foodstuffs continues to be an important economic and cultural activity for many Alaska Natives. In Barrow, Alaska in 2005, more than 91 percent of the Iñupiat households which were interviewed still participated in the local subsistence economy, compared with the approximately 33 percent of non-

Iñupiat households who used wild resources obtained from hunting, fishing, or gathering.

But, unlike many tribes in the contiguous United States, Alaska Natives do not have treaties with the United States that protect their subsistence rights, except for the right to harvest whales and other marine mammals. The Alaska Natives Claims Settlement Act explicitly extinguished aboriginal hunting and fishing rights in the state of Alaska.

Revitalization:

Today, Alaska Natives account for just over 15 percent of the total Alaskan population of approximately 648,000 people. Since the 1960s and 1970s, aboriginal autonomy has rebounded in Alaska. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 officially ended native land ownership claims while creating regional corporations that administered approximately one-ninth of Alaskan territory; the shareholders of the corporations are the native peoples. The legal battles for rights to their ancestral land began a revitalization of native society that is evident today.

“There Are Two Versions of the Story of How the U.S. Purchased Alaska From Russia,” William L. Iggiagruk Hensley, Smithsonian Magazine, 29 March 2017 [16]
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/why-russia-gave-alaska-americas-gateway-arctic-180962714/>

Abstract:

One hundred and fifty years ago, on March 30, 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward and Russian envoy Baron Edouard de Stoeckl signed the Treaty of Cession. With a stroke of a pen, Tsar Alexander II had ceded Alaska, his country’s last remaining foothold in North America, to the United States for US\$7.2 million.

That sum, amounting to just \$113 million in today’s dollars, brought to an end Russia’s 125-year odyssey in Alaska and its expansion across the treacherous Bering Sea, which at one point extended the Russian Empire as far south as Fort Ross, California, 90 miles from San Francisco Bay.

Current & Relevant Information:

Today Alaska is one of the richest U.S. states thanks to its abundance of natural resources, such as petroleum, gold and fish, as well as its vast expanse of pristine wilderness and strategic location as a window on Russia and gateway to the Arctic.

So, what prompted Russia to withdraw from its American beachhead? And how did it come to possess it in the first place?

As a descendant of Inupiaq Eskimos, I have been living and studying this history all my life. In a way, there are two histories of how Alaska came to be American – and two perspectives. One concerns how the Russians took “possession” of Alaska and

eventually ceded it to the U.S. The other is from the perspective of my people, who have lived in Alaska for thousands of years, and for whom the anniversary of the cession brings mixed emotions, including immense loss but also optimism.

The lust for new lands that brought Russia to Alaska and eventually California began in the 16th century, when the country was a fraction of its current size.

That began to change in 1581, when Russia overran a Siberian territory known as the Khanate of Sibir, which was controlled by a grandson of Genghis Khan. This key victory opened up Siberia, and within 60 years the Russians were at the Pacific.

The Russian advance across Siberia was fueled in part by the lucrative fur trade, a desire to expand the Russian Orthodox Christian faith to the “heathen” populations in the east and the addition of new taxpayers and resources to the empire.

In the early 18th century, Peter the Great – who created Russia’s first Navy – wanted to know how far the Asian landmass extended to the east. The Siberian city of Okhotsk became the staging point for two explorations he ordered. And in 1741, Vitus Bering successfully crossed the strait that bears his name and sighted Mt. Saint Elias, near what is now the village of Yakutat, Alaska.

Although Bering’s second Kamchatka Expedition brought disaster for him personally when adverse weather on the return journey led to a shipwreck on one of the westernmost Aleutian Islands and his eventual death from scurvy in December 1741, it was an incredible success for Russia. The surviving crew fixed the ship, stocked it full of hundreds of the sea otters, foxes and fur seals that were abundant there and returned to Siberia, impressing Russian fur hunters with their valuable cargo. This prompted something akin to the Klondike gold rush 150 years later.

But maintaining these settlements wasn’t easy. Russians in Alaska – who numbered no more than 800 at their peak – faced the reality of being half a globe away from St. Petersburg, then the capital of the empire, making communications a key problem.

Also, Alaska was too far north to allow for significant agriculture and therefore unfavorable as a place to send large numbers of settlers. So, they began exploring lands farther south, at first looking only for people to trade with so they could import the foods that wouldn’t grow in Alaska’s harsh climate. They sent ships to what is now California, established trade relations with the Spaniards there and eventually set up their own settlement at Fort Ross in 1812.

Thirty years later, however, the entity set up to handle Russia’s American explorations failed and sold what remained. Not long after, the Russians began to seriously question whether they could continue their Alaskan colony as well.

For starters, the colony was no longer profitable after the sea otter population was decimated. Then there was the fact that Alaska was difficult to defend and Russia was short on cash due to the costs of the war in Crimea.

So clearly the Russians were ready to sell, but what motivated the Americans to want to buy?

In the 1840s, the United States had expanded its interests to Oregon, annexed Texas, fought a war with Mexico and acquired California. Afterward, Secretary of State Seward wrote in March 1848:

“Our population is destined to roll resistless waves to the ice barriers of the north, and to encounter oriental civilization on the shores of the Pacific.”

Almost 20 years after expressing his thoughts about expansion into the Arctic, Seward accomplished his goal.

In Alaska, the Americans foresaw a potential for gold, fur and fisheries, as well as more trade with China and Japan. The Americans worried that England might try to establish a presence in the territory, and the acquisition of Alaska – it was believed – would help the U.S. become a Pacific power. And overall, the government was in an expansionist mode backed by the then-popular idea of “manifest destiny.”

So, a deal with incalculable geopolitical consequences was struck, and the Americans seemed to get quite a bargain for their \$7.2 million.

Just in terms of wealth, the U.S. gained about 370 million acres of mostly pristine wilderness – almost a third the size of the European Union – including 220 million acres of what are now federal parks and wildlife refuges. Hundreds of billions of dollars in whale oil, fur, copper, gold, timber, fish, platinum, zinc, lead and petroleum have been produced in Alaska over the years – allowing the state to do without a sales or income tax and give every resident an annual stipend. Alaska still likely has billions of barrels of oil reserves.

The state is also a key part of the United States defense system, with military bases located in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and it is the country’s only connection to the Arctic, which ensures it has a seat at the table as melting glaciers allow the exploration of the region’s significant resources.

But there’s an alternate version of this history.

When Bering finally located Alaska in 1741, Alaska was home to about 100,000 people, including Inuit, Athabascan, Yupik, Unangan and Tlingit. There were 17,000 alone on the Aleutian Islands.

Despite the relatively small number of Russians who at any one time lived at one of their settlements – mostly on the Aleutians Islands, Kodiak, Kenai Peninsula and Sitka – they ruled over the native populations in their areas with an iron hand, taking children of the leaders as hostages, destroying kayaks and other hunting equipment to control the men and showing extreme force when necessary.

The Russians brought with them weaponry such as firearms, swords, cannons and gunpowder, which helped them secure a foothold in Alaska along the southern coast. They used firepower, spies and secured forts to maintain security, and selected Christianized local leaders to carry out their wishes. However, they also met resistance, such as from the Tlingits, who were capable warriors, ensuring their hold on territory was tenuous.

By the time of the cession, only 50,000 indigenous people were estimated to be left, as well as 483 Russians and 1,421 Creoles (descendants of Russian men and indigenous women).

On the Aleutian Islands alone, the Russians enslaved or killed thousands of Aleuts. Their population plummeted to 1,500 in the first 50 years of Russian occupation due to a combination of warfare, disease and enslavement.

When the Americans took over, the United States was still engaged in its Indian Wars, so they looked at Alaska and its indigenous inhabitants as potential adversaries. Alaska was made a military district by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant with Gen. Jefferson C. Davis selected as the new commander.

For their part, Alaska Natives claimed that they still had title to the territory as its original inhabitants and having not lost the land in war or ceded it to any country – including the U.S., which technically didn't buy it from the Russians but bought the right to negotiate with the indigenous populations. Still, Natives were denied U.S. citizenship until 1924, when the Indian Citizenship Act was passed.

During that time, Alaska Natives had no rights as citizens and could not vote, own property or file for mining claims. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, in conjunction with missionary societies, in the 1860s began a campaign to eradicate indigenous languages, religion, art, music, dance, ceremonies and lifestyles.

It was only in 1936 that the Indian Reorganization Act authorized tribal governments to form, and only nine years later overt discrimination was outlawed by Alaska's Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945. The law banned signs such as "No Natives Need Apply" and "No Dogs or Natives Allowed," which were common at the time.

Eventually, however, the situation improved markedly for Natives.

Alaska finally became a state in 1959, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Alaska Statehood Act, allotting it 104 million acres of the territory. And in an unprecedented nod to the rights of Alaska's indigenous populations, the act contained a clause emphasizing that citizens of the new state were declining any right to land subject to Native title – which by itself was a very thorny topic because they claimed the entire territory.

A result of this clause was that in 1971 President Richard Nixon ceded 44 million acres of federal land, along with \$1 billion, to Alaska's native populations, which

numbered around 75,000 at the time. That came after a Land Claims Task Force that I chaired gave the state ideas about how to resolve the issue.

Today Alaska has a population of 740,000, of which 120,000 are Natives.

As the United States celebrates the signing of the Treaty of Cession, we all – Alaskans, Natives and Americans of the lower 48 – should salute Secretary of State William H. Seward, the man who eventually brought democracy and the rule of law to Alaska.

“History of Alaska,” warpaths2peacepipes.com, 16 January 2018 [17]
<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/history-of-native-americans/history-of-alaska-indians.htm>

Overview:

The history and the way of life of Alaska Indians was profoundly affected by newcomers to the area. The indigenous people had occupied the land thousands of years before the first European explorers arrived. The Europeans brought with them new ideas, customs, religions, weapons, transport (the horse and the wheel), livestock (cattle and sheep) and disease which profoundly affected the history of the Native Indians. The history of the State and of its Native American Indians is detailed in a simple History Timeline. This Alaska Indian History Timeline provides a list detailing dates of conflicts, wars and battles involving Alaska Indians and their history. We have also detailed major events in US history which impacted the history of the Alaska Indians.

Current & Relevant Information:

10,000 BC: Upper Paleolithic period - Asiatic groups crossed the Bering land bridge into western Alaska

1741: Vitus Bering, a Dane working for the Russians, discovers mainland Alaska

1745: The exploration of Alaska by the Russians begins

1763: 1763-1766 - Conflict between Russian fur hunters and Alaskan Natives in which the Aleut destroy four Russian ships and kill 175 hunters.

1772: Permanent Russian settlement established

1775: 1775 - 1783 - The American Revolution.

1776: July 4, 1776 - United States Declaration of Independence

1778: Captain James Cook explores the Arctic Ocean searching for the Northwest Passage

1794: First Russian Orthodox missionaries arrive at Kodiak from Russia to convert Alaskan Native Indians

1799: Russia claims Alaska

1804: Battle of Sitka, a major conflict between European and Alaska Natives.

1805: Tlingit attack and destroy the Russian post at New Russia

1812: 1812 - 1815: The War of 1812 between U.S. and Great Britain, ended in a stalemate but confirmed America's Independence

1830: Indian Removal Act

1832: Department of Indian Affairs established

1835: United States and England obtain trading privileges in Alaska

1835: 1835-1839 Smallpox, measles, chicken pox, and whooping-cough epidemics reduce the Alaskan Native Indian population

1838: The British Hudson's Bay Company leases the Southeast Alaska mainland from the Russians

1851: The Nulato Massacre - The Kokukuk River people massacred a large part of the population of Nulato due to a trade dispute

1861: 1861 - 1865: The American Civil War.

1862: U.S. Congress passes Homestead Act opening the Great Plains to settlers

1865: The surrender of Robert E. Lee on April 9 1865 signaled the end of the Confederacy

1867: The sale of Alaska by Russia to the United States for \$7.2 million

1887: Dawes General Allotment Act passed by Congress leads to the breakup of the large Indian Reservations and the sale of Indian lands to white settlers

1890's: Alaskan gold rush results in miners and settlers moving to Alaska. Reindeer herds are imported into Alaska

1969: All Indians declared citizens of U.S.

1979: American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed

“Alaska Natives and Early People,” National Park Service – Bering Land Bridge, 13 October 2023 [18] <https://www.nps.gov/bela/learn/historyculture/alaska-natives-and-early-people.htm>

Overview:

Many of the stories told about Bering Land Bridge National Preserve are focused on its prehistory, but the more recent past and present-day cultural traditions of Northwest Alaska are just as important. Deeply-rooted cultural practices and

traditional subsistence hunting and gathering are still a part of everyday life for most Inupiaq communities around the Seward Peninsula. The protection of resources within Bering Land Bridge helps to support these lifestyles, as well as communicate to others the importance of Alaska Native heritage in a holistic context.

Current & Relevant Information:

Today's cultural groups of the Seward Peninsula remain closely tied to the ancestors who first crossed over from Siberia, and many still have living relatives on the Asian side of the Bering Strait. Up until European contact in the 19th century, these groups led mobile subsistence lifestyles, moving seasonally with food availability and thriving off the land and the sea.

By the 1850s however, the commercial whaling, fur trade, and mining industries caught on that Alaska really was the last frontier, and, despite a sometimes-harsh climate, offered the supply needed to meet the growing demands of the world. Unfortunately, however, along with unsustainable practices of harvesting these resources also came irreversible changes to the Alaska Native groups that inhabited the land for thousands of years before European contact.

In 1884, the US Bureau of Education appointed Sheldon Jackson as a special agent for Alaska to establish schools and missions in Native communities throughout the Seward Peninsula. Jackson was under the impression that these groups were living in poor conditions, some just barely surviving; on the contrary however, this was in fact a misunderstanding of cultural and lifestyle practices. It turns out that Jackson first visited the Inupiat during a normal seasonal resource shortage and mistook it for chronic starvation, without considering the cyclical nature of resource availability in the arctic.

Regardless, the most enduring of his undertakings was the establishment of reindeer herding on the Seward Peninsula in response to the perceived needs of the Inupiat. Working as an apprenticeship program, reindeer were imported from Siberia and young Inupiaq men were trained in herd management, as well as taught agricultural methods and English.

This program essentially changed not only the traditional subsistence lifestyle of the Inupiat, but also the social organization and health of their communities. With an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, villages were hit hard by disease epidemics such as the 1918 influenza that wiped out significant portions of the population. Over time populations have recovered, but communities continue to work hard to preserve and promote the cultural traditions that have made them who they are today.

“Thirty Years Later: The Long-Term Effect of Boarding Schools on Alaska Natives and Their Communities,” Diane Hirshberg and Suzanne Sharp, Institute of Social and Economic Research University of Alaska Anchorage, September 2005 [19]
https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy_publication_links/boardingschoolfinal.pdf

Summary:

In 2004 and 2005 we gathered information on how boarding school and boarding home experiences affected individual Alaska Natives, their families, and communities. From the early 1900s to the 1970s Alaska Natives were taken from rural communities that lacked either primary or secondary schools and sent to boarding schools run by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), by private churches or, later, by Alaska's state government. Some were also sent to boarding homes to attend school in urban places. We interviewed 61 Alaska Native adults who attended boarding schools or participated in the urban boarding home program from the late 1940s through the early 1980s, as well as one child of boarding-school graduates. Their experiences, some of which are shared in this report, reveal a glimpse of both the positive and negative effects of past boarding schools.

Many of those we interviewed spoke with ambivalence about their boarding school experience, finding both good and bad elements. Some of the good experiences included going to schools that had high expectations of the students; educators and other school personnel who developed personal relationships with students; individualized support for students who were struggling; and discipline and structure that was supportive, not punitive. For many of those we interviewed, boarding school offered an opportunity to learn about the world beyond village boundaries and to develop lasting friendships. But these good experiences came at a cost. The cost for some was abuse; interviewees reported physical and sexual abuse at the Wrangell Institute. At that school, children were forbidden to speak their native languages and were even beaten for speaking them.

The goal of many educators at the time of mandatory boarding schools was to assimilate people of different cultures and ethnicities into the dominant culture. This cost many students not only the loss of their language, but also their culture and identity. These practices had lasting effects on individual students, their families, and communities. Those we interviewed told of finding it difficult to return home and be accepted. They felt that by being sent to boarding school they had missed out on learning important traditional skills and had a harder time raising their own children. For communities, the loss of children to boarding schools created a tremendous void, one that interviewees said was filled by alcohol and a breakdown in society. Drugs, alcohol, and suicide are some of the effects interviewees spoke of as coming from boarding home experiences and the loss of cultural identity and family.

In 1976, the State of Alaska agreed to build schools in rural communities having eight (later ten) or more school-age children. When these schools were built, it was no longer necessary to send Native children to boarding schools. However, there is now an ongoing policy debate over the cost and quality of these local schools and whether Native children might be better off attending schools outside their communities. We hope that policymakers consider Alaska Natives' past experiences with boarding schools reported here and learn from them.

One important caveat to this report is that it is not a comprehensive analysis of the boarding school experience. It is based on experiences of the people who were able to participate in our survey. There are many who were unable to participate, for a variety of reasons. Some have left the state; others are homeless; some live in remote rural villages and either did not hear about our project or were unable to come to the urban hubs where we did our work. Sadly, too, some have died. For these reasons, we use caution in drawing conclusions about the experience. Instead, we have done our best to present some of the stories shared with us in the hope that they will encourage others to come forward with more stories from their experiences. Only as people share their experiences can we learn more about the lasting effects of the boarding home experience on individual Alaska Natives and their communities.

Current & Relevant Information:

The history of formal schooling for Alaska Natives, from the time of the U.S. acquisition of Alaska in 1867 to the present, is a troubled one. The initial goals of formal education in the North were to Christianize and “civilize” Alaska Natives (Darnell and Hoem, 1996, p. 62). Over time, the federal, territorial, and state governments established a boarding school system to accomplish these goals. For the first three quarters of the 20th century Alaska Native children were sent to boarding schools or boarding homes either inside or outside Alaska.

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) developed the boarding school system for American Indian students in the 19th century, with the explicit intent of assimilating these youngsters. By 1881, there were 68 boarding schools throughout the country, serving 3,888 students (McDiarmid, 1984). In the early part of the 20th century, academically talented Alaska Native students were sent to vocational boarding schools outside Alaska. These students had largely unsuccessful experiences, and in the 1920s the federal government created three vocational boarding schools for Natives in Alaska. For two decades these schools functioned as the sole BIA-operated secondary education option for Alaska Native students. However, these first boarding schools fell into disrepair, and in 1947 the BIA opened a single consolidated boarding school in Sitka, Mt. Edgecumbe (McDiarmid, 1984; Cotton, 1984).

Until 1966, students living in rural communities that did not have local high schools had few options for secondary education. Options were limited to the BIA-operated Mt. Edgecumbe, the only public boarding school in Alaska, and church-run schools such as St. Mary’s Catholic School, Copper Valley at Glennallen, and Covenant in Unalakleet (McDiarmid, 1984). When Mt. Edgecumbe was full, Native students were sent to BIA boarding schools in other states, including Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon and Chilocco Indian School in Chilocco, Oklahoma (Alaska Natives Commission, 1994b). At one point over 1,000 children from Alaska attended these out-of-state boarding schools (Cotton, 1984). The BIA also operated the only public

K-8 (later K-9) boarding school, the Wrangell Institute, in Wrangell, Alaska. In 1966, the State of Alaska increased options for Native students by establishing a boarding home program in which Native students moved to urban areas to attend school and live with families that were compensated by the state. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the State of Alaska also opened three regional boarding schools for secondary students in Nome, Kodiak, and Bethel (Cotton, 1984; Kleinfeld and Bloom, 1973). Smaller community boarding home programs and foster care programs offered two more alternatives for Alaska Native students.

Figure 1 shows the 22 boarding schools and homes attended by Alaska Native students, including a short-lived program in New Mexico, the American Indian Arts Institute.

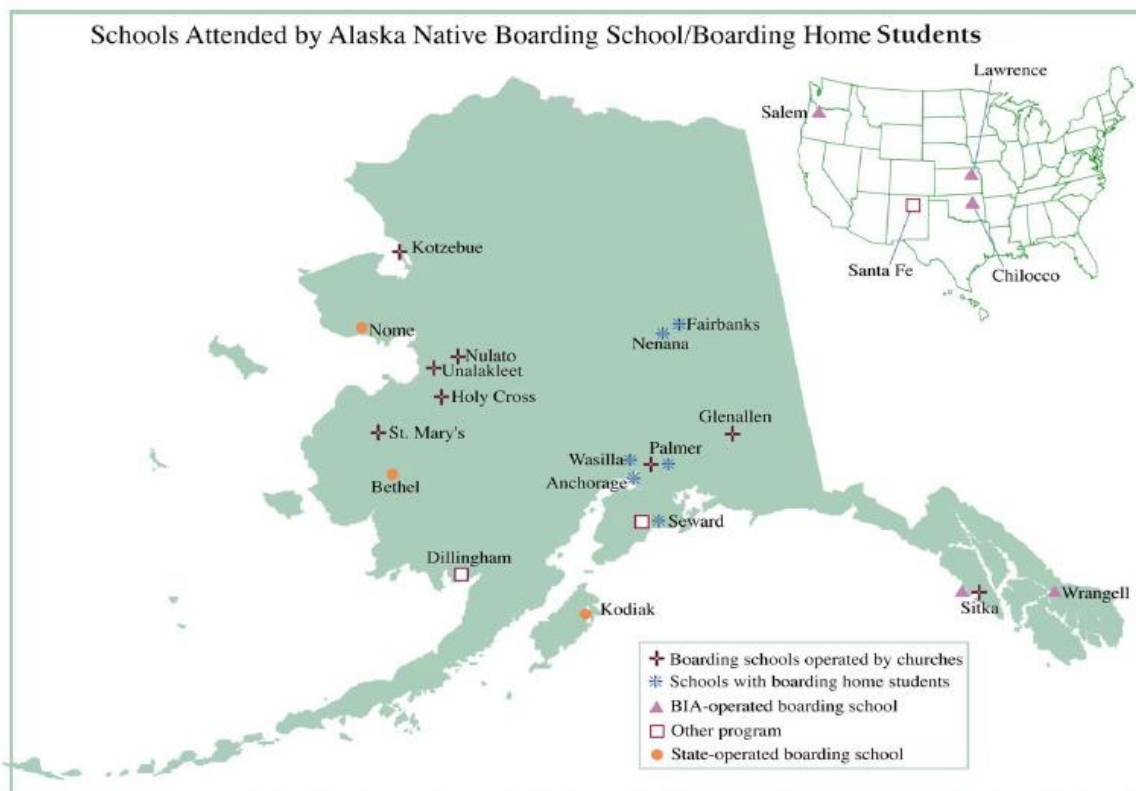


Figure 1

Tables 2 and 3 show the number of students from Alaska enrolled in secondary and elementary boarding school programs. The number of students who participated in the boarding home program is less clear, since state enrollment data did not separate out these figures in the 1960s.

Table 2. Alaska Native Enrollment Figures: Secondary Boarding Schools 1958-59 to 1968-69

| | 1958-1959 | 1959-1960 | 1960-1961 | 1962-1963 | 1963-1964 | 1964-1965 | 1965-1966 | 1966-1967 | 1967-1968 | 1968-1969 |
|---|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>BIA Boarding Schools</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chemawa Indian School (Salem, Oregon) | | | 153 | 299 | 426 | 583 | 676 | 657 | 735 | 717 |
| Chilocco Indian School (Chilocco, Oklahoma) | | | | | | | | 171 | 266 | 370 |
| Mt. Edgecumbe | 388 | 292 | 672 | 677 | 672 | 671 | 669 | 632 | 619 | 622 |
| Wrangell ¹ | | | | 29 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 20 | 28 | 115 |
| <i>Religious Institution Boarding Schools</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Copper Valley ² | 47 | 41 | 39 | 50 | 57 | 73 | 114 | 75 | 61 | 83 |
| Covenant | 42 | 30 | 29 | 26 | 26 | 42 | 50 | 48 | 58 | 63 |
| St. Mary's | 44 | 42 | 50 | 77 | 80 | 75 | 101 | 108 | 106 | 106 |
| Sheldon Jackson ³ | 110 | 86 | 107 | 83 | 102 | 86 | 70 | 39 | | |
| <i>State Operated Boarding Schools</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nome Beltz ⁴ | | | | | | | | 154 | 154 | 154 |
| Bethel Regional High School ⁵ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kodiak Aleutian Regional High School ⁶ | | | | | | | | | N/A | N/A |
| Total Number of Students | 631 | 491 | 1050 | 1241 | 1391 | 1559 | 1709 | 1750 | 1873 | 2076 |

¹Wrangell only enrolled students through grade 9, and only for a few years; ²Enrollment counts include only Native students; Copper Valley enrolled non-Native students as well; ³Sheldon Jackson became a post-secondary only institution in 1967; ⁴Beltz opened in 1966 and was a stand-alone boarding school up until 1972, when it was consolidated with Nome High School into a regional school, with both residential and local students; ⁵Opened in Fall 1972; ⁶Residential school opened in 1967, but enrollment data is not available; residential school enrollments were merged with local high school attendance figures

Table 3. Alaska Native Enrollment Figures: Elementary Boarding Schools 1958-59 to 1968-69

| | 1958-1959 | 1959-1960 | 1960-1961 | 1962-1963 | 1963-1964 | 1964-1965 | 1965-1966 | 1966-1967 | 1967-1968 | 1968-1969 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <i>BIA Boarding Schools</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mt. Edgecumbe | 289 | 366 | | | | | | | | |
| Wrangell* | 255 | 266 | 262 | 230 | 224 | 232 | 230 | 230 | 216 | 114 |
| <i>Religious Institution Boarding Schools</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| St. Mary's | 44 | 42 | 48 | 75 | 78 | 75 | 101 | 108 | 106 | 106 |
| Total Number of Students | 588 | 674 | 310 | 305 | 302 | 307 | 331 | 338 | 322 | 220 |

*grades served at the school changed from K-8 to K-9

Table 4 indicates participation in both publicly funded boarding schools and the boarding home program in 1973, but excludes enrollment in the religious boarding schools.

Table 4. Enrollment of Village Native Students in Public High Schools, 1972-1973

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <i>BIA Boarding Schools</i> | |
| Mt. Edgecumbe | 360 |
| Chemawa Indian School (Salem, Oregon) | 348 |
| <i>State Operated Boarding Schools</i> | |
| Nome Beltz Regional High School | 173 |
| Bethel Regional High School | 205 |
| Kodiak Aleutian Regional High School | 73 |
| Wildwood Boarding School* | 158 |
| <i>Boarding Home Program</i> | |
| Urban Boarding Home Program (Anchorage, Fairbanks) | 554 |
| Rural Boarding Home Program (Other – Bethel, Dillingham, etc.) | 556 |
| <i>Village Ninth and Tenth Grade Programs</i> | 158 |
| Total Number of Students | 2,585 |

*opened in 1972-73 with Johnson O'Malley Program federal funds

Table from: Kleinfeld, J., (1973), *A Long Way From Home: Effects of Public High Schools on Village Children Away from Home*. Fairbanks, AK: Center for Northern Educational Research & Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, University of Alaska.

In 1972, attorney Christopher Cooke filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Alaska Native children in villages lacking secondary schools. The Alaska Supreme Court remanded *Hootch v. Alaska State-Operated School System*, also known as the Molly Hootch case, for trial on the claim that that state's failure to provide local high schools in Native villages constituted a pattern and practice of racial discrimination. Plaintiffs showed how predominately white communities received high schools, while Native communities—even larger ones—were required to send their children to boarding schools or homes. After a year of negotiations, the state and the plaintiffs reached an out-of-court settlement. Under the 1976 *Tobeluk v. Lind* consent decree the State of Alaska agreed to build a system of village high schools serving any community with eight or more students of high-school age (later changed to ten or more students). Within six years, the state implemented new or expanded high school programs in more than 100 Native villages (Cotton, 1984).

With the development of local, rural high schools, interest in the lasting effects of the old boarding schools on Alaska Natives and their communities has been scant. Attention has shifted instead to the successes and failures of small rural high schools. The last major study of Alaska boarding schools, conducted by Judith Kleinfeld, was published in 1973. That study examined one rural boarding home program, one regional boarding school, and one urban boarding home program during a three-year period. The study did not include the most widely lauded boarding school in Alaska, Mt. Edgecumbe in Sitka. While much research has been done on the long-term effect of boarding schools on American Indians in the continental United States (e.g., Adams, 1995; Child, 1998;), and on First Nations peoples in Canada (e.g., Deiter, 1999; Iwama, 2000; Jaine 1993), almost nothing has been written on the Alaska Native boarding school experience since Kleinfeld's study.

Currently, some Alaska policymakers argue that state-funded boarding schools should be reestablished. They are concerned about both the cost of maintaining rural secondary schools and the quality of the education provided in those schools. Policymakers often point to the accomplishments of the graduates of one school, Mount Edgecumbe High School, as justification for expanding the state-funded boarding school program and eliminating many of the small rural high schools. Some also argue (albeit incorrectly) that since the Tobeluk consent decree was implemented, and is now “terminated,” the state is not legally obligated to maintain high schools in every rural community.

At the same time as some policymakers argue for a return to the boarding school system, a number of Alaska Natives have come forward publicly to share their experiences at the Wrangell Institute, a boarding school where much abuse occurred. There have been healing ceremonies at the site where the school was located and discussions at conferences and gatherings about the effects of the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse inflicted there.

It is crucial that we now look at the long-term effects of boarding schools on Alaska Natives, both to better understand the effects of the old system of rural education in Alaska and to inform the current policy debate. We need to know how Native adults’ boarding school experiences have affected their communities and schools. Some of the questions we address include whether boarding school experiences influenced students’ decisions about returning to communities and families; whether those who attended boarding schools would choose to send their children to boarding schools; and how the boarding school experience shaped their education and later life. We also consider the effect of the boarding school experience on Alaska communities. If the state does expand the boarding school system, we need to know how to avoid repeating past mistakes and how to create successful boarding schools for students who choose that option.

“Observations on Researching and Managing Alaska Native Oral History: A Case Study,” Kenneth L. Pratt, *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*, 2004 [20]

https://www.alaskaanthropology.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Vol_2_1-2-Essay-10-Pratt.pdf

Abstract:

Cultural, legal, practical, and/or ethical considerations challenge the management of virtually every oral history collection—regardless of geographical, topical, or ethnic affiliations. The oral histories of Alaska Natives are no exception, and as public interest in such materials increases so will associated access and use requests. Every individual and organization that performs oral history research (or manages the resulting records) should be educated about this subject, yet it has received little attention in the anthropological literature on Alaska. This essay examines the problem in the specific context of oral history records compiled during research

based on historical place and cemetery site applications filed pursuant to Section 14(h)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska differs from all other states in our nation in several ways but particularly with respect to its Native peoples, who are broadly separated into three groups: Eskimos, Aleuts, and Indians. The Federal government has further sub-divided Alaska Natives into 229 separate “tribes.” Most people are unaware that many Alaska Natives followed a seasonal subsistence round as recently as 1940. This means that individual families often did not have a “permanent” residence and only combined with other families into groups during a small portion of the year. Throughout most of the year, families moved independently between seasonal camps according to available subsistence resources—procured through hunting, fishing, gathering, and trapping. In this “subsistence” lifestyle, they lived not in modern framed houses but in semi-subterranean sod dwellings, cabins, tents, or other temporary shelters. Travel from point to point was not by planes, trains, or automobiles but by foot, dog team, or non-motorized boats. Partly because Native groups were so recently (and widely) dispersed across the remote and immense Alaskan landscape, in some areas Western educational and religious systems did not arrive until after 1920. Perhaps more telling yet, televisions did not appear in many Native villages until after 1980.

In Alaska, as elsewhere, the impact of non-Native influences on the transfer of information and knowledge has been severe for indigenous peoples who for centuries passed on knowledge by word of mouth. In contrast to Western civilization, the ability to share knowledge and information via written words is a recent introduction to Alaska Native cultures. In our Western literate society, we could cease writing altogether, right now, and still be able to access major elements of our history and culture through previous literary works. However, Native cultures in transition from exclusively oral traditions to literacy risk losing that historical thread, because their books and archives live in their elders’ heads. When every elder has potential for significant contributions of historical facts and cultural practices, any elder’s death could constitute an irretrievable loss of cultural, historical and idiosyncratic knowledge. This is one obvious reason why such knowledge should be documented and preserved.

“Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-203): History and Analysis,” Richard S. Jones, UNT Digital Library, 22 May 1972 [21]

<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc992643/>

Abstract:

This report analyzes the history and background of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, as amended, which settled the claim of Alaska's Native Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo population to the aboriginal lands on which they have lived

for generations. The claim had been unresolved during the more than 100 years since the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867.

Under provisions of the settlement, the Natives received title to a total of 40 million acres, to be divided among some 220 Native villages and twelve Regional Corporations established by the Act. The twelve Regional Corporations (together with a thirteenth Regional Corporation comprised of Natives who are nonpermanent residents of Alaska) were to share in a payment of \$462,500,000 (to be made over an eleven-year period from funds in the U.S. Treasury), and an additional \$500 million in mineral revenues deriving from specified Alaska lands.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction:

On December 18, 1971, Public Law 92-203, the "Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act," was signed into law by President Nixon. Public Law 92-203 was enacted by Congress to settle the claim of Alaska's native Indian Aleut and Eskimo population to aboriginal title to the land on which they have lived for generations. This claim had been unresolved during the more than 100 years since the U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867.

A summary of the background to the Alaskan native land claims issue is provided by the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee Report to accompany H.R. 10367 (House Report No. 92-523, pp. 3-4), which is followed by a detailed analysis of the history of government action over the past century regarding native land claims. As stated in House Report No. 92-523:

"When the United States acquired the Territory of Alaska by purchase from Russia, the treaty (proclaimed June 21, 1867, 15 Stat. 539) conveyed to the United States dominion over the territory, and it conveyed title to all public lands and vacant lands that were not individual property. The lands used by the 'uncivilized' tribes were not regarded as individual property, and the treaty provided that those tribes would be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States might from time to time adopt with respect to aboriginal tribes.

"Congress provided by the Act of May 17, 1884 (23 Stat. 24), that the Indians and other persons in the territory (now commonly called Natives) should not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or then claimed by them, but that the terms under which such persons could acquire title to such lands were reserved for future legislation by Congress. Congress has not yet legislated on this subject, and that is the purpose of this bill.

"Aboriginal title is based on use and occupancy by aboriginal peoples. It is not a compensable title protected by the due process clause of the Constitution, but is a title held subject to the will of the sovereign. The sovereign has the authority to

convert the aboriginal title into a full fee title, in whole or in part, or to extinguish the aboriginal title either with or without monetary or other consideration.

"It has been the consistent policy of the United States Government in its dealings with Indian Tribes to grant to them title to a portion of the lands which they occupied, to extinguish the aboriginal title to the remainder of the lands by placing such lands in the public domain, and to pay the fair value of the titles extinguished. This procedure was initiated by treaties in the earlier part of our history, and was completed by the enactment of the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946. That Act permitted the Indian Tribes to recover from the United States the fair value of the aboriginal titles to lands taken by the United States (by cession or otherwise) if the full value had not previously been paid.

"The Indian Claims Commission has not been available to the Natives in Alaska, in a practical sense, because the great bulk of the aboriginal titles claimed by the Natives have not been taken or extinguished by the United States. The United States has simply not acted.

"The extent to which the Natives in Alaska could prove their claims of aboriginal title is not known. Native leaders asserted that the Natives have in the past used and occupied most of Alaska. Use and occupancy patterns have changed over the years, however, and lands used and occupied in the past may not be used and occupied now. Moreover, with development of the State, many Natives no longer get their subsistence from the land.

"The pending bill does not purport to determine the number of acres to which the Natives might be able to prove an aboriginal title. If the tests developed in the courts with respect to Indian Tribes were applied in Alaska, the probability is that the acreage would be large—but how large no one knows. A settlement on this basis, by means of litigation if a judicial forum were to be provided, would take many years, would involve great administrative expense, and would involve a Federal liability of an undeterminable amount.

"It is the consensus of the Executive Branch, the Natives, and the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House that a legislative rather than a judicial settlement is the only practical course to follow. The enactment of H.R. 10367 would provide this legislative settlement.

"The Committee found no principle in law or history, or in simple fairness, which provides clear guidance as to where the line should be drawn for the purpose of confirming or denying title to public lands in Alaska to the Alaskan Natives. The lands are public lands of the United States. The Natives have a claim to some of the lands. They ask that their claim be settled by conveying to them title to some of the lands, and by paying them for the extinguishment of their claim to the balance.

"As a matter of equity, there are two additional factors that must be considered. When the State of Alaska was admitted into the Union in 1958, the new State was authorized to select and obtain title to more than 103,000,000 acres of the public lands. These lands were regarded as essential to the economic viability of the State. The conflicting interests of the Natives and the State in the selection of these lands need to be reconciled. The discovery of oil on the North Slope intensified this conflict. A second factor is the interest of all of the people of the Nation in the wise use of the public lands. This involves a judgment about how much of the public lands in Alaska should be transferred to private ownership, and how much should be retained in the public domain."

History:

I. Alaska under Russian Administration

The history of Alaskan native land rights predates the U.S. purchase of Alaska in 1867 and is rooted in the colonial policies of Russia regarding the natives who inhabit[ed] Alaska during Russian administration of the territory.

Russian authority in Alaska was first decreed in 1766. While this decree left the Aleutian Islands and the Alaska Peninsula open to separate, competing groups of Russian traders, the Russian government did, however, declare the natives to be Russian subjects and gave them protection against maltreatment by private trading groups.

In 1799 the Russian American Company was granted a monopoly of trade and administration in Russian possessions in America for twenty years. A charter, granted in 1821 for a period of twenty years, was superseded in 1844 by yet another charter, which remained in force until the sale of Alaska. The Charter of 1844 is important to the history of Alaskan native claims, for its classification of the Alaska natives influenced the American classification of these natives in the 1867 Treaty of Cession confirming America's purchase of Alaska from Russia. And it is upon the provisions of this Treaty that subsequent Congressional legislation regarding the Alaskan natives has been based.

To explain how this is so, we must examine the Russian Charter of 1844. This document had distinguished three different categories of natives: (a) "dependent," or "settled" tribes; (b) "not wholly dependent" tribes; and (c) "independent" tribes.

The "dependent" tribes, mostly of Aleut and Eskimo stock, were defined by the charter as including "the inhabitants of the Kuril Islands, the Aleutian Islands, Kodiak and the adjacent islands, and the Alaska peninsula, as also the natives living on the shores of America, such as the Kenais, the Chugach and others" (sec. 247). While not delineated with any greater specificity, the "settled" tribes were primarily those most directly involved with the Russian enterprises. They were recognized as

Russian subjects (sec. 249), and as such, were guaranteed the protection of the "common laws of the government." (sec. 250.)

The "not wholly dependent" tribes were described by the 1844 Charter as "dwelling within the boundaries of the Russian colonies, but not wholly dependent." (sec. 280.) They apparently had some contact with the Russian colonies but were not wholly integrated into the Russian trading economy. It appears they were nomadic tribes wandering in and out of the Russian colonial area. "Independent" tribes, on the other hand, were those inhabiting the mainland outside the area of Russian activity. Both the 1821 and the 1844 Charters refrained from stating whether or not the "not wholly dependent" or "independent" natives were Russian subjects. The "not wholly dependent" tribes, moreover, were eligible for "the protection of the colonial administration only on making request therefore, and (only) when such request (was) . . . deemed worthy of consideration." (sec. 280.) The relations of the colonial administration with the "independent" tribes was "limited to the exchange, by mutual consent, of European wares for furs and native products." (sec. 285.)

Article III of the 1867 Treaty of Cession (15 Stat. 539) recognizes two groups within the Alaska populations —(a) all inhabitants guaranteed "the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States," and (b) "uncivilized native tribes," who are excluded from citizenship, and who are subject to "such laws and regulations as the United States may from time to time adopt in regard to the aboriginal tribes of that country." Article III reads in full, as follows:

"The inhabitants of the ceded territory, according to their choice, reserving their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within three years; but if they should prefer to remain in the ceded territory, they, with the exception of uncivilized native tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion. The uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may, from time to time, adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country." (Emphasis added.)

In respect to the Treaty's classification of Alaska natives (in Article III), the Alaska court held in 1904, and again in 1905, that the Treaty had regarded as "citizens"—with the right to "property"—those natives whom the Russian Charter of 1844 had regarded as "dependent" tribes, and thus, as Russian subjects. According to the court, the Treaty withheld citizenship from those natives whom the Russian Charter of 1844 had characterized as "not wholly dependent" and "independent":

"It appears, then, that the imperial law recognized the Russian colonists in Alaska, their creole children, and those settled tribes who embraced the Christian faith as Russian subjects; those tribes not wholly dependent—the independent tribes of pagan faith who acknowledged no restraint from the Russians, and

practiced their ancient customs—were classed as uncivilized native tribes by the Russian laws. Those laws and these social conditions continued to exist at the date of the treaty of cession in 1867. . . . It was these people (Russian colonists, creoles, and settled tribes' members of her national church) whom Russia engaged the United States to admit as citizens, and to maintain and protect 'in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion.' "

Thus a correlation can be seen between the "dependent" or "settled" tribes mentioned in the 1844 Charter (whom the Russians considered as "subjects") and those inhabitants of Alaska who were guaranteed American citizenship by Article III of the 1867 Treaty—just as a correlation may be drawn between the "not wholly dependent" and the "independent" tribes mentioned in the 1844 Charter and the "uncivilized" tribes excluded from American citizenship by Article III of the Treaty.

It would be erroneous to assume an exact correlation, however, since in many cases it was not clear which tribes the Russians considered to be "not wholly dependent" and "independent"; nor was it clear precisely what conditions the Russians considered prerequisite to a definition of "not wholly dependent" or "independent" status.

Moreover, since the "independent" natives who had been Christians under Russian rule were considered by the Alaska court (*In re Minook, U.S. v. Berrigan*, above) to be American citizens by provision of Article III of the Treaty, it must be concluded that American citizenship was not necessarily limited to those natives whom the Russians had considered "dependent" or "settled":

"Thus, it may appear that a tribe not wholly dependent or independent according to some Russian authorities may nevertheless answer the requirements set forth in decisions of the American court for that part of the Alaskan population which does not belong to the "uncivilized tribes" contemplated by Article 3 of the Treaty of 1867."

Both the 1844 Russian Charter and the 1867 Treaty of Cession are unclear as to native property rights. The 1844 Charter fully recognized "property rights" of "settled" tribes: "Any fortune acquired by a native through work, purchase, exchange, or inheritance shall be his full property; whoever attempts to take it . . . shall be punished . . ." (sec. 263). However, "this referred primarily to personal property. The right to landholdings in any form remained totally unregulated. At that time, land titles were unknown among the peasants in the greater part of Russia and were not regulated in the colonies. The actual holdings of the natives were, however, to be respected. This is the evident intention of section 263 (above)." This intention was also expressed in sec. 235 of the 1844 Charter: "In the allotment of ground to the Russian colonists the Company shall particularly bear in mind that the natives are not to be embarrassed and that the Colonists are to support themselves by their own labor without any burden to the natives."

No restriction is to be found in the Charter of 1844 concerning the disposal of land for the needs of the Company, however: "Provisions of sec. 49 of the Charter of 1821 according to which the Company was 'obligated to leave at the disposal of Islanders as much land as is necessary for all their needs at the places where they were settled' or will be settled' was not repeated in the Charter of 1844."

It is officially affirmed that "with reference to the rights of the independent and not wholly dependent tribes to the lands they occupied, certain provisions of the Charter of 1844 suggest, by implication, that they were to be respected by the colonial administration. . . . The Russian laws not only refrained from granting the Company any rights or privileges regarding the land occupied by such natives, but also . . . positively prohibited the Company from any 'extension of the possessions of the Company in regions inhabited' by such tribes. The rights of the tribes to undisturbed possession was tacitly recognized by virtue of that fact."

According to this interpretation, however, nothing in the Treaty of 1867 suggests that any such obligation was undertaken by the United States and the property rights guaranteed the "settled" tribes by Article III are not defined. Moreover, the Federal government was to maintain in 1947 and again in 1954 that Articles II and VI of the Treaty extinguished all claims of the natives to aboriginal title.

In sum, the 1867 Treaty gave Congress a blank check regarding the uncivilized tribes at least, by providing that such tribes "will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may from time to time adopt in regard to the aboriginal tribes of that country."

II. Allotment

While not considered a recognition of aboriginal title, passage of the Alaska Native Allotment Act (34 Stat. 197) in 1906 did provide for allotment of up to 160-acre homesteads on nonmineral land to Eskimos or Alaska Indians of full or mixed blood, 21 years old, and head of families. Allotments under this Act were inalienable and nontaxable. This reflected a national policy thought at the time to be the best means of "civilizing" the Indian.

Allotment was accomplished in the lower States at that time by breaking up reservations into individually owned tracts of land or by allotting public lands to Indians who did not live on reservations.

The specific means by which allotment was achieved in the lower States were incorporated in the General Allotment Act of 1887 (24 Stat. 388), sometimes called the Dawes Act. According to provisions of this Act, the head of the family was to be allotted 80 acres of agricultural land or 160 acres of grazing land; a single person over eighteen or an orphan child under eighteen, was to receive one-half this amount. In order to protect the Indians from being cheated by unscrupulous adventurers who might take advantage of their inexperience with private ownership,

the Federal government retained title to the lands allotted until the expiration of a trust period of twenty-five years, or longer, if the President deemed an extension desirable. Then, the allottee was to secure a patent in fee; to be able to dispose of the land as he wished; and to be subject to the laws of the state or territory where he resided. The Act granted citizenship to every allottee as well as to those Indians who had voluntarily taken up residence within the U.S. apart from their tribes and who had adopted the habits of "civilized" life.

The absence of reservations in Alaska at the time the General Allotment Act was enacted meant that the provisions of the Act allowing for allotment of reservation lands was, by definition, inapplicable.

That Congress in 1906 enacted a separate allotment act for Alaska, however, indicated that the 1887 Allotment Act was felt to be inapplicable in its entirety in Alaska—even in regard to the creation of allotments out of non-reservation lands. This was owing to the view of the Federal government that, in a legal sense, the Alaska natives were not equivalent to "Indians" and that laws pertaining to Indians did not therefore pertain to Alaska natives. Thus, while the General Allotment Act, as well as the homestead laws (by provision of the Act of July 4, 1884 [23 Stat. 96]), were applicable to "Indians," they were not held applicable to Alaska natives:

"In the beginning, and for a long time after the cession of this Territory Congress took no particular notice of these natives; has never undertaken to hamper their individual movements; confine them to a locality or reservation, or to place them under the immediate control of its officers, as has been the case with the American Indians; and no special provision was made for their support and education until comparatively recently. And in the earlier days it was repeatedly held by the courts and the Attorney General that these natives did not bear the same relation to our Government, in many respects, that was borne by the American Indians."

This view was upheld in numerous opinions rendered by the courts, the Attorney General and the Department of the Interior during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (See *United States v. Ferueta Seveloff* (2 Sawyer U.S., 311) (1872); *Hugh Waters v. James B. Campbell* (4 Sawyer, U.S., 121) (1876); 16 Ops. Atty. Gen., 141 (1878); *In re Sah Quah* (31 Fed. 327) (1886); and *John Brady et al.* (19 L.D. 323) (1894).

This concept of the Alaska natives' Federal status was gradually revised, however, so that by 1932 the Interior Department declared the Alaska natives to have the same status as Indians in the rest of the United States and thus to be entitled to the benefit of and . . . subject to the general laws and regulations governing the Indians of the United States to the same extent as are the Indian tribes within the territorial limits of the United States. . . ."

III. Federal Protection of Use and Occupancy

Despite arguments that aboriginal rights to land were extinguished by the 1867 Treaty (see p. 13 above), Congress did, through various laws, protect the Alaska natives in the "use or occupation" of their lands and such legislation was upheld in the courts of Alaska. According to the Interior Department, "Congress and the administrative authorities have consistently recognized and respected the possessory rights of the natives of Alaska in the land actually occupied and used by them (United States v. Berrigan, 2 Alaska, 442, 448 [1905]; 13 L.D. 120 [1891]; 23 L.D. 335 [1896]; 26 L.D. 517 [1898]; 28 L.D. 427 [1899]; 37 L.D. 334 [1908]; 50 L.D. 315 [1924]; 52 L.D. 597 [1929]; 53 L.D. 194 [1930]; 53 L.D. 593 [1932] . . .) The rights of the natives are in some respects the same as those generally enjoyed by the Indians residing in the United States, viz: the right of use and occupancy, with the fee in the United States (50 L.D. 315 [1924]). However, the recognition and protection thus accorded these rights of occupancy have been construed as not constituting necessarily a recognition of title . . ." (Cf. Tee-Hit-Ton Indians v. United States [348 U.S. 272 (1955)], below, p. 27).

The first legislation to protect the Alaska natives in their use and occupation of lands was the Alaska Organic Act of 1884 (23 Stat. 24), which provided a civil government for Alaska and established the area as a land district. Sec. 8 of the Organic Act declared that:

". . . the Indians or other persons in said district shall not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or now claimed by them but the terms under which such persons may acquire title to such lands is reserved for future legislation by Congress." (Emphasis added.)

The Alaska Native Claims Act of 1971 therefore embodies the "terms under which (the Alaska natives) may acquire title to such lands," and is thus the "future legislation" reserved to Congress by sec. 8 of the 1884 Alaska Organic Act. Subsequent to 1884 (and previous to 1971) laws enacted by Congress (and resulting judicial decisions) have protected the natives' right to "use and occupancy." The Act of March 3, 1891 (26 Stat. 1095), to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes; the Act of May 14, 1898 (30 Stat. 409), extending the homestead laws to Alaska; and the Act of June 6, 1900 (31 Stat. 321), making further provision for civil government in Alaska, all contained clauses protecting native use and occupancy of land.

Congressional protection of native use and occupancy was repeatedly upheld by Alaska courts. Among the most important such decisions were *United States v. Berrigan* (2 Alaska Reports, 448) (1905); *United States v. Cadzow* (5 Alaska Reports 131) (1914); and *United States v. Lynch* (7 Alaska Reports 573) (1927).

IV. The Reservation Question in Alaska

Passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934 (48 Stat. 984) (also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act) laid the foundation for a new Indian policy which ended the

division of reservation lands into private allotments. While certain sections of the Indian Reorganization Act applied to Alaska, the balance of its provisions was extended to the Territory by enactment of the Act of May 1, 1936 (49 Stat. 1250). Section 2 of the 1936 Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to designate as "Indian reservations" such areas of the State as had been reserved for the use and occupancy of Indians or Eskimos by sec. 8 of the Act of May 17, 1884 (23 Stat. 26); by sec. 14 or sec. 15 of the Act of March 3, 1891 (26 Stat. 1101); by executive order; or which were at the time (1936) "actually occupied by Indians or Eskimos." Such action was to be effective upon vote of the adult native residents within the proposed reservations. Under authority of the 1936 Act six reservations were proclaimed and approved.

The entire issue of whether, with the exception of Annette Island and Klukwan, areas withdrawn by executive order or Interior Department proclamation in Alaska are "reservations" in the same sense of the word as it applies in the lower 48 States, is a matter of some confusion. The Interior Department Task Force Report on Alaska Native Affairs (1962) states that "the question of the permanent entitlement of the natives to lands within reservations created pursuant to the 1936 Act [49 Stat. 1250] [Cf. p. 21, above] was raised in a case involving the village of Karluk (Hynes v. Grimes, 69 U.S. 968) and, in its decision, the U.S. Supreme Court commented that the Karluk Reservation constituted a withdrawal which was 'temporary . . . until revoked by him (the Secretary of the Interior) or by Act of Congress. . . .' This decision cast doubt upon the permanent entitlement of the natives to other lands previously reserved for their benefit, use, and occupancy, and the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior has held that the authority of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to lease land for the benefit of the natives may not extend to Alaska, except in the cases of Klukwan and Metlakatla." The Task Force Report concludes:

"In addition to the lands reserved for native use at Klukwan, Metlakatla, and the six communities included under the 1936 Act, the Federal Government has since 1900 made more than 150 separate withdrawals from the public domain for native use, for native use and occupancy, for 'Indian purposes,' for the establishment of schools and hospitals, and for other programs of benefit to the natives. The extent of the natives' use rights to land in these reserves may differ with the language of the various orders and proclamations, but in no case does it appear to be as great as the Indians' interest in lands reserved by treaty or statute, or by Executive Order in the lower 48 States."

“ANCSA and ANILCA: Capabilities Failure?” Wayne Edwards and Tara Natarajan, Native Studies Review, 2008 [22]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tara_Natarajan/publication/280132333_ANCSA_and_ANILCA_Capabilities_Failure/links/574d9c6108ae8bc5d15bb49b.pdf

Abstract:

The authors apply Amartya Sen's concepts of capabilities and entitlements to analyze legislation relating to Alaska Natives. In particular, the impact and potential impact of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) is considered. The authors argue that while the laws had the potential to improve the well-being of Natives, this potential was never fully realized. Specifically, while entitlements provided by the acts made the receiving parties better off on average, the benefits have not been fully transformed into capabilities and functioning due to the legislation's design and implementation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The legal history of Native Americans is a winding trail. In some cases, the U.S. government blatantly usurped land occupied by indigenous peoples, while in others it offered reparations for past imperialism (Pevar, 2004). In recent decades, most legislation (and litigation) has concerned property rights and provisions for federal and state assistance. An important question is whether a particular statute made any positive difference to its target group. In the end, a law is considered a success if it improves the well-being of the group in question. Defining an "improvement in well-being," however, is a difficult task.

This article examines the question of well-being in the case of Alaska Natives and two important laws. We use the taxonomy of Amartya Sen to view well-being from a non-income perspective. Employing his concepts of "entitlements and capabilities," Sen described poverty not as a shortfall of income but as an absence of the basic ingredients necessary to carry on a self-sustaining existence (Sen, 1985). Applying Sen's ideas, we take a fresh look at the successes and failures of two specific laws and how they affected the well-being of Alaska Natives. For our purposes, an improvement in well-being is understood to occur when entitlements provided by a law transform into new capabilities and, ultimately, "functioning" (as described below).

Our main findings are that the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) had the potential to improve the well-being of Natives, but that that potential was never fully realized. Specifically, while entitlements provided by the acts made the receiving parties better off on average, they have not been fully transformed into capabilities and functioning because of the design and implementation of the legislation. Therefore, the positive impacts of the laws are not permanent.

When discussing well-being, researchers and policy makers often concentrate on some form of income measurement to establish a "poverty line," a benchmark for policy and social service delivery. Yet income does not tell the full story about well-being. A person with low money income might supplement his or her livelihood by

other activities (like subsistence hunting, fishing, or gathering), thereby achieving a greater well-being than income level alone suggests. On the other hand, a person of moderate means can be made quite poor in the presence of an extended illness if health care is unavailable (Edwards and Natarajan, 2007). Health statistics can show geographic and demographic instances of negative health outcomes that can lower the quality of life for individuals regardless of income level. Likewise, crime statistics can show that, despite moderate or even high-income levels, the risk of violent crime can lessen the wellbeing of affected communities (Edwards, in press).

Examining raw data on health outcomes, court schedules, and instances of crime can be informative, but they have their limits. Summary measures that show how non-income factors affect well-being might be very useful. Non-income measures of poverty and well-being do exist, such as the Human Development Index (HDI), but are rarely applied to the United States (Anand and Sen, 1994). Additionally, most measures like HDI are aggregated to the national level. Indeed, regional measures of well-being that do not rely on income are rare (Edwards, 2007). In Alaska, as well as other states, large regional differences are present. A national HDI measure for the United States, for example, would say little about well-being in the western Alaska village of Bethel.

No single approach to understanding well-being, then, is comprehensive. Using a particular benchmark for public policy can have counterproductive results if the benchmark does not accurately describe the situation being addressed. In other words, if public policy seeks to address a poorly understood problem, then the solution would be effective only by accident.

Throughout this paper, the Native peoples in Alaska are referred to as Alaska Natives or Native Alaskans. This terminology was chosen for a number of reasons. First, as discussed in the next section, the Native people who live in Alaska are very varied, and so “Native Alaskan” is a sufficiently general term to refer to these people in the aggregate. Second, while other Native Americans in the United States are referred to as “Indians” in most legislation, Natives in Alaska are typically referred to as “Native Alaskans” or “Alaska Natives.” And third, Native advocacy groups (for example, the Alaska Federation of Natives) refer to Natives in Alaska collectively as “Alaska Natives.”

Native Peoples in Alaska

The people who lived in Alaska prior to Russian colonization, and who live there still, are a varied lot. As with any large group, dividing members into subgroups can be accomplished in many different ways. According to the Alaska Native Heritage Center (2008), there are eleven distinct indigenous cultures in Alaska, eleven languages, and twenty-two dialects. The Heritage Center orders the eleven cultures into five geographical “cultural groupings”: Athabascan (primarily in the interior of Alaska); Aleut and Alutiq (along the south and southwest coasts); Yup’ik and Cup’ik

(in the Yukon delta in southwest Alaska); Inupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yupik (in the north and northwest); and Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian (in the southeast). The Alaska Native Language Center states that there are twenty different languages among Native People in Alaska (Alaska Native Language Center, 2008). The Alaska Federation of Natives aggregates the Native peoples of Alaska into three primary groups: Eskimo; Indian; and Aleut (Alaska Federation of Natives, 2008). The federal government commonly uses these three categories in legal writings and congressional investigations (Pevar, 2004, p. 19). While a legal definition for nativity exists for federal and state purposes (discussed below), cultural differences and likenesses are not consistently defined across governments and Native organizations.

Given this great variability, it is difficult to identify a single “Native perspective” on any issue (Stairs, 2004). One can, however, contemplate aggregated preferences through surveys of individuals and proclamations of advocacy groups. Interviews of individuals and news reports can provide additional information about a Native perspective. While none of these approaches are ideal, neither are they without value as they offer some insight into the point of view of Alaska Natives.

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is a Native advocacy group. Each year at its annual convention, the AFN publishes a list of resolutions that are the basis for the group’s federal priorities. The first three (of fifteen) priorities for 2006 were: increased funding for Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service budgets; reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act; and preserving subsistence lifestyles (Alaska Federation of Natives, 2006). The first priority spoke to the need for funding projects aimed at community sustainability, including health, education, housing, and job training. The second priority was in support of the reauthorization of Public Law 94-437, which provides health service benefits to Native Americans and Alaska Natives. The third priority specifically addresses continuing attempts to weaken the subsistence priority for rural residents as guaranteed by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. While these priorities have changed somewhat from year to year, issues of subsistence, jobs, education, health care, and community sustainability consistently recur.

In a 2003 survey of Native Alaskans conducted by an Anchorage, Alaska consulting company, respondents reported that the top four issues facing Alaska Natives were subsistence, education, jobs, and substance abuse (McDowell Group, 2003). These four categories were the same when the question was asked about the state of Alaska as a whole, as well as when the question was asked about the respondent’s community, although the order of significance was different. Statewide, the order was subsistence, education, jobs, and substance abuse, while for individual communities the order was jobs, education, substance abuse, and subsistence. Other surveys, such as the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA), found similar concerns. A recent summary of SLiCA surveys reported widespread

subsistence activity throughout the arctic (including Alaska), and respondents reported that the major problems in their communities were a lack of jobs, substance abuse, suicide, and family and sexual violence (Leask, 2007). The results of older surveys concentrated on the desire for subsistence access and a continuation of traditional lifestyles (Nielson, 1977; Nelson, 1979; Worl, 1979; Wolfe, 1993).

Individual interviews, as reported in the media, highlighted similar issues found in survey results and advocacy priorities: healthcare (Bryson, 2007); crime (Halpin, 2008); sexual abuse (DeMarban, 2008); and jobs (Kizzia, 2008). Besides showing commonality between interviews and among respondents, interviews and journalistic investigations can also point out differences. For example, in the case of resource extraction in places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Wallace (2005) found that “most” Natives were in favor of the development and extraction of existing petroleum resources in currently protected areas. While this position might surprise outsiders, the notion of wilderness preservation is quite uncommon in bush Alaska, and is, to a large extent, a Western cultural construct (Mason, 2004). However, a vocal minority—in this case, many Gwich’in people in northeastern Alaska—oppose expanding resource extraction in favor of a traditional lifestyle that maintains the land in its present state (Wallace, 2005). As with any group of people, not all Natives hold the same opinions.

Combining information from surveys, media reports, and advocacy groups, Alaska Natives are, in general, concerned about continued subsistence opportunities, job opportunities, health care, education, and violence. Most Alaska Natives will look favorably upon any legislation that successfully addresses these categories of concerns. Of course, individuals, as in any group, will maintain their own distinct positions. The two laws examined in this article directly impact these issues. The Arctic National Interest Lands Conservation Act addresses subsistence issues, and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act has had a large impact on economic circumstances of Alaska Natives, and so could have affected community living conditions, including job opportunities, education, and health care.

Sen’s Capabilities and Entitlements Approach in Context

The entitlements and capabilities perspective provide a rich paradigm to investigate the Alaska case and represents a shift away from income and commodities as the focal point for poverty analysis. Dreze and Sen developed the concepts of entitlements and capabilities, with both a theoretical and public policy focus, in the context of developing and underdeveloped regions of the world (Dreze and Sen, 1981, 1989, 1991, 1995). Even so, the applicability of this work is not regionally restricted because the central aim was to develop a viable framework for poverty analysis that captured the complex multidimensionality inherent in poverty.

Dreze and Sen argued that “the mere presence of food in the economy, or in the market, does not entitle a person to consume it” (Dreze and Sen, 1989, p. 9). A

person's entitlement to a bundle of commodities (e.g., food) depends on prevailing social, economic, political, and institutional arrangements. These entitlements are thus defined as "the set of alternative bundles of commodities over which a person can establish command" (Dreze and Sen, 1989, p. 13, n. 21). Sen's theory identified a set of mechanisms and institutions through which command over entitlements is established. The three main mechanisms are: a person's legal rights of ownership (legal entitlements); what people own initially and what they can acquire through exchanging labor for wages, and in turn exchanging wages for some commodity bundle (endowment and exchange entitlements); and social relations that take the broader form of accepted legitimacy rather than simply legal rights enforceable in a court (extended entitlements). Extended entitlements include socially sanctioned rights, like instances involving intra-family divisions where, by well-established convention, the male head of household receives more favorable treatment in the division of the family's total consumption. If, for example, as a result of well-established social convention, men have a claim to meat or fish (rare nutritious food) ahead of women and children, this claim would not be legally enforceable in a court of law, but is clearly an entitlement deriving from social convention.

Prior to expanding his framework to include the concept of capabilities, Sen (1999) saw the entitlements approach as limiting because it was primarily concerned with command over commodities and only instrumentally important to well-being. Ultimately, what people are actually able to do or be, not just what they can command, is what is most important. Stewart, Saith, and Harriss-White (2007) explained that the concept of human "capabilities" and "functioning" is another way of conceptualizing individual behavior, assessing well-being, and identifying policy objectives. These differences depend on varying individual characteristics and differences in the contexts in which they live (e.g., where public services are provided and where services are absent). Stewart, Saith, and Harriss-White thus concluded that the concept of "functioning" refers to the actual achievement, whereas "capability" refers to the potential for achievement.

The particular relevance of the capabilities approach to the statutes discussed in this paper is two-fold: the distinction between commodity command (entitlements) and functioning; and the problems in converting commodity command into functioning. The laws provide entitlements, but they do not necessarily provide functioning. Thus, the elementary concepts of entitlements, capabilities, and functioning provide direct insights for examining well-being among Natives by separating the impact of the law into the distinct categories.

The major criticism of Sen's capabilities approach is the difficulty in applying it to specific situations and the lack of guidelines for drawing up a universal list of capabilities (Stewart, Saith, and Harriss-White, 2007). While it might be that Sen's lack of specification was deliberate, attempts to operationalize the concept often end in simply redefining the ideas slightly and creating new categories of capability types

that are equally difficult to operationalize (Alkire, 2002). Our approach is different. After describing the basic economic conditions of the state and the laws themselves, we will identify the entitlements provided by the acts in question and then project capabilities and functioning that might emerge from the entitlements. These “best case scenarios” will then be compared to observations of what has actually occurred since the inception of the entitlements.

Alaska by the Numbers

Alaska is a state with unusual characteristics. It is the largest state in the United States by area but has one of the smallest populations. Even today, vast expanses of land remain unorganized politically. The state is quite remote, yet the flow of migration to and from Alaska is one of the highest rates of any state (Howe, 2004b). In addition to large flows of people into and out of the state, internal migration is particularly high (Edwards, 2007; Huskey, Berman, and Hill, 2004).

In some ways, poverty (i.e., a relatively low level of income) is less widespread in Alaska than in other states. For example, based on Gini coefficients, Alaska has a more equitable income distribution than many other states. A Gini coefficient of zero means that income is equally distributed (every citizen has the same amount of money), whereas a Gini coefficient of unity [what does “unity” mean? 1?] means that a single citizen holds all the money. Alaska’s Gini coefficient in 1999 was 0.39, while the national average was about 0.43 and the District of Columbia was 0.53 (Howe, 2004a). Median income in Alaska is higher than most other states, the percentage of median income held by the lowest-earning fifth of the population is relatively high, and the income captured by the richest twenty percent of the population is relatively low. Other income-based measures reveal similar results—Alaska, compared to other states, generally performs better by most income measures of poverty. This pattern has been fairly consistent in Alaska over the past forty years (Howe, 2004a).

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act

There is a long legislative history in Alaska concerning the rights of indigenous peoples to the land. Laws and agreements have come and gone over the years, many of which overlap and conflict with each other (Colt, 2001). A few of the important laws regarding land rights are summarized below. While it is not our purpose to analyze the legislative history of all land claims in Alaska, the brief history below provides an important context for discussing the two primary statutes with which we are concerned. For those interested, a good summary of these and other relevant legislation can be found in Jones (1981). The following information is drawn mainly from Brooks (2005).

- One of the earliest laws regarding land rights of Natives was the Native Allotment Act (1906) [34 Stat. 197]. Under this act, Alaska Natives were authorized to acquire individual allotments of up to 160-acre parcels of

unreserved and unappropriated land. Alaska Natives filed roughly 10,000 applications for 16,000 parcels of land under the law.

- The Alaska Statehood Act (1958) [PL 85-508] added a newly created economic unit, the State of Alaska, into the land rights issue by giving it legal standing and claim to former federal land. This act allowed the state to select for ownership approximately 104 million acres of unclaimed and unreserved federal land.
- The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1971) [PL 92-203] was designed to settle the aboriginal claims of the Alaska Natives and is discussed in more detail below.
- The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (1980) [16 U.S.C. Sec. 3120] gave people living in rural places in Alaska, the overwhelming majority of whom were Alaska Natives, priority in hunting and fishing on public lands (Pevar, 2004, p. 302). This act is discussed in more detail below.
- The Alaska Native Veterans Allotment Act (1998) [43 U.S.C. § 1629g] stands out as an oddity because its foundation rests on a law previously extinguished by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This act allowed those Vietnam veterans who missed the opportunity to apply for allotments under the 1906 act.
- Because of the confusion generated by previous overlapping legislation, the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act (2004) [PL 108-452] was passed. This act represented an attempt to clear up the conflicting land claims of three distinct parties in Alaska: the state; Alaska Native corporations; and Native allottees.

We focus on two of these laws that have a continuing influence on Alaska Natives. While all the above laws, and many others not mentioned, have a bearing on the well-being of Natives, the two concentrated on in this article have the broadest reach and greatest consequences. These two pieces of legislation are also good candidates for analysis using Sen's entitlements and capabilities concepts because they both provide entitlements that have the potential to become transformed into capabilities and functioning.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act settled land claims of the aboriginal peoples of Alaska by transferring approximately 44 million acres of public land and nearly \$1 billion through twelve regional Native corporations and approximately 200 village corporations (Colt, 2001). All Alaska Natives—people who could prove they were at least one-quarter Native—born on or before 18 December 1971 were entitled to enroll in one of the corporations and receive ownership shares. ANCSA required that corporation shares could not be sold for at least twenty years (Statewide Library Electronic Doorway, 2005). In concept, the distribution of land returns to Natives their ancestral heritage and subsistence ability. Because it was thought that the land available to achieve these goals was insufficient, a cash transfer was added to the law (Anders, 1989).

The distribution of land to the regional corporations was not uniform. The corporation receiving the smallest allotment was Sealaska, at 0.3 million acres; the largest distribution was 12.5 million acres to the Doyon Corporation. The potential market value of the land varied widely as well. Some corporations received land with valuable surface or subsurface products—e.g., the Arctic Slope Corporation received land with real and potential oil and gas deposits; Chugach Natives Corporation received land rich in timber; and NANA Corporation received land with zinc-lead deposits. Other regional corporations, like Aleut, Bering Straits, and Koniag, took title to land with no known marketable products other than the land itself (Colt, 2001). This disparity is important because the regional corporations received fee simple title to the land, meaning that they controlled rights to both the surface and subsurface of the land (Pevar, 2004, p. 301). Remote land in Alaska with no harvestable trees and no subsurface assets has a market value that is, for all intents and purposes, zero. The disparity is somewhat overcome by the requirement that 70% of all net earnings from subsurface and timber resources made by each Native corporation must be distributed equally among all other corporations (Colt, 2001).

The cash settlement was divided among the corporations and individual Natives. Regional and village corporations each received 45% of the distribution, while the remaining 10% went to individuals as an immediate transfer (Colt 2001).

ANCSA was substantially revised through legislation signed by President Ronald Reagan on 3 February 1988. The so-called “1991 amendments” allowed many changes, including shareholder control to issue stock to Natives who missed out on the original enrollment (such as children born after the deadline), a continuation of restrictions on the sale of stock after the initial twenty-year period of prohibition, automatic protection for undeveloped land, shareholder authority to change benefits to elders, and other corporate structural changes (Statewide Library Electronic Doorway, 2005). Because of the enormous amount of money involved, it is no surprise that litigation continues concerning many aspects of ANCSA and its subsequent amendments. Nevertheless, ANCSA provided legal property rights to Natives that did not exist beforehand.

While ANILCA, enacted in 1980, mainly sought to set aside land for conservation, it was also intended to preserve Native culture by protecting opportunities to engage in a subsistence lifestyle (Atkinson, 1987). In rural Alaska, subsistence activities account for a large share of final food consumption goods. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1999, 86% of rural households used game from subsistence hunting and 95% of rural households used fish from subsistence fishing (Wolfe, 2000). Urban residents also participate in subsistence activities, but on a much smaller scale. Furthermore, because Natives make up the majority of the rural population, the impact of subsistence activity rests disproportionately on the Native

population (Wolfe, 2000). Any change in legal access to subsistence goods, therefore, affects Natives more than any other racial group in Alaska.

Despite ANCSA's conceptual intent to preserve Native lifestyle, some view it as a failure, especially with respect to subsistence guarantees (Atkinson, 1987). ANILCA can be regarded as a response, in part, to a perceived need to protect rural residents' rights to subsistence access. After a realization that there were insufficient populations of fish and game to satisfy all potential entrants into subsistence activity, a two-tier system was adopted in ANILCA. The first tier establishes that the taking of fish and game for non-wasteful subsistence purposes has priority over all other uses. If wild populations of fish and game are not sufficient to fulfill the tier one directive, tier two specifies an order of priority and exclusion.

In such a case, the highest priority goes to those people with customary and direct dependence on subsistence (i.e., Alaska Natives), followed by local residents generally, and then those with other available alternative resources (Atkinson, 1987). This creates an entitlement specifically for Natives because it eliminates competition for game and fish from commercial and sport activities and excludes non-Natives (people without customary and direct dependence) from the highest priority subsistence rank.

While ANCSA is notable (in the context of this paper) for providing specific property rights and cash transfers to a vulnerable population in Alaska, ANILCA is remembered for providing a subsistence guarantee to this group. These acts can both be understood in the sense of Sen's concepts of capabilities and entitlements, for ANCSA and ANILCA both transferred entitlements to Alaska Natives.

B. Duality: U.S. Citizenship and Native Sovereignty:

“Citizenship: United States, State of Alaska, Tribal,” University of Alaska Fairbanks: Federal Indian Law for Alaska Tribes [23]

<https://uaf.edu/tribal/academics/112/unit-2/citizenshipunitedstatesstateofalaskatribal%20.php>

Overview:

In the early days of the country, most Indian and Alaska Native people were not citizens of the United States. Citizenship was granted in a piecemeal fashion through various paths. Some treaties had provisions for U.S. citizenship, as did some Congressional statutes which intended for Indian people to give up traditional ways of life and assimilate into the mainstream American life.

Current & Relevant Information:

Congress enacted the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, which granted citizenship to all American Indian and Alaska Native people who were not already citizens of the United States. Under the Act, all Indian and Alaska Native people became U.S.

citizens. They did not have to apply for citizenship, and they did not have to give up their tribal citizenship to become U.S. citizens.

Rules regarding state citizenship vary from state to state. In Alaska, the Alaska Territorial Legislature extended Alaska Citizenship to Alaska Native people with an Act in 1915. The Native Citizenship Act was modeled after the General Allotment Act and required the applicant to "sever all tribal relationships, a total abandonment of any tribal customs or relationships" and to obtain a certificate stating such from "at least 5 white citizens"

Rules regarding tribal citizenship (membership) are determined by each tribe and there are considerable variations from tribe to tribe. Tribes have exclusive jurisdiction, or the power to determine their own membership rules. Alaska Native people can be citizens of the United States, the State of Alaska, and also of one or more tribes. In other words, citizens of the three sovereigns in the United States: United States sovereign, State of Alaska sovereign, and Tribal sovereign.

“The Dual Political Status of Alaska Natives Under U.S. Policy,” Thomas A. Morehouse, [alaskool.org](http://www.alaskool.org), March 1992 [24]

http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/Dualpoliticalstatus.pdf

Abstract:

Alaska Natives hold a complex, dual political status, as both U.S. citizens and aboriginal Americans. Just what that dual status entails are uncertain and controversial. But it is clearly a tool Alaska Natives can use to help change policy and increase self-determination.

This paper examines the political status of Alaska Natives. One objective of the paper is to show why Alaska Natives can claim both special status under federal Indian law and policy as well as equal status with all other citizens under federal and state law. Another objective is to explain why Natives' special status is so intensely disputed, particularly by Alaska state government and some of the non-Native interests it represents. A third objective is to explore the consequences of dual status for current policies and programs affecting Alaska Natives: tribal status and powers, village and regional governance, village services, and subsistence. The concluding section of the paper describes issues related to those policies and programs, and raises specific questions that could help guide policymakers.

Current & Relevant Information:

Courts, legislators, and executives disagree about the rights, status, and powers of Alaska Natives. The Alaska Supreme Court has said that, except for the Metlakatla Indian Community, there are no Native tribes in Alaska possessing inherent powers of self-government or tribal sovereignty (Native Village of Stevens v. Alaska Management and Planning 1988). The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, on the other hand, says that most of Alaska's Native villages may be tribes with inherent

governmental powers (*Native Village of Noatak v. Hoffman* 1990; *Native Village of Tyonek v. Puckett* 1992).

The U.S. Congress, in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, said that Natives and other rural residents of Alaska should have a “subsistence preference” for harvesting fish and wildlife when these resources are in short supply. The Alaska Legislature, in 1990, disagreed. After the Alaska Supreme Court decided that a preference based on rural residence was unconstitutional, the legislature refused to place a rural preference amendment to the state constitution on the election ballot.

In 1990, Governor Steve Cowper issued an administrative order directing that Alaska’s villages should be treated as tribes with certain sovereign governmental powers, limited mainly to control of their internal affairs (State of Alaska 1990). Contradicting the Alaska Supreme Court, he included powers that the court had explicitly denied existed. Then, in 1991, Cowper’s successor, Governor Walter Hickel, revoked Cowper’s administrative order with an order of his own, declaring that “Alaska is one country, one people. The State of Alaska opposes expansion of tribal governmental powers and the creation of ‘Indian Country’ in Alaska” (State of Alaska 1991).

Which of these conflicting positions authoritatively describes the current political status of Alaska’s approximately 200 Native villages? Paradoxically, they all do. In questions of Indian policy in the United States, history and politics have conspired with the legal system to defy consistent, straightforward answers. Moreover, Alaska Natives represent an unusually complicated case in the larger context of American Indian policy.

The complexities of Indian policy arise not just from the convolutions of the American political and legal systems or the creative imaginations of lawyers. It is primarily the body of American Indian law itself, as it has evolved during two centuries, that provides the basis for contradictory opinions about the political status of Alaska Natives and Native Americans generally. Indian law is not unique in this regard; American law abounds in contradictions. Yet, Indian law represents an extremely volatile case. This is so because contemporary Indian law is the product of many abrupt and dramatic changes in the relationship between America’s aboriginal peoples and the Euro-Americans who took the continent away from them.

The case of the Alaska Natives is both similar to and different from that of Native Americans elsewhere. It is similar in that Alaska Natives, as the original inhabitants of the region, could claim aboriginal rights, a trust relationship, and inherent governmental powers (Case 1984; Price 1982; Smith and Kancewick 1990; Berger 1985). It is different primarily in that, until recent times in most of Alaska, there was little or no pressure on Natives to surrender their lands, including their traditional hunting and fishing grounds. (A major exception was the Russian occupation of

southern coastal and Aleutian regions before the American purchase.) Thus, Alaska Natives, unlike most other Native American tribes, were not conquered by Euro-Americans, did not sign one-sided treaties, and were not forced onto reservations.

Alaska Natives' "dependent sovereignty," or inherent governmental power, was not documented in treaties or institutionalized on reservations (although many special purpose reservations were created in Alaska; see discussion below). Ironically, the absence in Alaska of these traditional instruments of Indian subordination and control has tended to undermine rather than reinforce the tribal status and powers of Alaska Natives.

This issue has two interrelated but analytically distinct parts: tribal status and tribal powers. As a practical matter, there may be less at stake in the question of whether Alaska Native communities are formally recognized as "tribes" than in the question of what tribal powers they may have. Although the record is contradictory (see, for example, the majority and minority opinions of the Alaska Supreme Court in the Stevens Village case), Congress has referred to Alaska Natives as "tribes" in Indian legislation beginning in the early years after the Alaska Purchase. Alaska Natives' status as tribes, though often qualified, has many times been affirmed in executive and judicial actions (Case 1984; Smith and Kancewick 1990).

The more significant issue is what specific tribal powers Alaska Native communities possess. The actual extent of their powers depends on such questions as their individual histories and capabilities; the significance of the power to their tribal existence and well-being; the state's interest in the matter; and what federal laws may or may not say about the power in question (State of Alaska 1986:145-147; Case 1984:472-473). Such tribal powers are likely to be determined on a case-by-case basis. It is as if the exercise of powers establishes tribal status, rather than the other way around.

If Alaska Native tribal communities were within reservation "Indian country," their governmental powers would presumably be greatest (Cohen 1982:472-473). Despite the absence of reservations in Alaska, Native communities may still claim independent governmental powers: federal courts have held that Native allotments and "dependent Indian communities" may also be Indian country (Case 1984:457-458). The problem lies in determining the extent and applicability of these more elusive (dependent Indian communities) or limited (allotments) forms of Indian country in Alaska and elsewhere (State of Alaska 1986:121ff.).

Given the ambiguities and contradictions in the record and the peculiarities of the case of the Alaska Natives, the questions of tribal status, sovereign powers, and Indian country are more in dispute in Alaska than elsewhere. With one exception, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 abolished all the reservations and reserves previously existing in Alaska. To date only the Metlakatla Indian community's tribal status and powers have been recognized by state as well as

federal courts as being the same as those of tribes on reservations in the Lower 48 states.

Yet, even in the case of Lower 48 reservations and treaties, disputes continue over the nature and extent of tribal powers—for example, access to fish and game, water rights, law enforcement, taxation, and gaming operations. Relationships between tribal and state powers are continually being disputed, redefined, and adjusted, whether covered by treaty provisions or not.

In Alaska, the political conflict extends beyond definitions of specific powers to the fundamental issue of whether Native communities have any special powers or rights at all. This more basic issue underlies the current conflict over Alaska Native subsistence. Thus, many Alaskans see the subsistence issue as a fundamental ideological conflict between equality and special privilege, and they assert that, whatever the law may say, Natives' rights to fish and game are no different from those of anyone else. It is the clash of absolutist positions that makes the issue so difficult to define and resolve politically.

The question of the status and powers of Alaska Natives ultimately needs to be reviewed in historical perspective. One of the more salient facts in modern Alaska Native history is that Natives came under U.S. rule during the post-Civil War assimilation era of federal Indian policy, when American Indian tribes had been reduced to a condition of almost complete dependency. As viewed by federal authorities and no doubt by popular opinion, Indians had to be trained, educated, and morally uplifted—“civilized”—so that they might eventually be absorbed into mainstream society (Prucha 1985:28-54). This attitude carried over into the federal government's relationships with its new Native wards in Alaska.

The first agents of the U.S. government in Alaska were not teachers and missionaries, however, but military officers (Price 1990:23-42). After the Civil War, their mission was to control and pacify Indians on what was left of the American frontier. On the far edges of that frontier, in Alaska, the military could try to assure relative peace and order, but they were equipped to do little else to “civilize” the Natives. Whatever their attitudes toward Natives (and some were quite hostile), the military's responsibility was to enforce federal customs and Indian liquor laws, preserve order, and protect non-Native traders and settlers (State of Alaska 1986:74ff.).

From the Alaska Purchase until the early 1900s, many statutes, court decisions, and administrative rulings stated directly or indirectly that Alaska Natives were subject to the same federal and territorial laws that applied to non-Natives (State of Alaska 1986: 71ff.). At the same time, Congress, courts, and administrators also recognized the unique interests and needs of Natives and made many special provisions for them. These special provisions culminated in 1936 amendments to the Indian Reorganization Act which, according to Case (1984:10), “were apparently intended

to place Alaska Native land ownership and governmental authority on the same footing as that of other Native American reservations.”

Alaska Natives had experienced devastating problems by the end of the nineteenth century: cultural disruption that came with western occupation, trade, religion, and schools; degradation and collapse of subsistence economies following importation of new technologies and commercial harvests; and spread of demoralization, hunger, disease, and death. Sheldon Jackson introduced reindeer herding to Alaska in the 1890s in part as a means of warding off starvation among Natives (Case 1984:208-210; Jenness 1962: 35-37). By then, large numbers of Natives had died from new diseases, primarily smallpox and influenza, brought by outsiders.

At the time of contact with the Russians in the 1740s, the estimated population of Alaska's aboriginal peoples was 75,000. By the end of the nineteenth century, their numbers had been reduced to about 25,000 (Rogers 1962:61). The largest declines occurred among the Aleuts and Eskimos of the coastal regions. Only in recent years has the size of the Native population, returned to the level where it was two and a half centuries ago.

Sheldon Jackson also established missionary schools, which later came under the control of the U.S. Commissioner of Education. At the end of the century, the commissioner described his agency's mission in Alaska, vowing to avoid mistakes made on Indian reservations elsewhere: The agency would “provide such education as to prepare the natives to take up the industries and modes of life established in the States by our white population, and by all means not to try to continue the tribal life after the manner of the Indians in the western states and territories” (Chance 1987:92-93).

In 1905, however, the Nelson Act established separate systems of public schools, one for “white children and children of mixed blood who lead a civilized life,” and the other for “uncivilized Alaska Natives.” The Native schools were patterned after the Indian reservation and boarding schools established in other territories and states.

Other special “Indian” measures were extended to Alaska Natives during a period in which the overall objective of federal policy was assimilation. Both the 1884 and 1912 Alaska Organic Acts contained provisions protecting Native land rights (though legal dispute continues even today about whether these were intended to protect “aboriginal title”). As early as 1870, Congress exempted Natives from a general prohibition on harvesting fur seals. Several other exemptions from fish and game laws and international treaties followed, including Native hunting provisions in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916. Earlier, in 1902, Congress had exempted Native subsistence hunting from regulation under the Alaska Game Act (Smith and Kancewick 1990:506; State of Alaska 1986:15).

Native land reserves were another area in which Congress and the executive made special provisions for Alaska Natives (Case 1984: 83-111). Congress made reindeer

herding an exclusively Native activity with the Alaska Reindeer Act of 1937. Through such special measures, Congress and the executive were treating Alaska Natives in much the same way they dealt with Indian tribes elsewhere.

Officially, federal assimilation and allotment policies ended with the coming of Indian reorganization in the 1930s. In Alaska, allotments allowed individual Natives to own land, but they were not based on the breaking up of reservations as they were in the Lower 48 states. (Alaska Natives were eligible to apply for allotments until ANCSA was passed in 1971.) Many Native villages—about 70 as of recent years—adopted the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA) constitutions. Indicating separate status and possible assertions of Indian country, these constitutions were opposed by Alaska's political leaders (as they generally still are today). Some of the most intense controversies of the pre-statehood years centered on the creation of IRA reservations, which could potentially provide the territorial bases for Indian country and assertions of Native sovereignty (State of Alaska 1986:118-119; Naske and Slotnick 1987:191).

Before the IRA, over 150 special Native reserves had been created in Alaska by executive order. (Metlakatla was established under unique circumstances by an act of Congress in 1891 [Price 1990: 78-83]). The main purposes of these special reserves were to support reindeer herding, schools, and vocational education. Some of the reserves encompassed extensive areas for subsistence activities. Only six reserves were established under the IRA in Alaska, and they helped to secure Native hunting and fishing rights in such villages as Venetie, Hydaburg, and Karluk (Case 1984:10-12, 99-107).

IRA reserves provoked fierce battles between territorial leaders and the Secretary of the Interior over control of Alaska lands and resources. Ernest Gruening, who was governor of the territory from 1939 to 1953, viewed reservations as barriers to the future development of Alaska and the progress of its people. Writing for the statehood cause in the early 1950s, Gruening vehemently opposed Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes's "arbitrary and disingenuous efforts to impose his reactionary concepts [i.e., IRA and other reservations] on the people of Alaska."

Alaska leaders' opposition, which was reinforced by federal termination policy, blocked all but a few IRA reservations (State of Alaska 1986:118-121). Also, under the termination policy, Congress extended P.L. 280 to Alaska, giving the state broad powers over criminal matters, and more limited powers in civil matters, in Native communities that might qualify as Indian country.

In 1957, a federal court had determined that the village of Tyonek, an executive-order reserve created in 1915 for education, subsistence, and related purposes, was Indian country. As such, the court declared that the tribal government, not the Territory of Alaska, had jurisdiction to try a criminal case in the village (Case 1984:14). Congress responded by making Alaska a P.L. 280 state in 1958, which

brought Tyonek and all Native villages under state criminal jurisdiction (State of Alaska 1986:139-141).

Later, however, in 1971, Congress granted concurrent criminal jurisdiction to Metlakatla's tribal government at the request of both the state and the tribal government. The state found it impractical and too costly, because of the difficulties of travel and communication, to meet the village's law enforcement needs (Case 1984:456).

In the early 1960s, the state began selecting lands from the public domain in fulfillment of its land entitlement under the Alaska Statehood Act. This and related threats to aboriginal land rights caused Native leaders throughout the state to organize regional associations to protest state selections and to intensify their pursuit of a Congressional settlement. Both the statehood act and the Alaska Constitution included provisions (similar to those in the Treaty of Cession and the Alaska organic acts) disclaiming state rights to Native lands and looking to Congress to resolve aboriginal claims.

State land selections as well as all other major land transactions in Alaska were stopped by Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall's "land freeze," beginning in 1966, pending settlement of Native claims. The final impetus to the settlement was the discovery of vast petroleum deposits at Prudhoe Bay in 1968. Transport of the oil required construction of a pipeline across lands claimed by Natives, and the economic stakes were much too great to permit a long delay of the project. This supplied the incentive—to the state, the oil companies, and Congress—for agreement with Native leaders on the terms of a settlement act compensating Alaska Natives for extinguishment of aboriginal title.

In some respects, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 was an Alaska Native "treaty" or "treaty substitute" with the U.S. government (Wilkinson 1987:8). Like traditional Indian treaties, in return for grants of limited, designated lands and other benefits to Natives, ANCSA extinguished aboriginal title to much more extensive lands traditionally used and occupied by them. In other respects, ANCSA clearly is not like a traditional treaty. Congress deliberately wrote ANCSA to exclude the traditional features of treaties: reservations and BIA trust responsibility for the land and monetary benefits of the settlement. Moreover, Alaska Natives were not signatories to ANCSA, as would have been the case in an agreement.

ANCSA is an equivocal product of overlapping termination and self-determination eras of federal Indian policy. It speaks the language of self-determination, but it does so with a distinct accent of termination and assimilation. While ANCSA granted Alaska Natives full control of unprecedented amounts of money and land, it assigned this control not to tribal governments but to state-chartered Native corporations. Further, ANCSA extinguished not only aboriginal land title but aboriginal hunting and fishing rights as well (Section 4 [b]).

Although ANCSA extinguished aboriginal hunting and fishing rights, the conference committee responsible for the act “expect[ed] both the Secretary [of the Interior] and the State to take any action necessary to protect the subsistence needs of the Natives” (U.S. Senate 1971:37). Such action could include withdrawing lands for subsistence uses and closing them to non-residents when resources were scarce.

Finding that Native subsistence was not adequately protected and that neither the state nor the secretary had responded adequately, Congress later included provisions for subsistence hunting and fishing preference rights in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA). These rights were to be assigned to all eligible “rural residents,” however, and not exclusively to Natives. Congress thus avoided the issue of “special privileges” for Natives, to which the state strongly objected, and struck a political compromise. But Congress also made clear that its primary concern was to protect the subsistence activities of Alaska Natives, invoking “its constitutional authority over Native affairs and its constitutional authority under the property clause and the commerce clause...” (ANILCA, section 801 [4]).

The federal courts generally support the special political status of Native Americans, including Alaska Natives. This does not mean, however, that complexity, ambiguity, and contradiction have been eliminated from Indian law and policy, as the Alaska case continues to demonstrate. Even where policies appear consistent, there almost always is room for disputes about the meaning and application of the policies. This is because critical factors affecting the meaning and application of policies—contexts and questions, needs and demands, and values, expectations, and interests—are always changing.

Conclusion:

Charles Wilkinson (1987:103) remarks that “the Founding Fathers almost certainly assumed that tribes would simply die out under the combined weight of capitalism, Christianity, and military power.” He notes how right the Founding Fathers were about the constitutional structures and processes of government, but how wrong they were about the survival of Indian tribes. This belief in the withering away of the tribes persisted through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. It is still held by some people even now.

Although often with great reluctance, American politics and law accommodated the existence of the tribes, inventing and applying the doctrines of aboriginal rights, the trust relationship, and inherent powers. In most of the country, these doctrines were institutionalized in treaties and reservations that did as much to mark successive reductions in tribal power as to protect what was left of it. Nonetheless, the Indian tribes had a foothold in the American political system, and they refused to withdraw. Successive Congresses, courts, and executives have, as Wilkinson observes, continued “squarely to acknowledge this third source of sovereignty in the United

States” (1987:103-104). Particularly during the late twentieth century, there has been a resurgence of political consciousness and action among the American Indian tribes.

Alaska Natives were the last of the Native Americans to feel the weight of capitalism, Christianity, and superior power on their cultures. They did not, for the most part, need to be conquered because there was plenty of land in Alaska and relatively few takers. After the early Russian occupation, Natives’ contact with outsiders was mostly peaceful, and they made room for missionaries, traders, miners, fishermen, government agents, adventurers, and settlers. Alaska Natives were “conquered” by this process and by an invasion of politics and bureaucracy. The rules governing land ownership and claims on resources changed virtually beneath their feet, often without their knowledge or their understanding of the implications. In Alaska, too, non-Natives probably shared a widespread belief that the Native peoples would (and should) gradually wither away through assimilation.

By statehood, it was clear that Alaska Natives would lose their lands, resources, and cultures by default if something was not done. What followed was the land claims movement and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. ANCSA, however, underscored the equal and potentially assimilated status of Alaska Natives, not their special status, which was not as clearly set forth in federal law and policy for them as it was for Native Americans elsewhere. Yet, over the years Congress, courts, and executives built an incremental, often contradictory record of special provisions for Alaska Natives. In recognizing many specific tribal powers, this complex record supports recognition of their special tribal status, too.

Given the ambiguity of the record and the political resistance in Alaska to abstract and threatening claims to “sovereignty,” Alaska Natives have increasingly turned to practical political and social action to strengthen their special status and their distinctive cultural identities. It seems increasingly clear that the issue of Alaska Natives’ special status is ultimately a political question, not a legal one, and that their political status depends less on what federal policymakers say about it than on what Natives themselves choose to do.

“Legal status of tribal governments in Alaska,” Jahna Lindemuth, Alaska Attorney General Office, 19 October 2017 [25]
http://www.law.state.ak.us/pdf/opinions/opinions_2017/17-004_JU20172010.pdf

Abstract:

[Letter from State Attorney General to Governor] You have asked for a legal opinion about the sovereign status of Alaska Native tribes (Alaska Tribes) and their relationship with the State of Alaska (the State). This opinion covers the following: (1) tribes do exist in Alaska; (2) Alaska Tribes are governments with inherent sovereignty; and (3) the areas where the scope of that sovereignty is clear.

Current & Relevant Information:

I. There are 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska.

The existence of a tribe or tribal government does not require a federal determination and tribal sovereignty does not originate with the federal government. That said, the United States Constitution gives Congress the authority to legislate with respect to Indian tribes. Thus, the sovereign status of tribal governments, for the purpose of determining tribes' relationships with states, is a question of federal law and federal recognition of a tribe is dispositive.

While Alaska Native people and Alaska Tribes have existed in what is now the State of Alaska for thousands of years, Alaska Tribes have undoubtedly been recognized by the federal government since 1994. Alaska Tribes' inherent sovereignty has been recognized by all three branches of federal government and the Alaska Supreme Court. This inherent sovereignty exists regardless of whether the land that Alaska Tribes possess or inhabit is considered "Indian country."

II. Alaska Tribes are sovereign governments.

Tribal governments are separate sovereigns. As a starting point, tribal sovereignty can perhaps be understood as self-rule—the right to make one's own laws and be governed by them. Tribes possess inherent powers of self-government and exercise these powers to the extent they have not been extinguished. It is presumed that a tribe's inherent sovereignty remains intact unless it has been divested or limited by Congress "or by implication as a necessary result of their dependent status."

Numerous federal laws have limited tribal sovereignty. For example, the Major Crimes Act extended federal criminal law into Indian country, an area where tribal jurisdiction had originally been exclusive. Public Law 280 then allowed limited state authority in Indian country in some states, including Alaska. And the U.S. Supreme Court held in *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribes* that tribes were divested of criminal jurisdiction to prosecute non-Indians, finding that such jurisdiction was "inconsistent with their status" as sovereigns subordinate to the federal government.

Tribes' inherent powers of self-governance over tribal citizens have long been recognized, and there is no evidence that Congress intended to extinguish Alaska Tribes' powers in enacting ANCSA. Federal courts have likewise concluded that tribes in Alaska retain inherent sovereign authority. As a general matter, sovereign governments have authority, or jurisdiction, over citizens, over land, and over people who enter their land. Similarly, this "dual nature of Indian sovereignty" derives from two intertwined sources: tribal citizenship and tribal land. These two aspects of jurisdiction, or authority, while intertwined, have been "teased apart" in Alaska.

III. Conclusion

The law is clear. There are 229 Alaska Tribes and they are separate sovereigns with inherent sovereignty and subject matter jurisdiction over certain matters. Indian country is not a prerequisite for Alaska Tribe’s inherent sovereignty or subject matter jurisdiction, but it may impact the extent of that jurisdiction.

“Working Effectively with Alaska Native Tribes and Organizations: Desk Guide,”
acf.hhs.gov, 18 December 2023 [26]

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ana/native_affairs_desk_guide_fw_s.pdf

Abstract:

This information is intended to serve as a reference book for federal employees who work with Alaska Native tribes/governments. As federal employees, we are directed by Congress in various laws to coordinate and work with Alaska Natives. The special legal status of tribal governments requires coordination and consultation be conducted on a government-to-government basis. In managing public lands and subsistence hunting and gathering, we must communicate and work in partnership with Alaska Native people.

Traditional Alaska Native societies were self-governing and autonomous before European contact. Social and political systems were in place, which varied from group to group, but worked effectively to maintain social order, control individual behaviors, define interpersonal relationships, define spiritual relationships to the environment and wildlife, identify territory, and regulate relationships with other societies. Each society had an identifiable resource use area that could be defended. Use of resources was often coordinated by various groups for the same location, sometimes for totally different purposes. Distribution and exchange of resources was coordinated by these local societies or tribal governments as they are now identified. Land ownership and use were collective.

Today, Alaska Native peoples continue to live off the land. Tribes, clans, and families continue to have an influence over their members’ social interaction, property rights, and ceremonies. Alaska Native peoples continue to have extremely strong ties to the land.

A summary of each of the general cultural groups of Alaska Natives, before and after European contact, is provided for an understanding of Alaska Native people.

This desk guide has been developed to serve as a quick reference document, covering such topics as Alaska Native cultures, historical information, and legal summaries of pertinent legislation, subsistence, and consultation.

Current & Relevant Information:

6. Alaska Native Government and Organizations

6.1 Tribe

A community constitutes a sovereign tribe if it can show that it is either recognized as a tribe by the federal government or that it satisfies the traditional common law definition of a tribe. The common law definition requires a body of Indians to be of same or similar race, united in a community under one leadership or government, and inhabiting a particular, although at times, ill-defined territory. Additionally, sovereignty flows from the self-governance of tribes before contact with the Europeans. Therefore, contemporary tribes may have to show that they are the modern-day successors to a historically sovereign entity. Established Indian tribes retain sovereign authority over both members and territory. Tribes in Alaska retain sovereign authority over their members, since the land issue was mitigated with passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

6.2 Federally Recognized Tribe

A legal term meaning the United States government recognizes a government-to-government relationship with a tribe and that a tribe exists politically in a “domestic dependent nation status.” A federally recognized tribe is one that was in existence, or evolved as a successor to a tribe, at the time of original contact with non-Indians.

6.3 Tribal Governments

The federal government recognizes two types of tribal government in Alaska – traditional councils and councils organized under the authority of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (amended for Alaska in 1936). Traditional governments are those organized according to the customs and traditions of the Indian community, but without a federal or state government approved constitution. Traditional governments still exist in many areas of Alaska. Size and population of the tribe do not matter. It is the choice of the people how they choose to be recognized. For example, the Navajo Nation (population approximately 170,000) did not choose to be organized under the authority of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), but as a traditional government. The 1934 IRA originally permitted a tribe or several tribes residing on the same reservation to organize by adopting a constitution and bylaws. Because there were few reservations in Alaska, the IRA was amended in 1936 to permit Alaska Natives to organize on the basis of commonality (common bond of occupation, association, or residence). Alaska may be the only state in which there are regional tribes recognized by the federal government. Regional tribes are multiple tribes not restricted to a single village location: Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (southeast) the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, and the communities of St. Paul and St. George known as the Pribilof Islands Aleut Communities.

6.4 ANCSA Corporations

Under the terms of ANCSA, 13 regional corporations were created. One of these corporations, the 13th, was created to include Alaska Natives not living in Alaska at the time of the passage of ANCSA in 1971. Alaska Natives who were approved for

enrollment in the corporations became shareholders, receiving 100 shares of stock in these for-profit corporations. Lands conveyed to Alaska Natives as part of the settlement were conveyed to these regional and village state-chartered business corporations for them to administer. The corporations were intended to be profit corporations for the purposes of development and payment of dividends to their shareholders. Regional corporations own the subsurface rights to the lands selected for the village corporations under ANCSA, along with any surface and subsurface rights to the lands selected for the regional corporations. As always, there are exceptions and it is difficult to make a blanket statement about land status.

6.5 Village Corporations

Approximately 200 for-profit village corporations were created under the authority of ANCSA. Amendments in 1976 authorized the village corporations within a region to merge with each other, or with their regional corporations, and some took advantage of this provision to consolidate operations. Village corporations own the surface title to their lands, but the subsurface rights are held by the regional corporation.

6.6 Regional Non-Profit Associations

There are regional non-profit organizations in each of the 12 regions, corresponding to the boundaries established under ANCSA. Many of these non-profit corporations were the advocacy organizations that pursued the settlement of the Alaska Native land rights and later served as the ANCSA-designated incorporators of the newly-organized regional profit corporations. As the self-determination policies were implemented in Alaska, regional Alaska Native non-profit organizations became service delivery agencies for federal programs in Alaska. The governing bodies of these organizations are made up of tribal representatives from each tribe in the region who usually meet yearly in convention. Official functions are overseen by an Executive Board/Council/Committee.

6.7 State-Chartered Government

Borough

Boroughs are units of government formed for the purpose of providing services to people residing in a large geographic area or region. They resemble counties in other states. Currently, there are 16 boroughs in Alaska. The remaining area is considered a single unorganized borough.

First and second-class boroughs must perform three area-wide powers: education, planning/platting/zoning, and tax assessment/collection.

Municipal Government

There are two types of general law cities provided for by the Alaska Constitution: first class and second class. General law cities can do only what the law says they can do. A city has only those powers given to it by the state. These include general

governmental powers (financial, administrative, and legal), powers to provide public facilities and services, and regulatory powers. These powers can allow a city to provide a wide range of community services and facilities. In practice, populations and fiscal constraints serve to limit the number of services provided by many cities.

There are provisions for first-class and second-class cities. A community must have a minimum population of 400 in order to incorporate as a first-class city. The mayor of a first-class city is elected by the voters and is not a member of the council. The mayor of a first-class city may vote only in cases of a tie or a veto action of the council. If a first-class city is located in the unorganized borough, it must also provide education, planning, and zoning services for its residents.

Second-class cities are the most common form of municipal government found in Alaska. Communities with less than 400 residents can petition the state to incorporate as a second-class city in order to provide services and facilities to their residents. Larger communities such as Bethel and Kotzebue have chosen to incorporate as second-class cities.

6.8 Statewide Organizations

Alaska Federation of Natives

In October 1966, representatives of 17 Alaska Native organizations gathered for a three-day conference primarily to address Alaska Native aboriginal land claims. During this historic conference, Alaska Natives formed the first statewide organization to present a unified position on Native land use and occupancy in Alaska. The delegates, who also addressed many other issues important to them on a local, regional, and statewide bases, chose to name the new organization the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). Between 1966 and 1971, the AFN worked to attain passage of ANCSA. As Alaska Natives began the process of implementing ANCSA, the AFN offered technical assistance and managed a number of statewide human service programs. As the regional associations grew, the human service programs were transferred to these associations. Today a primary function of AFN continues to be the representation of Alaska Native concerns before the U.S. Congress, the Alaska State Legislature, and federal and state agencies. The AFN is an advocate for Alaska Natives on issues ranging from the implementation of ANCSA to subsistence protection; from tribal rights to the delivery of health and social services; from education to preserving cultural practices.

Alaska Inter-Tribal Council

The Alaska Inter-Tribal Council (AITC) is a statewide, tribally-governed, nonprofit organization that advocates on behalf of tribal governments throughout the state. The AITC promotes indigenous self-determination by providing technical assistance to tribal governments, facilitating inter-governmental and inter-agency communication and collaboration, offering public education regarding Alaska Native

cultures and tribal governments, and advocating on behalf of tribal initiatives and self-governance.

Rural Alaska Community Action Program

The Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) provides services in rural Alaska to communities which are predominantly Alaska Native. One of about a thousand national “community action” agencies, it is a private, non-profit corporation whose goal is to promote maximum participation by village residents in overcoming all forms of poverty. The RurAL CAP operates such program as Alcohol Prevention, Housing, Energy Conservation, Child Development, Head Start, Homeward Bound, and AmeriCorps programs.

Alaska Native Health Board

The Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB), established in 1968, is recognized as the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues. The purpose of ANHB is to promote the physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being of Alaska Native people. The Board is a 22-member entity, consisting of one elected or selected representative to the Board of Directors or health committees of the each of the regional health organizations. Quarterly meetings serve as a forum for discussion of health issues affecting Alaska Natives. Issues are identified and strategies developed, providing a unified voice on health matters affecting Alaska Natives, statewide.

First Alaskans Institute

First Alaskans Institute is a statewide, non-profit foundation. Its mission is to help develop the capacities of Alaska Native people and communities to meet educational, economic and social challenges, while fostering positive relationships among all segments of our society. First Alaskans is a catalyst, convener and supporter of work done throughout the Native community.

7. Status of Alaska Natives

Tribal Members

Alaska Natives may be members of one of the federally recognized tribes in Alaska. To be a tribal member, an individual must be recognized by the tribe and included on the tribal membership list. It is up to the tribe to determine its membership.

United States Citizens

Alaska Natives are citizens of the United States and Alaska under the Citizenship Act of 1924.

ANCSA Shareholders

The ANCSA is historically the largest and one of the most complex aboriginal land settlements ever enacted by the U.S. Congress. The ANCSA provided that all U.S.

citizens with one-fourth or more Alaska Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut blood living as the date of passage of the Act and enrolled to one of the 13 regions established under the Act, were qualified to become shareholders in one of 13 regional Alaska Native corporations and over 200 village corporations. This settlement directed the payment of \$962.5 million as compensation for lands previously lost and for those to which Aboriginal title was being extinguished by the Act, and confirmed fee simple title to 44 million acres to the corporations. Both the compensation and the land are administered by the corporations established by ANCSA. Collectively, Alaska Native shareholders are the largest private landowner in Alaska.

8. Tribal Sovereignty

Many of us have not had an opportunity to learn the facts about the unique political relationship between the United States and the American Indians/Alaska Native tribes. Sovereignty is the foundation upon which this relationship is built. The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with a basic understanding about the sovereign status of American Indian/Alaska Native tribes.

What is Sovereignty?

Sovereignty is an internationally recognized concept. A basic tenet of sovereignty is the power of a people to govern themselves.

Tribal Sovereignty

American Indian/Alaska Native tribal powers originate with the history of tribes managing their own affairs. Case law has established that tribes reserve the rights they had never given away.

Treaties

Treaties formalize a nation-to-nation relationship between the federal government and the tribes. Formal treaty-making ended in 1871.

Trust Responsibility

In treaties, tribes relinquished certain rights in exchange for promises from the federal government. Trust responsibility is the government's obligation to honor the trust inherent to these promises and to represent the best interests of the tribes and their members. It is important to understand the difference between the ethnological term "American Indian" and the political/legal term "American Indian." The protections and services provided by the United States for tribal members flow not from an individual's status as an American Indian in an ethnological sense, but because the person is a member of a tribe recognized by the United States, and with which the United States has a special trust relationship. This special trust relationship entails certain legally enforceable obligations and responsibilities.

United States Constitution

The U.S. Constitution recognizes tribes as distinct government. It authorizes the U.S. Congress to regulate commerce with “foreign nations, among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.”

Court Precedence

Three 19th century U.S. Supreme Court opinions serve as a cornerstone to understanding the sovereign status of tribes. These cases are the most widely cited with respect to tribal sovereignty:

Johnson v. McIntosh concerned the validity of a tribal land grant made to private individuals; provided that tribes’ right to sovereignty are impaired by colonialization but not disregarded.

Cherokee Nation v. Georgia involved an action brought against the state of Georgia by the Cherokee Nation which sought relief from state jurisdiction on tribal lands; described tribes as “domestic, dependent nations,” and maintained that the federal-tribal relationship resembles “that of a ward to his guardian.”

Worcester v. Georgia concerned the application of Georgia state law within the Cherokee Nation; held that tribes do not lose their sovereign powers by becoming subject to the power of the United States; maintained that only Congress has plenary power over Indian tribes; and established that state laws do not apply in Indian Country.

Modifications in the Nation-to-Nation Relationship

Public Law 280 (1953)

Provides for states to assume general criminal and some civil jurisdiction over Indian reservations within their boundaries. Tribes retain limited criminal and general civil jurisdiction but because of a lack of resources have generally not fully assumed these responsibilities.

Indian Child Welfare Act (1978)

Establishes procedures state agencies and courts must follow in handling Indian child custody matters. Creates dual jurisdiction between states and tribes and defers heavily to tribal governments.

Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (1988)

Should a tribe decide to engage in casino gaming, this act requires the state to negotiate in good faith with the tribe to form a compact setting forth the terms of operation.

“Protecting the Civil Rights of American Indians and Alaska Natives,” FindLaw’s Legal Writers Team, FindLaw, 15 August 2017 [\[27\]](#)

<https://civilrights.findlaw.com/discrimination/protecting-the-civil-rights-of-american-indians-and-alaska-native.html>

Abstract:

American Indians and Alaskan natives occupy an odd legal space: they're simultaneously U.S. citizens and citizens of their tribes, which are considered separate nations. While Native Americans are protected under the same federal civil rights laws as other U.S. citizens, the enforcement of these rights is complicated by this form of almost dual citizenship. Below, you'll find explanations of American Indians' rights under both the federal and tribal systems.

Current & Relevant Information:

Native Americans' Civil Rights and the U.S. Government

As U.S. Citizens, American Indians are protected by the Bill of Rights, anti-discrimination laws, and all other statutes protecting the rights of American citizens. These rights include:

Freedom from violence and hate crimes: Although this right is not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, Americans enjoy the right to be free from discriminatory violence. Laws that guard against hate crimes protect this right. In addition, Native Americans are specifically named as a protected group under most hate crime laws.

Freedom of speech, press, and assembly: Native Americans are protected by the rights provided in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights.

Freedom from police misconduct: Under the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable search and seizure, police and other law enforcement officials must respect the rights of individuals, including Native Americans.

Freedom from discrimination in employment, housing, and lending: Native Americans are protected under federal anti-discrimination laws as well. However, since Native American-owned businesses located on reservations are governed by tribes and not by the U.S. government, these businesses may discriminate and cannot be prosecuted under U.S. laws.

Right to education: Native American children living within a school district have the right to attend the schools within the district, regardless of whether they live on U.S. soil or on a reservation.

Right to vote: Native Americans have the right to vote free from harassment.

In addition, Native American citizens have a specially protected right to religious freedom under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. The Act provides that Native American citizens must have access to sacred sites and may use drugs, such

as peyote, in religious ceremonies. In addition, sacred artifacts must be removed from museums and repatriated if possible.

Native Americans' Civil Rights and Tribal Governments

Although the Constitution and U.S. anti-discrimination laws provide Native Americans protection against many different kinds of civil rights abuses, they were created without Native American representation and did not apply to tribal governments. Since tribal governments did not always have reliable court systems, many Native Americans were left without an effective means to enforce their own civil rights. As a result, in 1968, Congress created the Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA) which listed several rights that tribal governments must respect, including:

Rights to speech, assembly, press, and religion,

Rights against unreasonable searches and seizures,

Rights against double jeopardy,

Freedom from self-incrimination,

Right to a speedy and public criminal trial,

Right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment,

Right to equal protection of the law and due process, and

Right to a trial by jury.

However, unlike with other federal civil rights laws, the Department of Justice has little authority to enforce the provisions of the ICRA over tribal governments. Consequently, tribal governments are free to make their own laws that have the practical effect of limiting these rights.

“Bureau of Indian Affairs Answers to Frequently Asked Questions,” Bureau of Indian Affairs Public Affairs Office, 24 October 2001 [28]

<https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/soc/bia.pdf>

Abstract:

The Bureau of Indian Affairs website provides the answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Current & Relevant Information:

Who is an Indian?

No single Federal or tribal criterion establishes a person's identity as an Indian. Government agencies use differing criteria to determine who is an Indian eligible to participate in their programs. Tribes also have varying eligibility criteria for

membership. To determine what the criteria might be for agencies or Tribes, you must contact each entity directly.

To be eligible for Bureau of Indian Affairs services, an Indian must (1) be a member of a Tribe recognized by the Federal Government, (2) one-half or more Indian blood of tribes indigenous to the United States (25 USC 479) ; or (3) must, for some purposes, be of one-fourth or more Indian ancestry. By legislative and administrative decision, the Aleuts, Eskimos and Indians of Alaska are eligible for BIA services. Most of the BIA's services and programs, however, are limited to Indians living on or near Indian reservations.

The Bureau of the Census counts anyone an Indian who declares himself or herself to be an Indian. In 1990 the Census figures showed there were 1,959,234 American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the United States (1,878,285 American Indians, 57,152 Eskimos, and 23,797 Aleuts). This is a 37.9 percent increase over the 1980 recorded total of 1,420,000. The increase is attributed to improved census taking and more self- identification during the 1990 count.

The BIA's 1993 estimate is that about 1.2 million of this total population live on or adjacent to Federal Indian reservations. This is the segment of the U.S. Indian and Alaska Native population served by the BIA through formal, on-going relations.

What is an Indian Tribe?

Originally, an Indian Tribe was a body of people bound together by blood ties who were socially, politically, and religiously organized, who lived together in a defined territory and who spoke a common language or dialect. The establishment of the reservation system created some new tribal groupings when two or three tribes were placed on one reservation, or when members of one tribe were spread over two or three reservations.

What is a Federally recognized tribe?

There are more than 550 Federally recognized Tribes in the United States, including 223 village groups in Alaska. "Federally recognized" means these tribes and groups have a special, legal relationship with the U.S. government. This relationship is referred to as a government-to-government relationship. Members of Federally recognized Tribes who do not reside on their reservations have limited relations with the BIA and IHS, since BIA and IHS programs are primarily administered for members of Federally recognized tribes who live on or near reservations.

A number of Indian Tribes and groups in the U.S. do not have a Federally recognized status, although some are State recognized. This means they have no relations with the BIA or the programs it operates. A special program of the BIA, however, works with those groups seeking Federal recognition status. Of the 150 petitions for Federal recognition received by the BIA since 1978, 12 have received acknowledgment through the BIA process, two groups had their status clarified by

the Department of the Interior through other means, and seven were restored or recognized by Congress.

How does an Indian become a member of a Tribe?

A Tribe sets up its own membership criteria, although the U.S. Congress can also establish tribal membership criteria. Becoming a member of a particular Tribe requires meeting its membership rules, including adoption. Except for adoption, the amount of blood quantum needed varies, with some Tribes requiring only proof of descent from an Indian ancestor, while others may require as much as one-half.

What is a reservation?

In the U.S. there are only two kinds of reserved lands that are well-known: military and Indian. An Indian reservation is land a Tribe reserved for itself when it relinquished its other land areas to the U.S. through treaties. More recently, Congressional acts, Executive Orders and administrative acts have created reservations. Today some reservations have non-Indian residents and land owners living within the boundaries of reservations.

There are approximately 275 Indian land areas in the U.S. administered as Indian reservations (reservations, pueblos, rancherias, communities, etc.). The largest is the Navajo Reservation of some 16-million acres of land in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Many of the smaller reservations are less than 1,000 acres with the smallest less than 100 acres. On each reservation, the local governing authority is the tribal government.

Approximately 56.2-million acres of land are held in trust by the United States for various Indian Tribes and individuals. Much of this is reservation land; however, not all reservation land is trust land. On behalf of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior serves as trustee for such lands with many routine trustee responsibilities delegated to BIA officials.

The States in which reservations are located have limited powers over them, and only as provided by Federal law. On some reservations, however, a high percentage of the land is owned and occupied by non-Indians. Some 140 reservations have entirely tribally owned land.

Do all Indians live on reservations?

No. Indians can and do live anywhere in the United States that they wish. Many leave their home reservations for educational and employment purposes. Over half of the total U.S. Indian and Alaska Native population now lives away from reservations. Most return home often to participate in family and tribal life and sometimes to retire.

Do Indians have the right to own land?

Yes. As U.S. citizens, Indians can buy and hold title to land purchased with their own funds. Nearly all lands of Indian Tribes, however, are held in trust for them by the United States. There is no general law that permits a tribe to sell its land. Individual Indians also own trust land, which they can sell, but only upon the approval of the Secretary of the Interior or his representative. If an Indian wants to extinguish the trust title to his land and hold title like any other citizen (with all the attendant responsibilities such as paying taxes), he can do so if the Secretary of the Interior or his authorized representative determines that he is able to manage his own affairs. This is a protection for the individual.

What does tribal sovereignty mean to Indians?

When Indian Tribes first encountered Europeans, they were dealt with because of their strength in numbers and were treated as sovereign governments with whom treaties were made. When tribes gave up their lands to the U.S., they retained certain sovereignty over the lands they kept. While such sovereignty is limited today, it is nevertheless jealously guarded by the tribes against encroachments by other sovereign entities such as States. Tribes enjoy a direct government-to-government relationship with the U.S. government wherein no decisions about their lands and people are made without their consent.

Are Indians U.S. citizens?

Yes. Before the U.S. Congress extended American citizenship in 1924 to all Indians born in the territorial limits of the United States, citizenship had been conferred upon approximately two-thirds of the Indian population through treaty agreements, statutes, naturalization proceedings, and by "service in the Armed Forces with an honorable discharge" in World War I. Indians also are members of their respective Tribes and thus have dual citizenship.

Can Indians Vote?

Yes. Indians have the same right to vote as other U.S. citizens. In 1948, the Arizona Supreme Court declared as unconstitutional disenfranchising interpretation of the State constitution. Thus, Indians were permitted to vote as in most other States. A 1953 Utah State law stated that persons living on Indian reservations were not residents of the State and could not vote. That law was subsequently repealed. In 1954, Indians in Maine who were not then Federally recognized were given the right to vote, and in 1962, New Mexico extended the right to vote to Indians. Indians also vote in State and local elections and in their affiliated tribal elections. Each tribe, however, determines which of its members are eligible to vote in its elections. This qualification to do so is not related to the individual Indian's right to vote in national, State or local (non-Indian) elections.

Do Indians have the right to hold Federal, State and local government offices?

Yes. Indians have the same rights as other citizens to hold public office. Indian men and women have held elective and appointive offices at all levels of government. Charles Curtis, a Kaw Indian from Kansas, served as Vice President of the United States under President Herbert Hoover.

Indians have been elected to the U.S. Congress from time to time for more than 80 years. Ben Reifel, a Sioux Indian from South Dakota, served five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1986 from the Third District of Colorado, and is currently serving in the United States Senate. He is the only American Indian currently serving in Congress.

Indians also served in and now hold office in a number of State legislatures. Others currently hold or have held elected or appointive positions in State judiciary systems and in county and city governments including local school boards. Larry Echo Hawk, an enrolled member of the Pawnee Tribe, served as attorney general of Idaho from 1992 to 1994.

Do Indians pay taxes?

Yes. They pay the same taxes as other citizens with the following exceptions:

- Federal income taxes are not levied on income from trust lands held for them by the United States;
- State income taxes are not paid on income earned on an Indian reservation;
- State sales taxes are not paid by Indians on transactions made on an Indian reservation; and
- Local property taxes are not paid on reservation or trust land.

Do laws that apply to non-Indians also apply to Indians?

Yes. As U.S. citizens, Indians are generally subject to Federal, State, and local laws. On Indian reservations, however, only Federal and tribal laws apply to members of the Tribe unless the Congress provides otherwise. In Federal law, the Assimilative Crimes Act makes any violation of State criminal law a Federal offense on reservations. Most Tribes now maintain tribal court systems and facilities to detain tribal members convicted of certain offenses within the boundaries of the reservation.

Does the United States still make treaties with Indians?

No. Congress ended treaty-making with Indian tribes in 1871. Since then, relations with Indian groups are by Congressional acts, Executive Orders, and Executive Agreements. Between 1778, when the first treaty was made with the Delawares, to 1871, when Congress ended the treaty making period, the U.S. Senate ratified 370 Indian treaties. At least 45 others were negotiated with tribes but were never ratified by the Senate.

The treaties that were made often contain obsolete commitments which have either been fulfilled or superseded by Congressional legislation. The provision of education, health, welfare, and other services by the government to tribes often has extended beyond treaty requirements. A number of large Indian groups have no treaties, yet share in the many services for Indians provided by the Federal Government.

The specifics of particular treaties signed by government negotiators with Indians are contained in one volume (Vol. II) of the publication, "Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties," compiled, annotated and edited by Charles Kappler. Published by the Government Printing Office in 1904, it is now out of print, but can be found in most large law libraries. More recently the treaty volume has been published privately under the title, "Indian Treaties, 1778-1883."

Originals of all the treaties are maintained by the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration. A duplicate of a treaty is available upon request for a fee. The agency will also answer questions about specific Indian treaties. Write to: Diplomatic Branch, National Archives and Records Services, Washington, DC 20408.

How do Indian tribes govern themselves?

Most tribal governments are organized democratically, that is, with an elected leadership. The governing body is generally referred to as a "council" and comprised of persons elected by vote of the eligible adult tribal members. The presiding official is the "chairman," although some tribes use other titles such as "principal chief," "president" or "governor." An elected tribal council, recognized as such by the Secretary of the Interior, has authority to speak and act for the tribe and to represent it in negotiations with Federal State, and local governments.

Tribal governments generally define conditions of membership, regulate domestic relations of members, prescribe rules of inheritance for reservation property not in trust status, levy taxes, regulate property under tribal jurisdiction, control conduct of members by tribal ordinances, and administer justice.

Many tribes are organized under the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, including a number of Alaska Native villages, which adopted formal governing documents (Constitutions) under the provisions of a 1936 amendment to the IRA. The passage in 1971 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, however, provided for the creation of village and regional corporations under State law to manage the money and lands granted by the Act. The Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936 provided for the organization of Indian tribes within the State of Oklahoma. Some tribes do not operate under any of these acts, but are nevertheless organized under documents approved of governments. Prior to reorganization, the tribes maintained their own, often highly developed, systems of self-government.

Do Indians have special rights different from other citizens?

Any special rights that Indian tribes or members of those tribes have are generally based on treaties or other agreements between the United States and tribes. The heavy price Indians paid to retain certain "sovereign" rights was to relinquish much of their land to the United States. The inherent rights they did not relinquish are protected by U.S. law. Among those may be hunting and fishing rights and access to religious sites.

Do Indians serve in the Armed Forces?

Yes. Indians have the same obligations for military service as other U.S. citizens. They have fought in all American wars since the Revolution. In the Civil War, they served on both sides. Eli S. Parker, Seneca from New York, was at Appomattox as aide to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant when Lee surrendered, and the unit of Confederate Brigadier General Stand Watie (Cherokee) was the last to surrender. It was not until World War I that Indians' demonstrated patriotism (6,000 of the more than 8,000 who served were volunteers) moved Congress to pass the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. In World War II, 25,000 Indian men and women, mainly enlisted Army personnel, fought on all fronts in Europe and Asia, winning (according to an incomplete count) 71 Air Medals, 51 Silver Stars, 47 Bronze Stars, 34 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and two Congressional Medals of Honor. The most famous Indian exploit of World War II was the use by Navajo Marines of their language as a battlefield code, the only such code which the enemy could not break. In the Korean conflict, there was one Indian Congressional Medal of Honor winner. In the Vietnam War, 41,500 Indians served in the military forces. In 1990, prior to Operation Desert Storm, some 24,000 Indian men and women were in the military. Approximately 3,000 served in the Persian Gulf with three among those killed in action. One out of every four Indian males is a military veteran and 45 to 47 percent of tribal leaders today are military veterans.

Why are Indians sometimes referred to as Native Americans?

The term, "Native American," came into usage in the 1960's to denote the groups served by the Bureau of Indian Affairs: American Indians and Alaska Native (Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts of Alaska). Later the term also included Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in some Federal programs. It, therefore, came into disfavor among some Indian groups. The preferred term is American Indian. The Eskimos and Aleuts in Alaska are two culturally distinct groups and are sensitive about being included under the "Indian" designation. They prefer, "Alaska Native."

“On this day, all Indians made United States citizens,” National Constitution Center Staff, Constitutional Daily, 2 June 2023 [29]

<https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/on-this-day-in-1924-all-indians-made-united-states-citizens>

Abstract:

On June 2, 1924, President Calvin Coolidge signed into law the Indian Citizenship Act, which marked the end of a long debate and struggle, at a federal level, over full birthright citizenship for American Indians.

The act read that “all noncitizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States: Provided that the granting of such citizenship shall not in any manner impair or otherwise affect the right of any Indian to tribal or other property.”

Current & Relevant Information:

American Indians had occupied a unique place since the drafting of the Constitution in citizenship matters. Originally, the Constitution’s Article I said that “Indians not taxed” couldn’t be counted in the voting population of states (while slaves were counted as three-fifths of a person).

American Indians were also part of the Dred Scott decision in 1857 but in a much different way. Chief Justice Roger Taney argued that American Indians, unlike enslaved blacks, could become citizens, under congressional and legal supervision.

The 14th amendment’s ratification in July 1868 overturned Dred Scott and made all persons born or naturalized in the United States citizens, with equal protection and due process under the law. But for American Indians, interpretations of the amendment immediately excluded most of them from citizenship.

There was enough confusion after the 14th amendment was ratified about American Indian citizenship that in 1870, the Senate Judiciary committee was asked to clarify the issue.

The committee said it was clear that “the 14th amendment to the Constitution has no effect whatever upon the status of the Indian tribes within the limits of the United States,” but that “straggling Indians” were subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

At the time, U.S. Census figures showed that just 8 percent of American Indians were classified as “taxed” and eligible to become citizens. The estimated American Indian population in the 1870 census was larger than the population of five states and 10 territories—with 92 percent of those American Indians ineligible to be citizens.

The Dawes Act in 1887 gave American citizenship to all Native Americans who accepted individual land grants under the provisions of statutes and treaties, and it marked another period where the government aggressively sought to allow other parties to acquire American Indian lands.

Another Supreme Court case in 1886 ensured that the federal government had full power and control of all lands inhabited by American Indians. And a separate act eliminated the definition of "Indians not taxed" for legal purposes.

The issue of American Indian birthright citizenship wouldn't be settled until 1924 when the Indian Citizenship Act conferred citizenship on all American Indians. At the time, 125,000 of an estimated population of 300,000 American Indians weren't citizens.

The Indian Citizenship Act still didn't offer full protection of voting rights to Indians. As late as 1948, two states (Arizona and New Mexico) had laws that barred many American Indians from voting, and American Indians faced some of the same barriers as blacks, until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, including Jim Crow-like tactics and poll taxes.

"Native Citizenship and Land Issues," Alaska History & Cultural Studies [30]
<https://akhistory.lpsd.com/articles/article.php?artID=136>

Abstract:

Alaska History and Cultural Studies offers an online curriculum designed to teach Alaskan high school students about their state, its rich history and its people. The Alaska Humanities Forum and the state's leading historians, anthropologists, geographers and educators developed the course.

Current & Relevant Information:

Native Citizenship

The 1867 Treaty of Cession with the Russians spelled out that the inhabitants of Alaska "with the exception of uncivilized native tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States. . ."

The Native peoples of Alaska were not second-class citizens. They were simply not citizens at all, at least the way most people understood the law. As the treaty put it, "The uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may, from time to time, adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country."

It wasn't until 1915 that the territorial legislature came up with a complicated procedure for Natives to become citizens of the United States. The Alaska lawmakers said that every Native "who has severed all tribal relationship and adopted the habits of civilized life" could become a citizen.

A Native was eligible for a certificate by going to a local school to be examined by a majority of the teachers. "Such examination shall broadly cover the general qualifications of the applicant as to an intelligent exercise of the obligations of suffrage, a total abandonment of any tribal customs or relationship, and the facts

regarding the applicant's adoption of the habits of a civilized life," the law said. The schools at that time were geared to promote assimilation of Natives into the white culture, so the teachers seemed the best able to make such judgements.

After the teachers approved the application, a Native person had to have at least five white citizens who had been in Alaska at least one year testify that they knew the applicant for at least a year. The witnesses also had to say that the prospective citizen had met the requirements of the law.

Then the certificate, after being endorsed by five citizens, had to be presented to the district court. To achieve citizenship, the Native had to say he was living "separate and apart from any tribe of Indians" and had "adopted the habits of civilized life."

This Alaska action had its roots in the federal Dawes Act of 1887, where Indians born within the United States could become citizens if they removed themselves from their tribes and "adopted the habits of civilized life." One of the supporters of the Alaska law was the Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB), formed by Southeast Natives to promote citizenship for Alaska Natives, education, and the end of aboriginal customs.

The Alaska measure did help lead to significant Native participation in the voting process in Southeast. William Paul, an attorney and active member of the Alaskan Native Brotherhood, won election to the legislature in 1924, mainly on the strength of the Tlinglit vote for him in the villages of Southeast. Shortly before that election a new federal law went into effect that recognized Native Americans as citizens.

In the meantime, the legislature adopted a requirement that all voters pass a literacy test, as another means of keeping Natives from voting. It was amended before final passage, in a compromise worked out by William Paul, to allow "grandfather rights" to illiterate Natives who had voted in 1924.

Natives and the Land

In July 1915, Judge James Wickersham traveled to Fairbanks to dedicate a new cornerstone for the future institution known as the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. It later became the University of Alaska.

The next day he took part in another historic ceremony, gathering with six of the Tanana chiefs to talk about Native lands. Wickersham warned the tribal leaders that with the coming of the Alaska Railroad, there would be more white men coming to settle in Alaska. "White men are coming out and taking up the land," Wickersham said. "They are staking homesteads, cultivating the land, raising potatoes and all kinds of crops."

Speaking through a translator, the Athabaskan chiefs asked that the government "not let the white people come near us. Let us live our own lives in the customs we know." Wickersham said that nothing would stop the white people from coming and

that the Indians should seek 160-acre allotments or reservations, to hold onto some of the land.

"We don't want to go on a reservation, but wish to stay perfectly free just as we are now and go about just the same as now," Chief Ivan said. Wickerhsam described again what he saw as the advantages of reservations, and said they were not "prisons." The chiefs didn't buy it. "I tell you we are people on the go and I believe that if we were put in one place, we would just die off like rabbits," Chief Alexander of Tolovana said. The tribal leaders said again that they wanted to be left alone and "to live here all the time."

A "New Deal" for Alaska Natives

The relationship between the United States government and Native Americans has changed through two centuries of court decisions and changing political perspectives.

Native Americans were self-governing people long before the Europeans arrived. Tribes opposed the invasions of their territories and gave strong resistance in some cases. The doctrine of a "government to government" relationship developed between tribes and the United States over the years. In decisions going back to the early 1800s, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the idea of "aboriginal title" to lands.

In the late 1800s, when the United States began to pay attention to Alaska, the philosophy of dealing with Natives was to encourage them to become part of or assimilation into the white culture. This was to happen primarily through the schools. In 1905, Congress said that there would be one set of schools for "white children and children of mixed blood who lead a civilized life." Native Alaskan children would be in separate schools, designed to teach them about "civilized life."

In the 1930s, key leaders in the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt rejected the idea of assimilation, and supported tribal reorganization instead. The provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) were extended to Alaska in 1936 in order to help reduce the loss of Native lands and create a new political status for Alaska Natives. The federal government urged Native villages to adopt constitutions for self-government under the IRA. Legal experts said the purpose of these amendments was to put Alaska Natives on the same legal footing as other Native Americans.

No treaties had been made with Alaska Natives and few reservations had been set aside for them. They continued to live on the land like their ancestors had done for generations. But Interior Secretary Harold Ickes wanted to establish reservations in Alaska for three reasons: "First, they would define Alaskan 'tribes' by identifying particular groups with the land they occupied; Second, they would define geographic limits of jurisdiction so that Alaska Native communities could exercise power of local

government, and Third, they would enable the United States to segregate Native land and resources, thereby preserving the 'economic rights' of the Natives."

On a trip to Alaska in 1938, Ickes had been impressed by the wealth and orderly development in Metlakatla, the Southeast village on Annette Island, where an 86,000-acre reservation had been set up in 1891. He concluded that since the reservation had helped make that village a success, the same idea would work in other areas, and improve the economic standing of all Alaska Native people.

The pro-reservation stance by Ickes led to much political conflict among Natives, as well as in the political bodies in Alaska and Washington, D.C. Many years of bureaucratic fighting and court suits followed, as the debates raised issues of aboriginal land rights. There was also a controversy about whether as much as one-third to one-half of Alaskan land would become "off-limits" to white settlers and to economic development in the 100 reservations that were proposed. The fishing industry opposed reservations, as did Gov. Ernest Gruening and the territory's businesses.

One of the chief supporters of reservations in Alaska was the Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, who defended his position years later by saying, "Assimilation, not into our culture but into modern life, and preservation and intensification of heritage are not hostile choices."

From the 1930s to the 1950s, about 70 villages set up Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) constitutions, similar to state constitutions, under this law. The largest of six IRA reserves created in the 1940s was the Venetie Reserve in the northeast Interior, covering 1.4 million acres.

In the end, the proposed reservation policy was a failure, but the legacy of the IRA movement is important - it became, along with traditional Native governments, one of two types of Native authority recognized by the federal government.

Traditional Native governments across Alaska reflected different cultural and subsistence patterns. All of these governments tried to meet the needs of their people however, with rules that governed their society and defined their physical and cultural boundaries.

Historian and lawyer David Case wrote that by the time of statehood, "both the courts and Congress had acknowledged that Alaska Native governments historically possessed the same inherent internal authority as Native governments elsewhere."

The Alaska Statehood Act included language that said Congress would resolve Alaska Native land issues in the future. It also allowed the new state to select 103.5 million acres of land, which set up a conflict that increased in the early 1960s. As the state began to select more and more acres, Natives grew upset that their traditional lands for hunting and fishing were threatened. In response to land concerns, the

Alaska Federation of Natives was formed in 1966 and lobbied for a settlement of land claims that was achieved five years later.

Tribal governments, both traditional and IRA governments, still exist in villages across Alaska. In some cases, they co-exist with state-chartered governments, and with Native profit and non-profit corporations set up under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). In what Case describes as a "bewildering institutional array" of governments, there is still tension and debate about which of these governments best serves the interests of Alaska Natives.

The tribal sovereignty movement of the 1980s and beyond drew much of its strength from people who felt that the land claims settlement did not do enough to improve the lives of people in the villages. The tribal governments exercise power and operate programs in certain social service areas dealing with child welfare, health and other governmental services. But they do not have jurisdiction over the lands conveyed to the ANCSA corporations by the federal government.

A unanimous 1998 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court sharply limited the powers of tribal governments. The court said that even though village corporations in Venetie and Arctic Village had transferred their land to the tribal government the land was not "Indian country," meaning that it was not land on which the tribe would have primary jurisdiction instead of the state. The state had taken the Venetie case to the Supreme Court, arguing that a declaration of "Indian Country" in Alaska would have led to 226 "separate and sovereign" tribal governments, with powers over fish and game, and taxes.

C. Culture and Perspectives:

“Successful Aging through the Eyes of Alaska Natives: Exploring Generational Differences Among Alaska Natives,” Jordan P. Lewis, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, 2010 [31]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jordan_Lewis2/publication/45168193_Successful_Aging_through_the_Eyes_of_Alaska_Natives_Exploring_Generational_Differences_Among_Alaska_Natives/links/0a1cc05a1119708b5cfb8018/Successful-Aging-through-the-Eyes-of-Alaska-Natives-Exploring-Generational-Differences-Among-Alaska-Natives.pdf

Abstract:

There is very little research on Alaska Native (AN) elders and how they subjectively define a successful older age. The lack of a culturally-specific definition often results in the use of a generic definition that portrays Alaska Native elders as aging less successfully than their White counterparts. However, there is a very limited understanding of a variety array of successful aging experiences across generations. This research explores the concept of successful aging from an Alaska Native perspective, or what it means to age well in Alaska Native communities. An adapted Explanatory Model (EM) approach was used to gain a sense of the beliefs

about aging from Alaska Natives. Research findings indicate that aging successfully is based on local understandings about personal responsibility and making the conscious decision to live a clean and healthy life, abstaining from drugs and alcohol. The findings also indicate that poor aging is often characterized by a lack of personal responsibility, or not being active, not being able to handle alcohol, and giving up on oneself. Most participants stated that elder status is not determined by reaching a certain age (e.g., 65), but instead is designated when an individual has demonstrated wisdom because of the experiences he or she has gained throughout life. This research seeks to inform future studies on rural aging that prioritizes the perspectives of elders to impact positively on the delivery of health care services and programs in rural Alaska.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction:

We are all aging as individuals, and we are also aging as a society. Older people over the age of 65 are the fastest growing segment of the population, as they are in most developed nations (AoA 2008). While it is clear that we are living longer, it is not clear that our lives are healthier (Verbrugge 1984). As our communities change and elders live longer, we need to understand how to live out our older years in a good way, at both the individual and societal levels, and to identify factors that can help us to do so (Herzog and House 1991). For Alaska Natives, in particular, this is important because it will enable us to get the most out of our lives, feel good about ourselves as we age, as well as preserve our culture and traditions while honoring our elders who share their knowledge and wisdom. Rowe and Kahn's (1987) biomedical definition of successful aging, which emphasizes physical health, does not fit the holistic approach to aging that is common among Alaska Native elders, and gaining a better understanding about Alaska Natives conceptions and definitions of successful aging will bring new insight for the broader field of aging studies, as well as explore in further detail the local, or cultural, notions of aging. This research answers the question: How do Alaska Natives subjectively define successful aging?

The significance of this research is that it will shed light on what it means to age well in Alaska and what is needed to ensure a successful older age in their own homes and communities. As the population of Alaska continues to grow older, it will be important to understand the needs of our elders to enable them to remain as productive and contributing members in their families and communities.

Literature:

As the literature demonstrates, there is a lack of understanding on why, and how, Alaska Native, and ethnic minority, elders age successfully and no definition exists that adequately describes a successful aging process. As the average age of the Alaska Native population continues to increase, it is important to address the issues facing our elders and determine what they need to age successfully. The number of

people age 65 and older grew faster in Alaska than any other state during the decade between 1997 and 2007, according to the Alaska Commission on Aging (2008) press release.

Incorporating the perceptions of older adults will help researchers develop their own definitions of successful aging and the knowledge of older adults' beliefs would improve the ability of providers to offer elder-centered care (Phelan et al. 2004). In spite of the growing literature on culture and its relevance to aging, much of the gerontological literature is "culturally oblivious" (Torres 1999:34). Cross-cultural gerontology has yet to generate culturally-relevant theoretical frameworks for the study of variability and aging and address the construct of successful aging from a variability perspective (Torres 1999). These frameworks are necessary if we are to understand the ways in which culture shapes the experiences of aging (Torres 1999).

Independence is a characteristic that is regarded as an indicator of success for non-Native elders in the U.S.; those elders who are able to remain in their own homes and not be dependent on assistance are seen as aging successfully.

Within Alaska Native cultures, the sense of generativity, leading and teaching the future generations, is evident among those considered aging successfully. Torres (2003) argues that there are various ways in which the term successful aging can be conceptualized and that some type of relationship exists between the cultural values the elders prefer and the understanding of successful aging that they possess. Torres (2003) goes on to state, "theoretical frameworks focusing on successful aging should allow for 'within-cultural' variation to be the fore since it is archaic to think in terms of one culture equals one understanding of aging" (p. 93).

In a study by Sarkisian et al. (2002), the authors found in their sample that many older adults do not expect to achieve the predominant medical model of successful aging. They found that about half of the older adults in their study regarded worsening physical health and cognitive function as normal parts of the aging process; these beliefs were found predominantly among the older patients and those with poor health-related quality of life (Sarkisian et al. 2002). Understanding what constitutes successful aging for Alaska Natives will contribute to the literature and expand the scope of successful aging research with ethnic minority populations.

Design and Methods:

A qualitative, exploratory research design was utilized to gather data from Alaska Native elders and non-elders for the study. This study explored the perspectives of different generations of Alaska Natives on successful aging and the impact of their communities on how they view the aging process. This study relied on careful observation and description of phenomena through interviews and surveys and did not apply a pre-existing theoretical framework (or concept) to the population of study. This study focused on identifying how Alaska Natives define and interpret

their world (e.g., emic perspective) (Llyod et al. 1998) and used an inductive research strategy by which ideas, concepts, and themes emerged from the data through the use of grounded theory methodology (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Non-elders were the focus of this study as they are the upcoming elders and understanding how they have incorporated what they have learned from their elders and culture is important for the health and wellbeing of future populations.

A grounded theory methodology was used so the data would more likely resemble reality than a theory driven study. Grounded theorists create a story based on their observations and experiences; this story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). This methodology was chosen for this study because of the lack of existing research on the relationship between culture and perspectives on successful aging. Upon completion of the interview transcriptions, which were open-coded, key concepts and themes were identified and compared across transcripts to develop a set of preliminary themes.

A purposive sampling procedure was used in this study and six Alaska Native tribal groups (Aleut, Athabascan, Inupiaq, Tlingit, Sugpiaq, and Yup'ik) were represented who were residents of both rural (N=7) and urban (N=8) communities and self-identified as Alaska Native (N=15). The participants gave permission to have their ethnicity and community identified in future publications and presentations.

The age range for all participants was 26–84 with the median age being age 56. Most of the urban participants were non-elders, but they all grew up in a rural community; the elders were predominantly from rural communities. For the purposes of this study, urban communities are defined as Anchorage and Fairbanks and rural is defined as any remote community off the road system. Elders were selected for this study based on a chronological age. Rather than social status, the age of the participant was the main criteria. This is a limitation to the study because social status as an Elder in Alaska is based on life experiences and traditional knowledge and less on chronological age. The focus of this study was on generational differences among Alaska Natives so the use of chronological age was used to ensure elderly participants were interviewed to compare with the younger population, or non-elders. Prior to conducting the interviews, proper IRB Human Subjects protection was obtained through the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Office of Research Integrity to ensure protection of the participants.

This study used an explanatory model (EM) approach (Kleinman 1980); twenty (20) questions covered topics such as how AN elders would define successful aging, how their aging process affects their emotional, spiritual, and cognitive well-being, as well as whether or not they believe their community is supportive of them aging successfully. The elders and non-elders were asked the same questions with the goal of obtaining generational differences in how Alaska Natives view, or define, successful aging. Examples of questions asked of the participants include: What do you think successful aging means? What are the causes of aging well? At what age

do you think a person becomes an Elder? How does aging impact your emotions, body, and spiritual wellbeing? The final question asked participants how they have tried to age well. To gain a clear picture of successful aging, the questionnaire also asked what it means to age poorly in their community and how participants personally avoid poor aging. This study offers explanations of successful aging grounded in the experiences and perceptions of Alaska Natives.

Results:

This study looked at the concept of successful aging across generations to gain a sense of how the definition, and view, of the elders' roles in their communities has changed over time. Alaska Native elders and non-elders emphasized that much of how one views whether or not they are aging successfully is based on personal responsibility and making a conscious decision to live a clean and healthy life. A Yup'ik elder from Bethel (age 74) emphasized that successful aging is, "being strong minded about yourself because only you know yourself." These decisions were influenced by the fact the elders wanted to be around for their grandchildren and family and wanted to live as role models for their community. "If you have contact with your family and your children, you will have a successful life," was the advice given by an Athabascan elder (age 84) from Fairbanks. The three (3) key findings of this study are: 1) Alaska Native conceptions of aging and aging well center around a particular status and role for Elders that set out both expectations for how to treat/relate to older members of the community and expectations that elders will contribute their knowledge and experiences in meaningful way; 2) there are important generational differences as demonstrated by young respondents' focus on their physical/mental health and differences in technology use; and 3) demographic realities and shifts in both urban and rural communities impact on changing notions of successful aging for Alaska Natives as demonstrated by the loss of roles for elders because of a movement away from subsistence activities to cash-based economies. Alaska Natives view aging and health from a holistic perspective and the following themes emerged from the interviews and highlight what are considered as important components of successful aging: definition of elder is not based on a chronological age; there are rural and urban differences in how one views their aging process; lifestyle choices directly impacts how one ages; and access to health care plays a different role in aging well for non-elders and elders.

Defining who is an elder:

One of the challenges with this study was determining whom to interview as elders. A Gwich'in Athabascan man from Arctic Village (age 35) stated, "people become an elder at many different ages; it can occur as early as their 20 s or 30 s." With regard to when an individual becomes recognized as an elder, the younger generations defined it as a chronological age (e.g., 65), whereas the elders defined it as based on wisdom and experiences. The Aleut elderly woman (age 62) state that "I don't think it is just age—you don't determine if you are an elder, the community does."

The elder from Bethel (age 74) states that, “some of us merely become elderly, but don’t become an elder.”

This study could have used a chronological age (i.e., 65 years old) to recruit elder participants, but most of the participants were considered elders by their community and family; being an elder is not a label they give themselves, but is an honor that is bestowed upon them by their community. Two of the Native women (non-elders) also defined the status of being an elder based on their knowledge they gain throughout their lives and not on a chronological age. “They’ve gone through life and have done things.” Most of the literature on successful aging uses a chronological age (e.g., 65) as the benchmark of defining who is considered an elder and fits the criteria for their research study on successful aging. Each village in Alaska has different unspoken rules about who is considered an elder, which is a status that is earned and given by the community to the individual(s), and is not necessarily based on the chronological age, but rather the wisdom, experiences, and contributions the individual has made to the community.

Rural versus urban lifestyles:

Differences in how someone ages in a rural versus an urban Alaskan community emerged during the interviews. The Yup’ik elder (age 74) from Bethel said, “Today, we have a need for interconnectedness, but it’s not there [in rural communities]. Technology plays a role in this.” The young Gwich’in Athabascan man (age 35) from Arctic Village noted a difference between rural and urban lifestyles. “There is a huge difference. A physical difference. Rural communities have more physical activities, for example, hauling water. They don’t haul water in the cities.” He goes on to state that the question should be restated; instead of dichotomizing rural versus urban, the question should be rephrased as “traditional way of living versus urban living.” He goes on to state that:

Rural is a Western concept and focuses less on a Native way of living. In urban communities, food isn’t traditional, rural has more traditional food, which is like our medicine. Living off of the land helps people age well; food connects who we are as Native people. Living off the land is putting your body to use. Keeping up your health and mental balance. Don’t have these opportunities in the cities. Cities have more dictated ways of living. There are no Western stresses in villages. Your body becomes weak and lazy in urban cities; there is no access to traditional food. Urban communities enable Alaska Native peoples to have access to health care, services, and healthier foods.

The young Tlingit man (age 33) from Fairbanks stated, “urban people have more access to health facilities, organic foods. Rural people have more access to natural meats and foods in the wild, which are much healthier than store bought and processed foods.” There are noticeable differences between the participants who lived in rural communities versus those in urban communities, such as their lifestyle,

connection to their Native culture and language, and their informal support networks. As technology continues to improve and gain popularity in rural Alaskan communities, there will be changes in lifestyle, from a subsistence-based economy to a cash economy. These changes will have both positive and negative effects on the health and wellbeing of the residents, as well as the elders in the community.

Knowledge of successful aging:

In addition to asking how the participants have tried to age well, another question asked where they received most of their information on what it means to age successfully. A majority of the respondents indicated that they observed and followed in the steps of immediate family members and relatives. The Inupiaq woman (age 38) from Fairbanks stated, "I got most of my information about aging well from family members who are elderly." The Yup'ik woman (age 50+) from Tununak stated, "I get most of my information about aging well by observing." The Aleut woman (age 50+) from Dillingham sums it up by saying, "thinking about those before me who aged. I read some things, but I think of my parents and grandparents as models." Almost every respondent, young and old, had a role model(s) to follow who exemplifies successful aging and how to live their lives to the fullest. One noticeable difference that varies with age is the younger generations obtaining more information on healthy lifestyles and aging from the Internet and their medical providers. They were more likely to ask more questions and gather information whereas the elders recalled the healthy habits and lifestyle of family and community members that exemplified a successful older age.

Lifestyle

One of the interesting findings in the interviews with the younger participants was their fear of not aging successfully because of their employment and not being able to engage in physical activities; they are unable to engage in physical activities or be around friends because they are stuck in the office behind their computers. The Inupiat woman from Fairbanks (age 38) stated, "I am trying to keep busy. It's hard when you have a job and sit all day." A majority of the non-elder participants in the study grew up in rural communities but currently reside in urban communities, where they are employed or attend the university. Similar in nature to other urban settings, many of the jobs in Alaska require sitting behind a desk, preventing them from engaging in subsistence activities or being active. Many of the respondents, when asked how they try to age well, focused on physical activity and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Many of them included mental wellbeing and being able to accept the fact they are going to be growing older and they are concerned about what they should do to ensure they would age successfully. In response to this question, the Tlingit man from Fairbanks (age 33), replied, "I live a balanced life without alcohol and drugs. I take care of myself and consciously eat healthy foods regularly, exercise, don't drink or use drugs. Live spiritually." Two of the young Alaska Native women explained they would age poorly if they engaged in self-abuse and

did not take care of themselves. The Inupiat woman from Fairbanks (age 38) defined the symptoms of poor aging as, “Self-abuse and self-sabotage. You don’t take care of other people, particularly older people.” Many of the younger respondents emphasized the importance of helping others and giving back to the community. One Gwich’in Athabascan gentleman from Arctic Village (age 35) stated that he has tried to age well through “working with the community and the youth. Helping with the problems of the community. I don’t just talk about the problems; I work on them.”

Most of the younger participants in this study stated that people were much busier long ago because they did not have televisions and computers. Remaining active was instrumental in maintaining good physical and mental health as we age, which contributed to a sense of wellbeing and having a positive outlook on life. “People just sit there now. There are not many activities where men go out each season to subsist.”

In addition to noticeable differences in views on lifestyle and successful aging, there are age-related differences in perceptions of successful aging. One of the big differences is the emphasis younger participants place on biological health and genetics. The Yup’ik woman from Tununak (age 50+) state that you need “good genes” to age successfully. The elders placed less emphasis on the biomedical aspects of aging and focused on respecting self and others, remaining active, and making a continuous contribution. The Athabascan elder from Fairbanks (age 84) stated that in order to age successfully, “you need to share, be happy to get out, and pass on what you know.” When asked how the participants have tried to age well, a majority of the non-elders placed more emphasis on remaining active and being free of disease; the elders referred to a role model in their family or community that taught them the traditional lifestyle and how to live a clean and healthy life. As the population of Alaska Natives continues to age, the perceptions and views on successful aging will change, as well as the views on aging in rural and urban communities across the State.

Access to health care services:

After interviewing Alaska Native elders about what would be required for them to age successfully, there was hardly any mention of health care, let alone access or quality of care. Rather than basing whether or not they are aging successfully on their health status, most AN elders attributed being able to share their knowledge with younger generations as important to successful aging. On the other hand, during the interviews with the AN non-elders, health care and health status played a larger role in whether or not they considered themselves as aging well. The Yup’ik woman (age 50+) from Tununak stated that her health was important and the only way to ensure she would age well is “keeping physically busy and eating well (Yup’ik food).” In addition to taking care of their bodies, the Aleut woman (age 50+) from Dillingham stated that, “today we focus on our body, the physical aspects of our life. The key is in our mind. We need to accept our older age.” The younger generations (non-

elders) defined successful aging as being psychologically and physically comfortable and having a support system.

What is poor, or unsuccessful, aging?

These findings also indicate among elders and non-elders that poor aging is defined as not being active, not being able to handle alcohol, and giving up on oneself. The Athabascan elder (age 84) from Fairbanks defined poor aging as “using alcohol and drugs and giving up when your health is down.” The non-elders placed more emphasis than the elders on the biological changes associated with aging and the presence of a chronic disease, or illness, as directly relating to whether or not someone will age poorly.

Similar concerns were mentioned among the elders when it came to defining poor aging. The elders emphasized not taking care of oneself, having a negative attitude about life, and giving up as contributing to poor aging.

Discussion:

This study provides a holistic view of successful aging, paying in particular attention the unique characteristics of Alaska Natives. Successful aging can be defined in this study as taking responsibility for one’s own health and wellbeing, being active in the community, and passing down knowledge and wisdom rather than basing it solely on physical health. This study did not have a large sample, and included a mixed sample of elders and non-elders, so generalizations regarding successful aging in Alaska could not be made. The study did offer the opportunity to get a sense of the variability by age that currently exists between age groups in Alaska.

Affirming the generational differences here, we see that the Alaska Native non-elders placed more emphasis on their current health status and how it will impact their aging process, whereas the Alaska Native elders emphasized their ability to give back and take care of themselves mentally. For elders, aging successfully was not determined solely by the current physical health. Strawbridge et al. (2002) found in their study on successful aging and wellbeing that although the absence of chronic conditions and maintaining functioning were positively associated with successful aging, many elders with chronic conditions and difficulties still rated themselves as aging successfully; none were so classified according to Rowe and Kahn’s criteria. Von Faber et al. (2001) found in their study on successful aging among the oldest old that “most elderly persons viewed success as a process of adaptation, rather than a state of being, and that wellbeing and social functioning were valued more than physical and psychocognitive functioning” (p. 2694). Reichstadt et al. (2007) found that “older adults place greater emphasis on psychosocial factors as being key to successful aging, with less emphasis on factors such as longevity, genetics, absence of disease/disability, function, and independence” (p. 194). These studies illustrate the fact that the literature has moved from a strictly biomedical emphasis on health and other factors besides

physical ability and absence of disease determine whether someone believes they are aging successfully or not, which have served as the main focus of this study.

As the Alaska Native population continues to grow older, it will be important to address the issues facing Alaska Native elders and determine what they need to age successfully in their own communities and continue to feel their community values them. Insight into how successful aging is defined by Alaska Natives will inform the factors that determine whether or not villages are able to meet their needs and enable them to live their remaining years in their own community. According to study by Gruenewald et al. (2007), compared with older adults who frequently felt useful to others, those who never or rarely felt useful were more likely to experience an increase in disability or die sooner. As our Alaska Native elders pass on, or relocate, the role of traditional leaders and knowledge bearers will fall to our youth. From a health psychologist perspective, we are going to witness more rural communities becoming less dependent on the land (subsistence) and beginning to live more sedentary lifestyles, which is a major health problem for both our rural and urban Alaska Native youth and adults.

Study implications:

The aim of this research was to establish perceptions of successful aging that reflects the experiences of Alaska Natives across Alaska. It is not the aim of this research to establish a definition of successful aging that would meet the needs of every Alaska Native, but rather provide a better understanding of successful aging. The lack of literature on the subject of Alaska Native aging and successful aging in communities requires a more in-depth analysis of successful aging among minority elders and how elders age in rural settings. As the literature demonstrates, there is a lack of understanding on why, and how, elders age successfully and no definition exists that adequately describes a successful aging process. As the Alaska Native population continues to grow older in rural communities, it will be important to address the issues facing Alaska Native elders and determine what they need to age successfully in their own communities.

Insight into how successful aging is defined by Alaska Native people will inform the factors that determine whether or not villages are able to meet the needs of their elders and enable them to live their remaining years as they wish. It will also assist health care providers (e.g., community health aides, nurses) in understanding their needs and what is required to keep them in their homes and communities. Without an understanding of the challenges of aging in a rural community, it is difficult to provide services and meet the needs of the elders and provide the necessary support.

Acquiring a better understanding of successful aging could be enhanced if beliefs and definitions were elicited from the public and incorporated into researchers' definitions. Asking aging individuals about the relevance and meaning of successful

aging will enrich the definitions, making them more applicable to the varied aging population.

This study contributes to this debate on culture-specific approaches to successful aging and attempts to establish an Alaska Native definition of successful aging that steers away from the ethnocentric focus this definition has in mainstream gerontology literature. It also explores within-culture variation by exploring perspectives across different generations and distinct regions.

“Looking across three generations of Alaska Natives to explore how culture fosters indigenous resilience,” Lisa Wexler, *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 2013 [32]
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lisa_Wexler/publication/266903512_Understanding_How_Culture_Shapes_Youth_Resilience_Considering_the_Narratives_of_Three_Generations_of_Alaska_Natives_to_Describe_Common_and_Disparate_Patterns_in_Overcoming_Difficulties_While_Growing_U/links/5669911e08ae430ab4f7293c/Understanding-How-Culture-Shapes-Youth-Resilience-Considering-the-Narratives-of-Three-Generations-of-Alaska-Natives-to-Describe-Common-and-Disparate-Patterns-in-Overcoming-Difficulties-While-Growing-U.pdf

Abstract:

Research has established connection between indigenous culture—often described in terms of cultural identity, enculturation, and participation in traditional activities—and resilience, the process by which people overcome acute and ongoing challenges. Despite correlations between culture and resilience, research has seldom described the ways these concepts are linked in indigenous people’s narratives. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to the effect of historical trauma on different generations’ understanding and deployment of “culture” in the context of hardship. This project, conducted in the summer of 2008 in an indigenous Arctic community, focuses on narratives from three generations who have experienced different degrees of cultural suppression in their lifetimes. From this starting point, the study explores how individuals make meaning and take strength from particular notions of culture, and illuminates the ways each generation accesses and deploys their cultural understandings in the face of hardship. By identifying the similarities and differences in both the challenges and sources of strength for each generation, the paper highlights how understandings of culture are shaped by historical experiences and modified through time. The differing ways that culture fosters strength, purpose, and fortitude (or does not) in indigenous young people’s, adults’ and Elders’ life stories provide clues for enhancing indigenous youth resilience. Findings suggest that “culture” can galvanize Inupiaq people’s sense of identity, feeling of commitment, and purpose, all of which are protective. However, young people need support in developing particular ideas around cultural identity and group membership that can contribute to resilience.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction:

Indigenous people in the Arctic have experienced profound social and cultural changes, including epidemics, forced relocation, cultural colonization, and genocide over the past century. Indigenous young people have not evenly understood or consciously articulated these historical events (Jervis et al., 2006), but the behavioral health disparities associated with acculturation stress, identity conflicts, and discontinuities between past and present have been well documented (e.g., Lehti, Niemela, Hoven, Mandell, & Sourander, 2009; Wexler, 2009a). The health inequalities experienced by indigenous young people are also linked to ongoing colonialism (Gone, 2007; Wexler, 2006), discrimination (LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006) intergenerational trauma and historical loss (Durie, Milroy, & Hunter, 2009). Historical trauma is defined as cultural stress and bereavement, grief related to genocide, and racism that has been generalized, internalized, and institutionalized (Duran & Duran, 1995). It is cumulative and often unresolved (Danieli, 1998), as well as being both historic and ongoing (Durie et al., 2009). Evidence suggests that there is a transmission of trauma within families (Adelman, 1995; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2003), and for indigenous people, across generations within one's tribe (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

Culture is offered as an antidote to protect against poor health outcomes and to bolster indigenous well-being, but the nuances of this process remain unexplored. More specifically, studies have found consistent correlations between cultural identity, positive affiliation and engagement with traditional culture, and indigenous people's mental health (e.g., Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Kral & Idlout, 2009). These cultural affiliations seem to extend to indigenous resilience (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008), a process characterized by good outcomes in spite of threats to development or adversity (Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Ungar, Lee, Callaghan, & Boothroyd, 2005). Having a positive cultural identity appears to confer feelings of self-worth, self-efficacy, connectedness, and purpose to Native people (EchoHawk, 1997; Minore, Boone, Katt, & Kinch, 1991; Tatz, 2001; White & Jodoin, 2004). These studies underscore the connection between Native people's well-being and their identification and involvement with their culture. Yet they fail to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding what culture means to people and how this occurs. How people utilize ideas of "culture" to facilitate wellbeing or overcome challenges remains understudied.

Resilience involves acute hardship (e.g., victimization) and/or forms of sustained stress (e.g., poverty, discrimination), and—despite these risks results in positive or unchanged behavioral and/or health outcomes (Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick, & Sawyer, 2003). Resilience research is often conceptualized as a process defined by access to and effective use of protective influences (Olsson et al., 2003) in response to risk and adversity. Research often catalogues and describes the dynamic interaction of both risk and protective factors in the process of

resilience (Roosa, 2000). This research not only considers this interaction, but also includes the ways that personal and community contexts mediate them to produce wellness (Garmezy, 1991; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Werner, 2000).

Culture is an important variable that influences how people approach, interpret, and respond to difficulty (Barber, 2008; Wexler, DiFulvio, & Burke, 2009). Here, culture, is an organizing schema that provides people with particular ways to locate themselves in relation to others, to a larger shared context, and to their history (Sonn & Fisher, 1998; Wexler, 2009b). In this understanding, “culture” is conceived as that which structures people’s ideas related to their ethnic group membership. Cultural meanings, then, provide ways to understand what it means to be a man, woman, or youth or elder in a given community. More specifically, the ever-moving meanings and expectations associated with one’s situated role provide individuals with a range of acceptable behaviors within which they can maneuver (Berger & Luckmann, 1966/1990). This translates into particular, accepted ways that people make sense of their lives and respond to adversity at a particular moment in time and within a certain community. This sense-making situates people as specific kinds of actors with access to different kinds of resources across time and within various contexts. This contingent and dynamic sense of cultural selfhood has many implications for health.

Recent research has considered personal, community, and cultural meaning making in the context of resilience and vulnerability. For instance, Eggerman and Panter-Brick (2010) describe how culture can be “an anchor of resilience, but also an anvil of pain” (p. 81). Through analysis of Afghan students and caregivers’ narratives, the researchers discuss how cultural expectations, roles, and values limit the acceptable options available for people to overcome hardship, and thus, shape resilience. This narrowing of possibilities particularly for women became highly problematic in the context of a “broken economy” brought about by the Afghanistan war. Building on similar ideas, Zraly and Nyirazinyoye’s (2010) study of genocide-rape survivors in Rwanda considered how participants’ cultural understandings fortified and expanded women’s processes of resilience. Cultural perspectives of endurance and strength were galvanized within a context of shared trauma, collective meaning-making, and “going public” in order to create positive social change. This “voicing of individual pain” made their trauma more bearable through culturally sanctioned, sharing and action. In these examples, the mechanisms and meaning systems that support (or hinder) resilience are made clear. Thus, only some renditions of “culture” within a particular context foster resilience.

This nuanced insight is needed in indigenous resilience research (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Lehti et al., 2009). Prior studies have underscored the connection between enculturation, ethnic identity, traditional activities, well-being, and resilience, but the interplay between personal and cultural meaning-making has not been adequately considered (Wexler et al., 2009). How does one’s understanding of

culture mediate their response to hardship? These processes are undoubtedly influenced by historical trauma for indigenous people, yet little is understood about how these ideas about shared difficulties shape people's identity, sense of purpose, and social roles. Plainly put: What conceptions of culture in the context of historical trauma bolster one's ability to get through hardship?

One way to answer this question is to investigate resilience processes within one indigenous community in which each generation has experienced different kinds of cultural suppression in their lifetimes. This historical (and ongoing) trauma poses a real threat to indigenous health, and has been associated with the exceptionally high local youth suicide rates (Wexler, 2006; Wexler, Hill, Bertone-Johnson, & Fenaughty, 2008; Wexler, Silviera, & Bertone-Johnson, 2012). This paper describes how culture is conceptualized by members of different age groups, and how these understandings shape their stories about overcoming hardship. Examining the ways in which culture confers protection and fortitude for three generations of indigenous people provides perspective about the mechanisms underlying the association between resilience, well-being, and culture. In short, age-cohort comparisons begin to illuminate the ways that Inupiaq people—young and old—deploy cultural resources when overcoming challenges. The similarities and differences across generations articulate the ways that cultural constructions are transformed over time, yet are salient to personal stories of resilience. This vantage point offers some important insights into the ways that specific cultural understandings can buffer the effects of historical trauma and foster indigenous youth resilience.

Findings: Historical trauma and cultural strength:

This analysis focuses on the ways that Elders, adults, and youth understand their personal challenges and deploy ideas of culture in their stories of resilience. Each generation talked about cultural oppression, although these differed in magnitude, level of institutionalization, and awareness. Similarities in resilience narratives underscore the ways culture provides members with distinct sources of strength to help them get through difficulty. Both focus group and interview data are used here to convey general ideas about “the community” and how these ideas of sociocultural context influence the experiences of participants. In discussing amorphous and commonplace concepts like culture, switching between normative and personal perspectives seemed to help participants clarify their thinking about what culture means and how it affects them.

Elders: Cultural grounding gets them through hard times:

All Elders talked about overtly racist policies, such as being sent far away to go to school, being publicly ostracized because of tuberculosis, being shamed for living the “old way,” and most commonly, being punished at school for speaking Inupiaq. Some participants described punishments like standing in the corner or having to write a punitive phrase repeatedly. A few Elders lightened these stories with jokes

about how these experiences improved their handwriting, while some described how corporal punishments left them angry and bitter until a greater force—God, culture, or family—lifted them out of the “darkness.” These three sources of strength were often intertwined. Here, an Elder describes his experiences to a room full of young people, and Harris and myself, the interviewers.

When I was growing up in [village name] see we grew up speaking Inupiaq. . . .My cousins and I, [on] our first day of school, we were talking Inupiaq, and the next thing you know, the teacher grabs me by my ears and my hair, lifts me up, brings me over and uses a three foot yardstick and makes me bend over and hit me and break it and get another one: all because we spoke Inupiaq. The teachers told us not to, over and over. I have scars on my back to prove what we went through because we spoke our language.

Elders linked this kind of abuse to future drinking, smoking, irresponsibility and violence, either through personal examples or through generalized theories. The same Elder, a little while later in the interview, makes this connection,

So, during my time when we went to school, we were punished very hard for speaking our language and we got mixed up because we were wondering how come that was being done. We got mixed up and when some of us got older, they turned to alcohol because they carried this hurt inside. They carried this thing what they went through and some people can't understand why some of them still drink today because they went through a hard time.

Colonialism was often seen as the root of modern problems. According to several Elders, this historical trauma became internalized and results in personal and social problems.

All Elders talked about the difficulty of leaving home either for schooling, medical care, the military, or “no jobs.” One Elder said, “going away from Alaska, that was probably more difficult than anything else.” This was particularly hard since many were not able to speak English fluently. As the sole Inupiaq, many felt profound loneliness. When asked what helped him through feeling “down and lonesome and homesick” while in school “down states,” a different Elder says,

I wanted to be home, but I couldn't come home So, I prayed, and that helped me through most things, most of my difficult times. Being able to see that you're not alone is something you will have to learn from someone and do yourself. In my case, I learned how to pray, and I prayed and that made me feel better because I grew up knowing that my grandparents were Christians and believe in Christ and going to church every Sunday, you know. So, I learned at a young age, and that's what I lean back on.

Elders' narratives emphasized how ideas of culture (and in this case a shared notion of God) linked them to family, home, and tradition, and importantly to a feeling a part

of something intergenerational and therefore larger than themselves. This perspective allowed many to transfer values, perspectives, and strength from home to new contexts. One Elder explains, “So my connection to the culture was important in a sense that it gave me the outlook on life as a whole . . . You learn how to accept things.” Traditional values and practices were important touchstones, linking Elders to traditional activities, important relationships, and the teachings gained through them. Another Elder summarizes, “so, when you are up against something, you got to dwell on your values, [the ones] that you learned when you were growing up.”

Elders spoke about learning the right way to act from their parents and grandparents. This moral compass got them through troubling times. One prominent Elder explains,

I’ve been able to be strong and overcome a lot of challenges . . . because of the fact that I grew up in a very traditional culture where discipline was pretty heavy. By that I mean, what I did and how I did things were taught at home.

Teachings, passed down from parents and grandparents, were reinterpreted and applied to new situations. This linking of past and present, home to distant places offered strength to many Elders.

Elders learned how to navigate the competing demands of the dominant culture and their indigenous one. Here, an Elder describes the advice he was given by the grandmother who raised him.

She said our lives are changing and we got to change with them. The White people are here and they’re in control especially if you’re living out in the country and coming to [village]. And sometimes they look down at you. She told me that. They [White people] thought that they were better, but [my grandma] said I have to learn to be better than them.

Instead of confronting the inequality and racism directly (and probably suffering for doing so), many Elders were encouraged to do well, despite discrimination. Many prominent Elders described consciously learning how balance Inupiaq and Western ways of understanding and acting, and being supported in doing so by their parents.

Adults: Dealing with historical trauma, colonialism, and fighting back:

Adult participants talked about how the punitive, colonial policies experienced by their parents had significant repercussions in their lives. Many of their parents did not allow them to Eskimo dance or speak their Inupiaq language. Historical trauma was also reflected in stories of family members who drank, neglected their children, or committed suicide. This contrasts with the Elders’ experiences, whose stories of growing up did not include suicide and alcohol abuse.

Adults not only clearly linked historical trauma to present problems like the Elders did, each had specific strategies for dealing with it personally and collectively. This

involved asserting the value of Inupiaq culture, and actively resisting colonialism. Thus, being Inupiaq for many adults reconstituted culture as a political stance. In these narratives, adults reposition themselves from victim to activist, and gain strength from the effort.

All of the adult participants identified cultural oppression—in its many forms—as something that affects their lives. One woman connects past abuses with current problems, saying,

As we were growing up . . . my mom went to an orphanage . . . and that's where she grew up. I would say [that] was the first generation of alcoholism. After [my mom's] husband [left], she kind of ran around, just lost and there was a lot of wild things going on at the time. That was the time when the gold was found and all that stuff [prospectors coming North]. So, she was our first generation of drunk which isn't something to be proud of but it's manifested itself from generation to generation.

Linking past trauma with current difficulties, another woman considers the effects of historical trauma from school abuses.

I guess it affected me big time, yes, and that's why my parents never taught me [to speak Inupiaq] because they didn't want me to get slapped in school . . . And my mom. . . she's real mad at the school system. [She says,] "After they never tell us to [speak] Inupiaq and now they're trying to teach it back." So, my mom was angry and what we're trying to deal with right now is healing. You know? Get beyond that and then forgive and heal so that we could take the next step forward and try to learn and not keep that resentment.

Instead of being resentful, adults suggested working hard to gain back what was lost. This fierce willpower parallels that talked about by Elders and points to a strong tradition of individual strength buoyed by one's heritage.

Being aware of the injustices suffered was a first step in healing according to many adults. Injustice is not always obvious, and several adults linked current social problems to more subtle forms of cultural oppression, like stifling of personal expression and "learned helplessness." A different woman explains,

When television came, it's been likened to someone grabbing your hands and putting duct tape on them and having them sit for 25 years and say, "Who are you? You're not good enough. Your culture is bad. Your traditions are bad. You're stupid." And you never have a chance to speak out and say, "This is not right! This is not right. I'm a human being who lives in a different culture who has different things to bring to this world." And our people have been sitting like this for almost a century now . . . What has happened is that our critical thinking and our ability to come up with solutions is disappearing because we're now relying on the outside world to fix us. Basically, we've not had a chance to express who

we are: the beauty of who we are as Inupiaq people. It's all been suppressed. We have no way of saying, "This is the beauty of who I am" . . . I think it's had major impact on our young people . . . I mean all of this, suicide attempts and all of that is an attempt to scream out at the world that, "I'm here and I don't feel that I have any hope in my life!" and that's what we're trying to fix.

Having a strong sense of identity that is rooted in culture was seen as essential for youth well-being. This perspective not only gives people a sense of pride and belonging, but also provides a vantage point to take action and move into the future. A leader says,

We celebrate our uniqueness of being Inupiaq and it's powerful. It helps us to know who we are and once you're grounded and know who we are as a people, it's going to get us to where we need to go in the future, but before that, we have to be grounded first.

Many adults believed having a strong cultural identity and understanding how to resist further colonization is key to promoting personal and cultural strength. Doing so not only involves combating oppression, it also includes educating the dominant society. The same participant continues,

I need to teach [non-Natives] because they're clueless most of the time . . . The teachers, the missionaries, they assume they know what's right for us. . . so it's my job to educate outside people about who we are as a people so that they don't assume and tell us how to live our lives all the time . . . We [need to] share who we are so that it's both ways and it's not just them outside people telling us how to live our lives. We have to educate them so they know what our strengths are.

Going one step beyond the Elders in the study, adults talked about not only succeeding in the Western world by "being better than White people," they intended to teach outsiders about their needs, wants, and perspectives. Instead of being satisfied with fitting into the dominant culture, many of the adults intended to influence that society so that Inupiaq culture was also respected and honored.

Youth: Doing the best they can with less perspective:

The youngest participants in this study had many challenges to overcome, but few linked this directly to historical trauma or racism. Their most common problems were suicide—peer deaths, their own attempts, or those of friends—parents and friends drinking, fighting, and being removed from their homes as a consequence. These issues were not explicitly linked to historical trauma, with the exception of the two youth interviews that occurred after listening to adult and Elder interviews (see Wexler, 2011). Instead, youth understood community problems to be individual issues, connected to "family dysfunction," being "depressed" or "addicted."

In the youth focus group, a young man described the cycle as he sees it, accompanied by general youth assent.

Every time kids get into alcohol; they think about suicide and what the problems are [in] the[ir] families . . . too much enters their minds and they think about suicide. I think suicide around here is a real big problem because this whole town is like: most of the people drink and when the adults drink, their kids watch them and learn and then they follow them and then they have problems and they think about suicide because of the problems.

These problems were understood to be localized in time and space. Perspectives about why there were so many problems now, as opposed to historically, were attributed to personal struggles such as the “lack of jobs” or “coping skills.”

Although youth in the study did have distinct ideas about “what their parents and grandparents went through,” they did not think about the intergenerational implications of these experiences. A young man explained in the focus group, “So they had to either go to [Alaskan boarding school] or [to] a school down in the lower 48. [That] had to have been hard for a lot of the families.” The youth were aware of historical policies that constrained other generations’ lives, but they did not link them to community, family, or personal problems.

Even when participating in cultural activities caused problems for them at school, youth did not understand this as cultural oppression. One young woman explains why she is not going to graduate on schedule. She says,

and the reason why I’m not graduating this year is because every year we travel to either Fairbanks or Anchorage for that AFN [Alaska Federation of Natives] meeting . . . So, we travel too much and so I have to catch up on school.

Later in the interview, she explains, “When it’s time for me to make up work it’s like way too much.” Since her parents are active, Native leaders, attending the AFN meeting is important, yet it forces this young woman to make a difficult decision of whether to prioritize school or participation in an important cultural event. She has chosen the latter, which she believes has caused her to fail a grade in school. In another example, a young woman says, “I don’t do a lot of Inupiaq stuff like . . . I’ve never actually been out hunting with my family or anything.” When asked why, she responded, it is not “that I never had the opportunity but [rather] I’m not taking it because I have other things that are going on, like school.”

Although many talked about doing school in lieu of subsistence activities, none of them considered this situation to be an extension of colonization. The school schedule—starting in prime caribou, fishing, and berry season—was unproblematic for youth. They did not think about how these experiences paralleled the difficulties faced by prior generations who talked about starting school late each year and

falling behind because of the August start. Youth did not note how this schedule prioritized Western interests over indigenous ones.

All young participants mentioned the general feeling that their culture was slipping away, but many connected this to individual apathy or time constraints instead of cultural oppression. Unprompted, a young woman states, “We’re losing the things we used to do, the fishing and hunting . . . and living subsistence.” As in this quote, culture was understood by many youths to be connected to a discrete set of activities (e.g., eating traditional foods, hunting, sewing, etc.). Because of this constricted notion of culture, several youths talked about how they “don’t do culture much,” and none had ideas for how they could do culture more (or differently).

Even so, many of the participants gained strength from their culture in ways they could not name. A youth talks about how she gains a sense connectedness from hearing traditional stories. She says,

I can’t remember what it meant, but my dad used to always come when I was younger. He would always tell me a story in Inupiaq and I just, I can’t remember what it was about, but I usually think back on that story and just the feeling I got when he used to tell me that story. That helped me.

This vague sense of support was articulated by several young people who “felt better” after hearing Inupiaq stories, eating Native foods, or going out on the land with family and friends.

Additionally, all of the young people felt connected to their culture through a sense of belonging they felt in their home community. This was heightened by contrast when traveling to other parts of the state and nation. Echoing the Elders, a young man states, “Moving away from home, Alaska. It was hard.” Although the reasons for being away from home were different, youth experiences of being away were strikingly similar to those described by Elders. Both age cohorts found themselves far from their community, missing their family (and friends), and severely homesick.

Unlike the older generations, young participants did not talk about gaining strength by enacting family and cultural traditions. Instead, many overcame this challenge by literally coming back after much suffering. Here, a young woman describes her experiences with overt racism while “down states.” She says, “[People] said, ‘Oh she’s Eskimo, she doesn’t understand what we’re saying and she doesn’t know how to do this or that.’” This led to severe depression. She continues later in the interview, “I’d just stay in my closet for days and crying and stuff. And my mom figured it will help me to just come back up here for the summer,” and it did. All six youth participants who left their home community talked about the healing experience of coming home. A young man summarizes this sentiment by saying: “It feels good. It feels good to be back home.” It is important to note that many of these youth did not know how to “feel good” without physically coming home.

This situation becomes problematic because most of the young participants also felt like they needed to be able to “make it” away from home in order to be truly successful. A different youth describes being homesick, but feeling like she needed to be able to succeed outside of her home community in order to consider herself capable. She says, “I think it was more like what I didn’t want to become. I didn’t want to become just another person who stayed in [home village] . . . I don’t want to be stuck here forever.” That sense of stagnation or limitation from staying home was not heard in the Elders’ narratives, but was a struggle for several adults who wanted their children to be able to navigate Western and Inupiaq cultures. This sentiment was not a matter of surviving cultural oppression as described by the Elders, but rather adults and youth wanted to be able to take advantage of the various kinds of opportunities the dominant society offered and was not available in their home community.

Discussion:

Cultural identity and affiliation have been associated with positive health outcomes and the ability to get through life challenges for indigenous people. However, the processes—particularly the meanings that enable this association—are not well understood. Here, I consider the ways in which three generations of indigenous people interpret and adaptively utilize notions of “culture” and heritage in their responses to difficulties. Each generation in the study experienced a different form of cultural marginalization while growing up. Looking across age groups, the analysis explores how intergenerational suffering is experienced and understood, and considers how cultural resources are deployed in response. In considering this, Teresa Evans-Campbell (2008) states, “It could be argued that in indigenous communities, a history of historical trauma has enhanced community ties and underscored the importance of retaining culture and tradition” (p. 334). The data here support this contention, and provide insight into the ways culture is sustaining, particularly for the older generations.

In the adult and Elder narratives, culture transcends time, space, and discrete subsistence activities. Instead, cultural ideas of self-situate people as part of something larger. This orientation seems to offer people a way to understand their problems and difficulties as part of a collective experience that has been overcome by people like them. The situated perspective allows individuals to access ideas about how to tackle current issues based on traditional or at least familiar, intergenerational strengths and practices. Through this lens, adults and Elders see themselves as capable actors who draw strength, resources, and skills from those who came before them. In this way, both generations talked about feeling grounded by their connection to values, orientation, knowledge, and sustaining practices of their traditions and culture. This viewpoint was particularly important to people as they confronted oppression. Oppression described by the Elders was overt, such as being abused for speaking their indigenous language; whereas, adults reflected on

the more subtle forms they experienced through dominant culture media and the paternalistic tendencies of social and health workers. The analysis, then, describes some renditions of culture that foster resilience in the context of blatant and less conspicuous forms of colonialism.

For Elders, cultural oppression was easily identified because it was institutionalized and systematic. Many believed that culture was crucial to resilience. Their cultural roots—described as encompassing interconnected ideas of God, family, and traditions—gave them fortitude and strength, even when they were far from home. Despite the potentially problematic intertwining of Christianity and “culture,” this conceptualization, for them, provided a sense of connectedness and inner strength, which supported them in gaining the Western skills they believe, were necessary for success.

Adult narratives described coming to terms with the cultural oppression experienced by Elders, and repositioning themselves as strong culture bearers. They understood how historical trauma affected their parents and themselves, and most became determined to fight it. Each time an adult talked about colonialism, s/he also talked about how they were actively engaged in counteracting it. Adults highlighted ethnic pride, and challenged the acceptance of the status quo. The latter gave them a sense of purpose that transcended individual issues and offered them clear ways to contribute to “their people.” This sense of membership and responsibility gave adult participants enduring strength to tackle community and personal issues, and to overcome many different kinds of hardship.

The youngest cohort experienced some of the same difficulties as the older generations, yet they did not articulate them in the context of historical trauma, cultural strength, or even shared experience. Instead of drawing upon visions of a shared past and future rooted in Inupiaq values and traditions, Youth linked today’s issues to personal problems and family difficulties. Additionally, youth had a smaller sense of culture, often equating it only with a discrete set of activities and skills. This understanding of cultural resources did not translate into flexible sources of strength. Unlike Elders and adults, many youths described being overwhelmed by their challenges, and feeling unable to access feelings of belongingness and support while far from home. In this way, culture, for many youths, had limited scope in relation to resilience.

This difference between older and younger generations provides clues for understanding how culture can be protective. Previous research has emphasized the behavioral health benefits of youth enculturation (e.g., Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Lehti et al., 2009; Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, & Adams, 2004), yet have failed to decipher the processes involved. Cultural understandings, including those related to historical trauma and current strengths, can provide platforms for mutual affinity and shared meaning-making. These perspectives inform ideas of selfhood, and can

define youth pathways into adulthood. This orientation can provide a sense of self-worth, social belonging, and purpose to help youth overcome challenges.

For adults and Elders in the study, being Inupiaq provided them with emotional grounding as they entered adulthood. They articulated a sense of continuum with the past and shared strategies—learned through traditions—for pursuing their future. This cultural perspective reinforced their sense of connectedness and purpose, which have been found to be important elements in healthy youth development (Erikson, 1968; Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003) and resilience (Barber, 2008). Phinney and colleagues (Phinney, 1989, 1991, 2000; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997) describe the importance of developing an ethnic identity in adolescence, and specifically how this increases self-esteem, which has been associated with health. Perhaps this is because a strong cultural identity provides a sense of belonging and offers perspectives from which to draw when overcoming challenges and being well. Youth in this study did not talk about their ethnic identity in vivid, contextualized ways. Specifically, without a clear understanding of collective suffering and cultural fortitude, it was harder for youth participants to understand their own problems in context and to gain collective strength from the effort. Without this perspective, they were less able to access cultural resources when facing challenges.

Conclusion:

The challenges described by Elders, adults, and youth in an Alaska Native community illuminate the lived experience of historical trauma. For the older generations, community problems were interpreted as an expression of social suffering. The unifying interpretation gave older people a shared purpose, and fostered a commitment to “their people.” Whereas, youth understood suicide, substance abuse, and violence as personal (or family) issues reflecting “unhealthiness,” or morally deficiency. This interpretation leaves little room for collective response. The difference between “those who made it” (adults and Elders) and “those who are trying to make it” (youth) provides perspectives to see what might be most useful in helping youth be well. The juxtaposition of age groups, therefore, allows the analysis to look at the differences between older cohorts and young people to make suggestions for how understanding one’s culture in particular ways might best foster resilience.

Adults and Elders articulated cultural sources of strength that went beyond subsistence activities and traditional skills. They held a distinct Inupiaq worldview, a proud heritage that conferred a sense of purpose and fortitude which transcended time and space. Young people had fewer ways to talk about and utilize their cultural resources. They equated culture with discrete subsistence activities and skills, and had difficulty transferring cultural learning to new situations. It was therefore difficult for them to understand or articulate how culture aided them through personal challenges.

Adults and Elders had a clear and helpful way of sense-making around culture and young participants did not, underscoring the need for more communication between generations. This cross-generation perspective highlights the importance of teaching young people about the impact of historical trauma, and importantly, how culture can be a sustaining force in their lives. Youth need help to better understand the ways in which culture can be linked to enduring and multifaceted ideas of personal, family, and collective strengths, as was illustrated in the older generations' narratives. This understanding can potentially enhance their ability to navigate personal and shared challenges.

“Working Effectively with Alaska Native Tribes and Organizations: Desk Guide,”
acf.hhs.gov, 18 December 2023 [33]

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ana/native_affairs_desk_guide_fw_s.pdf

Abstract:

This information is intended to serve as a reference book for federal employees who work with Alaska Native tribes/governments. As federal employees, we are directed by Congress in various laws to coordinate and work with Alaska Natives. The special legal status of tribal governments requires coordination and consultation be conducted on a government-to-government basis. In managing public lands and subsistence hunting and gathering, we must communicate and work in partnership with Alaska Native people.

Traditional Alaska Native societies were self-governing and autonomous before European contact. Social and political systems were in place, which varied from group to group, but worked effectively to maintain social order, control individual behaviors, define interpersonal relationships, define spiritual relationships to the environment and wildlife, identify territory, and regulate relationships with other societies. Each society had an identifiable resource use area that could be defended. Use of resources was often coordinated by various groups for the same location, sometimes for totally different purposes. Distribution and exchange of resources was coordinated by these local societies or tribal governments as they are now identified. Land ownership and use were collective.

Today, Alaska Native peoples continue to live off the land. Tribes, clans, and families continue to have an influence over their members' social interaction, property rights, and ceremonies. Alaska Native peoples continue to have extremely strong ties to the land.

A summary of each of the general cultural groups of Alaska Natives, before and after European contact, is provided for an understanding of Alaska Native people.

This desk guide has been developed to serve as a quick reference document, covering such topics as Alaska Native cultures, historical information, and legal summaries of pertinent legislation, subsistence, and consultation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Who are the Alaska Native People?

Inupiat – Arctic Slope, NANA, and Bering Straits regions

Yup'ik – Calista, Bristol Bay, and Bering Straits regions

Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida – Sealaska region

Athabascan – Cook Inlet, Doyon and Ahtna regions

Aleut – Aleut region

Alutiiq – Koniag, Bristol Bay, Chugach and Cook Inlet regions

Eyak – Chugach region

Alaska Native cultures and traditions vary according to groups. Lifestyles vary according to terrain, climate, and available resources.

2.1 Aleut People, or Unanga (oo nung' ah)

General Residence

Aleutian Islands, Pribilof Islands, and Lower Third of Southern Alaska Peninsula

Population

At contact – 16,000

1996 – 4,000

Social and Political Organization (Pre-European Contact)

Eight tribes of Aleuts occupied permanent, named villages and had seasonal subsistence sites. They had large communal houses occupied by related families as well as smaller residences. Other Aleut groups needed permission to enter the village territory for use of resources.

Each village had a dominant family that provided the leader, or chief. The chief had the authority to organize economic activities, settle internal disputes, lead in time of war, and direct the protection of group boundaries. Social ranking was important in the Aleut culture; there were two classes which included “free” Aleuts and slaves (war captives).

Specific codes of behavior and social obligations were applied to categories of Aleuts based on age, sex, kinship, and prestige. Individual behavior was channeled

toward cooperation, and disregard for valued benefits led to shame and public sanction in the form of loss of esteem or severe chastisement.

Communication patterns tended to avoid personal confrontations. Aleuts followed two rules:

1. If you have nothing worthwhile to say about someone or something, say nothing; and
2. If you have nothing to say, say nothing.

The Aleuts had considerable knowledge of the human body and had surgeons who could perform operations. They also embalmed the dead before burying them in caves.

Eastern Aleutians – A chief was chosen from among the leaders of individual eastern villages to declare war and establish peace. Dispute resolution was directed primarily at reestablishing harmony rather than imposing a punishment. The chief and other elders sometimes directed punishment by death for repeated crimes.

Western Aleutians – Dispute resolution was taken care of by family rather than the community.

Social and Political Organization (Post-European Contact)

The Aleut cultural, social and political organization was almost decimated by Russian and American actions. Ceremonies, storytelling, and dancing became almost nonexistent.

1744-1867 Russian Period

Population: 3,200 (reduction caused by infectious diseases and killing by Russians)

Aleuts from Atka and Unalaska were forced to resettle on the Pribilof Islands in 1786, to capitalize on the fur seal. Other settlements were consolidated and moved to the mouths of rivers. Households were reduced to single family dwellings.

Village chiefs kept their titles because the Russians needed cooperation in organizing local labor. Their families were taken as hostages until seal hunting was completed and later were taken to Russia for education. They returned as mediators between the Russians and Aleuts.

Creoles (mixture of Aleut and Russian) occupied managerial, decision-making positions. Several Aleuts became clergymen in the Russian Orthodox Church. Others became paramedics or assistant physicians.

1867-1910 Early American Period

In the first 23 years, the Americans harvested more otters and seals than the Russians did in 125 years. This led to the 1911 treaty among the United States, Canada, Russia, and Japan which regulated the fur harvest.

1942 – During World War II, most of the Aleuts were evacuated to southeastern Alaska and placed in relocation camps because of war concerns. Only one-half returned to their Aleutian homes after the war and most of their villages/homes/property destroyed. Forty-two Aleut residents from the island of Attu were taken prisoners by the Japanese. Then Attu was bombed by American forces to retake the village. Atka was burned to prevent occupation by the enemy. United States officials discouraged resettlement of remote islands because of administrative problems in delivering educational and other services.

1981 – Commercial slaughter of seals was outlawed

1988 – Reparation of Aleuts and acknowledgement of their situation by the United States government (combined with reparations to Japanese interred during WWII).

Social and Political Organization (Current)

Many villages contain a mix of descendants from formerly distinct Aleut island groups. Much of the traditional knowledge, values, and skills were impacted with the death and displacement of so many people during the war. Village elders now provide traditional authority and there has been a resurgence of traditional activities, practices, and languages.

Language – Aleuts speak two distinct dialects of the Unangam language which is remotely related to the Eskimo language. Eastern Aleut is spoken in Atka; Western Aleut is spoken in other villages. A written alphabet was developed in the 1800s by the Russian Orthodox Church, along with Aleut scholars. Some Aleuts speak English with a Norwegian accent.

Other Significant Points of Interest:

Russian surnames

Russian Orthodox religion

Finely woven grass baskets

Skin-covered kayak craft

2.2 Alutiiq

Also known as Sugpiaq (a real person) or Koniag for Kodiak Islanders, or Chugach for Prince William Sound

The Native people in this area were called Aleut by the Russians although they were not related to them. In 1985, they were informed by an anthropologist that they were related to Yupik people, rather than the Aleut.

General Residence

South Alaska, including Kodiak and surrounding islands, Prince William Sound, Lower Cook Inlet area, and portions of the Alaska Peninsula from Egegik south to Kamishak Bay (across from Kodiak Island).

Population

1796 – 6,206

1880 – 1,943 (Kodiak and surrounding islands) *

1996 – 3,000

*A decrease in the population was caused by disease, a measles epidemic in 1832, and extensive utilization of Alutiiq men for hunting by the Russians

Social and Political Organization (Pre-European Contact)

Each Alutiiq village in the Kodiak area had a communal house, the kazhim, for plays, dances, and meetings. Three, four, or more families lived together. Each village had a leader (by inheritance) whose power was limited to punishing slaves and family members. A chief did not have much authority, as the people followed a person who was either well-to-do or a good hunter/provider. The chief acted as a primary counselor or advisor in war and peace.

In the Alaska Peninsula area, each village had a community house, or qasiq, for storytelling.

In the Prince William Sound area, each group had a chief and an assistant chief; the chief represented the group and led in decision-making.

Families were responsible for managing their own affairs and resolving disputes. Social control was maintained partly by community gossip, ridicule songs, joking and ostracism.

Social and Political Organization (Post-European Contact)

1744-1867 Russian Period

The Alutiiqs fought the Russians unsuccessfully and were proclaimed Russian subjects in 1788. The Russians were impressed with Alutiiq hunting skills and, in 1818, the Alutiiqs were hired as hunters of waterfowl, sea otter and other furbearing animals. The Russian American Company nominated chiefs; prior to that they were inherited positions. Many of the customs and rites were abandoned with the introduction of Christianity.

Intermarriage between Alutiiqs and Russians produced another social class. Creoles were a mix of Russian and Alutiiq and received special treatment in education and employment.

1867-1940s Early American Period

Fur-trading between Alutiiqs and Americans occurred through the village chief who was chosen with great input from the Russian Orthodox priest. In 1912, Novarupta volcano erupted (known as the Katmai eruption) and many Alutiiq relocated from Katmai, Douglas, and Old Savonoski and founded the village of Perryville. Another group settled in the coastal village of Kanatak during the winter and moved to Egegik and Ugashik during the summer. In the late nineteenth century, village councils were established and were composed of teachers, missionaries, and representatives of the federal government (Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) employees) The councils acted as a rule-making and law-enforcing body; however, traditional leadership patterns prevailed, including traditional control through the elders.

Fish canneries replaced fur trading, which brought into the area many non-Natives, Filipino, Japanese, and Chinese laborers. Also, Scandinavian fishermen settled in this area and adopted Alutiiq customs. Native people were refused employment in the canneries and did not become involved in the commercial fishing industry until the early 1900s. The Alutiiqs continued fur trapping and fox farming until the 1940s.

The Alutiiqs were forbidden to speak their language because they were to be assimilated into western culture.

Creoles were no longer categorized as a separate class. They were called Russians by Alutiiqs but were considered “insiders” rather than foreigners.

Social and Political Organization (Current)

Since 1989, the Alutiiq people are actively rebuilding and reassembling their culture.

Language

Sugcestum – part of the Aleut-Eskimo linguistic family, closely related to Yup'ik. The Chugach dialect is spoken in the Prince William Sound area; the Koniag dialect is spoken on the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak Island. English dominates.

Other Significant Points of Interest:

Alutiiq Culture Center and the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak were established and administered by the Alutiiq. The Sun'aq (Shoon'aq) Tribe received federal recognition in 2000.

2.3 Athabascan

Tanana – Tanana River area

Tanaina/Denaina – Cook Inlet area, north of Kachemak Bay

Koyukon – Yukon River and Koyukuk River areas

Ingalik – lower Yukon River and Anvik River areas

Ahtna – Copper River area

Kutchin – Yukon River, Porcupine River, and Chandalar River areas

Gwich'in – Yukon River and Yukon Flats areas

General Residence

Interior Alaska

Population

At contact – 13,000

1996 – 11,700

Social and Political Organization (Pre-European Contact)

The basic social and political unit was the band, made up primarily of persons related by blood and marriage; a band included several clans, members of which were related to clan members of other bands. The local band defined the boundaries of the subsistence-use areas which were closed to other groups unless permission was granted. In the Koyukon area, beaver houses and pond, muskrat swamps, and other subsistence-use areas were privately held; although if the sites were vacated, they were open to others.

While Athabascans migrated for subsistence activities, each band had a settlement for social and ceremonial activities. Each band had a recognized leader based on demonstrated ability. He was expected to be wise and generous and often had shamanistic powers. In some areas, leadership was associated with certain families.

Leadership was more formal and elaborate among the Ahtna and Denaina people. Chiefs maintained peace, commanded the labor of their followers and slaves, and redistributed resources within their society. The Ahtna chief was responsible for enforcing the traditional law and for defending his people. Among the Ingalik, both men and women elders participated in resolving disputes.

Ahtna clans defined reciprocal duties and obligations between different but cooperating social groups, defined one's relatives and which individuals a person could marry, and organized labor and duties at times of life crises.

Social control was primarily a family matter and was achieved subtly; leaders played a role in internal dispute resolution and acted as negotiators with chiefs from other societies. Deliberate murder and theft were punishable by death and carried out by members of the family group, except among the Ahtna. There, the chief could order execution unless the person escaped to relatives in another place.

The Ahtna taught their children that their words would travel far and that they should think carefully before speaking. Social avoidance acted to prevent confrontation or

disharmony among closely related people. If there was a dispute between two people, their families simply moved until the problem was less important.

All Athabascans in Interior Alaska had a traditional governing body (Dena Hena' Henash) and a traditional chief.

Social and Political Organization (Post-European Contact)

1744-1867 Russian Period

Contact did not occur until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Traditional leaders were appointed as chiefs by trading company managers and Russian Orthodox priests in the Tanaina/Denaina area.

1867-1915 Early American Period

The population of the Athabascans was decimated by disease. Chiefs functioned as middlemen between the white traders and Athabascan trappers. Territorial officials and church representatives introduced election of chiefs and councils. The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) succeeded the Dena Hena' Henash and is the nonprofit Native association that provides many services for its tribal members including health, education, employment, community needs, natural resource programs, and family services.

Social and Political Organizations (Current)

Chief Peter John of Minto was the Traditional Chief of all Interior Athabascans and it is a lifelong position. The chief is elected by the board of directors of the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Before and after European contact, a successful traditional leader, or the chief, has much influence. In addition to having a traditional chief, some clans also have a "working chief" and a council elected to represent the community. This was done at the request of the white community.

Language

Athabascan languages extend from villages in the Doyon region, through Canada to the Mexican border, and include the Navajo and Apache Indians of the Southwest. There are eleven Athabascan languages:

Ahtna

Dena'ina

Deg Hit'an

Holikachuk

Koyukon

Upper Kuskokwim

Tanana

Tanacross

Upper Tanana

Han

Gwich'in

Other Significant Things of Interest:

Gwich'in and Koyukon have a distinct style of fiddle playing. Fiddles, along with French-Canadian and Scottish tunes, were introduced by Hudson Bay Company fur traders from Canada in 1847.

Athabascan people are well known for their elaborate beadwork.

2.4 Eyak

General Residence

Cordova area between Aleut and Tlingit territories.

Population

1880 – 400

1900 – 60*

1997 – 120

* Reduced mainly by epidemics and poverty

Social and Political Organization (Pre-European Contact)

Historically related to the Athabascan people, the Eyak occupied the Gulf of Alaska coast between present-day Cordova and Yakutat. They were “raided and squeezed” by the Chugach Alutiiq of Prince William Sound and the Tlingit who claimed some of the same territory. Intermarriage with the Tlingit people contributed much to the near disappearance of the Eyak.

Based on the choice of the men, Eyak people lived in single and/or communal dwelling houses, in three main villages – Eyak, Alaganik, and Old Town. The village chief and his family occupied the rear of the communal house. There were two potlatch houses in each village, one for each moiety (tribal subdivision). The shaman and any attendants occupied a small house, in the middle of the village. Although there were fish camps, there were no family, moiety, or village rights over them.

The social structure of the Eyak was similar to the Tlingit. Within each village there were two moieties, the Eagles and the Ravens. Each moiety had a chief, one of which was also the chief of the entire tribe, and a subchief. The chief was usually the richest and strongest man in the village. His role included leading war and hunting parties, performing duties at potlatches, and giving to the poor. The oldest son in a family had authority over, and responsibility for, his brothers and sisters; discipline was very strict and complete ostracism was practiced whenever rules were broken. Disputes resulted in singing “contests” by the two men involved, or related to those involved; or, by the village peacemaker. The Eyak kept Eskimo slaves, who were war captives.

Social and Political Organization (Post-European contact)

The Eyak was a small tribe, recognized by the Russians as a separate and distinct culture. Americans did not recognize the Eyak as a distinct Native group until recently. The last Eyak chief died in 1930 and was not replaced until recently.

Social and Political Organizations (Current)

The Eyak are trying to revive their language and cultural practices and to gain back usage of their ancestral lands in Cordova.

Language

Eyak has distant links to Athabascan and Tlingit languages. Today, Eyak is spoken more widely, due to the efforts of the late Marie Smith Jones.

Other Significant Things of Interest:

Like the Tlingit, the Eyak are known for their wood-carved totem poles.

2.5 Inupiat (the “real people”)

General Residence

Bering Straits, Northern and Arctic Areas

Population

At contact – 6,000

1990 – 12,650

Social and Political Organization (Pre-European Contact)

There were at least twenty-five distinct Inupiat societies; each occupied a territory with well-defined boundaries. Each unit was referred to as a *munatqatigiit*, meaning “people who are related to one another through their common ownership of land.” Each group, made up of large extended families, had a major settlement with permanent dwellings and a *qarigi* or “men’s house” used for men’s activities and

meetings. Each group had seasonal fishing, hunting, and trapping areas. They were self-sufficient economic and political units, each with a chief who worked with elders to establish social obligations, resolve disputes, receive visitors, decide penalties for theft, crimes, and lead ceremonial events. The chief usually attained this position through inheritance.

The societies were distinguished by differences in dialect and clothing styles. Each group had a group identity that emphasized its superiority over others. The boundaries between these groups were either geographic or areas of low resource potential.

During times of peace, Alaska Natives and Siberians were involved in trade activities.

Social and Political Organization (Post-European Contact)

A loss in population occurred from diseases such as measles, small pox, and flu epidemics, alcohol, and a heavy depletion of resources by whaling crews and miners.

1732-1867 Russian Period

History shows that Russians actually discovered portions of the Bering Straits region in 1732, and that relations with the Inupiat were not friendly. The Russians raided and took prisoners. Trading among the Natives and the English, and other foreigners, began in the late 1770s. Beginning around 1848, hundreds of commercial whaling ships sailed through the Arctic Ocean and Bering Straits, taking whales for their oil. There were also many independent trading ships with all sorts of goods, including firearms and liquor.

1867-1910 Early American Period

From 1866 to the late 1870s, commercial whalers killed thousands of walrus each year for oil and ivory after whales became scarce. From 1883 to 1890, galena ore was mined on the Seward Peninsula, and the mine was patented in 1894. The gold rush (1898-1900), mission schools (1890), missionaries, and the reindeer industry (1892) brought about the most changes in Alaska Natives' lives in the Bering Straits area. Subsistence areas were disturbed and patented to non-Natives; they faced a new authoritarian government; they began their journey into civilization, speaking a new language, learning various religious beliefs. In the late nineteenth century, village councils were established and were composed of teachers, missionaries, and representatives of the federal government (BIA employees). The councils acted as a rule-making and law-enforcing body. The qarigi ceased to be used; however, traditional leadership patterns prevailed.

Social and Political Organization (Current)

There is a mix of traditional governments and elected councils throughout the Inupiat areas; also, some villages are organized as municipalities under state law.

Language

Inupiaq, however most speak English.

Other Significant Things of Interest:

Inupiat people are known for their elaborate ivory carvings and engraving.

2.6 Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian

Tlingit – Cape Fox to Yakutat Bay

Haida – migrated from Queen Charlotte Islands in Canada to the southern portion of Prince of Wales Island; today they live mainly in Hydaburg, Craig, Ketchikan, and Klawock.

Tsimshian – migrated from British Columbia to Annette Island in 1887, establishing Metlakatla; Congress created the Metlakatla reservation in 1891.

General Residence

Southeastern Alaska

Populations (in Alaska)

At contact last quarter of 18th century (Tlingit) –10,000

Tlingit in 1996 – 9,800

Haida – 1,100

Tsimshian living in Metlakatla – 1,500

Social and Political Organization (Pre-European Contact)

The Tlingit belonged to one of two moieties (Tribal subdivisions), the Raven or the Wolf (later changed to Eagle), which were broken down into numerous naa (clans) named for characteristic animals. Membership in a moiety and clan was matrilineal, or determined by ancestry through a person's mother. Clans were made up of one or more house groups or houses (also referred to as hits). A house group was composed of ten to forty related individuals sharing a large house. House group members owned and shared large canoes, ceremonial objects, and utensils; they harvested resources together and provided food and goods that were consumed communally. The men had rights to specific portions of land.

Each Tlingit also belonged to one of about twenty kwaans, which are large territorial groups. Examples: Chilkat Kwaan (Haines and Klukwan) and Auke Kwaan (Juneau). Within each kwaan, the clans and houses lawfully owned specific sites for hunting,

fishing, ceremonial objects, and slaves (prisoners of war or purchased). They sold lands and resources with the consent of clan members. Other clan members were expected to ask permission to use kwaan lands.

The social groupings functioned to formally regulate marriages, distribute inheritance, resolve disputes, and to define ceremonial activities. Under Tlingit custom or law, the ultimate source of political power was in the clan. Marriage could occur only outside of a person's specific clan. Dispute resolutions within a clan and between clans were the prerogative of clan leaders, usually the eldest males, and their decisions were final. The Tlingit did have a "peacemaker" who possessed a ceremonial canoe paddle, and whose role was to settle disputes.

Social ranking of clans and houses according to wealth was very important among the Tlingit people. Those members of the highest ranked clans were considered "noble" so competition was very prevalent.

Note: The Haida and Tsimshian had a similar social and political organization as the Tlingit, except that the Tsimshian leader in some villages was the village chief.

Social and Political Organization (Post-European Contact)

A significant population loss occurred between 1836 and 1840 due to a smallpox epidemic.

1744-1867 Russian Period

The Tlingit resisted colonization by Russians and destroyed the Russian forts at Yakutat and Sitka. Later, the Russians made Sitka the capital of Russian America but failed in establishing political control over the people. The Tlingit traded profitably with English, Spanish, American, and Russian explorers and became "middlemen" in fur trading between the Europeans and Athabascans.

1867-1920 Early American Period

Contact with Americans was unfriendly; the Americans destroyed Indian houses, canoes and forts in 1869 as a reprisal for the alleged murder of two white men. Americans also destroyed the village of Angoon in 1882 because of a disagreement over the death of two Indians in an explosion at a fish cannery. New settlements, an increased non-Native population, missionary schools, the development of commercial fisheries, mining and timber industries, and the establishment of the Tongass National Forest brought rapid changes to the Indians' lives between 1870 and 1890. The Indian clan leaders then saw change as inevitable, and that education would help them survive; therefore, they cooperated with the Americans.

Social and Political Organization (Current)

The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian have retained the same clan organizations established prior to European contact. However, the laws of traditional marriages between people of opposite moieties are not as strictly observed today.

Language

Languages of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian are all different. The Tlingits share definite linguistic similarities in verb structure with the Athabascans.

Other Significant Things of Interest:

The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian are widely known for their woodcarving of massive totem poles and canoes as well as for their huge clan houses with carved panels, bold crests, and intricate weavings.

2.7 Yup'ik (the “real people”)

Central Yup'ik

Cup'ik – Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Mekoryuk

Saint Lawrence Island Yupik – also known as Siberian Yup'ik

General Residence

Southwest Alaska

Calista, Bristol Bay, and Bering Straits areas

Population

At contact – 20,000

1996 – 20,000

Note: the population at the time of contact included the people now known as Alutiiq

Social and Political Organization (Pre-European contact)

Yup'ik societies were organized very much like those of the Inupiat. There were a large number of distinct Yup'ik societies distinguished by differences in dialect, clothing styles, and ceremonial life. Each unit occupied a territory with well-defined boundaries and was referred to as nunakutellriit, meaning “those that share an area.”

Each group, made up of large, extended families, had a major settlement with permanent dwellings and a qasgiq or men's house where men lived, worked, taught, and directed the community's political, social, and ceremonial life. They were self-sufficient economic and political units, each with a leader or leaders, and had seasonal fishing, hunting, and trapping areas. In a smaller community, the oldest male was the leader; in larger communities, several men functioned as leaders and

decision-makers. Yup'ik leaders didn't have the power of dispute resolution between local families, which were responsible for managing their own affairs. Families had considerable power over the behavior of their members. Social control was maintained partly by community gossip, ridicule songs, joking, and ostracism.

Social and Political Organization (Post-European Contact)

1744-1867 Russian Period

Russians established a trading post on the Nushagak River in 1818, "discovered" Nunivak Island and the Yukon River in 1821, and established a trading post on the Kuskokwim River in 1832. They founded Fort Saint Michael in 1833. Most of the Yup'ik people were not contacted until the late 1800s. The Russians had little effect on Yup'ik culture and political organization; they did recruit some traditional leaders for employment in fur trading.

1867-1920 Early American Period

The Yup'ik population was reduced by about one-fourth in 1901 due to severe measles and influenza epidemics. This resulted in considerable reorganization of sociopolitical units. Also, Moravian and Catholic missions and schools were established along the Kuskokwim and lower Yukon rivers, respectively. Qasgiqs disappeared due to missionary coercion.

In the late nineteenth century, village councils were established; the chief and council members were elected. The councils acted as rule-making and law-enforcing bodies; however, this resulted in confusion among village members concerning the duties of the various leaders. Later, traditional leadership patterns prevailed, including traditional control through the elders.

Social and Political Organization (Current)

There is a mix of traditional governments and elected councils throughout the Yup'ik areas; also, some villages are organized as municipalities under state law. Changes in type of governments are occurring in some areas.

Language

Central Yup'ik – There are many dialects in this Yup'ik language which is the most widely spoken; it is taught to children as their first language.

Siberian Yup'ik – Saint Lawrence Island people speak Siberian Yup'ik; this is mostly unintelligible to speakers of Central Yup'ik. Siberian Yup'ik is also spoken by a small group of Natives on the southern tip of the Chukotsk Peninsula in Russia.

Cup'ik – The Cup'ik people of Chevak are the Qissunamiut tribe, whose main historic village was on the Kashunak River. There is one other Cup'ik tribe—the Cup'ik people of Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island. The Qissunamiut Cup'ik dialect differs

from the more widespread Yup'ik dialects, but it is understood throughout the Yup'ik region.

Other Significant Things of Interest:

Yup'ik people are known for their mask making, grass baskets, and dance fans.

“Alaska Native Cultures,” Alaska History & Cultural Studies [34]

<https://akhistory.lpsd.com/articles/article.php?artID=314>

Abstract:

Alaska History and Cultural Studies offers an online curriculum designed to teach Alaskan high school students about their state, its rich history and its people. The Alaska Humanities Forum and the state's leading historians, anthropologists, geographers and educators developed the course.

Current & Relevant Information:

INFORMATION ABOUT ALASKA NATIVE CULTURES

Today Alaska Natives represent approximately 16 percent of Alaska's residents, and are a significant segment of the population in over 200 rural villages and communities. Many Alaska Natives have retained their customs, language, hunting and fishing practices and ways of living since "the creation times."

Alaska's Native people are divided into eleven distinct cultures, speaking twenty different languages. In order to tell the stories of this varied population, the Alaska Native Heritage Center is organized based on five cultural groupings, which draw upon cultural similarities or geographic proximity:

Athabascans

Yup'ik & Cup'ik

Inupiaq & St. Lawrence Island Yupik

Aleut & Alutiiq

Eyak, Tlingit, Haida & Tsimshian



ATHABASCANS

Who We Are

The Athabascans traditionally lived in Interior Alaska, an expansive region that begins south of the Brooks Mountain Range and continues down to the Kenai Peninsula. There are eleven linguistic groups of Athabascans in Alaska. Athabaskan people have traditionally lived along five major river ways: the Yukon, the Tanana, the Susitna, the Kuskokwim, and the Copper river drainages. Athabascans were highly nomadic, traveling in small groups to fish, hunt and trap.

Today, Athabascans live throughout Alaska and the Lower 48, returning to their home territories to harvest traditional resources. The Athabaskan people call themselves ‘Dena,’ or ‘the people.’ In traditional and contemporary practices Athabascans are taught respect for all living things. The most important part of Athabaskan subsistence living is sharing. All hunters are part of a kin-based network in which they are expected to follow traditional customs for sharing in the community.

House Types and Settlements

The Athabascans traditionally lived in small groups of 20 to 40 people that moved systematically through the resource territories. Annual summer fish camps for the entire family and winter villages served as base camps. Depending on the season and regional resources, several traditional house types were used.

Tools and Technology

Traditional tools and technology reflect the resources of the regions. Traditional tools were made of stone, antlers, wood, and bone. Such tools were used to build houses,

boats, snowshoes, clothing, and cooking utensils. Birch trees were used wherever they were found.

Social Organization

The Athabascans have matrilineal system in which children belong to the mother's clan, rather than to the father's clan, with the exception of the Holikachuk and the Deg Hit'an. Clan elders made decisions concerning marriage, leadership, and trading customs. Often the core of the traditional group was a woman and her brother, and their two families. In such a combination the brother and his sister's husband often became hunting partners for life. Sometimes these hunting partnerships started when a couple married.

Traditional Athabascan husbands were expected to live with the wife's family during the first year, when the new husband would work for the family and go hunting with his brothers-in-law. A central feature of traditional Athabascan life was (and still is for some) a system whereby the mother's brother takes social responsibility for training and socializing his sister's children so that the children grow up knowing their clan history and customs.

Clothing

Traditional clothing reflects the resources. For the most part, clothing was made of caribou and moose hide. Moose and caribou hide moccasins and boots were important parts of the wardrobe. Styles of moccasins vary depending on conditions. Both men and women are adept at sewing, although women traditionally did most of skin sewing.

Transportation

Canoes were made of birch bark, moose hide, and cottonwood. All Athabascans used sleds --with and without dogs to pull them – snowshoes and dogs as pack animals.

Trade

Trade was a principle activity of Athabascan men, who formed trading partnerships with men in other communities and cultures as part of an international system of diplomacy and exchange. Traditionally, partners from other tribes were also, at times, enemies, and travelling through enemy territory was dangerous.

Regalia

Traditional regalia varies from region to region. Regalia may include men's beaded jackets, dentalium shell necklaces (traditionally worn by chiefs), men and women's beaded tunics and women's beaded dancing boots.

YUP'IK AND CUP'IK

Who We Are

The southwest Alaska Natives are named after the two main dialects of the Yup'ik language, known as Yup'ik and Cup'ik. The estimated population, at the time of contact, was: Nunivak 500, Yukon-Kuskokwim 13,000 and Bristol Bay 3,000. The Yup'ik and Cup'ik still depend upon subsistence fishing, hunting and gathering for food. Elders tell stories of traditional ways of life, as a way to teach the younger generations survival skills and their heritage.

Traditional House Types and Settlements

Many of today's villages were ancient sites that were used as seasonal camps and villages for subsistence resources. Historically the Yup'ik and Cup'ik people were very mobile, traveling with the migration of game, fish and plants. The ancient settlements and seasonal camps contained small populations, with numerous settlements throughout the region consisting of extended families or small groups of families.

All males in the Yup'ik/Cup'ik community lived in a qasgiq, or men's house/community center. Boys old enough to leave their mothers joined male relatives in the qasgiq, where they lived, worked, ate, bathed, slept and learned how to be men. Women prepared and brought food to the qasgiq. Ceremonies, singing, dancing and events usually occurred in the qasgiq, thus making it a community center.

Women and girls lived in an ena, which had architectural features similar to the qasgiq, although the qasgiq was twice as large. Bearded seal or walrus intestine provided a removable "skylight" window. Like most other winter dwellings, the qasgiq and the ena shared the distinctive, partially semi-subterranean winter entrance passageway – which in the ena also provided space for cooking.

Tools and Technology

Technology was highly adapted to survival in the sub-arctic environment, and was fine-tuned through the centuries by trial and error. Technology was mostly geared toward the marine environment along the coast and more riverine habitats in the delta regions.

Women's important household items included the versatile, fan-shaped, slate knife (uluq), stone seal-oil lamp and skin sewing implements made from stone, bone and walrus ivory. Men's tools were associated with hunting and were elaborately decorated with appropriate spiritual symbols to aid in hunting success. These items included a variety of spears, harpoons, snow goggles, ice cane, and bow and arrows for hunting and warfare.

Social Organization

Social norms and behavior were all geared toward survival and compatibility among family-village groups. Roles and social rank were largely determined by gender and individual skills. Successful hunters, nukalpiit, usually become group leaders. Women roles included child rearing, food preparation and sewing.

Role of shaman

There were good and evil shamans that had separate roles within the village. Good shamans would heal, search out animal spirits for the hunters, ask for survival necessities such as driftwood and good weather. The bad shamans battled good shamans for power, placed curses on people, generally made life miserable for others and could even kill. It is believed that some Yup'ik/Cup'ik people still possess shamanistic powers.

Clothing

Traditionally, skins of birds, fish, and marine and land animals were used to make clothing. Hunting clothes were designed to be insulated and waterproof. Fish skin and marine mammal intestines were used for waterproof shells and boots. Grass was used to make insulating socks, and as a waterproof thread.

Trade

Coastal villages traded with the inland villages for items not locally available. Seal oil was highly desirable by inland villages who usually bartered moose/caribou meat and furs such as mink, marten, beaver and muskrat, for seal oil and other coastal delicacies such as herring and herring eggs.

INUPIAQ AND SAINT LAWRENCE ISLAND YUPIK

Who We Are

The Inupiaq and the St. Lawrence Island Yupik People, or "Real People," are still hunting and gathering societies. They continue to subsist on the land and sea of north and northwest Alaska. Their lives continue to evolve around the whale, walrus, seal, polar bear, caribou and fish.

The north and northwest region of Alaska is vast. The land and sea are host to unique groups of people. To the people of the north, the extreme climate is not a barrier, but a natural realm for a variety of mammals, birds and fish, gathered by the people for survival.

Main Groups

The Inupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yupik tended to live in small groups of related families of 20-200 people. Population at time of contact included five main units:

- 1,500 St. Lawrence Island Yupiit
- 1,820 Bering Strait Inupiat

- 3,675 Kotzebue Sound Inupiat
- 1,850 North Alaska Coast Inupiat (Tareumiut, people of the sea)
- 1,050 Interior North Inupiat (Nunamiut, people of the land)

House Types and Settlement

The people used a variety of designs and materials, but three key features were common:

1. An underground tunnel entrance below the living level to trap cold air;
2. A semi-subterranean structure, using the ground as insulation.
3. A seal-oil lamp from soapstone or pottery, for light, heat and cooking. Homes were usually made from sod blocks, sometimes laid over driftwood or whalebone and walrus bone frames, generally dome-shaped. The shape was usually rectangular, except on St. Lawrence Island where the houses were circular of varying sizes. The rectangular houses generally were 12-15 ft. x 8-10 ft., holding 8 to 12 people. In the summer many of these houses flooded when the ground thawed, but most people had already moved to their summer camps.

Community houses, called qargis, were used as a work area in Inupiaq settlements.

Traditional Subsistence Patterns

Traditional subsistence patterns depend upon location and season of the resources, such as whales, marine mammals, fish, caribou, and plants. For instance:

- Whales and sea mammals were hunted in the coastal and island villages.
- Pink and chum salmon; cod, inconnu and whitefish were fished whenever ice formed; herring and crab and halibut were also caught.
- Birds and eggs formed an important part of the diet.

Traditional Tools and Technology

The traditional Inupiaq and St. Lawrence Island Yupik tool kit had a variety of stone, wood, bone and ivory tools made for butchering, tanning, carving, drilling, inscribing, sharpening and flaking. The bow drill was an important tool, used for starting fires, drilling holes in wood, bone, ivory. Hunting equipment and tool kits are kept in different containers.

A sophisticated package of toggle-headed harpoons, lances, lines, and seal bladder floats was used for the bowhead whale hunt. Seal skin floats are used for whale hunts, as are water-filled seal bladders which attract and lead bowhead whales closer to the shore.

- Other tools include scratching boards for attracting seals to breathing holes, bows, arrows, spears, spear throwers, bolas for taking birds, snares.
- Fishing gear includes nets, traps made from branches and roots, hooks.

Transportation

- The Umiak/Angyaq is a large open skin boat, 15 - 25 feet long (although some are nearly 50 feet from Kotzebue area). It is used for hunting whale and walrus, travel and bartering. A large umiak/angyaq could carry up to 15 people and a ton of cargo.
- The kayak, a closed skin boat, is typically for one person.
- The basket sled is used for land travel. A flat sled is used for hauling large skin boats across the ice.
- Snowshoes are used in interior regions (e.g., Kobuk River valley). Small sleds attached in the bottom of a skin boat transport the watercraft across ice.

Trade

Trade has always been important, but became even more important after the arrival of Europeans.

Clothing

Traditional clothing consisted of outer and inner pullover tops (parkas or kuspuks / qiipaghaq - the outer garment); outer and inner pants, socks, boots (kamiks). Tops and pants were made of caribou skin, with the fur facing inward on inner garments and outwards on outer. The woman's pullover had a larger hood for carrying small children, except on St. Lawrence Island, where they do not carry the baby in the parka. Gloves were made from various skins, with the fur turned inside and usually connected with leather strip around the neck. Waterproof outer garments made from sea-mammal intestines completed the wardrobe.

Ceremonial / Beliefs

Both groups believe in reincarnation and the recycling of spirit forms from one life to the next, both human and animal. Names of those who died recently are given to newborns.

Only if animal spirits are released can the animal be regenerated and return for future harvest. This explains the elaborate treatment of animals killed, even today.

ALEUT & ALUTIIQ

Who We Are

The Aleut and Alutiiq peoples are south and southwest Alaska, maritime peoples. The water is our living, whether it's the creeks and rivers near villages, the shore

outside or the vast waters of the North Pacific and Bering Sea. Knowledge of these resources and skill in harvesting them define the cycle of life in a village. The intensity of the weather that travels through our islands governs activities more than any other factor.

The Aleut and Alutiiq cultures were heavily influenced by the Russians, beginning in the 18th century. The Orthodox Church is prominent in every village, Russian dishes are made using local subsistence food, and Russian words are part of common vocabulary although two languages, Unangax and Sugcestun, are our indigenous languages.

Main Groups

The territory of the Aleut and Alutiiq stretches from Prince William Sound to the end of the Aleutian Islands. There are also over 300 Aleuts in Nikolskoye on Bering Island, Russia. Linguists estimate that the Aleut language separated from the earlier Eskimo languages 4,000 years ago. Anthropologists have classified the Alutiiq people into three basic groups,

- Chugachmiut or Chugach of the Prince William Sound area,
- Unegkurmiut of the lower Kenai Peninsula, and
- Koniagmiut or Koniag of the Kodiak Island and Alaska Peninsula.

The suffix "-miut" is added to names signifying "the people of" a certain place. Thus, each village has a name for its people and each regional area has a name for its people. The people of Kodiak Island, for example, were called Qikertarmiut meaning "people of the large island."

House Types and Settlements

The Aleut and Alutiiq people lived in numerous coastal villages as well as a few inland villages located on rivers and lakes. Each settlement had defined territories for harvesting resources such as seals, sea lions, halibut, cod, birds, plants and driftwood.

The traditional houses of both cultures were semi-subterranean. The Alutiiq houses, called ciqlluaq, provided efficient protection from harsh weather conditions. For thousands of years, the house style consisted of a single room. The ulax, the basic Unangax Aleut house, is an oblong pit dwelling with wooden or whale bone frames and rafters covered by grass and sod. These dwellings were often hard to distinguish from the surrounding terrain. They were entered by means of a pole ladder through the ceiling.

Traditional Tools and Technology

The kayaks of the Aleut and Alutiiqs called, respectively, iqyax and qayaq, were distinguished from other sea craft by the split bow, which increased the

seaworthiness and speed of the craft. Aleut and Alutiiq hunters wore distinctive bentwood visors with sea lion whiskers. These visors provided protection from glare as well as a visual symbol of the status of the hunter. The number of sea lion whiskers attached showed the successes in hunting.

The Aleut and Alutiiq used various portions of sea mammals for clothing and other utensils. The skins of seal, sea lion, sea otter, bear, birds, squirrels, and marmots were all used for clothing items. Hats and baskets were woven from spruce roots and grass. Baskets were woven with geometric patterns, considered among the finest in the world with up to 2500 stitches per square inch. Women wove other goods: cords, cables and fish line from plant fibers and animal tissue.

Social Organization

Still important in Aleut and Alutiiq society are kinship and family relationships. These connections persist throughout the regions and are important in the management of the village, as well as decision-making related to everyday life. Today, many Elders reminisce about the past, mentioning the strong value of sharing and helping one another in the villages of their youth. Village members would punish those who violated the rules of conduct of the village. The most serious form of punishment was banishment.

Clothing

Due to the wet maritime climate, it was crucial to have waterproof clothing. Therefore, the garments made of skin and gut were sewn with incredible precision making them very effective against the wet weather. Clothing was decorated with colorful natural dyes, feathers and puffin beaks, and in some cases elaborately carved ivory, bone or wooden figurines.

Transportation

Aleuts and Alutiit are known for their skill in building the iqyax/qayaq [baidarka]. They also used the igilax/angyaq [baidar], a large open skin boat, for travel and trade. Traveling was most often done by sea in these skin boats. However, people also walked long distances. For example, on Kodiak Island, remnants of the trails used by Alutiiq people to cross the island remain visible today.

Trade

The Aleut and Alutiiq people traded among themselves as well as with others such as the Yup'ik of Bristol Bay, Dena'ina Athabascans of the Cook Inlet area, the Ahtna Athabascans of the Copper River, the Eyak and Tlingit. This trade enabled them to balance their diet as well as take advantage of foreign technology.

Subsistence Patterns

The Aleut and Alutiiq peoples are maritime people obtaining most of their food and livelihood from the sea. Historically, sea mammal hunters went to sea, sometimes traveled long distances in their skin covered iqyax/qayaq or 'bairdarka', as they became known in Russian. For larger groups, people traveled in a large skin covered boat called an angyaq or 'baidar' in Russian.

Historically, villages were usually located at the mouths of streams to take advantage of fresh water and abundant salmon runs as they are today. Besides nets, traps and weirs for fishing, people used wooden hooks and kelp or sinew lines. Today, salmon, halibut, octopus, shellfish, seal, sea lion, caribou (on the Alaska Peninsula) and deer remain important components of the Aleut and Alutiiq subsistence diet.

Ceremonial

In Aleut and Alutiiq cultures, the winter was a time for elaborate celebrations and ceremonies. Singing, dancing and feasting took place as part of these rituals. The festivals usually began in late fall after all the necessary food for the winter had been gathered and stored. The festivals and ceremonies were held in large communal houses, called the qasgiq, and generally fell into two types. First were those of a spiritual nature, which were necessary to guarantee continued good hunting and fishing, and second, social celebrations, such as those for marriages and other events.

Regalia

During ceremonies, performers often wore elaborate costumes, some specific to certain ceremonies. Carved wooden masks, some with complex attachments were used. People had tattoos and also wore body paints and other decorative items.

EYAK, TLINGIT, HAIDA & TSIMSHIAN

Who We Are

The Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian share a common and similar Northwest Coast Culture with important differences in language and clan system. Anthropologists use the term "Northwest Coast Culture" to define the Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian cultures, as well as that of other people's indigenous to the Pacific coast, extending as far as northern Oregon. The Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian have a complex social system consisting of moieties, phratries and clans. Eyak, Tlingit and Haida divide themselves into moieties, while the Tsimshian divide into phratries. The region from the Copper River Delta to the Southeast Panhandle is a temperate rainforest with precipitation ranging from 112 inches per year to almost 200 inches per year. Here the people depended upon the ocean and rivers for their food and travel.

Although these four groups are neighbors, their spoken languages were not mutually intelligible.

- Eyak is a single language with only one living speaker
- The Tlingit language has four main dialects: Northern, Southern, Inland and Gulf Coast with variations in accent from each village
- The Haida people speak an isolate (unrelated to other) language, Haida, with three dialects: Skidegate and Masset in British Columbia, Canada and the Kaigani dialect of Alaska
- The Tsimshian people speak another isolate language, Sm'algyax, which has four main dialects: Coast Tsimshian, Southern Tsimshian, Nisga'a, and Gitksan.

Eyak occupied the lands in the southeastern corner of Southcentral Alaska. Their territory runs along the Gulf of Alaska from the Copper River Delta to Icy Bay. Oral tradition tells us that the Eyak moved down from the interior of Alaska via the Copper River or over the Bering Glacier. Until the 18th century, the Eyak were more closely associated with their Athabaskan neighbors to the north than the North Coast Cultures.

Traditional Tlingit territory in Alaska includes the Southeast panhandle between Icy Bay in the north to the Dixon Entrance in the south. Tlingit people have also occupied the area to the east inside the Canadian border. This group is known as the "Inland Tlingit". The Tlingits have occupied this territory, for a very long time. The western scientific date is of 10,000 years, while the Native version is "since time immemorial."

The original homeland of the Haida people is the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia, Canada. Prior to contact with Europeans, a group migrated north to the Prince of Wales Island area within Alaska. This group is known as the "Kaigani" or Alaska Haidas. Today, the Kaigani Haida live mainly in two villages, Kasaan and the consolidated village of Hydaburg.

The original homeland of the Tsimshian is between the Nass and Skeena Rivers in British Columbia, Canada, though at contact in Southeast Alaska's Portland Canal area, there were villages at Hyder and Halibut Bay. Presently in Alaska, the Tsimshian live mainly on Annette Island, in (New) Metlakatla, Alaska in addition to settlements in Canada.

House Types and Settlements

Before and during early contact with the non-aboriginal population, the people built their homes from red cedar, spruce, and hemlock timber and planks. The houses, roofed with heavy cedar bark or spruce shingles, ranged in size from 35'-40' x 50'-100', with some Haida houses being 100' x 75'. All houses had a central fire pit with a centrally located smoke hole. A plank shield frames the smoke hole in the roof.

Generally, each house could hold 20-50 individuals with a village size between 300-500 people.

The people had winter villages along the banks of streams or along saltwater beaches for easy access to fish-producing streams. The location of winter villages gave protection from storms and enemies, drinking water and a place to land canoes. Houses always faced the water with the backs to the mountains or muskeg/swamps. Most villages had a single row of houses with the front of the house facing the water, but some had two or more rows of houses.

Each local group of Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian had at least one permanent winter village with various seasonal camps close to food resources. The houses held 20-50 people, usually of one main clan. In each Eyak village, there were two potlatch houses, outside of which was a post topped with an Eagle or Raven. The dwelling houses were unmarked. The southern Tlingit had tall totem poles in the front of their houses. The Northern Tlingit houses had fewer and shorter frontal totem poles.

Tools and Technology

Southeast Alaska's environment is a temperate rain forest. This environment produces many tall and massive trees. Wood was the most important commodity for the people. Houses, totem poles, daily utensils, storage and cooking boxes, transportation, ceremonial objects, labrets (worn by high status women), clothes all were made of wood and wood products. The tools to make the wood into usable items were adzes, mauls, wedges, digging sticks and after contact, iron. To cut the wood people used chipped rocks, bones, beaver teeth, and shells. For light, the Eyak used a clamshell with seal oil or pitch, and a lump of fat for a wick in the sleeping room. Dried ooligan were used as candles. Also, hollowed sandstone with cotton grass fashioned into wicks.

Various means were used to harvest the seasonal salmon runs. Fish weirs (fences) and traps were placed in streams. Holding ponds were built in the inter-tidal region. Dip nets, hooks, harpoons and spears were also used to harvest salmon during the season. A specialized hook, shaped in a 'V' or 'U' form allowed the people to catch specific sized halibut.

Various baskets were used for cooking, storage, and for holding clams, berries, seaweed and water. The Tsimshian used baskets in the process of making ooligan (a special of smelt) oil. Basket weaving techniques were also used for mats, aprons, and hats. Mats woven of cedar bark were used as room dividers and floor mats, as well as to wrap the dead prior to burial or cremation. The inner cedar bark was pounded to make baby cradle padding, as well as clothing such as capes, skirts, shorts and blankets (shawls).

The Nass River Tsimshian are credited with originating the Chilkat weaving technique, which spread throughout the region.

Social Organization

No central government existed. Each village and each clan house resolved its differences through traditional customs and practices; no organized gatherings for discussions of national policy making took place. Decisions were made at the clan, village or house level, affecting clan members of an individual village or house. The people had a highly stratified society, consisting of high-ranking individuals/families, commoners and slaves. Unlike present day marriages, unions were arranged by family members. Slaves were usually captives from war raids on other villages.

All four groups had an exogamous (meaning they married outside of their own group), matrilineal clan system, which means that the children trace their lineage and names from their mother (not their father as in the European system). This means the children inherit all rights through the mother, including the use of the clan fishing, hunting and gathering land, the right to use specific clan crests as designs on totem poles, houses, clothing, and ceremonial regalia.

The Eyak were organized into two moieties, meaning their clan system is divided into two reciprocating halves or “one of two equal parts”. Their moieties, Raven and the Eagle, equated with the Tlingit Raven and Eagle/Wolf and with the Ahtna Crow and Sea Gull moieties. The names and stories of the clans in these moieties show relationships with the Tlingit and Ahtna.

In the Tlingit clan system, one moiety was known as Raven or Crow, the other moiety as Eagle or Wolf depending upon the time period. Each moiety contained many clans.

The Haida have two moieties, Eagle and Raven, and also have many clans under each moiety. The clans that fall under the Haida Eagle would fall under the Tlingit Raven. One example: Tlingit Raven/Frog; Haida Eagle/Frog. The Tsimshian had phratries (four groups instead of two groups). There are four crests: Killer whale (Blackfish), Wolf, Raven and Eagle. However, Fireweed, Wolf, Raven and Eagle are the Gitksan’s phratry names. The Tsimshian Killer whale and Wolf are one side and their opposite side are the Eagle and Raven. However, the Gitksan have Fireweed and Wolf as their opposites to Eagle and Raven.

Clothing

All four groups used animal fur, mountain goat wool, tanned skins and cedar bark for clothing. Hats made of spruce roots and cedar bark kept the rain off the head. After western trading, wool and cotton materials were common.

Transportation

The main means of travel was by canoes. The people traveled regularly for seasonal activities such as subsistence and trading. The Haida canoes, made from a single cedar log up to 60 feet in length, were the most highly prized commodity.

Traditional and Contemporary Subsistence Patterns

Contemporary subsistence activities and traditional ceremonies are still essential and important to the Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people's cultural identity.

The water supplied their main food. One of the most important fish is salmon. There are five species: King (chinook), silver (coho), red (sockeye), chum (dog salmon), pink (humpback or humpy). Steelhead, herring, herring eggs, and ooligans (eulachon) were also caught and eaten. Southeast waters produce an abundance of foods including a variety of sea mammals and deep-water fish. Some sea plants include seaweed (black, red), beach asparagus, and goose tongue. Some food resources are from plants (berries and shoots), and others from come from land mammals (moose, mountain goat, and deer).

Traditionally, clans owned the salmon streams, halibut banks, berry patches, land for hunting, intertidal regions, and egg harvesting areas. As long as the area was used by the clan, they owned the area. The food was seasonal and therefore had to be preserved for the winter months and for early spring. The food was preserved by smoking in smokehouses or was dried, either by wind or sun. These subsistence patterns are still a crucial part of Southeast Alaska Native people's cultural identity.

Ceremonies

The Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian are known for a ceremony called the "potlatch" and feasts. Potlatches are formal ceremonies. Feasts, a less formal but similar event, are more common with the Haida, in which debt was paid to the opposite clan.

Events

High-ranking Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian clans and/or individuals were expected to give potlatches. However, a potlatch could be given by a commoner who could raise his position by doing so. Except in the Haida tradition, the host would not raise his personal status, but rather the status of his children. Potlatches were held for the following occasions: a funeral or memorial potlatch, whereby the dead are honored; the witness and validation of the payment of a debt, or naming an individual; the completion of a new house; the completion and naming of clan regalia; a wedding; the naming of a child; the erection of a totem pole; or to rid the host of a shame. Potlatches might last days and would include feasting, speeches, singing and dancing. Guests witness and validate the events and are paid with gifts during the ceremony. In potlatches, there would be a feast, however, a feast does not constitute a potlatch.

Regalia

Regalia worn at potlatches were the Chilkat and Raven's Tail woven robes, painted tanned leather clothing, tunics, leggings, moccasins, ground squirrel robes, red

cedar ropes, masks, rattles, and frontlets. Other items used at potlatches include drums, rattles, whistles, paddles, and staffs. Only clan regalia named and validated at a potlatch could be used for formal gatherings.

The Chilkat robes were made of mountain goat wool and cedar warps. The Chilkat weaving style is the only weaving that can create perfect circles. The Raven's tail robe is made of mountain goat wool. Some of the headpieces had frontlets that would also have sea lion whiskers and ermine. After contact, robes were made of blankets, usually those obtained from the Hudson Bay trading company, adorned with glass beads and mother-of-pearl shells, along with dentalium and abalone shells.

“Native Perspectives on Climate and Sea-Ice Changes,” Igor I Krupnik, *Impacts of Changes in Sea Ice and Other Environmental Parameters in the Arctic*, August 2000 [35] <https://www.mmc.gov/wp-content/uploads/seaicereport.pdf#page=36>

Abstract:

This paper is a short overview of some ideas and statements expressed by several of the workshop participants who represented Alaska Native communities from the northern Bering Sea-Chukchi Sea region. By no means does it pretend to be a summary of the environmental knowledge shared by some 15 experienced hunters, resource managers, and community leaders from several villages. Even less does it represent a common “Native perspective” on Arctic climate and sea-ice change. Instead, this paper is intended, first and foremost, to let the voices of Native observers be fully heard through extended, direct quotations.

In reviewing Native statements on climate and ice change, academic scientists and the public at large have to consider the conditions under which these data have been documented and the format in which they are presented. First, beyond some general views (such as, “the ice and weather indeed are changing these days”), we are less likely to capture a uniform Native perspective from the residents of the area that extends from Barrow to Nunivak Island than we are to grasp a shared perception of Arctic climate change from the scientific community. As will be shown below, changes do occur and they are fairly substantial. Nevertheless, people experience changes differently along the northern and western Alaskan coastline.

Second, the section below is based upon several individual observations and comments offered by Native participants that were recorded and written down during the three-day workshop. In addition, a few extended interviews were specially recorded during the days of the workshop. However, unlike the edited (and highly polished) academic papers prepared in advance as a background report for the workshop, the Native contributions were merely spontaneous voices spoken and heard at the meeting. The statements below are transcripts of oral statements and comments given by people who more often than not are more comfortable on the moving Arctic ice than at a conference podium. We also have to keep in mind that

many of the speakers use English as their second language and that they are far more accustomed to share their observations of the environment and its changes in their Native language and in a different social setting.

Third, thanks to George Noongwook's post-workshop contribution to this volume (Noongwook 2000), we already have an opportunity to grasp some valuable outcomes of the partnership forged at the symposium in Girdwood. Noongwook's paper is a highly eloquent representation of the ways local hunters perceive and discuss the changing ice and weather conditions that affect their lives and the well-being of their communities. At the same time, it is already a written product of reflections stimulated by discussions and mutual exchange of data and perspectives initiated by the Girdwood meeting. Therefore, it greatly expands the spectrum of potential formats of documentation of native knowledge, from personal observations to public statements, extended storytelling and interviews, and now written texts.

Whereas environmental observation is a life-long phenomenon in northern communities, speaking and writing about the environment and its changes is not. As this paper illustrates, we have a long way to go and much work to do before individual oral statements and personal observations can be transformed into systematic monitoring efforts and orderly documentation conducted in Native communities, by their members, and for their own sake. As such, we are at the very beginning of new tradition of listening to each other's ways of documenting the environment and of reading each other's patterns of analysis of change. The final section of this paper offers some general reflections on the status of knowledge shared by local hunters. It discusses both potential gains and obstacles concerning the ways in which this knowledge could complement and be complemented by data and approaches generated by the community of Arctic scientists.

Current & Relevant Information:

Native Perspectives:

1. Residents in many Northern communities clearly see changes in weather, ice, and marine biota that are taking place during their lifetime

"Climate change is becoming obvious to us. When we completed our land claims agreement [around 1984], we thought that protected areas and parks were going to be the best way to protect our land and its resources. Today, however, we see these conditions changing and our needs may change too. Past Aklavik, there is a place called Fish Hole. It has changed in many ways in recent time. That water just runs differently. Rocks fall into the Big Fish River. Dead fish are found on top of the ice."

Billy Day, Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada

"In 1996, when I was doing research on sea-birds on St. Lawrence Island for the Park Service, I talked to the elders of Gambell and Savoonga about their observations of change and how it was reflected in their lifetime. The main comment

I got from the interviews is that people were seeing changes but these were not being documented properly. My aunt, Mabel Toolie, said [to me]: 'The Earth is faster now.' She was not meaning that the time is moving fast [these days] or that the events are going faster. But she was talking about how all this weather is changing. Back in the old days they could predict the weather by observing the stars, the sky, and other events. The old people think that back then they could predict the weather pattern for a few days in advance. Not anymore! And my aunt was saying that because the weather patterns are [changing] so fast now, those predictions cannot be made anymore. The weather patterns are changing so quickly she could think the Earth is moving faster now." *Caleb Pungowiyi, Kotzebue, Alaska*

"The changes are affecting our diet in Deering too. There used to be walrus, there should be walrus, we could see walrus all the time. And then they were gone. Now they are returning, slowly. We normally hunt ugrook [bearded seal] in the springtime, every family, every house in Deering. We do it every year when the ice break starts. We have 15 boats in our town and for every house we used to get maybe 5 or 6 ugrooks. Last year the ice come and go, and we brought maybe 5 ugrooks into our town. So, we are very short of seal-oil. We go for miles and miles in boats and we spend hundreds and hundreds of gallons of gas. But there was nothing, just clean white ice: no ugrooks, no seals. Those changes in our ocean, they are affecting us. The people in Deering, maybe not only in Deering but also in other communities along the coast too. Changes are coming and we have to learn how to live with them. They are coming anyway. We have to change, adapt, and this will be hard, it will be difficult." *Gibson Moto, Deering, Alaska*

"The first sea ice that I noticed [i.e., that left a deep impression] was when going on a single-engine airplane. [It was] on my first trip to Nome, on April 25th, 1943. We flew from Gambell toward King Island. From the end of the Island to the north and northeast, right up to Nome, there was just solid ice all over. There were but a few breaks – not open leads but just lines across the ice in between the mainland and the island. This I believe, maybe at that time it was always like that, because back then we had more fair weather and cold weather. Today – as Caleb told us about his trip to Nome from the island when he looked down – it was all broken ice everywhere, all the way to Nome. And nowadays it is most often like that." *Conrad Oozeva, Gambell, Alaska*

"We can see changes in our environment – I am from the northeastern Bering Sea-southern Seward Peninsula area. It's happening through my lifetime. In my area we [now] have timber coming down almost to the shoreline, all the way on the coast. These are full-grown timber, maybe 500 years old. They come up on the beach because of the heavy storms, beach erosion. We never saw them before but now these can be seen all along the coast. And another thing in my area – the ice is not stable anymore; it is not too good in springtime. I don't know, maybe the water temperature is coming up. So, in the spring time when we go out hunting for seals in

the day like this, sometimes it's a real warm day or they may even come in groups of two or three days. We can go out hunting to the shore ice and then we come back right to the beach in the boat. The shore ice is melting so fast – it's like opening your hot water socket, and the ice is melted away at once. Maybe the temperature is going up real fast. Before we could go out hunting, come and go – but never like that. I noticed that and we also talked about it at one of our elders' meetings. We just talked about all these changes. I do not know what's going on with our weather and what is going to happen. Because these changes may affect our ways of subsistence hunting, and also the fish stocks. It may impact the whole system."

Charles Saccheus, Elim, Alaska

2. Hunters' experience – whether called "Native knowledge," "local knowledge," or "traditional knowledge" – is a very powerful source of information; it is uniformly held in very high esteem by Native people

"We are talking here a lot using all this terminology and most of us are probably not aware of the scientific terminology. Although take people like Conrad [Oozeva] – he is a life-long observer, a living database. He is very articulate in his first language [Siberian Yupik]. He knows at least 30 different types of snow and ice conditions. He is very well versed in knowledge about how the [ocean] currents are flowing and he knows how to get out when the ice is moving. He knows about the winds in the wintertime and about ice formations, and different weather patterns – he has his own equivalents for all these terms plus some 60 years of his personal knowledge. We have our Native versions of knowledge about all these wind and ice patterns, and it has been passed down through the generations. And people, like Conrad, they have lived with this knowledge all their life. I mean, they have knowledge on everything that pertains to the ecosystem, to the iceberg change, to the resources, and marine biology. I guess we have our own versions, in terms of understanding the comprehensiveness of our environment and all the necessary terminology. For every conceivable condition of snow and ice pattern, which is either annual or through generations. And we have stories of all these changes based upon comparative experiences and observations. We believe we have been put by the Creator in this ecosystem, to live on its resources, to be in sync with the ecosystem." *John Waghiyi, Savoonga, Alaska*

3. Local observations are particularly detailed in identifying unusual indicators of change, such as extraordinary weather/ice conditions or rare game animals

"The other fall, last fall – we never used to see bowhead whales come by in Deering. And now they are there: two bowheads right in front of the village. We even wanted to go out and get a black whale. We never had a bowhead whale in Deering in my time. We also have reports of those long-nose dolphins washed out on the beach. When they were washed out one day, they were completely dead. But they are coming, they came again, like [during] past two or three years. You can see nine of them swimming by in front of the village. Those are dolphins, black-colored; we

never had them before and now they are coming back.” *Gibson Moto, Deering, Alaska*

“It seems to be there are lots of minke whales in our area these days. This is the first time in my life – I’ve never seen a minke whale before. When I saw the first one in my life, a few years ago, I thought it was a killer whale. But they are different. We are seeing now a lot of minke whale in our area – it’s pretty unusual. Another change I’ve noticed – I am a monitor for the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee – it was almost five years ago after a big storm. I went along the beach with my four-wheeler, and I came across something that I thought was a young beluga whale, maybe 12 feet long. It looked like a full-grown. When I looked at it, it was a dolphin. We never see dolphins in this part of the country. So, there must be some animals feeling different temperatures and they are coming in to our area.” *Charles Saccheus, Elim, Alaska*

4. Elders’ and, generally, ancestors’ experience is usually considered the ultimate reference in documenting changes

“My uncle did trapping from top of the Gambell Mountain and he used to go to check his traps every day. And I remember him saying sometimes that he is seeing now a different type of ice. He mentioned that the thick ice is now coming in.” *Conrad Oozeva, Gambell, Alaska*

“They [the animals] are coming back. The elders always say: the animals will return. But we were too young then, we did not believe them. The elders said: one day the caribou will come and it will take all your reindeer. I did not believe them [because] there were plenty of reindeer. Now the caribou have come and there is no reindeer and there is no reindeer anymore. The elders always said: they would come back. And they did.” *Gibson Moto, Deering, Alaska*

A similar statement that praised elders’ memories was made a few years ago by an Inuit hunter from Rankin Inlet, in the Canadian Arctic, with regard to climate variations in his local area (Ernerk 1994):

The elders do tell us that once every so many years cool summers repeat themselves, that also some years have freak snow storms that occur in mid-summer. My father told me about one such year in his memory where there was such a cold and extended snow storm in the middle of an otherwise warm summer, that this storm caused many baby birds to die, that all the mosquitoes appeared to die off and there was quite an accumulation of snow on the ground. He remembered that after the storm was over the snow melted and things did return to normal. In discussing this particular storm with my boss, Ollie Ittinuar, who is presently 70 years old he indicated to me that he remembered that particular storm. My father was at least 25 years his senior and we place this storm in the early 1930s. It was the storm and summer to remember.

5. Unlike specialized scientific research, Native knowledge is always multi-faceted and it covers a much broader spectrum of indicators of change

“We are seeing many differences in the quality of sea ice. It is less salty, easier to chop, and [it] breaks up sooner. The fast ice retreats early. It breaks up and retreats 20-30 miles and doesn’t come back. We used to have ice come in in fall time, but now the water freezes up in place and we don’t see the ice floes drifting to shore. Multi-year ice doesn’t arrive till later.” *Charles D.N. Brower, Barrow, Alaska*

“The ice conditions and walrus migrations are different from my early years, as they are now. We used to go out hunting for migrating walruses in June and last part of May. We used to go after bull walruses that remained on the northern side of the island. We used to hunt them at the same time when the females with calves are migrating north. The bull walruses could go out and come back in the month of June. We cannot see them no more now in the month of June. We don’t know why they are gone. Maybe this is because of too many aircrafts coming in into our area.” *Conrad Oozeva, Gambell, Alaska*

“There have been many unusual occurrences in recent years [in our area]. Weather patterns, fish distributions, and other things are very odd. Some species of fish have been caught in areas where they’ve never been seen before. There used to be a lot of tomcod in our area, but no longer, and we don’t know why. In 1998, there was a big die-out of seabirds. Many dead birds washed up on shore. Did they die of starvation, or because the weather was too warm? Animals, too, are going to places they’ve never been before. Is it lack of food – or because of other reasons? Salmon are decreasing in some places. They are fewer in the Yukon River now. There are fewer clams in our area. The bay used to have lots of clams, but now there are hardly any – only very small ones. And the shellfish have moved into our area, where they used not to be.” *Dale T. Smith, Sr., Mekoryuk, Alaska*

6. It is often stated that “Native knowledge is intuitive and holistic” – in fact, it is very well organized around key environmental agents (such as wind or ice) or indicators of change or around critical game species

“There is much difference in sea ice that I see during my lifetime. Every year the first ice we see is mostly of this iceberg type – the floating icebergs coming from the North, mainly from the month of September. The wind always starts blowing from the North, almost regularly. I think that same high wind makes the ocean flow, too. And now we have more westerly winds. What I learned from my elderly people, as the days grow longer, the northwest throw [stream] gets stronger in between the island and the mainland of Siberia. But now with those more westerly winds we have more ice on the other side, the Anadyr side of the island, the ice is packed over there.” *Conrad Oozeva, Gambell, Alaska*

“Our ice and weather conditions in Savoonga are probably comparable to what Gambell conditions are. The young ice was formulated when Conrad was growing

up [in the 1930s and 1940s], maybe in late September. By October, the young ice was already there, because of the prevailing northern winds. The cold current is always flowing, snow is flowing; and so, there was a crystallization process, because of the drop in conditions with the water temperature. What was formulated was young slush-ice. As Conrad is saying, when he was growing up, because of the north wind, these glacier icebergs, drift icebergs, were washed up on the shore of St. Lawrence Island. That was probably how the solidifying process of the young ice took place in those days. And as he says, we were aware about the sea icebergs flowing from the north. In late October, during Conrad's time, that is, during the time when ice formulated in mass, it had a lulling position [impact] within the Bering Sea, where there is lots of big waves. And when the ice solidifies enough, you can actually go out hunting in 25-30-knot conditions, because the formulation of the young flat ice makes the waves gentle enough to go out for harvest activities. When it solidifies enough, when we can go on it and we have to be careful, because winter is going to happen at this time. When they were growing up, they were usually gone on the ice [in winter] harvesting walrus and bearded seals, and other species of seals. And they were actually pulling back their walrus meat with the raw-hide ropes, just sliding it through the ice. And they will bring that food home and that meat home for their families and their children, and also for their family dogs. When they were young, they used to go out by dog-teams [on ice] for many, many miles. And this is their perception of the winter ice conditions. Now, these days if we are lucky, the ice will set up at a time of late November, usually in December in Savoonga where I am from. It is like that now most of the time. This year is a perfect example. On Thanksgiving Day, that was November 25th [1999], we harvested a bowhead whale right off the village of Savoonga where the migration happened. And the next day the young ice solidified enough, it was dense enough we could not go out. Just the day before, men could go out with their skiffs and zigzag around, because there was enough open water in front of the village that they could go after the bowhead whale. The next day, when they were butchering the whale, it was too dense and solid – and that meant that winter was here. When the ice solidifies and it becomes solid, that means winter in our culture has taken place. In the past ten years or so, our winter trends based on the ice conditions have been probably early December to mid-December, because as I mentioned, we had all these walrus and bowhead whale in front of Savoonga. Now, Conrad knows – and he is a living database – maybe 30 different conditions of ice and snow around our island. And I just talked about two different conditions: one is slush ice and the other is flowing sea icebergs. Conrad can give you many, many different variations, with their specific terminology from our Native culture." *John Waghiyi, Savoonga, Alaska*

7. Native observers are very well trained in documenting unusual ice and weather patterns – but they have their own ways and means of memorizing and documenting the events

As an illustration, we may cite at length three narratives of St. Lawrence Island hunters of different ages about years with extraordinarily warm winter conditions in their respective communities.

George Noongwook (Savoonga, born in 1949): “My most clear memory of ‘extreme weather’ was that of winter of 1962 [1962/1963]. This has been a really exceptional winter. I remember: it was the month of January, and then a lot of snow melted. Not all of it but most of it just melted down to the bare ground. And during that fall, that same year, there were very high winds blowing from the southeast. It was strange, because it’s normally blowing from north-northeast all the time. Consequently, not very many people were able to bring back home any walruses or seals or other marine mammals. It was so bad [in the village] that they had to fly in dried fish and drop it down from the airplanes, because back then we did not have an airstrip in our village. So, they dropped dried fish and other protein-rich food off the airplanes [to feed the people]. This is the year I clearly remember as one with exceptional weather that affected all the people. We used to commemorate such events: in the old days, people would make a song or try to mark the moment somehow. Like this extreme weather conditions. One elder in our village named his son Ughugutkaq for that particular year. That little boy was born during this year, and the man’s name was Keengeekuk [Kingikaq]. Because ughuguq means ‘melting snow’ [in Siberian Yupik language]. This name was because of that extreme weather when the boy was born. It was pretty scary these days, I remember. No returning birds, nothing. When the snow melted down, there were ponds of water on the ground, but nothing else. There was almost no hunting because of these extremely dangerous conditions. We could probably go anywhere [hunting] and get almost nothing. I do not think it was safe to go out because there was still some ice at sea. My memory is probably sketchy but that I can remember. People were being blown away almost down to the water because of the high winds during the previous fall. It was scary!”

Edmond Apassingok (Gambell, born in 1963): “As far as I can remember, it was this winter [1999/2000] that was very exceptional because of its warm weather. About a week ago or so it started to get really warm, I mean – exceptionally warm. And it continues to this day [February 16th]. But before that we had nice weather and these easterly winds; then, right after the New Year the southerly winds started to pick up. Before that it seemed like it [was going to be] a normal winter, but then it warmed up, it’s all changed. As far as I can remember, that did not happen in a long time. We have already spotted a bowhead whale [off Gambell] before I came to this meeting. People say, that this is very unusual, it’s too early. Also, from the land observation, several bowheads have been seen – this does not happen usually in February, sightings like that, at least from my recollections. They have not seen too many walruses, but seals are quite normal – at least, since the ice came in in December. The sea ice was also late [last year] and it was strange, not like the usual year. I remember we had to go to another conference in late November, and we flew over from Gambell to Nome. When we left from Gambell, it was fairly cold but there was

no young ice at this time, of this iceberg type. Usually, before the young ice comes in, these icebergs are drifting [from the north] – this indicates that the young ice is coming. But not this year! When I called home from Anchorage, people said that it's pretty windy from the north, and the young ice already came in. But there were no icebergs this year, although they always come before the young ice comes in."

George Noongwook, on 1999/2000 ice conditions: "In Savoonga, the ice conditions were also very unusual this past fall. We even were able to get a bowhead whale right in front of our village. That happened on Thanksgiving Day, November 24th [1999]. The wind was of 25 knots, but because there was lots of ice on water, young ice, it kept the water from the winds. It got really cold then and that lasted through the whole of December. Then in January it started snowing, we did not have any snow in November, in December, and half of January. On January 11th it started snowing, and it snowed almost every day until these days. There were tons of snow. Now we have probably much more snow than usual, like the older people say – 'it's like the old times.' They have not experienced that much snow in years. It was really difficult to walk practically anywhere. It was this way up to February, probably up to a couple of weeks ago. And then in got really warm, real warm. At one time, one could see the ground and the snow melting. Just like springtime when the snow is melting. But there were not that many walruses like we usually see in spring. It's so strange! We had walruses in Savoonga until the month of December, and we also got that bowhead whale. The walruses were very close: maybe a mile or half-a-mile off the village. Lots of other sea mammals as well. This was because of these easterly winds. Now, this month [February] we also managed to get a lot of open water [in front of our village] for a week or so. Right until the day we came here [February 14th], and then the ice came in again. We were even able to get out [in our boats] – there was enough of open water to get out hunting, particularly to the west, that the waves were coming from that direction. We saw six walruses at this time coming from the west; so, several boats went hunting westward, as far as Taapghhaq. We did not see the walruses there and there were no makllaks [bearded seals] either but lots of seals. And lots of birds – old-squaws, murre, like in springtime. In 1990 there was another exceptionally warm spring that people remembered. We were able to get our quota of four whales in one week. The temperature warmed up to 60° F on one day. There was abundance of belugas, and whales, and all kinds of birds. That was at the Southwest Cape, we call it Pugughileq."

Conrad Oozeva (Gambell, born in 1926): "We always have warm weather during the winter time. Our winter, as I mentioned [is] when thin ice gets it – that's when we call it 'winter.' It was only two times, I remember, when the ice showed in before fall: one [time] in the last part of August and the other one [in] first part of September. That's all I know about these two but the ice did not get clear to the land. We even got some walruses and seals when that ice showed in August, in last part of August. [The year] was some time in the late [19]40s or early '50s. And when the ice was in September – it might be later – '40s or '50s. It is common that it gets warm in

wintertime. Maybe, twice or even three times until spring; sometimes, maybe, two times. Only one time I know it got really warm in January. It rained, rained, and rained, until the ice on the lake was soaked with rain and started breaking in near the shore land. It was like this all January, maybe from last part of December – it gets warm, very warm. We also had all those high swells all the time. The ice almost formed firmly but it did not [solidify], maybe, because it got too warm. And the walrus were coming in [but] there was no ice for these walrus, [and] they stayed on the east side of Gambell. So, people went hunting down by boats on ice on the other side, got the walrus, and came home. The backwash was washing in, this seafood that grows under the ocean, and other sea plants. [Krupnik: Was it like in 1962?] It did happen after that too but this time was farther back. It got snow fully on the ground but then it rained, and rained, and rained. Snow melted but shore ice was still good enough on the other side. When we wake up [in the morning] – it's still warm. Ralph [Apatiki] even asked me the question: will it ever get cold again? And I told him: "It still will be time when it gets cold!" [Laughs.] And it did in later time get cold... It is very common warmth like we have this winter – two or three times every year or almost every year. But those past few years we hardly had any warm weather [in winter]. The temperature got high enough, not much cold. This year was maybe the coldest I know... I remember being a boy, when we still had these mengteghapik [houses with an inner chamber of reindeer skin]. In the morning I could hear people walking making cracking noise out there, because it's so cold. We always dressed up warmly that time. I don't mind staying out there long enough. Of course, in those days, even in cold days, the days were nice and calm, almost calm. No snowing: just cold and calm. When we were still using those [oil] lamps, naneq, every time when I got out on a very cold day, I noticed my eye-lids are getting picky, when I am getting out first of my house. They always got picky because of the moisture inside the house. This winter reminds me of those old days. I know [remember], it did get real cold with some wind in my [old] days. I was going out hunting from my old house, I could not even stand it anymore because I had beginning to get frostbites. I had to stop. You have to walk long enough to get used to cold. I could not stay long enough when I was hunting on the ice – it was just too cold. So, I came home. I did not get seals or walrus [because] it was too cold. It's the same type of winter we have this year. If it happened like [in] the early days, we have this cold and windy, and snowy winter, we ran out of food. And all naneq [oil lamps] were down. In the days like these, there was little fuel. This year is the coldest year and [although] it got warm recently, it's still not as warm as in the old days, when it gets warm. The snow often thawed when it got warm in the early days. [Krupnik: A winter without snow?] I don't remember anything like that. One year we had a long easterly wind. The storm on one side but this side [western side of Cape Sivuqaq] was clear. It keeps so for many days, those easterly winds blowing. I could see that heavy cloud on the other side [of the cape] but no clouds on this side. And the easterly wind [was] blowing all day, maybe for a week or longer. We got snow [that year] but the snow was blown off all over. I remember because I was going to

check my trap lines and foxes were very visible at that time because there was no snow, it was all blown away. “[Krupnik: A warm winter is called “woman-winter” by the Yupik people in Chukotka]. Yes, I heard people saying that in Gambell too: “woman-winter,” aghnangyaq. When the temperature is above 10° F [in winter] – I like it. Because you can tell it even without seeing the thermometer. The sea between the ice looks black, no smoke, nothing. We have a good winter this year, hunting was good even on one of those cold days. My boat has been going hunting, we have been bringing walruses, makllaks [bearded seals], and birds. They don’t go far out too. This change [is visible], anleghaq [going out at sea, particularly to the east] has changed. When I was younger, there were these migrating walruses coming on the eastern side of Gambell first; and then they were going around the point, and headed south. That used to happen in November, first part of November. This is where we first got our walruses on the other side of the hill, when walruses are migrating south. That did not happen like that anymore. Now they do like that for very short time in December, which is late. Just enough walrus on the other side, mostly the walrus females. Something is changing, we noticed this.”

Some Final Remarks:

These stories and observations of Native hunters from a handful of Alaska communities illustrate that local knowledge has enormous power as a resource to document changes in weather, sea ice, and marine life due to modern climate change. What is listed here is just the tip of the iceberg of information that was shared at the meeting and has been written down, in order to give both full acknowledgement to and a better appreciation of the Native contribution to workshop. Unlike scientists, hunters are not bound in their observations by a “project time” or to any salaried research period. They are going on the ice almost every day, year after year; and they preserve their memories, listen to elders’ stories as well as share their observations with other hunters. This is the body of knowledge that has been praised highly by the most experienced anthropologists and natural scientists for years (e.g., Freeman 1984, Nakashima 1993, Nelson 1969).

It is almost trivial these days to talk about “barriers” and “hurdles” on the ways Native or local knowledge can be matched with the data collected by the scientific community. Those obstacles most commonly listed arise from the presumption (which more often than not remains untested and never fully examined) that traditional knowledge is assumed to be intuitive, holistic, qualitative, and orally transmitted while academic or scientific knowledge is primarily analytical, compartmentalized, quantitative, and literate (Berkes 1993, Eythorsson 1993, Lalonde 1993, Nadasdy 1999). While there is some truth to these differences, both scientists and Native observers can effectively operate with both types of knowledge – as has been clearly demonstrated by the many presentations given at the Girdwood Workshop, prepared and informal alike.

It is not a different nature but rather a different focus of scientific and local knowledge that clearly keeps these two types of expertise looking in different directions. Modern scientific studies of environmental change are unmistakably time-focused, in that scientists are primarily looking for well-documented series or samples of otherwise uniformly organized data (like annual or seasonal temperature and ice series, ice charts, satellite photos, ice core samples, etc.). This focus allows scientists to operate with both the average and the extreme characteristics of the environment that are easily and thoroughly positioned in time (i.e., by fixed dates) and which are regarded as “statistically reliable.” Thus, the scientific knowledge of climate change is openly fixated upon expanding the timing and reliability of the data it operates with; the very nature of data may be of secondary importance.

Local knowledge, on the other hand, is first and foremost detail-focused, in that it prizes specific and very detailed information about the characteristics of the environment observed, including climate change. There is no issue of statistical reliability, and every personal observation is considered sound and equal, as long as it relates to the environment, which is familiar to the given observer. The age of the observer is probably the closest equivalent of the scientific concept “reliability,” as changes reported by elders are always considered more valid than those observed by younger people. And there is hardly an issue of precise timing. Local knowledge documents the many possible facets of environmental changes as well as of exceptional phenomena; but in most reported cases it is not focused on absolute dating or on any mechanism of precise timing similar to the beach-ridge chronology developed by geologists and archaeologists. This is a scientific method when events or objects are dated along the series of beach ridges that have been subsequently built on shore by the sea surf through time. That is why for many scientists, local knowledge contains too many data that are very hard to organize properly in a standardized time series.

Therefore, in order to be compatible, both types of knowledge must be substantially modified to accommodate each other’s specifics – in the same way that the data from social and natural (physical) sciences have to undergo certain accommodations to be used in any interdisciplinary or joint study. One can see this conclusion as one of the major outcomes of the Girdwood workshop and one of the most critical by-products of a three-day intellectual (inter-knowledge) interaction.

One can also see from the statements of many Native participants that local hunters are far more advanced in mastering the terms, data, and approaches developed by scientists than vice versa. Unlike Native observers, scientists learn through “projects” and they respond to new challenges by “research programs.” Therefore, the only way academic science can modify itself to be more open for accommodation of Native knowledge is by developing a special research program on just how to do this.

This approach differs from the many previous studies focused on the incorporation of traditional knowledge into scientific research, including the very original assumptions we shared while organizing the Girdwood workshop. Scientific knowledge about recent climate change in the Arctic has to become detailed and specific. From the abstract global models, it has to be projected down to the regional and even to the individual village level in order to interact productively with the knowledge and observations of change shared across local communities. For local knowledge, a timing mechanism has to be created in order to make Native observations of past and present events compatible with the records kept by academic science. This is a complicated enterprise, as each local community has to build a “beach-ridge chronology” of its own, one based upon its particular history, available documentary records, and memories shared by the most elderly experts.

To accomplish these and other goals, much joint research as well as intense mutual interaction and knowledge/data sharing is required. This future long-term effort should be focused first and foremost on charting the ways for mutual adjustment of the two types of knowledge of Arctic climate change. When and if such a program gets the necessary funding, it may well become the most significant legacy of the Girdwood workshop of 2000.

“The Talking Circle: A Perspective in Culturally Appropriate Group Work with Indigenous Peoples,” Joseph P. Bohanon, University of Southern Mississippi, 2006 [36] <https://www.se.edu/native-american/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2019/09/Proceedings-2005-Bohanon.pdf>

Abstract:

Social service programs are currently addressing service delivery, which utilizes a cultural competence or cultural sensitivity approach to the populations they serve. The need to go further than cultural sensitivity is for culturally appropriate intervention strategies that are fully incorporated into the social workers’ repertoire. The author will discuss a technique called “The Talking Circle,” which has been used in various groups to create a healing pattern that is legitimate to Indigenous Peoples. Based on values of sharing, respect, and honor, the Talking Circle is one way for Indigenous People to communicate about life events. Moreover, it is a way to explore the polarities which exist related to one’s heritage, relationships, challenges, stresses, and strengths.

Current & Relevant Information:

Cultural Competence

In the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Fact Sheet, “Cultural Competence” is defined as a set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities with, among, and between groups. This requires a willingness and

ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs, and to work with knowledgeable persons of and from the community in developing targeted interventions, communications, and other supports. The major concern for social workers that work with Indigenous Peoples is to have a cultural competency established within their own practices or within an agency. The consideration for more cultural competency training geared toward the Indigenous Peoples is vital for successful outcomes of those served.

Culturally competent programs are characterized and guided by the following general principles: 1) acknowledge culture as a predominant force in shaping behaviors, values, and institutions; 2) acknowledge and accept that cultural differences exist and have an impact on service delivery; 3) believe that variability within cultures is as important as variability between cultures; 4) respect the unique, culturally defined needs of various client populations; 5) recognize that concepts such as “family” and “community” are different for various cultures and even for subgroups within cultures; 6) understand that people from different racial and ethnic groups and other subgroups are usually best served by persons who are a part of or in tune with their culture; 7) recognize that taking the best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all.

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is defined as an awareness of the nuances of one’s own and other cultures. Basic awareness of other cultures is an important aspect in determining methods and interventions, but so is the awareness of biases, prejudices, and differences within one’s own culture. Some culturally sensitive approaches consist of listening or conducting reliable and valid research, designing interventions that are sensitive to the value constraints of both Western and traditional culture, involving the tribal community in the planning and implementation of programs, and remaining open to collaboration or co-therapy with traditional healers.

Cultural Appropriateness

In order to be culturally appropriate, one needs to be able to demonstrate both sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities and effectiveness in using cultural symbols to communicate a message. It is important to recognize these differences with Indigenous Peoples because of the historical distrust with systems they have experienced. Assistance has not always been there, or the goals of the services have not been followed through. One must recognize that the families that live within a community may consist of clans and lineage affiliations, which value particular ceremonies, activities, and protocols. The social worker needs to be aware of taking a slow and patient approach to building a relationship with Indigenous Peoples in addressing problems. There is a confidence established when social workers have an understanding of the respect for the spoken word and the unspoken one. Other

important aspects to remember are that kinship is associated with tribal members, wisdom is attributed to elders, cooperative efforts are more highly valued than individual ones, parenting is often delegated to other family members, education can be formal and informal, approaches to life are fraught with spiritual connections, and material things are not as important as the natural ways of life.

Conclusion

The areas of concern for the quality of care for Indigenous Peoples pertaining to service delivery involve not only cultural competency, but also going a step further with cultural appropriateness. Using the Talking Circle as a means to incorporate the group process in addressing issues by involving a culturally appropriate approach can help ensure the possibility of successful outcomes. This perspective establishes trust and creates an open discussion geared specifically to commonalities that agree with the culture. The Talking Circle generates a continuum of hope and partnership with other tribal members that encourages them to share life events and assures them that travel in the circle is not solitary. The Talking Circle can open up avenues of cooperation and strength to cope with issues of concern not only to Indigenous Peoples, but possibly others as well.

“Secularization and Social Control in Alaskan Eskimo Culture: Shifting from Fear/Power to Honor/Shame,” John Ferch, Alaska Bible College, 7 April 2018 [37]
<https://www.akbible.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Secularization-and-Social-Control-in-Alaskan-Eskimo-Culture.pdf>

Abstract:

The shamanistic roots of the Alaskan Eskimo culture are well-attested in contemporary ethnographic literature. An orientation to shamanism is generally a basic training requirement for any Westerner seeking to minister in the Northern indigenous context. Nevertheless, after years of ministry with the Eskimo people, it seems to me that this traditional focus on the supernatural dimension does not accurately represent the “heart” of modern Eskimo culture. The “spirit world” of their ancestors is rarely a major motivator in the day-to-day actions of my Eskimo students. That said, it is clear that my own Western approaches are often equally ineffective as motivators. I remember quite clearly when a student abruptly left my office mid-conversation after I communicated a bit too bluntly regarding some poor academic decisions. Though I attempted to provide personal motivation by appealing to the individual sense of reward and punishment, the student simply perceived accusations against their character, and chose to save face by leaving the room. I was left to wonder, “What am I missing in Eskimo culture?” As educators, and even more importantly as ministers, it is crucial that we understand the historic and contemporary orientations of the culture in which we serve. We must realize that the Eskimos’ approaches to such issues have not remained static over the years, nor have they simply adopted the individualistic Western framework oriented around

personal guilt and innocence. Diachronic study of Alaskan Eskimo culture suggests that the influence of Western secularization has caused a shift from a predominantly Fear/Power orientation towards a greater emphasis on Honor/Shame.

Current & Relevant Information:

Contemporary Culture: Social Control through Honor & Shame

As the “old ways” passed away and a secularized worldview began to take root, one might assume that the traditional mechanisms of social control would simply be replaced by Western ones. In terms of Muller’s three cultural “building blocks,” the Fear/Power dynamic would then be replaced by the Western emphasis on Guilt/Innocence. Human behavior would no longer be governed by supernatural spirits or a supreme deity, but rather by an individual sense of “right” and “wrong” and a desire to conform to internal moral codes and external public laws. However, an evaluation of contemporary Eskimo culture reveals that this is not the case.

Shame and Honor in the Old Ways

The secularization of Eskimo culture did not cause a widespread transition to the Western orientation of Guilt/Innocence, but rather “uncovered” and brought into prominence another dynamic of social control that had always existed beneath the surface. Though the earlier analysis of oral history and anthropological studies has identified Fear/Power as the primary dynamic of social control in early Eskimo culture, it is important to note Muller’s word of caution:

We must be careful, however, not to try and fit each culture or worldview into one specific category...all three building blocks are present in all cultures and worldviews, but how much of each one is present, determines the actual type of culture that emerges.

He goes on to make a specific suggestion about the indigenous cultures of North America, suggesting that they often consist “of elements of both shame-based and fear-based cultures.” This is consistent with the observations of anthropologist Paul Hiebert, who identifies strong elements of both Fear/Power and Shame/Honor in what he calls “small-scale oral societies.”

Returning to the sources consulted earlier, it is clear that an “undercurrent” of Shame/Honor complimented the dominant value of Fear/Power. This is illustrated again through the story of Qutleruq, who had killed her father by breaking the taboo against making braids. The result of her actions was ostracism from the community: “Qutleruq was now an outcast, labeled a ‘murderer.’ Yes, labeled as such, even by the whole village. The verdict given by a mother’s authority was final. It has been spoken.” Qutleruq struggled with this brand of shame throughout her life. It later caused her to be rejected by her mother-in-law as a source of bad luck:

Like any other mother who loved her children, Egaq's mother could sense the turmoil in her son's life. She, too, after this length of time, learned to love her daughter-in-law. But the fear of breaking rules of superstition was stronger. After the second baby came and died, she encouraged her son to leave his wife who was still in the snow shelter. This would be the quickest way to solve problems coming their way. Surely, the outcast in their family was the source of it all.

In Qutleruq's story, the dynamics of Fear/Power and Honor/Shame are seen to be working hand-in-hand: honor and shame were observed by the community in order to avoid supernatural consequences.

Anthropologists affirm this communal orientation. Survival for the Eskimo depended not only on supernatural power, but also on connectedness to other human beings through a widespread network of kinship for support and mutual sustenance:

Under this arrangement, all Eskimo who called each other by real or fictive kinship terms assumed a relation of sharing and cooperation (the extent of obligation depending on degree of distance from ego), and were seen by outsiders as being responsible for the actions of the entire kin group. Feuds occasionally arose between these groups and when the conflict resulted in murder, retaliation required the joint action of the appropriate kin members.

Status and face in the community were nearly as important for survival as spiritual power and influence. Sharing, caring, and hospitality were of paramount importance, and thievery and dishonesty were the greatest transgressions; "Any Eskimo found with the bad habit of either one was known by people in several communities. Distrust of such a person among the honest and truthful was, in itself, enough punishment and warning to others." These are clear examples of Shame/Honor values as defined earlier.

As the forces of Western secularization removed the dynamic of Fear/Power, this secondary orientation towards Honor/Shame has risen to the surface, and now operates as the primary dynamic of social control in rural Eskimo society. Napoleon relies heavily on shame-based language to describe the effects of the cultural transition upon his Yup'ik people. He argues that the death of the "old ways" brought a great sense of communal shame:

The survivors seem to have agreed, without discussing it, that they would not talk about it. It was too painful and the implications were too great. Discussing it would have let loose emotions they may not have been able to control. It was better not to talk about it, to act as if it had never happened, to nallunguaq. To this day nallunguaq remains a way of dealing with problems or unpleasant occurrences in Yup'ik life. Young people are advised by elders to nallunguarluku, "to pretend it didn't happen."

He goes on, discussing how this dynamic has shaped modern Eskimo behavior today:

The survivors were stoic and seemed able to live under the most miserable and unbearable of conditions. They are quiet, even deferential. They did not discuss personal problems with others. If they were hurt, they kept it to themselves. If they were angry, they kept it to themselves. They were lauded as being so respectful that they avoided eye-to-eye contact with others. They were passive. Very few exhibited their emotions or discussed them.

Examining social control among the Eskimo in more recent times, Chance affirms this orientation towards Shame/Honor: "As long as the Eskimo's economic and social security depends on the assistance and support of others, gossip, ridicule, and ostracism can be quite effective in ensuring conformity to group norms." These are often applied formally in the context of the village council, and in extreme cases banishment from the community is not unusual.

Conclusion

Western dominance has wrought a massive paradigm shift within the Eskimo worldview. Through the process of secularization, rural communities that once understood life and controlled society through supernatural power have been forced to give up this guiding principle. Honor and Shame now dominate as the major forces of social control in the rural Eskimo culture. When Europeans arrived with the gospel message, it was quickly accepted and adapted to the Fear/Power cultural orientation. The Eskimo of yesterday found in Jesus the power over evil and fear that their own shamans had long sought and predicted. Sadly, this victory was short lived. As that generation succumbed to epidemic and the "old ways" succumbed to Western secularization, the Shame/Honor framework has now emerged as the primary lens through which contemporary generations understand life.

The missiological task in Alaska remains. While the culture was effectively evangelized by the early missionaries from the Fear/Power perspective, it must in a sense be disciplined anew from the perspective of Shame/Honor. This new cultural framework has introduced a host of new questions:

The Eskimo youth is expected to be self-reliant in a physical and supernatural world over which he has little control. He must be friendly even with those people he may dislike. He should maintain a sense of pride but remain modest, be prepared for action but have patience. We may assume that these long-continued frustrations build up impulses toward aggression in the individual. Since others strongly condemn any overt expression of these feelings, the individual simply suppresses them (that is, they seldom come to his conscious awareness) except during sudden seemingly unexplainable outbursts of temper during which a mother shouts at her children, or a man beats his wife or destroys

someone's property. On rare occasions today, but more frequently in the past, these severe outbursts resulted in murder—or when turned inward, suicide.

These “outbursts” have only increased since Chance wrote in 1966, as Napoleon illustrates:

Tragically, under the influence of alcohol and drugs, the pent-up anger, guilt, shame, sorrow, frustration, and hopelessness often is vented through outbursts of violence to self and others. Such acts, which are difficult for others and even for the sufferer to understand, drive him further into the deadly vortex of guilt and shame.

In a sense, secularization has caused this ancient culture to lose an important bearing that it once had through understanding of the supernatural realm. Once freed from the power of fear, the culture now faces the slavery of shame. The gospel offers real answers to the question of shame, just as it offered to the question of fear in the days of Qutleruq and Egaq. The Eskimo church must adapt its methods to address these questions. Modes of ministry that demonstrate and affirm biblical perspectives on honor will help in this regard, as will modes that appropriately address the smothering blanket of shame that so often oppresses individuals and communities. Promoting open, honest communication about the hurts of the past can allow Jesus Christ to heal the shame of the present. “As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame’” (Romans 10:11).

More than this, the Eskimo church should seriously consider its attitude towards the Fear/Power dynamic of old. As has been demonstrated, the ancient worldview of Yuuyaraq was in many ways much more compatible with the biblical worldview than the secularism of contemporary culture. Loss of this worldview and the rise of secularism have removed an important aspect of social control, and allowed shame to wreak havoc. By finding ways to affirm, celebrate, and critically contextualize the ancient worldview within a biblical framework, the Eskimo church may find a helpful cultural countermeasure against the sense of lost identity and vocation that fuels the shameful cycle of alcoholism, drug abuse, and domestic violence decimating many Eskimo communities today.

“Alaska Native Elders’ Views of Abuse: The Tradition of Harmony, Respect, and Listening,” Kathleen Graves, Louise Shavings, and Elizabeth Rose, *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*, 2009 [38] <https://www.alaskaanthropology.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AJA-v71-optimized.pdf#page=74>

Abstract:

This project queried Alaska Native elders from the five major Alaska Native ethnic groups regarding their ideas about the causes and kinds of elderly abuse and asked them to suggest ways to reduce and control such abuse. They preferred to discuss the topic in terms of respect and disrespect, emphasizing a holistic understanding of

current disharmony that flows from the historical trauma experienced by Alaska Native people. Using a grounded theory approach in Part I, major themes are discussed regarding how harmony and balance are maintained through acceptance of one's own value and the value of all creation, including the natural world. The most prevalent kinds of elder abuse that they perceived, presented in Part II, are emotional disrespect of Alaska Native elders by well-meaning western institutions and Alaska Native youth and financial exploitation by family members.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction:

The population of elderly in the U.S. is increasing dramatically. In Alaska, this trend among Alaska Natives is even more dramatic, with more people reaching advanced age compared to the past. Saylor and Doucette (2004) reported a 62% increase over the past twelve years of Alaska Native elderly who are eighty-five years and older, compared to 13.2% for the non-Native population. With an increasing population of elderly comes a growing concern for abuse of the elderly. In 2004, the National Indian Council on Aging reported that there is little known about the scope and nature of abuse and neglect among Native elderly in "Indian country" in the Lower Forty-eight. Buchwald et al. (2000) reported a rate of abuse for urban Native Americans in the Lower Forty-eight that ranged from 2% to 46%, with the probability that socioeconomic factors are responsible for the variation. Segal (2004) suggested that studies are needed to determine how elderly abuse is viewed and defined by Alaska Native peoples.

In response to the above concerns about abuse of Alaska Native elderly, this project initially focused on understanding how elderly Alaska Natives view abuse, focusing solely on Alaska Native elderly residing in urban or hub locations. As will be explained below, we shifted to questions about respect and disrespect shown to Alaska Native elderly, then examined their perceptions of the causes and examples of elder abuse.

The urban location of respondents for this study is justified by the lack of health care in rural Alaska, which has resulted in an increasing influx of elderly to urban and "hub" centers such as Bethel and Barrow (Feldman 1980). In rural Alaska, fewer family members and others are, thus, available to care for the elderly within the community. Branch (2005) recommends expansion and improvement of personal care and community-based services in rural Alaska to lessen this influx of elders away from close family ties. Until that occurs, more and more Alaska Native elderly will be forced to reside where services for them are available.

Several key themes emerged from the data analysis methods. First, "elder" is a status not based primarily or solely on maturity in age. There are also traditional ways for asking for an elder's assistance. Most importantly, there are culturally significant values involving what is glossed in English as "listening," without which

the harmonious cycle of appropriate interactions with all things is broken, resulting in disharmony that can be expressed as disrespect for/abuse of elders. Part I summarizes the functions of elders and what it meant traditionally to respect and listen to elders. Part II summarizes respondents' points of view regarding how the breakdown of these traditional roles, respect for and holistic listening to elders has resulted in elder abuse.

Part I: Definition and Traditional Role of Alaska Native Elders:

Elders explained that there were things we need to know about traditional cultural values and how to define the role of "elder" prior to even discussing "elder abuse." We present their background knowledge here before we present findings about how they experience being abused in Part II.

The respondents defined the role and function of elders within the community. Elders are known for maintaining a healthy lifestyle and a wealth of cultural wisdom and good judgment.

Not all elderly Alaska Natives are viewed as elders, particularly when the individual does not live a healthy lifestyle and does not maintain a wealth of cultural knowledge. The chronological age of the individual is not necessarily connected with the ability to hold the role and status of elder within the community. When elderly Alaska Native people do not live their lives by these standards, they are not identified by their community as elders.

Athabascan elders usually do not offer unsolicited advice; elders need to be engaged and their advice requested. Elders will not interfere by imposing their knowledge on others but are happy to assist when asked. Alaska Natives traditionally learned that there are protocols in place whereby the elders are available for support when asked.

An Athabascan elder explained that there is a traditional way to ask for help from elders. The respondent explained that instead of directly asking for help from the elder, a plate of food was offered, which served as an outward sign or symbol that the elder's spiritual help was needed. The nonverbal request for spiritual help was implicit in the action of offering the food to the elder. There was no need for words.

While the above characteristics reflect the respondents' views of the role of the Alaska Native elder, this role requires a reciprocal role from the listener if the elder's role is to have an effect.

For Alaska Natives elders in this study, the primary emphasis traditionally was placed upon maintaining a balanced, harmonious, and interconnected relationship with others and with the natural environment, taught to the child as a fetus and fostered by learning as a child how to listen with one's whole being, not just with one's ears. The needs of the individual were secondary to the needs of the group.

When there is a lack of balance, harmony, and connection with others and the natural world, disrespect or abuse occurs, which is the subject of Part II of our study.

Part II: Alaska Native Elders' "Views of Abuse":

As described in Part I, Alaska Natives place primary emphasis on maintaining a balanced, harmonious, and interconnected relationship with others and with the natural environment, fostered by a cultural emphasis on "listening." The needs of the individual are secondary to the needs of the group (Markus and Kitayama 1991). When there is a lack of balance, harmony, and connection with others and the natural world, disrespect or abuse is present. As explained by an Alaska Native elder respondent when asked to define "disrespect":

Definition of disrespect: Not living correctly. Out of balance with nature or out of balance with other people.

The emphasis of Alaska Natives on living in balance with nature and other people as fostered by a culture of listening demonstrates the accuracy of the National Indian Council on Aging report that Native elders have different attitudes regarding abuse compared to non-Indian elders and that different responses to prevention are needed.

It was difficult for the elders who served as respondents in our study to talk about disrespect of elderly Alaska Natives. Many of the elders interviewed grew up at the time when traditional structures, practices, values, and beliefs were systematically dismantled and were replaced by western social, political, economic, religious, and justice systems. In the past, there were time-tested Alaska Native systems in place that controlled unacceptable social behaviors. There were nonconfrontational methods of resolving conflict. Many of the elder respondents grew up with a system of justice that helped to maintain balance and harmony while healing the victim and allowing the offender to regain trust within the community (Mirsky 2004).

The elders in our study were concerned that the Euro-American justice system causes further imbalance and disrespect. They are reluctant to put their families and communities at further risk by reporting abuse of the elderly. As a result, there is a pervasive reluctance to turn family members in to law enforcement and the Office of Protective Services, because of the goal of ensuring the longevity of the group. The elders were reluctant to directly address the issue of abuse, which appeared to be connected with a desire to protect the youth of their communities. Some expressed fear that directly addressing abuse of the elderly would trigger the epidemic of suicide among at-risk youth.

Other researchers in this delicate area need to be aware of why elders might be reluctant to discuss being abused. While some of the areas of abuse noted by the respondents in this study are likely similar to those experienced by non-Native elderly in the U.S., others seem particularly related to the colonialist experience of

Alaska Native peoples. The devastation of traditional family values, of the subsistence lifestyle that bonded generations together because of the vast knowledge of elders regarding how to harvest, hunt, and fish in the challenging environment of Alaska, the replacement of traditional institutions by western institutions for health, education, and social well-being, and the influx of alcohol and illicit drugs into communities were some of the destructive social impacts.

Emotional Abuse by Non-Native Institutions and Visitors. Most of the fifteen Alaska Native elder respondents in this study identified emotional abuse by non-Native institutions and visitors to their communities as one of the most widespread forms of disrespect experienced by Alaska Native elders. Emotional abuse is connected with elders' feeling as though the Native way of life and traditions are not respected by non-Natives who come into their communities. Native protocols, songs, stories, regalia, advice, and knowledge from elders are often disrespected. The non-Natives may be critical of the food they eat and the manner in which they live and may take an ethnocentric stance toward the elders' lifestyle.

Disrespect from Natives, Family, and Youth. Others mentioned that another form of emotional abuse is to place elders in extended care facilities and not visit them (a complaint that is not limited to Native elders). When caregivers, family members, and friends either consciously or unconsciously communicate to elders that they are a burden, elders are emotionally hurt. It is the traditional role of the elder to pass on knowledge to the next generation. When they are viewed as a burden or an imposition, instead of being respected as a leader with knowledge to share, cognitive dissonance occurs within the elders.

Verbal Abuse. Verbal abuse was frequently mentioned as experienced by Alaska Native elders. This form of abuse is difficult for the elderly to discuss, as was noted by this respondent: "It's hard for them to talk about it, verbal abuse." The significance of verbal abuse from family members is emphasized by this respondent:

But it's the verbal abuse that they suffer. And you know yourself, physical abuse you can take; it's the mental and verbal abuse that's really devastating for the elders.

Elders are Overburdened with Caring for Youth. In Alaska Native culture today, many grandparents take care of their children's children or their great-grandchildren, a phenomenon that has not been studied in detail but should be investigated. When elders are overburdened with caring for youth, they may experience physical, emotional, and financial strain. Many elders are providing full-time care for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren while the parents are unavailable due to substance abuse or lack of parenting skills. In the past, there were strict roles, boundaries, and responsibilities for each stage and age of the Native lifecycle. Due to colonialism, the roles and boundaries are not being taught and practiced today. Many children and grandchildren unknowingly, or sometimes knowingly, violate the

role of the grandparent and great-grandparent by leaving their children for extended periods of time.

Physical Violence and Substance Abuse. Alaska Native elders are at risk of physical abuse when their family members or other caregivers are engaged in substance abuse.

Financial Exploitation of the Elderly. Financial abuse of Alaska Native elderly was the most frequently mentioned form of abuse reported by the respondents and was reported as a problem for Native American elderly by 63% (N=19) of the Title VI directors surveyed in the National Indian Council on Aging report (2004). The poverty rates among Alaska Native families could be a contributing factor in the financial exploitation of Alaska Native elderly. Half of Alaska Native families have incomes below \$30,000. In rural areas, where Natives make up 60% of the population, income is especially low. Rural areas also have a higher cost of living than urban areas. Alaska Native poverty rates are at 20%, compared to 7% for non-Natives. For some families, the elder's social security check is the only source of income.

Analysis by Elders: The Disruption of the Cycle of Respect. Elders in our study voiced concern about a "spiritual sickness" related to the history of Alaska Natives that is being transmitted from one generation to the next. The elder respondents thus have a profound awareness of how the cycle of respect has been disrupted due to historical trauma, rapid acculturation, and present-day trauma.

Loss of Language has Diminished the Connection Between Elders and Youth. Loss of language has impacted the harmony and connection between elders and the youth. Elders reported that the loss of language is connected with the loss of culture, identity, and direction in life. Without the knowledge of their language, the learning process is altered and there is a disconnection between the youth and elders today. They were "forbidden to speak their language . . . severely punished by school superiors."

Traditional Spiritual Beliefs Were Lost or Went Underground. Because missionaries often misunderstood the spiritual practices of Alaska Natives, the practices became taboo. The practices that survived during this time period often went underground.

The Role of Historical Trauma. Disrespect today of Alaska Native elderly can be, in part, explained by focusing on the history of Alaska Natives. A common slogan of this time in American history was "Kill the Indian but save the man" which resonated with the dominant culture's policy of assimilation. The literature defines this experience as cultural genocide, historical trauma, and multigenerational grief.

Concluding Comments:

Traditionally, Alaska Native people had systems in place to restore justice that were mechanisms for handling the absence of respect. These mechanisms need to be recognized, accepted, and reinstated by Native leaders and elders. The system of justice involves traditional teachings, in particular maintenance of balance and harmony and respect for others and the natural world (Gray and Lauderdale 2006). A holistic approach to this issue, as identified by our Alaska Native elder respondents, is required.

D. Traditions:

“Celebrating Heritage Traditions in Alaska’s Indigenous Communities,” Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi, Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine, 11 December 2013 [39]
<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/celebrating-heritage-traditions-alaskas-indigenous>

Abstract:

At a recent appearance at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska, visiting artist resident Coral Chernoff (Alutiiq) brought with her a bear intestine that was recently harvested from Kodiak. She stood in the museum gallery and, holding onto the sides of the intestine, began gently blowing. With each breath the intestine became longer and wider. Once blown, Chernoff demonstrated the waterproof quality of the material by pouring a glass of water into the organ. There were no leaks; when wet, the texture of the intestine was silky and incredibly soft.

Historically, women from Kodiak Island utilized the viscera of bears, seals, and whales to construct durable, waterproof, and windproof parkas (sometimes referred to as a kamlieka). Such parkas were ideal for Kodiak’s maritime climate. They were worn by sea mammal hunters when out on the water in kayaks and during celebrations where the “gut parka” held symbolic meaning. Gut was also used to make containers, window coverings, and hats.

Current & Relevant Information:

Chernoff is entirely self-taught and has been experimenting with processing and sewing gut materials for the last few years. She says she enjoys making items that use natural materials from her home on Kodiak Island; along with working with intestines, she also experiments with bird skins, grasses, spruce roots, fish skins, and furs. With the bear gut that she brought to the museum; she plans to make her son a parka. The process is labor intensive and requires intimate knowledge of the properties of the gut material: after the animal is killed, the intestines are removed and thoroughly washed. Both the inside and outside are scraped clean with a spoon to remove all of the fatty tissues. Once clean, the intestines are hung to dry. They can then be split down the middle, wrapped into a ball, and stored in a cool place until she is ready to use them.

Although gut materials were once used as a common textile material from the far north to the south-central regions of Alaska's coast, Chernoff is one of a few Alaskan artists continuing this tradition. During the Russian-American period, Alaska Native people were introduced to manufactured clothing and gradually the need for Native-made clothing, such as gut parkas, dwindled. As Chernoff says, "We didn't have to make gut or salmon skin parkas because we could just go to the store and buy them." Today many Alaska Native artists are making choices to practice, preserve, and pass on customary traditions like gut processing and sewing so that these traditions remain a part of Alaska Native culture and identity. While some artists like Chernoff are working to revive their cultural traditions on their own, there are also institutions that provide support for Alaska Native artists. Non-profit institutions such as The CIRI Foundation and the Sealaska Heritage Institute provide financial support to encourage heritage programs among Alaska Native peoples. Museums and cultural centers such as the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository in Kodiak, the Alaska Native Arts Foundation in Anchorage, and other institutions provide support for workshops and training programs for Alaska Native artists. Such programs create opportunities to make Alaska Native art more visible in the state, help to solidify an image of Alaska Native culture, and financially support artists and tradition bearers in continuing their work.

One of the most important benefits for promoting Alaska Native heritage relates to healing from the effects of colonization. Heritage programs like those mentioned above can instill a sense of cultural self-esteem, dignity, and pride. With colonization, Alaska Native people experienced destructive cultural loss. In many cases they were made to feel ashamed of their Native heritage and were denied opportunities to learn about their cultural practices. Alaska Native heritage programs act to reverse the negative impacts of colonization by focusing on positive aspects of culture, reinforcing Alaska Native traditions as a source of pride that individuals should value and hold on to. Along with encouraging pride in culture, heritage projects also work to reclaim knowledge about Indigenous culture that has sometimes been controlled or silenced by dominant cultures.

In some situations, colonization alienated Native people from their material culture through the removal of cultural objects to museums or private collections. In other cases, Native communities were alienated from their ancestral lands and natural resources through changes in land ownership or coercive relocation of Native communities. Reintroducing the knowledge of artistic practices and art forms, returning to important ancestral places, and publicly performing or practicing traditions that were once condemned reclaims the authority over Native cultural practices to living Native people.

Alaska Native heritage programs ground people in who they are, and help to establish the characteristics that make a culture distinct. The materials used to make

some objects intimately connect the object to the place where the materials were collected, and by extension, the people who inhabit that region; for example, the fine beach grass of the Aleutian Chain used in basket making; argillite used for carving from the Queen Charlotte Islands; and vivianite found on the cliffs Nelson Island used as pigment. Perpetuating the knowledge of specific artistic materials and traditions by making, using, and documenting them helps to maintain a distinct cultural identity.

An additional benefit for heritage projects is that these activities create opportunities to encourage continuity and connection between generations; they often take place in a setting that includes the participation of multigenerational community members. As Chernoff explains, “It is not just about making art, it’s the context that takes place around it: the stories, having people get together and share food. In my family we had weaving every Sunday night and we would sit around and learn.” Such events are important because they create opportunities for young people to interact with and learn from elders, who are considered by many Alaska Natives to be the backbone of Native communities. Continuity between generations is also maintained through the continued engagement with objects, materials, and spaces that members of past generations have worked with— and such work reminds us of the cultural wealth that is contained within our communities.

“Alaska Natives Use Ancient Traditions to Fight Mental Health Problems,” Phil Dierking, VOA News: Learning English, 10 April 2018 [40]

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/alaska-natives-use-ancient-traditions-to-fight-mental-health-problems/4339418.html>

Abstract:

For thousands of years, the Yup'ik people of Alaska have depended on cultural traditions for their way of life. From one generation to the next, Yup'ik community leaders passed on their knowledge and skills to younger members of the tribe.

Now, some of these traditions may prove helpful to fighting substance abuse, depression and suicide within the Alaska Native community.

Current & Relevant Information:

Knowledge from tradition

Over the years, the lives of the Yup'ik people centered around the qasgiq, a house where many men lived and worked. Community celebrations were often held in the qasgiq. Most importantly, this also is where community leaders passed on their knowledge to the next generation.

"Our ancestors and grandfathers were like psychologists," said Billy Charles, a fisherman and former mayor of Emmonak, a rural town in southwestern Alaska.

"They had a system of early childhood development in place, and with every teaching, they'd say, 'It may not apply to you now, but later on in life when you meet the challenge, you'll know what to do.'"

Today, Charles serves as a researcher in the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Center for Alaska Native Health Research. He works to prevent health problems, such as drug abuse and suicide, in native communities.

Problems tied to colonization

Research shows that Alaska Native youth have a greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse than any other population group in the state. In 2015, more children died from suicide than any other cause.

The reasons have been linked to the shock of colonization. Russia established colonies in Alaska in the 18th century. In 1867, the United States purchased the territory from Russia.

As with Native American children in other parts of the U.S, the government removed Alaska Native children from their families and placed them in Christian schools. There, the boys and girls were required to give up their language, culture or religion.

Today, Alaska Native communities face a number of problems: poverty, poor housing, under-employment, drug abuse, violence and mental health issues.

The location of villages is also an issue, noted Evon Peter, an administrator for rural, community and Native education at the university. Peter is a Neetsaii Gwich'in and Koyukon Native from Arctic Village in northeastern Alaska. He told VOA that most Alaskan villages are very rural, and not connected by roads.

"For me to travel from Fairbanks to some of our villages, it's two days of travel and at least three different plane rides, sometimes costing as much as \$2,000," Peter said. He added this creates many difficulties for people to find work or receive medical or behavioral health care.

Climate change also creates problems for some communities, said Stacy Rasmus of the Center for Alaska Native Health Research.

"Alaska Native people are still very subsistence-based, very dependent on land-based food," Rasmus noted. She added that communities that hunt whales are finding it more dangerous to travel through ice, and some villages are having to move because they are losing land to rising ocean levels.

New solutions from the past

However, Rasmus said not all Native Alaskans are at risk of drug addiction or suicide. Earlier research has shown that Natives who are more connected to their traditional culture and language are less likely to take their own lives.

Rasmus and Charles have developed a cultural-based training and teaching guide called the Qungasvik, the Yup'ik word for "toolbox." Traditionally, Qungasviks were wooden boxes Yup'ik men used to keep tools and tobacco. They are designed to help young people build resiliency.

The book, available online, has 36 activities based on Yup'ik traditions. One of them involves recreating the qasgig to provide young people a way to connect with older community members. This can help them learn about their culture and history, develop life skills and take part in community life.

"Our elders instruct us that... we must gather together, hold hands and form a circle around our youth, sheltering them from evil," said Josie Edmund, in a video that is part of the Qungasvik.

"The point is to communicate to children that... you are valuable members of our community, and therefore, have much to live for."

This month, tribal representatives and mental health experts met with University of Alaska researchers for the first Statewide Gathering to Celebrate and Support Community Strengths. The goal of the meeting was to have experts come to share success stories and develop the best ways for improving mental health in native communities.

“Exploring the Rich Traditions of American Indian Culture,” Oglala Lakota, Running Strong for American Indian Youth, 2024 [41]

<https://indianyouth.org/native-american-history-culture/>

Abstract:

There are 574 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages in the United States, each with their own culture, language and history. Every tribe has unique traditions and distinct styles of housing, dress, and food. Federally recognized tribes vary in population and land base, but all are considered sovereign nations and hold a specific nation-to-nation relationship with the United States.

Current & Relevant Information:

Prior to European arrival in North America, tribes had effectively governed themselves for hundreds of years and had developed thriving systems of nurturing and teaching their youth and governing their communities. The U.S. government itself finds its roots in the principles of the Iroquois Confederacy. However, European conquest shattered many Native communities through forced relocation, warfare, broken treaties and foreign-brought diseases. Most Native communities were completely wiped out.

During the 18th and 19th centuries' "Indian Wars," relentless aggression by the U.S. Government caused Native peoples to lose their homelands. Broken treaties and

forced relocations displaced American Indians from the land of their ancestors, where they had been living for generations, to reservations. These reservation lands offered a fraction of the size and natural resources of what was taken. Tribes were split, combined with traditional enemies and/or forced to reservations far from home and sacred spaces. Laws like 1887 Dawes Act reinforced the dependency of reservation system with land reallocation that set forth to destroy the tribe as a social unit.

Under the shamefully misguided idea of “Kill the Indian and Save the Man,” federal laws and policies prohibited tribes from practicing their religion and ceremonies, laws that were not fully repealed until the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act, later amended to protect the Native American Church’s ceremonial use of peyote in 1994. Tribes lacked control of their own ceremonial items and even their human remains until the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act required federal agencies and institutions that receive federal funding to return Native American "cultural items" to their descendants and tribes.

In the Boarding School Era from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, the U.S. government enacted legislation that forcibly removed Native children from their homes and placed them in Christian boarding schools. These children were taken to hundreds of miles away from their families for years and faced severe discipline if they tried to speak their languages or practice their traditions. Many children died from malnutrition or disease. Those who survived returned years later to find themselves completely disconnected from their family and traditional ways.

The trauma and persecution endured by elder Native generations led to a breakdown of the Native family and tribal structure and a weakening of spiritual ties. Many Natives who attended boarding schools lost their sense of self through enforced shaming of their cultural identity. As a result, their children were raised with little awareness of their Native heritage and became disconnected from their tribal ways of knowing.

Today, many tribes in the United States are reviving their traditions and cultures. Central to this cultural renaissance is the importance of language and ceremony. A number of tribes have created language learning programs to preserve and pass on their tribal dialects to future generations. Ceremonies returned into practice, local radio stations began broadcasting in Native languages, pow-wows became an inter-tribal gathering space, and a new native generation is taught to live with dignity, character and pride. Running Strong supports several Native communities that are part of this movement, which brings strength and healing, and hope to today’s American Indian youth.

All tribes have a rich culture, whether founded in language or ceremony, which strengthen America as a nation today. Though Native cultures have struggled to

survive tribes' ever-changing relationship between self-determination and self-preservation, they remain vibrant and resilient as ever.

“For Native Alaskans, Tradition Is Yielding To Modern Customs,” Sarah Kershaw, The New York Times, 21 August 2004 [42]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/21/us/for-native-alaskans-tradition-is-yielding-to-modern-customs.html>

Overview:

When it became clear that the elders in this isolated Eskimo village on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea approved of the marriage, Clifford Apatiki's relatives did what was required of them: They bought him his bride.

That meant, according to a fast-fading custom here among the Siberian Yupiks, a small but sturdy native Alaskan tribe that has inhabited this treeless and brutally windy island since about A.D. 500, that Mr. Apatiki's family would spend at least a year coming up with the payment. They called on their relatives, here in Gambell, over in Savoonga, the other Yupik village on this island 38 miles from the Chukchi peninsula in Russia, and across Alaska, to send them things -- sealskins, rifles, bread, a toaster, a house full of gifts.

When the bride's family accepted the offerings, Mr. Apatiki, a skilled ivory carver and polar bear hunter, did what was required of him: he went to work for her family as a kind of indentured servant for a year, hunting seal, whale and polar bear, and doing chores.

Current & Relevant Information:

The marriage between Mr. Apatiki, 30, and the former Jennifer Campbell, 29, who was a bookkeeper for the village tribal council, was formalized five years ago, when traditional marriages such as theirs were still the norm here. But now the couple worry whether their children will follow suit because even in five years this and other centuries-old traditions in this village of 700 have been slipping away, as one of the most remote villages on earth finally contends with the modern world.

"I'm sure people will continue to do it for a while," Mrs. Apatiki said one evening in the living room of her one-story home in the village. "If the tradition isn't in effect with some families, they are whispered about. They will say about a girl, 'She was not bought.'"

Still, it is of great concern to the elders in Gambell that this marriage tradition is disappearing in the face of whirlwind change here over the last decade. Life has shifted so much in Gambell, where satellite television, rising rates of alcoholism and a growing rejection by the younger generation of the Yupik language and customs have begun to chip away at tradition and at a hunting-and-gathering subsistence lifestyle, that it is as if the world here is playing on videotape stuck on fast-forward.

And fewer couples are getting married in the traditional way, despite pleas from their parents and grandparents in this whaling community. The rising tension between the old ways and the new ones, between older generations and younger ones, is playing out in native villages across this state, where 16 percent of the population is native Alaskan, comprising 11 distinct cultures and speaking 20 different languages. The Internet, much more regular airline travel and other modern advances are connecting even the most remote Alaskan villages to mainstream society.

"Gambell, it has changed quite a bit now," said Winfred James, 82, one of the village's most knowledgeable elders, one recent evening in his living room, where he was watching a CNN interview with Senator John Kerry and his wife.

"Westernization is coming in."

Mr. James said he and other elders were deeply concerned about losing the marriage customs, "but it probably will change with the next generation."

"We try to teach them to do that, you know," he added. "So, they can know each other, so they can stick together."

Village residents say that more and more young couples are simply living together and not pursuing the traditional marriage customs or that men are working for the families of their fiancées for much shorter periods, if at all.

"They work for maybe a month, and then I guess they forget," said Christopher Koonooka, 26, who teaches at the village school in a bilingual program. Mr. Koonooka said he saw many of his peers rejecting the old traditions.

The Siberian Yupiks inhabit Gambell and Savoonga, another village of 700 people about 50 miles from here, and parts of the Siberian Chukchi Peninsula, where about 900 Siberian Yupiks live. Gambell was named after a Presbyterian missionary, Vene Gambell, who came to St. Lawrence Island in the late 1800's. He was followed by other missionaries, whose Western-sounding surnames made their way into the lineage of the Yupiks.

The first working telephones were installed here in the 1970's, and television was not readily available until about a decade ago; running water became available to about half of the homes here about five years ago. Before satellite television, Gambell residents watched the news at least two weeks late on videotapes flown in with other supplies from Nome, the closest city on the Alaska mainland, 200 miles away and reachable only by small plane.

Almost every house has a satellite dish, and the first cellular telephone tower was built, near the one-room trailer that serves as the police station, a few years ago.

The people here generally welcome much of the technology even as the village elders and others say television is a particularly disturbing force.

For example, Global Positioning Systems now provide great assistance to hunters who could otherwise get terribly lost in the rough Bering Sea, especially because some of the old knowledge about how to find the whales, seals and walrus has been lost.

And the Internet has not only allowed greater access to information, but ivory carvers, who would otherwise have to wait for the occasional tourist or birder, use it to advertise and sell their wares. (Only the hardiest birders make the trek out here from Nome, and tourists arrive only once in a while, on cruise ships that sometimes stop on the shores of Gambell.)

"Technology has had a big impact, in good ways and bad ways," said Mattox Metcalf, high school program art coordinator for the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage and a Siberian Yupik who was born in Gambell. "Some of my relatives have said they are competing hard with what's on T.V."

"The younger people are seeing stuff on T.V., and they are slowly realizing that what they do is different from what other people do in the U.S.," said Mr. Metcalf, 24, who travels here frequently to visit relatives. "And they want to be like them. The older people are trying to fight for their minds and fight for their attention. It is kind of at a stalemate right now."

Carol Zane Jolles, an anthropologist at the University of Washington who has studied the people of St. Lawrence Island and recently published a book about her research, said she had seen radical changes here, even since she first visited in the late 1980's. Returning in the last few years, Dr. Jolles was struck, she said, by how children were speaking English first with each other, rather than Siberian Yupik, the main language of their parents, and that she saw major shifts in the marriage customs and in family structure.

In a society still structured around clans, the recent construction of modern houses has shifted the emphasis from the extended family to the nuclear family, she said. The newer homes, pre-fabricated and shipped here, replaced the small driftwood and walrus-hide houses that still stand in the older part of the village, where dozens of people live and there is no running water.

"Everyone now has access to the way the rest of the world lives," Dr. Jolles said. "They are American citizens and they have the same interests and values."

She added, "They are watching how other people live on television, the modern movies, and there is a great impact on young people."

As much as things have changed in Gambell, there are some constants, and on a recent summer afternoon, life, on the surface anyway, was unfolding much as it has for hundreds of years.

Split walrus skins, used to cover and waterproof the hunting boats, were stretched across wooden planks, drying out under the sun. Some of the women were picking greens up on the mountain, preparing to soak them in tall buckets of mountain spring water and store them for the winter. In the winter, the rocky mountain is bare, except for gravestones and above-ground coffins in the village cemetery and piles of snow. There are greens and berries to be harvested here in the summer and sea fruits wash up on the beach in the fall, but no fruits or vegetables can be found in the winter.

Other women were picking through the cache of meat carved from a 40-foot bowhead whale caught last April, contemplating dinner. The meat is kept in hand-made freezers dug out in the still frosty tundra, on a foggy landscape scattered with giant whalebones, prized trophies laid across the black gravel. Later that night, the women sliced up the whale blubber and served it on a large tray, along with bits of smoked seal and walrus flippers, a delicacy, at a party for a couple celebrating their 17th wedding anniversary.

The men, meanwhile, including Kenneth James, 24, the grandson of Winfred James and an up-and-coming whale, walrus and reindeer hunter, were checking their nets for salmon and trout, zooming back and forth between their one-story wooden houses and the beach on all-terrain vehicles that, in the summer, replace snowmobiles as the only mode of transportation in this roadless village. Others were buffing and polishing their intricate walrus ivory carvings.

Kenneth James, perhaps one of the last to abide by the marriage tradition, will soon begin working for his girlfriend's family, once his grandfather gathers an acceptable amount of goods for them.

He was stoic about his duty.

"I will be going to work soon," Mr. James said late one evening, as the sun, which does not set here in the summer until 2 a.m., was still lighting up the village.

He was eager to hop on his all-terrain vehicle and check his salmon nets.

"It's what I will do," he said.

This evidence that some young people are still keeping the marriage tradition makes many elders happy.

Perhaps the Gambell resident most concerned about what the village is facing these days is Edmond Apassingok, 41, president of the Indian Reorganization Act Council, which, along with the Gambell City Council, governs the village.

Mr. Apassingok, a whale hunter who caught a 50-foot whale last January (the meat is shared among all the residents and catching a whale is cause for a huge, emotional celebration) is deeply concerned about the rising temperatures in Alaska, he said. The climatic change, the annual mean temperature has risen in Alaska 5.4

degrees over the last 30 years, has shortened the season for whale hunting because the ice that provides the right conditions for the whales has begun to melt earlier in the spring.

But Mr. Apassingok has other worries, as well.

"Every generation is losing something," he said.

“Climate Change Effects on Traditional Inupiat Food Cellars,” Michael Brubaker, Jacob Bell, and Alicia Rolin, Research Gate, 19 October 2009 [43]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Michael_Brubaker/publication/237655457_Climate_Change_Effects_on_Traditional_Inupiaq_Food_Cellars_Center_for_Climate_and_Health/links/02e7e5216550407ce5000000/Climate-Change-Effects-on-Traditional-Inupiaq-Food-Cellars-Center-for-Climate-and-Health.pdf

Abstract:

This paper reports on a special health concern identified in Point Hope during the Climate Change Health Impacts Assessment performed in May 2009: the thawing of traditional food storage cellars due to warming soil temperature. This problem is reducing the quality and quantity of food available to the residents of Point Hope. Adaptive strategies are necessary to restore food security in Point Hope and in other Arctic communities that depend on traditional storage cellars.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

In May of 2009, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) performed a Climate Change Assessment in Point Hope, Alaska. It was performed by ANTHC's Center for Climate and Health in partnership with the Maniilaq Association, the regional tribal health consortium for Northwest Alaska. The purpose of the assessment was to record local observations related to climate change and to explore adaptive strategies for improving community health. The purpose of this paper is to raise awareness about an emerging health issue and to identify potential adaptation strategies.

Background

Point Hope is an Inupiat community of about 700 residents. It is located on a gravel spit that creates a natural peninsula extending out into the Chukchi Sea. It is an ideal location for hunting and gathering wild foods, most importantly bowhead whale. Whaling defines the identity of Point Hope and drives social and cultural activities. From a nutrition, food security and mental health standpoint, whaling is critical for overall community wellness.

During our assessment, twenty-two interviews were performed including with the Mayor, the Tribal Council President, other representatives of the city and tribal

council, as well as the school, health clinic, fire department, police department, and public works. Elders were interviewed, including retired whaling captains, and there were discussions with students and presentations at Tikigaq School. Throughout the interviews, concern about the thawing food cellars was expressed repeatedly as was the desire to find a solution.

In Point Hope, underground cellars dug into the permafrost have provided food storage for thousands of years. Nature provided the Inupiat with all the necessary materials: whale bone and drift wood for the frame, sod for the roof, and frozen ground for refrigeration. The traditional cellars, “sigl’uaq” in the Inupiaq language, are still in use today. They offer convenience (located near the old town site), ample space, and an economical method for refrigeration.

However, during the last decade, average summer air temperature in Point Hope crossed a threshold, resulting in “permafrost” was no longer permanent. Above average temperatures resulted in sigl’uaqs where the ground was completely thawed and sometimes flooded with melt water. As a result, whale meat and blubber from the Spring whale hunt is being put in storage months before the ground temperature is cold enough to freeze. This can result in spoiled meat, increase the risk of food related illness, and become an attraction for polar bears and other animals. If warming trends continue in the Northwest Arctic, we can expect to see decreasing periods when ground temperatures are adequate for food storage. The loss of traditional sigl’uaqs is a crisis for Point Hope and for other Arctic villages.

National Weather Service data indicates that the Northwest Arctic climate has been gradually warming, with a 3.3°F total increase in annual temperature between 1949 and 2005. During the same period, the increase in summer temperature was 2.7°F, and 7.2°F in winter (Shulski & Wendler, 2007). Within 50 years, (2061 to 2070) Point Hope’s mean annual temperature is projected to increase by an additional 6°F to 12°F (SNAP, 2009). Climate models also project increases in precipitation across Alaska and higher summer temperatures would increase evaporation and transpiration resulting in drier conditions and reduced soil moisture (Meehl et al., 2007). Permafrost temperatures have increased throughout Alaska since the late 1970s (Lettenmaier et Al., 2008). As much as the top 30 ft of discontinuous permafrost is projected to thaw in Alaska over this century (Parson 2001). The largest increases in soil temperature have been measured in the northern part of the state (Osterkamp, T., 2007).

Vulnerability & Adaptation

Arctic indigenous peoples are known to be particularly vulnerable to health impacts of climate change, in part because of the threat to traditional food safety and food security (Confalonieri et al., 2007). The traditional subsistence diet of Alaska Natives is nutritious and protective against the development of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other metabolic disorders (Boyer et al., 2007). Loss of adequate

storage effects food security and also raises concerns about the potential for foodborne illnesses.

The most common types of foodborne illnesses in humans are caused by bacteria such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *E. coli*, and viruses such as Norovirus. Higher temperatures have been found to increase incidences of salmonella cases (Kovats et al., 2004). These pathogens typically cause symptoms such as fever, diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Pregnant women, infants, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe infections. Community health aides have not reported any unusual change in the number or type of food related illnesses in Point Hope (Davenport, A., 2009). However, the health aides and other residents, including whaling captains, have expressed concern about the decreasing quality of sigl-uaq stored whale meat (Towksjhea, J., 2009).

The environment inside the sigl-uaq critical to food safety. Bacteria must multiply before enough are present in food to cause illness. Given warm, moist conditions and an ample supply of nutrients, one bacterium can produce millions of progenies in a single day. Below freezing temperatures (32°F to 0°F) impede most bacteria growth but allow some to survive. The optimal storage temperature for most frozen foods is from 0°F to -10°F (USDA, 1994). Whale meat and whale blubber preserve differently, temperatures below -10°F are ideal, allowing for preservation of up to one year (Drum, D., 2009).

Preservation of food is accomplished in several ways. In addition to refrigeration, high levels of salt, sugar or acid keep bacteria from growing, which is why salted meats, jam, and pickled vegetables are time honored methods for preserving foods. Similarly, microbes are also killed by heat. If food is heated to an internal temperature above 160°F for even a few seconds it is sufficient to kill most parasites, viruses and bacteria. The toxin that causes botulism is completely inactivated by boiling. This is why canned foods must be cooked to a high temperature under pressure as part of the canning process. To address food security and safety problems in Point Hope, alternative methods for food storage can be developed. There are several possible adaptive approaches: 1) improve the storage environment at the current location, 2) establish new sigl-uaqs at a location with a better subsurface environment, and 3) develop an alternative method for food storage.

1. Improve the environment at the current location

The conditions at the sigl-uaq location in Point Hope make continued use of the traditional sites very challenging. Erosion has caused many of the sigl-uaqs to be reclaimed by the sea, and storm surges can flood the old town area. Permafrost thaw creates two problems; the lack of adequate soil temperature and high moisture and humidity. Factors including ventilation, drainage, and temperature should be considered in developing appropriate storage strategies.

2. Establishing new sigl-uaqs at a location with a better subsurface environment

There may be other locations near Point Hope where the conditions are better suited for underground food storage. With an understanding of local permafrost conditions, other sites could be considered. Year-round soil temperature is a key measure of suitability. Currently there is at least one soil boring located in Point Hope actively logging soil temperatures throughout the year. This was established through a collaborative project between the Tikigaq School and Kenji Yoshikawa of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Geotechnical Institute. There are also plans underway to install temperature loggers inside sigl-uaqs to acquire more information about year-round temperature. Development of test borings in other areas could help identify potential alternative storage sites.

3. Develop an alternative method for food storage

There are alternative methods of food storage that could be considered, such as community freezers using conventional systems and alternative approaches that blend new technology with traditional knowledge. Alternative methods for using underground cellars have been developed in many places around the Arctic and provide models that are efficient and cost effective. Training courses are available in Alaska that provide instruction on how to build food storage structures that achieve optimal temperatures (0°F to -10°F) with maximum efficiency (Drum, D., 2009). Another possibility is the development of sigl-uaqs that are assisted during warm months from refrigeration. It is possible to construct efficient systems powered by alternative energy (H'ebert, J., 2009).

Conclusion

Loss of traditional food storage cellars is occurring in Point Hope and other Arctic communities in Alaska, due to warming soil temperatures and permafrost thaw. This phenomenon is reducing the quality and quantity of food available to residents. Adaptive strategies are necessary to restore food security. Any adaptation response should be locally driven, culturally appropriate, economical, sustainable and meet public health guidelines. Adaptive practices for food management can help to reduce the negative effects of climate on health (Lake et al. 2009). Without adaptive measures, current climate conditions will continue to destabilize food security and increase the risk of foodborne illnesses in Point Hope.

“Local Traditions and Subsistence: A Synopsis from Twenty-Five Years of Research by the State of Alaska,” Robert J. Wolfe, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence, July 2004 [44]

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/download/Technical%20Papers/Tp284.pdf>

Abstract:

This report provides a synopsis of findings on subsistence systems in Alaska, drawing on a quarter century of research by Alaska Department of Fish and Game,

Division of Subsistence. The synopsis examines the localized nature of subsistence systems. Subsistence is shown to comprise a varied set of localized systems of food production and distribution, representing relatively unique combinations of ecological, cultural, and economic factors. The report concludes that there is not one subsistence tradition in Alaska, but a multitude of subsistence traditions linked to particular localities. The creators and principal users of these localized subsistence traditions are the long-term residents in the communities and areas where they occur. For resource managers to achieve fish and game management goals, locality is at times an essential regulatory tool. To illustrate this, the report presents three case examples of local subsistence traditions associated with difficult resource management issues arising from competition between urban-based harvesters and rural subsistence users: brown bear hunting in western Alaska, salmon dip net fishing in the Copper River, and Nelchina caribou hunting. The three cases illustrate ways that resource management systems have used locality within regulations to resolve resource issues.

Current & Relevant Information:

In Alaska, subsistence uses are the customary and traditional uses of fish and wildlife for food and other noncommercial purposes. Subsistence uses are parts of localized traditions of wild food production, tied to specific places by ecology, community, culture, and economy. After twenty-five years of subsistence research, data collected by the State of Alaska strongly support this observation. There is not one subsistence tradition in Alaska, but a multitude of subsistence traditions linked to particular localities. The creators and principal users of these localized subsistence systems are the long-term residents in the areas where they occur.

The localized nature of subsistence traditions can be illustrated by two case examples. The first is the communal hunt of bowhead whales from Arctic coastal villages. In this annual hunt, whale strikes (determined within an international management structure) are allocated and transferred among a designated set of communities with traditional uses of bowhead whales. The skin, fat, and meat from a killed whale (pulled ashore by community members) are widely distributed and celebrated within communities following customary rules. This subsistence system is clearly localized: bowhead whale hunting is found in Alaska within four Arctic slope villages (Point Hope, Wainwright, Nuiqsut, and Kaktovik), five Bering Strait villages (Ganbell, Savoonga, Wales, Little Diomedea, and Kivalina), and one regional center (Barrow), all member communities of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC). The second example, less well known but of regional importance, is the annual subsistence harvest of herring roe on hemlock branches in Sitka Sound. In this fishery, individual boatmen (predominately Tlingit from Sitka and neighboring communities) sink hemlock branches beneath the milky waters of spawning herring runs to capture their eggs (up to about 120,000 lbs. some years). The egg-covered branches (called haaw) are cut up (commonly frozen) for distribution among families

throughout the region, with some sold for small amounts of money. This subsistence system is also localized: roe-on-hemlock fisheries are found in Alaska only at Sitka and a few other villages in the southeast archipelago.

When “subsistence” is examined across Alaska, one discovers it comprises a varied set of localized systems of food production and distribution, much like these two cases, representing relatively unique combinations of ecology, community, culture, and economy. The annual bowhead hunts and the annual herring roe-on-hemlock harvests are just two examples of a multitude of localized subsistence systems throughout rural Alaska.

Many localized subsistence systems have been described by the State of Alaska’s subsistence program, formally established by statute in 1978 to document subsistence patterns in Alaska. Descriptions are found in the state’s technical paper series, covering research in about 180 communities, while quantitative information is stored in a computerized Community Profile Database. Scientific documentation has been essential for the sustainability of some subsistence systems, as illustrated by our two examples. The bowhead hunt in Alaska continues as a legal hunt because of a special exemption written into the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 allowing for traditional hunts by coastal Alaska Natives under customary rules through the AEWC. Similarly, the herring roe-on-hemlock fishery in Sitka Sound continues as it does under subsistence regulations crafted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries alongside a much larger and newer commercial fishery that exports herring sac roe to Japan. Documentation has allowed the bowhead hunt a roe-on-hemlock fishery to successfully compete within their respective resource management regimes. Without good information, Alaska’s customary and traditional subsistence systems otherwise might be inadvertently or unwisely displaced, disallowed, transformed, or neglected among other competing enterprises.

This report provides a synopsis of some findings on subsistence systems in Alaska, drawing on the quarter century of research by Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Previous summaries of this data set have identified general characteristics of subsistence socioeconomic systems in Alaska, including substantial wild food production in rural communities, domestic modes of production, and mixed cash-subsistence sectors in rural economies, among other features. Adding to these general summaries, this synopsis highlights the localized nature of subsistence systems. The report elaborates on a point that is sometimes lost in general descriptions of subsistence, that subsistence systems are localized because of a constellation of factors, including the ecologies, cultures, and economies of users.

The focus on locality for this synopsis was chosen because of its pertinence for current subsistence management regimes. While subsistence traditions and their participants are clearly localized, using geographic information as regulatory tools has at times proved difficult within resource management systems, particularly in

regards to delimiting eligibility for subsistence hunts and fisheries under federal and state regulations. Yet, in order to achieve management goals, locality is at times an essential regulatory tool for resource managers. The synopsis begins with a general discussion of two types of local socioeconomic systems in the state and their relationship to subsistence uses. The discussion then describes the local character of subsistence traditions. Following this, the report presents case examples of local subsistence traditions. The cases were associated with difficult resource management issues, primarily due to competition between urban-based sportsmen and rural subsistence users. The cases illustrate ways that state and federal resource management systems have used locality within regulations to resolve resource issues.

“Harvested Food Customs and Their Influences on Valuable Functioning of Alaska Native Elders,” Janell Smith, et al., Alaska Journal of Anthropology, 2009
[45] <https://www.alaskaanthropology.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AJA-v71-optimized.pdf#page=103>

Abstract:

Valuable functioning, an empowered quality of life evident in Alaska Native communities, is influenced at least in part by a lifestyle dependent on fish, game, and plants harvested by the consumer. Elders play important roles in the transmission of knowledge and skills necessary for continuation of food harvesting customs, and through this process, elders feel valued and obtain quality of life. This paper examines how elders view their roles. Communities based on harvested foods have similar food cultural experiences even though land, location, language and tribal entities are different. The proposed model of food culture illustrates eight key constructs. Traditional Native foods are central and appear to be predicated on continued use, access, and participation in the procurement. The communities' continued involvement of older adults is viewed as an indication of respect for elders and links villages to experiences of the past and provides a vehicle for the elders' achievement of valuable functioning, a component of quality of life.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The role of elders in continuing the harvested food culture found in Alaska Native communities is explored in this paper through an examination of aspects of traditional food beyond nutrient intake. “Aging” is a biocultural phenomenon, not simply a biological process, and thus, it is important to document observed habits to potentially understand the progression of aging within the context of a Native community.

Included in this essay is a reexamination of the testimony gathered at the Voices of Our Elders Conferences (2004–2006, as described below) for the purpose of

presenting a broad overview of food issues that affect Alaska tribes. These conferences heightened our understanding of the similarities between the groups as their comments revealed the importance of harvested foods in their lives. Using quantitative data collected by the authors, we link contributions of harvested food to quality of life and the achievement of a sense of well-being by the elders, or what Sen (1993:31) referred to as achievement of “valuable functioning.” The data presented moves towards defining a measure of valuable functioning based on the following attributes: elder personal well-being, sense of purpose, and the achievement of the role of elder status (community-recognized culture-bearer due to an older person’s culturally congruent lifestyle, not simply to being elderly).

There is always the possibility that the authors have oversimplified or misunderstood the broad nature of the elders’ comments. This paper in no way attempts to minimize the importance of cultural differences and the benefits of the varied diets of Alaska tribes. It was our goal to use comments of Native elders to increase our understanding of harvested food customs and the relationship to quality of life as older individuals living in Native communities increase in age. Consistently in the Voices of Our Elders Conferences testimony, from both rural and urban locations, the older participants wanted greater access to harvested Native foods and reported that they felt better when they had access to harvested foods. Universally across tribal groups was the sense of purpose (and thus well-being) that came when the elders were involved not only in the act of eating fish, but also in the planning prior to harvest, the actual harvest, as well as in the processing and distribution of the harvest.

The issue of the importance of harvested foods to the lives of elders is not a new issue for Alaska Native communities. Pioneering work in the late 1970s was conducted by Kerry Feldman with a team of interdisciplinary students from the University of Alaska Anchorage, which documented the desire of elders in Anchorage for harvested foods when they moved away from their rural village to urban locations such as Anchorage. From this initial study, fresh Alaska salmon prepared in traditional ways was added to the menus served in the Anchorage congregate meal program to Native senior citizens.

Roughly speaking, there are 15,600 older Native individuals over the age of fifty-five who identify themselves with one of the 229 federally recognized Alaska Native tribes (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Approximately 10,500 (or one third) of Native older individuals live in Alaska’s rural communities and half of all Alaska Natives live in rural areas.

Conclusions

Consistently in testimony from all locations, be it rural or urban, the elders wanted greater access to Native foods and reported that they did not feel as well when they did not have it. The narrative data suggests that universally across all groups was

the sense of purpose (and thus wellbeing) that came from the elders' involvement in being part of the harvested food culture. It was not only the act of eating fish, but also the planning prior to harvest, the actual harvest, and the processing and distribution of the harvest.

Our conceptual model of harvest-based food culture presented components of valuable functioning. These expressions included tribal history; a positive perspective on life; family, and community; participation in Native life, food sharing, and food security; and respect for the land. Valuable functioning, as expressed by Alaska Native elders, is multidimensional, encompassing social, cultural, and psychological influences, with food and food-sharing processes as the keystone. Valuable functioning includes the availability of and access to culturally significant foods, as well as the community interaction that coexists as part of the food harvesting and food-sharing processes. The elders' view of harvested food appears to incorporate both objective and subjective experiences, and throughout this process the value of the elders' knowledge is reinforced. The importance of routine activities is consistent with Schlettwein-Gsell's (1992) view that quality of life encompassed a food component. She proposed that the importance of food-related behaviors increased with age, especially routines that surround food that she proposes equates to the pleasure of the food experiences.

In rural communities, extended family members and kin-based food-sharing networks provide not only food for the elderly but also socially structured food activities (such as planning for the hunt or harvest) and food practices (actual harvest, then the preparation and distribution of food). These food activities increase personal interactions between elders and the community. Food-related activities also provide opportunities for sharing traditional knowledge by the elders and obtaining valuable functioning. Elders in the rural setting are near "people they know," and it is a place "where they can get their Native foods" (Smith 2007:228). The application of the valuable functioning construct also includes the elders' ability to participate in family activities, food preparation activities, and the teaching of traditional cultural skills to younger community members.

These data indicate that the well-being of Native elders is intricately linked to continued use and access to land and natural resources. As competition increases among various stakeholders both in and out of state, and as climate change scenarios deleterious to traditional food abundance unfold, the level of anxiety concerning the change also increases. These threats to community balance are not theoretical but are played out in day-to-day activities with implications for the health of not only elders but for other age segments of the village as well.

LaBelle summarized the importance of the findings:

We know that the collection of foods to feed our bodies has other values, which creates an interdependence of the spiritual, family, communal and tribal survival

constructs. Policy makers should acknowledge that other terms exist within the indigenous world; not just a term created for western usage in making laws and regulations for first peoples to follow. The sad thing here is that federal and state fish and game administrators have attempted to learn of the “subsistence” patterns of certain people, ultimately using that information to regulate their activities, sometimes with ruinous results. And that is because they are attempting to use western concepts and understanding based largely on western economic models while not acknowledging existing cultural models. It’s no wonder that some tribes view regulators with suspicion. (LaBelle field notes, 2008)

The quantitative and qualitative data support the value of harvest-based food culture in the lives of older Native individuals. In this context, elders’ comments and our observations document how harvest-based food culture retains tribal history, myths, stories, values, and language. Food culture is significant in the lives of Native elders because of its relationship to traditional norms of respect for plants and animals, to their sense of food security, and to the special contributions traditional foods make to well-being and quality of life. Connections to the land and to community members and extended families are demonstrated in day-to-day activities and in a positive attitude toward the health and daily life resulting from contact with the Alaska environment.

Retention of food culture is integral to the retention of Native pride and history. Participation in these activities is viewed as essential preparation in fulfilling the role of an elder as a keeper of historical memory, linked to ensuring his or her significant future role within the community, and the survival of the community as well.

“Traditional Healing,” Stanford School of Medicine: Ethnogeriatrics [46]
https://geriatrics.stanford.edu/ethnomed/alaskan/fund/traditional_healing.html

Abstract:

Alaska Natives have healing practices that go back over 10,000 years and today these practices are beginning to reemerge. Historical events diminished these practices due to weakening trust in their effectiveness and fear related to missionary teachings. However, presently there is resurgence in the use of traditional healing practices. Programs have been developed in which these practices are used by tribal doctors and Western trained allopathic physicians to incorporate Alaska Native values and beliefs for promoting health, preventing disease, reducing pain, and enhancing emotional wellness. A blending of elements of Alaska Native cultural practice along with Native American tribal practices is used by tribal doctors and traditional healers. Great variability exists among various Alaska Native cultures with regards to beliefs and practices.

Current & Relevant Information:

Tribal Doctors

Tribal doctors are generally employed by tribal health organizations in Alaska and are sometimes certified by a credentialing body. They may have completed a formalized training with an apprenticeship with a more experienced tribal doctor. Most may have restrictions with regards to practices that break the skin or use medicinal plants without concurrence from the referring allopathic physician.

Traditional Healers

Traditional healers are customarily identified by their community, work informally, and are considered to possess an inborn “gift” of healing. They sometimes continue to uncover their unique “gift” through apprenticeship and by observing more experienced healers. Many do not charge for their services but are given gifts as an expression of gratitude.

Healing Practices

Typical traditional healing practices include but are not limited:

- Healing Hands (therapeutic massage)
- Prayer (group or individual)
- Cleansing (burning of sage)
- Song and Dance (drumming circles)
- Traditional Plant Medicine (for treatment of various ailments)
- Culturally sensitive and supportive counseling (talking circles)

When appropriate, Tribal Doctors refer patients to regional or statewide hospitals or health care clinics for additional treatment.

E. Family:

“American Indian and Alaska Native Children: Results from the 2000 Census,” C. Matthew Snipp, Population Reference Bureau, April 2002 [47]

<https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-AmericanIndianandAlaskaNativeChlidreninthe2000Census-2002.pdf>

Summary:

Between 1990 and 2000, the population of American Indian and Alaska Native children virtually doubled, largely reflecting changes to the 2000 Census that allowed respondents for the first time to identify their background as consisting of more than one racial or ethnic group.

Overall, 4.1 million people reported “American Indian” or “Alaska Native” as their race on the 2000 Census, representing about 1.5 percent of the total U.S.

population. About 2.5 million people identified themselves as only American Indian or Alaska Native, while another 1.6 million people identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native along with one or more other races.

Children make up 1.4 million of the total American Indian and Alaska Native population. Of these, 550,000 were identified as multiracial—American Indian and Alaska Native plus some other race. The remaining 850,000 were identified as only American Indian or Alaska Native.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are among the poorest groups in American society. In 1999, while the nation's poverty rate stood at 13.6 percent for families with children (and 9.4 percent for white families with children), 27.0 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native families with children were in poverty. The poverty rate is even higher (32.4 percent) for American Indian and Alaska Native families with children under age 5.

American Indian and Alaska Native children have parents who are on average less educated and poorer than the parents of non-Hispanic white children. Among older youth (ages 16 to 19), American Indians and Alaska Natives are more likely to be high school dropouts, jobless, and outside the civilian labor force than non-Hispanic white youth.

Only about one-third of American Indians and Alaska Natives live on designated reservations or tribal areas. Compared with single-race American Indian and Alaska Native children, multiracial American Indian or Alaska Native children are more likely to live with both parents, less likely to be in the care of grandparents, and more likely to live in households with higher incomes.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Among U.S. racial and ethnic minority groups, American Indians and Alaska Natives occupy a singular position by virtue of having been the first people to occupy the land that is now the United States. Their unusual relationship with the federal government has grown out of a long history of conflict and struggle.

This unique relationship stems from the fact that in the early history of the United States, American Indians were not considered a part of the nation. From 1790 to 1871, the federal government dealt with American Indians much as it would with foreign nations, using a mixture of diplomacy, treaties, and warfare. When the opportunity arose, federal efforts were devoted to “civilizing” American Indians by persuading them—using whatever means necessary—to surrender their tribal culture and adopt the habits and lifestyles of European Americans.

This ongoing conflict led to a steady decline in the American Indian population. By the late 19th century, the population of American Indians had dwindled to an

estimated 250,000. The federal government had successfully overwhelmed American Indians' military resistance and had turned to the task of assimilating them into modern society. Adult American Indians were expected to become farmers and, later, workers in urban labor markets. Children were frequently sent to boarding schools far from their homes; the schools' curricula were intended to indoctrinate Indian children with Anglo-American cultural ideals while at the same time imparting basic academic skills.

The campaign to assimilate American Indians lasted throughout much of the 20th century. However, the failure of these efforts, combined with increasing American Indian opposition, led the federal government to abandon the campaign in the 1960s. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the federal government gradually replaced the old assimilationist policies with new ones allowing self-determination. These new policies recognized American Indians' rights to decide their own future and to have the principal responsibility for overseeing the affairs of their communities.

Since the 1960s, the population of American Indians and Alaska Natives has increased dramatically. In 2000, 4,119,301 people reported American Indian or Alaska Native as their race—about 1.5 percent of the total United States population—including 1,383,502 American Indian and Alaska Native children.

Despite their move to self-determination and their population gains, however, American Indians and Alaska Natives remain one of the poorest groups in American society. In 1999, while the rest of the country was enjoying an economic boom and the nation's poverty rate stood at 13.6 percent for families with children (and 9.4 percent for white families with children), the poverty rate for American Indian and Alaska Native families was 27.0 percent. The poverty rate was even higher (32.4 percent) for American Indian and Alaska Native families with young children under age 5. The persistently high levels of poverty found among American Indian and Alaska Native families bespeaks a host of other disadvantages tied to low levels of education, geographic isolation, and discrimination.

Self-Determination and the Indian Child Welfare Act

To any community, few matters are more vital than the maintenance of family life and the wellbeing of its children. Before the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978, responsibility for child welfare lay with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and on occasion with local authorities. The decommissioning of the boarding school system began in the early 1930s and accelerated after World War II, so ever-larger numbers of Indian children were able to remain at home with their parents. To oversee the welfare of these children, especially those in distressed or abusive homes, the BIA established the Indian Adoption Project in 1958, a collaborative effort with the Child Welfare League of America.

The number of American Indian children in foster or adoptive homes grew rapidly. In 1961, the BIA placed more than 2,300 children with foster or adoptive parents. Very

few of the placements were made on reservations with American Indian families; indeed, the overwhelming majority of children were placed in non-Indian families at considerable distances from tribal communities. There was little consideration of tribal culture or the value of the child remaining in the tribal community. One quote from this program reveals its lack of cultural sensitivity: “One little, two little, three little Indians—and 206 more—are brightening the homes and lives of 172 American families, mostly non-Indians, who have taken the Indian waifs as their own.”

By the late 1960s, American Indian advocates had become alarmed by statistics showing that American Indian children were placed in foster and adoptive homes at rates far higher than the rates for non-Indian children. For example, between 25 percent and 35 percent of all-American Indian children were being raised in foster and adoptive homes at that time, and about 85 percent of those in foster care were in non-Indian homes. Some advocates accused the placement services of being motivated primarily by financial motives and of caring little about the wellbeing of Indian children.

In 1976, the American Indian Policy Review Commission investigated these claims and issued a report agreeing that the problem was serious. The following year, legislation was introduced in both houses of Congress to deal with what one House committee called the “Indian child welfare crisis.” After a year of hearings and deliberations, Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in late 1978. About six months later, the Federal Register of July 21, 1979, published detailed guidelines for the act’s implementation.

The ICWA contained a number of provisions designed to slow the adoption of Indian children outside of tribal communities. Perhaps the most significant provision gave American Indian tribes—and American Indian parents—the jurisdictional authority to intervene in child custody proceedings held in state courts when American Indian children were involved. The law also set forth criteria to which state courts must adhere when rendering decisions in child custody cases involving American Indian children. The criteria gave preference in adoption proceedings to members of the child’s extended family, other members of the child’s tribe, and other American Indian families. The law was intended to keep American Indian children in cultural environments similar to, if not the same as, those into which they were born.

Initially, the ICWA was hailed as a victory by Indian rights activists, and was widely praised as a much-needed action to deal with a very grave problem. But in the more than 20 years that have passed since its enactment, the ICWA has come to be viewed in less sanguine terms. American Indian children continue to be placed in non-Indian homes, and the ICWA has been at the center of a number of intensely controversial child custody cases. Critics have vigorously attacked the act, prompting Congress to introduce legislation that would diminish or eliminate its key provisions.

After several highly publicized custody battles in the early 1990s, a 1996 bill that would have significantly weakened the ICWA was introduced in the House of Representatives. The bill—H.R. 3286—would have restricted tribal jurisdiction over Indian children residing on reservations. It also would have required that at least one of the child’s biological parents “maintain(s) a significant social, cultural, or political affiliation” with the tribe. In other words, the law would have required one of the child’s parents to demonstrate that he or she was a “real” Indian, forcing the courts to determine the validity of parental claims to an ethnic identity. Despite vociferous opposition from advocates for Indian children’s welfare, the House passed the bill, which was ultimately killed by a Senate committee. Since 1996, several other amendments have been introduced, but none that would significantly affect the ICWA’s original intent.

Family and Household Structure

Most social and behavioral scientists agree that the presence of parents is essential for the wellbeing of children. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule; parents who are physically and psychologically abusive, who have problems with substance abuse, or who have serious mental health problems are often detrimental to their children. Nonetheless, for most children, having at least one and ideally both parents present in their lives is a key precondition for their health and welfare.

In 2000, about one-half of single-race American Indian and Alaska Native children resided in married-couple families, while nearly one-third (32 percent) were living with a single parent. In contrast, three-quarters of non-Hispanic white children lived in married-couple families. In addition, a relatively large number of American Indian and Alaska Native children were not living with either of their parents—11 percent of single-race American Indian and Alaska Native children and 7 percent of multiracial American Indian and Alaska Native children. This finding—that children solely identified as American Indian or Alaska Native are more likely than other children to live with neither parent—is significant because such children are also more likely to live on reservations, where grandparents have an important role in childrearing.

Many reservations have relatively large numbers of older and younger people and a relatively small number of young and working-age adults. The most common explanation for this age distribution is that adults in the prime working ages must leave the reservation to find employment, and grandparents fill the role of family caregivers for children while parents are away. Furthermore, in many tribal cultures, grandparents traditionally have an active role in rearing their grandchildren.

Since children identified as solely American Indian and Alaska Native are more likely to be living on reservations, it is not surprising that a larger share of this population is found residing with grandparents than mixed-race American Indian and Alaska Native children. About 11 percent of the single-race American Indian and Alaska Native children live with their grandparents, compared with about 9 percent of

mixed-race children and only 5 percent of non-Hispanic white children. While a sizable share of monoracial American Indian and Alaska Native children live with their grandparents, fewer (about 8 percent) are actually in the care of their grandparents. Likewise, only about 5 percent of mixed-race American Indian and Alaska Native children are in the care of their grandparents.

In the absence of grandparents or other family members to provide care, a small number of American Indian and Alaska Native children reside in group quarters. While this number of is relatively small (barely 1 percent of the total population), it is nonetheless significant because it reflects the numbers of children living outside a family environment. Some of these children are living in institutional settings, which by definition are places where they live under close supervision and have little autonomy with respect to their daily lives. Juvenile detention facilities are one example of institutional group quarters. Other children in institutional settings are living in dormitories in colleges or boarding schools. Attending boarding schools is not unusual for American Indian and Alaska Native children, especially if their families reside in exceptionally remote areas where schools are not easily accessible, such as Alaska, the Southwest, or the Great Plains.

2000 Census data show that roughly one-half (48 percent) of the single-race American Indian and Alaska Native children who live in group quarters are housed in settings where their everyday lives are carefully regimented and monitored. While this number may appear substantial, it is slightly lower than the corresponding share for non-Hispanic white children (53 percent).

Discussion and Conclusion

American Indian and Alaska Native children are a unique group in American society in so many ways. Their historical legacy confers a special legal and political status unlike any other group in American society: They are subject to the laws of the United States as well as the authority of tribal governments that also have a large stake in their well-being and in their future. American Indian and Alaska Native children are also the subjects of special legislation—such as the ICWA—that are designed to ensure adopted American Indian children can retain a strong connection with their tribe in the absence of their parents or other close relatives.

A great deal of variability, however, exists both within the American Indian and Alaska Native population and among the children of these groups. Some of these children live within a tightly knit circle of family, clan, and tribal members situated in remote reservations. Others live in cities distant from their family's reservation and have only limited contact with their families or tribe.

Some of this heterogeneity is manifest in the “mark all that apply” option for racial identification in the 2000 Census. About 2.5 million people were identified as nothing other than “American Indian” or “Alaska Native” in the 2000 Census. But another 1.6 million people were identified as American Indian or Alaska Native along with one or

more other races, making a total of 4.1 million people who claim some connection with an American Indian or Alaska Native heritage. And clear differences distinguish children who are identified as American Indian or Alaska Native “alone” from those who are identified in connection with another race. In particular, multiracial American Indian or Alaska Native children are more likely to live with both parents, less likely to be in the care of grandparents, and more likely to live in households with higher incomes than single-race American Indian and Alaska Native children.

Regardless of how American Indians and Alaska Natives choose to identify themselves, they also possess some common characteristics. For example, American Indian and Alaska Native children have parents who are less educated and poorer than the parents of non-Hispanic white children. Among older youth, American Indians and Alaska Natives are also more likely to be high school dropouts, jobless, and outside the civilian labor force than are non-Hispanic white youth. By most measures and regardless of how they are identified, American Indian and Alaska Native children live in more precarious economic conditions and have more uncertain economic futures than those of non-Hispanic white children.

Many if not most American Indian tribes devote substantial resources to assure the well-being of their youngest tribal members. These efforts include pre-school programs, vigorous enforcement of the ICWA, measures to keep adolescents in high school, and initiatives to provide childcare for working parents. While these efforts have no doubt improved the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native children, many needs remain and much still must be done to ensure a bright and healthy future for these children. No greater and more important challenge faces the leadership of American Indian and Alaska Native communities across the nation.

“A Measure of Traditionalism for American Indian Children and Families: Psychometric Properties and Factor Structure,” Christopher H. Morris, Susan L. Crowley, and Carolyn Thomas Morris, American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research, 2002 [48]

https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider205/journal_files/vol10/10_3_2002_33_morris.pdf?sfvrsn=e271e2b9_2

Abstract:

Factor analytic findings from culturally specific instruments measuring traditionalism as one aspect of cultural identity are described, based on the self-reports of American Indian children and parents. Findings indicate that traditionalism is a multidimensional construct that can be measured reliably. Results are important because few psychometrically adequate instruments exist to assess either traditionalism or acculturation among American Indian families. Implications for refinements in measuring child and family acculturation and examining the relationship with the social/emotional development of American Indian children are discussed.

Current & Relevant Information:

The literature indicates that, in comparison to children of other ethnic minority groups, American Indian and Alaska Native children are at greater risk for emotional and behavioral disorders and negative psychosocial conditions such as poverty, family and community violence, substance abuse, and substandard living conditions (e.g., Beiser & Attnave, 1982; Berlin, 1987; Gotowiec & Beiser, 1993-94; Manson, Walker, & Kivlahan, 1987; U.S. Office of Technology Assessment, 1990). In addition, there is evidence that the stress of attempting to adapt to two disparate cultures has significant impact on overall mental health (Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991), drug abuse (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1996), suicide rates (Lester, 1999), and eating disorder symptoms (Perez, Voelz, Pettit, & Joiner, 2002). Conversely, strengthening cultural or ethnic identity may reduce problems such as substance abuse (Gilchrist, Schinke, Trimble, & Cvetkovich, 1987), suicide (Lester, 1999), loneliness, and depression (Roberts & Phinney, 1999); while enhancing emotional well-being (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993) social adjustment (Coleman, Casali, & Wampold, 2001), self-esteem, coping ability, and optimism (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Roberts & Phinney, 1999). Understanding how American Indian and Alaska Native children and families adapt to living in a bicultural context is a critical aspect of promoting positive social and emotional development, preventing emotional and behavioral problems, and effectively treating problems when they arise.

Traditional indigenous cultures are an essential, but highly complex, resource for promoting positive mental health and addressing mental health problems among American Indian and Alaska Native children (Berlin, 1987; Sharp, 1991). Sociocultural level movements that “selectively return the life style of a group to a quasi-traditional form” (Berry, 1980, p. 270) involve changes at the individual level in identity, attitudes, beliefs, and stress reactions (Berry, 1980; Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998). Retraditionalization, the increasing reliance on “cultural beliefs, customs, and rituals as a means of overcoming problems and achieving Indian self-determination” (LaFromboise, Trimble, & Mohatt, 1990, p. 637) has been called essential to the revitalization of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. In part due to the influence of retraditionalization, traditional cultures and the psychological constructs of biculturalism and cultural identity have come to be frequently emphasized in mental health and substance abuse programs for young people (e.g., Indian Health Service, 1994; Legah & Benally, 1990). Increased understanding of these constructs means increased understanding of the influences on mental health and well-being for American Indian and Alaska Native children and families, and development of more appropriate prevention and intervention strategies.

The focus of the present research is on individual traditional orientation (“traditionalism”) as one aspect of extant models of acculturation and cultural identity. Specifically, this report focuses on a sample of elementary-school students and their families from a southwestern American Indian tribe, utilizing a portion of an

extant data set from the Flower of Two Soils project (Beiser, 1986; 1989; Sack, Beiser, Phillips, & Baker-Brown, 1993), a longitudinal study of mental health and academic performance across different tribal groups of American Indian children and families. Goals of the analyses reported here are to refine the scale structure and establish reliability of separate instruments for parents and children measuring culture-specific traditional behaviors, beliefs, and values.

Traditionalism and Models of Acculturation

Persistent and pervasive social pressure to change and adapt in response to contact with multiple cultures is a fact of life for most American Indian and Alaska Native children and families (Berlin, 1987). In the context of a pluralistic society, the study of traditionalism and cultural identity requires an understanding of these change processes, which are often collectively termed acculturation. Acculturation refers to the changes experienced by members of a distinct cultural group, as a result of continuous contact with members of different cultures (Birman, 1994; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Changes encompass both cultural and psychological phenomena, including values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Berry, 1980), and vary across individual group members in accordance with individual and contextual differences (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986).

In anthropology and psychology, the acculturation paradigm is commonly used to conceptualize social change through processes of mutual cultural exchange and influence. But historically, value-laden concepts of development and modernization have influenced the psychological study of sociocultural change (Berry, 1980). Under these outdated approaches, acculturation referred to the unidimensional movement of a minority culture along a continuum, away from reliance on aspects of traditional culture, and toward increasing internalization of the dominant culture. This linear conceptualization was used to imply the superiority of the majority culture, and promote the elimination of indigenous cultures in favor of adopting the ways of the dominant society (Oetting, Swaim, & Chiarella, 1998).

Modern theories provide a less value-laden, more empirically based, and multidimensional understanding of acculturation (Azar, 1999; Olmedo, 1979). Two widely accepted models are the two-dimensional model developed by Berry and colleagues (e.g., Berry & Annis, 1974; Berry, Wintrob, Sindell, & Mawhinney, 1982) and the orthogonal model developed by Oetting and colleagues (e.g., Oetting, E. R. & Beauvais, 1991; Oetting, Swaim, & Chiarella, 1998). In addition, Coleman and colleagues have recently developed a sequential model that provides a dynamic perspective on how individuals cope with cross-cultural contact (e.g., Coleman, Casali, & Wampold, 2001).

Berry's two-dimensional model was developed in part through research with indigenous communities in Canada and the U.S., and formed the basis for the measures of acculturation used in Flower of Two Soils (Beiser, 1989). The two-

dimensional model describes attitudes to acculturation that allow for identification with both minority and majority cultures. The model is based on the idea that an individual faced with acculturation decides to what degree s/he will maintain connection with traditional culture and identity, and to what degree s/he will seek positive connections with the majority culture (Berry, Wintrob, Sindell, & Mawhinney, 1982). Based on the degree to which an individual identifies with the majority and traditional cultures, s/he falls into a category of either integration, assimilation, separation, or marginality.

If the option of integration (more commonly called biculturalism) is chosen, connections with both cultures are sought and maintained. With assimilation, traditional culture is relinquished and the ways of the dominant society are adopted. Separation, or traditionalism, involves adherence to traditional ways and avoidance of adopting the introduced culture. Marginality may include some mixture of elements from both cultures (Dana, 1993), but is not really an option in the true sense of the word, since it is not typically chosen by minority group members; rather, it is imposed on them through simultaneous loss of the original culture and exclusion from substantial participation in the new culture.

The orthogonal model (Oetting & Beauvais, 1991; Oetting, Swaim, & Chiarella, 1998), like the two-dimensional model, allows for independent identification with both cultures. Oetting's contribution is the concept of continuous, independent measurement on each dimension. Thus, a categorical model, which assigns the individual to a discrete group, is transformed into a model allowing for assessment of cultural identification on both dimensions, and placement of the individual anywhere within a two-dimensional space. The present report provides findings pertaining to assessment on one axis of this two-space, i.e., assessment of identification with traditional culture.

An alternate paradigm (Coleman, Wampold, & Casali, 2001) for understanding how individuals respond to cross-cultural contact is based on a sequential rather than a dimensional or orthogonal conceptualization. That is, an individual who is in contact with a second culture will have to make a series of choices, consciously or unconsciously, about how to associate with minority and majority cultures. These choices will be reflected in his or her behavior, and the individual will adopt specific strategies for coping with cross-cultural situations based on these choices. In support of this model, Coleman and colleagues found that adolescents' goals and strategies in responding to cross-cultural situations do vary according to the social context, that is, they reflect a sequential process. One implication of this model is that young people with a strong bicultural identity may have a wider range of options, greater success, and experience lower levels of stress, in coping with a wide variety of cross-cultural situations.

The goals of analyses reported here are consistent with the goals of acculturation research discussed in the literature (Berry et al., 1986; Olmedo, 1979), as follows:

(a) development of a method to quantify cultural variables, in this case variables that describe traditionalism; (b) to systematically explore structural relationships among cultural variables, i.e., the interdependence structure of traditionalism variables; and (c) to improve precision in the definition and measurement of acculturation and cultural identity, by developing a reliable and valid measure of traditionalism for children and families.

Conclusion

Dimensions of Traditionalism

Acculturation has been described in the literature as a multidimensional construct (Berry, 1980; Birman, 1994; Olmedo, 1979). This study assessed only one dimension of acculturation, specifically, traditionalism. Assessing this single dimension of acculturation describes only a part of the process of cultural adaptation in which minority persons are engaged (Dana, 1993; Mendoza, 1989; Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991; Sodowsky, Lai, & Plake, 1991). Factor analytic findings indicate that traditionalism itself is also a multidimensional construct that can be measured reliably among children and adults, both at the global level and at the level of individual constructs. These findings are consistent with those previously documented for adults (e.g., Olmedo, 1979; Pomales & Williams, 1989) indicating that traditionalism is measurable with a reasonable degree of reliability and validity. A cautionary note here is that the degree of measurement reliability among children was slightly lower, although this is a common finding across a variety of different measurement instruments (Anastasi, 1976).

Establishing a reliable measure of traditionalism is especially significant because few psychometrically adequate instruments exist to assess traditionalism or acculturation among American Indian and Alaska Native families (Dana, 1993). The measure studied here provides highly culture-specific information associated with one tribal group. This specificity can be both a strength and a limitation, depending on the desired application. In any case, a similar process of scale development could be employed with other tribal groups, to produce scales with similar psychometric properties. This line of research would also be useful for quantitatively identifying important differences across tribal groups, as indicated by any differences in factor structure that might emerge through replication.

The literature indicates that factor analysis is a useful tool for exploring the multiple dimensions of traditionalism (Dana, 1993; Olmedo, 1979). In addition to describing specific dimensions that may constitute traditionalism, factor analysis also identified similarities and differences in the manifestation of traditionalism between children and adults. For instance, each respondent group produced a subscale that was nearly identical, in terms of content, involving reliance upon plants and animals, and natural products derived from them. This consistency may indicate this dimension of

traditionalism is particularly robust, at least among this particular American Indian tribe.

Children's responses produced separate dimensions for language and food preference. On the other hand, parent responses were such that language and food preference clustered together, along with other behavioral items such as engaging in traditional healing and spiritual practices. Previous factor analytic studies, primarily involving Hispanic or immigrant populations (e.g., Pomales & Williams, 1989) have consistently identified language as the strongest and first factor to emerge. Frequently, this factor is global in nature and includes a range of other culturally determined behaviors in addition to language (Olmedo, 1979). Similar findings emerged from the present analysis, particularly with respect to adult responses on the Traditional Scale for Parents (TSP). However, children's responses split this global factor into two, one of which was almost exclusively composed of items assessing language usage within the family. It may be that since increasing numbers of children from this tribe are primary English-speakers, other types of traditional behavior are emerging as distinct from speaking the language.

The language/behavior dimension of parent traditionalism shared some overlap with the family/beliefs factor of the TSP. Both these dimensions of parent traditionalism included some items dealing with spiritual practices, but family/beliefs were dominated by the heavily loading item, "I believe in the legends of the [traditional] way." Interestingly, the family/beliefs dimension included all TSP items that referred specifically to traditional characteristics of the respondent's family as a whole. These items may provide an especially far-reaching assessment of the cultural context of the respondents. Because the concept of "family" in American Indian cultures typically encompasses extended family, these items may assess behaviors and experiences within a rather large group of family members who influence the respondent.

For children, involvement in and knowledge of traditional ceremonies emerged as a distinct facet of traditionalism. In a post hoc comparison of subscale score means, the traditional ceremonies subscale was the only Traditional Scale for Children (TSC) scale to show differences in conjunction with the age of child respondents, with sixth grade children scoring approximately one-half standard deviation higher than fourth grade children (Morris, 1998). This difference may reflect that older children have had more opportunities to learn about and participate in ceremonies. The traditional ceremonies dimension of child traditionalism may be particularly important to mental health promotion and prevention efforts, as it has been positively associated with children's social competence (Morris, 1998).

The second factor commonly emerging in previous factor analytic studies of traditionalism concerns culture-specific attitudes and value orientations (Olmedo, 1979). Items specifically developed to assess acculturation attitudes were not available for this analysis. However, factors involving values, in the form of family

practices, traditional spiritual beliefs, and ceremonial practices, did emerge as part of the TSP family/beliefs subscale and the TSC beliefs/behaviors subscale. Further refining our ability to assess relative values and attitudes of parents and children in this area could be highly useful for communities seeking to develop prevention and intervention programs for families. There are some indications that parent acculturation attitudes are associated with parent perceptions of child competencies (Morris, 1998), and future research should include an expanded focus on attitudes and values in relation to traditionalism and other dimensions of acculturation.

Although not directly related to the present analysis, other findings suggested that the extent of traditionalism was associated with the age and identity of the respondent. This was particularly true if a grandparent was the informant, in which case TSP full-scale scores exceeded those of parents by nearly two standard deviations (Morris, 1998). These intergenerational differences provide some evidence for the construct validity of the instrument, since traditionalism would be expected to be greater in older generations (Olmedo & Padilla, 1978).

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Review of relevant literature indicates that quantitative data describing family and child traditionalism among American Indians and Alaska Natives are extremely rare. This study used existing data, from a project not specifically designed to study traditionalism or acculturation, to conduct an exploratory analysis of traditionalism. Although measures were based loosely on the two-dimensional model of acculturation, items were not devised with an a priori model of the traditionalism construct. Therefore, exploratory factor analysis, with its attendant limitations, was the appropriate technique for providing a springboard to further research, which may determine if the factor structure can be replicated using confirmatory (or additional exploratory) factor analytic techniques. Despite shortcomings in the design and data, findings do provide an addition to the slim body of research in this area, as well as some direction for future research.

The ratio of participants to items in these analyses, at around two to one, was lower than is typically desired; a ratio of at least five to one is more adequate. It is possible that spurious structure coefficients compromised the reliability of the factor structure. However, Stevens (1996) reported empirical data demonstrating that factors with four or more structure coefficients of .60 or greater will be reliable regardless of sample size, and most of the TSC and TSP factors meet or nearly meet this criterion. Replication could further establish reliability (or alternatives) for the factor structure reported here. Given the challenges of conducting research with American Indian and Alaska Native participants and obtaining adequate sample sizes, future research in this area might best focus on fewer carefully selected items, such as those that emerged with the highest loadings in the factor analyses reported here.

If reliability of the factor structure can be firmly established, future research should seek to determine the utility of specific items in the grouping of factors. Discriminant analysis can identify those items that are essential to the differentiation of subscales from one another, thus helping to establish the discriminant validity of subscales.

Although detailed data for variables that were dropped from the final versions of parent and child traditionalism scales were not reported here (for a full description see Morris, 1998), the excluded variables hold implications for further refinements in assessment of traditionalism. Some items were dropped for poor psychometrics, and these can be ruled out for future consideration in measurement of traditionalism. For example, many of the poorly performing items dealt with phenomena that are becoming very rare (such as regularly sleeping on sheepskins); nor did negatively worded items perform well.

On the other hand, future investigators may also wish to consider resurrecting certain types of items. For example, the gender-specific items were not analyzed simply due to insufficient sample size, but such items should still be considered for their utility to describe gender-related aspects of traditionalism. Some of the items in “branched” format, eliminated from the present analysis, were those providing numerical data (e.g., “How many times have you visited a medicine man?”). These items displayed relatively high variability in responses when examined at the item level, indicating that such items may do a good job of assessing a range of frequency for specific types of traditional behaviors. Furthermore, these items are also descriptive of what a family actually does, providing useful information for those attempting to provide services designed to meet the needs of specific families. Future research should consider including such items.

Since the typical response to items assessing rare and highly traditional practices is so close to zero (i.e., “never”) and item variance is low, such items may not provide much information within a scale. However, such low frequency items should be carefully examined before being excluded from scale development, since some may be useful for their ability to discriminate the most traditional respondents. Whether as part of a scale, as separate “critical items” checked for an affirmative response, or included in an interview format, these items could help to identify those respondents with an unusually high degree of traditional knowledge or experiences. This information might be useful in certain applications, such as making decisions regarding how much of a mediating effect traditionalism may have, when assessment of acculturation is used as part of a larger psychological assessment (Dana, 1993).

It must be noted that the extant data set from Flower of Two Soils is now well over ten years old. This constitutes a significant limitation of current analyses, since during that time a variety of sociocultural, economic, political, and technological changes may have influenced traditionalism within the population studied. Assessing the breadth and impact of such changes is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is

possible there has been a differential effect across the dimensions of traditionalism identified here, potentially altering the construct itself. However, when studied as an aspect of acculturation, traditionalism is by its nature a dynamic construct, and the goal of research should be to understand traditionalism within the context of changing cultures. This report provides one set of data points toward that goal; additional research with contemporary data sets are now needed to further our understanding.

“Serving Native American Children in Foster Care,” Lisette Austin, The Connection, 2009 [49]

http://nc.casaforchildren.org/files/public/community/judges/July_2010/Connection_Winter2009.pdf

Overview:

American Indian and Alaska Native children face a number of significant challenges. Many are born into communities that experience widespread poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence and chronic health problems at much higher rates than non-Native communities. US government policies that for years sought to eradicate American Indian culture, sovereignty and way of life contributed greatly to these tragic circumstances. While many tribes survived this onslaught, most are still navigating the psychological and physical aftermath of practices many consider to have been cultural genocide.

According to national statistics, the general well-being of American Indian children trails significantly behind children from other ethnic groups. Recent research shows that while the US child mortality rate for children ages 1–14 has gone down by 9% since 2000, it has increased by 15% among Indian children. National data shows that Indian youth face higher rates of poverty, teenage suicide (nearly 2–2.5 times greater than Caucasian teens) and substance abuse. According to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, American Indian/Alaska Native children experience a rate of child abuse and neglect of 16.5 per 1,000 as compared to 10.8 for Caucasian children. They are overrepresented in the population of child maltreatment victims at more than 1.6 times the expected level. In addition, studies show that Native children receive fewer supportive services to promote stability, safety and general well-being.

Serious disparities also exist in relation to the US child welfare system. Children and families of color, particularly American Indian/Alaska Native and African-American children, are entering foster care at rates higher than non-minority children—and they stay in care longer. According to a 2007 report by the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), American Indian children are represented at nearly two times the level expected. Although Native children make up roughly 1% of the national child population, they are 2% of the children who entered foster care in 2005 and 2% of children in foster care waiting to be adopted. This disproportionality

in the child welfare system happens at every step along the way, from the initial call to Child Protective Services (CPS) to placement and court proceedings.

Current & Relevant Information:

The Indian Child Welfare Act

This current reality echoes a much darker period for Native children. From the early 1800s until the 1970s, there was a deliberate effort by the US government to “civilize” and assimilate American Indians into mainstream American culture. Many Indian children were torn from their families and tribal communities, placed in boarding schools and forbidden to speak their native language.

By the 1970s, approximately 25–35% of all Native children were being placed in institutions, foster homes or adoptive homes—three times the rate of non-Indian children. Many suffered terrible abuse both in boarding schools and foster homes. These placements were rooted in a system that did not respect or recognize American Indian cultures and instead sought to strip children of their traditional ways of life. Congress finally responded to these unjust practices by passing the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978.

ICWA requires that every state court dependency case involving an American Indian/Alaska Native child adhere to specific requirements. The act generally requires that Native children, once removed, be placed whenever possible in homes that reflect their unique cultures and values—and that tribes be involved in placement decisions. These requirements are intended to protect the integrity and future of tribal communities by protecting their children’s cultural identity and tribal citizenship.

And there is good reason to do so. “We know from research that American Indian children in the child welfare system who are connected to Native culture thrive and do much better than those who aren’t,” says Dr. Antony Stately, a clinical psychologist at the University of Washington who is Ojibwe/Oneida. Stately’s career has focused primarily on child maltreatment and neglect, and he currently sits on King County’s Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee.

“We also know that Indian kids in foster care settings where they are disconnected from siblings, family and their culture are at much greater risk for behavioral and mental health problems,” Stately explains. “And unfortunately, Native kids in foster care are less likely to receive therapeutic services and are more likely to be misdiagnosed and overmedicated as compared to Caucasian children,” he says.

As important and well intentioned as the Indian Child Welfare Act is, it is not always followed. Thirty years after the act’s inception, the removal of American Indian children from their homes still happens at an alarming rate. Many end up disconnected from their tribal culture and extended family. ICWA is an unfunded

mandate, and responsibility for its enactment often falls on the shoulders of the tribes—most of whom still struggle with severe poverty and lack of resources.

“ICWA is usually followed only if people make enough noise or have enough resources,” says Stately. “The reality is that many judges, caseworkers and advocates are still largely unaware of the importance and specific requirements of ICWA,” he says.

Organizations such as the National Indian Child Welfare Association are working tirelessly to help ensure that ICWA is followed in all placement cases involving American Indian/Alaska Native children. Other organizations involved in foster care issues, such as the National CASA Association and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, are also taking significant steps to raise awareness about how best to advocate for American Indian children in the child welfare system and follow the important mandate of ICWA.

“A Portrait of American Indian and Alaska Native Children and Families,” Meryl Yoches Barofsky, et al., Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, July 2018 [50] <https://www.mathematica.org/-/media/publications/pdfs/earlychildhood/2018/acf-opre-aian-ec-needs-brief-508b.pdf>

Abstract:

There is little national data about the need for early childhood and health services for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children. The American Indian and Alaska Native Early Childhood Needs Assessment project was initiated in 2015 to develop three designs for future studies to inform a national early childhood needs assessment for AI/AN children. The designs aim to (1) describe AI/AN children under 5 (not yet in kindergarten; hereafter referred to as “AI/AN young children”) and their families, (2) explore early childhood services organization and delivery for AI/AN children, and (3) assess communities’ capacity for conducting their own needs assessments.

This brief summarizes findings from the implementation of the first design, which used existing data to create a national picture of the AI/AN population of young children and their families, and their access to and participation in early childhood services using the 2010–2014 American Community Survey (first published in Malone et al., 2017). This brief will:

1. Describe the population of AI/AN young children and their families, including socioeconomic status, household employment, and highest household educational attainment; and
2. Estimate the need for early childhood and health services, including early care and education attendance and health care coverage of AI/AN young children and their families, by examining the services that families receive.

Current & Relevant Information:

The main findings are:

- There are approximately 451,000 AI/AN young children in the United States.
- Almost half of AI/AN young children live with both parents.
- Almost one-third of AI/AN young children live in households below the federal poverty line (FPL).
- Almost three-quarters of AI/AN young children live in households where at least one household member has some college education or higher.
- Almost all AI/AN young children have at least one household member working either full or part time.
- About one-fifth of AI/AN young children attended nursery or preschool in the past three months.
- Almost one-third of AI/AN young children are enrolled in a health insurance program through a parent's employer or union, and almost 60 percent are enrolled in health insurance through Medicaid or any kind of medical assistance plan.
- Almost half of AI/AN young children lived with a parent who purchased health insurance through an employer or union, and about one-third lived with a parent who was enrolled in health insurance through Medicaid or any kind of medical assistance plan.

Discussion

The data presented in this brief suggest many strengths and opportunities for AI/AN young children and their families. The majority of AI/AN young children live with a parent, and most live with an adult with some higher-education experience. Most AI/AN young children live in households with a working adult, and most have health insurance and live with a parent who is covered by health insurance as well.

However, despite these positive indicators, almost one-third live in households at or below the FPL. Participation in preschool and nursery school is also quite low, at 21 percent, despite a high rate of adult employment. Additionally, few AI/AN mothers received home visiting services.

The AI/AN Early Childhood Needs Assessment project was a first step in understanding the characteristics of AI/AN young children and their families. This brief provides a snapshot of indicators of need and potential unmet need for early childhood services. Future work is needed to understand the service provisions, availability, and barriers that exist to support families.

“Native Generations: A Campaign Addressing Infant Mortality Among American Indians and Alaska Natives in Urban Areas,” Shira Rutman, et al., American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research, 2016 [51]

https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider205/journal_files/vol23/23_5_2016_59_rutman.pdf?sfvrsn=96d1e0b9_2

Abstract:

This study describes the development and evaluation of Native Generations, a campaign addressing high rates of infant mortality (IM) among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) in urban areas. Campaign development included reviews of literature and previous campaigns, an advisory council, and focus groups. Campaign messages are strength-based, encouraging AI/AN caregivers to utilize available Native-specific resources, including health care, support services, and programming as IM protective factors. The primary campaign material is an 11-minute video. Pilot survey data indicate the video may help increase awareness of IM and Native-specific resources, and increase connection to Native identity, culture, and community.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

In November 2012, a national health communication campaign entitled Native Generations was piloted to address disparities in rates of infant mortality (IM) among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban areas compared to the general population. The campaign was developed, conducted, and evaluated by an urban AI/AN epidemiology center in close partnership with urban AI/AN communities, and included a review of literature and of previous campaigns targeted to AI/AN audiences, recommendations from an advisory council, focus groups for message development, communication strategies, and material testing. Based on the findings from this formative research, the campaign messages promote IM protective factors for urban AI/ANs, such as increased utilization of Native-specific resources, including health care, support services, and programs; and connection to Native identity, culture, and community. The campaign materials include an 11-minute video, companion guides for sharing the video, and a campaign webpage to host these and other resources for AI/AN families. We conducted an evaluation to assess the implementation of the pilot and whether intended outcomes were achieved with the video, as well as to inform recommendations for future upscaling of the campaign.

Background

In 2009, the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), a division of the Seattle Indian Health Board serving as a national epidemiology center for urban AI/ANs, was provided funding by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS)

Office of Minority Health to develop and pilot a national communication campaign to address high rates of IM among urban AI/ANs. We present here a brief description of data on the urban AI/AN population, IM rates, and causes of IM among AI/AN populations to outline the need for our campaign.

The Urban AI/AN Population

Seventy-one percent of the over 5.2 million AI/ANs (AI/AN alone or in combination with other races) live in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Urban AI/ANs include members, or descendants of members, of many different tribes that may or may not be federally or state recognized. Individuals may or may not have ties to their tribal communities. Urban AI/ANs are generally spread out within urban centers instead of localized within one or two neighborhoods and thus are often not seen or recognized by the wider population (Lobo, 2003).

Striking disparities exist between AI/ANs and the general population in urban areas with regard to socioeconomic, maternal and child health, and morbidity and mortality indicators—many at least twofold (Castor et al., 2006). The socioeconomic disparities include high rates of unemployment, poverty, single-parent households, and disability, and low levels of education (Castor et al., 2006). In a recent analysis of national data, the all-cause death rate for AI/AN persons was 46% more than that for Whites, with deaths due to diabetes, chronic liver disease, and homicide occurring at as much as five times the rates for Whites; deaths due to nearly all other causes also exceeded those of Whites (Espey et al., 2014).

Infant Mortality among Urban AI/ANs

The IM rate among AI/ANs in urban areas is significantly higher than the rate for non-Hispanic (NH) Whites in urban areas (7.4 and 4.6 per 1,000 live births, respectively); variations exist by geographic area, with some areas as high as 14.5 per 1,000 live births among AI/ANs (U.S. National Center for Health Statistics [US NCHS], 2006-2010). The true rate of IM for AI/ANs is likely greater due to racial misclassification of death records (Epstein, Moreno, & Bacchetti, 1997).

The five most common causes of IM for AI/ANs in urban areas are: 1) birth defects, 2) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, 3) preterm and low birth weight, 4) unintentional injuries, and 5) maternal pregnancy complications (US NCHS, 2001-2010). The rates of death for each of these causes are significantly higher among AI/ANs compared with NH Whites in urban areas (US NCHS, 2001-2010).

This article expands the literature on IM specific to urban AI/ANs by outlining disparities in rates of and risk factors for IM, the need for tailored communication campaigns on this topic, and promising communication strategies for this population to reduce IM.

Discussion

This study of a national health communication campaign pilot encompasses the four primary steps in the social marketing process outlined in the guide *Making Health Communication Programs Work*: planning and strategy development, concept creating and materials testing, implementation, and evaluation of the campaign (NCI, 2002). Pilot evaluation data describe a positive response to the campaign video and the strong potential of the Native Generations campaign to achieve its objectives with urban AI/ANs and broad audiences beyond the pilot. A large majority of respondents reported increased awareness of IM rates, risks, and prevention; and of Native-specific resources available to AI/ANs in urban areas. Most respondents reported the video increased their desire to connect to these resources and to AI/ANs in their community. Connection with Native identity and culture serves as a vital protective factor, which could intervene against increased risk for IM among AI/AN communities (Galliher, Jones, & Dahl, 2011; Weaver, 1999).

Our evaluation survey sample consisted of community members recruited from each of the participating sites and their contacts; therefore, the results may not be representative of the greater urban AI/AN population. Although 83% (n = 79) of AI/AN respondents had received services before at the UIHO where they were surveyed, over 90% stated that the video did increase their awareness of and desire to connect more with these services, programs, and support. Respondents already connected to health care and services represent a lower-risk population than those who may not already be connected to these services. Future expansion of the campaign should secure resources to broaden outreach methods that engage more AI/ANs, and a wider audience who are not connected to services. Although 76% of respondents indicated that the video increased their awareness of ways to prevent IM, this proportion was the lowest of all the measured objectives, and also mirrors qualitative comments, which called for more concrete action. This finding may suggest the need for a more explicit description about the relationship between IM prevention and utilization of Native-specific resources, including health care, support services, and programs, and connection to Native identity, culture, and community.

When asked whether they liked the video, none of the respondents stated that they did not. Despite the anonymous nature of the survey, these results may reflect response biases, including acquiescence bias (the tendency to agree with survey statements) and/or social acceptability bias (the tendency to provide a response that will be viewed favorably by others or that respondents feel is the “correct” answer). The overwhelming acceptance of the video reinforces the importance of conducting formative research in partnership with priority communities.

The survey questions used to measure intended outcomes represent an approximation of effect based on the self-reported impact of the video on respondents’ emotions, not their behavioral changes. For example, while increased connection to Native-specific resources is one of our campaign objectives, the survey captures a self-reported increased “desire” to connect more to these

resources after watching the video. Future studies should measure mid-term outcomes, such as changes in utilization of Native-specific resources, community engagement, and knowledge of risk and protective factors, including baseline knowledge. Resources to measure effects more directly (e.g., through video screenings and promotion beyond the study sites), as well as evaluation of perceived effectiveness and recall of campaign messages over time, would provide needed information to support the full-scale implementation of this promising campaign.

Although health communication can be a powerful strategy for reaching large numbers of people, changes in outcomes typically require long-term and sustained efforts (Institute of Medicine, 2002). Our campaign pilot is unique in its focus on the urban AI/AN audience, and because there is very little evaluation data available from other campaigns for this audience, we are limited in our ability to make specific comparisons. Local program providers and community leaders are most closely acquainted with the needs of their specific communities, and should be included in development and tailoring of materials to fit the mores and customs of the populations they serve, as well as to help ensure sustainability of the efforts.

Long-term behavioral change induced by campaign messages alone is unlikely to succeed; therefore, other supportive interventions at the individual and community levels are essential to help reduce IM (McGuire, 1984). Culturally competent IM prevention efforts should be undertaken within the social-environmental-political context, which impacts individuals' and communities' ability to implement positive change (Bronheim & Sockalingam, 2003). Aspects of the context that may affect infant health and safety efforts for urban AI/AN families include scenarios articulated by participants in our formative research, such as shared housing exposing infants to commercial cigarette smoke and violence, the ability to afford or create safe infant sleep environments, time away from work and child care to attend health care appointments, and lack of transportation that limits consistent use of a car seat.

Health communication campaigns have the greatest, most lasting impact when conducted in conjunction with health and social service systems that provide access to essential services while reinforcing educational messages (NCI, 2002). Despite the fact that the vast majority of AI/ANs live in urban areas, the IHS allocates only 1% of its budget to the urban programs, challenging the capacity of these programs to focus on improving perinatal outcomes and infant health (Grossman et al., 2002; US DHHS, 2016). Funds should be designated to support health care for urban AI/ANs and to engage the network of UIHOs as vested stakeholders in reducing the risk of IM in their communities.

Conclusion

The Native Generations campaign, which promotes utilization of Native-specific resources, including health care, support services, and programs, and connection to

Native identity, culture, and community to prevent IM among AI/ANs in urban areas, is unique in both its message and audience. The campaign pilot responded to a critical need for materials that address the crisis of IM among an often-overlooked population and creates opportunities for expansion of the message to AI/ANs nationwide. An expanded campaign implementation would also provide increased opportunities to assess impact.

The Native Generations campaign holds promise, especially when coupled with policies, systems, and environmental changes that support urban AI/AN communities in preventing IM. The positive response from the pilot audience indicates that an expanded Native Generations campaign that incorporates community action steps would be well received and could increase IM protective factors, such as utilization of Native-specific resources, including health care, support services, and programs, and connection to Native identity, culture, and community.

“American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence in the Home (Testimony),” Sarah L. Kastelic, National Indian Child Welfare Association, 9 December 2013 [52] https://www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NICWATestimonyTaskForceonAIANChildrenExposedtoViolence_Dec2013.pdf

Abstract:

A federal task force or commission was developed to examine the specific needs of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children exposed to violence and recommend actions to protect AI/AN children from abuse and neglect and reduce violence. The management of this task force or commission, and the selection of its members, was carried out through an equal collaboration between the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Interior.”

This Task Force was convened, as recommended above, to address this important issue: American Indian children exposed to violence in the home, a topic essential to improving the well-being of our AI/AN children who face violence in their homes, schools, and communities at alarmingly high rates. The commitment to better understand these issues at the practice, program, and policy levels, and to provide recommendations to ensure that the violence AI/AN children face is first and foremost prevented and, if these efforts fail, that the violence is adequately addressed and the trauma it creates is appropriately treated.

The focus of today’s hearing is American Indian children exposed to violence in the home. Violence in the home includes both intimate partner violence as well as child maltreatment. At the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), we understand that the intersection of these two issues cannot be ignored. Partners who engage in violence are more likely to perpetrate violence against their children; children who witness or live in a home where intimate partner violence is present

face the long-term effects of trauma; and children who are maltreated are more likely to later perpetrate violence against others, including intimate partners. Recognizing these important relationships and NICWA's expertise, this testimony will focus predominately on child maltreatment—the physical and sexual abuse and neglect of children in the home at the hands of their caregivers and family members.

This testimony will present:

- the historical context of, and past government responses to, child maltreatment in tribal communities;
- the current research available on the risk factors for, and rates of, AI/AN child maltreatment;
- the challenges and barriers to the current legal and programmatic framework designed to address AI/AN child maltreatment;
- the collaborative responses, including multi-disciplinary teams and child protective teams, to child maltreatment; and
- solutions that are working in tribal and urban AI/AN communities.

We also want to note that child maltreatment comes in a variety of forms, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect, among others. Among these different forms of child maltreatment, neglect is the most frequent occurring within AI/AN families. While the focus of this testimony and hearing will highlight abuse that is considered to be more violent in nature, such as physical and sexual abuse, neglect can have serious effects upon children's self-esteem and outlook for the future; some of these effects are longer lasting and more profound than abuse by itself (Ney et al., 1993). Neglect can also increase a child's vulnerability to becoming a victim of abuse and, when abuse follows neglect, children are more deeply traumatized.

It is my intent to highlight the common systemic challenges in Indian Country and urban areas; to provide examples of strategies and programs that are effective; then to offer recommendations to improve the prevention, intervention, and treatment of AI/AN children who face violence at the hands of their caregivers at the practice, program, and policy levels.

NICWA is a national American Indian/Alaska Native nonprofit organization located in Portland, Oregon. NICWA has over 24 years of experience providing technical assistance and training to tribes, states, and federal agencies on issues that impact Indian child welfare and children's mental health. NICWA provides leadership in the development of public policy that supports tribal self-determination in child welfare and children's mental health systems as well as compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act. NICWA also engages in research that supports and informs improved services for AI/AN children and families. NICWA is the nation's most comprehensive

source of information on AI/AN child maltreatment, child welfare, and children's mental health issues.

Current & Relevant Information:

Understanding Child Maltreatment in Indian Country

“The variability of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages cannot be overemphasized when thinking about child maltreatment in Indian Country. Tribes, villages, reservations, and urban Indian communities have vastly different resources, social and economic conditions, and cultural and traditional practices. These differing conditions affect child abuse and neglect and mean that no statements about child maltreatment can apply to all tribes, villages, and urban communities across the country” (Crofoot, 2005).

The Historic Context

To understand the context of child maltreatment for AI/AN children, it is essential to understand that AI/AN communities are at high risk for child maltreatment because of disparate treatment of AI/AN families and communities by federal and state governments. It is equally important to understand the lingering effects of historical governmental policies and practices—including the removal of tribes to reservations, the relocation of AI/AN peoples to major cities, and specific attempts to assimilate AI/AN children—on AI/AN children and families.

Prior to contact with European immigrants, tribal child-rearing practices and beliefs allowed a natural system of child protection to flourish. Traditional Indian spiritual beliefs reinforced that all things had a spiritual nature that demanded respect, including children (Cross, Earle, & Simmons, 2000). Not only were children respected, but they were also taught to respect others. Extraordinary patience and tolerance marked the methods that were used to teach Indian children self-discipline (Cross et al., 2000). Behavior management or obedience was obtained through the fear and respect of something greater than the punishment of a parent (Cross et al., 2000).

At the heart of this natural system were beliefs, traditions, and customs involving extended family with clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. Child-rearing responsibilities were often divided between extended family and community members (Cross et al., 2000). In this way, the protection of children in the tribe was the responsibility of all people in the community. Child abuse and neglect were rarely a problem in traditional tribal settings because of these traditional beliefs and natural safety net (Cross et al., 2000).

As European migration to the United States increased, traditional tribal practices in child rearing were often lost as federal programs sought to systemically assimilate AI/AN people. Efforts to “civilize” the Native population were almost always focused on Indian children. It began as early as 1609, when the Virginia Company, in a

written document, authorized the kidnapping of Indian children for the purpose of civilizing local Indian populations through the use of Christianity (Cross et al., 2000). The “Civilization Fund Act” passed by Congress in 1819 authorized grants to private agencies, primarily churches, to establish programs in tribal communities designed to “civilize the Indian” (Cross et al., 2000).

From the 1860s through the 1970s, the federal government and private agencies established large boarding schools, far from reservations, where Indian children were placed involuntarily (Crofoot, 2005; Cross et al., 2000). Indian agents had the authority to withhold food and clothing from parents who resisted sending their children away (Crofoot, 2005; Cross et al., 2000). The boarding schools operated under harsh conditions: Children were not able to use their Native languages or traditional customs, were required to wear uniforms and cut their hair, and were subjected to military discipline and standards (Crofoot, 2005).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the child welfare system became another avenue that state and federal governments used to force the assimilation of AI/AN children. It was during this era that the Child Welfare League of America and the Children’s Bureau, a federal government agency, sponsored the Indian Adoption Project, which removed hundreds of Indian children from their homes and communities out west and placed them in non-Indian homes on the east coast (Cross et al., 2000). At the same time, AI/AN children were unofficially being removed from their homes and placed in non-Native homes in large numbers. The Association on American Indian Affairs conducted a study in the 1970s that found between 25% and 35% of all Indian children had been separated from their families (Jones, Tilden, and Gaines-Stoner, 2008). This study also found that 90% of the removed Indian children were placed in non-Indian homes (Jones et al., 2008).

The outcome of these assimilation efforts is heightened risk factors for child maltreatment in AI/AN communities. These policies left generations of parents and grandparents who were subjected to prolonged institutionalization and who do not have positive models of family life and family discipline (Crofoot, 2005). These individuals, many of them current parents and grandparents of AI/AN children, may subject their own or their relatives’ children to the harsh discipline and sexual abuse they endured in boarding school. Further, boarding schools and relocation efforts have resulted in the destruction of kinship networks and traditional understandings of child rearing and protection, damaging the natural safety net that was in place traditionally (Crofoot, 2005). It was not until 1978, with the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (P.L. 95-608), that the federal government acknowledged the inherent sovereign right of tribal governments and the critical role that they play in protecting their children and maintaining their families—meaning that for two centuries the United States usurped tribes’ rights to care for their families, further eroding the traditional and natural child protection systems of tribal communities.

Other federal policies, including the removal of tribal populations and creation of reservations as well as the relocation program, have had major effects on AI/AN communities and increased the risk for child maltreatment. Removing and relocating American Indian people onto reservations between 1830 and 1871 forced tribes to leave behind customs tied to their traditional lands, adjust their economies, and change their way of life without the support promised by the federal government (Crofoot, 2005).

As the federal government began to recognize how the removal and reservation of tribal communities was hurting AI/AN people, it instituted the Indian Relocation Act of 1956. This Act offered to pay moving expenses and provide vocational training to AI/AN individuals willing to move from their reservations to certain government-designated cities (Pevar, 2012). This program not only broke down family systems but also left families and individuals stranded away from their communities and natural support systems in unfamiliar environments. Similarly, AI/AN individuals who moved to urban areas were far from traditional support networks and faced difficulty economically succeeding while adjusting to the high price of living and Western value system of cities, meaning that many urban AI/AN communities and families were also at an increased risk for child maltreatment. Nearly one third of all relocated AI/AN people eventually returned home because of these problems (Pevar, 2012).

The effects of these programs are long standing. Challenges in AI/AN communities today, including poverty, mental and physical health problems, poor housing, and violence, are directly related to reservation and relocation policies. Socially and economically isolated reservations and urban Indian communities are fraught with disadvantage, including heightened risk for child maltreatment (Crofoot, 2005).

The pattern of mistreatment of AI/AN people and communities over the course of the centuries, as described above, has had an additional effect on AI/AN families that creates a heightened risk for child maltreatment: historical trauma. The concept of historical trauma in AI/AN people and communities originates from studies that examined the lingering effects that the German Holocaust had on the children and grandchildren of families affected (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Researchers and experts believe that the shared experience by AI/AN people of historic traumatic events such as displacement, forced assimilation, suppression of language and culture, and boarding schools creates a legacy of unresolved grief that, when left untreated, is passed down through generations (Cross, 2006; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998), and experienced in ways that reflect reactions to trauma, such as increased mental health disorders, substance abuse, stress, and social isolation—all risk factors for child maltreatment. In a review of the literature on risk factors specific to AI/AN maltreatment, authors speculated about the influence of boarding schools, cultural identification, and extended family supports, as described in the section

above which details governmental policy and practices, which have had a direct effect on AI/AN families (Landsman, Cross, & Tyler, 1994; Cross, 1986; Hull, 1982).

The Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect in AI/AN Families

National data on AI/AN children who experience child abuse and neglect are limited. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) collects comprehensive data on the rates and characteristics of child abuse and neglect in all families. The data input into this system, however, is only for families who interface with state and county child welfare systems. Tribal programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or Indian Health Services (IHS) programs, or tribal consortia are often the primary service providers for AI/AN children and families, yet NCANDS does not include AI/AN children who come to the attention of and are served by tribal child welfare systems.

Research has shown that state and county workers are only involved in approximately 61% of all tribal abuse and neglect cases (Earle, 2000). These findings would lead to the conclusion that abuse and neglect of AI/AN children are underreported (Fox, 2003). Other issues, however, such as the definition of child abuse and neglect, the process for counting incidents of abuse and neglect in NCANDS, or the fact that reporting is primarily based on non-Native perceptions and substantiation of maltreatment would lead to the opposite conclusion—that numbers of AI/AN abuse and neglect cases in NCANDS are artificially high (Bigfoot et al., 2005).

It is also important to note that national research studies of the child welfare system have found biased treatment of AI/AN families in the state system. Although these studies tend to focus on out-of-home placement, one recent study found that, due in part to systematic bias, where abuse has been reported, AI/AN children are two times more likely to be investigated, and two times more likely to have allegations of abuse substantiated (Hill, 2007). This, too, affects the data presented in national data systems like NCANDS.

Furthermore, tribes are underrepresented in many major data collection efforts and statistical analyses (National Congress of American Indians, 2009). For example, the 2010 National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect 4 (NIS-4) stated that 'other' race categories "had too few sample children to support independent estimates for those groups (i.e., American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and mixed race), so analyses excluded those" (Sedlak, 2010).

Although there may be methodological adjustments necessary to work with smaller data sets, the knowledge and information that a report like the NIS-4 provides should not be denied to stakeholders for convenience reasons (Sahota, 2011). Studies and reports, like the NIS-4, in which AI/AN data are collected (NIS-4 does not use a national data set but engages in independent data collection) but are not analyzed

for use by the public, policy makers, and practitioners, are problematic and paint an incomplete national picture.

Nonetheless, the limited data that are available do provide some basic understanding of the prevalence of child maltreatment in AI/AN families and communities:

- AI/AN children are 1.1% of all child maltreatment victims reported to state and county child welfare agencies (Children's Bureau, 2012).
- AI/AN children experienced a rate of child abuse and neglect of 11.4 per 1,000 AI/AN children. This rate compares to the national rates of victimization of 9.1 per 1,000 (Children's Bureau, 2012).
- AI/AN children are more likely than children of other races/ethnicities to be confirmed as victims of neglect (59.7%) and are least likely to be confirmed as victims of physical abuse (6.4%) (Children's Bureau, 2008), which suggests a causal link between leading risk factors and incidences of maltreatment.

Although NCANDS is the primary source of data on the abuse and neglect of children, there are a few other sources of data for AI/AN children, such as select BIA regional offices, IHS, and other agencies concerned with this information that may collect data on the prevalence of child maltreatment in the tribal communities with which they work (Bigfoot et al., 2005; Earle, 2000). This data, however, is not kept consistently or nationally.

Effects of Child Maltreatment

Facing trauma in the form of child maltreatment has long-term effects on the well-being of AI/AN children, particularly when it goes undetected and untreated. Studies have shown that children who have been abused or neglected have higher rates of mental health and substance abuse disorders, are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system, have worse educational outcomes (truancy and grade repetition), and are more likely to have early pregnancies (Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2012). It is also important to understand that individuals who experience abuse and neglect are more likely to be perpetrators of intimate partner violence and child maltreatment, creating a cycle of violence that is difficult to break (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013). In addition, child abuse and neglect can have a long-term effect on physical health. One study has shown that at up to three years following a maltreatment investigation, 28% of children were diagnosed with a chronic long-term health condition (Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2007).

Child maltreatment does not just have long-term effects on the victims; it also comes at a great cost to society and the communities it touches. According to the Centers for Disease Control, to manage all of the services associated with the immediate response to all child maltreatment costs \$124 billion a year (Child Welfare

Information Gateway, 2013). Although AI/AN children are only a small fraction of child maltreatment victims nationally, that would still equate to billions of dollars a year being spent to respond to child maltreatment of AI/AN children. For tribes who are already under-resourced in the area of child welfare, and who do not have access to federal child abuse prevention funding (with the exception of two small, competitive grant programs), responding to child maltreatment can be a huge drain on available resources.

Beyond the direct or immediate costs of child maltreatment there are also many long-term indirect costs. These include long-term economic consequences to society such as an increased likelihood of employment problems, financial instability, and work absenteeism. In addition, child maltreatment creates long-term economic consequences related to increased use of the healthcare system, increase cost due to juvenile and adult criminal activity, and increased use of mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence services (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013).

Chronic social problems like child maltreatment hold back communities. When they are unaddressed, they ultimately interfere with efforts to create and encourage economic development by taking from tribal resources that could be used for economic and infrastructure development to “manage” these chronic and persistent social problems. Furthermore, as Cornell and Kalt (1998) discuss, “nation building,” an approach to successful economic development for Indian tribes, requires a community where both businesses and humans must flourish because they are in relationship with one another. Cornell argues that success in economic development is more than just jobs—it also includes social impacts and making a community a place where investors want to do business and where the community is healthy enough to engage successfully with the economy.

“Understanding the Role of Grandparents in Indigenous Families: Principles for Engagement,” Le Anne E. Silvey, Sandra J. Bailey, and James J. Ponzetti, *Family Science Review*, 2019 [53]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Le_Anne_Silvey/publication/336240379_Understanding_the_Role_of_Grandparents_in_Indigenous_Families_Principles_for_Engagement/inks/5d961dd1458515c1d391a20c/Understanding-the-Role-of-Grandparents-in-Indigenous-Families-Principles-for-Engagement.pdf

Abstract:

Indigenous grandparents have significant roles in the lives of grandchildren. They are integrally engaged with grandchildren because traditional ways value and support their involvement. Despite historical trauma and ongoing marginalization of Indigenous people, the power of their culture and resiliency are strength-based assets. Understanding Indigenous culture and history can help practitioners provide services to these families. This paper reviews unique characteristics of Indigenous grandparenting and makes recommendations for service providers.

Current & Relevant Information:

Understanding the Role of Grandparents in Indigenous Families: Principles for Engagement

Indigenous grandparents have historically played and continue to have significant roles in the lives of grandchildren. They are integrally engaged with grandchildren because traditional ways and cultural expectations value and support their involvement (Thompson, Cameron, & Fuller-Thomson, 2013; Henderson, Dinh, Morgan, & Lewis, 2017). Further, positive external factors, such as employment or educational opportunities that take parents out of the area, and family crises such as death, mental health, incarceration, and substance abuse, impact families such that grandparent involvement is necessary. However, there remains a paucity of research focused on grandparent and grandchild relationships in Indigenous (e.g., American Indian, Alaska Native, and First Nations) communities in the United States and Canada. Grandparents' roles in Indigenous families are reviewed in this paper, and suggestions for service providers to effectively render assistance presented. This paper reviews the unique characteristics of Indigenous grandparenting followed by recommendations for service providers.

Two important points must be recognized from extant literature. First, the tribal variability precludes any gross generalizations to all groups. For example, some are matriarchal (e.g., Pueblo) whereas others are patriarchal (e.g., Lakota). However, this variability does not prevent the presence of similarities. Similarities of interdependent extended kinship networks, collective responsibility for family members, and roles and obligations for cultural maintenance are commonplace. Second, most literature on Indigenous grandparents is offered by grandmothers. There is insufficient information to address whether the thoughts and behaviors of grandfathers are different.

Indigenous families and communities

Indigenous cultures are rich and varied. Each tribe or First Nation is grounded in its own culture borne of centuries of history. Varied family patterns can be found among Indigenous peoples within the same region in terms of their adherence to cultural practices and whether or not they reside on reservation lands (Red Horse, Lewis, Feit, & Decker, 1978; Red Horse, 1988; Silvey, 2004; Yellowbird & Snipp, 1998).

Indigenous communities emphasize balance in life and take a broad, comprehensive approach. They believe that every person has value and worth and deserves respect. The interconnectedness of all things is particularly evident in the belief of harmony with nature; harmony with nature is sought to enhance collective health (Silvey, Griffore, & Phenice, 2007; Woods, 1996). This philosophy is inculcated by kinship networks, comprehensive of extended family and community members. Traditional practices revolve around a relational rather than individualistic ethos. This ethos is based on circular rather than linear thoughts and a metaphysical reality that

incorporates dreams, visions, and spirits (Red Horse, 1980a; Silvey et al., 2007). Additional cultural values include living in the present and a sense of time that is relative and flexible (Grayshield & Mihecoby, 2010).

Indigenous people identify themselves not only as members of specific families but as members of communities that constitute a larger kinship network. Families are composed of biological and fictive kin and matters of blood and spirit. They exhibit a structural openness within a community milieu (Tam, Findlay, & Kohen, 2017). Community family networks are resilient and powerful. It is common to call non-blood-related persons relatives, thereby embracing them as legitimate family members. This is not due to lack of commitment or empathy toward raising children, but because it is an obligation and a desire to cooperate and share this task (Harper, 2011). Grandparents and other family and community members readily assume this responsibility for children with due earnestness (Bigfoot & Funderburk, 2011). In addition, multiple generations often reside in the same household. Cooperation and sharing in the spirit of community is essential to harmony and balance. Thus, examination of the community as a totality is necessary to understand family transactions (Lewis, 1981; Woods, 1996). Routine involvement of multiple generations in family life is a culturally familiar experience. For grandparents, having a house full of grandchildren is an expected privilege of later life.

Intergenerational experiences of Indigenous families have characteristics and history distinct from those in non-Indigenous society. Family configurations and concepts are inimitable to cultural histories and practices of Indigenous families that do not reflect Western norms. In general, Indigenous families exhibit greater structural flexibility and variability.

Grandparent Roles in Indigenous Families

Indeed, grandparents are typically involved in the lives of their grandchildren. Grandparents' commitment to intergenerational relationships and kinship care is conveyed in multiple roles. Grandparents expect to serve as Elders, wisdom bearers, cultural conservators, and teachers (Choi, Sprang, & Eslinger, 2016; Red Horse, 1980b; Robbins, Scherman, Holeman, & Wilson, 2005). Elders and grandparents are revered and respected in Indigenous societies. An Elder's status is not necessarily determined by age but rather by the attainment of a certain level of erudition and wisdom that is shared with the community (Baldrige, 2001; Day, 2007; Lewis, 2011). Elders are typically considered keepers of the culture and responsible for teaching traditional beliefs, values, and cultural practices. Children are socialized into traditional ways and values by observing behaviors of Elders, community members, and immediate and extended family members including their grandparents (Cross, Day, & Byers, 2010; Dennis & Brewer, 2017).

Grandparents as wisdom bearers perform crucial acts by conveying traditional knowledge through cultural practices and traditions. Traditional knowledge is

considered essential and vital to the endurance of tribal communities (Barnhardt, 2005; Cross, Day, & Farrell, 2011; Day, 2007; Schweitzer, 1999). Indigenous societies respect older family and community members (e.g., grandparents) as holders of traditional knowledge that is essential to cultural continuance. Remaining actively involved in the community while also engaging in the traditional intergenerational transfer of knowledge is an important role for grandparents (Balvinder, Barker, MacLean, & Grischkan, 2015; Collings, 2001; Graves, Shavings, & Rose, 2009; Lewis, 2011).

Indigenous grandparents are typically viewed as key conduits of cultural values and traditional knowledge to their grandchildren (Kopera-Frye, 2009; Thompson et al., 2013; Weibel-Orlando, 2000). Grandparents serve as “cultural conservators” or keepers of traditional Indigenous ways. They enculturate grandchildren with the past through preserving customs, beliefs, history, language, and traditions. Cultural continuity is highly valued considering the historical trauma, acculturation pressures, and contemporary familial circumstances that Indigenous families have encountered (Archuleta, Child, & Lomawaima, 2000; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Byers, 2010; Grandbois & Sanders, 2012; Struthers & Lowe, 2003; Weaver & Brave Heart, 1999).

Ties between grandparents and grandchildren are complex and vital for resilience in the face of social, economic, and emotional challenges. Grandparent roles are based on traditionally and culturally defined responsibilities performed within contexts of tribal ethics, community distribution networks, and economic supports. Grandparents provide a source of stability. It is through this essential role that they provide a sense of belonging, safety, and security (Ginn, 2009; Myhra, Wieling, & Grant, 2015; Red Horse, 1980b).

Grandparents fulfill roles as advisors, guardians of traditional knowledge, oral historians, stewards of cultural values, and mentors (Barusch & Steen, 1996; Cross et al., 2010; Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2005; Harper, 2011; Hopkins, Kwachka, Lardon, & Mohatt, 2007; Loppie, 2007; Robbins et al., 2005). Their guidance is esteemed and sought after (Bahr, 1994; Baldridge, 2001; Poppel, Kruse, Duhaime, & Abryutina, 2007). Indigenous grandparents leverage their own experiences of cultural disruption to reinvest in the cultural health and well-being of their grandchildren (Thompson et al., 2013; Weaver & Brave Heart, 1999).

Indigenous traditions are conveyed through storytelling. Grandparents are storytellers (Robbins et al., 2005). They offer their grandchildren a sense of knowing their cultures, kinship ties as well as pseudo-kin, and family histories (Cross et al., 2010; Silvey, 2004). Storytelling is commonly used to express feelings, beliefs, and the importance of experience, including historical trauma and marginalization. It helps with healing from experiences of social injustice, along with use of traditional ceremonies that come from deep Indigenous wisdom (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011). The use of storytelling to heal from historical trauma has been characterized as the “process of re-traditionalization” or “healing of spirit” (Struthers

& Lowe, 2003, p. 269). It is a time when listeners are expected to be silent, patient, and reflective (Plank, 1994). They share traditional knowledge handed down from previous generations through oral tradition. They recognize traditional knowledge as the cornerstone of cultural identity and endurance as a people.

Cultural and spiritual traditions are central to grandparents' lives, especially in the wake of historical trauma and oppression (Brave Heart et al., 2011; Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011; Hanson & Hampton, 2000). These traditions serve as a means of healing and as protective factors for children and families (Cournoyer, 2012; Silvey, 2004; Silvey, et al., 2007). Grandparents in tribal communities expect to contribute to the lives and safety of their grandchildren and maintain tribal identity in extended family ties (Bahr, 1994; Schweitzer, 1999). Grandparents find comfort in maintaining intergenerational relationships and extend the cultural practice of intergenerational child rearing to support the transmission of culture (Cross & Day, 2008; Hayslip & Kaminski, 2005).

Colonialism and ongoing intrusion of contemporary Western values and culture has had a significant impact on traditional parenting styles and intergenerational relationships (Kral, 2011). It is not unusual for Indigenous grandparents to take a central part in raising their grandchildren; however, such care is culturally and traditionally informal (Bahr, 1994; Weibel-Orlando, 1997). For example, the Lakota use the term *ecagwaya* (meaning to raise as one's own) to describe such arrangements (Bean, McAllister, & Hudgins, 2001), and Hawaiian grandparents assume parental responsibilities through *hanai* (i.e., informal adoption) (Werner, 1991; Yancura, 2013). Similarly, Schweitzer (1999) identified the significant impact of grandmothers' child care and childrearing on the young of Indigenous communities. This arrangement is devoid of the benefits of legal recognition because of its informality.

War, genocide, colonization, cultural suppression, and oppression by those who did not understand or respect traditional ways of living nearly eradicated Indigenous communities. They further experienced a corresponding decline in resources and opportunities, the denial of spiritual beliefs, and the near eradication of tribal cultures, languages, and traditional ways of living (Brave Heart et al., 2011; Goodkind, Hess, Gorman, & Parker, 2012). Understanding resilience in the context of life experiences and historical changes, which include forced relocation and displacements, reconfigurations, violent dispossession of property and homeland, and continuing marginalization borne of intentional and unintentional actions and policies is critical (Brave Heart et al., 2011; Montgomery, Miville, Winterowd, Jefferies, & Baysden, 1998).

Resiliency is a significant benefit that provides strength to both Indigenous grandparents and grandchildren (Cross et al., 2010). Grandchildren feel safe, secure and learn stability through grandparents' resilience, nurturance, and support. They learn that they will not lose their identity, cultural values and way of life, and more

importantly, their sense of communal family ties. Resilience develops through various relationships, such as strong, cohesive families and communities. Regarding cultural resilience, Indigenous Elders have reported that “If people stand together, they can be strong. The strength is in the unity and solidarity; it’s not the individual” (Grandbois & Sanders, 2012, p. 394). Thus, resiliency is a bidirectional process between grandparents and their grandchildren: the centrality of culture and communal worldview is strengthened, and each learns from the other (Silvey, 2004; Silvey et al., 2007).

Conclusion

Indigenous grandparents support and bolster family life in Indigenous communities, often without assistance from formal agencies. The comprehensive nature of extended family (fictive, non-fictive, tribe, community, and those informally adopted) promotes the principle of self-reliance, thereby taking care of problems or concerns within the Indigenous community first. It is only when all efforts have been exhausted within the Indigenous community and/or when matters have reached a crisis or emergency that Indigenous people look outside their extended family for help.

When serving Indigenous grandparents, it is important to recognize and respect the unique approach to life among Indigenous populations to provide useful resources and ways of knowing. Despite historical and political injustices that Indigenous communities have encountered, there is much to learn about their resilient nature that can serve as protective assets and lessons learned from contemporary grandparents in Indigenous families who encounter historical trauma and marginalization.

Indigenous peoples of the United States and Canada continue to experience social injustice from historical trauma, oppression, and marginalization. It is important for practitioners to understand the longstanding history of Indigenous people to effectively engage in working relationships. Of importance is the fact Indigenous people have a sovereign relationship with governments of North America: that is, one based on government-to-government relationships rather than race.

The six principles discussed in this paper are at the core of Indigenous culture and ways of knowing. Service providers need to be mindful of the value and meaning of extended family when engaging with Indigenous grandparents and their communities. Understanding these valued principles as strength-based assets at the core of self-reliance evince the power of culture and resiliency. Practitioners can help temper effects of historical trauma, oppression, and marginalization by incorporating these cultural values and principles when engaging Indigenous grandparents in provision of services. Most importantly, culture is not only treatment, culture is prevention.

“American Indian and Alaska Native Grand Families: The Impact on Child Development,” Suzanne Cross, Angelique Day, and Patricia Farrell,

digitalcommons.wayne.edu, 2011 [54]

https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1027&context=soc_work_pubs

Abstract:

Traditionally, grandparents and other family members have assumed integral roles in raising children within American Indian/Alaska Native communities. The existence of an extensive support system assisted parents in passing on to their children the knowledge of customs, culture, and language essential to community survival and well-being. An increasing number of children are now being raised in “grand families,” a type of family constellation where grandparents take on the role of sole or primary caregiver for their grandchildren under eighteen years of age.

Assuming primary care of grandchildren is a major undertaking for grandparents who have already raised their own children. This chapter examines the challenges and opportunities experienced by American Indian/Alaska Native grand families. We discuss the financial and legal challenges for grandparents, who often live on fixed incomes. We review how traditional child-rearing practices often differ from what grandparents are able to provide today because of disruption in parenting practices as a result of historical trauma. We discuss the strengths of American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents to build a more positive future for their grandchildren. Finally, we conclude with recommendations for how educational and social services institutions can support American Indian/Alaska Native grand families in culturally appropriate ways.

Current & Relevant Information:

American Indian/Alaska Native Grand Family Systems

In the United States, the number of grandparent-headed households is on the rise across all racial and ethnic groups (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2006-2008). Approximately 2.5 million grandparents are estimated to be responsible, without any parent present, for their own grandchildren under the age of eighteen. About two-thirds of these grandparents are ages thirty to fifty, with one-third being sixty and older. Approximately 19% of all grandparent caregivers report incomes below the poverty level.

American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents represented approximately 48,000 of the total number of grandparents raising their grandchildren in the 2006-2008 American Community Survey. However, it should be noted that this number is estimated to be lower than actual figures, as many American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents are informal caregivers “who provide care for their grandchildren without benefits of legal adoption, foster care, or legal guardianship” and are therefore reluctant to report their status (Mooradian et al., 2006, 83). As a group, American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents who were included in the 2000 Census

report experienced higher poverty rates (32%), more physical limitations (34%), and more crowded living conditions compared with White grandparent caregivers (Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2005; Mutchler et al., 2007).

Although specific reasons for grandchild placement with grandparents are not known, some of the factors that may thrust grandparents into a custodial role include: unemployment of the parents, divorce, child maltreatment, teen pregnancy, incarceration, disability, death of a parent, parental mental disorder, child's health issues, absent parent, or substance abuse (Casper & Bryson, 1998; Cross & Day, 2008; Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2005; Hayslip & Kaminski, 2005).

Formal and Informal Child Care Placements

American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents, similar to other grandparents in U.S. mainstream society, have several legal options in ensuring that their caregiving does not impede their grandchildren's access to medical care, financial support, and education. These options include power of attorney, foster care parent certification, guardianship, and adoption (Day & Cross, 2004). Although these options may provide stability and support for caregiving, American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents are sometimes reluctant to seek legal recourse for several reasons, including expectations that the biological parents will return to care for the children, and historical fear of a legal system in which outcomes in child care matters are not favorable to family preservation. In particular, the foster care system continues to present challenges for American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents. For example, Day and Cross (2004) note that grandparents seeking information about becoming foster parents are often informed that: (a) the children will become wards of the state in order to receive benefits, and (b) there is no guarantee that this will result in a kinship placement with the grandparents. Consequently, many American Indian grandparents decide to support their grandchildren informally, often on fixed and low-to-moderate incomes (Day & Cross, 2004).

Informal placements present significant barriers for grandparents. The lack of a legal relationship through a power of attorney, adoption, legal custody, or guardianship can impede their ability to obtain medical care, health insurance, and other supportive services, including financial assistance, for grandchildren (Butts, 2005). In such cases, grandparents without insurance often rely on hospital emergency rooms to provide medical care needs for their grandchildren, rather than scheduling appointments with pediatricians or family practice physicians who require insurance and copayments (Crumbley & Little, 1997). For American Indian/Alaska Native grand families, access to health services may be further complicated because of lengthy travel distances to health care facilities, lack of reliable transportation, extensive waiting periods before appointments are available (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005), and unwillingness to access services.

Cultural and Traditional Child Rearing Practices

Traditionally, American Indian/Alaska Native children were raised and disciplined not only by their parents but also extended family members and kin, which included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other members of their tribal nation. There was interdependence among this extended network, which involved the sharing of resources, opinions, and attempts to come to unanimous agreements concerning child care and child rearing (Officer, 1963). Discipline was often in the form of teachings and lessons that were learned by the telling of stories with a moral outcome. Another method employed by the elders of the tribal community was to instruct the children individually to sit by themselves to think of ways to make amends for wrongful and hurtful actions. Also, role modeling of appropriate behaviors by adults and older children was a means to educate children for roles that were integral and necessary for the survival of their tribal nations (Day, 2007).

In addition to these direct methods of child-rearing practices, children were included in the cultural ways of listening in to conversations by adults and/or with elders that focused on the concerns of the tribal community (Hilger, 1992), and they were able to contribute to the discussion if they thought they had something to add. Children engaged in assisting the adults and elders as they prepared for religious and spiritual ceremonies and social gatherings. All of the children were expected to participate as their age and knowledge allowed. Children did the same tasks fathers and mothers did, but on a smaller scale. Such tasks included making nets, tanning hides, fishing, hunting, making baskets, quill work, and others. (Hilger, 1992). Hence, prior to the Termination Era of 1890-1960, children were rooted in the culture, language, religion, and ceremonies of their tribal nations through extended family relationships, providing them with “firm social ties, a sense of interdependence and belonging to the culture” (Weaver, 1999). Because of these connections, American Indian/Alaska Native children thrived in kinship care.

Impact of Historical Trauma

Today, American Indian communities live with a legacy of cultural trauma as a result of centuries of U.S. policies and practices intentionally designed to disassemble tribal nations. Brave Heart put forth the definition of historical trauma as “the cumulative psychological and emotional wounding across generations, including one’s own life span, and comes from massive group traumatic events and experiences” (2005, p. 1). Historical trauma began for American Indian/Alaska Native populations with the European colonization over several decades and in numerous ways, including: loss of lives from military action; forced relocation of tribal nations (Weaver, 1998); loss of familiar environments needed to sustain life and loss of homeland; incarceration of Indian prisoners of war; and disease processes, such as small pox, tuberculosis, and influenza (Child, 1998; Child & Lomawaima, 2000). Trauma continued during the Termination Era, with the banning of traditional religious and cultural American Indian/Alaska Native practices. This prohibition

ended only thirty-two years ago, with the passage of the 1978 Religious Freedom Act.

During the Termination Era, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) attempted to “civilize” American Indians by the formal implementation of an off-reservation boarding school system. The BIA system used militaristic methods to “civilize” and “assimilate” American Indian youth through mainstream education. The number of BIA boarding schools increased significantly from twenty-five to five hundred schools during the Termination Era and through the mid-1980s (Child, 1998). The purpose was to extinguish the existence of American Indians as a unique people; a purpose that was not achieved, but one that did create significant trauma from which American Indians have not fully recovered.

In a 2005 study, more than 240 American Indian grandparents discussed at length their own experiences and shared stories of their parents, aunts, uncles, and siblings who had attended Michigan boarding schools (Cross, 2005). For many participants, days were filled with numerous tasks and little time to think. Children had no privacy and were encouraged to report on each other by administrators and teachers. Students were taught that the Indian way of life was savage and inferior to the non-Indian way, and that they were being civilized or raised up to a better way of life. Students were explicitly told they were dirty, stupid, and backward. They were given many rules, choices were limited, and to disobey meant severe punishment. Those who assimilated quickly were called “good Indians” and those who did not were called “bad Indians.” Traumatic experiences occurred in a number of these boarding schools through repetitive physical, psychological, and sexual abuse; withholding of food or rules on how food was to be consumed; limited or no contact with family; dehumanization by loss of tribal cultures; and experiences of hopelessness, confusion, and abandonment by lack of protection from parents.

In addition to the numerous descendants of parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, thousands of American Indians alive today have had the lived experience of the U.S. BIA boarding school system. In fact, Weaver notes that “most Native Americans have been affected, either directly or indirectly, by a legacy of boarding schools that broke apart families and forbade the speaking of American Indian languages, practicing of traditions and spirituality” (1998, 205). Children who attended boarding schools were denied the safety and security of being raised by their families and communities. Instead of learning traditional customs and practices, they were exposed to negative behaviors and disciplinary practices. The combined impact had lasting consequences for children’s sense of well-being and self-concept. Boarding school experiences may not be the only factor for the subsequent development of negative behaviors and disorders, but they are likely to have had a significant impact.

As a consequence of the boarding school policy and system, and the dissolution of tribes, clans, bands, and extended families, traditional child-rearing practices were

negatively altered for many families. Brave Heart describes the impact of historical trauma or historical trauma response as “the echoing through generations by symptoms of survivor guilt, anger, depression, self-destructive behaviors and a number of other disorders” (2005, p. 1). Additional self-destructive behaviors, such as domestic violence and substance use, have also been noted as a result of historical trauma (Weaver, 1999). The impact of historical trauma response is insidious, affecting subsequent generations unless there are counterbalances in children’s lives.

Further, Cross (2005) notes that these experiences have also impacted American Indian/Alaska Native attitudes and behaviors toward accessing social services or other governmental services. As a result, even though some of the grandparents felt they were best able to provide the safest care for their grandchildren, they were unwilling to access social services, with others accessing only tribal nation services and a few relying on their own resources. This reluctance based on mistrust presents challenges for addressing the socioemotional and educational needs of grandchildren.

Conclusion

American Indian/Alaska Native grandparents raising their grandchildren are experiencing challenges similar to other ethnic populations who provide kinship care. However, there are important considerations that are unique to this population, which include the need for knowledge of the laws that directly impact the population, such as the Indian Child Welfare Act and Indian Education Act. Service providers must also become knowledgeable about the number of programs and services offered by tribal nations and urban American Indian centers that are comprehensive of cultural teachings grounded in the rich traditions of the 564 tribal nations in the United States. Programs that are designed to address negative impacts of historical trauma are of enormous value to all tribal members, including grandparents who are raising grandchildren. American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Native service providers need to be aware that working with tribal nations may involve “working with medicine men, pastors, elders, priests, teachers, or other individuals with specialized knowledge” (Hodge et al., 2009, p. 217).

Various forms of historical trauma continue to be significant factors in the lives of both the grandparents and grandchildren, especially as to how decisions are made to access social services. It is essential that service providers understand and approach issues of care within American Indian/Alaska Native historical contexts. With that grounding, they will be better able to assist American Indian grandparents and their grandchildren with tribal and non-tribal services that are available to address their needs within the context of their culture, which is essential (Cross, 2007).

Early childhood and K-12 educational settings today can also play an important role in fostering American Indian/Alaska Native children's development in strength-based, culturally competent ways. Tribally run Head Start programs and K-12 schools offer opportunities for the incorporation of culturally specific curriculum and language. In light of the already-described challenges faced by American Indian/Alaska Native children, educational institutions emerge as vehicles for intervention and support of cultural strengths. However, if this is to be realized, educational institutions and programming must include the needs of American Indian/Alaska Native grand families.

At the national level, it is important that all grand families be included as a population in need of assistance. It was not until the 2000 U.S. Census that data were collected on grand families. Although, the data are likely to be an undercount, especially for American Indian/Alaska Native grand families, it is the start of focusing on a population with service needs and of tracking success in addressing those needs.

F. Religious Beliefs, Rituals, and Ceremonies:

“American Indian Belief Systems and Traditional Practices,” Betty E. S. Duran, [wellnesscourts.org](http://www.wellnesscourts.org), 2002 [55] <http://www.wellnesscourts.org/files/Duran%20-%20American%20Indian%20Belief%20Systems.pdf>

Abstract:

American Indians today remain the most culturally varied of the ethnic groups in the United States. Family life, cultural and religious practices, value systems, language, and dress vary greatly between American Indian groups that have lived on the same continent for centuries (Drews, et al., 1982). American Indians and Alaska Natives are as racially differentiated as the Europeans and far more varied culturally and linguistically (Ho, 1987).

Current & Relevant Information:

Historically, American Indians developed societies with well-defined roles, responsibilities, government and economic systems, recreational and leisure styles, religious rites and ceremonies, social behavior in which group involvement, support and consensus played major roles. Their social, economic and political traditions reflected a strong emphasis on group involvement and decision making (Edwards & Edwards, 1980).

American Indian values lean toward a cosmic identity, a harmony of the individual with the tribe, the tribe with the land, and the land with the spirit of the universe. Central to this quest for harmony is a sense of constancy – the timelessness and predictability of nature as the foundation of existence. This cycle symbolizes eternity-one reality, and it transcends everything in its absoluteness, giving respect to everything (Herring, 1989).

American Indian culture emphasizes harmony with nature, endurance of suffering, respect and noninterference toward others, a strong belief that man is inherently good and should be respected for his decisions. Such values make individuals and families in difficulty very reluctant to seek help. Their fear and mistrust toward non-Indians caused by past oppression and discrimination make it almost impossible for a non-Indian provider to gain entry into the Indian family system (Ho, 1987).

The family is a recognized cornerstone of American Indian society. It serves as a repository for value orientations that guide human behavior, as a transactional milieu for life span socialization, and as a basic catalyst for cultural revitalization (Red Horse, 1980). In Anglo culture there is an expectation of change from generation to generation, whereas, in most Indian cultures there is an expectation that the generations will repeat themselves (Metcalf, 1979).

Both American Indian tribal and Christian religions play an important part in the lives of American Indian people. Religion is incorporated into their being from the time of conception, when many tribes perform rites and rituals to ensure the delivery of a healthy baby, to death ceremonies, where great care is taken to promote the return of the person's spirit to the life after this one. American Indians who speak their native language tend to maintain their religious ceremonies, customs, and traditions. They also have more trust in their native people for physical and mental health needs than in Anglo medical doctors or family therapists (Ho, 1987).

Indian values are interwoven throughout American Indian culture, lifestyle, religion, and daily activities. Many values are re-enforced through the use of ceremonies (Edwards & Edwards, 1980). Additionally, the values systems of American Indian groups are as varied as their lifestyles. However, there are some values that appear to be generic and shared by most American Indian groups. Herring (Herring, 1989) described the following as commonly shared values:

| Anglo American | American Indian |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Success | Happiness |
| Ownership | Sharing |
| "Number One" | Tribe and extended family first, before self |
| Youth Oriented | Honor your Elders |
| Learning is found in school | Learning is through legends |
| Look to the future | Look to traditions |
| Work for retirement | Work for purpose |
| Be structured & aware of time | Time is only relative |
| Oriented to house, job, etc | Oriented to land |
| Look ahead, not to the past | Cherish the memories of youth |
| A critic is a good analyst | Don't criticize your people |
| "What are you – some kind of animal" | Live like the animals; they are your bothers and sisters |
| This is America, speak English | Cherish your language |
| I'll raise my own; you do the same | Children are gift of the Great Spirit to be shared with others |
| The law is the law! | Consider the relative nature of a crime, the personality of the individual, and the conditions of the offense. |
| Have a rule for every contingency | Few rules are best – loose and flexible |
| Religion is for the individual | Religion is the universe |

Understanding traditional American Indian values and their potentially conflicting opposites in the non-Indian population is a useful point to implementing the objectives of effective social programs that are ostensibly designed to help less-fortunate individuals without interfering with their right to self-determination. It is imperative that service providers learn about the specific Indian tribal groups with which they are working. This understanding will facilitate a more successful intervention. Furthermore, service providers should move slowly, identify problems and procedures clearly, make commitments regarding situations in which they have control, follow through consistently, and use client strength appropriately in order to develop a feeling of trust and establish professional relationships. Additionally, in working with an American Indian client, the service providers should assure an appropriate authoritarian position that permits the client to assume as much responsibility as possible for his or her activities, discussion, and decision making.

Tribal ritual and ceremonial practices provide a code for ethical behavior and social organization which contribute to a meaning of life. It also provides a means for intervening in individual or social dysfunction. American Indians are caught between two cultures, attempting to preserve the best of the old, while adopting the best and necessary of the new. Though there has been significant progress in the control of

biomedical oriented pathologies, there still exists a high rate of death attributed to the stress of biculturalism. Much of this high death rate is due to accidents, suicides, substance abuse, and violence, “. . . expressions of the emotional stress experienced by individuals who have been stripped of their cultural traditions and forced to live a bicultural existence” (Guilmet & Whited, 1987). Racism and oppression, including internalized oppression, are continuous forces which exacerbate these destructive behaviors (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). The chronic depression displayed by many American Indian people can be linked with such factors as failing to acquire upward mobility in American society, subjective feelings of rejection and discrimination, guilt stemming from collective and personal denial of their heritage, and moral disorientation due to the fragmentation of traditional practices. Guilmet and Whited (1987) report that an increasing body of psychiatric literature suggests that the integration of Indian healing practices along with western treatment strategies can have a positive impact on Indian depression.

Cultural interventions include ceremonies of name giving, spiritual cleansing of individuals, as well as homes and offices, and education on tribal traditions and practices. Strengthening of ethnic identity results from participation in tribal community activities, tribal language classes, traditional American Indian arts and crafts, and teaching of traditional rewards and values as compared with western society. Tribal members who do not adhere to cultural rules and functions tend to feel isolated, struggle with identity, and may act out frustrations by using alcohol or engaging in other kinds of destructive behavior. Religious observances are particularly important to the integrity of the Indian social/cultural system (Dicharry, 1986). Therefore, practitioners need to blend western strategies along with traditional culture and values when working with American Indian clients. Key community resource people and elders need to be included in development of effective cultural programs (Guilmet & Whited, 1987). The Kwawatchee Mental Health Counseling Center of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians has used this approach with tribal members experiencing a variety of mental health problems, resulting in increased use of mental health services and decreased episodes of treatment for the same patient.

Traditional American Indian beliefs about health, as well as all aspects of living, evolved from Indian religion. Health is not just the absence of disease, it is harmony with oneself, including body, mind, and spirit, harmony with others, and harmony with one's surroundings or environment. Therefore, the concept of spirituality and religion are inseparable from one's health. American Indian culture promotes the spiritual side of wellness and healing, whereas western medicine focuses primarily on the physical aspects. Traditional Indians believe that there are three kinds of disease: 1) natural (cuts, broken bones, etc.), 2) supernatural (curses), 3) non-Indian illness associated with contact with European culture (Baines, 1992). Baines (1992) identified only three ways of healing illness: illness only traditional healers can treat;

illness only western medicine can treat, and illness both methods can treat comprising the majority of all illnesses.

“Hearing before the Committee on Indian Affairs United States Senate One Hundred Eighth Congress Second Session on Oversight Hearing on American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978,” U.S. Government, epub.sub.uni-hamburg.de, 14 July 2004 [56] <https://epub.sub.uni-hamburg.de/epub/volltexte/2010/4647/pdf/getdoc4.pdf>

Overview:

In 1978, Congress passed and President Carter signed into law the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), which provided that freedom of religion is an inherent fundamental right guaranteed to all Americans by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and that the religious practices of Native peoples are an integral part of their culture and form the basis of Native identity; that the lack of a clear, consistent Federal policy had often led to the abridgement of religious freedom for those traditional American Indians; and that some Federal laws designed for such worthwhile purposes as conservation and preservation of natural species were passed without consideration of their effects on Native religions, often denying American Indians access to sacred sites; and that Federal laws at times prohibited the use and possession of sacred objects necessary to the exercise of religious rites and ceremonies.

The AIRFA also called on the President to direct the various Federal departments, agencies and other instrumentalities responsible for administering relevant laws to evaluate their policies and procedures in consultation with Native traditional religious leaders in order to determine appropriate changes necessary to protect and preserve Native American religious cultural rites and practice.

Aside from this directive, no legal mechanism was provided for enforcing the policy. In 1994, this act was amended to provide for traditional Indian religious use of the peyote sacrament. The amendment was prompted in part by the 1990 Supreme Court ruling that the First Amendment does not protect Indian practitioners who use peyote in religious ceremonies.

Attention was focused again on Indian religious freedom when in 1996 President Clinton issued Executive Order 13007, the Indian Sacred Sites Order, which directed all executive branch agencies with statutory or administrative responsibility for the management of Federal lands, to the extent practicable permitted by the law and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions, first to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands and to avoid adversely affecting such sacred sites, and where appropriate guard their confidentiality.

There has been much litigation in the area of religious freedom and cultural practices since the late 1970's. We called today's hearing to receive testimony regarding the

issue on how the 1978 Act has been implemented and whether there is a need for further congressional action.

Current & Relevant Information:

In 1978, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act [AIRFA] was enacted and mandated that the Federal Government protect and preserve for the American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to the access of sites, the use and possession of sacred objects, and freedom to worship through ceremonies and traditional rites.

Under AIRFA, Federal agencies are required to, one, seek and consider the views of Indian leaders when a proposed land use might conflict with traditional Indian religious beliefs or practices and, two, avoid unnecessary interference whenever possible with Indian religious practices during project implementation.

In 1990, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [NAGPRA] was enacted to make easier the efforts of the American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian organizations to claim ownership of certain cultural items, including human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony in control of Federal agencies and museums that receive Federal funds. NAGPRA requires agencies and museums to disclose holdings of such human remains and objects, and to work with the appropriate Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages and corporations and Native Hawaiian organizations to repatriate such cultural items.

Recently, the Secretary of the Interior appointed three members to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Review Committee. The committee consists of seven members who are charged with monitoring, reviewing and assisting in the implementation of NAGPRA.

Appointments to the committee are selected from nominations to the Secretary of the Interior by Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages, Native Hawaiian organizations and national museum and scientific organizations. Each appointee serves for a 4-year term. Executive Order 13007 on Indian sacred sites, issued in 1996, gives the Federal agencies guidance on dealing with sacred sites. The order directs Federal land management agencies, to the extent practicable, to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and to avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites.

The Executive order also requires Federal agencies to consult with tribes on a government-to-government basis whenever plans, activities, decisions, or proposed actions affect the integrity of or access to the sites.

There is a growing concern among the public that Native American burial grounds and other sacred places are being desecrated by human encroachment by urban sprawl. The BIA receives frequent requests for immediate intervention when

individuals believe a burial mound is being bulldozed or a Native cemetery is being cleared for housing or other urban development. Whenever possible, we refer these requests to the appropriate agency.

The Administration and the Department continue to work with Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages and corporations, and Native Hawaiian organizations to ensure access to and to protection of sacred sites and to comply with the law.

We support the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, which protects and preserves for the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian the inherent right of freedom to believe, express and exercise their traditional religions, access to religious sites, and the use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites.

“Festivals and Ceremonies of the Alaskan Eskimos: Historical and Ethnographic Sources, 1814-1940,” Jesús Salius Gumà, *Revista Española de Antropología Americana*, 2014 [57] <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/38845441.pdf>

Abstract:

The main objective of this article is to shed light on the festive and ceremonial events of some of the Eskimo cultures of Alaska through a review of the ethnohistorical documents at our disposal. The study centers on the ancient societies of the Alutiiq, Yup'ik and a part of the Inupiat, communities that share a series of common features, and sees their festive and ceremonial activities as components of the strategies implemented to maintain control over social reproduction. This review of the historical and ethnographic sources identifies the authors and the studies that provide the most pertinent data on the subject.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The ancient Eskimo societies of Alaska implemented a series of strategies in order to control social reproduction and thus to ensure their survival. The performance of festivals and ceremonies in which dances and songs played a predominant part represented an important feature of these strategies. Together, the observations of the explorers, missionaries and ethnographers who visited and lived in the coastal regions of western Alaska between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries comprise a valuable body of ethnographic data. The detailed analysis of this information allows us to establish ethnoarchaeomusicological reference points which so far have not been studied in detail (Salius 2010; 2011).

This study presents an appraisal of the ethnohistorical sources that record the festive and ceremonial activities of the Alutiiq, Yup'ik and the south-western Inupiat societies. In so doing we aim to answer the following questions: (1) which of the sources are the most informative regarding the social reproduction strategies

implemented through dances and songs? (2) how is this information expressed? (3) which features occur consistently in the sources, and which appear less frequently than we might expect?

The history of social reproduction, ceremonies and celebrations in the Alutiiq, Yup'ik and Inupiat cultures

The first explorations of the coastal regions of Alaska date from 1732. Mikhail Spiridonovich Gvozdev and Ivan Fedorov mapped the north-western coast. The first explorers understood next to nothing about the social organization of the cultures of the north and south-west of Alaska. Many of the observations published made in newspapers and reports were narrated from an ethnocentric perspective (Ray 1975: xix, 40) and the «myth of the noble savage» appears frequently in the language used. In fact, rather than a cultural reality, to a large extent the explorers' ethnographical accounts can be said to project onto the Eskimo peoples their own preconceptions based on earlier contacts with other «tribal» societies. As a result, some of the ethnographic data are not particularly reliable and reflect rather condescending value judgments. In addition, some of the sources are inaccurate and do not give a clear idea of the type of celebrations or ceremonies they are describing. It should also be noted that the explorers often describe dances and songs outside a ceremonial or festive context; in their brief encounters with the newcomers, groups of coastal Eskimos often used music and dance to welcome the «white man» and to facilitate contact and trade. Accounts of this kind are quite common in the historical sources.

After the discovery of the Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska in 1741, Russian traders began to exploit the territories of this part of the Pacific. The first historical accounts that include ethnographical information on Alaska focused almost exclusively on the Aleutian Islands (Black 2004: 59-72; Ray 1975: 26-38; Townsend 1975: 22-23). The Russian presence effectively forestalled any attempts by western Europeans to establish a foothold in the area and it was not until 1778 that the first western Europeans arrived. Captain James Cook pioneered the exploration of the territories situated north of the Aleutian Islands, thus initiating what Ray calls the second historical period of the Bering Strait (Ray 1975: 39). Although Cook wrote descriptions of some of the Eskimo groups on the coast (Cook 1805: 307), he made no mention of their ceremonies and celebrations; he refers only once to the presence of songs and dances and does not name the type of event observed (Cook 1805: 304). Interestingly, however, he does describe several festive activities on the island of Vancouver which he witnessed on the Discovery's outward voyage (Cook 1805: 130-221). The attention that Cook paid to describing the various societies he encountered is very uneven, probably because of questions of geography and climate. His expedition suffered tremendous difficulties in its attempts to find the North-western Passage through the Bering Strait; the volatile weather conditions, the ice and the shallow waters posed a constant threat to any ship attempting to

navigate the Arctic. Devoting efforts to get to know the societies that inhabited the Alaskan coasts was not one of the Discovery's priorities.

The first descriptions of ceremonial and festive events

The first descriptions of ceremonies and festivals date from the nineteenth century (Ray 1975: 175-176). The oldest account that unquestionably relates a ceremonial event appears in the diary of Gavriil Ivanovich Davydov, a Russian naval officer who described the lives of some of the societies of south-west Alaska between 1802 and 1807. His accounts were published in 1816 under the title *Reise der russischkaiserlichen Flott-Offiziere Chwostow und Dawydow von St. Petersburg durch Siberien nach Amerika und zurück in den Jahren 1802, 1803 und 1804* (Davydov 1816). Davydov's study of ethnographic aspects of the inhabitants of Kodiak Island takes up around half of the book (Davydov 1977: 146-249). The most significant feature of this study is the fact that it contains the first description of the Bladder Festival observed among the societies of south-western Alaska (Davydov 1977: 107-111). Davydov's account is incomplete, but it is detailed enough to allow us to identify the event and its main features. With regard to the strategies of social reproduction implemented by the Koniaga, Davydov records the roles and tasks of the women in the celebrations and the songs and dances they performed (Davydov 1977: 165-167, 173-174, 184). The information he provides is very interesting, even though it is important to contrast and complement it with later sources.

Historical and ethnographic accounts from the 1880s onwards

During the 1880s a series of significant changes took place in the regions of southern and north-western Alaska (Fair 2000: 480-481). Although the territories and societies all had distinctive features of their own, they would all feel the impact of the newcomers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By the 1880s Alutiiq settlements were already highly acculturated and their social organization showed profound changes. The continuous presence of the Russians in Kodiak Island since 1784, the smallpox epidemics of the late 1830 (Fortune 1989: 230-235), and the United States' acquisition of Alaska in 1867, transformed Alutiiq society (Crowell et al 2002: 54-65). In the Yup'ik region the arrival of Orthodox missions from 1845 had dramatically altered the lives of the coastal settlements. But from the year 1885 onwards, with the establishment of the Moravian and Catholic Churches in the Kuskokwim River area changes also reached the in-land regions. These new missions were far more intent on converting the inhabitants than the Orthodox church had ever been, but even in this new context many Yup'ik settlements along in the upper parts of the rivers continued to maintain a «traditional» lifestyle until the mid-twentieth century (Oswalt 1990: 94-180; Fienup-Riordan 1994: 31-34).

The ethnohistory of the Twentieth Century

Around the turn of the century, the arrival of outsiders changed the social organization of the Eskimo societies of Alaska forever. The first years of the new century saw an avalanche of gold diggers and the emergence of transport and communication systems along the main rivers. This increasing mobility and the contact between outsiders and natives brought with it a lethal new epidemic, alcoholism, which caused havoc among the Eskimo communities living near the goldmines and severely weakened their social structure (Napoleon 1991; Wolfe 1982). This situation was compounded by the process of «Americanization» of the Eskimo societies, which put an end to most of the customs and traditions that still survived (Fienup-Riordan 1994: 31-34; Oswalt 1990: 94-180).

Conclusions

The ethnohistorical record of Alaska contains a wide range of information concerning the strategies of social reproduction adopted by the Alutiiq, Yup'ik and Inupiat cultures. Some of these strategies were embodied in ceremonial and festive activities, from which women were excluded, or in which they played only a secondary role. A good example of this is the evidence that all festivals and ceremonies were managed by men, who also occupied a prominent place in the dances and singing groups. In the main events, the women's role was always secondary; in many of these activities, women were only spectators, or when they participated in the dances and songs their role was subordinate to that of the men.

The historical and ethnographical sources analyzed in this study present significant differences in terms of their contents and also in terms of their general approach. The first historical records of the celebrations and the festivals of Alaska date from the early nineteenth century. Some of these documents provide only partial descriptions that shed little light on the overall reality of those cultures, and so they should be understood only as interpretations, sometimes quite subjective, of what was really observed. To this we should add the fact that already in the nineteenth century many societies of the south-west of Alaska were undergoing evident social changes due to the continued and varied presence of outsiders, which had begun during the second half of the eighteenth century. So, the descriptions and ethnographical data referring to the Eskimo societies of the nineteenth century should be analyzed critically and contrasted with other records.

The most accurate and detailed descriptions of Eskimo ceremonies and festivals date from the period between 1870 and 1890. In fact, the ethnohistorical sources of this era lay particular emphasis on these events. The most interesting accounts describe the celebrations held during the coldest months, since between November and February an accentuated strategy of sexual division was implemented in the winter settlements; in fact, the ethnographical information from the period suggests that this strategy characterized all the productive and celebratory activities.

At the start of the twentieth century we find the last genuinely ethnohistorical accounts of the Eskimo societies, produced mainly by anthropologists. By this time the level of acculturation was already very high. Although some of the traditions and customs were maintained, many festive and ceremonial events had died out. For this reason, much of the ethnographic information recorded in this period proceeds mainly from the oral accounts recorded from all over Alaska.

Although there is a secondary bibliography that has analyzed an important part of the ethnohistorical documentation of Alaska, a great deal remains to be done. The valuable ethnohistorical documentation we mention here can serve as the basis for future ethnomusicological and ethnoarchaeological studies and for the proposal of new lines of research. Currently, ceremonial and festive activities are largely ignored in archaeological research. It is necessary to encourage ethnoarchaeological research into contexts such as the qasgi or qargi in order to see how these Alaskan cultures developed an important part of their cultural practices. Clearly, there are sufficient recurrences and coincidences between the sources to be able to establish sound working hypotheses for the study of themes like the strategies of social reproduction in the ancient Eskimo societies of Alaska which so far have not been studied in any great depth.

“Following the Pathways of the Ancestors: Well-Being through Iñupiaq Dance,” Sean Asiqluq Topkok and Carie Green, Research Gate, 2016 [58]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sean_Topkok/publication/309764229_Following_the_Pathways_of_the_Ancestors_Well-Being_through_Iñupiaq_Dance/links/582221ad08aeebc4f8916202.pdf

Abstract:

In this chapter, we unravel the meaning of well-being through the holistic internalization of Iñupiat Ilitqusiatic (Iñupiaq values), demonstrated and enacted through a healthy and happy state of mind, body, spirit, and the environment. We portray a parallel journey of traditional and contemporary understanding of Indigenous well-being expressed through Iñupiaq Dance by comparing Tuulik’s journey in the unipkaaq(legend) The Eagle Wolf Dance with Asiqluq’s personal journey of well-being in rediscovering his cultural heritage through the formation of the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers of Fairbanks. We turn inwards and outwards to show how healing begins as an introspective process and moves from the individual, to the family, to the community, and beyond. The drumbeats’ steady rhythm grounds us in the purpose of following the pathway of our ancestors and celebrating and sharing being Iñupiat through cultural dance.

Current & Relevant Information:

This chapter explores mind, body, and spiritual wellness regenerated through Iñupiaq dance. Specifically, we describe how participation in traditional Indigenous dances, stories, and songs can promote health and well-being. The Iñupiat are a

western (present day Alaska) branch of the Inuit peoples who inhabit the circumpolar regions across northern Canada, Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, Nunatukavut, Denmark, and Siberia (Schweitzer, Berman, Barnhardt, & Kaplan, 2008). Like Canadian Indigenous peoples, Alaskan Indigenous peoples continue to experience negative effects from European and American-European colonization (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Napoleon, 1996; Oquilluk, 1973; Schaeffer & Christensen, 2010). Early Russian fur traders, Christian ministries, and later American gold miners exploited the land and transmitted new illnesses, bringing death and devastation to nearly every Alaska Native community (Napoleon, 1996). Early educational efforts were aimed at making Alaskan Indigenous children “civilized” (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010). Some teachers perpetrated physical and emotional abuse upon children; other children were orphaned or sent away to boarding schools. These devastating events combined had an intergenerational impact amongst the Iñupiat and other Alaskan Indigenous communities, resulting in a loss of cultural identity and well-being.

It is recognized that deep-rooted cultural knowledge is conveyed through the stories of our ancestors and passed down through the generations (ALKC, 2007; Archibald, 2008; Cram & Phillips, 2012; Garrett, 1999; John, 2009; Northwest Alaska Elders, 1989, 1990, 1992; Reimer, 1999; Topkok, 2010). In this chapter we outlined how traditional stories, including those conveyed through drumming and dance, can provide a meaningful educational approach for transmitting cultural knowledge, wellness, and identity to youth and future generations. We invite others to share in our story and listen to our experience promoting health and well-being of the heart, the mind, the body, and the spirit. In this way, we follow the pathway of our ancestors and live and celebrate our cultural heritages and values, radiating outward to the community and beyond. Our unipkaat (legends) provide the guidance we receive from our ancestors to achieve a state of personal and community well-being.

“The Inupiat and the Christianization of Arctic Alaska,” Ernest S. Burch, Jr., [alaskool.org](http://www.alaskool.org), 1994 [59]

http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/research_reports/christianization/burch.htm

Abstract:

In 1890, when the first missions were established in Alaska north of Bering Strait, not a single Native in the region was a Christian. By 1910 Christianity was nearly universal. The foundation for this dramatic development was laid in Kotzebue Sound between 1897 and 1902 by Robert and Carrie Samms, of the Friends Church, and by an Inupiaq Eskimo named Uyaraq, who had been converted earlier by Covenant missionaries located south of the study area. Christianity was spread from Kotzebue to the interior, to the Alaskan Arctic coast, and even to the Mackenzie Delta region of Canada, by the Natives themselves. In this paper I document the course of these developments and present an explanation of why they occurred as they did.

Current & Relevant Information:

The introduction of Christianity in Northern Alaska

Christianity was first systematically introduced to Alaska Natives by Russian Orthodox priests in the late eighteenth century (Kahn 1988). For several decades they had the field to themselves, but restricted their activities to the southern and southwestern parts of the Territory of Alaska. Presbyterians became involved in Alaskan missionary work in the 1870s (Dimmit 1948a, 1948b), but only in southeastern Alaska. By 1880 several other Protestant denominations were preparing for the Alaska field. They joined with the Presbyterians in a comity agreement whereby the Territory was divided among them into spheres of influence (Almquist 1962: 126, Dimmit 1948b: 14, Flanders 1991: 47).²

The first denomination to establish operations near the area of present interest was the Mission Covenant, a nonconformist church organized in Sweden in 1878 (Carlson 1967: 359 n. 24). The members of this church had been encouraged in this endeavor by Baron N. A. E. Nordenskiöld, who had passed through Bering Strait in 1879 at the end of his traverse of the Northeast Passage (Almquist 1962: 18, Nordenskiöld 1882). The Mission Covenant was not party to the comity agreement, and its members probably did not know about it. Their first missionary, Axel Karlson, did not even have a destination in mind when he left California for Alaska. Instead, he depended on God to reveal it to him at the appropriate time. Conversations with the pioneer Episcopalian missionary John Chapman on board ship persuaded him to go north of the mouth of the Yukon River. When he disembarked at St. Michael, on the south side of Norton Sound, he met a Russian-speaking Native named Nashalook, who talked him into going on to Unalakleet (Almquist 1962: 19). Unalakleet was in an area left unassigned in the comity agreement, so Karlson's choice of location was acceptable to the other churches.

In 1885 Sheldon Jackson, formerly a missionary in the western continental United States and southeast Alaska, was appointed General Agent of Education for Alaska (Lazell 1960, VanStone 1980: 175). Jackson (1893: 1260) epitomized the view, widespread at [the] time, that teachers and missionaries were charged with "the general uplifting of the whole [Native] population out of barbarism into civilization." Civilization meant, as a minimum, literacy (in English), cleanliness, industry and Christianity. As VanStone (1980: 177) put it, "true conversion meant nothing less than a virtually total transformation of native existence."

Given Jackson's philosophy and missionary background, it was natural for him, as General Agent, to embark on a program of establishing government-sponsored schools staffed by missionaries. The immediate stimulus to extend this program to Arctic Alaska was provided by Lieut. Commander Charles H. Stockton, commander of a U. S. Navy cruise to northern Alaska in the summer and fall of 1889 (Stockton 1890; Stuck 1920: 28). Upon his return, he reported on the sad state of the Natives

living there and encouraged both Jackson and the Episcopal Church to do something about it. Prodded by a new sense of urgency, Jackson advertised for volunteers in March, 1890. Less than three months later, he had them on a ship heading north (Ray 1975: 214).

“Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit as a Foundation for Education,” Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Sharing Our Pathways, October 1996 [60]
<https://www.uaf.edu/ankn/publications/collective-works-of-angay/Earth-Air-Fire.pdf>

Overview:

Modern science studies that which is visible using many technological devices to refine their observations. Theories are constructed, used, modified or discarded as new information and findings warrant. The task of modern science has been to simplify Nature, learn of its underlying logic and then use that logic to control Nature (Briggs, 1992:14). Indigenous societies study that which is invisible to temper the development of technology and guide its association with Nature. The Yupiaq society deals with trying to understand the irregularities of Nature which is underlain with patterns of order. Many unseen forces are in action in the elements of the universe.

Current & Relevant Information:

To begin to understand these phenomena, Yupiaq science education must begin with the five elements—earth, air, fire, water and spirit. The sacred gifts of each must be understood, as well as the human activities which contribute to the de-spiritualization and reduction of these life-giving gifts. In order to be holistic, the activities must include Yupiaq language and culture, language arts, mathematics, social studies, arts and crafts and sciences. All must be interrelated as all of earth is interrelated. For example, in dealing with the element air, the teacher could select the sacred gift of weather. And what an unpredictable choice! Like many Yupiaq myths, weather is so very dynamic, ever changing, and, like the myth, very mystical.

Of utmost importance in using the five elements of life to teach science is assuring that the students understand that the sacred gifts of each is a gift to the life-giving forces of the living earth (or Mother Earth). The teacher must be careful to explain what those gifts are absolutely necessary for life on earth to continue. All these five elements' gifts make possible for creation on earth to continue. The Yupiaq honored and respected these gifts in the rituals and ceremonies. Take for example, the Nakaciuq or the “Blessing of the Bladders.” The Yupiaq people believed that when the seal or some other sea mammal gave itself to the hunter, that the spirit of the seal entered its bladder upon giving up its life. This required that the people take care to remove the bladder, inflate it to dry and save it for the winter Bladder Festival to honor the sacred gift of the element, spirit. In this way the Yupiaq people honored and showed respect for the gift of the element earth for giving birth to animals upon which they depended for survival as a people.

During the festival, the bladders were re-inflated with life-giving air and hung on poles for the duration of the activities. In the qasgiq were placed two three-to-four-foot stout poles in front of the place of honor for the elders. The honors seating was located at the rear of the community house. On the flattened upper end were placed two earthen lamps with wicks which were *then filled with seal oil. The wicks were lighted and the lamps kept burning during the entire festival. One or two people were given the responsibility of keeping the lamps going. The gift of the element fire was used to light and give some warmth to the community house. To purify the air and the participants in the house, wild parsnips were burned. Another gift of the element earth, the parsnip plant was used to create purifying smoke with the transforming gift of the element fire. Fire, with the gift of air, transformed the seal oil to heat and light.

At the conclusion of the Bladder Festival, the bladders were taken down, deflated, and carried to the ocean or river where an opening in the ice had been made. With collective mindfulness of all the Yupiaq participants that the spirits of the animals were happy and satisfied with the care and careful execution of the required rituals and ceremonies, and that they would return and give themselves to the hunters, the bladders were returned to the sacred gift of the element water, the womb of creation.

“The Messenger's Feast of the Inupiat Eskimo,” Thomas Riccio, The Drama Review, 1993 [61]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thomas_Riccio/publication/261992419_A_Message_from_Eagle_Mother_The_Messenger's_Feast_of_the_Inupiat_Eskimo/links/0deec536244d356f10000000/A-Message-from-Eagle-Mother-The-Messengers-Feast-of-the-Inupiat-Eskimo.pdf

Overview:

In January of 1988 the North Slope Borough of Alaska sponsored a Kivgiq. It was the first such presentation in over 80 years in the Inupiat Eskimo Messenger's Feast, which can trace its origins to the beginnings of the Inupiat culture. Participants came together in Barrow, Alaska, from all of the eight arctic villages of the North Slope Borough-where the sun sets in mid-November and rises mid-January each winter. The 2,000 plus spectators and participants that gathered in the high school gym for three days represented the largest single gathering of people ever on the North Slope. The revival of the Kivgiq was motivated not by the spiritual necessity of its origins, nor by trade or barter, which it later facilitated, but by renewed interest in the traditional social and cultural values that the Feast encodes. The 1988 Kivgiq brought together in performance the songs, dances, and events that had been scattered in cultural memory and threatened with extinction. And with this revival came a reaffirmation of Inupiat values that consoled the present as it rediscovered the past.

It was in 1987 when newly elected Borough Mayor, George Ahamaogak, coming to office on the heels of a political scandal and sensing the need for an uplifting

community event, decided to sponsor a Kivgiq. He appointed a "special assistant," Rex Okakok, who met with elders throughout the North Slope Borough to reconstruct the Kivgiq from their memories. The elders were more than glad to comply for they had long been concerned with the increased Westernization of their culture; the old ways were being lost and the language forgotten because there were fewer and fewer cultural events to hold it. "Every time I spoke to someone about it there was a sense of excitement; just by mentioning Kivgiq to the elders [. . .] there was a real positive feeling to bring people together" (1992), recalled Okakok of his travels to the villages of the North Slope. Starting with oral history records and then personally interviewing elders, Okakok, with the help of a North Slope Borough History and Language Commission (a three-person committee) then decided what basic understandings of the Kivgiq would be performed. "We came up with the central events in the Kivgiq and used those as the basis to kind of organize the event," said Okakok, "but the major theme was to get people together for Eskimo dancing and to visit their long lost relatives and sharing the culture" (Okakok 1992). Inupiaq leader James Nageak, a Kivgiq performer, Presbyterian minister and assistant professor of Alaska native language at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, recounted some of the motivation behind reviving the Kivgiq in 1988:

The elders were seeing that we don't use it as much as we need to, the Inupiaq language. And there are some activities that we have lost over the years that get the people together. In the Western world, where we have the [native] corporations and the North Slope Borough and all of these things on a daily basis, we get involved in that. So, I guess the elders said let's get back the Inupiat values and those activities that they use to do. They tried to think back to the last time they had a Messenger's feast. It was 1910. A lot of the elders said: "I've never been to one, but my father, my parents, and my grandparents talked about the Messenger's Feast, what kind of activities they had, and why it was used." (1991)

The Kivgiq was a pathway to the rediscovery of traditions and values that had been challenged by years of near epidemic drug and alcohol abuse provoked by the cultural and social trauma wrought by the introduction of Western culture. Yet even in memory, the Kivgiq served as an encoder of traditional culture. The songs, dances, regalia, and events, though fragmented and incomplete provided a doorway to the past. The doorway opened by performance led directly to the mythological core of the Inupiaq people, for in the performance of the Kivgiq were the echoes of ancient myths and rituals. Living in the revived Kivgiq is the Inupiaq creation myth, the myth of the Great Eagle Mother's Gift of Song and Dance, the shamanistic Eagle-Wolf Messenger's Feast, the animistic Wolf Dance, and the secular precursor of the contemporary Kivgiq, the Messenger's Feast.'

The Messenger's Feast will provide the focus of my exploration because of its historical and cultural detail. But the Messenger's Feast is only a point of departure

within a cultural context where past and present, old and new, have blurred distinctions-often elusive to the control and relevance of time as the Western world knows it. The Messenger's Feast has traveled a path that is as much myth as it is memory, as much mystery as it is fact, and as much of the spiritual as it is of the material, world. The Inupiat people could be represented in no other, nor better way.

Current & Relevant Information:

The traditional philosophy and beliefs of the Inupiat of Northern Alaska-as with other aboriginal people-is to live with the earth. In keeping with this, their scattered ritual records, myths, artifacts, and archeology point to performance (ritual/ceremony/theatre) based on spirit-human world interaction that serves to maintain or achieve harmony with the earth. That the ancient Inupiat Messenger's Feast survived to this century intact is as much a consequence of geographic isolation as it is of delayed contact with Western culture. The perseverance of the Messenger's Feast is also a testament to the deep cultural roots from which it springs; it remains relevant today because, like the Inupiat, it has developed a bond and relationship with a part of the earth from which it is inseparable.

The advent of "civilizing" missionary pressures-which in some cases persecuted and banned the Inupiaq language, songs, and dances in any form-became most severe for Inupiat Alaska during the 1920s. Overt magico-religious and animistic performances such as the Eagle-Wolf Messenger Feast did exist up until that time, when participants were shamed, pressured, or persecuted into either abandoning or secularizing their traditional culture. When Inupiaq elder and Barrow Dance Group leader Martha Aiken was asked if Inupiaq dances held any spiritual significance she replied:

It keeps our culture alive. That's spiritual. If you mean do we do our shamans, that's another thing. We don't and we've forgotten those parts. Because a shaman cannot be a shaman unless taught a ritual song. And we have lost those. We don't even know what they sound like. The shamanistic part had faded away, but not the cultural, that's still alive and well yet. That's part of the spirituality. They confused the two. They did not understand how it was. Most of the denominations, when they came to a native village, thought all Eskimo dancing was shamanistic. But they were just celebrating some catch; they misunderstood. They thought everything was for shamans. (1992)

Possibly the most devastating event for the Inupiat was the "great death" that occurred between 1910 and 1930. During this time entire villages were decimated by diseases-cholera, diphtheria, and polio-brought by European and American commercial whalers. The Inupiat culture that survived, devastated by the loss of its tradition-bearers and shamans, was altered irrevocably. Weak and vulnerable, the survivors of the once complex and ancient Inupiat tradition were no match for missionary pressures.

As a consequence of the "great death" and subsequent forced Christianization, many songs, dances, rituals, and celebrations were either lost or dislocated from their original context and spiritual origins. In some villages, Eskimo dancing and singing were considered as expressions of paganism and banned outright. Today some of these villages have lost their traditions entirely. What has survived-with few exceptions-has done so by virtue of its secularization fading in meaning and significance with each passing generation.

Traditionally, the Messenger's Feast had also served a trade and bartering function, bringing villages together to exchange local specialties. The advent of commercial stores and a cash economy rendered obsolete this function of the Feast. Nageak offers his theory about why the Messenger's Feast ceased:

The Nunamiu people [inland dwellers] get seal oil and all of these other things they normally don't get inland. And of course, the wolf skins and the wolverine skins and the caribou skins-the people from the Qualimiut, they get those. So, when we're looking at about 1900, there were these [commercial] whaling activities. Charles D. Bower began setting up a store in Barrow and branching out to these other little places like at Brownlow Point, the Hooper Bay area; people can get what they need. They didn't need the Messenger's Feast anymore. (1991)

"Feast of the Dead," The Free Dictionary [62]
<https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Feast+of+the+Dead>

Overview:

The Feast of the Dead is part of several Native American religious traditions. The history of Native American cultures dates back thousands of years into prehistoric times. According to many scholars, the people who became the Native Americans migrated from Asia across a land bridge that may have once connected the territories presently occupied by Alaska and Russia. The migrations, believed to have begun between 60,000 and 30,000 B.C.E., continued until approximately 4,000 B.C.E. This speculation, however, conflicts with traditional stories asserting that the indigenous Americans have always lived in North America or that tribes moved up from the south. The historical development of religious belief systems among Native Americans is not well known. Most of the information available was gathered by Europeans who arrived on the continent beginning in the sixteenth century C.E. The data they recorded was fragmentary and oftentimes of questionable accuracy because the Europeans did not understand the native cultures they were trying to describe and the Native Americans were reluctant to divulge details about themselves.

Current & Relevant Information:

The burial ceremony known as the Feast of the Dead was held by various North American Indian tribes-particularly the Iroquois, Huron, Algonquin, and Ottawa. The ceremony was held on an irregular basis, usually every ten to twelve years when a field-rotation cycle ended and the people who had been living in a particular area or village were ready to move on. Rather than leave their dead behind, and as a way of making it possible for the spirits of the deceased to complete their journey to the afterlife, the surviving relatives would carry what remained of the corpses to a central location and bury them in a common grave.

Although it sounds like a gruesome event, several communities usually participated in the feast, which lasted for ten days and, like any other funeral, gave the survivors an opportunity to renew their family and social bonds. The bodies of the dead, which had sometimes been buried but more commonly placed in a temporary grave on a scaffold, were gathered up and laid out in a row. Then the family members removed the flesh from the bones and wrapped them with great care in animal skins and furs. The bodies of those who had died recently were left intact and wrapped in furs as well. Each family held a funeral feast at which speeches were made praising the deceased and gifts were presented in their honor

The common burial ground was often many miles away, and families carried the corpses on litters and the bones in a bundle across their backs, wailing in imitation of the souls of the deceased as they marched. When they reached the burial ground, all the mourners would set up camp, light fires, and prepare for the ossuary ritual (an "ossuary" is a place for the bones of the dead). The younger men would engage in FUNERAL GAMES as entertainment, the women would prepare food, and the gifts that had been brought to accompany the dead on their journey would be laid out so that everyone could admire them. The huge open pit that would serve as a common grave was lined with beaver skins, ready to receive the remains.

When the time for the reburial arrived, people would line up around the edges of the pit and fling the bones and corpses in. A dozen or so Indians standing at the bottom would use long poles to arrange the heaps in an orderly manner. Families would cry out as the bodies of their loved ones toppled into the pit, and the level of noise and excitement was considerable. Then earth, logs, and stones were used to fill in the grave, and the shrieking and wailing subsided somewhat and became a funeral chant. In addition to being the last step in the long process of saying good-bye to loved ones, the Feast of the Dead gave these Native Americans a chance to renew or repair their relationships with their neighbors. Although scholars believe that the last Feast of the Dead was held in 1695, construction workers excavating the ground for a housing development in Scarborough, Ontario, in the 1950s stumbled upon such an Iroquois burial site. Local Native Americans held a Feast of the Dead and reburied the bones in another location, where it is hoped they will remain undisturbed forever.

SYMBOLS AND CUSTOMS

De-fleshing

The Native American tribes that practiced this ossuary ritual believed that when a person died, his or her spirit lingered for a period of time. Because flesh was what connected the body to earthly life, the soul or spirit could not depart until the body was free of it. The process of removing the flesh of a corpse from its bones, therefore, was symbolic of separating life from death, thus freeing the soul to continue its journey to the afterlife.

Funeral Games

The Feast of the Dead included sports activities. Young men (and frequently women) would have archery contests, and the mourners would award prizes for marksmanship in honor of their deceased family members. Another popular game was lacrosse, which was played by the tribes of the Iroquois Nation long before white settlers came to the New World. There was a spiritual aspect to the game back then, and it was often preceded by elaborate rituals and dances. Just as warriors played lacrosse to prepare themselves to endure the pains and injuries of battle, it may have been regarded as a symbolic preparation for the journey from this world to the afterlife.

G. Gender:

“Gender Based Violence and Intersecting Challenges Impacting Native American & Alaskan Village Communities,” VAWnet, 1 September 2016 [63]

<https://vawnet.org/sc/gender-based-violence-and-intersecting-challenges-impacting-native-american-alaskan-village>

Overview:

The identities of Native Americans/Alaskan Villagers originate in various experiences and political statuses. Enrollment status means an individual is a citizen of tribe. “Tribe” is defined by the United States for some federal government purposes to include only tribes that are federally recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, as amended in 1936 to include a number of Alaska Native villages (US Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2015). Throughout the country, there are tribes that have had active applications for federal enrollment for over 30 years. In the last three years, three new tribes have been granted “federal status” by the federal government, which oversees the application process and helps define which Native community has been given the political status of a sovereign Nation. However, Native identity and sovereignty are also defined by Native people as being about a cultural connection, such as being tied to the land and water, subsistence hunting and fishing, community life, traditional values, and spiritual practice, not simply a political status as qualified by Western thinking.

The voices in many of the materials included in this Special Collection may come from a sovereign nation perspective, while other voices represent those not enrolled

or affiliated with a federally recognized Tribe. Hundreds of tribes exist without federal recognition, meaning individuals may be a member of a state recognized tribe or may not be enrolled in any tribe. Native communities also exist in cities or urban environments, known as “urban Indians,” where families are mixed in both federally/state recognized status or no political Indian status at all. Some individuals were born into an enrollment status, but have since been dis-enrolled from their tribes; this affects their political status of “Native American.” The identity of “Native status” is very complex. All of these identities and citizenship statuses, as well as where they live and where they come from, can affect the methods and availability of services to and for Native survivors.

“Gender Issues: Do Arctic men and women experience life differently?” Karla Jessen Williamson, Arctic Human Development Report, 2004 [64]

http://www.svs.is/static/files/images/pdf_files/ahdr/English_version/AHDR_chp_11.pdf

Abstract:

Understanding the prevailing power relations is instrumental in making sense of human development in the Arctic. This includes power relations between women and men. However, any discussion of power relations and gender roles must also recognize the social and cultural variability across the circumpolar North and the fact that many different perspectives can be applied when analyzing these roles.

Some of the authors in this chapter emphasize that the traditional relationships between women, men, children and the land have been paramount for life in the harsh conditions of the North. The gender roles displayed in many Arctic regions are therefore seen as complementary rather than opposing. There may indeed be a commonality of this experience across the Arctic that transcends both culture and nationality.

However, western values, attitudes, structures and regulations were imported from southern societies following the introduction of the large-scale nation state. The paternalistic male bias inherent in these values and structures led policymakers and administrators with little knowledge of the societies they were working with to defer to males when assigning decision-making positions. Increased understanding of situated and traditional knowledge can make us aware of what we are losing by adopting gender roles from other cultural landscapes.

In light of the varied perspectives on the significance of gender and culture in designing power structures in the Arctic, this chapter provides a starting place for further dialogue on gender issues in the Arctic. It is a collection of varying views of gender and culture as a basis for describing Arctic societies. The themes range from a critique of western feminism as contrary to indigenous views and realities, through the importance of acknowledging indigenous men’s disenfranchisement, to using the concept of human security as a way of thinking about female out-migration and

gendered violence. They also include discussions about women's involvement and representation in political life and natural resource management.

The objective of the chapter is not to present a comprehensive assessment of gender issues in the Arctic. In Arctic research, gender is still an emerging topic, and there is not a fully developed body of literature available for assessment. Therefore, the chapter is more of an exploratory scoping exercise. The aim is to operate as a catalyst for future analysis of how shifting gender roles affect human development in the North.

Current & Relevant Information:

One of my Cree friends in Saskatchewan once asked me why the Cree and Inuit seem to have strongly delineated work along gender lines in their daily lives. She was asking me knowing that such practices may seem "old-fashioned" to some and may appear discriminatory in light of present-day couple arrangements. As good friends we had long conversations, comparing and contrasting the Inuit and the Cree from historical times to the present and in relation to spiritual realities and other situations. Little did we realize how steeped our conversations were in a scholarly discourse on gender construction across cultures and time.

Some of how Arctic men and women experience life differently can be analyzed through the tasks that men and women do both inside the house and outside. In my own studies in Greenland, some of my informants thought that the fact that so many people today live in apartments surely contributed to the loss of human value – particularly for men. The particular interviewee compared his own ownership of the family house where he continues to enjoy healthy esteem by looking after the outside of the house to be enviable to men who have no say or responsibility in apartment living. In his estimate these men lost their role and their ability to exchange their manhood duties for all what their womenfolk offer. Certainly, much of men's and women's lives can also be analyzed through the kinds of jobs they hold in society, and how the values attributed to those jobs have changed. However, for the sake of brevity, this contribution focuses on a few indicators: unemployment, suicide, criminality, and life expectancy as a way to depict differences in female and male lives.

Figure 1 shows that in the year 2002 men in Greenland, Alaska, the United States, and Iceland had a higher rate of unemployment than women.

| | Men | Women | Total |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|-------|
| Greenland ¹ | 6.9 | 5.9 | 6.8 |
| Iceland ² | 3.6 | 2.9 | 3.3 |
| Alaska ³ | 8.7 | 6.5 | 7.7 |
| United States ⁴ | 5.9 | 5.6 | 5.7 |

¹ Greenland in Figures, Statistics Greenland; www.statgreen.gl

² Labour Market Statistics on the web, Hagstofa Íslands; www.hagstofa.is

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics;
<http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost>

⁴ Current Population Survey, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm>

Figures 2 and 3 indicate gender specific suicide rates. Suicide in the Arctic is not myth. The gender differences in suicide rates in the Arctic, especially the number of young males committing suicide, simply cries out for action. Although it seems that the suicide rate is especially relative to gender and age, suicide is much more prevalent among Inuit men and women than among any other cultural groups in the Arctic. Young men up until 24 years of age seem much more directly affected by this phenomenon. The statistics for suicide rates in the Nordic countries are not disaggregated by cultural group making it difficult to ascertain if cultural factors play any role there. Even if men are more likely to commit suicide, statistics from Alaska raise a note of caution on how to interpret the data. In Alaska, while four times as many males as females commit suicide, females attempt suicide four times more often than men and report higher rates of depression. Alaskan males are 80% more likely (35.8 vs. 19.99 per 100,000) and Alaskan females are twice as likely (8.7 vs. 4.4 per 100,000) as their peers nationwide to commit suicide.”

| | Men | Women |
|--|------|-------|
| Alaska (2002-2003) ¹ | 35.8 | 8.7 |
| United States (2001) ² | 18.2 | 4.0 |
| Canada (1997) ³ | 19.6 | 5.1 |
| Nunavut (1986-96) ⁴ | 119 | 32 |
| Western Northwest Territories (1986-96) ⁵ | 34 | 17 |

¹ <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention/AboutUs/2002SSPCAnnualReport.pdf>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/tables/2003/03hus046.pdf>

³ <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/health01.htm>

⁴ <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/cdic>

⁵ http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/cdic-mcc/19-4/c_e.html

Gender specific suicide rates per 100,000 among 0-24 year old

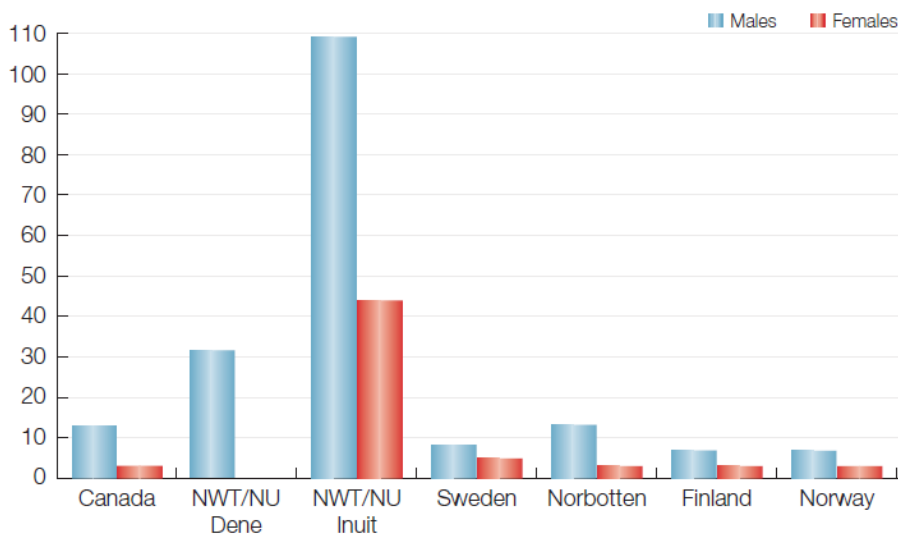


Fig. 3: Gender specific suicide rates in different regions of the Arctic. The figures for Canada, Norway and Finland pertain to the year 1998, while for Sweden and Greenland they are based on total rates for the years 1992 to 1997.

Source: Preliminary Findings of the Health Programme Data for Children and Youth in the Arctic, p. 47; http://www.arctic-council.org/files/inari2002sao/C_YAppendices.pdf

In the broadest societal context, the strikingly high suicide rate in most northern areas may suggest – along with extreme housing problems and substance abuse – some correlation with unemployment figures. I also suspect that the devaluation of men’s traditional role in the Arctic plays a tremendous part and this needs to be addressed on both the individual and the societal level.

Incarceration rates along gender lines were only available from the Alaskan Department of Corrections. Here 93% of the incarcerated are men and only 7% women. This picture fits well with international statistics and is not unique for the Arctic. Nevertheless, it tells a story of differences in men’s and women’s lives and I expect that the Alaskan experience would have great similarities with other nations across the Arctic.

These statistical snapshots indicate that the welfare of Arctic men is much more jeopardized and at risk than that of women. In light of the suicide and incarceration rates, actions need to be real and immediate.

“Dissimilarity on the Career Path: The Occupational Structure of the American Indian and Alaska Native Workforce,” Jacob Wise, Carolyn A. Liebler, and Richard M. Todd, Center for Indian Country Development, February 2017 [65] <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/~media/files/community/indiancountry/resources-education/working-papers/cicd-wp-2017-01.pdf>

Abstract:

We analyze the occupational structure of the non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) workforce in the United States, relative to the non-Hispanic White workforce, using public-use census microdata. AIAN workers are generally

overrepresented in low-skilled occupations and underrepresented in high-skilled occupations, relative to White workers. This pattern is stronger among men than among women and stronger among single-race AIANs than multiple-race AIANs. AIAN occupational dissimilarity does not appear to have declined substantially since 1980. Controlling for individual differences in factors such as education, age, location, and language proficiency accounts for a significant proportion of AIAN underrepresentation in high-education occupations.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Occupational structure is a useful social indicator. Group differences in occupational attainment may signal inefficiencies that significantly reduce economic productivity, such as labor market discrimination or suboptimal investment in education. Occupational differences can also mediate other adverse social and economic disadvantages because occupations differ in average pay, sensitivity to business cycles, health risks, prestige, status, and authority.

We analyze the occupational structure of the non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) workforce in the United States, relative to the non-Hispanic White workforce and other specific comparison groups. Although racial and ethnic differences in occupational patterns have been documented and analyzed for decades (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967), few studies have focused on the occupational structure of the AIAN workforce, and none that we know of have separately examined both AIAN workers who identify as single-race and AIAN workers who identify as multiple-race.

A detailed analysis of AIAN occupational structure is timely in light of economic and social changes that have affected the AIAN workforce in recent decades. The economies of many reservations and homeland areas have grown rapidly (albeit from a low base) in recent decades (Akee and Taylor 2014). This growth directly affects many AIANs - about one-fifth of AIAN individuals (single-race and multiple-race combined) lived on a reservation or other homeland as of 2010 (Norris, Vines, and Hoe el 2012). Since 1970, tribal colleges have expanded significantly, and there has been a general increase in AIAN educational attainment. In the broader economy, the occupational distribution of the general workforce has changed significantly in response to deindustrialization and rising service employment.

Measurement changes have also added to the value of an update on occupation and race. Partly as a result of the shift in the general occupational distribution, the Standard Occupational Classification system used by federal agencies was developed in 1977 and updated as of 1980, 2000, and 2010 (Emmel and Cosca 2010). In 1997, the federal government broadened the definition of AIAN to include Central and South American indigenous people and required that multiple-race responses be allowed (Office of Management and Budget 1997). In the censuses of

2000 and 2010, individuals were instructed to "mark one or more" races. In the 2010 Census there were about 2.3 million individuals who identified as AIAN in combination with another race or races, as well as 2.9 million who identified as AIAN alone (Norris, Vines, and Hoebel 2012).

In this paper, we address three research questions about non-Hispanic AIAN occupational stratification. First, is the occupational distribution of AIAN workers different from that of Whites, now and since 1980? We show that it is and that AIAN workers share many occupational patterns long-observed among other racial or ethnic minorities. We find that the pattern of occupational dissimilarity between AIAN workers and White workers is stronger among men than among women (although still significant among women). We do not find that AIAN occupational dissimilarity has declined substantially since 1980, though results about changes over time are relatively tenuous due to changes in measurement and racial identification (see Liebler, Bhaskar, and Porter 2016).

Second, in which occupations are AIAN workers underrepresented relative to White workers? In which are they overrepresented? We compare single-race Whites to single-race and multiple-race AIAN workers. Using Census 2000 and the 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS), we find that AIAN workers are generally overrepresented in low-skilled occupations and underrepresented in high-skilled occupations, relative to White workers. This distinction is less pronounced for multiple-race AIAN workers than for single-race AIAN workers.

Third, we ask: Do standard demographic factors account for the underrepresentation of AIAN workers in high-education occupations (relative to White workers)? Among the observable factors that may account for AIAN-White differences (including age, location, and language proficiency), we find that gaps in educational attainment are the most important. Controlling for individual differences in these factors reduces the degree of AIAN underrepresentation but fails to fully account for it. We regard the remaining occupational structure differences we find between AIAN and White workers as a sign that deeper social and economic issues may continue to restrain the well-being of the AIAN population.

Results

Is the AIAN Occupational Distribution Different from that of Whites?

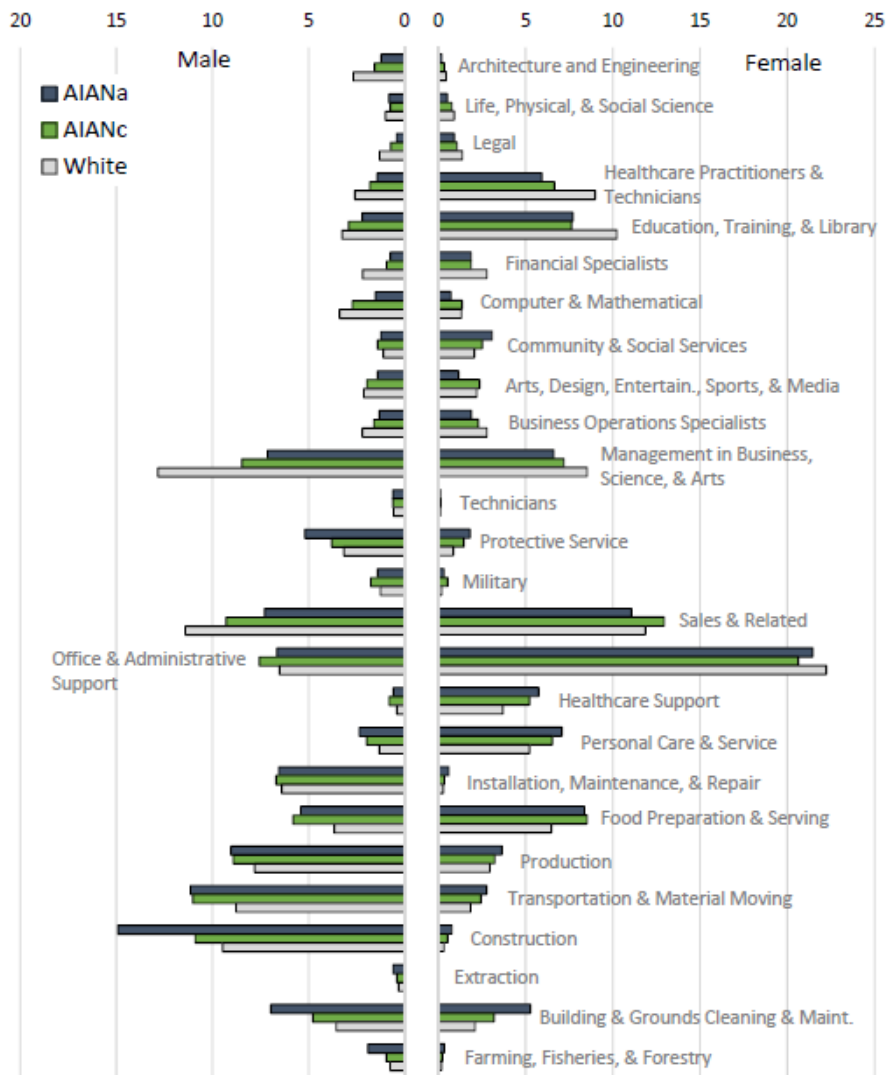
Table 1: Percentage breakdown of the (age 16+) labor force by race, over time.

| | Race | 2000 | 2010 |
|---|------------------|--------|--------|
| 1 | White | 72.71 | 65.99 |
| 2 | African American | 10.57 | 11.45 |
| 3 | Hispanic | 10.48 | 14.95 |
| 4 | Asian/PI | 3.75 | 5.14 |
| 5 | Remainder | 1.09 | 1.04 |
| 6 | AIANa | 0.66 | 0.58 |
| 7 | AIANc | 0.55 | 0.58 |
| 8 | Hispanic AIAN | 0.19 | 0.27 |
| | Total | 100.00 | 100.00 |

In Table 1 we show a breakdown of the U.S. labor force in 2000 and 2010 by race, where each category (except where explicitly listed) is single-race and non-Hispanic. From the results in Table 1 we see that there are relatively few AIAN workers - AIAN single-race and multiple-race individuals together comprised 1.43 percent of the (age 16+) labor force but 1.63 percent of the population in 2010 (authors' calculations). In most of our analyses, we compare AIANa and AIANc individuals to the largest race group in the workforce: single-race, non-Hispanic Whites.

Our first research question is: Is the occupational distribution of AIAN workers different from that of single-race White workers, now and since 1980? We begin to address this question using Figure 1, in which we plot the distribution of the workforce in 2010 across 26 occupation groups, separating out the results by sex and for non-Hispanic AIAN alone, AIAN in combination, and White.

Figure 1: Percent of workers of that race group who worked in each type of occupation in 2010, for non-Hispanic single-race AIANs (AIANA), multiple-race AIANs (AIANc), and Whites, separated by sex.



Some general patterns are evident. Females and males are very differently distributed across occupations, and differences by sex are generally large relative to differences by race. Multiple-race AIANs have an occupational distribution that is generally between that of single-race AIANs and Whites; the share for AIANc lies between the shares for AIANA and White in 18 of the 26 career categories for men and 17 of 26 for women. Also noteworthy is a tendency toward underrepresentation of AIANA and AIANc workers of both sexes in traditional “white-collar” occupation categories, such as management, financial specialists, and legal professions, and their overrepresentation in traditional “blue/pink-collar” fields such as construction, healthcare support, and building/grounds cleaning and maintenance. With respect to our first research question - whether the occupational distribution of AIAN workers is

different from White workers – Figure 1 presents a mixed picture of gross similarity overall (for each sex) but also many differences occupation-by-occupation.

Further analysis shows that the answer to our first question is clear: the AIAN occupational distribution was significantly different from the White occupational distribution in 2010 and each of the three preceding decades. To arrive at this conclusion, we use data across all the occupations in Figure 1 to calculate an overall index of occupational dissimilarity between each AIAN group and the corresponding group of single-race White workers. This index can be interpreted as a percentage that represents the proportion of workers who would need to change careers in order to make the AIAN and White occupational distributions identical. In 2010, the index is about 16.5 percent for AIANA workers and about 10 percent for AIANc workers. Furthermore, both percentages are very significantly different from zero ($p < 0.001$ for both), according to the likelihood ratio test described by Allen and colleagues (Allen et al. 2015).

Table 2 shows this index of dissimilarity for AIAN and other racial/ethnic groups over four decades, for males and females combined, compared to non-Hispanic Whites. All of the index values in the table are significantly different from zero. As in 2010, dissimilarity to single-race Whites in 2000 is smaller for AIANc workers than for AIANA workers. For both 2000 and 2010, the degree of dissimilarity for AIANA workers is closer to that of African American or Asian/Pacific Islander workers than to the value for AIANc workers, and is about halfway between the values of AIANc workers and Hispanic workers.

Table 2: Index of dissimilarity (and standard errors) for 26 occupation categories, split by race/Hispanic origin and decade. Comparisons are to single-race, non-Hispanic Whites, for whom the index of dissimilarity (from themselves) is automatically zero.

| | AIANA* | AIANc* | Asian/PI | African American | Hispanic** | Remainder |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1980 | 17.79 (0.37) | | 16.55 (0.21) | 21.62 (0.08) | 20.50 (0.10) | 9.98 (2.00) |
| 1990 | 18.16 (0.32) | | 15.97 (0.14) | 20.35 (0.06) | 22.43 (0.09) | 14.91 (2.03) |
| 2000 | 16.54 (0.27) | 10.15 (0.47) | 17.78 (0.12) | 19.09 (0.08) | 23.30 (0.07) | 10.07 (0.31) |
| 2010 | 16.47 (0.38) | 9.92 (0.55) | 18.13 (0.11) | 19.00 (0.07) | 24.14 (0.07) | 10.33 (0.35) |

*For 1980 and 1990 we report the AIAN data under the AIANA column (the Census did not allow multiple-race responses until 2000).

**All Hispanics are grouped together.

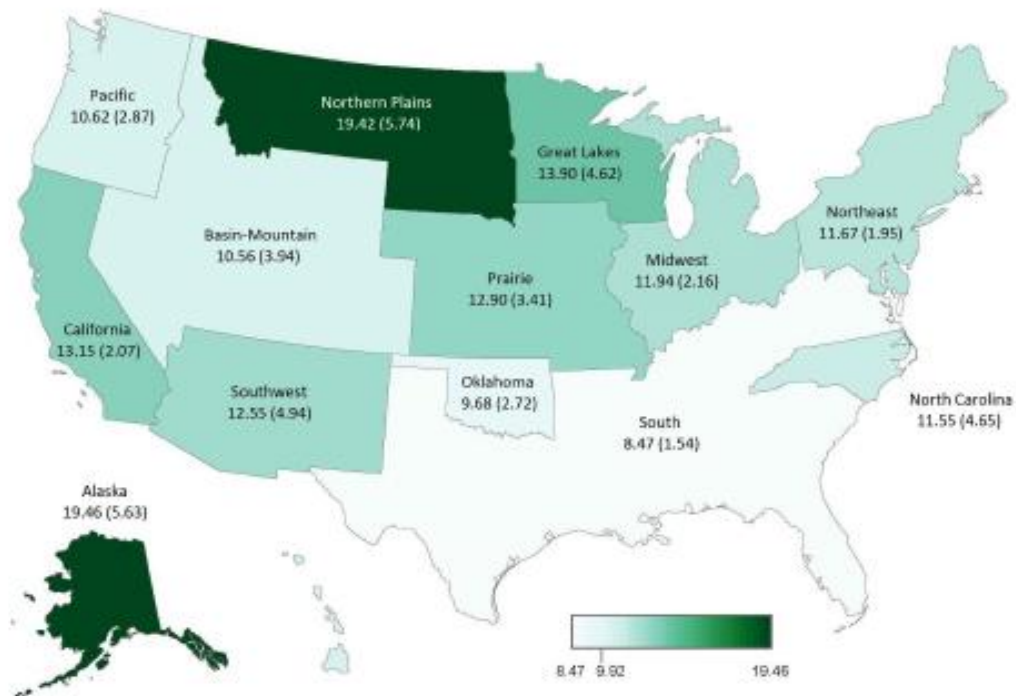
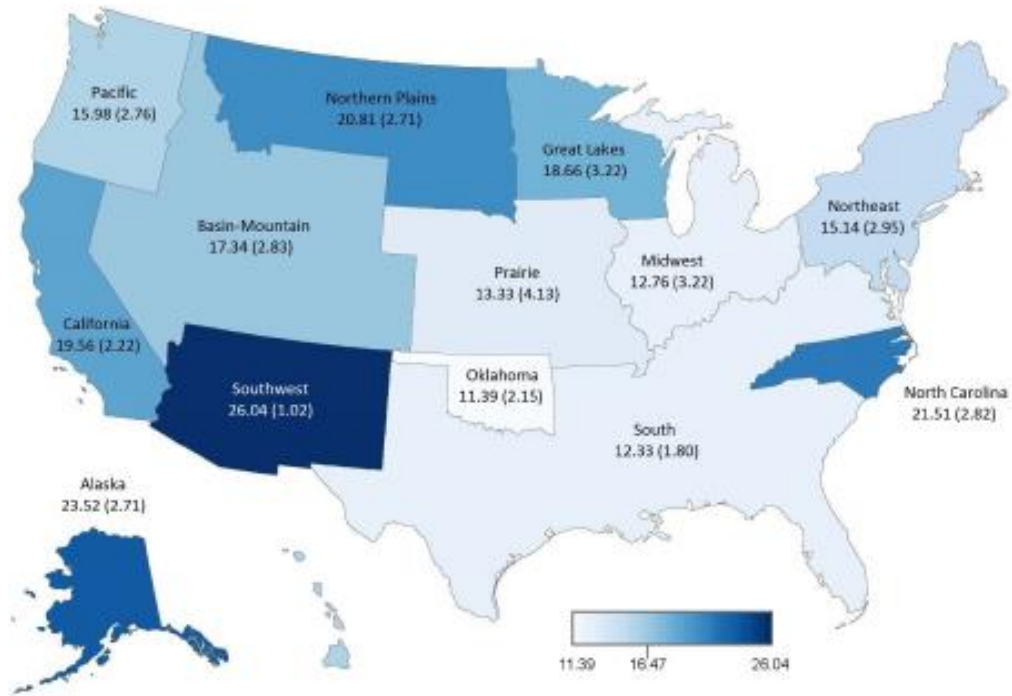
For 1980 and 1990 in Table 2, we show the AIAN data under the AIANA column, even though the Census did not allow multiple-race responses in those years. As discussed above, this makes intertemporal comparisons difficult. Nonetheless, we see that the degree of AIAN occupational dissimilarity from Whites changed little between 2000 and 2010 and see no clear AIAN trend overall since 1980. This is in contrast to the small but steady decrease for African Americans and the steady increase for Hispanics.

Men and women tend to choose different occupations (as highlighted in Figure 1) and thus may have different within-sex occupational dissimilarities. Accordingly, we also calculate the AIANA-White dissimilarity index separately for men and women in 2010. Similar to the findings reported by Taylor (1994) for the distribution of indigenous Australian workers across broad occupational categories, we find a lower occupational dissimilarity index between AIANA women and White women (14.5 percent) than between AIANA men and White men (19.8 percent), and this difference is statistically significant. However, for women as well as men, the answer to our first question is the same - AIAN workers have a different occupational distribution than single-race White workers.

We are also interested in whether the overall difference between AIAN and White workers' occupations varies by place. In Figure 2 we show the occupational index of dissimilarity for AIANA people in 13 regions (defined and discussed by Eschbach 1992). Dissimilarity indices for AIANA and AIANc workers appear to vary substantially by region within the U.S., and the AIANA occupational dissimilarity index is higher in areas with relatively many AIAN workers than in areas with relatively few of them. For AIANA workers, the Southwest and North Carolina stand out as having the highest degree of occupational dissimilarity with Whites in the same region; Alaska, California, and the Basin-Mountain, Northern Plains, and Great Lakes regions also show high levels of AIANA-White dissimilarity. For multiple-race AIAN workers, Alaska and the Northern Plains stand out as regions of higher occupational dissimilarity from local Whites.

There were very disparate results for AIANA versus AIANc workers in the Southwest and North Carolina (and we find these AIANA-AIANc gaps to be statistically significant, in tests not shown). In the South the dissimilarity from local Whites is relatively low for both AIAN groups, and in Alaska the dissimilarity is relatively high for both. In the Northern Plains, dissimilarity appears relatively high for AIANc workers relative to Whites (higher than for AIANA workers in five other regions and nearly on par with AIANA dissimilarity nationally), and yet the dissimilarity for AIANA workers there appears noticeably higher than that for AIANc workers. However, this example also illustrates the limitations of our regional results - neither of these apparent results for the Northern Plains is statistically significant, due to a small number of observations, and thus large standard errors (shown in parentheses in Figure 2).

Figure 2: Occupational dissimilarity indices by region, in the form: Index (SE)
 (Blue = AIANA, Green = AIANc, with nationwide statistics indicated in the scale)



Over- and Under-representation in Occupations

Our second research question is: In which occupations are AIAN workers underrepresented relative to White workers? In which are they overrepresented? To begin answering this question, we return to Figure 1. The occupational categories there are ordered by the fraction of incumbents who had completed at least one year of college, based on the data from 2010 (for all workers). For example, 92.9 percent of members of the architecture and engineering profession attended college. This was the highest rate of college attendance by labor force participants in any of the occupation groups, so it is shown at the top. Those in the farming, fisheries, and forestry category, shown at the bottom, had the lowest percentage of incumbents who attended college (16.9 percent). See Table 3 for details.

Table 3: Occupational education and occupational income by occupation group (all workers, 2008-2012 ACS).

| Occupation Group | Occupational Education | Occupational Income |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| Architecture and Engineering | high 93% | high \$85,155 |
| Life, Physical, and Social Science | high 92% | high \$68,781 |
| Legal | high 92% | high \$115,592 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians | high 90% | high \$75,637 |
| Education, Training, and Library | high 90% | low \$43,963 |
| Financial Specialists | high 90% | high \$76,898 |
| Computer and Mathematical | high 90% | high \$76,918 |
| Community and Social Services | high 88% | low \$43,022 |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media | high 81% | low \$49,298 |
| Business Operations Specialists | high 80% | high \$68,255 |
| Management in Business, Science, and Arts | high 76% | high \$87,336 |
| Technicians | low 63% | low \$52,601 |
| Protective Service | low 61% | low \$48,859 |
| Military | low 59% | low \$44,328 |
| Sales and Related | low 55% | low \$43,321 |
| Office and Administrative Support | low 54% | low \$32,855 |
| Healthcare Support | low 48% | low \$24,817 |
| Personal Care and Service | low 45% | low \$20,723 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair | low 38% | low \$43,477 |
| Food Preparation and Serving | low 33% | low \$15,747 |
| Production | low 28% | low \$35,266 |
| Transportation and Material Moving | low 28% | low \$33,464 |
| Construction | low 26% | low \$36,669 |
| Extraction | low 22% | low \$52,030 |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance | low 22% | low \$22,281 |
| Farming, Fisheries, and Forestry | low 17% | low \$22,249 |

Do Standard Demographic Factors Account for Occupational Disparity?

Having established that the occupational distribution of AIAN workers differs from that of single-race White workers and is tilted toward low-education fields, we now turn to our third research question: Do standard demographic factors account for the underrepresentation of AIAN workers in high-education occupations (relative to

White workers)? To answer this question, we add additional explanatory variables, beyond race, to the regression framework introduced in the previous section.

Measures of educational achievement are, on the one hand, natural variables to add because of the obvious ties between education attainment and many occupations. On the other hand, using an individual's education to predict whether they are in a high-education occupation may seem circular and thus merits some discussion. To define the dependent variable in our regressions, we classify occupations as high- or low-education based on whether a high or low percentage of incumbents have at least some college education. Thus, on average over the full sample of Whites and AIAN workers, there must be a positive overall average relationship between individual education attainment and whether an individual is in a high- or low-education field. However, it need not automatically be true that each additional level of education will further increase the odds that an individual will hold a high-education occupation. Nor must individual education be related to occupation on average in the AIAN portion of our sample - this population is very small relative to the White portion and thus has little influence on how occupations are ranked. So, the race coefficients in a regression of occupational outcome (high- or low-education field) on individuals' race and education can meaningfully show that (holding the effects of individuals' educational attainment constant) AIAN workers are less likely to hold high-education occupations than Whites.

Conclusion

The raw data on occupational distribution by race reveals a clear disparity between AIAN workers and White workers that has been present since at least 1980. AIAN workers, both single-race and multiple-race, are underrepresented in high-education fields like management, financial services, and legal professions, relative to White workers. AIAN workers are significantly overrepresented in low-education fields like construction, healthcare support, and food preparation. These differences are especially strong when the comparisons are limited to working men.

We find that race-group differences in educational attainment are the single most important explanatory factor behind the race-group differences in whether a worker is in an occupation group with relatively high education in 2010. Accounting for differences in educational outcomes and other factors markedly reduces all the race coefficients relative to their values in a race-only regression, but they are all still statistically different from zero. These demographic factors also explain much (for men) or all (for women) of the tendency for AIANa workers to be less likely than their AIANc counterparts to work in a highly educated field.

Though American Indians and Alaska Natives have improved their educational attainment in the past decades, White educational levels have also been increasing, and AIANs have not closed the gap. Over the same decades, the aggregate occupational dissimilarity of the AIAN workforce seems to have changed little

(though data issues prevent us from being certain). Although unmeasured factors also contribute to these occupational dissimilarities, our findings suggest that further efforts to close racial gaps in educational attainment can play an important role in narrowing the occupational dissimilarity between White workers and AIAN workers, thus improving lives and eliminating potential inefficiencies in how jobs are allocated.

“Disparities and Resilience among AIAN People,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 16 November 2022 [66]

<https://www.cdc.gov/health/aian/disparities.html>

Overview:

Although deaths related to pregnancy are rare, most are preventable. We lose too many American Indian and Alaska Native mothers each year from complications related to pregnancy.

American Indian and Alaska Native women are two times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than White women. This is unacceptable.

Current & Relevant Information:

American Indian and Alaska Native people experience disparities in pregnancy-related death and other maternal health conditions. Ongoing and historical trauma due to colonization, genocide, forced migration, and cultural erasure contribute to health inequities. Due to ongoing and historical trauma, American Indian and Alaska Native people are more likely to have underlying chronic health conditions and experience sexual or interpersonal violence. American Indian and Alaska Native people often experience discrimination or racism and face systemic barriers to care including higher rates of poverty and long distance to quality health care services.

Despite these challenges, American Indian and Alaska Native people continue to be resilient and thrive.

Many American Indian and Alaska Native people draw strength from culture and tradition. Their resilience is built through culture, spirituality, shared values, and a strong sense of identity. Culture serves as a protective factor in the health and well being of American Indian and Alaska Native people.

We honor the lives of those who have passed on, and work to prevent future losses.

“Alaska’s domestic violence rates remain high, as advocates push for more preventative measures,” Wesley Early, Alaska Public Media, 8 December 2023 [67]

<https://alaskapublic.org/2023/12/08/alaskas-domestic-violence-rates-remain-high-as-advocates-push-for-more-preventative-measures/>

Overview:

Alaska has some of the [highest rates of domestic violence in the country](#), with studies finding that almost half of women in the state have been victims in their lifetime.

A recent series by the Alaska Beacon takes a look at various facets of the domestic violence epidemic in Alaska, from root causes and proposed solutions to adverse health effects.

Beacon reporter Claire Stremple says funding for shelters and other programs to help domestic violence victims is hard to come by.

Current & Relevant Information:

his interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

Claire Stremple: Shelter directors will tell you that they're strapped for cash, even though the state adds money to federal funds that we get to address the issue. The state's former Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Director Diane Casto told me that those programs are just really expensive and recent inflation is not helping those budgets. But she also pointed to this other thing that's really important, which is that the state spends most of its money to treat domestic violence on shelters and other services for after harm happens. But she said, if we want to stamp out domestic violence, we really have to focus on prevention, on keeping it from happening, and that's harder.

But then the root causes of violence, advocates say, and state data bears this out, that violence begets violence. So most domestic violence offenders have experienced violence in their lifetimes as victims. That's broad, but the [Alaska-specific piece of that answer](#) has to do with our state's colonial history. I spoke with Charlene Apok, she's the director of Data for Indigenous Justice. And in that work, they keep a record of missing and murdered Indigenous people, which of course, has a lot of crossover with domestic violence. (She) said that institutional violence, especially against Alaska Native people, is violence that also begets domestic violence. So they give the particular example of boarding school violence against children, physical violence, which can have devastating effects on adulthood. But they also talked about how stripping cultural values and practices, that psychological violence can also have impacts.

Wesley Early: So you note that in a lot of these instances of domestic violence, women are unable to get away from their abusers, with many having trouble finding housing. Can you talk about those barriers and what's being done to take them down?

CS: So housing is a struggle in the state whether you've experienced domestic violence or not, but it is [especially devastating in that context](#). Survivors of domestic violence often need assistance to find and pay for housing, because data shows that abusers commonly sabotage their victims' economic stability. So that can result in

things like trouble finding rental properties because of poor credit, or a bad rental history, or a spotty employment history. Mandy Cole runs the DV shelter in Juneau, and she said, essentially, there's no daylight between surviving domestic violence and independent, affordable housing. So it is this crucial piece, but it's also, because of the violence and the trauma that people have experienced, harder to access.

What's being done to take those barriers down? At the Juneau shelter, and at some other shelters, they're building permanent supportive housing for victims of domestic violence. So it's something that people are working to address. I don't know if there's this large policy solution that's aimed specifically at fixing that problem.

And another thing that I'd like to note, and this, I guess, is not going in the solutions direction, but domestic violence is the [leading cause of homelessness for women](#) and their children. So nationally, most women who experience homelessness have been victims of domestic violence.

WE: Advocates who you spoke to in your reporting also point to a myriad of adverse health trends that are linked to domestic violence. Can you talk a bit about those?

CS: The specific outcomes that we talked about in this series, the first is that domestic violence is linked to our [high maternal mortality rate](#) in the state. So in the past 10 years, the number of people who die in the year after labor has nearly doubled in Alaska, and more women die from homicide, suicide or overdose than from medical complications. And of those women who die in the year after labor, about 70% of them had experienced domestic violence in their lifetimes. And one thing to point out when we're talking about the suicide and overdose piece is that those two, and studies and research bears this out, is that they're common responses or even escape measures to domestic violence.

Another issue is traumatic brain injury. Alaska has the highest rate of deaths from traumatic brain injury in the nation. And it also has among the highest rates of domestic violence, and recently in Alaska, advocates and caregivers are starting to [link those two data points](#). But they do say that as high as the rates are in Alaska for both traumatic brain injury and domestic violence, they're very likely undercounts. The state is developing a screening tool. It's in a pilot program right now. But it's aimed at being used in shelters to help advocates spot those symptoms, spot TBI symptoms, and connect survivors of violence to resources. So that's really exciting.

WE: Continuing on that, you know, what else is being done to combat this epidemic of domestic violence in Alaska? What resources are available either from local nonprofits or the government?

CS: There's actually a lot of work that's being done to combat domestic violence in Alaska. And while working in such a difficult subject, it's something that really gave me hope, is how many people have dedicated their lives to helping to heal that issue. So I'd say first, Alaska is a state that contributes to solutions financially. Not

all do. About half the budget for shelters and programs statewide comes from state funds. So this is something that our state does recognize and aims to fix. [There's a funding gap this year.](#) One of the sources of federal funds has shrunk substantially, which is leaving a multimillion-dollar hole in the budget. But there is money going that direction. And that's, I think, important to recognize.

But then there's also a great example of an upstream solution prevention program that aims to stop violence before it starts. Students across the state are actually legally mandated to [take healthy relationships classes](#). Teens learn what healthy relationships are. They learn how to maintain them, how to avoid dating violence. And all of that is really important because so many survivors of domestic violence say they didn't initially know what was happening to them, or didn't have the tools to identify the unhealthy parts of their relationships. So that work is really important.

A traveling social worker based in Bethel told me he sees that curriculum work, and he travels from Bethel to schools and villages around the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta to share those curriculums. And I recently traveled with him to Nunapitchuk, and it was amazing to see the bond of trust that he built, not only with the students, but also with his colleagues there in the school and how those relationships meant that people really absorbed his message

“Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and the Criminal Justice Response: What is Known,” Ronet Bachman, et al., U.S. Department of Justice, August 2008 [68]

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/223691.pdf?ftag=MSF0951a18>

Summary:

The purpose of this report was to provide an overview of the epidemiology of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women as well as an accounting of the criminal justice responses to this violence. Key findings include:

- National rates of homicide victimization against American Indian and Alaska Native women are second to those of their African American counterparts, but higher than those for white women. However, these national averages hide the extremely high rates of murder against American Indian and Alaska Native women present in some counties comprised primarily of tribal lands. Some counties have rates of murder against American Indian and Alaska Native women that are over ten times the national average. Like other women, American Indian and Alaska Native women are more likely to be killed by their intimate partners compared to other offenders.
- Using information to estimate nonfatal victimizations from official police report data, such as the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) or the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation is extremely problematic since we know less than half of violent victimizations against women are ever reported to police. Random sample surveys of women are the most appropriate method for estimating incidence

rates. Unfortunately, a majority of studies that have examined violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women have relied on convenience samples of women (e.g. those available for study such as women seeking medical care at a clinic), which cannot be generalized to the population of all women, even women in a particular tribe. The extreme variability in social, cultural, and economic conditions across tribes as well as the differences that may exist between American Indian and Alaska Native women who reside in urban areas (roughly 60%) off tribal lands, makes estimating rates of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women problematic. Making comparisons of incident rates is also difficult because of the extremely varied nature of the survey questions used to uncover victimizations.

- An analysis of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) reveals that rates of rape and other sexual assaults are higher for American Indian and Alaska Native women compared to both African American and white women. Rape and sexual assaults against all women regardless of race were more likely to be committed known offenders. These results are consistent with findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) that found American Indian and Alaska Native women were significantly more likely to experience a rape in their lifetimes compared to other women.
- With few exceptions, surveys of American Indian and Alaska Native women conducted in local areas including those residing on tribal lands as well as those residing in urban areas also generally find high rates of rape and sexual assault victimization. However, because of the extreme variation in the wording of the questions used, it is not always possible to know whether these victimizations were completed rapes or other sexual assaults. There has been one very rigorous survey that employed a random sampling design to uncover rape victimizations, both completed and attempted, within six tribal nations, which generally found high rates of rape with the exception of one tribe.
- According to NCVS data, rape and sexual assault victimizations against American Indian and Alaska Native women are just as likely to be reported to police compared to victimizations against other women, however, a friend, family member, or another official are most likely to do the reporting, not the victim herself. In only 6% of the victimizations that were reported were victims aware that the offender had been arrested. This is similar to the percent of other women who report that an arrest was made in their case.
- National annual incidence rates and lifetime prevalence rates for physical assaults are also higher for American Indian and Alaska Native women compared to other women. Like other women, American Indian and Alaska Native women are more likely to be assaulted by known offenders compared to strangers. Roughly equal proportions of these victimizations against American Indian and Alaska Native women are reported to police compared to other women. In addition, reports to police by American Indian and Alaska Native women are just as likely to result in arrest compared to reports made

- by other women. These national patterns do not, however, reflect variation in reporting and arrest rates that may occur across tribal nations.
- The unique position of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes as both sovereign and dependent creates problematic jurisdictional barriers that sometimes prohibit an effective criminal justice response to American Indian and Alaska Native victims of violence. Several federal laws have limited tribal government's power to prosecute offenders including the Major Crimes Act (1885), which mandated that virtually all violent crimes committed on tribal lands were to be prosecuted by the federal government. Although tribes have the power to concurrently prosecute cases of violence, the Indian Civil Rights Act (1968) mandates that tribal courts are not permitted to punish offenders with more than \$5,000 in fines, one year in jail or both. Importantly, tribal sovereignty in punishing offenders does not apply to non-American Indian and Alaska Natives (*Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe*, 435 U.S. 1978).
 - Complicating jurisdictional issues even more is Public Law 280 (1953), which gave state governments jurisdiction over offenses committed against American Indian and Alaska Natives on tribal land in six "mandatory" states including Alaska, California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Wisconsin, and some states that also assumed part or total jurisdiction over some tribes within state boundaries including Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington. Since Public Law 280 (PL-280), however, several states have retroceded authority to specific tribes making jurisdictional issues even more complicated.
 - Complicated jurisdictional issues still produce unique barriers to American Indian and Alaska Native women seeking help from a criminal justice authority on tribal lands. When an act of violence occurs on tribal lands, there are several possible law enforcement officials who may respond including tribal officers, Federal Bureau of Investigation officers, Bureau of Indian Affairs officers, and in PL-280 states, state police officers. Deciding who has jurisdictional authority is dependent on several factors including the crime that was committed, whether the offender or the victim was an American Indian and Alaska Native, and whether the crime was committed exclusively on tribal land. The jurisdictional confusion that may ensue when an act of violence occurs sometimes produces an inadequate and delayed response to female victims. Importantly, some tribes have worked out cross-deputization agreements with state police authorities, which serve to alleviate the jurisdictional confusion over authority.
 - Additional problems in law enforcement are exacerbated on many tribal lands by insufficient funding, inadequate training, and victims' lack of trust for outside authority.
 - Although tribal governments do not have jurisdiction to prosecute non-American Indian and Alaska Native offenders in criminal courts, they do have authority to enact civil orders against them, including Personal Protection Orders (PPOs). PPOs provide injunctive relief for petitioners who seek to use legal remedies to end threatening behavior, cease contact with another individual, or to alter custody arrangements. The Violence Against Women

- Act (VAWA) of 1994 established “Full Faith and Credit” for PPOs, which mandates jurisdictions to honor PPOs enacted in other jurisdictions. Importantly, this means that States and tribal governments must enforce the protection orders of other State and tribal jurisdictions. In reality, however, the variety of orders and accompanying legal punishments and the understanding of the intent of the order vary by each State and tribal government, creating significant barriers to the enforcement of “Full Faith and Credit.”
- In addition to legal barriers that may impede American Indian and Alaska Native women from obtaining justice, there are also other barriers including the social isolation of many tribal lands that precludes some American Indian and Alaska Native women from obtaining adequate medical care including the availability of rape kits being performed by trained medical staff to aid prosecution. Cultural barriers also prevent some American Indian and Alaska Native women from seeking assistance from those outside the community, while issues of privacy may also prevent others from seeking help inside close-knit tribal communities where “everyone knows everyone else’s business.”
 - Some American Indian and Alaska Native communities are developing culturally sensitive interventions for violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women both within and outside of the criminal justice system. These family or community forums emphasize restorative and reparative approaches to justice. One example of this is the Navajo Peacemaking system. Other culturally sensitive victim support services are being created across the country, in both urban settings as well as on rural tribal lands.
 - A great deal of progress has been made to combat violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women as a result of the VAWA 1994 and its reauthorizations in 2000 and 2005. Initiated in 1995, one of the most significant initiatives administered specifically for American Indian and Alaska Native communities has been the Services-Training-Officers-Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Indian Women (VAIW) program. The primary purpose of the STOP VAIW Discretionary Grants Program was to reduce violent crimes against American Indian and Alaska Native women. In 2006, over \$6.7 million was awarded to 35 American Indian and Alaska Native communities under this initiative. Additionally, American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments and tribal associations could obtain funding under other grant programs including the Legal Assistance for Victims Program, the Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Assistance Program, The Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Program, and the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program. Over \$21 million dollars were awarded to tribal communities under these initiatives in 2006 and 2007. Title IX of VAWA 2005 significantly increased existing set-asides to tribal nations and created a new consolidated initiative called the Tribal Government Program, which gives tribal governments a longer list of options on how funds can be utilized to combat violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women.

In the past few decades, we have learned a tremendous amount about the vulnerabilities that American Indian and Alaska Native women have to violent victimization as well as the unique obstacles they face when seeking help from law enforcement authorities and other officials for these victimizations. We have several recommendations that we believe will provide more fruitful investments to combat this violence in the future:

- Valid and reliable data on violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women are essential in formulating policies likely to prevent this violence and to respond effectively. Importantly, without solid baseline rates of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women at both national and local levels, there is no way to assess the overall effectiveness of interventions. Using official data from police reports is not desirable for these endeavors because police reporting by female victims can be influenced by a number of factors. Moreover, since less than half of all violent victimizations against American Indian and Alaska Native women are ever reported to police, using survey methodology is the only reliable way to estimate and track trends in violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women. However, because many local tribes will not have the resources to conduct surveys, official data from police will likely remain the principal means to monitor levels of violence. As such, it is important that efforts be made to improve the official databases that exist at the local tribal level. We recommend using the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation since its data template allows the collection of detailed information about the incidents including the victim/offender relationship along with other socio-demographic characteristics of the victim and offender. The jurisdictional issues described in this report should not prevent tribes from creating databases from initial victim reports.
- We now have consistent and reliable evidence from several random sample surveys conducted at the local tribal level, as well as from two national random sample surveys that violence disproportionately affects American Indian and Alaska Native women. It is important, however, that victimization of American Indian and Alaska Native women continue to be monitored by already existing surveys. Since the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) remains the only large-scale survey conducted annually, every attempt should be made to restore the sample size of the NCVS in order to monitor violence against small subsets of the population, including American Indian and Alaska Native women. The current sample of the NCVS is insufficient to monitor patterns and trends of different forms of victimization (rape, assault) against American Indian and Alaska Native women, even when multiple years are aggregated. Future survey research efforts should be focused on understanding the causes of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women, not just measuring the magnitude of this violence. To do this, collection efforts must be theoretically guided.

- Different research designs using different wording in questions to uncover victimization events at the local level will continue to produce disparate findings in the future. We contend that new resources directed at counting “how many” American Indian and Alaska Native women are victims are misguided. Even the most conservative estimates indicate that violence is an extremely serious problem in many American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The limited resources that are available would be better invested in developing interventions and prevention programs, scientifically evaluating their efficacy for protecting American Indian and Alaska Native women, and making sure all female victims of violence have safe havens in the meantime.
- Research intended to evaluate the efficacy of programs and policies created to protect American Indian and Alaska Native women must employ scientifically rigorous standards when possible to determine if programs had their intended “impacts.” Unfortunately, much of the evaluation research to date has predominately evaluated the “process” by which programs were implemented. While these are important, they do not tell us anything about whether programs had the intended consequences of protecting women. We are not alone in this call. The National Research Council Committee on the Assessment of Family Violence Interventions similarly identifies improving the standards of evidence used in the evaluation of family violence programs as critical. We have learned far too many times that ineffective policies can sometimes do more harm than good.

“Alaska has the highest rate of women killed by men in the nation for the 7th year in a row,” Claire Stremple, KTOO, 21 September 2022 [69]

<https://www.ktoo.org/2022/09/21/alaska-has-the-highest-rate-of-women-killed-by-men-in-the-nation-for-the-7th-year-in-a-row/#:~:text=Women%20in%20Alaska%20were%20killed,white%20women%20in%20Alaska%20were.>

Overview:

Alaska has the highest homicide rate in the nation for women killed by men — for the seventh year in a row.

Current & Relevant Information:

The state has been first or second on that list for a decade. That’s according to a report released Tuesday from the Violence Policy Center, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit that advocates for gun control.

The report details findings from the most recent data, which is from 2020. In that year, 12 Alaska women were killed by men. More than 90% of the victims were killed by someone they knew. A quarter of them were killed with guns.

The report says state lawmakers should prioritize ending the “epidemic of deadly violence” against Alaska women — and particularly Alaska Native women.

Women in Alaska were killed at more than twice the national average rate. That’s 3.43 women were killed by men for every 100,000 people. Alaska Native women were killed by men at ten times the rate white women in Alaska were.

The federal Office of Violence Against Women is holding its annual Government to Government Tribal Consultation meetings in Anchorage this week. Its aims are to figure out how to administer tribal funds to make Indigenous women safer and to strengthen the federal response to these violent crimes.

“Advancing Positive Paths for Native American Boys & Young Men,” First Nations Development Institute, 2016 [70]

<https://nativephilanthropy.issuelab.org/resources/35400/35400.pdf>

Abstract:

The diffusion and preservation of cultural knowledge, in the idiom of relationality, among Native boys and young men is a key pathway to success among this underserved and somewhat neglected demographic. This report highlights areas of success by five innovative programs among Indigenous communities in the United States. In the literature on boys and men of color, retaining connection to attributes of culture is difficult, but proves successful in achieving better life, educational and social outcomes. This report builds from this research and identifies in five key programs the mechanism for cultural diffusion, in both the domains of early intervention and policy programs, to provide Native boys and young men connection with cultural signifiers such as: values and ethics, self-sufficiency, family values, and environment. In the end, this report suggests the importance of these interventions and programs in further improved outcomes in education and the need to build on these and enhance their scale of operation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Not surprisingly, there is not a significant amount of data documenting the current state of affairs when it comes to Native boys and young men. Like data across Native communities, baseline data is either nonexistent or extremely hard to find. That said, the existent data does begin to paint a dire picture of Native boys and young men in relation to opportunities in life that are suppressed starting at a young age.

Perhaps the largest gains in data collection on Native boys and young men has come in the area of education. These statistics document that Native American boys and young men have one of the highest middle and high school dropout rates among ethnic groups (Mackety and Linder-VanBerschoot 2008). This group is 2.2 times more likely to be suspended from high school when compared to white boys and young men in middle and high school (U.S. DOE 2011-2012).

Moreover, studies reveal that both on and off reservations many schools are not providing an appropriate education for Native students in a manner that incorporates their native heritage through teaching and curriculum. This results in discontinuity between their home culture and what is taught in school, often leading to disengagement and increased dropout rates (Reyhner 1991).

Lastly, the emerging statistics, on suicide among Native youth and young adults has documented that suicide is the second leading cause of death among Native youth age 15 to 24 years old and roughly 3.5 times higher than the national average. (Hummingbird 2011). In some Native communities, like those in Alaska, Native boys and men have more staggering suicide rates.

These statistics are highly contested, “small numbers, coupled with a geographically dispersed student population[s], result in Native students being characterized as statistically insignificant...for purposes of data analysis and research” (Faircloth and Tippeconnic 2010). According to Toney (2007), “structural and institutional racism, [place Native] students...at a further disadvantage in opportunities and outcomes” (p. 8). These structures render Native students statistically insignificant. Consequently, some national-level data may not reflect Native students. Available statistics, however, do reveal a critical pattern that implies a crisis among Native American boys and young men in middle and high schools.

Researchers have asked: “What factors lead to this disparity in educational attainment among Native boys and young men?” Answers have run the gamut from resistance to “acting White” (Warikoo and Carter 2009) to structural and systemic issues rendering Native boys and young men invisible, subject to increased policing, and more likelihood to not graduate from high school (Adelman et al. 2013).

The literature, however, underscores and converges on the following point: that establishing and/or maintaining a variant of young Native men’s connection to their culture is an important component in improving their educational attainment. Brandt (1992) notes several factors contributing to reduced attrition or dropout rates. These factors include parental encouragement, proficiency in students’ Native language, incorporating and honoring traditional values and beliefs, and enrollment in small schools among others. Culture, in its varied expressions and modes of transmission, plays a vital role in educational attainment, behavior, and civic engagement.

It should be noted that “culture” cannot be reduced to a single category and to assume one particular type of transmission of cultural learning and acquisition. In this literature, culture has been broadly conceptualized as: mentoring, support, acquiring traditional knowledge and skills, language acquisition, social enrichment and networking, and connection to traditional and spiritual practices. Naturally, in Indigenous communities, cultural variables will look different depending on belief systems, land, and other culturally relevant mode of transmission. Nonetheless, these activities implicitly define and frame culture around the notion of relationality.

“The relational is central to Indigenous ways of knowing and acting” (Wulff 2010). Hence, culture and the modes of cultural acquisition intended to affect educational attainment outcomes is constructed around and informed by relations. Wilson (2008) notes, “rather than viewing ourselves as being in relationship with other people or things, we are the relationships that we hold and are part of” (p.80). The idea being, the person is the bridge that connects one to another. Thus, these activities that conceptualize culture, are also modes of transmission or learning. More importantly, relations are central to operationalizing these activities.

The following factors are associated with and affect educational attainment: lack of connection or concern from teachers, irrelevant curriculum, and parents or family who lack involvement. Native American students have felt the effect of institutional racism causing them a feeling of not being wanted or pushed out (Wax 1967, Hare and Pidgeon 2011). They experience a lack of academic support (Adelman et al 2011, Reyhner 1991) and a lack of parental support (Reyhner 1991, Huffman 2001). They were also more likely to be surrounded by substance and alcohol abuse at home or in their communities (Brandt 1992, Garrett et al 2011).

These factors imply a disconnection to community, self, and culture. These factors are associated with low rates of educational attainment. When understood as factors of relations, they ultimately signify a loss of relations. They are about a disconnection between the individual, their family, their community, their culture and that community’s values. Interventions designed to affect educational outcomes in Native American communities are often constructed around the idea that connection to culture improves the likelihood of educational attainment and improved behavior. Thus, activities that connect Native boys and young men to culture also connect them to community and self. Garrett et al. (2011) found that participation in sweat lodge ceremonies can affect the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of Native American men. Colmant and Merta (2000) noted that sweat lodge ceremonies improved behavior of young Native boys, it showed improved measures of self-esteem, helped the boys feel relaxed, relieved stress, and left them with a feeling of accomplishment. These authors argue that the sweat is a means to “restore the common bond between the sacred and the secular...” (p. 324). Others have found that curriculum or programs that enhance cultural knowledge and language increase the likelihood of young people to “know stories and facts about their communities and demonstrates higher levels of civic responsibility” (Kana’iaupuni et. al 2010 p. 18). Kana’iaupuni (2010) found these students “reported multiple occasions of working to protect the environment and their communities” (p. 18). It is clear that culture and language are vital components to re-engaging Native boys and young men with community, but also in affecting the likelihood of educational success. These activities imply they are about helping the individual understand their place in the universe.

Activities designed to highlight relations and create and identify relations are vital to improving the educational success of Native boys and young men. Tribal and community relations are core to Native culture. Thus, mentoring, cultural learning, Native language acquisition, and a focus on enhancing relations raise the chances of success. Mentoring is a means of connecting the individual with a set of ideas about him or herself and who they are (Hare and Pidgeon 2011). With respect to Native American boys and young men, learning what Indigenous manhood means is about establishing oneself as a relationship to mentors, ideas, family, others around themselves, and Native ideas of masculinity (Hokowhitu 2012).

To conclude, this review focused on the connection between culture and improved behavior broadly. The literature implicitly and broadly defines culture as relations. Specifically, it focused on the notion of culture as relations, and demonstrated prevailing interventions like mentoring, teacher-student attention, cultural and language acquisition were important to understanding and building relations. This review also showed how cultural activities lead to improved behavior and re-engagement to community.

Any intervention designed to affect educational attainment and success for Native boys and young men must focus on re-establishing relations with themselves and their communities. Thus, these activities, whether through mentoring or academic support is about reaching a population that is often characterized as lazy or misfit. This population has largely been forgotten. They are statistically invisible and are ignored by society. These structural and system modes of oppression have been and can be effectively countered through engagement with culture and through understanding of relations. Native boys face challenges in educational and life outcomes. These challenges manifest as low high school graduation rates, higher dropout rates, higher rates of suspension, and other challenges that continue to inhibit their contribution to their communities.

H. Economic:

“Arctic Peoples and Ecosystems,” U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, 3 March 2024
[71] <https://toolkit.climate.gov/regions/alaska-and-arctic/arctic-peoples-and-ecosystems>

Overview:

Changes in the land and sea environments impact the economy, health and quality of life, and the ecosystems that many people—especially Native Peoples—depend on economically, nutritionally, and culturally for hunting and fishing. Climate impacts on these communities are magnified by additional social and economic stresses. However, Native communities have for centuries adapted to changing environmental conditions and have deep cultural values that enhance flexibility and adaptability. See also the [Tribal Nations](#) topic and subtopics.

Current & Relevant Information:

Economic impacts

Energy production is the main driver of Alaska's economy, providing more than 80 percent of state government revenue and thousands of jobs. Continuing pressure for oil, gas, and mineral development on land and offshore in ice-covered waters increases the demand for infrastructure, placing additional stresses on ecosystems. Land-based energy exploration will be affected by a shorter season when ice roads are viable, yet reduced sea ice extent may create more opportunity for offshore development. Climate also affects hydropower generation by changing the timing, amount, and/or duration of precipitation (see also [Energy Production](#)).

Mining and commercial fishing are the second and third largest industries in the state, with tourism rapidly increasing since the 1990s. Fisheries are vulnerable to changes in fish abundance and distribution that result from both climate change and fishing pressure. Tourism might respond positively to warmer springs and autumns, but negatively to less favorable conditions for winter activities and increased summer smoke from wildfires.

Impacts of reduced sea ice

With reduced sea ice extent, the Arctic Ocean is more accessible for marine traffic, including trans-Arctic shipping, oil and gas exploration, and tourism. These activities increase the risks of industrial or marine accidents, but they can also provide new economic opportunities (see also [Arctic Development and Transport](#)).

With the late-summer ice edge located farther north than it used to be, storms produce larger waves and more coastal erosion. An additional contributing factor is that coastal bluffs that were once "cemented" by ice-rich permafrost are beginning to thaw in response to warmer air and ocean waters, and are therefore more vulnerable to erosion. Standard defensive adaptation strategies to protect coastal communities from erosion—use of rock walls, sandbags, and riprap (rock or other material used to armor shorelines) and other strategies—have been largely unsuccessful. Several coastal communities are seeking to relocate to escape erosion that threatens infrastructure and services, but because of high costs and policy constraints on use of federal funds for community relocation, only one Alaskan village has begun to relocate.

Health and quality of life

Most rural Alaskan communities are not connected to the state's road system or electrical grid, so the cost of living is high, and it is challenging to supply food, fuel, materials, health care, and other services. Major food sources are under stress due to many factors, including lack of sea ice for marine mammals. Thawing of near-surface permafrost beneath lakes and ponds that provide drinking water cause food and water security challenges for villages. Sanitation and health problems also result

from deteriorating water and sewage systems, and ice cellars traditionally used for storing food are thawing.

Such changes may be particularly threatening to Alaska Native communities, whose subsistence lifestyle is part of an enduring cultural tradition spanning centuries. See the [Tribal Nations topic](#) of this Toolkit to learn how climate disproportionately affects indigenous peoples in the United States, and about their unique ways of blending Traditional Knowledges with climate science and technology.

Changes in the timing and quality of ice make traveling conditions for hunters, fisherman, and those going between communities more unpredictable and sometimes dangerous. There are an increasing number of reports of people going through thin ice, often in remote locations where immediate response and rescue is difficult, if not impossible.

Warming also releases pollutants, such as poleward-transported mercury and organic pesticides, from thawing permafrost. Diseases may also spread into new regions as the climate changes. Both pollutants and diseases may cause harm to Arctic plants and animals—including subsistence food species—posing new health challenges, especially to rural communities. Positive health effects of warming include a longer growing season for gardening and agriculture.

Connections to ecosystems

Functioning ecosystems serve as a foundation for human well-being by providing basic necessities such as food and water and other ecosystem services. Moreover, for indigenous peoples and many rural communities, culture is constructed around livelihood activities, such as reindeer husbandry, farming, fishing, and hunting and gathering. Changes in the environment can thus lead to the erosion or loss of core elements of culture.

Northern communities in Canada have long considered the land and resources around them as crucial to their well-being. Many Inuit, Athabaskan, Métis, and other northern peoples recognize the importance of respectful symbiotic relationships between themselves and the water, fish, wildlife, and other beings of their natural world. What's more, these relationships are imbued with sacred or spiritual significance. Beliefs that people and animals “are related like families,” and that the “land is alive” and can be managed by people only when treated with respect, are described in oral histories documented throughout the North, particularly in First Nations communities. In this context, the experience of environmental change is deeply personal and spiritual and can really only be understood through lived experience and the development of long-term, respectful social and social-ecological relations. The people of Alaska, along with other Arctic residents in other nations, rely on and have strong connections to marine and terrestrial ecosystems, both of which are experiencing climate change.

Rapid erosion and storm vulnerability due to sea ice loss have forced tribes to prepare to leave their homes and lands. Thirty-one villages are identified as being in imminent danger. At least 12 of the 31 threatened villages have decided to relocate or to explore relocation options.¹ Federal funds are scarce, competition is steep, and, due to complex eligibility criteria, many Alaska tribes cannot qualify for needed federal programs.

Marine and coastal ecosystems

Ocean acidification, rising ocean temperatures, declining sea ice, and other environmental changes interact to affect the location and abundance of marine fish, including those that are commercially important, those used as food by other species, and those used for subsistence. These changes have allowed some near-surface fish species such as salmon to expand their ranges northward along the Alaskan coast. In addition, non-native species are invading Alaskan waters more rapidly, primarily through ships releasing ballast waters and bringing southerly species to Alaska. These species introductions could affect marine ecosystems, including the feeding relationships of fish important to commercial and subsistence fisheries.

Overall habitat extent is expected to change as well, though the degree of the range migration will depend upon the life history of particular species. For example, reductions in seasonal sea ice cover and higher surface temperatures may open up new habitat in polar regions for some important fish species, such as cod, herring, and pollock. However, continued presence of cold bottom-water temperatures on the Alaskan continental shelf could limit northward migration into the northern Bering Sea and Chukchi Sea off northwestern Alaska. In addition, warming may cause reductions in the abundance of some species, such as pollock, in their current ranges in the Bering Sea and reduce the health of juvenile sockeye salmon, potentially resulting in decreased overwinter survival. If ocean warming continues, it is unlikely that current fishing pressure on pollock can be sustained. Higher temperatures are also likely to increase the frequency of early Chinook salmon migrations, making management of the fishery by multiple user groups more challenging.

Ocean acidification

Research is showing that ocean acidification is already affecting northern waters. It is a complex issue and the impacts may vary between Arctic regions, depending on variables such as water temperature, glacial melt and runoff, and ocean circulatory patterns. The impacts on the food chain are not yet fully understood, but already some of the essential plankton and small invertebrates are showing physical changes. Ocean acidification may cause a loss of primary food sources for species that are physically, economically, and culturally essential. The rising acidity will have particularly strong societal effects in the Bering Sea on Alaska's west coast because

of its high-productivity commercial and subsistence fisheries. Shelled pteropods—tiny planktonic snails near the base of the food chain—respond quickly to acidifying conditions and are an especially critical link in high-latitude food webs, as commercially important species such as pink salmon depend heavily on them for food.

Coastal zone habitats

The Arctic coastal zone is the interface between the seas of the Arctic shelf and the Arctic terrestrial regions—the realm where the terrestrial ecosystem is affected by proximity to the marine, and vice versa—and which as a result is sensitive to changes or shifts in either. As a result of this interaction, the coastal zone supports high structural and ecological variability, which includes its human component.

A reduction in sea ice is altering habitats along Arctic coastlines. Some of the most recognizable Arctic animals, such as polar bears, seals, and walrus, rely on sea ice as a platform for resting and hunting. Like the Arctic's human residents, these animals face the loss of habitat and drastically reduced hunting ranges as sea ice recedes. Polar bears are one of the most sensitive Arctic marine mammals to climate warming because they spend most of their lives on near-shore sea ice. Declining sea ice in northern Alaska is associated with smaller bears, probably because of less successful hunting of seals, which are themselves ice-dependent and so are projected to decline with diminishing ice and snow cover. Although bears can give birth to cubs on sea ice, increasing numbers of female bears now come ashore in Alaska in the summer and fall and den on land. Walrus also depend on sea ice as a platform for giving birth, nursing, and resting between dives to the seafloor, where they feed. In recent years, when summer sea ice in the Chukchi Sea retreated over waters that were too deep for walrus to feed, large numbers of walrus abandoned the ice and came ashore. The high concentration of animals results in increased competition for food and can lead to stampedes when animals are startled, resulting in trampling of calves.

Terrestrial ecosystems

On land, shrubs are expanding in the tundra and invasive insects are moving into the forests. As Arctic summers warm and the ice-free season lengthens, more species from the south could begin to spread northward. Competition from these species for food and other resources could potentially lead to major ecosystem reorganization and even extinctions. For example, as climate warms, shrubs have started to grow in areas previously dominated by tundra vegetation, such as lichens—an important winter food source for caribou. The loss of lichens can lead to declines in the growth and abundance of caribou, which in turn are an important food source for hunters from the Arctic's indigenous communities, as well as for predators such as bears and wolves.

Higher temperatures and less summer moisture increase the risks of drought, wildfire, and insect infestation. Alaska's boreal spruce forest declined substantially in recent decades from both fire and insect damage. By mid-century, the average area burned by wildfire each year is likely to double. In the forests, research has shown that increased frequency of wildfires in the conifer forest (for which increasing summer temperature is the main driver) will likely turn the landscape into a deciduous broad-leaf forest, as the dominant slow-growing conifer black spruce (*Picea mariana*) is replaced by more open ecosystems dominated by aspen and birch.

On average, lakes have decreased in area in the last 50 years in the southern two-thirds of Alaska, due to a combination of permafrost thaw, greater evaporation in a warmer climate, and increased soil organic accumulation during a longer season for plant growth. In some places, however, lakes are getting larger because of lateral permafrost degradation. Future permafrost thaw will likely increase lake area in areas of continuous permafrost, and decrease lake area in places where the permafrost zone is more fragmented. Many communities in northern Alaska draw their drinking water from lakes and other surface waters. Changes in water availability may require new water sources and new treatment technologies.

A continuation of the current drying of Alaskan lakes and wetlands could affect waterfowl management nationally: Alaska accounts for 81 percent of the National Wildlife Refuge System and provides breeding habitat for millions of migratory birds that winter in more southerly regions of North America and on other continents. Wetland loss would also reduce waterfowl harvest in Alaska, where it is an important food source for Alaska Natives and other rural residents.

“The Status of Alaska Natives Report 2004 Volume I,” Scott Goldsmith, et al., Institute of Social and Economic Research University of Alaska Anchorage, May 2004 [72] https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy_publication_links/statusaknatcandp.pdf

Summary:

The Alaska Federation of Natives asked ISER to report on social and economic conditions among Alaska Natives. We found that Natives have more jobs, higher incomes, and better living conditions, health care, and education than ever. But they remain several times more likely than other Alaskans to be poor and out of work. Alcohol continues to fuel widespread social problems. Native students continue to do poorly on standard tests, and they're dropping out in growing numbers. Rates of heart disease and diabetes are rising. In the face of all these challenges, subsistence remains critical for cultural and economic reasons. And there are more challenges to come. In the coming decade, when economic growth is likely to be slower than in the past, thousands more young Alaska Natives will be moving into the job market.

Current & Relevant Information:

- Alaska Natives are increasingly urban. About 42 percent live in urban areas now, and that share could reach more than 50 percent by 2020.
- The fastest Native population growth since 1970 has been in urban areas, boosted by thousands of Natives moving from rural places.
- Populations of remote Native villages continue to grow, despite the migration to urban places.
- At current trends, the Native population will grow from 120,000 in 2000 to 165,000 by 2020.
- Natives are a young people. Those 19 and younger make up 44 percent of all Natives, compared with about 29 percent among all Americans. But the elder population has also been growing fast.
- Natives gained more than 8,000 jobs between 1990 and 2000. But only about 35 percent of all Native jobs are full-time and year-round.
- Native women held more jobs than Native men by 2000. Working-age women are also the most likely to live in urban areas.
- Despite job gains, the number of unemployed Natives increased 35 percent from 1990 to 2000.
- Demand for jobs will continue to grow, with 25 percent more Alaska Natives entering the work force between 2000 and 2010.
- Incomes of Natives remain just 50 to 60 percent those of other Alaskans, despite gains. Transfer payments are a growing share of Native income.
- All the economic problems Natives face are worst in remote areas, where living costs are highest.
- Natives are three times as likely as other Alaskans to be poor. Half the Native families below the poverty line are headed by women.
- Many Alaska children are growing up in families headed by women, but the share is about a third larger in Native families.
- Alcohol continues to fuel high rates of domestic violence, child abuse, and violent death in the Native community. But two thirds of small villages have imposed local controls on alcohol.
- Current Native health problems—like the spread of diabetes and heart disease—are linked more to the modern American way of life than to poor living conditions, as problems were 30 years ago.

- Native education levels continue to rise, but haven't yet reached those among other Alaskans. Native women are significantly more likely than men to attend college.
- Native students are more likely to drop out of school and less likely to pass standard tests.

“Academic Achievement of American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Does Social-Emotional Competence Reduce the Impact of Poverty?” Jennifer Chain, et al., *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, 2017 [73]

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ff5e/cfc221f695974ef2a6ac5d1fa230c2934a8f.pdf?_ga=2.5067259.97712671.1587741980-1004298732.1531764871

Abstract:

Social-emotional competence may be a protective factor for academic achievement among American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. This study used Fisher's r to Z transformations to test for group differences in the magnitude of relationships between social-emotional competence and achievement. Hierarchical linear modeling was used to determine the variance in academic achievement explained by student race, poverty, and social-emotional competence, and the schoolwide percentage of students by race. Data are from 335 students across 6 schools. This study suggests that promoting social-emotional competence among AI/AN students could be a strategy for reducing disparities in academic achievement and the consequences of these disparities.

Current & Relevant Information:

INTRODUCTION

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students, on average, experience high rates of adversity and systemic oppression (Alaska Federation of Natives, 2011a, 2011b), such as poverty, racism, and insufficient access to resources and services, as well as the long-term consequences of historical trauma and displacements (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Evans-Campbell, 2008; LaFromboise, Albright, & Harris, 2010; Krogstad, 2014; Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). In addition, AI/AN students in the U.S. are implicitly asked to acculturate to a “mainstream” education system. Mainstream academic environments may not reflect AI/AN cultures, and an emphasis on assimilation may undermine the value of AI/AN cultures (Fryberg et al., 2013b; Gone, 2013).

The cumulative effects of these risk factors and barriers pose threats to AI/AN students' academic achievement (Brayboy, 2005; Dalla & Kennedy, 2014; DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, non-Native peers) (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). This early achievement gap leads to more AI/AN students disengaging, underperforming, and dropping out of school (Gentry & Fugate, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). In the long term, the

achievement gap contributes to the persisting disparities observed in employment, rates of poverty, and mental and physical health between AI/AN and other communities (Aud et al., 2010; Gone & Trimble, 2012). This paper explores the achievement gap between AI/AN students and their non-Native peers.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine 1) the effect of race and poverty on academic achievement, 2) the strength of the relationship between social-emotional competence and academic achievement for AI/AN students relative to their non-Native peers, and 3) the impact of social-emotional competence on academic achievement over and above race and poverty. Aligned with previous research, we found that race is associated with academic achievement (Sirin, 2005; Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014). We found that considering low-income status in addition to race improved our ability to explain the variance in academic achievement scores.

The relationship between social-emotional competence and academic achievement was reliable and sizable across all social-emotional domains and for children in all racial groups, even when sample sizes were small. This finding affirms prior research indicating that social-emotional competence is related to academic achievement for all children (Wanless et al., 2011) and raises the possibility that interventions to promote social-emotional competence may universally benefit students from all cultural backgrounds (Becker & Luthar, 2002). The advisory committee members suggest that social-emotional competence is important for AI/AN students' academic success because the social-emotional competencies are tied to cultural values and aligned with the Alaska standards for culturally responsive schools (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998). Consistent with prior analyses (e.g., Konstantopoulos, 2005), the effect of student body characteristics on achievement did not persist when individual characteristics were also modeled.

The results of the Fisher's r to Z transformation support the hypothesis that the function of social-emotional competence may vary across race. Although all eight social-emotional scales were strongly correlated with academic achievement for AI/AN students, Personal Responsibility and Decision Making were found to be more strongly correlated with academic achievement for Native students relative to their non-Native peers. There are a number of possible explanations for the strong correlation between social-emotional competence and academic achievement for AI/AN students, including the role of social-emotional competence in bicultural competency development. CASEL (2014) combines Personal Responsibility and Decision Making into one social-emotional domain—Responsible Decision Making. The skills that constitute Responsible Decision Making, as measured by the DESSA, (e.g., serve an important role at home or school, encourage positive behavior in others, follow the example of a positive role model, seek advice, follow the advice of a trusted adult, use available resources [people or objects] to solve a problem) may be a salient precursor of bicultural competence that help AI/AN students function in

environments that are otherwise culturally misaligned (Gestsdottir et al., 2011; Whitesell et al., 2009).

It should also be considered whether the assessment of Responsibility and Decision Making among AI/AN students, as completed by their teachers, reflects the dominant cultural values of the school (Chen & French, 2008). If this were the case, students who scored high on these scales may be perceived by their teachers as acculturated to the norms of the school (Fryberg et al., 2013b). Therefore, it could be the case that social-emotional competence is a proxy, rather than a prerequisite, for biculturalism, and biculturalism is a predictor of academic achievement (Oyserman et al., 2003).

The final multilevel model provides further evidence that social-emotional competence is related to academic achievement for all students. While holding all measures of race and poverty constant, students with higher social-emotional competence, on average, had higher standardized test scores. When social-emotional competence was taken into account, the negative association between poverty and academic achievement decreased for all students. Furthermore, when social-emotional competence was considered, the negative association between AI/AN racial identity and academic achievement disappeared entirely. This finding suggests that the achievement gap between AI/AN students and their White peers may be largely attributed to differences in levels of student poverty and social-emotional competence. Ultimately, poverty and social-emotional competence had a larger effect than race on academic achievement for Native students. If these results hold across studies, promising approaches to closing the achievement gap for AI/AN students could include poverty remediation strategies, school reform efforts aimed at cultural alignment, as well as social and emotional learning opportunities. The results of this study provide some initial support for the adoption of social and emotional learning initiatives as a potential mechanism for closing the achievement gap.

A number of limitations to the current study exist. One limitation is the small sample size. In particular, the small sample size at the school level was powered to detect only medium to large effects and may not have been large enough to detect cross-level interactions (Garson, 2013). Therefore, results need to be interpreted with caution given the small number of schools. The sample of AI/AN students was smaller than other groups. We maintain that AI/AN research should be done, even when sample sizes are small, in order to build research knowledge that pertains to this group. However, results do need to be interpreted cautiously, as small sample sizes have a greater potential for type II errors (underpowered to detect relationships that exist).

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study and others like it suggest that social and emotional learning curricula delivered through culturally responsive pedagogy should be tested as a strategy to narrow the achievement gap for AI/AN students (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). The Anchorage School District is an increasingly varied education environment. The administrators of the Anchorage School District have implemented a Culturally Responsive Education Plan that emphasizes “professional development programs to heighten teachers’ awareness of the impact of teacher attitude, background, culture and socio-economic status on teaching” (Anchorage School District, 2006, p.2). Under this plan, teachers are encouraged to create culturally responsive social and emotional learning goals for their students. Without further study, it is unclear what impact this project has had.

More culturally appropriate and affirming social and emotional learning programs and pedagogies are needed for AI/AN students (Dalla & Kennedy, 2014). An example of such a pilot program is Project Ki’L, tailored to the needs of Native boys. Project Ki’L provides cultural education for AI/AN boys from preschool to 5th grade. The program invites Native elders and community members to teach afterschool and summer programs on AI/AN cultural values and Indigenous knowledge (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 2001), and reinforces the coexistence of multiple worldview and knowledge systems that are associated with well-being (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008; Bryant & LaFromboise, 2005). The curriculum includes activities such as creating ceremonial masks, skinning seals, making akutaq, cooking fry bread, throwing rabbit sticks and atlatls, going on canoe trips, participating in talking circles, and bringing families together on family nights. In this program, culture is the intervention (Kenyon & Hanson, 2012). Designing and testing culturally responsive strategies for promoting social-emotional competence among AI/AN students could be a strategy for reducing disparities in academic achievement and their consequences.

“Determinants of Development Success in the Native Nations of the United States,” Jonathan B. Taylor, University of Arizona, 2008 [74]

<https://nnigovernance.arizona.edu/determinants-development-success-native-nations-united-states-english>

Overview:

The poverty of indigenous North Americans, especially those living on reservations, has concerned Indian and federal policymakers for more than a century. After the treaty-making phase and the establishment of the reservation system, federal policies to address Native poverty vacillated between cultural assimilation, forced urbanization, and asset privatization, on the one hand, and governmental reorganization, natural resource exploitation, and welfare assistance, on the other. None of this experimentation brought American Indians to parity with the rest of the United States. American Indians and Alaska Natives have been the poorest category of Americans for decades.

Recently, however, many resurgent Native nations have created economic growth and accompanying political and social development in their homelands. For the first time, the incomes of Indians on reservations rose faster than the American average without an accompanying rise in federal spending. In the 1970s and 1980s, Indian incomes rose and fell as federal program budgets for Indian Country increased and then decreased. By contrast in the 1990s, federal spending on Indian programs did not change much, but Indian incomes rose, both on reservations with casinos and without. The pace of average income growth on the reservations exceeded the US growth in per capita income by a factor of three.

What explains this welcome improvement? Research begun in the 1980s and continuing to the present examines the variation in outcomes across tribes and uncovers the strategies Native nations have used for success. Whereas many Native and federal policymakers treated the problem of poverty as a question of creating employment, projects designed to create employment usually resulted in failure because they addressed symptoms not root causes. By contrast, successful Native nations address the underlying challenge: they create conditions that allow the accumulation of physical, financial, and human capital.

Today some Native nations create conditions even more attractive than in the states around them. There is a recurring traffic jam of non-Indian employees going to work on the Mississippi Choctaw Reservation. Non-Indian citizens of Montana regularly enroll in Salish and Kootenai College. The State of Minnesota emulates the foster care program created by the Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa Indians. National accreditors rank the substance abuse program of the Squaxin Island Tribe in the top three-percent of programs in the United States. In case after case, Native nations built adept governments, recruited talented people and investors, and benefited themselves and non-Native taxpayers and neighbors.

Much still needs to be done. Indians living on reservations earned incomes little more than one-third the US average in 2000. As welcome as the growth of the 1990s was, it would take half a century for that trend to close the gap. Despite the difficult road ahead, Native nations in the United States have found successful approaches, and their fortunes have never looked better.

Current & Relevant Information:

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Native nations in the United States prepare a fertile environment for development by taking charge and by channeling internal political forces over the long term. Indeed, one of the paradoxical findings of the research by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development and the Native Nations Institute is that Native leaders make their nations more powerful by binding their own hands themselves. By restricting their own powers to intervene at whim in a contract dispute, an enterprise firing, or a school program, Native political leaders make their nations more

attractive to the Native citizen with a college degree, the Native entrepreneur, or the non-Native teacher. These investors become more confident that they will be treated fairly—that their time, experience, and money will not be hostage to politics—and they become more willing to bet on the future of the nation.

To be specific, successful Native nations share three essential characteristics: 1) they assert the Nation's powers of self-rule; 2) they build strong institutions of self-government to backup those powers; and 3) they root their development efforts and institutions in Native culture.

1. Successful Native nations control their own affairs. They assert the power to make core decisions about resources, policy, and institutions. Lack of control in these domains soon traps Indian nations in dependent poverty. The research is clear: outsiders perform poorly when managing Native resources, designing Native policy, and creating Native governing institutions—no matter how well-meaning or competent they may be. When Native communities take control of their assets, programs, and governments they obtain higher prices for their commodities, more efficient and sustainable use of their forests, better programs for their health care, greater profitability from their enterprises, and greater return migration. The reasons are straightforward. The decision makers are more likely to experience the consequences of good and bad decisions. They are closer to local conditions. And they are more likely to have the community's unique interests at heart. When Native nations manage their own forest resources, both productivity and profits rise, and so do the chances that management reflects community priorities.

2. Successful Native nations establish long-lived institutions that limit political opportunism and administer the practical business of the community effectively. Without effective institutions, asserting the powers of self-government means little. The United States Supreme Court nullified Montana taxes on Indian coal, but the Native nation that won the case took years to pass a tax code and tell the mining company where to send the checks. The powers of self-government come with the burdens of governing effectively.

A formal written constitution may specify the powers of these institutions, but it is not necessary for success. Some traditional southwestern pueblos succeed using traditional, unwritten arrangements. What matters, the research indicates, are three essential functions that these institutions perform:

a. Successful Native nations insulate dispute resolution from political interference. If the political bodies within the Native nation can interpret contracts and laws directly (or indirectly by threatening judges or mediators), they discourage people from bringing their ideas, experience, or investment dollars into the Native community. By contrast, when the Native nation resolves disputes fairly, quickly, and independently of political considerations, investors feel secure and contribute to systematically higher rates of Native employment. Successful

dispute resolution does not need to have a European flavor. The Navajo Supreme Court relies upon traditional Navajo common-law to guide its decisions and allows adversarial parties to choose traditional Peacemaker Court.

b. Successful Native nations carefully govern nation-owned enterprises in systems that isolate business managers from political forces yet keep managers accountable to the community for performance. Corporate governance in the private sector has its own challenges: Will managers advance the interests of owners as well as they would themselves? When governments—Native or otherwise—own the business, other considerations (such as employing members of politically strong factions) complicate the challenges further. Successful Native nations in the US recognize the threats to profitability and establish independent boards of directors. Then, critically, they hold those directors to account—for profitability especially, but also for meeting community goals. Business always entails risks, but Native nations improve the odds four-fold by managing business and government effectively. Nation-owned businesses from Alaska (Yukaana Development Corporation) and Nebraska (Ho-Chunk, Inc.) to New Mexico (Poeh Cultural Center) and Montana (Siyeh Corporation) adopt strong systems of corporate governance and succeed where prior businesses did not.

c. Successful Native nations build capable bureaucracies. The demands of self-government require performing certain jobs well. Without the staffs to design the wildlife protection plan, maintain the land title records, or operate the police dispatch system, Native nations fail to achieve their own objectives. Successful Native nations not only recruit and train talented citizens for these jobs, but they protect their government employees from politically motivated firings. When they develop professional administration, they have even been able to extend the domain of Native decision making. The US Fish and Wildlife Service entrusted biologists from the Nez Perce Tribe with gray wolf management on federal lands. Native water managers regularly hold the City of Albuquerque to higher quality standards. The state of Alaska reluctantly agreed that trained Quinhagak rangers were the people best suited to managing non-Indian campers in the Kanektok riverbed.

3. Successful Native nations root their institutions and activities in indigenous culture. Too often in Indian Country outsiders dictated the choices of institutions and economic activities to the Native nations. Beginning in the 1930s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs recommended government structures that hardly resembled indigenous Lakota, Wampanoag, or Hopi ways of organizing authority. Consequently, conflicts over legitimacy and authenticity regularly corrode the effectiveness of Native self-government.

Many Native Americans recognized that their nations needed to unwind the legacy of outside influence on their institutions of government. The Osage, Apsaalooke, and Cherokee Nations reformed their constitutions. The Navajo Nation experiments with

local governance. The Village of Kake, Alaska uses a traditional peacemaking circle for sentencing minors convicted in the state courts. These and other tribes have rebuilt old institutions and constructed new ones that meet two critical tests. First, the formal institutions of government align with contemporary local norms and customs about what is and is not an appropriate use of authority. Without this alignment, institutions written on paper are little more than that: paper. When formal institutions do match indigenous culture however, the research indicates they tend to produce long-lasting stability and effectiveness. The Osage constitutional reform coincides with an economic boom and return migration. Local self-government at the Navajo Kayenta Township resulted in economic and civic resurgence.

Second, most successful Native nations recognize that their institutions must be practically effective in today's world, not romantic renditions of Native culture. Few Native nations in the United States have the luxury of isolationism. Native nations contend with the social, economic, and technological forces of globalization—for better or worse. To advance the values they care about, successful Native nations account for the demands of the outside world without necessarily abandoning their own priorities.

The Kake peacemaking circle meets the needs of the state justice system well enough to earn praise from the Alaska Chief Justice, but it is also very effective at advancing its traditional preference for victim restitution and community harmony. The Salish and Kootenai, Winnebago, and Mississippi Choctaw attract ample private capital without privatizing their efficient nation-owned enterprises. The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate may fire employees who do not show up on time for work at the nation's casino, but then it surrounds the dismissed worker with social, medical, and cultural experts (tribal elders) so that the employee develops the life skills necessary to regain and maintain their employment.

In contrast to historic models of development that emphasized creating jobs by starting development projects, this research indicates that successful Native nations engage in a process of re-building their nations, creating an environment of rules and practices in which projects are likely to succeed. American Indian development arises from effective political processes rooted in tribal culture and decision-making control, not from finding the right development project or attracting the right investor.

“Poverty and Disadvantage among Native American Children: How Common Are They and What Has Been Done to Address Them?” Randall Akee and Emilia Simeonova, National Academies of Science, 30 October 2017 [75]

<https://www.nap.edu/resource/25246/Akee%20and%20Simeonova.pdf>

Overview:

Any analysis that focuses on American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) must start with defining the population. Unlike other ethnic or minority groups in the United States, American Indians and Alaska Natives occupy a distinct position in that they

are also recognized as a political group. Due to the history of US expansion, land acquisition and treaty-making, American Indians and Alaska Natives as a group have political rights that may or may not align with racial or ethnic designation (Snipp, 1986). As such, the AIAN population is eligible for certain programs and benefits that would otherwise be deemed illegal or unconstitutional in other settings for things such as preferential hiring, treaty payments and sovereign immunity. These benefits accrue directly as a result of their unique political status and not from a racial or ethnic designation. In the discussion that follows, we will primarily discuss the AIAN population as a racial and ethnic group; in certain instances, however, we will take care to identify potential programs that may be of benefit only to the AIAN population that are considered citizens of their tribal nations.

A second distinction that is important to note for this particular group is the prevalence of the mixed-race self-identification. When the US Census Bureau allowed for individuals to identify as multi-race starting with the 2000 US Census, the size of the AIAN population doubled. Liebler et al (2016) find that the AIAN population increases from 2 million in 1990 to over 4 million in 2000 if we include the multi-race category as well. Therefore, more than any other group in the US, it is important to distinguish whether one is discussing AIAN alone or AIAN in combination with other races (Liebler et al 2014; Liebler et al 2015). As would be expected, there are large differences in the socioeconomic status of these two groups. We will take care to identify the specific group in our analysis that follows.

A third area that should be mentioned is the scarcity of data for this population and for children in particular. Given the relatively small size of the AIAN population, they are often uncounted in national survey data. For instance, data sets such as the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) do not collect data for the AIAN population. Other data sets may collect information but sample sizes are quite small, the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) has around 900 observations and the Current Population Survey (CPS) has only 2,700 observations for the AIAN population when it has over 164,000 for whites. As such, unlike other populations, the AIAN population is really only well-represented in extremely large-scale data collection efforts that are conducted by the US Census Bureau. Other nationally-representative surveys either have few or no AIAN individuals in their data; alternatively, the AIAN group is combined with other small racial or ethnic groups.

The official poverty rate when we include the entire population identifying as (part) AIAN ranges from 27%-31% over this time period. However, when one uses the AIAN alone race category (we are able to extend backwards to the 1990 US Census with this comparable measure) we find that the poverty rates were higher in 1990 and dropped by 6 percentage points from 38% to 32% over the 1990s and remained constant over the 2000s.

Current & Relevant Information:

AIAN families report significantly lower incomes than others. The difference here is about \$33,000 per year. Correspondingly, the average American Indian family is much closer to the federal poverty level - their income is only 1.68 times higher than the level of income that would officially put them below the poverty threshold.

Parental employment is also significantly higher among non-AIAN. Overall, the AIAN families have worse labor market outcomes and are substantially financially worse-off than the rest of the surveyed population.

Summary of Findings:

This report has focused on different definitions of the AIAN child population and their respective poverty rates. We have described the difficulties in measuring and defining poverty among this group in particular due to data limitations and potentially conflicting group definitions. We show that the Official Poverty Monitor (OPM) for the AIAN population either alone or in combination mirrors that of the Black or African American population over the past few decades. Restricting our analysis to the AIAN population residing on reservations (or villages) we find that there is a level increase in child poverty rate by about 10-12 percentage points as compared to the AIAN child poverty rates in the country as a whole (the off-reservation population).

Indian Casino operations were an important and unprecedented economic expansion that occurred in the mid-1990s on American Indian reservations. However, there does not appear to be a noticeable change in child poverty rates in this population as a whole or even for the on-reservation alone population over the period after the casinos opened. The advent of this industry coincided with several other large macroeconomic phenomena such as the general economic growth in the US over the 1990s and a change in the AFDC (to TANF) program. It is impossible to gauge the impact of gaming industry on the AIAN population as a whole: there are no datasets that cover a sufficiently large AIAN population and include the additional data needed to determine whether these individuals were affected by casino opening. There is evidence, however, for a few tribes that the provision of direct cash transfers has resulted in an improvement of child outcomes and household incomes.

Evaluating the effectiveness of other programs, whether tribally-provided or federal or state-provided, has not been conducted for a number of important programs for this particular population. One might anticipate that response to certain programs may differ in significant ways from other targeted populations. In the few instances where such evaluation does exist, we do find that programs have an impact on improving certain aspects of household conditions. For instance, there is some evidence that EITC refunds are used almost exclusively for basic household needs.

Future research should focus on evaluating these standard programs and whether they are more or less effective for the AIAN population. Additionally, much of the existing analysis is confined to the AIAN population residing on or near tribal lands;

future research should also focus on the large urban populations of AIAN children. These urban populations are starting to be as large or larger than the on-reservation population of children, yet we do not have significant studies for these populations primarily due to the lack of data. Substantial obstacles exist given the scarcity of available data for both on and off-reservation populations. Advocating for over-samples in future data collection efforts for the AIAN population would be a step in the right direction for increasing the possibility of further evaluation and analysis.

“The Importance of Local Foods in Mitigating Poverty-Related Food Insecurity in Rural Southcentral and Southeastern Alaska,” Tracey Burke and Cara Durr, USDA Economic Research Service, 4 December 2023 [76]

<https://data.ers.usda.gov/FANRP-ridge-project-summaries.aspx?type=2&summaryId=249>

Summary:

There are three distinct discourses about food security and insecurity in Alaska and the Arctic, focusing on:

- Locally grown foods/sustainability, which highlights the dangers posed by reliance on foods imported from southern regions and the role of Alaskan agriculture as a part of disaster preparedness. Local agriculture comprises a small but emerging segment of the food market.
- Subsistence, which focuses on the cultural as well as nutritional importance of wild foods for Alaska Native peoples, and the threats posed by climate change. The superiority of many wild foods compared to those available in local stores is emphasized. Many non-Natives also participate in hunting, fishing, and gathering, but there is a widespread perception that hunting and fishing are hobbies for non-Natives, and therefore matter less to them than to Native Alaskans as a regularly recurring food source.
- Poverty and economic insecurity, in which food is one among many expenses that families are juggling as they attempt to make ends meet.

Existing literature suggests that there has been limited crossover among these discourses. Insofar as they do overlap, studies find that Alaskans with higher incomes are more likely to harvest wild foods, purchase food from farmers, and consume foods from their own gardens. Conversely, Alaskans with incomes below the poverty level are least likely to purchase from farmers or eat from their own gardens. The fact that Alaskans below the poverty line fall into the middle range of likelihood to harvest wild foods probably reflects the high percentage of Alaska Native people who are poor. This project underscores that the three discourses must be brought together by addressing the consequential role that local foods—both wild and cultivated—play in enhancing food security in two rural regions of the State.

The project utilized a research team with a background in social services and primarily interested in food insecurity as it intersects with poverty. Little is known

about poverty-related food insecurity in rural Alaska. Existing studies describing low-income, food-insecure Alaskans have emphasized urban Alaska. What little information there is about rural Alaskans does not differentiate among regions or communities.

The goal of this study was to learn more about the experiences of food insecurity in regions of rural Alaska that are accessible by land transportation, understanding that the experiences of residents of fly-in-only communities are probably quite different. Thirty-four users of food pantries in 9 communities in rural south central and southeastern Alaska were asked about what they eat, what they would like to eat, and their experiences procuring food from various sources including the pantry where they were recruited. The semi-structured ethnographic interviews were analyzed using methods drawn from grounded theory.

All the communities are accessible by road, ferry, or both and all have active pantries partnering with Food Bank of Alaska, the only Statewide food bank. The people in the convenience sample picking up food for their families are predominantly White, which is not surprising in these regions, and mostly female. About half of households have at least one working adult, although few of them work year-round and full-time. Half of the households include at least one minor child. Most families receive some sort of means-tested assistance; about half receive electronic benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly food stamps.

The study reveals a greater reliance on, and desire for, local foods, both wild and cultivated, than was expected in this mostly non-Native sample. A preliminary negative association was found between the degree of involvement with local foods—whether through growing, harvesting, and processing by individuals or through gifting and trading—and participation in SNAP. People who are relatively more involved with local foods are less likely to use SNAP benefits. Everyone in the sample relies on pantry food to some extent (that is, the analysis reveals that the pantry plays a central role in the family's eating for about half the sample), so clearly local foods are no panacea for food insecurity.

As a group, people in the study prefer local foods. They are aware of the nutritional benefits of fresh produce and wild proteins, and they report that the food available in their stores is not only expensive but often of lesser quality, especially perishables. In addition, people want to be self-sufficient. They emphasize both the compromises they feel they are making in accepting assistance, and the pride they take in harvesting and processing their own foods. However, these activities require specialized equipment and knowledge, and not everyone has these two key elements. Not everyone deemed more highly involved with local foods has their own equipment and knowledge either, but they have social ties with people who do. Indeed, level of involvement with local foods and level of connectedness in the community also are associated.

Findings suggest that the preference for local foods and the availability of wild proteins, in particular, can be leveraged to enhance both food security and self-sufficiency for low-income Alaskans in rural communities accessible by surface transportation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Poverty and economic insecurity:

Nationally and internationally, scholars and advocates in nutrition, social work, and related fields have documented the effects of and circumstances contributing to food insecurity as related to poverty, what advocates still often refer to as hunger. We know the high-stakes consequences of food insecurity on children's development in multiple domains (Belsky, Moffitt, Arseneault, Melchior, & Caspi, 2010; Murphy, Ettinger de Cuba, Cook, Cooper, & Weill, 2008; Zaslow et al., 2009). Much of the research focuses on nutrition, but recently scholars have recognized that these effects often are evident even when children are not physiologically hungry (Connell, Lofton, Yadrick, & Rehner, 2005; Fram et al., 2011), suggesting that the phenomenon is more complicated.

We know the factors that contribute to food insecurity. Poverty and household income are key, but other factors include: employment status and hours worked, competing financial obligations such as housing costs and immigrants' support of other households, health & mental health status and related coping, transportation, cooking skills, social networks, and availability of food outlets (Fletcher, Andreyeva, & Busch, 2009; Gorton, Bullen, & Mhurchu, 2009; Heflin, Corcoran, & Siefert, 2007; Quandt et al., 2006). Family configuration and gender play a role in the risk of hunger (Martin & Lippert, 2012).

We know that hunger and satiety have psychological as well as physiological elements that affect food choices, that what people experience as a proper meal or better food choice has elements beyond nutritional value (Kristensen & Holm, 2006; Murray & Vickers, 2009; Wiig & Smith, 2008). Also, we know that the social elements of eating – ritual and celebration, as well as simply spending time with friends and family – are impacted by food insecurity (Hamelin, Beaudry, & Habicht, 2002).

What we lack is a nuanced sense of how food-insecure people themselves make sense of these and other aspects of their lives. General knowledge also is limited in its local specificity. Which of the factors contributing to hunger in general are especially important in Alaska?

These questions are timely. Although Alaska has suffered less in the recent recession than many states, the state has not escaped altogether. At the same time, there has been increased interest in Alaska and around the circumpolar North in

food security from the angles of sustainability and subsistence, and the role of economic security in increasing overall food security must be foregrounded.

Poverty-related conditions in Alaska:

As part of a national study commissioned by Feeding America and managed locally by Food Bank of Alaska (FBA), the Alaska report of Hunger in America 2010 (HIA-AK) (Mabli, Cohen, Potter, & Zhao, 2010a) provides the best available information about Alaskans who use the charitable food system. By sampling the users of FBA's network of programs, HIA-AK tells us that FBA and its partners provide food to over 77,000 different people in Alaska annually – more than 10% of the population (731,449 in 2012, per the Census Bureau). It tells us that about 40% of these people are children, 71% have incomes below the federal poverty level, and 82% are food insecure (low and very low food security) according to official U.S. scales.

The state report does not, however, distinguish between rural and urban Alaskans, and the Anchorage-specific report (Mabli, Cohen, Potter, & Zhao, 2010b) tells us that FBA partners in Anchorage alone provide food to over 41,000 different people, more than half of those in the statewide figure. Moreover, HIA-AK does not provide information about different rural regions of the state, let alone different communities within regions.

To help fill that gap, the Alaska Food Coalition issued a report on the state's "hungriest communities," using variables defined as components of meeting the hunger need: number of pounds distributed through the FBA network, percent of income spent on food, percentage of schools that serve free or reduced-price school meals, and the Food Stamp participation rate (Alaska Food Coalition, 2009). The report provides some guidance as to which communities suffer more, but the available data was limited and so findings must be viewed cautiously. All regions of the state rank in the report's middle category, "room for improvement," with some communities in the top "addressing the hunger need" category or in the bottom "not adequately addressing the hunger need" category.

Economic insecurity has been recognized in some Alaskan food security studies. We know that Alaskans with higher incomes are more likely to harvest wild foods, purchase food from farmers, and consume foods from their own gardens; conversely, Alaskans with incomes below the poverty level are least likely to purchase from farmers or eat from their own gardens (State of Alaska, DHSS, Obesity Prevention and Control Program, 2013). (That Alaskans below the poverty line fall into the middle category of likelihood to harvest wild foods probably reflects the high percentage of Alaska Native people who are economically poor.) We also know that local seafood makes the most difference regarding food security for those with the lowest incomes, at least in one borough (Loring, Gerlach, & Harrison, 2012).

Concurrent with this project, work is being done to update Hunger in America, with the report expected in spring, 2014. A new contractor has taken a new approach to

sampling, and rural Alaska is expected to be much better represented. We look forward to the new report as an improved backdrop for our findings.

Findings: The Importance of Local Foods in a Low-Income Diet

Almost everyone in our sample – 31 of 34 households (91%) – accesses local foods at least occasionally, and only one of those families relies solely on gifting or trading rather than household participation in harvesting activities (hunting, fishing, gathering, and/or growing).

Given that the entire sample relies on pantries to some extent, local foods clearly are no panacea for the kind of food insecurity that drives people to use this kind of assistance. Also, it is noteworthy that across the sample, there is no apparent relationship between household reliance on pantries and household level of involvement with local foods.

However, there may be some relationship between use of Food Stamps and involvement with local foods: 70% (7/10) of those who fall within the least-involved third of the sample (uninvolved or low involvement) receive Food Stamps, while only 45% (5/11) of the highest-involved third (medium-high or high involvement) receive them. Recall that the levels of involvement are our ordinal characterizations and are not mathematically meaningful; we did not run tests of significance and must interpret this comparison cautiously. Nonetheless, we have no reason to believe that the two groups are different in terms of income or other factors that would impact their eligibility for Food Stamps, suggesting that greater involvement with local foods may play a role in whether eligible people choose to participate.

Preference for local foods:

The preference for local foods comes across in two ways. First, there is awareness that most local foods are healthy foods, both intrinsically and in contrast with what is available at the store or pantry. Second, raising or harvesting local foods is a marker for independence and self-sufficiency.

Access to local foods:

Although the preference for local foods is shared by most of the people in our sample, access to those foods is more variable. Here we identify patterns regarding two overlapping factors that support relatively more engagement with local foods, or conversely, the absence of which are barriers – community relationships, and access to necessary equipment and the knowledge to use it.

Conclusion

We have clarified the importance of locally grown and wild “subsistence” foods for low-income residents of rural but relatively accessible communities in two regions of Alaska. Local foods play a consequential role in how well people eat and for some, how they feel about themselves; harvesting and processing are not merely hobbies,

even for our mostly non-Native sample. Policymakers should consider how to increase access to local foods of all sorts.

**“Presenting a Picture of Alaska Native Village Adaptation: A Method of Analysis,”
Elizaveta Barrett Ristroph, *Sociology and Anthropology*, 2017 [77]**

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Elizaveta_Barrett_Ristroph/publication/319572039_Presenting_a_Picture_of_Alaska_Native_Village_Adaptation_A_Method_of_Analysis/links/5aabefec458515ecebe5bffc/Presenting-a-Picture-of-Alaska-Native-Village-Adaptation-A-Method-of-Analysis.pdf

Abstract:

Alaska is a large state with 229 nationally recognized tribes, known as Alaska Native Villages (ANVs). Efforts to understand ANV climate change adaptation have often been limited to a particular concern (i.e., flooding and erosion) in a particular part of Alaska (i.e., the west coast). My study is the first that I am aware of attempting to identify adaptation actions, strategies and barriers across the entire state of Alaska and recommend ways for laws and institutions to facilitate adaptation. In this article, I explain a distinct method for identifying adaptation actions, strategies, and barriers that draws on literature, community plans, laws, and interviews and conversations with 153 participants (including ANV residents and those that make or influence policy affecting ANVs). Rather than coding particular segments of an interview or plan, I numerically code interviews and plans as a whole, based on themes expressed therein and from the literature. At the same time, I keep track of quotations that help clarify these themes. This method yields a complex picture of ANV adaptation that shows different views of climate change and adaptation strategies among different sources. Preliminary results of the study suggest a need for measures to improve implementation of community-level adaptation actions, rather than perpetuating a system of government-sponsored planning and data collection in narrow areas. Institutional changes need to be incremental in order to gain political support, yet they must be holistic in addressing the many challenges that ANVs face.

Current & Relevant Information:

Many communities in the United States and around the world are struggling with the impacts of climate change. Indigenous communities face particular challenges because of their attachment to traditional lands and the impacts of colonization. Among indigenous peoples in the United States, Alaska Native Villages (ANVs) are especially challenged because of the degree of change they are experiencing as well as their lack of control over land and natural resources. In 2003, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that flooding and erosion affected 86% of all ANVs. In 2009, GAO identified 31 ANVs facing imminent flooding and erosion threats, with four villages in need of relocation. A study by the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers identified extreme erosion problems in many of the same villages as those identified by GAO.

GAO's works also addressed vulnerabilities related to ANVs' remoteness and lack of jurisdiction over land and natural resources needed for adaptation. The latter relates to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, characterized by the Indian Law and Order Commission as "the last gasp of Federal Termination Policy." This unique Act eliminated aboriginal rights to lands and natural resources and created Native corporations to own and manage roughly 10% of the tribes' former domain. As a result of this Act, ANVs cannot rely on treaty rights to help them adapt.

How ANVs are Adapting:

There are different levels of adaptation depending on the community and the type of climate change impact. In most villages, adaptation to subsistence impacts continues to occur as it always has, at the individual and family level. Forty-six participants referred to individual and family level subsistence adaptations, compared with only 23 people mentioning community-level strategies for subsistence and food security (i.e., seeking to co-manage hunting with agencies). Hunters and fishers adjust their practices and try to adhere to complex laws, but are not always able to.

Compared to subsistence adaptation, there is relatively less individual and family adaption to flooding and erosion. Only eight participants mentioned household strategies such as moving possession to accommodate flooding, while 34 (28 from villages) mentioned community-level strategies.

Many ANVs rely on outside help to address flooding and erosion. Help often comes in the form of government-sponsored, consultant-led planning efforts that do not necessarily led to adaptive actions. Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs), which are developed for many ANVs by the same handful of state and federally sponsored consultants, are a key example. While HMPs suggest community-level hazard mitigation actions, these are often drawn from a generic, contractor-generated list. The result is that HMPs look surprisingly similar across Alaska, despite the vast array of geography and potential natural hazards. HMPs for 28 villages call for fire avoidance methods, even though this is not a significant problem for many villages. Shishmaref's HMP profiles wildfires as a hazard and suggests 5 fire mitigation actions, although Shishmaref is an island with little vegetation and no record of wildfire. Yet permafrost degradation is not profiled as a hazard, despite the fact (admitted in the HMP) that it is a major contributor to erosion.

Other forms of community-level adaptation mentioned by participants include data collection (n=31), applying for grants for various projects (n=36), education (n=16), political advocacy (i.e., lobbying) (n=28), building capacity to adapt (n=33), pursuing renewable of more efficient energy (n=20), promoting community development and wellness (n=44), getting infrastructure to control flooding and erosion (n=34),

mitigate other stressors to environment, aside from climate change (n=8), and disaster preparedness measures (n=25). A few ANVs—most notably Newtok, Shishmaref, and Kivalina—have sought to relocate their entire village with government assistance. This approach has been stymied by several factors, including the difficulty of navigating laws related to relocation, community disagreement, and the lack of political will to fund such relocations.

Conclusions

It is a daunting task to describe adaptation actions and barriers across an area as large and varied as Alaska. But this study is important since, for better or worse, the 229 ANVs in this area are uniformly subject to Alaskan laws and institutions that affect adaptation. Further, Alaska is unique compared to any other American state, due to its size, climate, and the remoteness of many settlements. This article is the first of several that I intend to write on how ANVs across the state are adapting, what barriers they face, and how laws, institutions, and planning processes can facilitate adaptation. The emphasis here is on a method that gathers information from a representative number of ANVs (59 in this case) and shows how adaptation needs “on the ground” may differ from what is described or suggested in community plans and literature.

While plans and reports written by consultants and researchers often suggest that there is a need for more data and planning efforts, many ANV participants express frustration with the lack of meaningful adaptation actions and an overly narrow view of adaptation. At the community level, there is a need for more empowerment to adapt to a variety of challenges, from climate change to the difficulty of participating in the Western cash economy. Yet the institutional response is often to fund data collection and plans (such as HMPs) that are unlikely to be implemented, or to erect flooding and erosion barriers and other infrastructure that ANVs cannot maintain on their own. There is a need to shift institutional focus toward helping ANVs implement and sustain efforts to avoid flooding and erosion, along with efforts that improve food security and economic and social wellbeing. In future articles, I will propose relatively inexpensive actions that agencies and communities could take to facilitate adaptation, as well as incremental law changes that could be made across several areas of law to more holistically address adaptation challenges.

“American Indian/Alaska Native Child Health and Poverty,” Allison Empey, Andrea Garcia, and Shaquita Bell, *Academic Pediatrics*, November 2021 [78]
[https://www.academicpedsjnl.net/article/S1876-2859\(21\)00419-8/fulltext](https://www.academicpedsjnl.net/article/S1876-2859(21)00419-8/fulltext)

Abstract:

One in three American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children live in poverty. This rate is higher in some reservation communities. The alarming rates of physical, mental, and social health inequities (e.g., poverty) experienced by AI/AN children are symptoms of genocide, a legacy of inhumane Federal Indian policy, and ongoing

structural violence. The chronically underfunded Indian Health Service (IHS) is just one example where AI/AN children are not universally guaranteed equitable health care or opportunity to thrive. Poverty is highly predictive of educational achievement, employment opportunities, violence, and ultimately health outcomes. COVID-19 has not only exacerbated physical and mental health inequities experienced by AI/AN communities, but has also intensified the economic consequences of inequity. Thus, it is vital to advocate for programs and policies that are evidence based, incorporate cultural ways of knowing, and dismantle structurally racist policies.

Current & Relevant Information:

It is widely acknowledged Indigenous peoples have an interdependent relationship with their homelands, and these lands are the very places of creation, medicines, traditional foods, health, and individual and collective power.

The systematic dispossession of, and forced removal from, these homelands served to disrupt knowledge systems that maintained a healthy existence since time immemorial. Dispossession of AI/AN land and forced removal was, indeed, the first instance of homelessness in the United States and began a pathway into poverty.

Dispossession is best understood through precedence and legislation spanning centuries. The Doctrine of Discovery gave legal, spiritual, and political justification to seize land from non-Christians in essence denying Indigenous people land and human rights.

The Doctrine would later inspire Manifest Destiny, which justified American expansion to the west forcing millions of AI/AN from their homelands. The Reservation Era (1850–1890) created approximately 300 reservations, which were often not the traditional homelands of the Tribes forced to live within those boundaries.

The Allotment and Assimilation Era (1880–1940) included passage of the Dawes Act which systematically disassembled reservation land by assigning individual parcels of land, and served to replace a traditional communal economic base with a system of private ownership.

Individual ownership disrupted extended families, and ultimately resulted in the loss of 90 million acres. Forced removal of AI/AN children from their families to attend boarding schools was another tool of Assimilation. The Boarding School Era is a major root cause of intergenerational trauma and has its own dedicated section under Education. The Termination Era of policymaking in the 1940 to 1960 was meant to abolish Federal supervision over AI/AN Tribes and was another method of land dispossession and assimilation into mainstream culture. Approximately 109 Tribes, villages, and rancherias were stripped of their Federal recognition, and 1.4 million acres of trust land was removed from protected status and sold to non-Natives. At last, the Relocation Era of the 1950s encouraged individuals to leave

reservations and gain vocational skills in major cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

The promises of relocation oftentimes did not result in the intended outcomes of gainful employment. This push resulted in a demographic shift resulting in over three-quarters of AI/AN living in urban areas today.

This history is key to understanding how not only were AI/AN communities forced to make a fundamental shift in their relationship to land (eg, ownership), but the political tools used against Tribes did not provide opportunities for intergenerational passage of wealth let alone economic stability. Instead, what was inherited was a legacy of intergenerational trauma, disruption of traditional parenting practices, cultural loss, and genocide.

Fundamental to poverty is settler colonialism and racism. Systemic and institutional racism are the tools that uphold and perpetuate poverty. It is therefore critical to address racism when addressing poverty. In this review, we will focus on the unique forms of racism faced by AI/AN children and communities, explore the many factors that influence poverty, and outline pertinent recommendations to uplift the health of AI/AN children.

Health Impact of Poverty and Structural Racism

The compounding impact of poverty and structural racism on the lives of AI/AN communities is perhaps best measured in years of life expectancy. AI/AN life expectancy is 5.5 years shorter compared to all races in the US (73.0 years to 78.5 years, respectively).

Many of the causes of mortality begin in childhood. Poverty impacts the physical health, social and emotional well-being, mental health, and developmental trajectory of children and youth. AI/AN children have some of the highest rates of chronic diseases compared to the general population, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes mellitus, dental caries, depression/anxiety, and suicide.

Living in impoverished conditions causes significant chronic toxic stress, and it is not surprising Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) disproportionately affect AI/AN children compared to other races.

Emotional, behavioral, and developmental difficulties were 10 times higher among AI/AN children with 2 or more ACEs compared to AI/AN children with fewer ACEs.

This adversity portends worse outcomes for children as they enter adulthood. Compounding these poor outcomes is the lack of access to health care. Health insurance and access to medical care lie at the intersection of poverty and structural racism, and magnify poor health outcomes.

Healthcare

AI/AN are one of the few groups entitled to health care, education, and housing in exchange for land, natural resources, culture, lives, and languages lost. These obligations are codified in the most significant legal principle known as the federal trust responsibility. The Indian Health Service (IHS) is the agency entrusted to administer the trust obligation of the United States to provide health care for AI/AN. IHS provides healthcare to approximately 2.6 million AI/AN people who belong to 574 federally recognized Tribes. Based on inequitable budgeting and numerous reports, it is clear the United States is not fulfilling this trust obligation. The IHS is funded at 60% of need and about one-third of the per capita spending of the Veterans Affairs Health System, a comparable agency. Despite more than 75% of AI/AN residing in urban areas, less than 1% of the IHS budget is allocated to urban Indian health care.

Chronic underfunding has led to rationing of needed services and a crumbling infrastructure, exacerbated by significant turnover in key leadership positions.

In 2017, 14.9% of AI/ANs had no health insurance coverage.

Nearly one-third (28.8%) of those who reported being AI/AN and were under 65 years old were uninsured, despite additional protections afforded under the Affordable Care Act. Although children may have better access to publicly insured programs, one study found that less than half of AI/AN children had a medical home, and that IHS utilization was not associated with a medical home among AI/AN children who were uninsured or publicly insured.

Education

Institutional education has had detrimental effects on AI/AN communities and the long-term health of Indigenous children.

The first Indian boarding school in the United States was established in 1879 to assimilate AI/AN children and youth into mainstream society. These schools served to strip them of their culture, language and identity, and break down traditional family and community structures.

It is well documented these children often suffered physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and death. At the height of the boarding school era, over 367 boarding schools existed with 64 still in operation today.

In 1975, the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act was passed, allowing Tribes to operate schools with an emphasis on culturally relevant rigorous academic preparation, but the transition was not immediate and the long-term health effects have been lasting.

AI/AN children today are largely educated through the public schools (both rural and urban operated at the state and local level) with about 93% of all AI/AN attending public schools. Most recent data estimate AI/AN make up approximately 1.1% of all

students in public schools but have profound educational disparities including access to educational opportunity, lower graduation rates, higher rates of suspension/expulsion, and the highest drop-out rate compared to other races and ethnicities.

In a large study, The New Teacher Project (TNTP) set out to understand why students of color are more or less likely to achieve their academic goals.

They reviewed instruction and surveyed students and families from schools across America (public, charter, and private). TNTP found educational disparities are due to the quality of education as evidenced by the lack of access to four key resources: grade-appropriate assignments, effective instruction, deep engagement, and teachers who hold high expectations. This lack of access is not random and has much to do with the funding of school systems discussed in detail below. Though TNTP looked at Black and Latinx children, one can extrapolate their findings to AI/AN children.

TNTP findings parallel the research of [John Hattie](#).

Hattie found the most important factor in whether students in the classroom succeed is the teacher's belief they can positively impact educational outcomes. The teacher's estimation that a student can succeed is another important factor. Roughly 80% of educators in the US are white. Lowered expectations held by these educators become self-fulfilling prophecies for students of color in the classroom. In 2017-2018, only 0.5% of public-school teachers were AI/AN despite growing evidence having varied teachers positively impacts academic success.

Compounding this issue, school funding systems are often directly dependent upon property taxes. This policy creates a system where under-resourced communities have underfunded school systems, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

It is through the Termination Era and Relocation Era of the 1950s that American Indians were often relocated to the poorest neighborhoods in urban areas. This was further exacerbated by the Federal redlining policies that effectively segregated families of color by denying mortgages and preventing them from buying a home in certain neighborhoods in major cities. Social and economic opportunities are profoundly impacted by the disparities in educational attainment experienced by AI/AN youth. The scars of redlining still exist today and make it impossible for many families to break the cycle of poverty.

Employment and Housing

It is oversimplifying to say employment is linked to poverty. AI/AN populations face barriers to meaningful employment, employer-based benefits like health insurance, pensions, or retirement plans, opportunities for collective bargaining, and living wages.

These factors contribute to the impoverishment of AI/AN families and communities rooted in dispossession. What is not obvious is the challenge many people face when trying to find safe employment that pays a living wage. The current and future impacts of COVID-19 serve as an example.

While unemployment skyrocketed, many aid programs are expected to end in the coming months, and the effects of these lost jobs will reverberate for generations. Who will be rehired, who can afford to work from home, what sorts of jobs are conducive to phasing back in and then perhaps back out with COVID-19? While for many, education directly correlates to improved employment circumstances, these opportunities are not fairly distributed. Even with higher education, we see lower wages for AI/AN workers than for many peers entering the job market with similar levels of training/education.

Employment is directly tied to housing. Policies like redlining, predatory loans, and forced removal from traditional land were enacted with the express purpose of keeping people of color from owning homes. Today most families of color do not own their own homes.

The quality of housing impacts health through exposure to lead, lack of clean water, and safety hazards. The day-to-day stress that housing insecurity causes in parents and guardians is difficult to measure but must be considered in any analysis of health outcomes affected by poverty.

Violence, Trauma, and Loss

There have been many calls to recognize the violence directed toward AI/AN communities. This violence is evident in many ways, including overt racism, structural and institutional racism, human trafficking, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP), separation of children and parents via the foster care system, police violence, imprisonment, interpersonal and intimate partner violence, and many others. AI/AN are disproportionately impacted by this violence, rooted in white supremacy. White supremacy reinforces forms of violence (physical, structural, interpersonal) and deprivation (dispossession, impoverishment, scarcity). The result is that racism not only leads to poverty, but also a life filled with greater risk of violence, precarity, and chronic illness. This impact is intergenerational and cyclical. Thus, poverty is inextricably linked to safety. Crime and violence are driven by the pressures to survive in the conditions that poverty causes. Safety is in turn inextricably linked to health.

Despite massive undercounting, murder is the 3rd leading cause of death in AI/AN women. Approximately 30% of AI/AN girls between the ages of 11 and 17 years old have a history of sexual abuse and 11% have reported being raped.

Alaska Native women and girls make up 8% of the population in Alaska and represent 33% of sex trafficking victims.

These experiences of violence are ACEs, which have been well-documented drivers of poor long-term health outcomes such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

Another form of violence is the separation of AI/AN children into foster care. Substance use disorder is a tangible example of the criminalization of poverty that can lead to separation of AI/AN children. The likelihood of testing a mother for drugs is driven primarily by race, ethnicity, and income. Subsequently, the likelihood of separation of a child from said mother is directly linked to a state's laws, its availability of treatment for substance use disorder. All of this results in a greater likelihood of AI/AN children being separated from their parents after birth into foster care. If they are not placed within kinship care or another AI/AN family, they risk losing cultural knowledge and connections (which, in turn, is exponentially linked to poorer mental health outcomes).

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), ratified in 1978, was created to prevent disproportionate placement of AI/AN children out of their community. It gives rights to Tribes, allowing the children's community to decide who is best to raise them. This act is more than just a protection for individual children, this is also a protection of the sovereignty of Tribes. Protecting this groundbreaking legislation from innumerable and constant attacks is an active stand against structural racism, and ensures the healthy existence of future generations.

The Environment, Land Rights, and Climate Change

AI/AN have a unique relationship to their lands, both ancestral lands and their newly adopted reservation lands that continue to be threatened through political battles. The Dakota Access Pipeline is an example of a decision made by the US government, specifically the US Army of Engineers, threatening the health of AI/AN communities for economic gain. The Dakota Access Pipeline threatens health by potential contamination of drinking water, and desecration of a sacred site for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Fortunately, through protests, international attention and ultimately litigation, the pipeline was ordered to be shut down. Indigenous populations were the original caretakers of the land and Tribes carry Indigenous ecologic knowledge. Climate change threatens the food sources and traditional ways of life of many tribal communities, leading to food insecurity, water safety issues, and continued cultural genocide.

Evidence for the Interventions or Strategies

Despite deeply entrenched racist systems and policies, there are many examples of tribal policies and programs upending the cycle of poverty through self-determination. We explore examples below.

The home-visiting Family Spirit program is an example of an evidence-based, culturally-centered program created in collaboration with tribal communities.

Family Spirit uses paraprofessionals from the community to conduct home visits with young families focused on building upon their strengths and culture to promote family resilience. It was developed, implemented, and evaluated by the John Hopkins Center for American Indian Health in collaboration with the Navajo, White Mountain Apache and San Carlos Tribes using community-based participatory research beginning in 1995. Since then, Family Spirit has spread to over 100 tribal communities. Through multiple randomized controlled trials, Family Spirit has shown to increase parental knowledge and involvement and home safety, and decrease maternal depression and behavioral problems in mothers and children.

Tribal colleges and universities are tribally chartered, culturally-based educational institutions often located in rural communities. They provide high quality education to those within the community, reducing barriers to higher education based on geography. Funding for these schools comes primarily from federal sources but is operated by the Tribes. Continuing to support these schools allows Tribes to exercise their tribal sovereignty and create educational opportunities with the funding guaranteed by treaties.

With approximately three quarters of AI/AN living off reservations it is also important to recognize the programs and policies addressing poverty in urban areas. The Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley, an urban Indian clinic, offers a program to AI/AN youth called Instilling Wellness through Workforce Development.

Using a needs assessment, it was found community members living in an area with an extremely high cost of living were challenged by low wages. This program addresses this by helping youth build their employability through career exploration, resume building, interview skills, and financial literacy.

At the federal level, it is important to support legislation allowing each tribal nation to implement policies that work for their unique cultures and communities. The Violence Against Women Act, originally authorized in 1994 and reauthorized by President Obama in 2013 allows tribal judicial systems to prosecute Native and non-Native perpetrators in their communities, thereby strengthening public safety and infrastructure while recognizing tribal sovereignty.

Recommendations for Systems and Institutions

The history of poverty in AI/AN communities and the solutions to ending poverty are complex. Although the authors are AI/AN, we do not represent all AI/AN Tribes and communities, nor will all the recommendations apply to every AI/AN community. In any solution, it is vital to respect and honor tribal sovereignty and the treaties negotiated by our ancestors.

The Medicine Wheel (Fig1), which is widely adopted and accepted among AI/AN Tribes, is borne from spiritual traditions, and is applicable to many facets of life and medicine. Broadly it signifies balance and interconnectedness. In the context of

medicine, it is a reminder that health and wellbeing include not just the physical, but also social, emotional, and spiritual health. As such, solutions and recommendations are often approached holistically. Despite that outlook, and approaching this work with a holistic lens, our recommendations are notably “out of balance” (e.g., more than half of the recommendations had policy implications). This is no surprise given the current and historical realities, and the fact many AI/AN health outcomes can be tied to the consequences of a legacy of racist federal Indian policymaking, a system rooted in white supremacist and colonial ideology. Even more striking is the suppression and attempted obliteration of traditional systems of knowledge that fostered good health and wellbeing for millennia. Thus, it is no surprise that the counterbalance to the policy recommendations is those that advocate for the centering and reclamation of traditional knowledge, and systems honoring tribal sovereignty in order to restore balance.

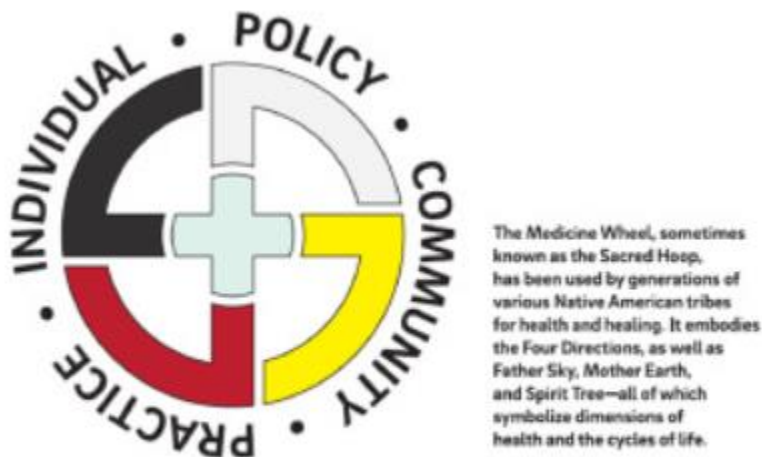


Figure 1 The Medicine Wheel.

Current federal policies and programs have fallen painfully short in fulfilling the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility which calls for the protection of tribal sovereignty, and the provision of basic rights including social, medical, and education services for AI/AN. One clear and longstanding recommendation is for Congress to enact a just and appropriate level of funding for the IHS. IHS funding should be made an entitlement rather than an appropriation in order to reflect the very charge of its existence, to fulfill a federal trust responsibility. Enacting a Medicare for All policy would ensure coverage for AI/AN who are ineligible for IHS services. Additionally, to protect children and youth ICWA must continue to be upheld despite repeated attacks. Federal policies to address climate change will improve health for all but most importantly protect children most at risk from the effects. We recommend relying on the ecological knowledge of Indigenous communities to lead these efforts with compensation for their expertise.

To support educational equality, policies to allow equitable funding to schools to address the scars of redlining are vital. This should also include policies and programs to help diversify the teacher workforce and the implementation of trauma-informed education. However, employment opportunities and equitable pay must also be addressed. We should strive to protect tribal sovereignty with a less paternalistic approach and by investing in Native-owned and Native-managed businesses and entities to allow for economic opportunities.

The American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement on “Caring for American Indian and Alaska Native Children and Youth” highlights what individual providers, practices, and communities can do to care for this unique population with recommendations for implementation.

While addressing many of these policies, practices and programs are a step in the right direction toward the US fulfilling its federal trust responsibility, it does not erase over 400 years of genocide, racist policies, and historical trauma. Until racism is directly addressed, AI/AN and communities of color will be disproportionately impacted by poverty. Acknowledging that colonization and racism are ongoing, and dismantling the systems that uphold them is requisite in liberating future generations of AI/AN children from poverty and ensuring holistic health and wellness.

2. Groups of Alaskan Natives: Tribes & Corporations:

“Are Alaska Native corporations Indian tribes? A multimillion-dollar question,” Gregory Ablavsky, SCOTUS Blog, 16 April 2021 [\[79\]](https://www.scotusblog.com/2021/04/are-alaska-native-corporations-indian-tribes-a-multimillion-dollar-question/)
<https://www.scotusblog.com/2021/04/are-alaska-native-corporations-indian-tribes-a-multimillion-dollar-question/>

Overview:

Are Alaska Native corporations — special corporations that Congress created in 1971 when it resolved Native claims in Alaska — “Indian tribe[s]” under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act? On Monday, the Supreme Court will hear argument on that question in [*Yellen v. Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation*](#). Immediately at stake in the answer is billions of dollars in federal CARES Act funding. But the outcome could also have longer-term consequences for how, and from whom, Alaskan Natives receive essential services.

Current & Relevant Information:

First, some background. Just as, in [*McGirt v. Oklahoma*](#) last term, the court confronted the complex past of Oklahoma’s Native nations, *Chehalis* turns on the unique legal history of Alaskan Natives. Though Alaska became part of the United States in 1867, the federal government only fitfully devoted attention to the status of the new territory’s Indigenous peoples. Consequently, when Alaska became a state in 1959 and when, soon thereafter, oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay, federal law left open many questions — especially land ownership. Alaskan Natives pressed

their enduring ownership of much of the new state; in response, in 1971, Congress enacted the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which extinguished all Alaskan Native aboriginal land claims in return for nearly \$1 billion in compensation and 38 million acres of fee title to land.

Most importantly for *Chehalis*, ANCSA departed from long-standing models of federal Indian law that governed the lower 48 states. ANCSA created two sets of for-profit Alaska Native corporations: two hundred village corporations and thirteen larger regional corporations. Based on residence or origin, Alaskan Natives became shareholders in both a village and regional corporation; both sets of corporations received land and money under ANCSA. Today, the regional ANCs in particular are among the most important companies in Alaska, with billions in revenue from energy development, tourism and government contracting.

ANCSA left unsettled, however, the status of Alaskan Native *governments*. Federal law had long spoken of federal recognition of “Indian tribes,” a process formalized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1978. In 1993, after long uncertainty, the bureau determined that Alaskan Native villages remained federally recognized Indian tribes with inherent sovereignty under federal law. The next year, Congress passed the List Act, which requires the bureau to publish an annual, official list of “all federally recognized tribes which are eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.” Today, 574 federally recognized tribes are listed, including 229 tribes in Alaska.

Because of this history, there are three kinds of Alaskan Native entities today: Alaska Native village corporations, Alaska Native regional corporations, and federally recognized tribes, often called Alaska Native villages. The first two are for-profit corporations that also provide some services to Alaskan Natives; the third are sovereign governments.

The meaning of these distinctions is at the core of the current litigation over the 2020 CARES Act. The act provided \$150 billion in emergency relief during the coronavirus pandemic to states, territories and local governments, including, after intense negotiation, \$8 billion earmarked for tribes. The act defined eligible “tribes” by reference to the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, a pivotal piece of legislation that, by allowing tribes to contract with the federal government to provide services in place of federal agencies, heralded the modern era of federal embrace of Native self-determination. The ISDA defines tribes as follows:

“Indian tribe” means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

The Treasury Department concluded that this language encompasses the Alaskan Native Corporations, making them eligible for CARES Act funds. A group of federally recognized tribes from various states, including Alaska, disagreed, and sued. A federal district court in D.C. sided with the Treasury Department, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit reversed, concluding that federal recognition is a term of art that applies only to tribes that appear on the bureau's annual list, which excludes Alaska Native corporations. The D.C. Circuit concluded that the explicit involvement of the corporations in the ISDA's definition reflected uncertainty in 1975 over whether they would later become federally recognized tribes — which, to date, they haven't. The Treasury Department and an association of Alaska Native village corporations appealed that ruling to the Supreme Court.

Unsurprisingly, the bulk of the briefing before the Supreme Court focuses on statutory interpretation. In their briefs, the Treasury Department and the Alaska Native corporations both argue against the application of the “series qualifier canon” — that is, interpreting the ISDA's requirement of federal recognition to apply to *all* the listed entities, including the corporations. Such a reading, they argue, would render superfluous the explicit involvement of the corporations within the ISDA's definition, and is at odds with the legislative history. They also challenge the D.C. Circuit's historical framing, noting that the uncertainty at the ISDA's enactment surrounded the status of Alaskan Native *governments*, not Alaska Native corporations — uncertainty resolved in 1993 when the bureau acknowledged Alaska Native villages as federally recognized tribes. They further claim that subsequent statutes, federal agencies and appeals court decisions have all *already* recognized the corporations as entities eligible for federal contracting under the ISDA.

The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, along with other tribes that are challenging Treasury's interpretation, read the ISDA provision differently. They insist that the provision's plain text, especially the word “including,” mandates that the requirement of recognition apply to *all* enumerated entities. This language, they argue, renders the involvement of Alaska Native corporations by name *redundant* rather than superfluous: that is, the language explicitly preserves the possibility that Congress could, at some future date, decide to recognize the corporations, even though it has not yet done so. They also suggest that there is no “well-settled” agency or circuit construction of the ISDA language, observing both the confusion and paucity of existing materials on the question.

In a separate brief, the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation offers an additional argument against the involvement of the corporations in CARES Act eligibility: Title V of the act limited funds to “Tribal governments,” which it defined as the “recognized governing body of an Indian tribe” before referring to the ISDA definition. This definition, the Ute Tribe argues, separately renders the corporations ineligible, since they are not tribal governments. In their briefs, both the Treasury Department and the corporations counter that the CARES Act defined “recognized

governing body” by referencing the ISDA definition; it did not establish a new, free-standing test for a tribal entity.

The parties also address the broader stakes of the controversy. The Alaska Native corporations, aided by amici including the state of Alaska and its congressional delegation, argue that they provide Alaskan Natives critical services like health care and housing through their nonprofit arms, especially in urban areas located far from federally recognized tribes. Alaska’s brief pointedly includes a picture of the COVID-19 vaccine being delivered by dogsled to underscore the key role that the corporations have played during the pandemic. In response, the tribes — joined by amici including a number of lower 48 states — argue that most of these examples are drawn from Anchorage, where Congress has already provided for Native health care through special statute. They further argue that Alaskan Natives’ health care needs have been, and will continue to be, met by regional tribal nonprofits. They also note that “[h]istory is littered with claims, often advanced by the United States and at great cost to tribal citizens, that tribes would be best off if others exercised governmental authority on their behalf.”

Chehalis underscores one of the many ironies in the history of Indigenous peoples and federal Indian law. When drafting ANCSA and creating Alaska Native corporations, Congress explicitly sought to *avoid* recreating the complexities that the court’s Indian law jurisprudence had created in the lower 48. Yet, as has so often happened with “solutions” in this area of law, Congress’ experimentation has spawned more uncertainty and confusion, not less. The consequence, as this current litigation underscores, is that Native peoples are forced to compete in a zero-sum contest over hard-won resources extracted from an often-reluctant federal government. Whatever the case’s outcome, it reiterates the enormous stakes for Indigenous peoples of decisions made in distant institutions by non-Native politicians who often imperfectly grasp their policies’ lasting consequences.

“American Indian and Alaska Native Children: Results from the 2000 Census,” C. Matthew Snipp, Population Reference Bureau, August 2005 [80]
<https://sociology.stanford.edu/publications/american-indian-children>

Summary:

Between 1990 and 2000, the population of American Indian and Alaska Native children virtually doubled, largely reflecting changes to the 2000 Census that allowed respondents for the first time to identify their background as consisting of more than one racial or ethnic group.

Overall, 4.1 million people reported “American Indian” or “Alaska Native” as their race on the 2000 Census, representing about 1.5 percent of the total U.S. population. About 2.5 million people identified themselves as only American Indian or Alaska Native, while another 1.6 million people identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native along with one or more other races.

Children make up 1.4 million of the total American Indian and Alaska Native population. Of these, 550,000 were identified as multiracial—American Indian and Alaska Native plus some other race. The remaining 850,000 were identified as only American Indian or Alaska Native.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are among the poorest groups in American society. In 1999, while the nation's poverty rate stood at 13.6 percent for families with children (and 9.4 percent for white families with children), 27.0 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native families with children were in poverty. The poverty rate is even higher (32.4 percent) for American Indian and Alaska Native families with children under age 5.

American Indian and Alaska Native children have parents who are on average less educated and poorer than the parents of non-Hispanic white children. Among older youth (ages 16 to 19), American Indians and Alaska Natives are more likely to be high school dropouts, jobless, and outside the civilian labor force than non-Hispanic white youth.

Only about one-third of American Indians and Alaska Natives live on designated reservations or tribal areas. Compared with single-race American Indian and Alaska Native children, multiracial American Indian or Alaska Native children are more likely to live with both parents, less likely to be in the care of grandparents, and more likely to live in households with higher incomes.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska. The Native population indigenous to what is now the state of Alaska should be considered distinctly different from American Indians and even other Alaska Natives residing in the lower 48 states. One obvious reason is the extreme environmental conditions found in Alaska. For example, Alaska Native villages are often located in exceedingly remote areas, unreachable by transportation sources that would ordinarily be sufficient in most other areas of the country. Alaska Natives are also unique because they still rely heavily on subsistence hunting and fishing for their livelihood.

A less obvious distinction is that the 1971 Alaska Native Claims and Settlement Act (ANCSA) has had an overriding influence on the legal and political status of Alaska Natives—an influence that is also unparalleled among American Indians in the rest of the nation. As a result, while Aleut, Inupiat, and Yu'pik are important cultural divisions among Alaska Natives, they do not possess the same political and legal status as tribes in the rest of the United States. In Alaska, the relevant political and administrative units are designated Alaska Native Villages (numbering more than 200) and 43 Regional Corporations.

Finally, census data for Alaska also can be misleading if the state's high cost of living and equally high wage rates are not taken into account. Incomes that might be

considered adequate in many parts of the nation may be significantly less than adequate when purchasing goods and services in the Alaskan economy. For this reason, Alaska's relatively low child poverty rates for American Indians and Alaska Natives (23 percent) must be viewed with some caution. Other measures of well-being are less sanguine. For example, the percent of American Indian and Alaska Native youth ages 16 to 19 who are neither in school nor employed stands at 19 percent. And 31 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native children in Alaska are living in single parent families.

“Alaska Native Communities on Harriman's Route,” Steve J. Langdon, Harriman Expedition Retraced: Excerpted from *The Native People of Alaska, 1978* [81]
<https://www.pbs.org/harriman/1899/native.html>

Overview:

The Harriman Alaska Expedition of 1899. One day in March 1899, Edward H. Harriman strode briskly into the office of C. Hart Merriam, chief of the U.S. Biological Survey. Without appointment or introduction, Harriman launched into a grand plan for an expedition along the coast of Alaska. Merriam, skeptical, listened politely, and, when Harriman left, checked the man's credentials. He soon learned that E.H. Harriman was a highly respected railway magnate, who had the financial resources and the talent to realize such a grand scheme.

Within days, the two men were working feverishly on the necessary details: refitting of a ship, recruiting of a score of the nation's leading scientists, and plotting a route from Alaska's panhandle to the Bering Strait. The expedition became famous even before the ship, the S.S. George W. Elder, set sail. A crowd of onlookers cheered the departure from Seattle on May 31, 1899. Newspapers all over the world featured the story on their front pages.

History has shown that the Harriman Alaska Expedition lived up to all expectations: genera and species new to science were described, fossil species newly recorded, natural history collections created, and the Harriman Fiord surveyed for the first time. By any standard, the world's scientific and environmental portrait of Alaska was greatly enriched as a result of the 1899 Harriman Alaska Expedition.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska's indigenous people, who are jointly called Alaska Natives, can be divided into five major groupings: Aleuts, Northern Eskimos (Inupiat), Southern Eskimos (Yuit), Interior Indians (Athabascans) and Southeast Coastal Indians (Tlingit and Haida). These groupings are based on broad cultural and linguistic similarities of peoples living contiguously in different regions of Alaska. They do not represent political or tribal units nor are they the units Native people have traditionally used to define themselves.

At the time of contact with Russian explorers in the mid-18th century, Alaska was occupied by approximately 80,000 indigenous people. The phrase "time of contact" means the earliest time when a Native group had significant direct interaction with Europeans. This time varied for different parts of Alaska; therefore, Alaskan Native groups have had somewhat different historical experiences through their contact with Europeans and Americans.

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Aleut | 1750-1780 |
| Southern Eskimo | 1780-1840 |
| Northern Eskimo | 1850-1870 |
| Interior Indians | 1840-1860 |
| Coastal Indians | 1775-1800 |

In 1899, the Harriman Expeditions met people from the Aleut, Southern Eskimo and Coastal Indian groups. George Bird Grinnell, writing about these encounters, described them as "hasty and superficial," not surprising given that the *Elder* rarely spent more than a day in any port. But the expedition created an overview record of Alaska Native life at the turn-of-the-century, one that includes not only writings about the Native communities on the coast, but also the first known recording of Tlingit song, and the evocative portraits made by photographer Edward Curtis.

The Aleuts

Stretching like a rocky necklace from Asian to North America, the Aleutian Islands and the nearby Alaska Peninsula are the home of the Aleuts. The term "Aleut" was introduced by Russians and comes originally from the Koryak or Chukchi languages of Siberia; it appears to have been quickly adopted by the Aleut people themselves.

The Aleuts are distinctive among the world's people for their remarkably successful maritime adaptation to this cold archipelago. Some archeologists suggest that contemporary Aleuts are the descendants of a population which first established itself at Anangula Island more than 7,000 years ago. At the time of European contact, the Aleut population inhabited all of the major Aleutian Islands, the Alaska Peninsula as far east as Port Moller, and the Shumagin Islands to the south of the Alaska Peninsula.

Although reconstruction of Aleut culture and history is difficult due to the devastating impact of Russian contact in the 18th century, it is believed that the Aleuts were

divided into nine named subdivisions. The total Aleut population is estimated to have been between 15-18,000 at the time of contact. The nine subdivisions are usually joined into western, central and eastern groups based on language. Population concentration was greatest among the eastern groups who had access to salmon and caribou. The Aleuts were a relatively long-lived people with a considerable proportion of the population more than 60 years of age.

Traveling with the Harriman Expedition, Grinnell noticed the profound influence that the Russian Orthodox Church had had on Aleut communities at Unalaska and in the Pribilofs. He also noted how difficult it had become for the Aleuts to maintain their subsistence way of life "under the changed conditions which surround them, and the increasing scarcity of the wild creatures on which they used to depend for food."

The Southern Eskimos

The most varied group of Alaskan Natives are the southern Eskimos or Yuit, speakers of the Yup'ik languages. At the time of contact, they were the most numerous of the Alaska Native groups. Communities stretched from Prince William Sound on the north Pacific Coast to St. Lawrence Island in the central Bering Sea. The Yuit settled this vast region from west to east reaching the Kodiak archipelago and Prince William Sound by about 2,000 years ago.

The Yuit are usually divided into Bering Sea groups and Pacific groups. This classification is based on technological, subsistence and language differences. In the Bering Sea group, the major language spoken is Central Yup'ik. St. Lawrence Island Yup'ik is a separate language. The Pacific Eskimos all speak dialects of Alutiiq, another Yup'ik language.

In general, between 100-300 people could be found living in sedentary villages in protected locations during the winter. In the spring, family or extended family groups dispersed to various camps to obtain migratory waterfowl, salmon, caribou and other resources. Substantial movements of people throughout the spring, summer and fall was necessary to ensure that adequate resources would be acquired before the winter.

In 1899, the Harriman party encountered Eskimos in Bering Sea communities of both Alaska and Siberia. Grinnell's descriptions of these communities reveal how closely the Eskimo communities were bound to the sea in every aspect of their lives. Food, clothing, fuel, materials for their homes and boats were all derived from the creatures they hunted in the sea. They made their hunting weapons from whalebone and walrus ivory, and carried their entire stock of possessions from summer to winter villages in sealskin bags.

Grinnell predicted that the Eskimos' immediate future was "gloomy." He knew that, with fur seals in serious decline, with commercial whaling and gold mining on the rise, these Eskimo communities could not long maintain their traditional way of life.

The Tlingit/Haida

Occupying the islands and mainland of southeast Alaska are the northernmost groups of the Northwest Coast cultures; the Tlingit and Haida Indians. They are well-known for their distinctive art represented in totem poles and other elegantly carved objects.

The Tlingit and Haida are more similar to Indians along the coast of present-day British Columbia than to other Alaskan groups. The Tlingit occupied the vast majority of the area from Yakutat Bay to Portland Canal while the Kaigani Haida, whose Haida relatives occupied the Queen Charlotte Island off the north coast of British Columbia, controlled the southern half of the Prince of Wales archipelago. The two groups share similar social and cultural patterns; however, their languages are unrelated and they have distinct ethnic identities.

The Tlingit were divided into 13 units, sometimes erroneously labelled "tribes" (they were not tribes because there was no political unity at this level) to which the suffix *kwan* was applied. This terminology defines a group of people who lived in a region, shared residence in several communities, intermarried, and were at peace. The total Tlingit population was about 15,000 at the time of contact. The most numerous groups were those living on the Stikine and Chilkat rivers. The Kaigani Haida population was about 1,800 people at the time of European contact.

The Tlingit and Haida had similar settlement patterns which included relatively permanent winter villages occupied from October or November to March. From these villages, small groups of people dispersed to seasonal camps during the spring, summer and early fall.

Grinnell described the Tlingits as "a hardy race. Living on the shore, bold mariners and sea hunters, they are also mountaineers, familiar with the towering peaks, the dreadful cliffs, and the mighty glaciers of the iron-bound coast. In their frail canoes they venture far to sea in pursuit of the fur-seal, the sea-otter, and the whale." Harriman himself must have recognized the value of such skill. At Yakutat, he invited a Tlingit named James to accompany them as a guide for the rest of the expedition.

“Alaska’s Population,” Know Alaska, 2010 [82]

<http://www.alaskakids.org/index.cfm/know-alaska/Alaska-Geography/People>

Current & Relevant Information:

People have lived in Alaska for at least 15,000 years. These first Alaskans spread out over Alaska and formed three main groups. These are Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts. These groups shared customs and lived in the same general areas. Like families, they split into several smaller branches. Tlingit (pronounced *klink-it*), Tsimshian (*shim-she-an*), and Haida (*hi-da*) Indians live in Southeast Alaska. Athabaskan Indians live in the Interior. Among the Eskimos, there are the Yupik

(pronounced *you-pik*) Eskimos of Southwestern Alaska and Inupiat (pronounced *i-noo-pee-ak*) Eskimos of the far north. Today about 105,000 Alaska Natives still call Alaska home.

“Alaska Natives,” Minority Rights Group International: World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples [83] <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/alaska-natives/>

Overview:

Ethnicity: Inuit, Tlingit, Haida, Alaska Athabaskan, Aleut, other tribal groupings

First language/s: English, Yupik, Inupiaq, Gwich'in, Aleut, Alutiiq, other local dialects

Religion/s: Christianity, Indigenous religions

The United States (US) Census in 2010 estimated the Alaskan Native population resident in Alaska to be roughly 138,300, comprising around 15 per cent of the state's residents, and a significant segment of the rural population in particular. Indigenous peoples of Alaska include at least 20 language groups (some now spoken only by a handful of elders) and several hundred villages and tribal groups. Yup'ik and Inupiat are the largest communities, numbering 33,900 and 33,400 respectively in 2010. The second largest group are the Tlingit-Haida (26,100) followed by Alaska Athabaskan (22,500), Aleut (19,300) and Tsimschian (3,800). Other groups include the Alutiiq, Cup'ik and Eyak. Over half of Alaska Natives live in rural areas, though growing numbers are moving to urban areas, particularly Anchorage, in search of education and employment opportunities.

Current & Relevant Information:

Before European contact, Inuit lived in extended family groups as semi-nomadic hunter-fisher-gatherers. Aleuts also hunted and trapped, but lived in more permanent, partly subterranean homes on the Aleutian Islands. Native groups further south had large permanent settlements and trade networks. The first Europeans to land in Alaska were Russian explorers, and the territory was occupied by the Russian Empire from 1741 until 1867, when it was sold to the USA. The USA imposed restrictions on indigenous Alaskans' education, religious and voting rights similar to those experienced by Native Americans in more southerly states. Alaska became the forty-ninth and largest US state in 1959. In 1966, the Alaska Federation of Natives was formed and filed land claims covering the entire state. Oil was discovered in Alaska in 1968, and in 1971 the US Congress passed the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). It extinguished aboriginal titles and created for-profit corporations in each region to administer an award totaling US \$962.5 million and covering 178,068 sq. km. Corporate shares, which could not be sold until 1991, were granted exclusively to indigenous Alaskans born before December 1971.

The treatment of Alaskan aboriginal peoples by European-descended Americans parallels the history of dispossession of other indigenous peoples in North America, with many of the same effects: dependency on government income transfers, poverty (Inuit and Natives earn on average less than half of white Alaskans' income per capita), educational failure, health problems, teenage suicide, poverty, language loss, alcoholism and violence. However, because of Alaska's relative isolation and long territorial status, the principle of Native sovereignty is less well-entrenched there. The state government maintains that, historically, indigenous Alaskans have always been treated as individuals, not peoples. No treaties and only a few reservation lands exist.

Alaska Natives widely criticized the ANCSA for imposing a corporate structure over their traditional forms of governance. It provided only weak protection of aboriginal title, leaving lands open to eventual corporate or government take-over, and gave no recognition to traditional subsistence hunting and fishing rights. In February 1988, Congress passed amendments to the Act that extended the stock sale restrictions and tax exemptions indefinitely, but allowed corporations to issue new stock to younger people and non-aboriginals. These amendments split the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). Some members welcomed the amendments as a way to resolve the dispute and encourage economic development. Others objected that not enough had been done to safeguard traditional lifestyles and rights.

In 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act set aside lands for national parks and wildlife refuges and recognized the priority of traditional uses of resources. But the Conservation Act is administered mostly by the state government, which leans towards commercial interests, and the situation has never been clarified. However, in October 1993 the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs quietly confirmed 225 Alaskan villages as recognized tribes. Several regional corporations have now transferred their lands to tribal governments to protect them against state appropriation. Ironically, indigenous Alaskans might ultimately achieve self-determination only by obtaining federal government support.

Indigenous Alaskans' rights, like those of other circumpolar peoples, are closely linked to environmental concerns, particularly in connection with oil. Oil companies provide 85 per cent of the state revenue of Alaska, but oil drilling is highly disruptive to subsistence life. Thus, oil exploration is controversial both inside and outside Native communities. In 1988, in 1991 and again in 1995, Congress proposed opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil development. President Bill Clinton considered vetoing the measure if it was passed by Congress in the 1996 budget. Oil spills, including the 11 million gallon Exxon-Valdez spill in 1989 and the up to 80 million gallon Russian spill in 1994, pollute the Arctic Sea and disrupt indigenous wildlife, culture and economies; in 1994, Native villagers were paid US \$20 million on top of Exxon's 1991 \$1 billion settlement with Alaska, and litigation is ongoing. A 2001 survey of the shoreline of Prince William Sound found

that the Exxon-Valdez spill had continuous low-level effects. Other current environmental issues include anti-fur activism and whaling conservation efforts, which threaten Native livelihoods. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference's alternative whaling commission argues that Native hunting should not be included in the US quota, but should be protected as a separate category. In addition, dumping and international control failures make the Arctic Circle a 'sink' for greenhouse gases, chlorofluorocarbons, DDT, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, radio nucleotides and nuclear wastes. These substances may alter the climate of the region, and toxins accumulate in the bodies of Alaska Natives and other polar peoples, causing unknown health risks.

Since the 1987 split over the ANCSA amendments, the United Tribes of Alaska and the Alaska Native Coalition have joined the AFN and Alaska Inter-Tribal Council in representing Alaska Native interests, along with tribal and village governments. In 1977, Inuit from Alaska, Greenland and Canada created a common forum in the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), which meets yearly and in 1983 gained non-governmental organization status at the United Nations. Inuit of the former Soviet Union joined the ICC in 1993. There is also an initiative, led by Canada, for an Arctic Council with indigenous and governmental representatives from the seven countries on the Arctic Circle: Canada, the USA, Russia, Norway, Finland, Iceland and Denmark. The Council would extend and enforce the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, which is not yet a legally binding treaty.

“Alaska Native Groups & Cultures,” alaskaweb.org, 2014 [84]
<http://alaskaweb.org/native/gps&cults.htm>

Overview:

In general, there are three groups of Alaska Natives – Indian, Eskimo and Aleut.

- The two main Eskimo groups, Inupiat and Yupik, are distinguished by their language and geography. The former live in the north and northwest parts of Alaska and speak Inupiaq, while the latter live in the south and southwest and speak Yupik.
- About a third of Alaska Natives are American Indians. Major tribes are the Athabaskan in the central part of the state, and the Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida in the southeast.
- The Aleuts, native to the Aleutian Islands, Kodiak Island, the lower Alaska and Kenai Peninsulas, and Prince William Sound, are physically and culturally related to the Eskimos. About 15% of Alaska Natives are Aleuts.

Current & Relevant Information:


The most recent category of native peoples are the Creoles of the Russian-American era, who had a mixed ancestry that was both Russian and Alaska Native. Having borrowed the term Creole from the colonial French experience, the Russians


applied it to people who typically had a Russian father and a native mother. In this way, many Alaska Natives intime had at least a modicum of Russian heritage. Owing to the chronic shortage of Russian laborers in Alaska, the importance of the Creoles to the tsarist colony proved immense. Indeed, the Russian-American Company increasingly turned to them as a means to fill staff positions. By the 1860s, the Creoles easily outnumbered the Russians and were a mainstay of the colonial economy.


You should know Alaskan Native tribes...

- are divided into eleven distinct cultures
- speak 20 different languages
- are organized under thirteen Alaska Native Regional Corporations
- belong to five geographic areas


Though there are eleven cultures, only five major cultural families emerge. A brief introduction is given for each group, then resources are listed, many in pdf format and available for download.


| The Five Regional Cultures | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Aleut & Alutiiq | The Aleuts lived on the coasts of the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands. These maritime people were almost completely dependent on the sea for their way of life. Knowledge of these resources and skill in harvesting them define the cycle of life in a village. Aside from food, even materials for clothing came from the sea - sealskin being an example. The plentiful supply of food permitted development of permanent villages characterized by huge houses sheltering from 10 to 40 families. The men |  |

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| | <p>in these permanent settings became famous as sea hunters, and the women excelled in handicrafts, including manufacture of some of the world's finest baskets. The intensity of the weather that travels through their islands governs activities more than any other factor.</p> <p>The Aleut and Alutiiq cultures were heavily influenced by the Russians, beginning in the 18th century. The Orthodox Church is prominent in every village, Russian dishes are made using local subsistence food, and Russian words are part of their common vocabulary.</p> <p>Life and Work of Innocent, Archbishop of Kamchatka, the Kuriles and the Aleutian Islands by Ivan P. Barsukov (pdf 2.06 MB)</p> | |
| Athabascan | <p>The Athabascan people call themselves 'Dena,' or 'the people.' The Athabascan people traditionally lived in the rugged interior of Alaska, an expansive region that begins south of the Brooks Mountain Range and continues down to the Kenai Peninsula. In past</p> |  |

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| | <p>times, these people migrated seasonally, traveling in small groups hunting and gathering. This lifestyle prevented them from establishing permanent villages. They did however, establish extensive trade relationships with other Alaskan groups, exchanging furs and other possessions for oil, copper items, blankets, and others things not abundant in their home territory.</p> <p>There are eleven linguistic groups of Athabascans in Alaska: Ahtna (Ahtena); Degexit'an (Ingalik); Giwch'in; Han; Holikachuk; Koyukon; Kuskokwim; Tanacross; Tanaina; Tanana; Tutchone.</p> <p>Indians of the Yukon and Tanana Valleys by Matthew K. Sniffen (5.96 MB)</p> <p>Ten'a Texts and Tales from Anvik, Alaska by John W. Chapman & Pliny E. Goddard (32.85 MB)</p> | |
| <p>Northwest Coast - Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian</p> | <p>The Eyak, Tlingit (pronounced Klinkit), Haida and Tsimshian share a common and similar Northwest Coast Culture with important differences in language</p> |  |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>and clan system.</p> <p>Anthropologists use the term "Northwest Coast Culture" to define the Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian cultures, as well as that of other people's indigenous to the Pacific coast, extending as far as northern Oregon. Their region is one of lush forests, mild climate, abundant fish, game, and edible plants which enabled these people to live in permanent villages. Their culture produced totem poles, ceremonial garb, and exquisite blankets. These are the Indians who practiced the well-known potlatch ceremony - the practice of giving away possessions to gain honor and prestige.</p> <p>The Tlingit and Haida are the two largest Indian groups in the southeastern part of the State. Tlingits were known to be fierce warriors. When the first Russians tried to settle in Sitka, the Tlingits drove them out, despite the guns and cannons brought by the intruders.</p> <p>Totem Lore of the Alaskan Indians by Harry P. Corser (11.42 MB)</p> | |
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| | <p>Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia by Albert P. Niblack (22.77 MB)</p> <p>Among the Thlinkits in Alaska by Charles Erskine Scott Wood (1.38 MB)</p> <p>Study of the Thlingets of Alaska by Livingston French Jones (31.72 MB)</p> <p>Apostle of Alaska : the story of William Duncan of Metlahkatla by John William Arctander (pdf 19.80 MB)</p> | |
| <p>Inupiaq & St. Lawrence Island Yup'ik</p> | <p>The Inupiaq and the St. Lawrence Island Yupik People, or “Real People,” are still hunting and gathering societies. The harsh weather and topography of the north and northwest provided techniques for dealing with their unkind physical environment. Permanent villages were the rule, but temporary winter and summer camps convenient to food resources were needed. Food was obtained largely through hunting on land and sea, for which Eskimo men are famous. They subsist on the land and sea of north and northwest Alaska. Their lives continue to evolve around the whale,</p> |  |

| | | |
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| | <p>walrus, seal, polar bear, caribou and fish.</p> <p>It is these people who are usually associated with the kayak, dogsled, mukluks and parkas from skins, and beautifully carved ivory objects.</p> <p>Culture and Change for Iupiat and Yupiks of Alaska by MacLean</p> <p>The Eskimo About Bering Strait by Edward W. Nelson (pdf 47.97 MB)</p> | |
| Yup'ik & Cup'ik | <p>The southwest Alaska Natives are named after the two main dialects of the Yup'ik language, known as Yup'ik and Cup'ik. The estimated population, at the time of contact, was: Nunivak 500, Yukon-Kuskokwim 13,000 and Bristol Bay 3,000. The Yup'ik and Cup'ik still depend upon subsistence fishing, hunting and gathering for food. Elders tell stories of traditional ways of life, as a way to teach the younger generations survival skills and their heritage.</p> <p>The Eskimo About Bering Strait by Edward W. Nelson (pdf 47.97 MB)</p> |  |

For additional information on Alaska Native resources see "[Records of Alaska Natives in Religious Archives](#)" compiled by Larry Hibpschman, Archivist at the Alaska State Archives

“Alaskan Native Cultures,” alaskan-natives.com [85] <https://www.alaskan-natives.com/alaskan-native-cultures/>

Overview:

Alaska's Native people are divided into three ethnic groups, eleven distinct cultures, speak twenty different languages with more than 50 dialects, live in eight geographical locations in Alaska, in more than 200 villages and communities, and make up nearly 20% of the total population of Alaska.

Current & Relevant Information:



Three types of Alaskan Natives

There are three types of Alaskan Natives with different ethnic, cultural and linguistic history. They are Indian, Eskimo and Aleut. The terms “Inuit” and “Native American” are sometimes used in place of “Eskimo.” In Alaska, Eskimo and Indian are not generally considered derogatory terms. The term "Alaskan natives" came into use

with the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, and includes all three ethnic groupings. Within those three ethnic groupings, there are seven distinct cultures.

Seven Alaskan cultures

1. Athabascan (Indians)

- Ahtna
- Deg Hit'an
- Dena'ina
- Gwich'in
- Hän
- Holikachuk
- Kolchan
- Koyukon
- Lower Tanana
- Tanacross
- Upper Tanana

2. Eyak (Indians)

3. Haida (Indians)

4. Tlingit (Indians)

5. Tsimshian (Indians)

These four Indian groups of southeastern Alaska are considered to be a part of the Pacific Northwest coast culture area. Each group speaks their own language and has their own clan systems. The four cultures are similar in the use of art and oral traditions, as well as complex legal and social systems based upon matrilineal clans. They share a similar use of art and are known for their totem poles and dramatic carvings.

6. Eskimo

- Inupiat (an Inuit people)
- Yupik

The Inupiaq & St. Lawrence Island Yupik live in a region that stretches from the St. Lawrence Island to the northern Canadian border and beyond. Their territory also

includes most of the Brooks Range. Today, as in the past the food is determined by the region and season of the year. The hunter/gatherer societies are based largely on an active subsistence hunting and traditional use of foods such as, berries, salmon, moose, whale, walrus, seal, duck, and other marine mammals to provide substantial portions of their diet.

- Siberian Yupik
- Yup'ik
 - Cup'ik

The Yup'ik & Cup'ik people, named after the two main dialects of the Yup'ik language, live in southwestern Alaska from Bristol Bay along the Bering Sea coast to Norton Sound. The availability of fish, game and plants determined the location of seasonal camps and villages. Yup'ik & Cup'ik are hunters of moose, caribou, whale, walrus, seal and sea lions and harvest salmon and other fish from the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Nushagak rivers. Bird eggs, berries and roots help sustain people throughout the region. The summer and fall seasons focus on gathering food and hunting while the winter season is for traditional ceremonies and festive events.

- Sugpiaq (Alutiiq)(Alutiqu) ◦Chugach
 - Koniag

7. **Aleut (in their own language they refer to themselves as Unangan)**

The area stretching from Prince William Sound west along the Gulf of Alaska to the Aleutian Islands is home to the Aleut and Alutiiq peoples. The natural marine environment defines subsistence lifestyles and cultures that date back more than 8,000 years ago. The Aleuts and the Alutiiq differ in language and culture but a commonality was created from the first contact with the Russians in the 18th century that is evident today. The Alutiiq language, called Sugcestun or Alutiiq, is one of the Yupik branches of the Eskimo-Aleut language family. The Alutiiq are known for their skill in building and handling kayaks or baidarka, as the Russians called it. The Aleut, also known as Unangan, are known for being expert boat builders and sailors and well known for their kayaks. The Aleut language, Unangax, also derives from the Esk-Aleut family.

“There are three major Indian tribes in Alaska,” Alaskan-natives.com [86]
<https://www.alaskan-natives.com/333/major-indian-tribes-alaska/>

Abstract:

There are three major Indian tribes in Alaska and a handful of smaller Indian tribes, which make up one of the three indigenous ethnic groups of Alaska. The other ethnic groups in Alaska are referred to as Eskimos (Inuit in Canada) and Metis.

Current & Relevant Information:

The Athabaskan Indians are the largest tribe in Alaska, with about 12,000 members.

The Tlingit tribe on the south-central coast near Juneau and off shore islands have about 10,000 members.

There are two Haida tribes, which collectively have about 3,000 members. The Haida south of Juneau on off shore islands near Ketchikan number about 1,000 and the Haida who live south of Ketchikan down the Canadian coast and on the Queen Charlotte Islands number another 2,000.

Another coastal tribe related to the Tlingit are the Tsimshian, with about 2,000 members, and the smallest, the Eyak tribe has only about fifty members.

Collectively, these tribes make up the Alaska ethnic group referred to as Indians.

The Athabaskan people have survived for thousands of years in the harshest part of interior Alaska.

The Tlingit tribe is noted for its world-famous art, particularly intricate ceremonial masks and totem poles. Their national anthem says they were the first people in North America.

The Haida are a coastal people best known for their 70-foot-long ocean-going canoes made from hollowed out giant red cedar trees. They were once great whale hunters and possessed the navigational skills to explore all the way to southern California.

“Implementing Government-to-Government Relationships between Federal Agencies and Alaska Native Tribes,” Amanda M. Shearer, Alaska Journal of Anthropology, 2007 [87] <https://www.alaskaanthropology.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AJA-v52-optimized.pdf#page=98>

Abstract:

Although tribes are recognized as “domestic dependent nations” with inherent sovereignty over their own affairs, the U.S. government has accepted various trust responsibilities such as protecting tribal rights and resources. Based on this trust relationship, federal agencies have been working to conduct meaningful government-to-government consultation on projects and policies that may have implications for tribes, including impacts to tribal cultural resources. The purpose of this paper is two-fold: (1) to provide legal background and understanding on government-to-government relationships and the federal recognition of tribes in Alaska; and (2) to present practical information on the implementation of government-to-government relationships, the inequality of funding and capacity between federal agencies and tribes, and what generally constitutes meaningful consultation to tribes. Government-to-government implementation is challenging and often involves conflict. Recommendations for enhancing implementation are included.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Working with federally recognized tribes on projects that may impact tribal cultural resources is both required by law and unique in Alaska due to the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Cultural resource managers working for federal agencies in Alaska should at least be attentive to government-to-government consultations with federally recognized tribes, if not heavily involved. Although several cultural resource laws discuss consultation with ANCSA corporations, this article focuses solely on the requirements of federal agencies to engage in the government-to-government process with federally recognized tribes.

This article is divided into two sections. The first section provides an overview of federal policy regarding government-to-government relationships and Alaska Native tribes from 1993 to the present. Topics addressed include federal recognition and how tribes become federally recognized, government-to-government relationships between the U.S. government and federally recognized tribes, and the differences between Alaska Native tribes and ANCSA corporations. The second section incorporates data gathered while researching for my master's thesis (Shearer 2005). Topics addressed provide practical information on: the implementation of government-to-government relationships; the inequality of funding and capacity between federal agencies and tribes; and, describes what generally constitutes meaningful consultation to tribes. Implementing government-to-government relationships is challenging work, and often involves conflict. Therefore, recommendations for enhancing implementation are also included.

U.S. Policy and Alaska Native Tribes: 1993 to Present

There are several recent, significant dates for tribes in Alaska, as seen in Table 1.

Federal Recognition of Tribes:

The existence of tribes and tribal governments predates the U.S. Constitution. In fact, tribes governed their members long before any contact with European nations (Berger 1985:137). Most of the powers of self-government that tribes possess today do not originate from congressional delegation but are inherent powers of a limited sovereignty that have not been extinguished. Thomas R. Berger, a former member of the British Columbia Supreme Court and appointed in 1983 by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference to head the Alaska Native Review Commission to review ANCSA, wrote:

Before and after contact, Native peoples of the New World governed themselves according to a variety of political systems... . They were acknowledged to be sovereign as distinct peoples. They had mechanisms for the identification of territorial boundaries, the maintenance of political autonomy, and the regulations of affairs with other societies. Ancient political systems have adapted to new

challenges with new forms. New institutional forms have been introduced and adopted, but decision-making at the village level remains grounded in traditional ways and values (Berger 1985:140).

Table 1. Alaska Native tribal timeline: Significant dates 1993 to present.

| | |
|------|--|
| 1993 | Department of Interior rules that Alaska Native villages have the same status as tribes in the contiguous 48 states (Pevar 2002:302) |
| 1994 | Executive Memorandum Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments signed by President Clinton acknowledges the U.S. government's responsibility for consultation with tribes on a government-to-government basis |
| 1994 | Department of the Interior enacts the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act; the list is published in the <i>Federal Register</i> |
| 1998 | Supreme Court held that ANCSA land is not Indian Country even when owned by a federally recognized tribe in <i>Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government</i> |
| 1998 | Executive Order 13084 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments signed by President Clinton |
| 2000 | Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments supersedes Executive Order 13084 and reaffirms the federal policy of government-to-government consultation with tribes |

The term "Indian tribe" is defined to mean "any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, pueblo, village or community within the continental United States that the secretary of the interior presently acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe" (25 CFR 83.1 1994). Tribes are political entities based on history, court cases, and guardianship. Tribal recognition is not determined by race, rather it is a unique political extra-constitutional relationship (Case and Voluck 2002:384). Federal recognition allows a tribe to become eligible for federal social, health, education, and other funds available for tribal groups (Feldman 2001:100).

There is a distinct process that must be followed for tribes to be recognized by the federal government. Identifying tribes is the responsibility of the Department of the Interior, delegated to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). To become federally recognized and to establish tribal status as an Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) tribe, the group is required to document its history and the genealogies of its members (Feldman 2001:100). The report is then submitted to the BIA for review and

determination. Once recognized, tribal status cannot be terminated except by an act of Congress.

Congress passed the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act in 1994, which was submitted by Ada Deer, head of the BIA at that time. This act confers upon the secretary of the interior the authority to both acknowledge tribes and to publish a list of all federally recognized tribes annually.

Tribes in Alaska:

The primary instrument for relations between the United States and Indian nations between 1789 and 1871 was the treaty (Monette 1996:643). The last treaty between the U.S. and an Indian tribe was negotiated in 1868 (Monette 1996:643). Feeling that the treaty process was unfair to Indians, the House attached a rider to the 1871 Appropriations Act officially ending treaty making with Indian tribes. Since Alaska was purchased from Russia in 1867, treaties were not available to Alaska Natives as a means of protecting their resources or as a means of establishing their sovereignty.

Aboriginal title in Alaska was extinguished through ANCSA, which diverted the land and money settlement to Alaska Native corporations. Therefore, federally recognized tribes in Alaska are separated from the land base. "Tribal governments in Alaska are in the same peril in which tribal governments found themselves after the General Allotment Act [of 1887]: they do not hold title to ancestral lands, which have been deeded to private corporations composed of individual shareholders" (Berger 1985:126).

Alaska Natives are "domestic dependent sovereigns" without "territorial reach" over tribal lands. This led to court cases during the 1990s regarding tribal jurisdiction.

Pevar states:

One post-ANCSA issue in sharp dispute was whether the land set apart for Natives under the act is Indian country. This issue was addressed by the Supreme Court in *Alaska v. Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government* (1998). In that case, a village corporation had conveyed its land to a tribal government. The tribe then sought to tax the profits made by a construction company when it built a public school under a state contract on that land, a power the tribe could exercise only if the land was Indian country. The Supreme Court held that ANCSA land is not Indian country even when owned by a tribe, and the Court thus invalidated the tax (Pevar 2002:302).

Nonetheless, ANCSA did not extinguish Alaska Natives' special relationship with the federal government or their entitlement to services. Alaska Native people and their tribal organizations receive the same federal services available to Indians and tribes generally (Pevar 2002:303). Federally recognized tribes in Alaska continue to retain the power to "determine tribal membership, regulate domestic relations among tribal

members, punish tribal members who violate tribal law, and regulate the inheritance of tribal property” (Pevar 2002:303). In addition, legislation enacted for Native Americans has also benefited Alaska Natives, including the Indian Financing Act of 1974, the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975, the Indian Health Care Improvement Act of 1976, and the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Case and Voluck 2002:28). These laws show the ongoing trust relationship between the federal government and Alaska Natives by recognizing various Alaska Native organizations as eligible for their benefits (Case and Voluck 2002:28).

Of the 561 federally recognized tribal governments in the United States, 229 are located in the state of Alaska (Federal Register 2005:72(55)). Four of the 229 tribes are regional tribes that are not restricted to a single village location, including the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes, the Pribilof Islands Aleut Communities of St. Paul and St. George Islands, and the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government. These regional tribes are comprised of individual IRA governments that assert their own recognition and rights to government-to-government relationships. This creates either duplication or conflict over which of the organizations should be recognized in various circumstances.

Differences between Alaska Native Tribes and Area Corporations:

There are certain dichotomies that distinguish ANCSA corporations from Alaska Native tribes, as seen in Table 2. It is important to note that federal agencies have a government-to-government relationship with Alaska Native tribes, not Alaska Native corporations.

Table 2. Comparison of ANCSA corporations and Alaska Native tribes

| ANCSA Corporation | Alaska Native Tribe |
|---|--|
| Granted land through ANCSA | Not granted land through ANCSA |
| Not government entity | Federally recognized entity |
| Concern is profit making | Concern is village life, welfare and cultural knowledge |
| State-chartered business designed for profit and subject to state laws. Trust doctrine may apply. | Empowered with jurisdiction over tribal membership and stands in a government-to-government relationship with the U.S. federal government. Trust doctrine applies. |
| Usually has money | Usually has no money |

Source: Adapted from Sandra Borbridge (Borbridge 2002, written communication)

“American Indians and Alaska Natives - Federal Recognition,” Administration for Native Americans, 19 March 2014 [88] <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/fact-sheet/american-indians-and-alaska-natives-federal-recognition>

Current & Relevant Information:

- Historically, most of today’s federally recognized tribes received federal recognition status through treaties, acts of Congress, presidential executive orders or other federal administrative actions, or federal court decisions.
- In 1978, the Interior Department issued regulations governing the Federal Acknowledgment Process (FAP) to handle, in a uniform manner, requests for federal recognition from Indian groups whose character and history varied widely. These regulations – 25 C.F.R. Part 83 – were revised in 1994 and are still in effect.
- Also, in 1994, Congress enacted Public Law 103-454, the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act (108 Stat. 4791, 4792), which formally established three ways in which an Indian group may become federally recognized:
 - By Act of Congress,
 - By the administrative procedures under 25 C.F.R. Part 83, or
 - By decision of a United States court.
- A tribe whose relationship with the United States has been expressly terminated by Congress may not use the Federal Acknowledgment Process. Only Congress can restore federal recognition to a “terminated” tribe.
- The Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act also requires the Secretary of the Interior to publish annually a list of the federally recognized tribes in the Federal Register.
- A non-federally recognized tribe has no relationship with the United States, except where a relationship is created under a particular statute as is the case the ANA’s Native American Programs Act where non-federally recognized tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders are eligible for federal assistance.

“Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs,” Federal Register, 29 January 2021 [89] <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/29/2021-01606/indian-entities-recognized-by-and-eligible-to-receive-services-from-the-united-states-bureau-of>

Summary:

This notice publishes the current list of 574 Tribal entities recognized by and eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) by virtue of their status as Indian Tribes.

Current & Relevant Information:

This notice is published pursuant to Section 104 of the Act of November 2, 1994 (Pub. L. 103–454; 108 Stat. 4791, 4792), and in exercise of authority delegated to the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs under 25 U.S.C. 2 and 9 and 209 DM 8. Published below is an updated list of federally acknowledged Indian Tribes in the contiguous 48 states and Alaska. Amendments to the list include formatting edits, name changes, and name corrections.

To aid in identifying Tribal name changes and corrections, the Tribe's previously listed or former name is included in parentheses after the correct current Tribal name. We will continue to list the Tribe's former or previously listed name for several years before dropping the former or previously listed name from the list.

The listed Indian entities are acknowledged to have the immunities and privileges available to federally recognized Indian Tribes by virtue of their government-to-government relationship with the United States as well as the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations of such Tribes. We have continued the practice of listing the Alaska Native entities separately for the purpose of facilitating identification of them.

Native Entities Within the State of Alaska Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs

Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove

Akiachak Native Community

Akiak Native Community

Alatna Village

Algaaciq Native Village (St. Mary's)

Allakaket Village

Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor [previously listed as Native Village of Old Harbor and Village of Old Harbor]

Angoon Community Association

Anvik Village

Arctic Village (See Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government)

Asa'carsarmiut Tribe

Beaver Village

Birch Creek Tribe

Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes

Chalkyitsik Village
Cheesh-Na Tribe [previously listed as Native Village of Chistochina]
Chevak Native Village
Chickaloon Native Village
Chignik Bay Tribal Council [previously listed as Native Village of Chignik]
Chignik Lake Village
Chilkat Indian Village (Klukwan)
Chilkoot Indian Association (Haines)
Chinik Eskimo Community (Golovin)
Chuloonawick Native Village
Circle Native Community
Craig Tribal Association [previously listed as Craig Community Association]
Curyung Tribal Council
Douglas Indian Association
Egegik Village
Eklutna Native Village
Emmonak Village
Evansville Village (aka Bettles Field)
Galena Village (aka Loudon Village)
Gulkana Village Council [previously listed as Gulkana Village]
Healy Lake Village
Holy Cross Tribe [previously listed as Holy Cross Village]
Hoonah Indian Association
Hughes Village
Huslia Village
Hydaburg Cooperative Association
Igiugig Village
Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope

Iqugmiut Traditional Council [previously listed as Iqurmit Traditional Council]
Ivanof Bay Tribe [previously listed as Ivanoff Bay Tribe and Ivanoff Bay Village]
Kaguyak Village
Kaktovik Village (aka Barter Island)
Kasigluk Traditional Elders Council
Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Ketchikan Indian Community [previously listed as Ketchikan Indian Corporation]
King Island Native Community
King Salmon Tribe
Klawock Cooperative Association
Knik Tribe
Kokhanok Village
Koyukuk Native Village
Levelock Village
Lime Village
Manley Hot Springs Village
Manokotak Village
McGrath Native Village
Mentasta Traditional Council
Metlakatla Indian Community, Annette Island Reserve
Naknek Native Village
Native Village of Afognak
Native Village of Akhiok
Native Village of Akutan
Native Village of Aleknagik
Native Village of Ambler
Native Village of Atka
Native Village of Atqasuk [previously listed as Atqasuk Village (Atkasook)]

Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government
Native Village of Belkofski
Native Village of Brevig Mission
Native Village of Buckland
Native Village of Cantwell
Native Village of Chenega (aka Chanega)
Native Village of Chignik Lagoon
Native Village of Chitina
Native Village of Chuathbaluk (Russian Mission, Kuskokwim)
Native Village of Council
Native Village of Deering
Native Village of Diomede (aka Inalik)
Native Village of Eagle
Native Village of Eek
Native Village of Ekuk
Native Village of Ekwok [previously listed as Ekwok Village]
Native Village of Elim
Native Village of Eyak (Cordova)
Native Village of False Pass
Native Village of Fort Yukon
Native Village of Gakona
Native Village of Gambell
Native Village of Georgetown
Native Village of Goodnews Bay
Native Village of Hamilton
Native Village of Hooper Bay
Native Village of Kanatak
Native Village of Karluk

Native Village of Kiana
Native Village of Kipnuk
Native Village of Kivalina
Native Village of Kluti Kaah (aka Copper Center)
Native Village of Kobuk
Native Village of Kongiganak
Native Village of Kotzebue
Native Village of Koyuk
Native Village of Kwigillingok
Native Village of Kwinhagak (aka Quinhagak)
Native Village of Larsen Bay
Native Village of Marshall (aka Fortuna Ledge)
Native Village of Mary's Igloo
Native Village of Mekoryuk
Native Village of Minto
Native Village of Nanwalek (aka English Bay)
Native Village of Napaimute
Native Village of Napakiak
Native Village of Napaskiak
Native Village of Nelson Lagoon
Native Village of Nightmute
Native Village of Nikolski
Native Village of Noatak
Native Village of Nuiqsut (aka Nooiksut)
Native Village of Nunam Iqua [previously listed as Native Village of Sheldon's Point]
Native Village of Nunapitchuk
Native Village of Ouzinkie
Native Village of Paimiut

Native Village of Perryville
Native Village of Pilot Point
Native Village of Point Hope
Native Village of Point Lay
Native Village of Port Graham
Native Village of Port Heiden
Native Village of Port Lions
Native Village of Ruby
Native Village of Saint Michael
Native Village of Savoonga
Native Village of Scammon Bay
Native Village of Selawik
Native Village of Shaktoolik
Native Village of Shishmaref
Native Village of Shungnak
Native Village of Stevens
Native Village of Tanacross
Native Village of Tanana
Native Village of Tatitlek
Native Village of Tazlina
Native Village of Teller
Native Village of Tetlin
Native Village of Tuntutuliak
Native Village of Tununak
Native Village of Tyonek
Native Village of Unalakleet
Native Village of Unga
Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government (Arctic Village and Village of Venetie)

Native Village of Wales
Native Village of White Mountain
Nenana Native Association
New Koliganek Village Council
New Stuyahok Village
Newhalen Village
Newtok Village
Nikolai Village
Ninilchik Village
Nome Eskimo Community
Nondalton Village
Noorvik Native Community
Northway Village
Nulato Village
Nunakauyarmiut Tribe
Organized Village of Grayling (aka Holikachuk)
Organized Village of Kake
Organized Village of Kasaan
Organized Village of Kwethluk
Organized Village of Saxman
Orutsararmiut Traditional Native Council [previously listed as Orutsararmuit Native Village (aka Bethel)]
Oscarville Traditional Village
Pauloff Harbor Village
Pedro Bay Village
Petersburg Indian Association
Pilot Station Traditional Village
Pitka's Point Traditional Council [previously listed as Native Village of Pitka's Point]
Platinum Traditional Village

Portage Creek Village (aka Ohgsenakale)

Pribilof Islands Aleut Communities of St. Paul & St. George Islands (Saint George Island and Saint Paul Island)

Qagan Tayagungin Tribe of Sand Point [previously listed as Qagan Tayagungin Tribe of Sand Point Village]

Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska

Rampart Village

Saint George Island (See Pribilof Islands Aleut Communities of St. Paul & St. George Islands)

Saint Paul Island (See Pribilof Islands Aleut Communities of St. Paul & St. George Islands)

Salamatof Tribe [previously listed as Village of Salamatoff]

Seldovia Village Tribe

Shageluk Native Village

Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Skagway Village

South Naknek Village

Stebbins Community Association

Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak [previously listed as Shoonaq' Tribe of Kodiak]

Takotna Village

Tangirnaq Native Village [previously listed as Lesnoi Village (aka Woody Island)]

Telida Village

Traditional Village of Togiak

Tuluksak Native Community

Twin Hills Village

Ugashik Village

Umkumiut Native Village [previously listed as Umkumiute Native Village]

Village of Alakanuk

Village of Anaktuvuk Pass

Village of Aniak

Village of Atmautluak
Village of Bill Moore's Slough
Village of Chefornak
Village of Clarks Point
Village of Crooked Creek
Village of Dot Lake
Village of Iliamna
Village of Kalskag
Village of Kaltag
Village of Kotlik
Village of Lower Kalskag
Village of Ohogamiut
Village of Red Devil
Village of Sleetmute
Village of Solomon
Village of Stony River
Village of Venetie (See Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government)
Village of Wainwright
Wrangell Cooperative Association
Yakutat Tlingit Tribe
Yupit of Andreafski

“Indian Lands, Indian Subsidies, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs,” Chris Edwards, Cato Institute: Downsizing the Federal Government, February 2012 [90]
<https://www.downsizinggovernment.org/sites/downsizinggovernment.org/files/interior-indian-lands-indian-subsidies.pdf>

Overview:

The federal government runs a large array of programs for the roughly 1 million American Indians who live on reservations. Many of the programs are housed within the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). These two agencies have about 9,000 employees and spend \$2.9 billion annually.

Since the 1970s, the federal government has promoted Indian "self-determination," but tribes still receive federal subsidies and are burdened by layers of federal regulations. In addition, the government continues to oversee 55 million acres of land held in trust for Indians and tribes. Unfortunately, Indians who live on reservations are still very dependent on the federal government.

Indians and the federal government have a long, complex, and often sordid relationship. The government has taken many actions depriving Indians of their lands, resources, and freedom. A former top BIA official admitted that federal policies have sometimes been "ghastly," including the government's "futile and destructive efforts to annihilate Indian cultures."

The BIA has administered federal Indian policies since 1824, and its history is marked by episodes of appalling mismanagement. Some of the BIA's scandals are reviewed here, including the Indian trust-fund mess that was recently resolved in a \$3.4 billion legal settlement—after a century of federal bungling.

This essay also reviews the effects of two special regulatory regimes for Native Americans. One regime is tribal gaming, which has exploded in size since changes to federal law in the 1980s. A number of Indian tribes have become wealthy from casinos, but gaming has also spawned lobbying and litigation because special preferences are given to some tribes and not to other tribes or other Americans. Another problematic regime discussed here is the system of procurement rules that Congress has created for Alaska Native Corporations.

American Indians and Alaskan Natives have a unique history and a special relationship with the federal government. However, subsidies and regulatory preferences are not a good way to create broad-based and durable economic growth for these peoples. Subsidies are also inconsistent with the movement toward Indian self-determination. A better way to generate a lasting rise in Indian prosperity is to make institutional reforms to property rights and tribal governance on reservations. These reforms are discussed in the last section.

Current & Relevant Information:

Brief History

The U.S. Constitution empowered the federal government to engage in relations with Indian tribes. The tribes have broad and general powers of government within reservation areas, subject to limitations imposed by the federal government. Reservations are generally independent of state and local government power, and Indian trust land is not subject to state and local taxation.

The federal government and Indian tribes have engaged in a complex struggle over the last two centuries, with Indians usually getting the short end of the stick. The aims of federal policies have gyrated wildly over the decades, and most policies

have failed, as is evident from the continued high poverty rates on most reservations. Here is an overview of federal policies through the decades:

- 1777 to 1871: Federal relations with Indian tribes were centered on trading, wars, and treaty making. In an 1831 decision, the Supreme Court described tribes as "domestic dependent nations" that had broad latitude to create their own laws within tribal areas. In an 1832 decision, the Court ruled that only the federal government could regulate Indian affairs, not state governments. The federal government signed more than 400 Indian treaties during this period, with tribes usually receiving various payments and benefits in return for ceding land. State governments, settlers, and businesses pressured the federal government to seize Indian lands for their own use, and more than 100,000 Indians from the Southeast were pushed off of their lands and moved to reservations west of the Mississippi River.
- 1871 to 1934: Congress ended making Indian treaties in 1871, and it adopted the policy of Indian assimilation under the Dawes or General Allotment Act in 1887. The Act aimed to reduce tribal power by dividing tribal lands into individual parcels. Between 1887 and 1934, Indian lands were dramatically reduced from 138 million acres to 48 million acres. Under the Dawes Act, the BIA was supposed to keep track of individual Indian land holdings and the income generated from the use of those lands, but it completely botched the job, which ultimately led to a \$3.4 billion legal settlement in 2009.
- 1934 to 1953: The Meriam task force report in 1928 detailed the failure of the Dawes Act and federal Indian policies in general, and it helped to usher in the "Indian New Deal" of the 1930s. The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act secured remaining Indian lands in trust status and encouraged the development of tribal governments and tribal constitutions.
- 1953 to 1968: Congress reversed course and once again tried to assimilate Indians in a heavy-handed manner. The government ended federal recognition of more than 100 tribes, reduced tribal land holdings, and relocated Indians to urban areas.
- 1968 to today: The Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 reversed the federal policy direction again, and launched a new era of Indian "self-determination." In recent decades, federal policies have generally aimed at facilitating tribal sovereignty or self-rule. Today, the government still controls many aspects of reservation life, but tribes have more flexibility in pursuing economic opportunities. However, "tribal sovereignty" is not the same thing as the sovereignty of Indian individuals, and reforms are still needed to enhance individual rights and improve the rule of law on reservations.

The 2010 Census found that there are 2.9 million American Indians and Alaskan Natives in the United States. Of this total, about 954,000, or 33 percent, live on Indian reservations and in Alaskan native villages. The largest reservation is the

Navajo Nation, which covers 24,000 square miles and is inhabited by 176,000 people.

There are 565 federally recognized Indian tribes and native groups, including 340 in the lower 48 states and 225 in Alaska. The number of recognized tribes has increased in recent decades. Federal recognition gives tribes certain powers of self-government, access to federal subsidies, and gaming privileges.

The BIA and BIE cost federal taxpayers \$2.9 billion in fiscal 2011. The agencies have about 9,000 employees, of which about 90 percent have Indian ancestry—apparently because of long-standing preferences in federal hiring. The agencies operate about 50 different subsidy programs, including programs for education, economic development, tribal courts, road maintenance, agriculture, and social services. The BIE provides primary and secondary education to 41,000 students in 183 schools.

Aside from the BIA and BIE, many other federal agencies have subsidy programs for American Indians. The Department of Health and Human Services houses the Indian Health Service, which has a budget of about \$4 billion. The Department of Housing and Urban Development runs the Native American Housing Block Grant Program, which has a budget of about \$800 million. And the Department of Education spends more than \$300 million a year on BIE schools. However, this essay focuses mainly on the programs, policies, and management of the BIA and BIE.

Alaska Native Corporations

Another economic development scheme based on preferential regulations is the procurement regime created for Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs). ANC preferences were carved into federal law with the help of a former Republican senator who was infamous for his pork-barrel politics: Alaska's Ted Stevens. ANCs have become a scandal-prone instrument of federal policy towards Native Americans.

Stevens helped create ANCs in 1971 as part of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. In the 1980s and 1990s, the senator helped get new rules passed that gave ANCs special advantages in federal procurement under the Small Business Administration's Section 8(a) program. The rules allow ANCs to win no-bid federal contracts of any dollar amount without the usual competition between contractors.

ANCs are supposed to advance the general welfare of individuals in Alaskan tribes. However, an investigation by Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) found that ANCs provide relatively few benefits to individuals compared with the large size of ANC contracts that are being awarded. And while ANCs receive preferences under "small business" rules, a large share of ANCs contracts goes to a small number of large firms.

Unlike other small businesses that receive federal contracts, ANCs "can subcontract with businesses of any size. This privilege coupled with the sole-source privilege makes the firms attractive to contracting officers who may want to pass work through to a large government contractor." As a result, ANCs are sometimes little more than fronts for large nontribal corporations. One ANC on Alaska's Kodiak Island won a \$28 million contract to replace windows on a federal building in Boston, but it contracted out 80 percent of the job to a firm in Alabama. Another ANC, which is owned by the Yup'ik Eskimos and Athabascan Indians, won a \$57 million contract to build bridges in California, and then turned around and subcontracted two-thirds of the job to one of the world's largest construction companies.

Here is what the Washington Post found out about one ANC in 2011:

For years as a lawyer in Washington, Paralee White had helped small and disadvantaged firms break into the federal contracting market. Then she decided to help herself. She started a business and was soon making more than \$500,000 a year through a contracting program intended to help poor Alaska natives, even though she isn't an Alaska native. White also helped her family. She hired her sister and brother, paying them as much as \$280,000 a year. She helped her sister's boyfriend set up his own firm in partnership with Alaska natives. He made more than \$500,000 a year....

Over several years, White and her associates landed more than \$500 million in construction contracts for the Navy and other Pentagon departments, nearly all of them through an SBA program aimed at boosting Alaska native corporations. But less than 1 percent of that money made it back to the native-owned corporations.

In cases like this, the effect of ANCs is to distort federal procurement by giving certain businesses an unfair advantage in winning contracts. In other cases, ANCs win contracts and keep them in-house even when they have little expertise in the activity. The effect is to steer federal work to possibly inferior businesses. As one example, a half-billion-dollar contract for scanning machines at U.S. border crossings was given to an ANC in 2002 that had little related experience. The established leaders in the scanning machine field were not allowed to bid on this project.

ANCs are becoming an important issue because they are no longer a small and obscure part of federal contracting. The value of federal contracts won by ANCs soared from \$508 million in 2000 to \$5.2 billion in 2008. Before the distortions caused by ANCs get any worse, federal policymakers should repeal these special contracting preferences.

“Chapter 12: The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act at 35: Delivering the Promise,” James D. Linxwiler, Guess & Rudd, 2007 [91]

<https://www.guessrudd.com/Articles/The-Alaska-Native-Claims-Settlement-Act-at-35.pdf>

Overview:

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), enacted in 1971, was an experiment in resolving aboriginal title in Alaska. In ANCSA, Congress sought to resolve claims of aboriginal title without resort to tribes, reservations, and litigation. Instead, Congress created 13 for-profit regional corporations and 225 for-profit village corporations, and conveyed to them some 40 million acres of land, and \$962.5 million.

ANCSA embodied a totally new approach to resolving aboriginal title claims, unlike any used anywhere before or since. ANCSA was driven in large part by the need to resolve aboriginal title claims that prevented the development of the North Slope oilfields and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and it was drafted from the beginning with profitable business activities and resource developments in mind, so it can be viewed as a unique response to the interaction of native peoples and mineral development.

ANCSA posed a compelling mix of statutory complexity, national policies, and the interests of Alaska Natives. While the initial approach embodied a considerable amount of idealism concerning the transformational power of capitalism, ANCSA almost immediately embarked upon a course of extensive litigation and statutory amendments—midcourse corrections required to adjust ANCSA to the real world. The result is a smoothly functioning statutory system of corporations administering assets for the Alaska Native community. However, the result also deviates somewhat from the original conception of ANCSA, and in certain ways more resembles traditional Indian policy, at least to the extent that ANCSA now seeks to preserve the ANCSA land base and corporate structure from economic forces to ensure perpetual ownership by Natives. For example, undeveloped ANCSA lands now cannot be taxed or taken in satisfaction of debts or in bankruptcy proceedings; ANCSA stock, which was to be freely alienable after 20 years, now is not alienable unless a corporation so elects; and the one-time issuance of corporate shares can be augmented by issuance of shares to new shareholders (for instance, to those born after adoption of ANCSA); ANCSA corporate lands and resources, originally intended to be fully subject to economic forces, are subject to protections that make them exempt from creditors under the Automatic Land Bank until such lands are “developed or leased or sold”; and notwithstanding ANCSA’s effort to resolve Native claims without resort to tribal entities, such entities and their sovereign powers have spontaneously arisen as public issues. ANCSA was an experiment, and it has been flexibly adapted to conform to experience.

ANCSA—as it was, and as it has become—is noteworthy as various alternative forms for resolving native and aboriginal claims are explored worldwide.

The results are impressive: In 2004, the most recent year for which there are figures, the major ANCSA corporations had total combined revenues of \$4.47 billion; and

seven of the top ten Alaska-owned businesses were Native corporations, which distributed \$117.5 million in shareholder dividends, employed 3,116 Native shareholders and 12,536 people overall in the State of Alaska, and donated \$5.4 million in scholarships for 3,040 Alaska Native students.

This business success also signals a success, somewhat late in coming, for the original vision for ANCSA, which was to create profit-making corporations, instead of tribal governments, as the focal point of the resolution of aboriginal claims in Alaska, in the hopes that this would lead to the maximum benefit for the Alaska Native community. While there are persistent social problems in the Alaska Native community that are not directly addressed by ANCSA, its record of achievement is noteworthy.

Current & Relevant Information:

Summary of ANCSA

ANCSA fundamentally provides as follows: section 2 establishes overall policies; section 4 extinguishes aboriginal title; section 5 provides for the enrollment of Alaska Natives by the Secretary of the Interior; section 7 provides for the incorporation of 12 land-owning and “for profit” regional corporations, one non-land-owning regional corporation for non-residents, and the issuance of stock in these corporations to Natives on the rolls. Section 8 similarly provides for the incorporation of about 225 village corporations within the regional corporation geographic areas, either as “for profit” or non-profit corporations and the issuance of separate stock to those Natives enrolled in a village corporation. Section 6 provides for the establishment of the Alaska Native Fund and the payment to the regional corporations over the following ten years of \$962.5 million; Section 11 provides for the withdrawal of 25 townships of lands surrounding each of about 225 villages, including lands TA’d to the State of Alaska for conveyance pursuant to section 6(g) of the Alaska Statehood Act, and for “deficiency” withdrawals; section 12 provides for selection of such lands by the village and regional corporations; and section 14 provides for the conveyance of such lands to the regional and village corporations “immediately after selection.” Additional provisions of ANCSA include section 7(i), which provides for the distribution by the regional corporations of 70% of their mineral revenues among all 12 land-owning regional corporations; section 16, which establishes land withdrawals for nine southeastern Alaska villages; and section 21, which originally provided for tax exemptions through 1991. Third-party rights are protected in sections 11, 14(c) and (g), 16, and 22(b) and (c). Under section 19, village corporations on existing Indian reservations could elect to receive the surface and subsurface of their reservation lands in fee and receive nothing further under ANCSA.

Provisions Relating to Native Corporation Structure

The provisions of ANCSA that establish Native corporations consist of section 7, primarily pertaining to regional corporations; section 8, primarily pertaining to village corporations; sections 6 and 9, dealing with the Alaska Native Fund (\$962.5 million); and sections 5 and 7(g), relating to the enrollment of Alaska Natives. Since 1992, there has not been substantial change to these provisions, and this section is therefore brief. Readers interested in these provisions should consult this author's 1992 article. Here, we primarily focus on a brief description of these provisions and enumerate a few recent legislative changes.

Section 7—Regional Corporations

Section 7(a) and (b) created 12 land-holding regional corporations covering all of Alaska, and section 7(c) created a thirteenth region for non-resident Natives which was conveyed no land by the United States. Because the 12 land-owning regional corporations hold title to subsurface natural resources, and have a broad population base, they play a critical role in the ANCSA settlement. Under ANCSA § 7(d) the 12 regional corporations are organized under existing Alaska corporate law, which contains a number of special provisions for ANCSA corporations. Originally, under ANCSA § 7(g), stock was issued only to Natives of quarter blood quantum or more who were alive on December 18, 1971. This had the effect of disenfranchising “after born,” natives born after December 18, 1971, and thus gave a “one time” character to the settlement. The 1991 Legislation amended these provisions to allow issuance of stock to Natives or descendants of Natives who were born after 1971, who were not initially enrolled, or who were more than 65 years of age. These changes resolved criticism of the “one time” nature of the original enactment, and have given needed flexibility for stock issuance.

Section 8—Village Corporations

ANCSA § 8(a) requires the organization of village corporations under Alaska corporate law as part of the receipt of lands or any benefits under ANCSA. Section 11(b) lists about 225 historic villages in Alaska in which village corporations might be organized. However, unlike the specific mandatory provisions relative to creating regional corporations, the eligibility of a village (whether named in ANCSA § 11(b) or not) was uncertain until the Secretary granted it village status. ANCSA § 3(c) requires that village corporations possess at least 25 shareholders. In addition, ANCSA § 10(b) and the regulations also require the village to have “on April 1, 1970, an identifiable physical location evidenced by occupancy consistent with the Natives’ own cultural patterns and life style . . . ; [t]he Village must not be modern and urban in character; and . . . [i]n the case of unlisted Villages, a majority of the residents must be Native. . . .” Like many of the other complex and untested provisions of ANCSA, these regulatory requirements for village eligibility led to litigation, which was resolved by settlement only after many years of protracted negotiation. Similar litigation relating to the recognition of a Native group (a Native organization with less

than 25 members), which would entitle the group to receive fee title to certain land under ANCSA, continued for several years and was only recently resolved.

“American Indians and Alaska Natives - What About Alaska?” Administration for Native Americans, 19 March 2014 [92] <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/fact-sheet/american-indians-and-alaska-natives-what-about-alaska>

Current & Relevant Information:

- In 1971, Congress passed a comprehensive law, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which changed the nature of the government’s relationship with Alaska Natives and gave them rights and interests not enjoyed by any other indigenous group.
- The ANCSA gave Alaska Natives approximately \$960 million in compensation for extinguishing all of their aboriginal land claims. ANCSA also gave Alaska Natives ownership rights to 40 million acres of land.
- Of the 40 million acres, the surface rights in 22 million acres were divided among over two hundred Native villages according to their population, with each village selecting its homelands and incorporating itself under state law. The remaining 18 million acres and the subsurface rights in the entire 40 million acres were conveyed to thirteen Alaska Native regional corporations. Therefore, 22 million acres patented to the villages are dually owned: the surface is owned by the village corporation while the subsurface is owned by the regional corporation.
- Under ANCSA, all persons living on December 18, 1971 and possessing one-quarter or more Native blood were automatically enrolled in a regional corporation and issued one hundred shares of its corporate stock.
- ANCSA requires each regional corporation to use its land and resources for the profit of its shareholders.
- When originally enacted ANCSA prohibited shareholders from selling their shares for twenty years and it also exempted the land owned by Native corporations from state and local taxation during this same twenty-year period. In 1988, Congress amended ANCSA and extended the restriction on taxation indefinitely and permitted the corporations to extend indefinitely the restriction on sales of corporate stock.
- While ANCSA was enacted by Congress with the intent that litigation could be avoided regarding land claims, it has resolved some disputes but created others.
- In 1993 the Department of the Interior issued a ruling stating that Native villages and corporations have the same status as the tribes in the lower forty-eight states and are “entitled to the same protection, immunities, and privileges as other acknowledged tribes.”

- In 2001, the Alaska Supreme Court reversed three of its prior decisions and held that “Alaska Native tribes are sovereign powers under federal law” and therefore had the right, as was the specific issue in the case, to enforce the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

**“Forest Service Acquisition of Harvested Native Lands in Southeast Alaska,”
Gunnar Knapp, Institute of Social and Economic Research University of Alaska
Anchorage, October 1991 [93]**

https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy_publication_links/1991_10-ForestServiceAcquisitionHarvestedNativeLands.pdf

Abstract:

This study describes Native lands in southeast Alaska and discusses the market value of these lands. The study was mandated by section 501(c) of the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990, to assess the feasibility of Forest Service acquisition of significantly harvested lands. During the course of the study, neither the Forest Service nor any Native corporations indicated either a specific or a general interest in such acquisitions; thus, the study focuses on providing general background information about Native lands and their market value.

There are thirteen southeast Alaska Native corporations--twelve village corporations and one regional corporation (Sealaska Corporation). These corporations account for almost all privately owned timberland in southeast Alaska. Together the corporations own about 518,000 acres of land, of which about 450,000 acres (88 percent) are timberland. Timber harvesting began in 1979, and as of 1990 about 3300 MMBF had been harvested. Although comprehensive data are not available, a rough estimate of total harvested area is 180,000 acres, or about 55 percent of village corporation lands and about 11 percent of Sealaska corporation lands.

The value of remote lands in southeast Alaska may range from as high as \$15,000/acre (for lands with high volumes of standing timber and low harvest costs, or small parcels with exceptionally favorable locations for remote cabins) to as little as \$100/acre for harvested timberland or non-forest land. Long rotations make the present value of future timber harvests from new regeneration small. Any proposed land acquisitions would require specific appraisals to evaluate timber volume and quality, access, and scenic characteristics, all of which significantly affect market value.

A major problem in estimating market values for harvested timberland in southeast Alaska is that no sales of large tracts of harvested or unharvested lands have occurred. Large tracts might command significantly lower per-acre prices than have occurred in the past for small tracts.

Current & Relevant Information:

Southeast Alaska Native Corporations

Most private lands in southeast Alaska are owned by Native corporations created under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). This chapter reviews ANCSA and the southeast Alaska Native corporations.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

Background:

In 1971, the U.S. Government settled the aboriginal land claims of Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts in Alaska with passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The Government had long acknowledged that the Native peoples in Alaska had some rights to land in Alaska because they had lived on and used that land for thousands of years and had never signed treaties relinquishing their rights. But for many years there was no pressing need to define Native land rights: Alaska was a huge place with few people, the Federal Government owned virtually all the land, and Alaska Natives had much the same access to land that they had always had.

In 1959, Alaska became a State, and the new State Government received rights to select more than 100 million acres. Native groups decided that the time had come to act on their claims. Within a few years, essentially all of Alaska was under Native claim, and in 1967 the Secretary of the Interior halted land transfers to the State Government until the claims were settled. Soon after, in 1968, oil companies exploring on the North Slope discovered what proved to be the largest known oil field in North America: the 10-billion-barrel Prudhoe Bay field. Development of that field and construction of a pipeline across Alaska were also prevented by the unresolved Native land claims.

Settlement terms:

The freeze on State land transfers and the huge untapped oil field put Alaska Natives in a strong bargaining position. On December 18, 1971, ANCSA became law and awarded Alaska Natives by far the biggest settlement ever of aboriginal claims: \$1 billion and 40 million acres. The act also gave Native villages on existing land reserves the option of taking ownership of those lands. Several villages did so, thereby bringing total land awarded Alaska Natives under the act to about 44 million acres.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act is a complicated law that has been amended many times since 1971. Congressional and court battles over provisions of the act are still going on. Below, I briefly describe the general terms of the act and the provisions most relevant to this study.

Regional and village corporations:

The claims settlement called for the establishment of Native regional and village corporations to manage the land and money awards. These corporations--

particularly the regional corporations--were to be profit-making and thereby parlay the settlement land and money into a healthy economic future for Alaska Natives. Thirteen regional corporations--12 in Alaska and 1 for Natives living outside the State--and more than 200 village corporations were formed under the act. All Natives alive on the day the act was signed into law were to share in the settlement. Under terms of the act, eligible Natives were defined as those able to prove that they were at least one-quarter Eskimo, Indian, or Aleut. Each eligible Native was to receive his share of the settlement by enrolling in a regional and a village corporation and becoming a stockholder. About 78,000 persons ultimately enrolled under the act.

Cash award:

The \$1 billion cash award came partly from Federal money and partly from State Government petroleum revenues. It was paid in installments, with the final installment paid in 1981. The payments were split roughly in half between regional and village corporations, with the payments to individual corporations based mostly on population.

Land award:

Transferring 40 million acres from Federal to Native ownership has been a slow, complex, contentious process. At the end of 1987, Native corporations had received title to about 88 percent of their lands.

The village corporations received surface rights to about 22 million acres. The regional corporations received subsurface rights to the village lands. Each village corporation received lands according to its population. In most of Alaska, the smallest villages (those with populations of less than 100) received 69,120 acres each, or three townships, while the largest villages (those with populations of more than 600) received 161,280 acres each, or seven townships. (A "township" is an area of six miles by six miles, or 23,040 acres. A township contains 36 sections. A "section" is an area of one mile by one mile, or 640 acres.)

Exceptions to this general rule were the village corporations in southeast Alaska, which received rights to 23,040 acres each, regardless of population. They received less land because of an earlier cash settlement of a suit brought by the Tlingit and Haida Indians. (The \$7.5 million settlement was based on the estimated worth of land used and occupied by Natives at the time of the establishment of the Tongass National Forest in 1907) (Arnold 1976: 91, 92, 106, 107, 150; ANCSA, Section 16 (c)).

Most of the remaining 16 million acres were divided among the regional corporations under a complicated formula based largely on land area within the region: the regions largest in acreage got the most land, even if their populations were small. Six regional corporations received land under this formula; the Doyon region in the

interior and the Arctic Slope region got the largest shares. Rights to regional corporation lands include both surface and subsurface rights.

Taxation of ANCSA lands:

Under section 21(d) of ANCSA, timber and land received by Native corporations under ANCSA that is undeveloped is exempt from State and local property taxes for 20 years after the date of enactment of ANCSA.

7(i) provision:

Section 7(i) of ANCSA requires each regional corporation to distribute 70 percent of its net revenues from timber and mineral development among the 12 Alaska-based regional corporations (including the distributing corporation). This provision was included in the law on the grounds that some regions would be richer in resources than others would. Application of the revenue-sharing provision has been the subject of many disputes and several court battles. In 1982, a Settlement Agreement was adopted by the regional corporations that clarified procedures for 7(i) distributions. Village corporations are not required to share their timber revenues with other corporations.

1991 provisions:

The act originally said that stock in Native corporations could not be sold or seized for most kinds of debt until 20 years after the act was passed; after 1991, Native corporate stock was to become freely transferable. As 1991 drew closer, Native leaders worried that when it became legal for shareholders to sell or lose their stock the corporations could go under the control of non-Natives, and that as a result Natives would lose control of the lands they had been awarded in settlement of their aboriginal claims.

Native groups asked Congress to extend the ban on stock sales beyond 1991. At the end of 1987, Congress passed legislation that extends the ban on transfer of stock past 1991 but allows stockholders in each corporation the option of deciding whether to make their stock freely transferable, subject to a vote of 50% of the stockholders. Then-President Reagan signed this legislation in February 1988 (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Amendments of 1987).

The 1991 amendments also made several other significant changes to ANCSA. The 20-year exemption of undeveloped Native lands from State and local taxation was made permanent rather than ending in 1991. If timber harvests occur, only the approximate area where timber is being harvested is subject to taxation. After commercial harvests end, timberland is no longer considered "developed" and is protected from taxation (Alaska Federation of Natives 1988).

Southeast Alaska Native Corporations

Under ANCSA, Congress created 1 regional corporation for southeast Alaska, Sealaska Corporation. Alaska Natives enrolled in Sealaska represent about 21 percent of total Alaska Native enrollment (Sealaska Corporation 1987: 27). The act also created 10 village corporations and 2 urban corporations. The urban corporations, created for Juneau and Sitka, were established under a different section of ANCSA.

Table 11-1 summarizes the names of the villages and corporations, the number of shareholders, and the area of their land entitlement. The total ANCSA land entitlement of the Native corporations is about 544,000 acres, of which Sealaska Corporation is to receive about half.

Table II-1--Southeast Alaska Native Corporations

| Type of corporation | Village or city | Corporation name | Number of shareholders ^a | Land entitlement ^b |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | Acres |
| Village | Angoon | Kootznoowoo, Inc. | 620 | 23,040 |
| Village | Craig | Shaan-Seet, Inc. | 317 | 23,040 |
| Village | Hoonah | Huna Totem Corp. | 870 | 23,040 |
| Village | Hydaburg | Haida Corp. | 563 | 23,040 |
| Urban | Juneau | Goldbelt, Inc. | 2,722 | 23,040 |
| Village | Kake | Kake Tribal Corp. | 558 | 23,040 |
| Village | Kasaan | Kavilco, Inc. | 119 | 23,040 |
| Village | Klawock | Klawock Heenya Corp. | 518 | 23,040 |
| Village | Klukwan | Klukwan, Inc. | 250 | 23,040 |
| Village | Saxman | Cape Fox Corp. | 230 | 23,040 |
| Urban | Sitka | Shee-Atika, Inc. | 1,804 | 23,040 |
| Village | Yakutat | Yak-Tat-Kwaan, Inc. | 392 | 23,040 |
| Total, village and urban corporations | | | 8,963 | 276,480 |
| Regional | | Sealaska Corporation | 15,388 ^c | approx. 267,250 |
| Total | | | 15,388 | approx. 543,730 |

^aSource (except for Sealaska Corporation): Hoffman 1987.

^bSource: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 1990. Region 10 Native Land Selections Statistics as of July 1, 1990. 16 p. Unpublished table. On file with Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage, 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508. Village corporation entitlements include only those described in Sections 14 and 16 of ANCSA; additional entitlements provided for in subsequent legislation are not included. Sealaska entitlement is approximate: entitlement will vary depending upon selection of 14(h)(1), 14(h)(2), 14(h)(3), and (14(h)(5) sites.

^cSource: Arnold 1978: xvi. Sealaska enrollments as of June 30, 1978. Village corporation shareholders are also Sealaska shareholders.

“Overview of Entities Operating in the Twelve Regions,” ANCSA Regional Association, 2020 [94] <https://ancsaregional.com/overview-of-entities/>

Overview:

Entities Operating in the Twelve Regions

To understand the complex landscape of Alaska Native representation, it's important to learn the differences between Alaska Native corporations, Alaska Native regional non-profit organizations, and federally recognized tribes.

Similar to Lower 48, federally recognized tribes in Alaska possess a government-to-government relationship with the federal government. However, the federally recognized tribes located in Alaska do not have a land base (e.g. reservations). Through ANCSA, Alaska Native corporations hold title to roughly 44 million acres of land held in private corporate ownership. Because land ownership and the government-to-government relationship are held by two different and distinct entities that represent Alaska Native people, the differences in Alaska are magnified when compared to the Lower 48 Tribes.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaska Native Regional Corporations:

Number currently operating in Alaska: 12

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 extinguished aboriginal land title and mandated the creation of private, for-profit corporations owned by Alaska Native shareholders. Alaska Native regional corporations are owned by over 130,000 Alaska Native shareholders and hold title to nearly 27 million acres of land across Alaska. Alaska Native regional corporations manage the land for the benefit of their shareholders. Alaska Native regional corporations do not possess a government-to-government relationship with the federal government.

For more information about Alaska Native regional corporations: [ARA About ANCSA](#)

Alaska Native Regional Non-profit Organizations:

Number in Alaska: 12

Alaska Native regional non-profit organizations were created to provide social services and health care for Alaska Native peoples. The specific objectives of the organizations vary but generally focus on health, cultural, and educational opportunities. Through federal compacts, grant funding, support from the regional corporations, collaboration with village non-profit organizations, and other means, the regional non-profits deliver a range of services. Programs include physical and behavioral health care, scholarships for Alaska Native students, sponsorship of cultural events, Alaska Native language preservation efforts, protection of sites with historic or religious importance, and more.

For a complete list of the Alaska Native Regional Nonprofit Organizations: [State of Alaska Department of Commerce](#)

Communities, Cities, and Boroughs:

Communities:

Number in Alaska: over 160, including 114 city governments

The State of Alaska has three classes of city governments: home rule, first class, and second class. The classification of a city government determines what governance structure must be followed within its boundaries. There are 114 organized city governments in Alaska ranging in population size from less than 100 to more than 270,000.

Boroughs:

Number in Alaska: 18

The State of Alaska has five classes of borough governments. Whether the borough is organized or unorganized and its classification determines what type of governance structure must be followed within its boundaries.

For more information about Alaska communities and boroughs: [Alaska Community Database Online](#)

Alaska Native Village Corporations:

Number currently operating in Alaska: 174

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 extinguished aboriginal land title and mandated the creation of private, for-profit corporations owned by Alaska Native shareholders. Alaska Native village corporations are owned by Alaska Native shareholders and hold title to nearly 17 million acres of land across Alaska. Alaska Native village corporations manage the land for the benefit of their shareholders. Alaska Native village corporations do not possess a government-to-government relationship with the federal government.

For more information about Alaska Native village corporations: [Alaska Native Village Corporation Association](#)

Federally Recognized Tribes:

Number in Alaska: 229

Federally recognized tribes possess certain inherent rights of self-government (i.e., tribal sovereignty) and have a government-to-government relationship with the United States federal government. The designation comes with specific responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations. Federally recognized tribes possess certain inherent rights of self-government and have government-to-

government relationship with the United States federal government. The designation comes with specific responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations. Most federally recognized tribes in the lower 48 are able to exercise their powers within a land base (e.g. reservations). Alaska's federally recognized tribes are unique because aboriginal land title was extinguished through ANCSA and reservations were not created. Federally recognized tribes are eligible to receive certain federal benefits, services, and protections, such as funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

For more information about federally recognized tribes: [The Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Leader Directory](#)

Federal Indian Reservations:

Number in Alaska: 1

A federal Indian reservation is an area of land reserved for a tribe under treaty or other agreement with the United States. Generally, federal Indian reserves are exempt from state jurisdiction, except when Congress specifically authorizes such jurisdiction. There are over 320 Indian land areas in the United States that are administered as federal Indian reservations; however, as evidenced in Alaska, not every federally recognized tribe has a reservation. There is only one federal Indian reservation in Alaska, the Annette Island Reserve: <http://www.metlakatla.com/>

For more information about federal Indian reservations: [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#)

Prominent Alaska Native Cultures:

Number in Alaska: 11

Alaska Natives belong to many varied cultures, including Inupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Athabascan, Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Sugpiaq, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Unangax. Within the eleven distinct cultures, there are various subcultures with differences in dialect, cultural activities, and traditional ways of life. Among the eleven major cultures, over 20 different languages are spoken.

3. Language:

A. Native Languages:

“Alaskan Native Languages,” alaska-natives.com [95] <https://www.alaskan-natives.com/alaskan-native-languages/>

Overview:

Twenty different Alaskan Native languages were spoken in Alaska when it became a state in 1959. One language, Eyak, is now extinct, with the last speaker dying in 2008.

Though not included as a modern Alaska Native language, Tsetsaut was still spoken in the region of the Portland Canal in southern Alaska at the time of Alaska's purchase by the United States in 1867. The last speaker likely died in the 1930s or 1940's.

Some authors also considered the Salcha-Goodpaster dialect of Lower Tanana to be a distinct language, known as Middle Tanana, but the last speaker died in 1993.

Most of these languages belong to one of two large language families; Eskimo-Aleut and Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit both belong to the Na-Dene language family.

The Tsimshian language arrived in Alaska only recently in 1887, moving under the leadership of Anglican missionary William Duncan.

The Tsimshian language spoken in Alaska is one of four Tsimshianic languages, the other three are spoken in Canada.

The Haida language, once thought to be related to Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit, is a language isolate, not demonstrably related to any other language.

Current & Relevant Information:

Alaskan Language Family Trees

Inuit-Yupik-Unangan ([Eskimo-Aleut](#))

- [Unangan](#) (Aleut)
- Alutiiq (Sugpiaq)
- Central Alaskan Yup'ik (with Cup'ik and Cup'ig)
- St. Lawrence Island Yupik
- [Inupiaq](#)

Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit (Na-Dene)

- Tlingit
- Eyak
- [Athabaskan](#)
 - [Ahtna](#)
 - Dena'ina
 - [Deg Xinag](#)
 - Holikachuk

- Upper Kuskokwim
- Koyukon
- Lower Tanana
- Tanacross
- Upper Tanana
- Gwich'in
- Hän
- Haida
- Tsimshian

Article Index:

[Ahtna or Ahtena is the Na-Dené language of the Ahtna ethnic group](#)

Ahtna or Ahtena is the Na-Dené language of the Ahtna ethnic group of the Copper River area of Alaska. The language is also known as Copper River or Mednovskiy.

[Athabaskan languages spoken in Alaska](#)

The 31 Northern Athabaskan languages are spoken throughout the interior of Alaska.

The differences among Athabaskan languages may be compared to differences among Indo-European languages. Thus, Koyukon and Dena'ina are about as different as French and Spanish, while Koyukon and Gwich'in are as different as English and Italian.

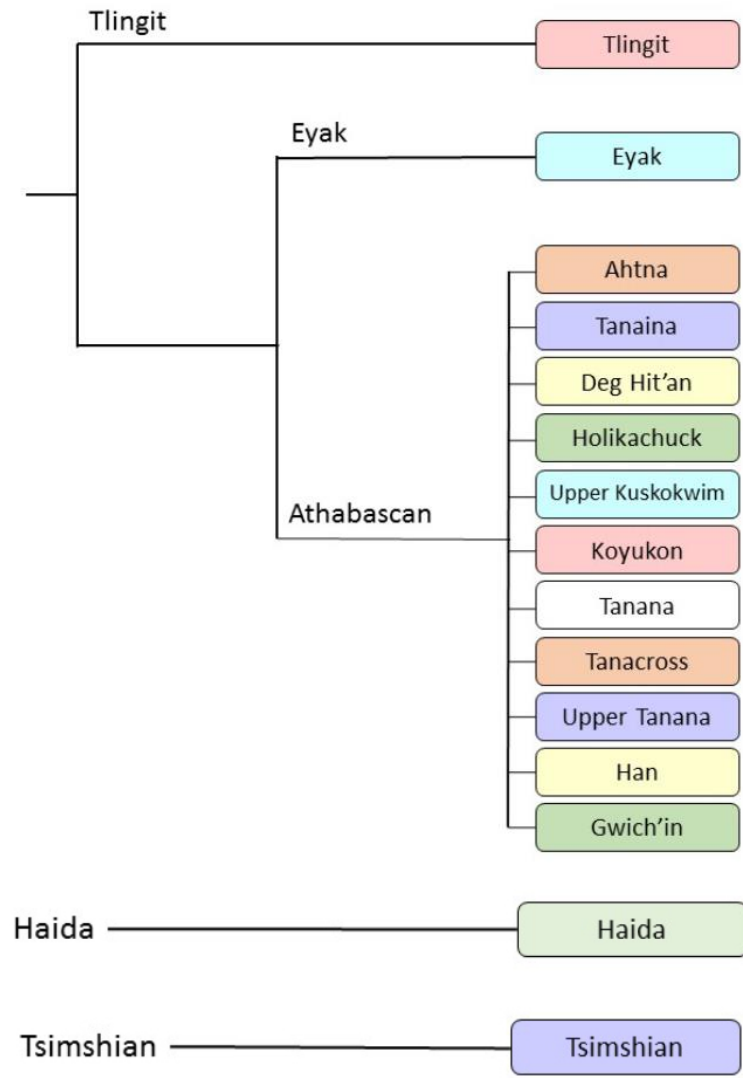
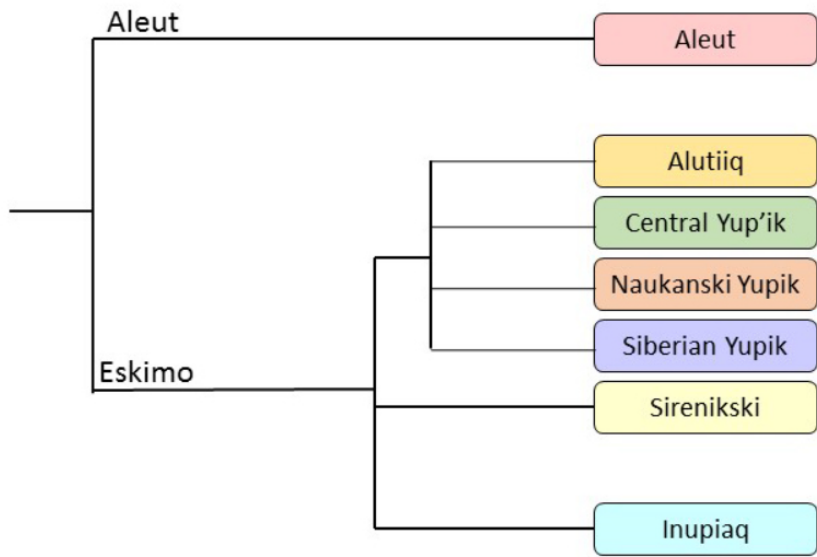
[Deg Xinag is a Northern Athabaskan language spoken in Alaska](#)

The Deg Hit'an (also known as Deg Hitan, Degexit'an, and Kaiyuhkhotana) are a group of Northern Athabaskan peoples in Alaska. Their native language is called Deg Xinag.

[Eskimo–Aleut languages](#)

[The Iñupiaq name for the bumble bee flower has been lost](#)

[The Inupiat languages \(Alaskan Inuit\)](#)



Language Relationships

Alaska is home to at least 20 Native languages belonging to four distinct language families. As the term implies, a language family is a group of languages descended from a common ancestor. Languages related in this way often share many resemblances, just as do people descended from a common ancestor. Of course, just as unrelated people may look alike, languages may be similar without being related through a common ancestor.

In Alaska it is relatively easy to distinguish language families. The difference between Eskimo-Aleut and Athabascan-Eyak-Tlingit (AET) is immediately obvious even to the casual listener. First, the sound systems are very different. For example, AET languages all contain ejective, or popping, consonants, while Eskimo-Aleut languages do not. Furthermore, the rules of word formation are completely different in the two families. Eskimo-Aleut languages build words by adding suffixes to the right end of a word root, while AET languages build words by adding prefixes to the left end of word root. The Haida and Tsimshian languages are not related to either the Eskimo-Aleut or AET families. Tsimshian is related to three other languages in Canada that together form the Tsimshianic family. Haida, though structurally quite similar to Tlingit, has not been demonstrably related to any other language family in the world. It is a language isolate.

Distinguishing between individual languages within a family of related languages is a much more difficult task. The crucial problem is deciding just how much of a difference justifies calling two speech varieties different languages rather than different dialects.

Family Trees

Relationships between languages can be modeled in a way similar to human genealogy using a family tree.

At the lower levels of the tree this model is imperfect for describing languages, as the effects of diffusion become more pronounced. This is particularly true of the Athabascan family, where multiple features have diffused across the family in different directions. Thus, it is not possible to say whether Tanacross is more closely related to Tanana or Han or Upper Tanana or Ahtna. Rather, Tanacross shares certain features with each of the neighboring languages.

The languages of the Eskimo-Aleut family are shades of blue, while the languages of the Athabascan family are shades of red. Eyak and Tlingit are shaded toward yellow or brown, reflecting their status as more distant cousins of the Athabascan languages. Haida and Tsimshian receive completely different colors, reflecting the fact that they are not related to other languages in Alaska.

“What Languages Are Spoken In Alaska?” Kelly Bergevin, World Atlas, 27 September 2018 [97] <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-alaska.html>

Overview:

Although English is the most-spoken language in Alaska, the state also recognizes 20 official Native Languages.

The state of Alaska is located at the northwestern extremity of the continent of North America. The United States of America admitted Alaska as the 49th state on January 3, 1959. It is one of two non-contiguous states, the other being Hawaii. Alaska is bordered by the Canadian province of British Columbia and territory of the Yukon. Alaska also shares a maritime border with Russia across the Bering Strait. Although Alaska is the largest US state, it is also the 3rd least populous with a population of 739,795 according to 2017 estimates. Due to its large size and small population, Alaska is the least densely populated US state.

Current & Relevant Information:

Major Languages of Alaska

The majority of the Alaskan population (approximately 84%) speak English as their primary language. The next largest language is Spanish, spoken by 3.5% of the population. Other Indo-European languages and Asian languages are spoken by 2.2% and 4.3% of the population respectively. In addition, 5.2% of Alaskans speak one of the Alaska Native languages.

Native Languages of Alaska

There are 20 recognized Alaska Native languages in the state. These belong to four language families, being the Inuit-Yupik-Unangan, Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian.

The **Inuit-Yupik-Unangan language family** is also known as the Eskimo-Aleut or Eskaleut languages. This language family is divided into the Aleut language, spoken on the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, and the Eskimo languages, further subdivided into the Yupik languages and the Inuit languages. The Yupik languages are spoken in western and southwestern Alaska as well as in Siberia whereas the Inuit languages are spoken in northern Alaska, as well as in Canada and Greenland.

The **Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit language family** is also known as the Nadene, Na-Dené, and Tlina–Dene languages. It is composed of the Athabaskan and Tlingit languages as well as the extinct Eyak language. The eleven Athabaskan languages are classified as Northern, Pacific Coast, and Southern due to their reach across Alaska and northwestern Canada, as well down the Pacific Coast and in the Southern States. The Tlingit language, on the other hand, is spoken by the Tlingit people of Southeast Alaska and Western Canada.

The **Haida language** is spoken by the Haida people of the Haida Gwaii archipelago (Canada) and Prince of Wales Islands (Alaska). As of 2014, there were only 14 native speakers of this dwindling language.

The **Tsimshian language** is spoken by the Tsimshian peoples of southeastern Alaska and northwestern British Columbia. It is known by the Tsimshian peoples as Sm'álg yax, meaning "real" or "true" language. There were 275 native speakers as of 2016.

Conservation of Native Languages

Although 20 Alaska Native languages were declared official languages in 2014, they are only spoken by small percentage (5.2%) of the Alaskan population. As these languages were not adopted for use by the government, their status as official languages are mostly symbolic. In April 2018, the Alaskan Senate passed a resolution asking Governor Bill Walker to recognize a linguistic emergency in regard to the 20 Alaska Native languages, arguing that loss of language means loss of culture. In September 2018, a state of emergency was declared directing the promotion of the Alaska Native languages in the media and the education system.

What Languages Are Spoken In Alaska?

| Rank | Alaska Native Languages |
|------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Ahtna |
| 2 | Alutiiq |
| 3 | Central Alaskan Yup'ik |
| 4 | Deg Xinag |
| 5 | Dena'ina |
| 6 | Eyak |
| 7 | Gwich'in |
| 8 | Haida |
| 9 | Hän |
| 10 | Holikachuk |
| 11 | Inupiaq |
| 12 | Koyukon |
| 13 | Siberian Yupik |
| 14 | Tanacross |
| 15 | Tanana |
| 16 | Tlingit |
| 17 | Tsimshian |
| 18 | Unangax |
| 19 | Upper Kuskokwim |
| 20 | Upper Tanana |

“Nurturing Native Languages,” Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Sharing Our Pathways, February 2002 [98] <http://ankn.uaf.edu/sop/SOPv7i1.pdf>

Overview:

Many Americans are intolerant of variability, be it cultural with its concomitant languages, or biological variability in an ecological system. Instead, we see notions of human and cultural superiority with designs for a monolingual and monocultural society in which the English language and its associated culture presumes to become the language and culture of the world. Thus, indigenous cultures have to contend with a language and its ways that has a very “voracious appetite,” as phrased by Richard Little Bear. We, indeed, have a formidable enemy which absorbs our Native languages and cultures very readily, unless we are cognizant of its hunger and take protective steps. This mass culture can be most appealing to young people. Its behaviorisms, codes of dress, languages and sometimes destructive proclivities inveigle young people to its world.

Current & Relevant Information:

***We know ourselves to be made from this earth.
We know this earth is made from our bodies.
For we see ourselves. And we are nature.
We are nature seeing nature.
We are nature with a concept of nature.
Nature weeping. Nature speaking of nature to nature.***

—Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature*

Griffin’s observations ring true to me because my Yupiaq language is nature-mediated, and thus it is wholesome and healing. It contains the creatures, plants and elements of nature that have named and defined themselves to my ancestors and are naming and defining themselves to me. My ancestors made my language from nature. When I speak Yupiaq, I am thrust into the thought world of my ancestors.

Let me cite two examples of the elements of nature naming and defining themselves. The first is anuqa—the wind. It is telling its name and telling me what it is. It is the moving air which is needed for life. The other is lagiq—the Canadian goose. Its call is “lak, lak, lak” giving its name to us and by its behavior telling us its habitat and its niche in the ecological system. “We are nature with a concept of nature.” Truly!

We, as Native people, have seen our languages become impoverished in the last several centuries. Many of us now speak our Native languages at the fourth and fifth grade levels (if such a grading system existed for us). We look at the wounds in our minds and we see that the wounds also exist in nature itself. “We know ourselves to be made from this earth” and it makes us weep when we see the destruction and pollution around us. We realize that the relationship between ourselves and our places is a “unity of process” (Joan Halifax). We know that there cannot be a separation between the two.

As we lose our Native languages, more and more of us begin to take part in the misuse and abuse of nature. We use English predominately in our everyday lives today. We don't realize that English is a language contrived by the clever rational mind of the human being. The letters were derived by the human mind. The words are a product of a mindset that is given to individualism and materialism in a techno-mechanistic world. For us to think that we can reconstruct a new world by using English and its ways will not work. We need to return to a language that is given to health and healing. To try to make a paradigmatic shift by using the consciousness that constructed this modern world is bound for failure. Albert Einstein stated something to the effect that “you cannot make change in a system using the same consciousness used to construct it.” This should be very clear to us as a Native people.

In my Yupiaq ancestral world egalitarianism was practiced. In this form of governance, no creature, plant or element becomes more important than another. All are equal. In the great state of Alaska, I can incontrovertibly state that racism is alive and seems to be gaining strength. This is a circumstance which is unconscionable and reflects a very destructive and alienated stance in the larger society.

How is it that we “stabilize indigenous languages”? I think that we must once again speak the Native languages in the home a majority of the time. If we expect only the school to do it, it will surely fail. The school must become a reflection of a Native speaking family, home and community. During the waking hours of the day, the children must hear the Native language being spoken—in the home and in school. The one-to-one and family conversation in the local language must be the standard of the day. The community, family, parents and especially the children must begin to know place. How is this to be done? By the Elders, parents and community members speaking to one another in their own language and from the Yupiaq perspective.

“143 Years after Russian America: the Russian language without Russians,”
Evgeny Golovko, St. Petersburg Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian
Academy of Sciences, 20 August 2010 [99]
<http://niniichikrussian.com/documents/Golovko.pdf>

Abstract:

The paper stems from the 'Creole Russian' part of the Project 'Documenting Alaskan Native and Neighboring Languages' funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation, Principal Investigator Dr. Michael Krauss. I collected material during the two summers of 2008 and 2009.

Current & Relevant Information:

History of the 'Creole Russian' part of the Project:

Russian does not belong to Alaskan Native languages. Of the two language categories covered by the Project, 'Alaskan' and 'Neighboring', it should evidently fall into the second one. However, even within this category, it occupies a special place, as, unlike other 'neighboring' languages (Chukchi, Naukan Yupik, Itelmen, etc.), it is spoken not only in the 'neighborhood', across the Bering Strait, but in Alaska as well. As was stated by Michael Krauss in a preliminary note (unpublished) and in oral communication before the Project was launched, there are at least three groups of Russian speakers in Alaska:

1. Newcomers who arrived in Alaska in the 1990s and who mostly reside in the two largest Alaskan cities – Anchorage and Fairbanks. This group is a dispersed one, and it does not form a clear-cut community. However, a small Russian speaking 'compact' community in Delta Junction, in the Fairbanks vicinity, can be treated as an exception. It was formed by 'new' Russian speaking immigrants who, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, left their newly established countries (first of all, Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia) in the 1990s for a variety of reasons, the two most important of which being search for economic stability and religious freedom. From a linguistic perspective, this group is not of primary interest, as the immigrants' Russian is just a variety of Standard Russian, and the interaction between Standard Russian and American English has been studied extensively, see works by Morton Benson (1957, 1960), David Andrews (1997, etc.), Maria Polinsky (1994, 1995, 1997); see also publications on diaspora Russian in Australia – by Ludmila Kouzmin (1973, 1982, 1988), Mark Garner (1985), in Harbin – Juha Janhunen (1987), in France – Golubeva-Monatkina (1993, 1994), in Germany (Ekaterina Protassova (1996), in Finland – Larissa Liesio (2001, etc.), Ekaterina Protassova (1994, etc.).

2. Old Believers. Historically, they stem from the Trans-Baikalian Old Believers community which moved to Manchuria during the construction of the East Chinese railroad and the city of Kharbin. After the Russian communist revolution of 1917, many of the Siberian Old Believers escaped over the boarder to China to join the already existing communities in remote areas of Manchuria and Sinkiang. Another communist revolution, the one of 1949 in China, again, caused disturbance among Old Believers, often with tragic results. By the late 1950, a minority of them, with an assistance from international organizations, were relocated (via Hong Kong) to other countries, at their choice. The largest groups

went to Brazil and Australia. Old Believers began their immigration to North America in the mid-1960s, most of them settled down in Oregon (the first families arrived from Brazil). In the course of time, being afraid of cultural assimilation, several families from Oregon moved to a more isolated area, Alaska. Today there are Old Believers communities in the Kenai Peninsula (Nikolaevsk) and on Kodiak Archipelago (Afognak, Raspberry Island). Despite certain controversies (due to different views of religious conduct) between some groups, the on-going globalization keeps Old Believers in different continents in close touch – by the internet and cell phones. Relatives from South America come to Alaskan communities to make money as seasonal workers in fishing industry. There is a number of publications studying Old Believers from an ethnographic and linguistic perspective: Dolitsky and Kuzmina 1986, Dolitsky 1991, see the collection of works 'Russkij yazyk zarubezhya' published in Moscow; currently, at St. Petersburg State University, there is a project under way studying Old Believers' traditions and language in South America.

3. Descendants of Russian colonists. As is well known, Alaska was a Russian colony from the mid-18th century till 1867. Despite a relatively small number of proper 'Russians' in Alaska at all times (barely more than one thousand), the one-hundred-year Russian presence has had a tremendous impact on Native Alaskan cultures. In connection with this Project, it should be, first of all, mentioned that, among all other lands colonized by Russia, Alaska occupies a special place as regards the imposed social structure. Unlike any other part of Russia, the newly colonized land was ruled by a non-governmental formation, called the Russian-American Company (RAC). After a certain time of service, *promyshlenniki* (white people in service), Creoles, and the Aleut had right to retire. Those who wanted to stay in the 'colonies' could settle down in one of the two specially designed villages – Ninilchik in the Kenai Peninsula, and Afognak in the Kodiak Archipelago. (It should be noted that both 'Creole' and 'Aleut' had little to do with ethnic labels, but rather designated social status.) After Alaska was purchased by the U.S.A., the addiction to the Russian language and Russian ways became an important identity marker for the Alaskan population. It is known that it was as late as 1950s that old people of the Aleutian Islands could still speak Russian. By the end of the 20th century, there were, however, only two places left in which Russian speakers still remained – Ninilchik and Kodiak. Unlike the village of Afognak that suffered the effect of a disastrous tidal wave, Ninilchik has been kept intact since the 1840s. Maybe this is the reason why there has been more scholarly attention paid to Ninilchik compared to former residents of Afognak. In the 1960s, Conor Daly, a student at the University of California Berkeley, collected linguistic material in Ninilchik. Later on, he quit linguistic career; there are two unpublished papers by Daly (1985, 1986) at the UAF Alaska Native Languages Archive. These two papers contain valuable observations on the structure of Ninilchik Russian, but unfortunately, they contain very little lexical information. This gap was bridged by the Russian linguists

Andrej Kibrik and Mira Bergelson who in 1998 spent two weeks in Ninilchik collecting information on nominal vocabulary of Ninilchik Russian; Kibrik also published a short paper (1998) on the structure of this idiom. Later on, the nominal vocabulary collected by Bergelson and Kibrik was expanded considerably by Wayne Leman, a trained linguist who was born in Ninilchik, though not a speaker of Russian himself. Now there is a 'checking copy' of the dictionary 'Ninilchik Russian: The First Language of Ninilchik, Alaska' (2009) stored in the UAF Archive.

Before the summer 2008 no linguistic work has ever been done on the Russian language of the descendants of Afognak village who, after the 'tsunami', had to move to a newly built village of Port Lions. Some people went to Ouzinkie, and some settled down in Kodiak and elsewhere.

Locations:

'Old Russian' speakers are dispersed in Kodiak Town, Port Lions, Ouzinkie, Anchorage; also, in Seattle WA, Bellevue WA, in Los Angeles CA, etc. In the summer 2008 I collected field data at four locations – Kodiak Town, Port Lions, Ouzinkie, and Anchorage. The distribution of work time between them was uneven and depended on newly discovered data on the number of speakers available in each of the above-mentioned locations: while field work was conducted for three weeks in Kodiak and Port Lions each, only three days were left for Ouzinkie and Anchorage each. In 2009 I documented 'Old Russian' with speakers residing in Anchorage, Ninilchik, Kenai City, Bellevue WA.

Conclusions:

To conclude, it should be mentioned that Alaskan 'Old Russian' provides a very interesting, if not unique, material that allows a better understanding of what a linguistic map of Alaska looks like. It also gives new evidence of what happens with the structure of Russian when it becomes a minority language in close contact with languages, so different structurally and socially, as Alutiiq and English.

Another important result of this preliminary analysis is that Kodiak 'Old Russian' does not show any common structural features at all with the famous 'Mednij Aleut' spoken on the Commander Islands, Russia. While there is no doubt that the Russian speakers, who 'invented' Mednij Aleut in the late 19th century, spoke the same Russian idiom as was spoken all around Alaska, the 'invention' of the mixed Aleut-Russian language ('Mednij Aleut') took place at a different location, presumably on Attu Island or on Mednij Island. There are even fewer reasons to believe that 'Old Russian' show any common features with Russian-based pidgins, such as Russenorsk, Russian-Chinese pidgin, or Govorka of the Taimyr Peninsula.

“Strategies of Language Revitalization in Alignment with Native Pedagogical Forms: Examples from Ahtna Alaska,” Greg Holt, Swarthmore College, 2004 [\[100\]](#)

Abstract:

Michael Krauss, director of the Alaska Native Languages Center (ANLC) for thirty years, has compiled data to predict that 90% of the world's 6,000-7,000 languages will be moribund or dead in next 100 years (Krauss, 1992; 7). This erosion of global cultural variability is occurring through the spread of closed or restricted political, economic, and religious institutions which reward homogenization and subtractive cultural assimilation. This model of integration does not allow for the full participation of multiple cultures in one society but rather requires the complete eradication of non-majority cultures. Using language shift as a measure, it is clear that current rates of cultural assimilation far outstrip any seen before in human history.

In Alaska, groups and individuals are working against this trend, but until recently programs have been few. In the bilingual education programs that do exist, English speaking Native Alaskan children often learn kinship terms, color names, and seasonal divisions in reference to the way these terms are defined in English. Granted, as Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1995;101) point out for Tlingits, English speaking Native Americans do not talk and think like whites. Still, even if a language cannot retain a completely steady and constant cultural significance, it is clear that language programs should not teach English-in-code, and should not reinforce institutionalized European-American values in their educational models and priorities.

In this thesis, I will explore creative ways that endangered language speech communities in Southeastern Interior Alaska have brought second-language acquisition into alignment with native pedagogical forms and cultural values, thereby strengthening both the language and the community, and further developing the power of the language and other cultural processes to respond to new situations and expand their functional domains. I will study the writings and teachings of both local community leaders and others working with Native language programming, documentation, and theorizing, in order to establish several themes which are integral to Native views of language, speech situations, and education. Oriented in light of the specifics of Athabaskan Alaska, these themes must be considered carefully when strategizing for language transmission in the absence of an immersive home environment, in programs such as mentoring, immersion schooling, supplemental education in public schools, and summer culture camps.

I will demonstrate how analysis of stories, geography, Native writings, theoretical works, cultural studies and other domains of knowledge often clearly indicate the priorities of a speech community, and may be examined for both explicit and implicit lessons. Close attention to these lessons will help make a language program successful. Not only will this attentiveness prevent well-intentioned community

members and outsiders from adding to the problem of unintentional subtractive enculturation, but will actually fortify the cultural processes which are used creatively and adaptively in this new situation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Status of Ahtna Language

The Ahtna population in Alaska is estimated to be between 173 individuals (US Census, 1990) and 500 (ANLC, 2001). While these data are most definitely inaccurate due to US census ignorance of strict rules governing the counting of kin in Ahtna culture, it is clear that there has been a decline in both total population of ethnically Ahtna people and number of speakers of Ahtna over the past 30 years? The Field Committee for Development and Planning in Alaska (cited in de Laguna, McClellan, 1981; 644) estimated Ahtna population at around 500 individuals in 1968. In 1979, there were perhaps 200 speakers of Ahtna (Krauss, Golla, 1981; 77), but currently this number is probably close to 80 (ANLC, 2001).

In his work on Indian Language Retention, James Bauman (1980) defines five terms to describe the stages of a language moving toward extinction, and he directly correlates each stage to a program that should be undertaken in the interest of that language's continued use. Ahtna clearly falls into his categorization as obsolescent: that is, a language no longer learned as a first language, spoken only by an aging population, and whose few speakers are rapidly shifting or have lost all domains in which the language would be regularly used (Bauman, 1980; 10). This is the case for nearly all Native Alaskan languages (Krauss, 1980; 33-51).

For obsolescent languages, Bauman suggests a program of restoration, and warns that this may require much energy and expense. Of course, the specific actions required must be considered on case by case basis, and must take into account whether a language has declined rapidly or gradually, and why (Nettle, Romaine, 2000; 51). Ahtna communities have shifted to English with increasing speed over the last 100 years, but are now responding to their situation in varied ways.

Despite the small numbers and rapid decline of speakers among the Ahtna, individuals and communities are employing several methods to fight language shift, and even revitalize use of Ahtna language in education and social life. Many of the leaders of these programs overlap, so that the experience and methods learned in one are quickly shared with and applied to another. The variability of these efforts will hopefully allow the language to retain a somewhat broad and multi-faceted role in community life. Although learners often hear the same set of culturally marked words, such as words for local macro fauna, perhaps they will see a range of settings for these terms-- in school, in stories, at a meal.

Clearly, over the past few generations, many individuals have chosen dominant language monolingualism as a strategy to give children to gain the most advantageous

position in a rapidly changing world. The continued advancement of highways, television, and radio as villages became connected to the road systems in the 1950s meant rapid growth of exposure to and dependence on non-localized systems of production, technology, and culture. In areas where access to construction, military, religious, and other jobs largely depended on English language ability, communities developed ambiguous and contradictory attitudes concerning the use of their native language. Learning a language, even for children, requires attention and persistence, and a child will not develop their skills if not clearly supported. This explains how many adults, even if their parents frequently spoke the Native language, were less ambivalent about English use than Ahtna language use and consequently grew up mostly monolingual in the language of higher prestige (Dauenhauer, Dauenhauer, 1998; 67).

Alaska History

Native languages in Alaska, as elsewhere, have historically been explicitly and vigorously repressed by religious, government, and educational institutions.

Federal Policy and Boarding Schools:

Across the United States in the 19th century, policy concerning Native Americans was directed towards either assimilation or extermination. By 1868, a year after the United States acquired Russia's American colonies, the federal government adopted a 'peace policy,' as, in the words of then commissioner of Indian affairs Nathaniel Taylor, "it costs less to civilize than to kill" (Spack, 2002; 17). Believing language and cultural difference to be the root of much violent conflict, the Peace Commission explicitly worked to "blot out" Native languages (Alton, forthcoming; 9).

As a result, in the 1870s, federal boarding schools were established around the United States where students studied far from tribal lands so that they might be acculturated into Anglo-American society while isolated from the influence of their families and communities. Even when a tribe was not held captive by war or treaty obligations, parents were misled into agreeing to send their children to study in enemy territory. At some schools, parents were unaware that when they "put their mark" on school documents, they were giving the schools "the right to hold children for three years with no vacation" (Spack, 2002; 14). Even parents who distrusted the white authorities sometimes saw benefits to an education in English. According to Luther Standing Bear, his father did not believe the promises of the whites, but Standing Bear went to the school in order to die bravely, as it were, learning the ways of the enemy (1933; 230). As Spack (2002) has convincingly shown, Native parents recognized the value of knowledge of the English language and desired their children to learn "only English [and nothing else]" (2002; 42). However, these schools were clearly designed as part of a severely anti-Native and pro-European acculturation program that was particularly harmful and counter to the wishes and goals of parents.

The boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania is of particular note served because it served as a model for others built in Alaska. The influential missionary Sheldon Jackson based his philosophies on those of Richard Pratt at Carlisle when he established a boarding school in Sitka (Alton, forthcoming; 12). English was the only language permitted at both the schools in Sitka and at the Fort Wrangell schools (Daley, James, 2004; 28), and at the school in Douglas, as at many other schools, speaking an Indian language resulted in corporal punishment (Alton, forthcoming; 16).

Missionaries:

Various missionary groups were instrumental in cultural changes of the late 19th and early 20th century in all areas of Alaska. A few missionary groups, such as the Jesuits and Moravians, integrated documentation of, use of, and production of materials in native languages into their missionary work. They believed that the word of God should be brought to the Native peoples in whatever form they could most easily access. In spite of other ways in which their work attacked and eroded Native culture, the work that was done can be an invaluable resource for those continuing the documentation of languages (Krauss, 1980; 20).

The majority of American missionary groups in Alaska, however, were concerned with more than the simply the most immediate religious education possible. They considered that their calling was to move indigenous people out of their traditional ways of life and exclusively into the so-called civilized world. These outreach efforts actively suppressed Native language use and encouraged or enforced English language monolingualism. English was seen as the only appropriate and possible medium of religious understanding, education, and participation in the broader society of the United States. Through shared funding, employment, and goals missionaries and schools often collaborated. Sheldon Jackson began his work in Alaska as a Presbyterian missionary, but in his later appointment as General Agent for Education in the Alaska Territory, he kept several former missionaries as employees of the federal Bureau of Education (Alton, forthcoming; 15).

Conclusion

Native communities see that sophistication in speaking a language like English increases access to educational, economic, and political institutions of power, while sophistication in speaking one's heritage language can provide an important spiritual and cognitive link to the intellectual traditions of one's people. The language is important not only in a stagnant archival form, perhaps which could be used in ritual religious practice, but also as a living and adaptive strategy for social interaction and cultural development. While the difficult decisions of how to allot limited time, labor, and resources must be made within each community, outsiders such as linguists must be available if called upon to provide specialized advice, recommendations, or advocacy to policy makers.

However, just as the phonology and syntax of every language is unique, so are the rules governing how language is used and why, and they must be considered as part of the revitalization program. Preserving cultural frames and references as accurately as possible in the recorded forms will allow a language to be accessed relatively independently of dominant aesthetics, values, and priorities. Further, those members of a dominating culture who are working in multicultural situations must be prepared, through examination of others' traditional intellectual works and development of metalinguistic and metacultural awareness, to be equally responsible for integration and learning of new cultural competencies, which will allow their work to be more helpful and relevant to the local community.

“Keynote Address: The Critical Next Step for Alaska Native Languages,” Edna Ahgeak MacLean, *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*, 2013 [101]
<https://www.alaskaanthropology.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/AJA-v111-2.pdf#page=5>

Abstract:

Despite the establishment of Alaska Native language programs in Alaska's schools, use of indigenous languages is declining. The former policy of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs to eradicate the use of Alaska Native languages in schools and homes will succeed unless the community members assist. Adults who were abused as school children for speaking their Native languages must now be recruited to champion language revival programs in their communities. The time is right for a realignment of resources and the creation of opportunities to nurture our indigenous languages.

Current & Relevant Information:

Many of you have heard of the abuse that Alaska Native children received from their teachers in the Bureau of Indian Affairs day schools for speaking their Native languages in the schools. The mistreatment was widespread, but I will focus on the issue using the Alaska North Slope region, and specifically my home town. The observations I make are based on the experiences that I shared with my fellow Iñupiat of Barrow, who are now the ages of fifty-five and older.

The purpose of schooling was to teach us English and for us to learn non-Iñupiaq knowledge so we could assimilate into the American culture quickly. The method that some of the teachers chose to teach us English was to beat Iñupiaq out of us. I've wondered why the teachers chose this method when other non-cruel learning methods were known.

Some of my friends dropped out of school because they did not understand English well and were punished for speaking Iñupiaq. Most of the time they were asking questions of other students in Iñupiaq for clarification of what the teacher wanted us to do.

Many of us hung in there because we had to. We endured the humiliation whenever any of our classmates were subjected to verbal or physical abuse for inadvertently speaking Iñupiaq.

We were sent to boarding schools by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for our high school years, away from our communities. Some of us enjoyed those years away from home, learning new things about the world we found ourselves in. But some of us felt terribly homesick and went back home and became immersed once again in the subsistence lifestyle and joined the workforce in our communities.

Many of us who stayed in the schooling process became more fluent and literate in the English language. We used Iñupiaq less and less, but we did not forget it. We returned to our Iñupiaq communities for the summers.

After graduation from high school in the late 1950s, 1960s, and into the mid-1970s, many of us left our home communities again for further schooling in trade schools and colleges, becoming carpenters, plumbers, electricians, heavy equipment operators, electronic technicians, airplane and car mechanics, secretaries, teachers, nurses, and lawyers.

Upon graduation from the trade schools and colleges, some of us melted into communities outside of our Iñupiaq communities, but many returned home to live and work. We became immersed in the hunting culture with its associated activities and increased our knowledge and use of the Iñupiaq language. Learning the English language and the American ways of behavior had been a good thing since we needed the English language, the knowledge of the American culture, and the technology skills associated with English to succeed in further education and to participate in the society we found ourselves in.

We returned to our communities as the civil rights movement, the bilingual education discussion, the Alaska land claims movement, and the emergence of the North Slope Borough government began. We worked hard within our communities to see successful conclusions. These were exciting and stressful times. We needed a good command of both English and Iñupiaq in order to participate fully. We communicated in Iñupiaq with our elders and we communicated in English with our partners and our adversaries.

Unfortunately, during all of this time we did not speak Iñupiaq to our children. We spoke Iñupiaq with each other, with our parents, and other adult members of our communities, but we did not speak Iñupiaq with our children. We talked to our children in English.

Because we did not speak Iñupiaq with our children, we have lost Iñupiaq as the first language of communication in our homes and in our Iñupiaq communities. Now, English is the language of communication in almost all of our families and in all of our communities. And Iñupiaq has become an endangered language. Our young

people do not speak Iñupiaq fluently. The child-bearing women in our communities do not speak Iñupiaq. Consequently, none of the very young are learning Iñupiaq at home.

The elementary and the high schools are having difficulty finding Iñupiaq-speaking teachers for the local Iñupiaq language programs. The local college is having a hard time finding fluent Iñupiaq speakers to participate in an Iñupiaq language nest program for preschoolers.

The only fluent speakers of Iñupiaq left are us—the grandparent generation who were abused or were always under the threat of abuse for speaking Iñupiaq in school, and are now hesitant to speak Iñupiaq to children and to young people. We are the resource which must be mobilized and persuaded to speak Iñupiaq to our young people and young children. We are now retired from eight-to-five jobs and some of us are available to help in community Iñupiaq language programs, but we do not. We've allowed our children to attend Iñupiaq bilingual classes but we did not speak Iñupiaq to them at home when they returned from the schools. And now our children send our grandchildren to Iñupiaq immersion classes in the schools, but we still do not speak Iñupiaq to either our children or to our grandchildren.

Many of us believe the abuse we experienced at the hands of our teachers is the reason we find ourselves unable to speak in Iñupiaq to our children and grandchildren. This is probably true. We need to understand why it is so hard to speak Iñupiaq to our children and grandchildren. Some of us have said it is because we love our children too much. We do not want them to experience what we had to endure in school. We are angry that we had to endure the harsh treatment from our teachers for speaking Iñupiaq, and now resent the schools for wanting our children and grandchildren to learn Iñupiaq. We are afraid that we will not be understood by our children and grandchildren if we speak Iñupiaq to them. We do not want them to experience the communication gap that we experienced so many times in our classrooms with a teacher who was intent on eradicating our Iñupiaq language, the only language we were fluent in. We are afraid that we will not have the patience to deal with children who may have a hard time learning Iñupiaq. We do not want to become like our teachers.

Although physical punishment was overtly painful, the humiliation received by children made to stand in waste baskets for periods of time for speaking Iñupiaq was crushing. In 1983, Sixten S.R. Haraldson, a renowned medical doctor and anthropologist, stated in his address to an Alaska Federation of Natives education conference: “socio-medical problems of increasing dimensions among traditional groups, such as alcoholism, divorce, suicide, neurosis, and juvenile delinquency have been explained by deculturation.” Deculturation via language replacement and relocation was the purpose of school for many of us. The disastrous results have been and still continue to exist in many Alaska Native communities.

The relocation and punishment practices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the policy of eradicating our Native Alaskan languages is working. The Bureau of Indian Affairs may have shut many of us up from ever speaking our Native languages to our children and our grandchildren. Some of us have provided linguistic information to researchers, written grammars, dictionaries, and documented stories and histories—all activities that do not require us to speak Iñupiaq to children.

But now many of us realize we have to somehow change this behavior before it is too late. We are the last fluent speakers of Iñupiaq.

We do want our children and grandchildren to become fluent in Iñupiaq, but we do not help them learn to speak the language. This is our conundrum.

In conclusion, we need not stand by helplessly as we witness the gradual loss of our Iñupiaq language. We can be mobilized to turn the tide by experiencing the joy of hearing our grandchildren speak to us in Iñupiaq. That happened to me a couple of weeks ago. One of my two granddaughters live in the same city I do. I speak Iñupiaq to her whenever I am with her. I know she understands me most of the time when I speak to her in Iñupiaq, but she had not yet answered me in Iñupiaq, except to say quyanapqak [“thank you very much”] when prompted, until last week.

Last week while driving her home from school, I asked her in Iñupiaq if she liked the raspberries I brought for her snack. Without hesitation, as she was readying herself to play with one of her games on my iPhone, she answered, “li, aaka. Aarigaa!” Those three words in Iñupiaq spoken without hesitation brought joy to my heart. Tears of joy sprung to my eyes. I had not anticipated that burst of joy. It was beautiful!

I want to experience the joy again. I want all of us to experience the joy I felt when my granddaughter answered me in Iñupiaq.

“Alaskan Language and Literacy Instruction: Dialect Attitudes,” Mary-Claire Tarlow and Anne Jones, Research Gate, April 2013 [102]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anne_Jones13/publication/264860539_Alaskan_Language_and_Literacy_Instruction_Dialect_Attitudes/links/53f38bd80cf2dd48950e6e7e.pdf

Abstract:

Because most school districts’ current focus is that of developing the indigenous language along with English, little attention is given to the existence of English dialectal variance and the possible role variance may play in Standard English development. We had the unique opportunity to be working with a group of teachers of Alaska Native background, who valued the role of indigenous language in students’ education, but still understood the social and economic importance of acquiring Standard English sufficient for successful learning through reading and writing, and presentation in public settings. This specific perspective was of

particular interest to us. Semi-structured interviews and Likert-type surveys provided the base evidence for this study. There was no significant difference in attitudes toward Village English between Alaska Native and non-Native teachers. There was a correlation between the number of years in the teaching profession and more negative attitudes toward Village English. Interviews revealed a complexity of attitudes toward the variety of languages and language forms. It is not general attitude toward Village English that contributes to literacy development struggles. Alaska Native teachers feel that Standard English is important for all Alaska students. It is the common language of the country. It is necessary for economic success outside of the village. However, this valuing of Standard English should be noted in the context of a concurrent value of the indigenous languages of Alaska Native peoples.

Current & Relevant Information:

The counterpoints of cultural perspectives, language attitudes, and language usage contrast with policies and practices in Alaska's schools. This study explores the multiple deprivations of educational entitlement, communicative understanding of discourse interactions by educators, and the intricacies of teacher language attitudes. This study employs a multi-layered analysis of interviews, surveys, analysis of demographics and educational practice to explore deprivation issues in literacy education in Alaskan K-12 schools.

We initiated our application of current linguistic knowledge toward Alaska by determining how teachers conceived of and responded to student use of Village English in rural settings. Because most school districts' current focus is that of developing the indigenous language along with English, little attention is given to the existence of English dialectal variance and the possible role variance may play in Standard English development. Could it be that existing research knowledge, if applied, could change the potential for student success? Could Alaska's educational institutions be impoverishing our Alaska Native students by pursuing standard curricular approaches with a population that requires accommodation? Our initial questions were 1) whether in teachers' perceptions there is a pattern of conflict with students' use of their vernacular and their written language in school and 2) how teachers conceived of and responded to student use of nonstandard Village English. Our hypothesis was that local dialect was prevalent in speech and student writing and that teachers took a traditional correctionist approach to student dialect variance, thus discouraging student engagement.

We had the unique opportunity to be working with a group of teachers of Alaska Native background, who valued the role of indigenous language in students' education, but still understood the social and economic importance of acquiring Standard English sufficient for successful learning through reading and writing, and presentation in public settings. This specific perspective was of particular interest to us.

Context

Alaska serves approximately 132,000 students. Alaska is unique in that more than half of all schools are rural and rural/remote sites. Within the vast 586,000 square miles of Alaska are scattered 31 rural and remote school districts; 64% of Alaska's districts, 53% of its schools, and 40% of its population are rural. These isolated school districts serve over 19,000 students, 14,000 of whom are Alaska Native. In many of the villages there is an Alaskan Native language used in the community, plus a dialect, commonly referred to as "Village English", which is comprised mostly of English words, but structurally based on the grammar of the indigenous language. In Village English, a speaker might say, "Go town" for "I went to town," or "Try see what I got" for "Do you want to see what I got?" Village English is the currently accepted language of the culture in many villages (Jones & Ongtooguk, 2002).

The 2011 National Indian Education Study (NIE) based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows no significant improvement in Alaska Native students' reading performance from previous assessment years. Alaska's average NAEP scores in reading for fourth-grade Alaska Native students have dropped from 183 in 2005 to 175 in 2011. Only 26% percent of Alaska Native fourth-graders performed at or above the Basic level in reading in 2011. One would hope that this could be explained by many rural districts' policy of teaching in indigenous languages in grades K, 1 and 2, and switching to instruction in English in grade 3. However, Alaska's average NAEP scores in reading for eighth-grade Alaska Native students dropped from 240 in 2005 to 234 in 2011. Only 44% of Alaska Native eighth-graders performed at or above the Basic level in reading in 2011.

Language in Rural Alaska

In Alaska's villages, the indigenous language is highly valued, Village English is commonly used as the English language medium, and schools attempt to develop Standard English for literate and formal speaking purposes (Barnhardt, 2001; Jones & Ongtooguk, 2002). Indigenous languages vary through the state, as do the resulting Village English in each locale. Literacy instruction is traditional, with most districts using commercial basal programs. Little research related to dialect variation or student sociological reaction to educational language-use policies has been done in rural Alaska.

Conclusions

Teachers did not appear to have negative attitudes toward Village English, but did perceive a conflict between students' use of their dialect with their literacy learning. Interviews revealed a complexity of attitudes toward the variety of languages and language forms.

Like Taylor (1973), this study found that there is no significant difference in attitude toward Village English between Alaska Native and non-Native teachers. Generally,

teachers seem to be favorably disposed toward Village English, as measured by our survey. As Taylor (1973) discussed, the findings are encouraging in that a positive potential exists to change school practices related to dialectal differences, especially with younger teachers, who seem to be more open-minded. This is an important starting point. It is not general attitude toward Village English that contributes to literacy development struggles. Further exploration will need to determine more of the complexity in attitude.

Alaska Native teachers feel that Standard English is important for all Alaska students. It is the common language of the country. It is necessary for economic success outside of the village. However, this valuing of Standard English should be noted in the context of a concurrent value of the indigenous languages of Alaska Native peoples. In fact, the issue of non-standard speakers learning Standard English may be said to be an issue lost in the intensity of focus on these young speakers' development of the indigenous language alongside any other language instruction. Fortunately, these do not have to be competing issues. They are separate, compatible concerns with different foundational research bases and potential pedagogical solutions.

When it comes to barriers to overcome or pedagogical solutions to implement, it appears that Alaska Native teachers might be as much at a loss as any other teachers. They look at home-school discrepancies and curricular irrelevancies as potential barriers, and teacher modeling, practice, and immersion in either oral Standard English or books as potential solutions. While the current research (Pewewardy, 2003; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Reyhner, 2001; Reyhner & Hurtado, 2008) validates these beliefs, the lack of progress in test scores means that either we are not implementing the research effectively, or there are other possible factors that should be considered. These Alaska Native teachers also endorsed correction, however, which has been shown to not be an effective practice (Gilyard, 1991; Piestrup, 1973; Wolfram, Adger & Christian, 1999; Wheeler, 2006). In the teacher's attempt to correct the student's grammar and show him the way it "should" be done, the teacher attacks the student's home language and associated values, creating a barrier in the student-teacher relationship (Palmer, 2009). The fact that many teachers acknowledged a confusion or lack of confidence in knowing how to best teach Standard English to Village English speakers may reflect an awareness that current practices do not seem to be clearly effective in reaching the goal.

Wheeler (2010) and others (Knestrict & Schoensteadt, 2005; Iannacci, 2008; Hill, 2009) have found that a process of code-switching lessons has been effective in teaching African-American students to add the Standard English dialect while not slighting their own vernacular dialect in the process. This approach alleviates the resistance issues related to language and dialect variation. Our next step is to explore the potential for this lesson process in Alaskan villages, applying it to Alaskan Village English rather than African-American vernacular, as well as

identifying other factors that may be instrumental in language that is more effective and literacy learning in this multilingual and multidialectal environment.

B. Communication:

“Same language, different culture: Understanding inter-cultural communication difficulties among English speakers,” David R. Thomas and Yoke Leng N. Thomas, Research Gate, 18 August 1994 [103]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Thomas11/publication/236147340_Same_language_different_culture_Understanding_inter-cultural_communication_difficulties_among_English_speakers/links/00b7d5165df396604c000000.pdf

Abstract:

Given the prominence of English as an international language of communication, the possibilities for misunderstandings increase where speakers of English have different cultural backgrounds. Misunderstanding may arise from differing expectations about appropriate interpersonal behaviors and interpretations of others behavior. It is proposed that there is a general dimension underlying expectation about appropriate interpersonal behaviors, egalitarianism versus respect. Many English-speaking Western cultures appear to give primary emphasis to egalitarian communication styles where status differences are minimized. In contrast Asian and Polynesian cultures, give primary emphasis to respect patterns of interpersonal behavior where differences in status among people are acknowledged. Examples of communication differences among people speaking English are outlined.

Egalitarianism and respect appear to be related to other cultural patterns such as individualism versus collectivism, nuclear versus extended family systems, styles of interpersonal politeness and maintaining face.

The implications of cultural differences in egalitarian-respect communication styles for training programs in cross-cultural communication are discussed. The impact on communication patterns of social changes associated with two communication technologies, audio-visual media and computer mediated communication, are also mentioned.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Several authors have described how people speaking the same or similar languages have communication misunderstandings due to cultural differences in expectations and interpretations about various aspects of the communication process (e.g., Metge & Kinloch, 1978; Platt, 1989). The purpose of this paper is to explore some cultural differences in interpersonal behaviors, and interpretations of the behaviors of others. It develops the idea that there is a general dimension related to communication styles, which can be labelled egalitarianism versus respect. Cultural differences on

this dimension are a frequent source of misunderstanding among people speaking a common language such as English. Examples are drawn primarily from Asian, Polynesian and Western English-speaking groups (such as Anglo-New Zealanders, Anglo-Australians and Anglo-Americans).

Egalitarianism is a style of social interaction where the communication patterns of participants:

- (a) tend to reduce the use of, or ignore, status markers during the interaction
- (b) tend to reflect informality and resistance to the use of status markers when participants have become familiar with each other.

Respect is a style of social interaction where status differences among participants are acknowledged during communication

- (a) through the use of clear status markers (such as use of titles)
- (b) by maintaining the use of the status markers even when the participants are very familiar with one another.

In both these descriptions "status" is used to describe situations where communication participants can be described as higher, equal or lower (e.g., age, generation or occupational differences). As with Brown & Levinson (1987, p.61-2), it is assumed that an orientation to "face" or public self-image is a universal phenomenon in human social interaction. Thus, maintaining face, enhancing face and losing face are processes that are applicable to interactions in all cultural groups. How processes related to "face" are handled in interpersonal communication is closely related to the dimension of egalitarianism versus respect.

A number of authors have developed related concepts and models (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1990) and these sources are acknowledged. The most similar conception to the egalitarian respect dimension is the distinction between solidarity and deference politeness outlined by the Scollons.

Solidarity and deference politeness: Scollon and Scollon

The distinction between egalitarianism and respect is similar to the distinction made between solidarity politeness and deference politeness by Ron and Suzie Scollon (1980, 1981). These categories were developed from their observations of communication styles among an indigenous Alaskan people, the Athabaskans, and American English speakers.

Solidarity politeness (similar to egalitarianism) is a form of interaction which endeavors to reduce status differences (or assumes little or no status differences) and emphasizes "getting to know" the other person and increasing social intimacy (low distance). It is an intrusive form of social interaction because it requires reciprocating responses from other people, even if they do not wish to reciprocate.

For example, a person telling others about problems in their office would expect sympathetic comments, or disclosures of a similar nature, from listeners.

Deference politeness (like respect) is a pattern of social interaction which maintains social distance, and respects privacy by assuming differences between the participants. It avoids intruding on the other person's "personal world."

These two styles differ in assumptions about three central communication characteristics:

- (a) the degree of intrusion into the other person's "personal world" which is acceptable,
- (b) the extent to which status differences are expected to influence behaviors, and
- (c) the extent to which participants are assumed to differ in personal and social characteristics.

The differences between solidarity politeness and deference politeness can be illustrated in two aspects of oral communication, initiating conversations and turn-taking in conversations (Scollon & Scollon, 1980).

Who speaks first? When an Athabaskan and a speaker of American English talk to each other, it is very likely that the English speaker will speak first. The English speaker will feel that talking is the best way to establish a relationship. The Athabaskan will feel that it is important to get to know someone by taking time to observe them before speaking.

Turn-taking in conversation. Among English speakers, when one person finishes speaking the other person can take a turn. If the other person does not say anything, then the first speaker can continue talking. However, Athabaskans allow a longer pause between sentences than English speakers. Thus, the English speaker pauses for a short time and, if there is no response, carries on talking. From the Athabaskan perspective, the English speaker does not allow others to take their turn, and English speakers interrupt Athabaskan speakers before they have finished what they wanted to say. From the English speaker's point of view, Athabaskans never seem to make sense or complete a coherent train of thought.

Deference politeness respects the other person's right to autonomy and self-determination. One tries not to speak for the other person, or complete sentences for them. One does not speak too much or too fast, and sometimes one remains silent rather than impose oneself on the other person, especially if they are of high status. Direct questioning is avoided.

When you assume solidarity with someone you notice and pay attention to the person, you exaggerate your interest in, approval of, and sympathy with the person; you claim in-group membership with the person, and speak as if you share a

common point of view. You show that you know the person's wishes and are taking them into account, and you assume or assert reciprocity (Scollon & Scollon, 1980, p. 30).

Egalitarianism and respect as a basic intercultural dimension

The information presented is consistent with the view that egalitarianism and respect represent opposite sides of a continuum. This continuum defines a basic dimension that underlies several specific cultural differences. These differences can be summarized as follows:

Respect - acknowledging a person's status or position in a social network - is associated with the following:

extended family networks, collective social orientation, identity defined to a significant extent by membership in groups.

Egalitarianism - minimizing status differences - is associated with the following:

nuclear family patterns, individualistic social orientation, identity defined primarily by individual characteristics and achievements.

These different styles are especially prominent in greetings and getting to know people. The extent to which status markers are used by people who have lower status in an encounter, or signaled as appropriate by people who have higher status, gives a clear indication of the extent to which egalitarian or respect principles will, or should, govern the development of familiarity among participants in an encounter.

Implications for training programs in cross-cultural communication

Given the contrasts between respect and egalitarian styles of communication, what are the implications for training programs teaching intercultural communication skills? Two points can be identified.

1. The development of bicultural (or sometimes multicultural) communication skills are important. Skilled communicators need to switch between different styles, depending on the protocol of the setting and who the participants are.
2. Sensitivity to social cues must be sufficiently developed so a person knows which behaviors are required and which behaviors should be avoided.

Just as learning a language does not necessarily make a person competent in the cultural patterns, so speaking the same language does not guarantee that people will have the same interpretations of each other's behaviors. Translators and interpreters especially need to know how to translate the subtleties and nuances of respect and solidarity between languages and cultures.

Impacts of communication technologies

Two types of communications technologies, audio-visual media and computer-mediated communication, are likely to have major impacts on communications styles in countries where these technologies become widespread.

The impacts of audio-visual media can be seen in the spread of satellite and broadcast television and video film shown on video recorders. Countries which are dominant in English-language media (e.g., United States and United Kingdom) tend to be major exporters of programs and other cultural products to countries with less extensive production facilities who import media products. This pattern of dominance through international media networks allows egalitarian societies to set cultural change agendas through media in other countries. For example, United States programs broadcast in Asian countries include scenes where children directly challenge (answer back to) parents' views and show children exhibiting a lack of courtesy and respect towards parents and older people.

Allowing egalitarian media to gain an influential position in respect societies raises issues of cultural imperialism. Should media from egalitarian societies be allowed to set cultural agendas? What can be done to allow "respect" societies to have more influence on agendas of cultural change? Will an increasing awareness of the cultural impacts of audiovisual media imports lead to more self-determination for some countries? Clearly there is an important role for governments to require sufficient local content in broadcast media (radio, television) to maintain cultural values and to determine their own preferred pattern and pace of cultural change.

Computer-mediated communication technologies pose a different kind of challenge, particularly in education. Some educators in both Asian and Western countries have suggested that the "respect" patterns students show towards lecturers or people of higher status interferes with the development of creative solutions in problem-solving classes or sessions. In "respect" societies, students are taught not to directly question the views expressed by people of higher status. Malaysian lecturers at the University of Waikato in New Zealand said they found interactive sessions, where students frequently ask questions, very effective for learning. On the other hand, in egalitarian societies, the most talkative or dominant people in a group may often impose their views, at the expense of other participants.

Recent developments in computer-mediated communication allow students to communicate in group sessions via computers. In these sessions (where participants can be in the same room or spread over several distant locations) ideas can be expressed and responded to without participants knowing who suggested the ideas. Computer communications laboratories have been established in several management schools around the world. Early reports indicate that problem-solving groups often reach superior solutions on technical problems when the influence of status and dominance factors are removed from decision-making processes. People feel freer to ask questions and express opinions in a situation where they do not have to deal with status issues.

“Culture and Communication,” Enid-Mai Jones, Optometric Education: Intercultural Sensitivity: The Journal of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, 2006 [104]

https://journal.opted.org/files/Volume_31_Number_3_Spring_2006.pdf

Overview:

It has become a cliché to say that the world is shrinking or becoming a "global village" or that "America is a melting pot." Rapid advancements in transportation and communication, political unrest and recent migrations have brought the people of the world closer together in a physical sense and have increased human interaction. The make-up of the American population continues to change as a result of migration patterns and significant increases among racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically varied populations already residing in the United States.

Current & Relevant Information:

The United States is experiencing a shift in demographic trends, resulting in an increase in cultural variability. Demographers predict that the next two decades will bring racial and ethnic minority population to a numerical majority in the United States. Primary care organizations and federal, state and local governments must implement systemic change in order to meet the health and mental health needs of this increasingly varied population. The reality is that African Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic Americans accounted for 30 percent of the population in 2000. These population groups are projected to account for about 40 percent of the population by 2025.

As professionals working in or preparing to work in this global and varied environment, we must realize that success in part depends on our ability to understand the dynamics of culture and how it shapes our ability to communicate effectively. It is important to understand intercultural communication and how it is affected by culture. Intercultural communication refers to the influence of cultural variability and variety on interpersonally oriented communication outcomes. Differences in communication and social style, world view, customs, expectations, rules, roles, and myths illustrate a few of the elements that explain how culture shapes the communication process.

As human beings, we are greatly influenced by our "culture." Culture is the holistic interrelation of a group's identity, beliefs, values, activities, rules, customs, communication patterns, and institutions. As people we have learned intriguing ways of acting and thinking that significantly organize our world. Culture is a powerful vehicle for socialization. It influences how we adapt and learn; it includes customs, habits, language, expectations, and roles.

First, culture teaches significant rules, rituals, and procedures. It defines our attitude towards time, how to dress, what is polite or expected. The process of learning the

rules and rituals of our culture is called socialization, which refers to developing a sense of proper and improper behavior and modes of communicating. These are important because they establish boundary-setting, involvement and self-worth. These modes of communicating define human development within the context of any one specific culture.

Secondly, culture reinforces values. Good and evil, the meaning of truth, and a core understanding of the world are taught in a cultural context. Culture teaches us what is beautiful or ugly, sexy or unappealing. Third, culture teaches us about relationships with others. These relationships formed in culture generate a dynamic of roles and expectations. For example, the optometrist may be seen as a figure of high authority and therefore may not be questioned even when the patient lacks understanding. Culture shapes our perceptions and affects the human tendency to categorize the roles of others.

Communication is central to our experience. It is through communication that we learn who we are, and what the world around us is like. Communication permits us to express our thoughts and feelings to others, and to satisfy our emotional and material needs. Through communication, we explore the world around us, and establish bonds, networks, and relationships with other people. Our culture impacts our personalities, perceptions, values, behaviors, language, time and space concept, nonverbal communication, and interaction with others. In large part, our identity as both individual personalities and as cultural beings is shaped through communication with other people. The cultural background of the communicator influences almost every detail and pattern of his and her communication activities.

When we communicate with individuals from a different cultural group, we are engaged in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication recognizes how culture pervades what we are, how we act, how we think, and how we talk and listen. Intercultural communication involves understanding the influence of culture and interpersonal relationship attributes as they affect intercultural communication and perception of differences. These factors influence two people as they build a communication climate from which they find commonality, reduce uncertainty and anxiety, and provide a context basis for continued communication. Failure to consider the cultural context can lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication. We must be aware that interpretations of the verbal and nonverbal messages are influenced by both the recipients' cultural background and ours.

A significant element of intercultural communication is the silent language of nonverbal communication. The term nonverbal communication is commonly used to describe all human communication events that transcend spoken or written words. Nonverbal communication patterns are highly culture-bound. Thus, nonverbal communication involves not only the actions but the cultural interpretations of those actions in relation to the verbal communication uttered simultaneously. Nonverbal messages such as space, gestures, postures, body movement, eye

behavior/movement, greetings, time and facial expressions may complement, contradict, repeat or accentuate, regulate or negate the verbal message. Each culture perceives nonverbal behaviors, converting them for communication value as defined by our respective culture. For example, our culture governs how close we stand while talking with another person, how we use (or avoid) eye contact; it affects how we express (or suppress) powerful emotions such as joy, disapproval, and anger. Although some nonverbal forms — such as smiles and frowns — are universal gestures, the ways in which they are used - and, therefore, what they mean —are not.

Successful intercultural communication requires enthusiasm and a willingness to overcome cultural barriers. It is a two-way process. Thus, understanding the relationship between culture and communication leads the intercultural communicator to try to avoid overreaction and to probe deeper into what is happening during the intercultural encounter. It is important to operate with a flexible world-view and patience, and to be able to respond to changing situations. Living and working in a varied environment means that we have to develop and display empathy. Display of empathy requires that we not only put ourselves in someone else's place but that we focus and diligently listen in order to understand each other's point of view. A culturally-fluent approach to communication means working over time to understand the ways communication varies across cultures, and applying these understandings in order to enhance intercultural relationships and interactions.

“Culture Card: A Guide to Build Cultural Awareness: American Indian and Alaska Native,” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, March 2009 [105] <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma08-4354.pdf>

Abstract:

Intended to enhance cultural competence when serving American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Covers regional differences; cultural customs; spirituality; communications styles; the role of veterans and the elderly, and health disparities, such as suicide.

Current & Relevant Information:

Communication Style

Nonverbal Messages:

- AI/AN people communicate a great deal through non-verbal gestures. Careful observation is necessary to avoid misinterpretation of non-verbal behavior.
- AI/AN people may look down to show respect or deference to elders, or ignoring an individual to show disagreement or displeasure.
- A gentle handshake is often seen as a sign of respect, not weakness.

Humor:

- AI/AN people may convey truths or difficult messages through humor, and might cover great pain with smiles or jokes. It is important to listen closely to humor, as it may be seen as invasive to ask for too much direct clarification about sensitive topics.
- It is a common conception that “laughter is good medicine” and is a way to cope. The use of humor and teasing to show affection or offer corrective advice is also common.

Indirect Communication:

- It is often considered unacceptable for an AI/AN person to criticize another directly. This is important to understand, especially when children and youth are asked to speak out against or testify against another person. It may be considered disloyal or disrespectful to speak negatively about the other person.
- There is a common belief that people who have acted wrongly will pay for their acts in one way or another, although the method may not be through the legal system.

Storytelling:

- Getting messages across through telling a story (traditional teachings and personal stories) is very common and sometimes in contrast with the “get to the point” frame of mind in non-AI/AN society.

“Communication Patterns and Assumptions of Differing Cultural Groups in the United States,” C.E. Elliott, ipi.usra.edu, 2007 [106]

https://www.ipi.usra.edu/education/lpsc_wksp_2007/resources/elliott.pdf

Abstract:

Comparisons of cultural value systems are not meant to stereotype individuals or cultures; rather, they are meant to provide generalizations, observations about a group of people, from which we can discuss cultural difference and likely areas of miscommunication.

Current & Relevant Information:

Native American Communication Patterns

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999), 2.2 million persons were classified as American Indians or Alaska Natives in 1994. (Approximately 1.5% of the U.S. population).

Animation/emotion: The preferred communication style is restrained, "...in order to not impose one's energy or emotion on others" (Elliott, 1992). Often Indians will speak dispassionately about something very meaningful and important to them.

Directness/indirectness: Indirectness is usually preferable (Locust, 1988). This gives others the chance to refuse a request without directly saying no, or to evade a question that is felt to be too personal or simply a subject the listener does not want to discuss (Darnell, 1988, p. 5). Elders with high status may sometimes be very direct with those younger than themselves. An untrue allegation or accusation will often simply result in no response from an Indian person; to reply is seen as lowering oneself to the level of ignorance or over-emotionality of the other person. It also involves entering the negative energy space of the accuser (Locust, 1988, p. 122) and may be interpreted by other Indians as a sign of guilt, an indicator that the accusation is true. Silence on the part of Indian people is often interpreted by Anglos as indirectness, although the actual meaning may be quite different (Basso, 1970, p. 218).

Eye contact: Direct prolonged eye contact is seen as invasive. Its avoidance is practiced to "protect the personal autonomy of the interactors" (Darnell, 1988, p. 6). Eye contact is usually fleeting, and the gaze of listener and speaker will often remain around the forehead, mouth, ear or throat area. Direct gaze to an elder or very respected person is seen as especially rude, unless one is in a formal listening/storytelling situation, in which case "...listeners may look at (the speaker) more directly ... without violating his or her personal space by eye contact" (Darnell, 1988, p. 15).

Gestures: A relatively restrained use of gestures in normal conversation is typical. Storytellers or elders may often use gestures, which are larger and more frequent than those found in usual conversations.

Identity orientation: Traditional American Indians have a lineal orientation—their identity is spread vertically over time. Ancestors, the present collateral group or tribe, and the potential people who are not yet born are all part of a person's felt identity and will be considered when making important decisions (Samovar, Porter, and Jain, 1981).

Turn taking and pause time: In formal group speaking situations, turns are usually taken by everyone present, and no one else speaks until the previous speaker is completely through and a few moments of silence have ensued (Darnell, 1988, p. 5). Speaking too quickly after the previous speaker may be seen to indicate that the next speaker, talking so quickly after the first, is a rash person who does not think things through before he or she speaks, or is showing disrespect for the importance of the other person or of what they had to say. Interrupting another speaker is unbearable rudeness, and may lead to severe social consequences if the person interrupted is an elder. When interacting with members of other cultures in which appropriate pause times are shorter, Indians may have to be rude (by their own standards) in order to participate in the conversation at all (Basso, 1988, p. 12). This is a stressful experience for the person, who feels forced to violate their own standards and self-concept in order to be heard.

Space: Often a side-by-side arrangement is more comfortable than a face-to-face orientation, especially in two-person conversations. If interacting with non-Indians or people whom they do not know well, Native Americans often prefer a slightly larger interaction distance--more than arm's length--for conversation.

Psychological space can be maintained by silence. This may be employed if the listener is asked a question, he or she feels is invasive or regards as something that should not be addressed with the other person, because the other does not have the standing of an intimate friend or relative. Sometimes the subject is simply seen as inappropriate.

Touch: Touch is usually reserved for friends or intimates; however, many Indians have adopted the European American custom of handshaking, at least outside of traditional settings. The Indian handshake is very light and fleeting, to avoid imposing energy on the other person or receiving energy one does not want.

Vocal patterns: A relatively narrow, quiet range of pitch, tone, and volume is viewed as the proper adult communication pattern, especially when non-Indians or elders are present. Talking quickly, loudly, and very animatedly may be viewed with some disapproval.

“Learning Styles of American Indian/Alaska Native Students: A Review of the Literature and Implications for Practice,” Cornel Pewewardy, *Journal of American Indian Education*, 2002 [107] https://www.jstor.org/stable/24398583?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Abstract:

A review of theories, research, and models of the learning styles of American Indian/Alaska Native students reveals that American Indian/Alaska Native students generally learn in ways characterized by factors of social/affective emphasis, harmony, holistic perspectives, expressive creativity, and nonverbal communication. Underlying these approaches are assumptions that American Indian/Alaska Native students have been strongly influenced by their language, culture, and heritage, and that American Indian/Alaska Native children's learning styles are different—but not deficient. Implications for interventions include recommendations for instructional practice, curriculum organization, assessment, and suggestions for future research.

Current & Relevant Information:

Mind-body, body-mind, what's the relationship? The links are one of the strong foundations supporting brain-compatible learning. The links are also one of the strong foundations supporting the concept of brain-compatible or brain-friendly learning. In recent years, the research by cognitive neuroscientists on the cerebellum into brain processing, brain growth, and brain dominance has led educators to take another look at traditional instructional methods of teaching. Learning styles researchers have added to understandings of how heredity,

experiences, environment, linguistics, and cultural differences affect the teaching and learning of American Indian/Alaska Native students.

Studies indicate that American Indian/Alaska Native students have distinct cultural values, such as conformity to authority and respect for elders, taciturnity, strong tribal social hierarchy, patrimonial/matrilineal clans, and an emphasis on learning, which are deeply rooted in the teachings of the elders. These cultural traits are exhibited in family socialization patterns, which are quite different from those of other ethnic groups. Historically, these cultural values, in turn play a dominant role in the teaching and learning process of American Indian/Alaska Native students.

In addressing the learning styles of American Indian/Alaska Native students, one must be mindful that there are approximately 510 federally recognized American Indian entities (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1991), each with its own unique government and social system. Within these groups, there are at least 200 traditional tribal languages (Fleming, 1992). These separate cultures and language groups vary significantly from one another in values, spiritual beliefs, kinship patterns, economics, and levels of acculturation. Moreover, American Indian/Alaska Native students differ dramatically from each other, even within their own communities. Other factors, such as degree of assimilation and assimilation versus American Indian/Alaska Native identity must also be considered, because these factors obviously affect learning styles.

Prior to the invasion of the American Indian/Alaska Native settlements in the Americas and the imposition of the Euro-American educational system, many tribal nations had their own very varied educational systems. These systems were culturally responsive to the needs of the American Indian/Alaska Native students – designed to educate the child informally through observation and interaction with parents, relatives, elders, and religious and social groups. In essence, traditional Indian educational practices provided the skills needed for any tribal society to function adequately within their natural environment. However, with few exceptions, the written history of Indian education relates attempts to apply a White man's education and educational processes to American Indian/Alaska Native students.

Findings support the view that American Indian/Alaska Native students are visual learners. Visual learners learn best when they are able to see the material they are expected to master. They tend to learn best when the teacher provides a myriad of visual learning opportunities such as graphics, films, demonstrations, and pictures. American Indian/Alaska Native students are taught by observing parents or elders. When skills are taught, parents or elders generally teach through demonstration. Children watch, and then imitate the skills. For example, the father, mother, or elder might teach the child a skill by modeling. Children are expected to watch, listen and then do. Therefore, many American Indian/Alaska Native students appear to perform best in classrooms with emphasis on visualization, especially in mathematics.

Research indicates that Native American/Alaska Native students tend to be reflective. Reflection is defined as the tendency to stop to consider options before responding, often resulting in greater accuracy in conceptualizing problems. Conversely, being impulsive is the tendency to respond immediately, more fluently, yet inaccurate problem-solving often occurs. In other words, there is a difference in the time period in which the student contemplates before arriving at conclusions. For example, some students' conversations may have a longer "wait time" between responses. Learning may be enhanced by teachers "tuning in" to the students' rhythms of conversation and movement. A reflective student does not need immediate closure. Instead, she or he is more open-oriented, delaying decision-making until all evidence is collected before coming to a conclusion or acting in response to a situation. When posed with a question or problem, American Indian/Alaska Native students tend to be reflective learners, examining all sides of an issue, as well as possible implications and solutions related to the problems. Therefore, they are careful to make sure that the answer to a problem is known before responding. It is not uncommon, therefore, for American Indian/Alaska Native students to spend much more time watching and listening and less time talking than do White students. As Hilliard (2001) pointed out, reluctance to try to solve a problem may be associated with fear of being shamed if one does not succeed, which may account for the seemingly passive behavior of the American Indian/Alaska Native student. Unfortunately, teachers may mistake this behavior as disinterest or lack of motivation.

The sense of time for an American Indian/Alaska Native also appears to mirror a sense of reflectivity. Many American Indian/Alaska Native students have more flexible concepts of time than do members of other cultural groups. The American Indian/Alaska Native student has been taught that time and punctuality are of little importance in the grand scheme of things. Therefore, students may be tardy for class or assignments might be late. The American Indian/Alaska Native student would tend to feel that being closure-oriented might lead to inaccurate decisions. Instead, having a high tolerance for ambiguity and being open-oriented (open to flexible time) are prized. The American Indian/Alaska Native student might then relish comprehending a problem, holding out for all available data. This is considered more important than coming to rapid conclusions about a topic, problem, or assignment.

Research indicates that American Indian/Alaska Native students tend to favor cooperation over competition. The typical American Indian/Alaska Native student lives in a world of people. To them, people are all important. Possessions are of value mainly because they can be shared. In contrast to White culture, most students do not equate the accumulation of property as a measure of a person's worth or social status. One's worth is based on the ability and willingness to share. One who has too many personal possessions is suspect. The thought is that getting

rich may not be possible or even desirable, especially if one looks after the needs of others.

American Indian/Alaska Native students prefer harmony, unity, and a basic oneness. There is security in being a member of the group rather than being singled out. Students do not want to be shown to be either above or below the status of others. Competition does not produce motivation. American Indian/Alaska Native students often feel “put on the spot” or ashamed if the teacher points out their superior work to the class. They may find it necessary to quit doing good work to regain their place in the group.

On the other hand, many American Indian/Alaska Native students prefer cooperative learning strategies. They find activities enjoyable that bring them together with friends or acquaintances in shared group activities. This holds particularly true for athletic events. Competition is unfair and situations are avoided if one student is made to look better than another does. Indian children hesitate to engage in an individual performance before the public gaze, especially where they sense competitive assessment against their peers and equally do not wish to demonstrate by their individual superiority the inferiority of their peers. In addition, to brag about one’s self and personal abilities are, for most tribes, considered to be most ill-mannered. In team sports, where performance is socially defined as benefiting the group, American Indian/Alaska Native students can become excellent competitors.

“Activity manual to honor Alaska Native cultures and traditions in care facilities,”
Don Thibedeau and Jordan P. Lewis, specialolympicsalaska.org, July 2018 [108]
<https://iasquared.org/resource-activity-manual-to-honor-alaska-native-cultures-and-traditions-in-care-facilities/>

Overview:

The State of Alaska is facing a rapidly growing population over the age of 65, in both rural and urban areas; and with this increase comes a need for support, in the way of long-term care and respite services. An important segment of this growing elderly population is Alaska Native Elders who are aging in place, living longer with more chronic illnesses, and facing a variety of health care needs. The high cost of living and the lack of available health care and support services in rural Alaska has required Alaska Native Elders to relocate to urban centers, either to live with family or move to a facility. For some of these Elders, this move can be extremely stressful, resulting in declining physical and mental health.

Working collaboratively with the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, Denali Center, we have developed this training manual with the hope of easing the transition of Alaska Native Elders to facility-based living. Denali Center was selected for this study because of its reputation as a model facility for incorporating culture and assisting Alaska Native Elders with the transition to institutional-based living; we want to share what they have learned with you. Our goal is to ease the stress associated with

relocating and promote optimal health and wellbeing among your Elders and to start discussions in your facility that may lead to implementation of some of these activities.

Denali Center is one example of a nursing home that sees firsthand the benefits and importance of integrating cultural activities and traditional foods. It is the hope of the center that they can serve as an example of how long-term care and skilled nursing facilities can incorporate cultural activities for the Elders that will improve their quality of life and honor their cultural identity, language, values, and customs.

Current & Relevant Information:

Overview of Alaska Native cultural values

Traditional values are seen in cultures all over the world. Alaska Native Elders and families hold certain values to be paramount to their culture. There are similarities and differences among the Inupiat, Yup'ik Eskimo, Athabaskan, Aleut, Haida, Tsimshian, and Tlingit peoples of Alaska. Although there is great variability in the history, language, and traditions of the various Alaska Native cultures, here is a list of some important values all Alaska Native cultures share:

Show respect to others: each person has a special gift

Share what you have: giving makes you richer

Know who you are: you are a reflection of your family

Accept what life brings: you cannot control many things

Have patience: some things cannot be rushed

Live carefully: what you do will come back to you

Take care of others: you cannot live without them

Know and Respect your Elders: they show you the way in life

Pray for guidance: many things are not known

See connections: all things are related

Respect extends to the words we use, the animals and plants that nourish us and heal us – nothing should be wasted.

Patterns of communication

The communication styles of Alaska Natives may differ, and it takes time and patience to gain trust and to provide quality care. Training in community and engagement in cultural activities have assisted in this process for both the Elders and staff.

The table below refers to examples between English and Alaska Native speakers, which may be helpful when considering cross-communication with Alaska Native tribal groups. If we look at what confuses one another in communication, we might be able to understand how the confusion occurred.

| 1. The presentation of Self | |
|--|---|
| Confusing to English speaker about Alaska Natives | Confusing to Alaska Natives about English speakers |
| They do not speak | They talk too much |
| They keep silent | They always talk first |
| They avoid situations of talking | They talk to strangers or people they don't know |
| They only want to talk to close acquaintances | They think they can predict the future |
| They play down their abilities | They brag about themselves |
| They act as if they expect things to be given to them | They don't help people even when they can |
| They deny planning | They always talk about what's going to happen later |

| 2. The Distribution of Talk | |
|---|---|
| Confusing to English speakers about Alaska Natives | Confusing to Alaska Natives about English speakers |
| They avoid direct questions | They ask too many questions |
| They never start conversations | They always interrupt |
| They talk off the topic | They only talk about what they are interested in |
| They never say anything about themselves | They don't give others a chance to talk |
| They are slow to take turns in talking | They just go on and on when they talk |

| 3. The Contents of Talk | |
|---|--|
| Confusing to English speakers about Alaska Natives | Confusing to Alaska Natives about English speakers |
| They are too indirect; too inexplicit | They aren't direct or specific when they talk about people or things |
| They just leave without saying anything | They say "goodbye" even when they can see that you are leaving. |

Examples of culturally mediated communication patterns

| Alaska Native | Euro-American |
|---|---|
| Avoidance of direct eye contact as a sign of respect | Direct eye contact considered sign of honesty and sincerity |
| Handshake lightly | Firm handshake denotes power |
| Information passed by "word of mouth" rather than media | Lectures, newspapers, tv, radio, internet |
| Personal information not forthcoming | Self-disclosure valued, "open and honest" communication style |

| | |
|--|--|
| Ideas and feelings conveyed through behavior rather than speech | Verbal expression of ideas and feelings |
| Words chosen carefully and deliberately, as the power of words is understood | Verbosity and small talk is appropriate social behavior |
| Use of observational skills and non-verbal communication | Verbal and written communication valued |
| Criticisms communicated indirectly through another family member, direct criticism considered disrespectful and rude | Direct criticism used to alter behavior |
| Withdrawal used as a form of disapproval | Direct expression of disapproval |
| Request given through indirect suggestion | Direct requests |
| Listening is valued over talking | Schools teach speaking over listening, importance of expressing one's opinions |

Note: Not all Alaska Native Elders, families, staff, or others will use these patterns

“Improving Cultural Competence Working with Native Americans and Alaskan Natives,” Dawn-Elise Snipes, slideshare.net, 16 December 2017 [109]

<https://www.slideshare.net/DrSnipes/improving-cultural-competence-when-working-with-alaskan-natives-and-native-american>

Current & Relevant Information:

Specific Native American Values:

- Native Americans generally value the community's best interest best interests over their own interest (Collectivistic).
- When an individual is experiencing problems, it interferes with his or her ability to fulfill his or her role in the community.
- Many believe that addiction or mental health problems hurt and weaken the community.

- The collectivistic role can increase motivation for change by inspiring clients to change for the good of the tribe and for the good of the next seven generations to come, even if they don't want to change for themselves.

Communication Guidelines:

- You should know someone well before speaking to them for long periods of time or confiding in them.
- Children should not display themselves verbally in front of adults.
- It is inappropriate to express emotions in public or around people you don't know very well, verbally or non-verbally.
- Don't ask direct questions or expect an immediate response from people you don't know very well.
- It is inappropriate to verbally discipline or praise a child in public.
- It is inappropriate to speak for someone else, no matter who that person is. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, even a child.
- In Indian conversations, it is not the person who speaks first who necessarily controls the topic. This is because an immediate response to what someone has said may be delayed. The respondent therefore has control over the topic by choosing when to speak and what to say.
- Do not signal someone out directly.
- Do not compete with answers, no answer can be said it is wrong.
- Do not look directly at someone the entire time they are talking.

Specific Native American Values:

- Be careful when bringing up the topic of spirituality, as there are sacred and secret traditional practices and spiritual leaders who have the role of providing guidance and healing.
- Many Native communities have long histories of contact with missionaries. They may have adopted, rejected or blended Christian beliefs with their own Native beliefs.
- In general, belief in the creator, Grandfather, God, gods or a higher power is central to many Native people.
- For some Native Americans, spirituality is an integral part of who they are and the world around them.
- Native healers do not separate mind, body and spirit but see them all as connected.

“Communication,” Stanford School of Medicine, 2020 [110]

<https://geriatrics.stanford.edu/ethnomed/alaskan/assessment/communication.html>

[NOTE: Although this reference is geared towards medical professionals, it still provides valuable information for others that interact with Alaska Natives.]

Overview:

Communication: Verbal and Non-Verbal: Alaska Native older adults will easily pick up on uninterested, unfocused, and preoccupied caregivers. Calming your thoughts and emotions can enhance the quality of the interaction with the Alaska Native elders who often use traditional medicines in addition to Western medicine but will not disclose this if they suspect the caregivers are not respectful of these practices. Healthcare workers who are sensitive and diplomatic with regards to the use of traditional medicines can establish trust and rapport with the older adults.

Current & Relevant Information:

Verbal Communication

There are twenty-two different Alaska Native languages. Ascertain the elder's proficiency with the English language. Because of the scarcity of trained interpreters in these languages a family member or friend may step into this role when it is needed. In this situation, it is advisable to have an adult in this role.

Pace of Conversation: An Alaska Native elder may speak with a specific cadence which may require a healthcare provider to slow down. Matching the provider's conversational pace with that of the older adults is critical to the flow of information and to building trust and rapport. Allow the older adult individual ample time to express themselves without interruptions. Health care workers should listen more than talk, giving the older adult individual total attention.

Language and Literacy Assessment: Assess the language(s) spoken, especially the language the Alaska Native older adult uses to learn new information. There is much variability in the indigenous languages in Alaska, although only 5.2% of Alaskans speak one of the twenty-two languages. Many Alaska Natives reside in remote villages and communities which poses major challenges to providing health information in a timely manner. While the boarding schools may have provided access to formal basic education, being informed about health matters occur mostly through the Village Health Aide or by word of mouth. Many rural Alaska Native older adults do not speak English fluently and some do not speak English at all. The older adults often speak indirectly, in metaphors and stories that could be mistaken for lack of understanding of the information received. Assess the literacy level to determine the most useful approach to talking about health care issues such as use of metaphor, storytelling, illustrations, etc.

Non-Verbal Communication

When some Alaska Native older adults nod their heads, they are indicating that they hear what is being said, and when they raise their eyebrows, they are indicating that they agree. They may furrow their brow to indicate they disagree with what is being said, and when they sigh, they are communicating that they are bored. When they hold their arms tight to their body, they are communicating that they want to maintain

a distance, and when they avoid eye contact, they are indicating respect for the person.

Eye Contact: Because health care providers are held in high regard, it is customary not to look directly at them while listening intently to what they are saying. This practice comes from the belief that health care providers have the gift of healing.

4. Recommendations:

[NOTE: Although some of the references in this section are geared towards medical professionals, it still provides valuable information for others that interact with Alaska Natives.]

A. Consultation with Natives:

“Working Effectively with Alaska Native Tribes and Organizations,” [acf.hhs.gov](https://www.acf.hhs.gov), 18 December 2023 [111]

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ana/native_affairs_desk_guide_fw_s.pdf

Overview:

This information is intended to serve as a reference book for federal employees who work with Alaska Native tribes/governments. As federal employees, we are directed by Congress in various laws to coordinate and work with Alaska Natives. The special legal status of tribal governments requires coordination and consultation be conducted on a government-to-government basis. In managing public lands and subsistence hunting and gathering, we must communicate and work in partnership with Alaska Native people.

Traditional Alaska Native societies were self-governing and autonomous before European contact. Social and political systems were in place, which varied from group to group, but worked effectively to maintain social order, control individual behaviors, define interpersonal relationships, define spiritual relationships to the environment and wildlife, identify territory, and regulate relationships with other societies. Each society had an identifiable resource use area that could be defended. Use of resources was often coordinated by various groups for the same location, sometimes for totally different purposes. Distribution and exchange of resources was coordinated by these local societies or tribal governments as they are now identified. Land ownership and use were collective.

Today, Alaska Native peoples continue to live off the land. Tribes, clans, and families continue to have an influence over their members' social interaction, property rights, and ceremonies. Alaska Native peoples continue to have extremely strong ties to the land.

A summary of each of the general cultural groups of Alaska Natives, before and after European contact, is provided for an understanding of Alaska Native people.

This desk guide has been developed to serve as a quick reference document, covering such topics as Alaska Native cultures, historical information, and legal summaries of pertinent legislation, subsistence, and consultation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Consultation with Tribes and ANCSA Corporations

The Federal Trust Responsibility to Tribes:

The “Tribal Trust Responsibility to American Indians and Alaska Natives” provides the basis for a relationship between the federal and tribal governments and references the United States Constitution, Congressional Acts, case law, Presidential Memorandums, Secretarial Orders, as well as policies across the federal government.

Some of these references include:

- Articles of Confederation: Article IX. The United States in Congress assembled shall also have sole and exclusive right and power of regulating ... the trade and managing all affairs with the Indians ...
- U. S. Constitution: Article I. Section 8 – Congress shall have Power ...to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.
- U.S. Constitution: Article 6 ... This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land ...
- U. S. Supreme Court Decisions: The Marshall Trilogy- Johnson v Macintosh (1823); Cherokee Nation v Georgia (1831); Worcester v Georgia (1832)
- Executive Memorandum: Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments (1994)
- Executive Orders: 12875 – Enhancing the Intergovernmental Partnership; (1993) 13175 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (2000)
- Secretarial Order 3225 – Endangered Species Act and Subsistence Uses in Alaska (Supplement to Secretarial Order 3206) (2001)
- The Native American Policy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1994)
- DOI-Alaska Government-to-Government Policy (2001)
- Draft DOI Consultation Policy (Expected final by November, 2011)

Consultation Basics:

Government-to-Government consultation is between the federal government and Federally Recognized Tribes. It encompasses a federal-tribal relationship - which involves verbal dialogue, various means of communication, teamwork, leadership on the part of both governments, and an agreed-upon process. This document answers 3 basic questions: 1) What is the definition of consultation; 2) What triggers consultation; and 3) How is meaningful consultation accomplished?

Definition:

According to Webster's dictionary, Consultation means to consult or confer. Consult means to ask for advice or to seek an opinion. It does not mean obtaining consent. As a working definition of Consultation for the purposes of USFWS guidance, consultation is defined as: A mutual, open, and direct two-way communication, conducted in good faith, to secure meaningful participation in the decision-making process, as allowed by law. (USFWS Draft Tribal Consultation Guide 2/7/2010)

Activities That Initiate Consultation:

The Department of Interior Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes is currently being written and due for the Secretary of Interior's signature this August. In the meantime, we must draw from several sources to help guide us.

- Proposed federal actions that will have a substantial, direct effect on the resources or rights of the Tribe(s). When assessing what is subject to consultation, the Agency shall take into account the cultural and traditional activities of the Tribe that may be affected by the proposed action. (DOI Policy on Government to Government Relations with Alaska Native Tribes, 2001)
- Departmental regulations, rulemaking, policy, guidance, legislative proposal, grant funding, formula changes, or operational activity that may have a substantial direct effect on an Indian Tribe, including but not limited to:
 - o Tribal cultural practices, lands, resources, or access to traditional areas of cultural or religious importance on Federally managed lands; or
 - o The ability of the Indian Tribe to govern its members; or
 - o The Indian Tribe's relationship with the Department; or
 - o The distribution of responsibilities between the Department and Indian Tribes. (DOI Draft Tribal Consultation Policy, March 2011)

Basic Consultation Process:

1. Offer the Tribe(s) the opportunity to consult, early (preferably before a document is drafted), in writing.
2. Provide ample information, if Tribe(s) is interested in consulting.

3. Have a meeting or series of meetings where the dialogue occurs.
4. Document in your own case file and track the consultation.
5. Cooperatively create decision memorandums OR simply notify the Tribe(s) of final decisions on a proposed action within a reasonable time.

“Department of the Interior Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes,” U.S. Department of Interior, 2021 [112]

https://usbr.gov/native/policies/pdf_consultation/DOI_PolicyOnConsultationWithIndianTribes_12-01-2011.pdf

Overview:

The obligation for Federal agencies to engage with Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis is based on the U.S. Constitution and Federal treaties, statutes, executive orders, and policies. Federal agencies help to meet that obligation through meaningful consultation with Indian Tribes.

The Department of the Interior (Department) is committed to fulfilling its Tribal consultation obligations—whether directed by statute or administrative action such as Executive Order (EO) 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments) or other applicable Secretarial Orders or policies—by adhering to the consultation framework described in this Policy. Through this Policy, the Department strives to strengthen its government-to-government relationship with Indian Tribes and begin a new era of consultation. This Policy reflects the Secretary’s commitment to consultation with Indian Tribes, recognition of Indian Tribes’ right to self-governance and Tribal sovereignty.

The Department’s Bureaus and Offices shall review their existing practices and revise them as needed to comply with this Policy. All Bureaus and Offices will report to the Secretary, through the designee, on their efforts to comply with this Policy, as described in a companion Secretarial Order.

Current & Relevant Information:

This Policy broadly defines provisions for enhancing the Department’s consultation processes with Indian Tribes. This Policy shall complement, not supersede, any existing laws, rules, statutes, or regulations that guide consultation processes with Indian Tribes.

This Policy requires a government-to-government consultation between appropriate Tribal Officials and Departmental officials. The appropriate Departmental officials are those individuals who are knowledgeable about the matters at hand, are authorized to speak for the Department, and exercise delegated authority in the disposition and implementation of an agency action. Departmental officials will identify appropriate Tribal consulting parties early in the planning process and provide Indian Tribes a meaningful opportunity to

participate in the consultation process as described in Section VII of this Policy. Departmental officials will participate in the consultation process in a manner that demonstrates a meaningful commitment and ensures continuity in the process. The Policy thus honors the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian Tribes, and complies with the Presidential Memorandum of November 5, 2009, which affirms this relationship and obligates the Department to meet the spirit and intent of EO 13175.

Consultation is a deliberative process that aims to create effective collaboration and informed Federal decision-making. Consultation is built upon government-to-government exchange of information and promotes enhanced communication that emphasizes trust, respect, and shared responsibility. Communication will be open and transparent without compromising the rights of Indian Tribes or the government-to-government consultation process. Federal consultation conducted in a meaningful and good-faith manner further facilitates effective Department operations and governance practices. To that end, Bureaus and Offices will seek and promote cooperation, participation, and efficiencies between agencies with overlapping jurisdiction, special expertise, or related responsibilities regarding a Departmental Action with Tribal Implications. Efficiencies derived from the involvement of Indian Tribes in the Department's decision-making processes through Tribal consultation will help ensure that future Federal action is achievable, comprehensive, long-lasting, and reflective of Tribal input.

“Implementing Government-to-Government Relationships between Federal Agencies and Alaska Native Tribes,” Amanda M. Shearer, *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*, 2007 [113] <https://www.alaskaanthropology.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AJA-v52-optimized.pdf#page=98>

Abstract:

Although tribes are recognized as “domestic dependent nations” with inherent sovereignty over their own affairs, the U.S. government has accepted various trust responsibilities such as protecting tribal rights and resources. Based on this trust relationship, federal agencies have been working to conduct meaningful government-to-government consultation on projects and policies that may have implications for tribes, including impacts to tribal cultural resources. The purpose of this paper is two-fold: (1) to provide legal background and understanding on government-to-government relationships and the federal recognition of tribes in Alaska; and (2) to present practical information on the implementation of government-to-government relationships, the inequality of funding and capacity between federal agencies and tribes, and what generally constitutes meaningful consultation to tribes. Government-to-government implementation is challenging and often involves conflict. Recommendations for enhancing implementation are included.

Current & Relevant Information:

Government-to-Government Relationships

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, the first American jurist to define the principles of aboriginal title doctrine, described the relationship between the federal government and Native American tribes as one that is government-to-government (Case and Voluck 2002:29, 36).

That relationship is founded on principles of constitutional, international, and common law, all of which lead to the conclusion that, on a government-to-government basis, Natives are compelled to depend on federal plenary power. They are dependent on the federal government to protect their aboriginal lands and give fair satisfaction to legitimate Native land claims; they depend on the government to provide important human services when the states refuse or are unable to; and they are dependent on the government to protect subsistence resources and tribal government from state or non-Native encroachment (Case and Voluck 2002:4)

Current federal regulations further state that the United States maintains a government-to-government relationship with recognized tribes in acknowledgement of the sovereignty of those tribes. “The Government-to-Government relationship of American Indian tribes and the U.S. is a truly unique one in the world system of governments” (Utter 2002:255). It is through government-to-government consultation that federal agencies can assess the potential effect that proposed federal actions may have on tribal rights or resources (Department of Defense 1998:3).

Executive Orders and Memoranda

In the past, presidents were more involved in Indian affairs than at present. More recently, the president’s contact with Indian policy is “largely ceremonial and symbolic” (Deloria and Lytle 1983:34). Nonetheless, the president’s position on Native affairs is still important, since it is the president who sets the tone for the administration (Deloria and Lytle 1983:35).

President Clinton recognized the government-to-government relationship between the federal government and tribes in May of 1994 when he met with American Indian and Alaska Native political leaders on the lawn of the White House (Deloria and Wilkins 1999:38). During this meeting, Clinton stressed his support for tribal self-determination and the trust obligations of the federal government. He vowed “to honor and respect sovereignty based upon our unique historic relationship and he pledged to protect the right of tribes to exercise their religious freedoms” (Deloria and Wilkins 1999:38). This meeting was followed by Executive Order 13084, entitled Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, issued in 1998.

President George W. Bush reaffirmed Indian tribal sovereignty as recently as September 23, 2004 with the issuance of an executive memorandum entitled

Government-to-Government Relationship with Tribal Governments. In this memorandum, Bush stated:

My Administration is committed to continuing to work with federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis and strongly supports and respects tribal sovereignty and self-determination for tribal governments in the United States. I take pride in acknowledging and reaffirming the existence and durability of our unique government-to-government relationship and these abiding principles.

The memorandum Bush signed holds no legal authority, since it neither created new law nor new rights for tribes. It simply restated the federal government's recognition of and support for tribal sovereignty. "Native American cultures survive and flourish when tribes retain control over their own affairs and their own future," Bush said (Vitucci 2004).

Consultation

Consultation is one of the primary mechanisms for instituting the federal government-to-government relationship. Despite the number of legal mandates either requiring or suggesting consultation with Indian tribes, consultation is not explicitly defined in any statute. The common understanding of the term is to seek guidance or information from another person. Consultation should not be confused with either notification, which simply provides information, or obtaining consent (U.S. Army Garrison Alaska 2007:2). For example, Army guidance states that "[t]he end goal of consultation is the resolution of issues in terms that are mutually acceptable to the U.S. Army and to the participating Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian groups" (Department of the Army 1998:37–38). Therefore, agency representatives should enter into consultation with tribal governments before decisions have been made and with a willingness to listen and take tribal viewpoints into account.

Generally, tribal consultation means the formal, mutually agreed-upon process when an agency leader coordinates on a government-to-government basis with tribal governments. Coordination includes formal written correspondence, telephone contact, and face-to-face meetings (U.S. Army Garrison Alaska 2007:3). Consultation is intended to assure meaningful tribal participation in planning and decision-making for actions proposed by the federal government that may have the potential to affect protected tribal resources (including tribal cultural resources), tribal rights, or Indian lands.

Government-to-government consultation is required whenever a federal action or a federally funded action may have the potential to significantly affect the interests of tribal governments and their people (U.S. Army Garrison Alaska 2007:2).

Government-to-government coordination is mandated even in instances when the tribe is not the landholder where tribal cultural resources may be located.

Consultation is not simply sharing general information with tribes, nor is it a one-time event, but rather a process of determining how to communicate between governments. The partnerships that develop must be built on an open dialogue. Each government needs to be able to effectively understand and operate within the bounds of the other's culture.

Agencies must take a comprehensive approach when evaluating which tribes may have interests affected by federal actions (U.S. Army Garrison Alaska 2007:3). Tribal sovereignty means that tribes themselves are in the best position to decide whether they have an interest or may be affected by federal activities. Consideration should be given to the wide geographical area that tribes use for subsistence hunting and fishing and the effects of the federal activities on these resources. It is better to include many tribes, rather than miss an opportunity for early consultation, or worse, determine on behalf of the tribes that particular tribal villages should not have any interest based on current location. Tribal villages may have been relocated or moved from traditional areas and may be interested in projects and policies despite their current geographic locations.

Affected tribes must be afforded an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process to ensure that tribal interests are given due consideration in a manner consistent with tribal sovereign authority (U.S. Army Garrison Alaska 2007:3). It is suggested that federal agencies adopt formal procedures to establish effective relationships with federally recognized tribes. General and frequent consultation, outside the pressures of specific agency proposals, is most advantageous to developing meaningful consultation (Department of Defence 1999:(d)).

What constitutes meaningful consultation to tribes?

Consultation is more than just fulfilling the requirements of agencies to meet with tribes regarding projects that may affect them. Two-way communication is one of the keys to successful consultation (T6 2004:2). A tribal member stated:

You have to be interested in us if you expect us to be interested in you. Treat us with respect if you want respect from us. Communicate with us if you want us to communicate with you. (T3 2004:8–9)

Meaningful consultation occurs “when the tribe has had an opportunity to give their opinion and effect a change that will affect future generations” (T5 2004:1). Tribes generally judge the effectiveness of consultation based on tangible results (T2 2004:1). Tribes also want to be fully involved in planning when and how consultation occurs, and they generally want consultation to be one-on-one.

Nothing is in it for tribes when [agencies] chooses when, where and how [consultation occurs] When you hold these big [meetings with] 10, 15, 20 tribes in one room, consulting with certain individuals with the [agency], there is nothing in it for tribes. (T2 2004:3–4)

Implementing Government-to-Government Relationships

Government-to-government coordination with the agencies can be a burden on tribal personnel, who receive a multitude of information and requests from all federal agencies. It requires the tribe to have technical people on board, which is not a reality for most tribes in Alaska. In the true spirit of consultation, tribes want agencies to give them choices and not ask tribes to simply concur with agency decisions.

Properly implementing government-to-government relationships requires continuity and constant communication. “Coordinating with the tribes is keeping up the dialogue, working with them, assessing if something is going to impact the tribes, to get to the notification stage, and then the consultation stage, you’d have to be coordinating with them effectively” (T1 2004:9–10).

Government-to-government relationship building between tribes and federal agencies in Alaska is a fairly new phenomenon (T8 2004:1). The old days of the government telling the tribes what their decision is are over (T8 2004:1). Nonetheless, implementation is still trial and error.

Enhancing Government-to-Government Implementation

There are several ways to enhance government-to-government implementation. The ability of each federal agency to employ a full-time dedicated Native or tribal liaison position improves the program and provides for more consistent coordination (L8 2004:5). Standard operating procedures documents and/or internal policy guidance have been identified as important for continuity when there is turnover within liaison positions (L4 2004:7). All liaisons need to have direct access to and support from the leadership “because [liaisons] aren’t representing the subordinates, you are representing the leader” (L7 2004:13; L5 2004:5).

Education and technical training are a continuing need, both within agencies and also for the tribes (L4 2004:7). One interviewee expressed desire for the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council to train tribes on their powers under the policies and laws (L4 2004:7). Another training need identified revolves around the issue of contracting:

It would help the process if the tribes could be more clearly informed... That’s where the biggest disappointment rests with the tribes. The message should be clear to them that money and contracts are not an outgrowth of government-to-government. Or, if [an agency] thinks they should be an outgrowth of government-to-government, then we need clear guidance. (L2 2004:6)

Regarding the chosen location for government-to-government meetings, agencies need to either travel to villages for government-to-government meetings or provide funding for tribe’s time and travel to meetings. “Don’t expect tribes to foot the bill to come to [agency] offices in Anchorage for meetings” (L4 2004:7). Tribes request that agency personnel travel to their villages for one-on-one consultation, rather than inviting multiple tribes to group meetings in urban centers (T2 2004:2).

Natives will talk more in the outdoors and on their own turf than in meetings in town. I don't like cities and don't get along with them. Natives won't talk at group meetings in the city, they won't say a word. More meaningful consultation will occur on Native turf. (T4 2004:1)

Traveling to the villages also allows agency personnel to spend time with elders. "Elders for the most part in our tribe are too old to travel so the [agency] should come to them" (T5 2004:1).

To be successful, government-to-government consultation must be initiated at the earliest stages of proposed project development (L6 2004: L6):

I think there's got to be consultation initiated in a real early planning level of stages, even in the conceptual stages. That's the only way it can really be successful. And that one of the best ways of doing it is having a quarterly or biannual meeting with the tribes where you start discussing what's coming up in the long range—not that there's any long-range planning. Give them a greater opportunity to understand what's going on. To understand and select those items that are going to be of interest to them to participate in.

Tribes want to be involved in the planning of meeting agendas and desire more consultation before government-to-government meetings (T2 2004:4). Tribes appreciate advance notice of project planning (T8 2004:16) and want agencies to be more considerate of tribal constraints such as time and funding (T2 2004:4), since government-to-government is an unfunded mandate (T1 2004:5).

Tribes want agencies to take action on items brought up during consultation (T2 2004:4) and they would like the efforts to be long-term (T8 2004:15). A tribal member expressed the need for written agreements in order to combat the problem of broken promises. "If a handshake doesn't mean anything, then we need to write it down. It doesn't mean nothing—you have to have it in writing" (T8 2004:16–17).

Lastly, vast improvements can be made through communicating on a regular basis with the tribes. "Don't be afraid of picking up the phone or e-mailing the tribes.... Interact with [tribes] just like you would any other group, whether it is a contractor or a regulatory agency, communicate with calls and e-mails" (L1 2004:6).

"Fast Facts about Traditional Knowledge and Responsible Partnerships with Indigenous Communities," Michelle Montgomery, Administration for Native Americans, December 2012 [114] https://acfmaint-dev.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ana/ff_tribal_partnerships_final.pdf

Abstract:

This fact sheet was developed by Michelle Montgomery for the University of Washington Center for Ecogenetics and Environmental Health and the University of Washington Center for Genomics and Healthcare Equality. It covers what traditional

knowledge is and how to respect it, as well as characteristics and examples of responsible community partnerships.

Current & Relevant Information:

What is Traditional Knowledge?

“From an indigenous perspective, Traditional Knowledge (TK) encompasses all that is known about the world around us and how we apply that knowledge in relation to those beings, physical and otherwise, that share our world. From this knowledge emerges our sense of place, our language, our ceremonies, our cultural identities, and our ways of life. As knowledge keepers pass away, the continued existence and viability of TK is threatened. It is crucially important to preserve the varied teachings in TK and employ them to strive for balance among the physical, the spiritual, emotional, and intellect, and all things that encompass ‘wolakota’ [to be a complete human being].” — Albert White Hat, Sr., Sicangu Lakota

A Responsible Community Partnership...

- ✓ Meaningfully and respectfully engages community members as partners;
- ✓ Recognizes past injustices inflicted on Native Americans and on this community;
- ✓ Builds trusting relationships;
- ✓ Respects traditional knowledge and allows community values and perspectives to guide the partnership;
- ✓ Fosters open, transparent communication;
- ✓ Becomes active and present in the community.

How Do We Respect Traditional Knowledge?

ETHICS. Fostering the importance of culture & the right to self-determination [Values, Responsibility, Recognition, Redistribution]

KNOWLEDGE. Fostering a healthy, holistic way of life & cultural resiliency [Culture, Language, Physical & Spiritual Health, Place-based, Traditional, Environment]

PRACTICE. Fostering & engaging community involvement [Community Driven, Community Expertise, Being Present, Respect, Transparency]

Why Responsible Community Partnerships are Important

Even though trusted partnerships and research practices have emerged, we still have much to learn. It is important for community members to become empowered to promote health and well-being for sustainable cultural resiliency. Positive courses

of action require transforming historically exploitative research practices in order to rebuild trust between indigenous people and academic researchers. There is no “one-size fits all” approach to creating responsible partnerships.

“The Talking Circle: A Perspective in Culturally Appropriate Group Work with Indigenous Peoples,” Joseph P. Bohanon, University of Southern Mississippi, 2006 [115] <https://www.se.edu/native-american/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2019/09/Proceedings-2005-Bohanon.pdf>

Abstract:

Social service programs are currently addressing service delivery, which utilizes a cultural competence or cultural sensitivity approach to the populations they serve. The need to go further than cultural sensitivity is for culturally appropriate intervention strategies that are fully incorporated into the social workers’ repertoire. The author will discuss a technique called “The Talking Circle,” which has been used in various groups to create a healing pattern that is legitimate to Indigenous Peoples. Based on values of sharing, respect, and honor, the Talking Circle is one way for Indigenous People to communicate about life events. Moreover, it is a way to explore the polarities which exist related to one’s heritage, relationships, challenges, stresses, and strengths.

Current & Relevant Information:

Group Work

Amid all the incorporation of ideas, strategies, and evaluations of the approaches used to work with Indigenous Peoples, one has to keep in mind the cooperative and consensus effort in group work, which involves a patient, cyclical, community-based, and kinship-oriented understanding of the deep respect for all things. An important suggestion is that after confidence has been gained a social services worker in a group setting “should keep discussion at a general level, avoiding attempts to diagnose any group members” (Nofz 1988, 71). When working with a group it is also good to begin with a group-oriented task rather than with individual tasks. This task should be chosen by the group and reflect the objectives valued by the group members. This method helps to create a bond and a sense of common purpose among group members and is congruent with traditional beliefs.

The Circle

Indigenous Peoples’ understanding of time is cyclical or circular rather than linear, and they believe that everything has a natural order. Black Elk, Oglala Sioux, stated, “the circle helps us to remember Wakan-Tanka, who like the circle has no end” (Brown 1972, 92). Indigenous Peoples believe everything is connected in a circular fashion: “everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round (Niehardt 1979,

194). Dances, drums, ceremonies, and symbolic meanings attribute their honor to the circle, which carries the significance of life with the ancestral ways.

Talking Circle

The Talking Circle has been used on occasion for various groups as part of support, healing, discussion, and evaluation. The Talking Circle “is a simple yet powerful Native American tradition that we have found useful in various settings” (Hammerschlag 1997, 145). In the American Indian Counseling Seminar in Dallas, Texas, the Talking Circle was used for the closing ceremony and to evaluate the participant’s experience of the day-long event. The structure of this group began with each seminar participant sitting in a circle and sharing their experience. The group facilitator opened with a flute song and passed a feather to the person on her left to begin the sharing of their experience. The person holding the feather could speak to the group and receive respectful attention to their spoken words. However, you could pass on taking the feather and speaking if you so desired. The facilitator gave honor to the males of the group and acknowledged all participants. A special recognition was given to an inner circle with gifts to the planning committee for the event. The Talking Circle ended by all participants holding hands, and an elder closed it with a prayer.

Another example of the Talking Circle was used for a substance abuse support group in addressing various personal and family issues. This group used some AA principles, but was creative in incorporating some tribal cultural aspects. Storytelling, humor, songs, and having Indian food were employed for integrating traditional ways into the Talking Circle. A Talking Stick was used because of the preference of some tribal affiliates more comfortable with that symbol of respect when giving a group member the opportunity to speak.

The latest use of the Talking Circle came from the development of a project that involved identifying Indigenous Peoples located in Houston/Harris County in Texas who were at risk for HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and other related health issues. The group members in the Talking Circle met to talk about personal issues related to life, health, culture, and community. This group was set up not to be a political forum, a time for lecturing, or the spreading of gossip. Respect was the key and honoring one’s presence was important, as well as being attentive and supportive. Any discussion or conversation during this group would be held in complete confidence and would not be taken from the circle. The person holding the feather was careful to speak for himself in a non-judgmental, non-aggressive manner when speaking in the circle.

The first part of the Talking Circle began with the smudging (smoking) of the area. Each group member could participate. The surroundings and members would be smudged for purification. A moment of silence was given to honor those that had moved on and those struggling with health-related problems and issues. The

facilitator or group leader began with recognition of the sacred directions, which vary from tribe to tribe. In this group we used the four directions and opened the discussion with the passing of the feather from member to member. The only time you were allowed to speak was when you were holding the feather in the circle. The person was aware of time constraints and respected those that had yet to speak. If a group member declined to speak, then he could pass the feather to the next person. After the members had talked, then one could address a concern or answer a question that was posed to the group. Everything was said in honor and in helping one another feel comfortable with discussing relevant problems and solutions. This was not a time for criticism or debate. The last part of the Talking Circle involved the discussion of the culture such as information pertaining to tribal activities, announcements, speakers, and heritage.

“American Indian & Alaska Native Resource Manual,” Jamie Grant and Teresa Brown, *The Nation’s Voice on Mental Illness*, June 2003 [116] <https://sprc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/AI-AN-Resource-Manual.pdf>

Current & Relevant Information:

Overcoming Distrust:

One of the first issues to consider in understanding the dynamics of carrying out...programs in American Indian Communities is that like many other ethnic minority communities, American Indian communities often have a historical distrust of the dominant society (Lockhart, 1981). This distrust is based in the historical nature of the relationship between the dominant culture and American Indians that includes a 500-year history of oppression and domination – at times approaching genocide. When programs are seen as imposed from outside the community, this distrust is likely to escalate and to form a significant barrier. In such situations...programs are not likely to produce useful results.

...A key part of making programs relevant is to have them emerge out of a process of community involvement. Beauvais and LaBoueff (1985) present a model of community action that progresses from a few interested people to a core group to a community task force. Each step involves more community members committed to the idea...

There are several ways that noncommunity members can demonstrate their commitment to American Indian communities. Simply responding to the stated needs that are defined by a process of community involvement instead of having a set program that is defined by academic interests or by government or foundation announcements is a strong statement to the community. Providing technical assistance that is needed in the community even though it may not be funded directly by grants also demonstrates commitment. Perhaps most important...being willing to stick around and deal with a problem as long as it takes, even if that means moving beyond the original funding period. This might mean locating and securing

additional funding in order to continue a program. In summary, working in American Indian communities requires us to directly address issues of distrust by listening to and then responding in a committed manner to community-defined interest.

Developing Cultural Sensitivity:

To accomplish the above, one must be culturally sensitive. But what does this mean?

Cultural competency occurs in stages with simple awareness of cultural differences being a necessary first stage. The second stage is self-assessment, that is, the awareness of one's own cultural values. This approach to cultural competence holds that people must understand their own culture (i.e. recognize that they have a cultural lens) before they can be sensitive to other cultures. The third stage is an understanding of the dynamics such as conflict and racism that may occur when members of different cultures interact. Working through these three stages enables individuals to adapt to variability and to adjust professional skills to fit within the cultural context of ethnic community.

...To be culturally competent means to conduct one's professional work in a way that is congruent with the behaviors and expectations that members of a cultural group recognize as appropriate among themselves. ...That does not mean that nonmembers of a community will be able to conduct themselves as though they are a member of the group. Rather, they must be able to engage the community on something other than their own terms and demonstrate acceptance of cultural difference in an open, genuine manner, without condescension.

“Strategies From American Indian and Alaska Native Community Partners on Effective Emergency Response Collaboration,” Tara M. Chico-Jarillo, Jefferey Burgess, and Brenda Granillo, American Journal of Public Health, November 2018 [117] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6236716/>

Abstract:

In the United States, there are 567 federally recognized Indian Nations (also referred to as tribes, communities, pueblos, rancherias, bands, native villages, and nations) that span 35 states. Each of these Nations are culturally, linguistically, and regionally different from each other. While each Indian Nation is different, the US recognizes each Nation as a sovereign and self-governing entity. As sovereign nations, each nation has the authority to enact their own regulations to protect the health, safety, welfare, and overall well-being of their communities. The different jurisdictional authorities within Indian Nations are complex, especially in public health preparedness and response (PHPR), as the delivery of services are distributed across federal, state, local, and tribal systems. Thus, addressing sovereignty and multiple jurisdictions is critical to building and maintaining an effective tribal and multijurisdictional response network.

Unfortunately, the integration of tribal public health partners into the multijurisdictional response network is often lacking. Supporting and sustaining an efficient network requires effective communication and collaboration to build capacity and capability. To assist in the identification of barriers that hinder effective collaboration and communications with tribal preparedness partners, the Mountain West Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (MWPERLC) at the University of Arizona's Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health was awarded a cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) focused on the translation, application, and evaluation of research products and trainings to improve public health preparedness and response practices, policies, and programs.

The overall goal of the MWPERLC project was centered on "Building an Effective Tribal and Multijurisdictional Response Network to Improve Preparedness and Response." To meet this goal the MWPERLC developed and distributed a regional tribal, state, and local needs assessment survey to validate the existing preparedness and response gaps of our tribal partners and to identify collaboration gaps between tribal, state, local, federal, and territorial preparedness partners. The needs assessment was distributed electronically to three separate groups: (1) MWPERLC advisory board members, (2) constituents and (3) members on the MWPERLC listserv. These individuals represented a wide array of agencies and jurisdictions and provided the MWPERLC team with multiple perspectives on the preparedness challenges within their respective jurisdictions and varied communities.

Data collected from the needs assessment were analyzed quantitatively to summarize and identify trends and analyzed qualitatively using a thematic approach to identify commonalities in the responses. To validate the specified needs identified in the needs assessment, the MWPERLC utilized an approach that included organizing an advisory board meeting and using the state-specific capability planning guides and the 2016 CDC National Snapshot as benchmarks for comparison.

Current & Relevant Information:

To further understand the deeper issues identified in the tribal needs assessment survey, the MWPERLC engaged its tribal advisory board members in root cause analysis to define success in collaboration and communication among preparedness partners. Root cause analysis is a vigorous evaluation methodology used in a variety of different disciplines to determine the real cause of an issue. Root cause analysis is also a structured problem-solving approach to assist in the identification of the real cause of a problem and to identify actions leading to a permanent solution to that problem. To begin root cause analysis, a problem statement needed to be identified and defined. The root cause analysis proposed the following problem statement:

“There is less than effective collaboration between all formal preparedness partners.”

The root cause analysis identified the following top three issues:

- lack of face-to-face personal interaction with partners;
- lack of understanding of how tribal governments work with nontribal partners; and,
- lack of preparedness infrastructure (i.e., often no formal public health emergency preparedness or emergency management programs) within the community.

The root cause analysis identified opportunities to increase collaborative efforts between all preparedness partners. Additionally, to enhance collaboration among tribal, state, local, and federal preparedness partners, the results from the root cause analysis led to the development of a guidebook that addressed the gaps associated with the three identified issues. The guidebook identified seven strategies for effectively working with American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. The strategies include:

1. Understand the history of AI/AN peoples in the United States: Recognize the deep-rooted and complex histories among AI/ANs and how it has affected their PHPR efforts.
2. Recognize the different structures of tribal governments among AI/AN peoples: Understand that federally recognized tribes are varied in structure and decision-making processes and tribal nations represent a unique part of the US emergency management system.
3. Acknowledge all AI/AN communities are different: AI/AN communities share similar values and ways of life, but every tribe is different, and these differences can play an integral role in their understanding of PHPR and in how a tribal nation responds to a disaster.
4. Establish trust with AI/AN peoples and their communities: To effectively work with tribal nations it is important to build relationships and maintain trust within each tribe.
5. Develop effective communication with AI/AN communities: Maintaining communication skills and patterns that are relevant to each AI/AN tribe is a crucial step in PHPR efforts.
6. Solicit tribal consultation: Ensure there is a process in place to seek, discuss and consider the PHPR views of AI/ANs.
7. Understand key definitions that apply to AI/AN peoples: Know the concepts, terms, and definitions that are specific to each group (i.e., AI/AN, Indian Country).

“Handbook: Model Alaska Native Consultation Procedures,” Environmental Law Institute, January 2016 [118] https://www.mmc.gov/wp-content/uploads/model_consultation_procedures_handbookfinal.pdf

Abstract:

This Handbook is meant to provide Alaska Native communities with guidance on how they can design their own policies and procedures for government-to-government consultation with federal agencies. Specifically, the Handbook focuses on consultation as it relates to federal actions that affect marine mammals and the communities that depend upon them, though its principles are meant to be broadly applicable to natural resource management issues faced by Alaska Native communities.

Current & Relevant Information:

HOW THIS HANDBOOK IS DESIGNED AND HOW TO USE IT

This Handbook is meant to be a reference document for Alaska Native communities to support their efforts to design and implement their own procedures for government-to-government consultation. The Handbook consists of two sections: (1) an Introduction, including an overview of government-to-government consultation; and (2) Model Consultation Procedures that can be used by Alaska Native communities to develop their own procedures for government-to-government consultation. For the Model Consultation Procedures portion of the Handbook, a sidebar is included for each section to explain the rationale for the provisions included.

The Introduction (Part I) describes government-to-government consultation (hereinafter called “consultation”) and outlines the purpose of the Handbook. In addition, it details that the Handbook is focused specifically on consultation related to marine mammal issues, but that the Handbook’s provisions can be applied generally to consultation related to other natural resource issues. Finally, the Introduction describes the difference between co-management and consultation, which are separate processes and two distinct mechanisms used to enable federal agency and Alaska Native collaboration. While the Handbook addresses the interaction of consultation and co-management in the marine mammal setting, none of the model provisions provided in this Handbook are meant to abridge or expand co-management or consultation rights beyond what is provided by law.

The Model Consultation Procedures (Part II) include model language that Alaska Native tribes can adapt to develop their own consultation policies, as well as explanations for why specific language is suggested. It is meant to serve as a resource for Alaska Native communities to support their efforts to design consultation policies and procedures that work for them. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, so some provisions may be useful in some circumstances for some

communities, but not others. The Handbook considers both internal procedures within a community and external procedures between communities and federal agencies.

The concept for this Handbook arose from a 2012 meeting hosted by the Marine Mammal Commission and the Indigenous Peoples Council for Marine Mammals (IPCoMM), which focused on marine mammal consultation and co-management. One outcome of the meeting was a recommendation by IPCoMM to work with the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) to develop model Alaska Native consultation procedures for marine mammals. With support from the Marine Mammal Commission, ELI collaborated with IPCoMM and an Advisory Group to design and develop this Handbook. The Advisory Group included experts from co-management organizations, statewide bodies, Alaska Native corporations, and those involved in consultation with federal agencies.

CONSULTATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

What is consultation?

Under Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, the federal government must consult with tribal governments when making decisions that may affect tribal interests, a requirement stemming from the trust relationship the federal government has with tribes.

Consultation is thus a process designed to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the views and perspectives of tribes during federal decision-making through an exchange of ideas, concerns and perspectives. It is a process that applies to federal agencies when they develop policies and actions that affect the interests of federally-recognized Indian tribes, including when federal agencies make decisions that affect marine mammal resources. Under the Executive Order, consultation should be **meaningful and timely**.

Who is involved in consultation?

Under the Executive Order, federal agencies must consult on a **government-to-government basis** with tribal officials and authorized intertribal organizations. While the consultation right lies with tribal governments, the involvement of authorized intertribal organizations in the Executive Order indicates that other organizations—like marine mammal co-management bodies—may be authorized by tribes to engage in consultation on behalf of (or alongside of) tribal governments. The agencies should be represented by federal officials with decision-making authority for the proposed action at issue.

When does consultation happen?

Federal agencies must consult **when developing actions with tribal implications**. Tribal implications include effects on tribal self-government, tribal trust resources,

and Indian tribal treaty and other rights. Among Alaska Natives' rights are rights to natural resources, including marine mammals. It is important to note that "actions with tribal implications" may not always be clear. When unclear, the consultation mandate should be construed broadly to encompass a greater number of issues given the complex interdependence of natural resources and possibility of indirect implications.

What are the agency requirements?

A fundamental principle of consultation is that tribes have an equal role in establishing the principles and practices of consultation with the federal agencies. The current federal consultation policy was strengthened in November 2000 by Executive Order 13175 and further enhanced by Presidential Memorandum in 2009. These presidential directives call upon **all federal agencies** to adhere to a set of consultation procedures.

Agencies are required to develop written procedures to ensure that they have **accountable** consultation processes. The written procedures must show how agencies will identify policies that may have tribal implications and how they will ensure "**meaningful** and **timely** input" into the development of agency policies. If appropriate, federal agencies should use consensual mechanisms for developing regulations on issues relating to tribal self-government, tribal trust resources, or Indian tribal treaty and other rights.

The Executive Order states the fundamental principle that "[w]hen undertaking to formulate and implement policies that have tribal implications, agencies shall: (1) encourage Indian tribes to develop their own policies to achieve program objectives; [and] (2) **where possible, defer to Indian tribes to establish standards...**" (emphasis added). Therefore, federal agencies should defer to Alaska Native standards, including policies and procedures related to consultation, where possible.

Each agency must have a designated tribal consultation official to coordinate and implement tribal consultation. This official must facilitate "a meaningful and timely form of consultation" concerning regulations with tribal implications. The official also is to provide yearly progress reports to the federal Office and Management and Budget showing that the agency is complying with consultation requirements.

B. Protocol and Etiquette:

"Working Effectively with Alaska Native Tribes and Organizations," [acf.hhs.gov](https://www.acf.hhs.gov),
18 December 2023 [119]

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ana/native_affairs_desk_guide_fw_s.pdf

Overview:

This information is intended to serve as a reference book for federal employees who work with Alaska Native tribes/governments. As federal employees, we are directed by Congress in various laws to coordinate and work with Alaska Natives. The special legal status of tribal governments requires coordination and consultation be conducted on a government-to-government basis. In managing public lands and subsistence hunting and gathering, we must communicate and work in partnership with Alaska Native people.

Traditional Alaska Native societies were self-governing and autonomous before European contact. Social and political systems were in place, which varied from group to group, but worked effectively to maintain social order, control individual behaviors, define interpersonal relationships, define spiritual relationships to the environment and wildlife, identify territory, and regulate relationships with other societies. Each society had an identifiable resource use area that could be defended. Use of resources was often coordinated by various groups for the same location, sometimes for totally different purposes. Distribution and exchange of resources was coordinated by these local societies or tribal governments as they are now identified. Land ownership and use were collective.

Today, Alaska Native peoples continue to live off the land. Tribes, clans, and families continue to have an influence over their members' social interaction, property rights, and ceremonies. Alaska Native peoples continue to have extremely strong ties to the land.

A summary of each of the general cultural groups of Alaska Natives, before and after European contact, is provided for an understanding of Alaska Native people.

This desk guide has been developed to serve as a quick reference document, covering such topics as Alaska Native cultures, historical information, and legal summaries of pertinent legislation, subsistence, and consultation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Protocol and Etiquette

Protocol: a code prescribing strict adherence to a correct etiquette or precedence.

Etiquette: the forms prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life.

General Preparation Guidance for Visiting or Working in Rural Alaska:

Be prepared for distinct cultural differences. Depending upon where you go, expect to see or experience the following:

- Poverty and lack of sanitation in some areas, outhouses and honey buckets – about 130 villages do not have running water or sewer systems.

- Native foods – depending on the time of year, you may see meat or fish drying on racks. Some of the odors will be unusual. Do not react in a negative manner, verbally or in expression, to different foods.
- Walking, waiting, silence – hear a lot of silence
- Review literature on the community you will visit. Published material and website can provide valuable information. Check out the state’s community database on its website
www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_COMDB.htm.
- Find out which governing body has the leadership role concerning your assigned task. Some of the villages have dissolved their municipal governments. In such cases, you will work with the local tribal government. Always contact the local tribal government to let them know your plans to do business in their area.
- Ask if you need to hire an interpreter. This will be an area-specific concern. To locate these services across the state, contact the respective regional corporation and/or the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage.
- Advance contact should be made with all parties. Send a letter stating who will be traveling to the area, the dates of the visit, and the specific purpose. Send maps and/or appropriate information in advance of your trip to allow time for meeting preparation. Be specific about the information or help you are requesting. Ask parties to identify any traditional leaders or practitioners that should be notified. Call at least two days before your trip to confirm your plans. If a meeting is not in your plans, ask if they need one.
- Plan your logistics, including travel, lodging and food. If commercial lodging is not available, you may be able to make arrangements to sleep in the school, community hall, or locally used federal facility. You should always bring a sleeping bag, any medications you need, and an emergency food and water supply (always be prepared in case you are stranded by inclement weather). Know where to get treated water. Bring your own toilet needs. If you have extra supplies when your mission is complete, contact the local tribal office about leaving the extras with a charitable organization in the village.
- Check the land status and do not trespass. Much of the land is privately owned.
- Check the weather forecast and bring appropriate outer wear. You may need rubber boots, rain gear, and insect repellent.
- Dress casually; no ties, high heels, or umbrellas.
- Know which villages practice search and seizure procedures for drugs and alcohol. Do not attempt to bring inappropriate items to rural villages.

- Churches are very important in some villages. Leave your religious preferences behind.

Timing:

- Be aware of perceptions of time. Remind yourself that “time” is a western concept. You may have a more difficult time finding individuals to work with at certain times of the year. Find out the seasons for fishing, berry picking, hunting, migratory bird hunting/egging, and the local seasons for harvesting land animals.
- Schedule business meetings in the afternoon and any community meetings in the evening. Prepare to stay as long as you are needed. Most people do not like to make snap decisions.
- Know that all activities and meetings could be postponed without notice because of subsistence activities or tragic events.

Protocol: Practical information to help you work with Alaska Native communities:

- Work with the tribes. Even if your business is with the ANCSA corporation, make contact with the tribal official. Tribes expect a significant level of consultation on all issues which relate to their members or indirectly affect their use of subsistence resources.
- Not all Alaska Native people have adjusted to the changes created by the ANCSA and ANILCA, and you will hear some opposition. Listen, but remain neutral.
- Recognize there are cultural differences which can have a negative impact on communication. Respect these differences. You have your own communication style unique to you. Realize that each Alaska Native community will have a slightly different communication style and method and respect those differences.
- Many Alaska Natives appear to be bashful and some may not make eye contact with you right away. In some areas, if you do not make eye contact, they may believe you are not telling the truth and are not to be trusted. In other areas, if you make too much eye contact, you may be perceived as too aggressive or demanding. Learn about the area you plan to visit.
- Greet people. Get acquainted. Walk around. Go to the post office or local store. Get to know the people before you begin your business. Tell people who you are, where you're from, and why you are in their village. When you willingly talk about your family you establish yourself as a family person. Everyone has family. Be courteous to others, including the children. Be honest. Avoid jokes. Humor tends to be subjective. If you are invited to share a meal or a steam bath, accept it as an honor. If you are invited for a boat ride (or other motorized transport), insist on paying for part of the gas.

- Do not take pictures, tape recordings, or copy Indian crests or other Alaska Native designs without obtaining permission. Many objects are viewed as sacred.
- Do not assume that a person who speaks broken English is not intelligent. Do not assume that silence means acceptance. Nodding of the head does not necessarily mean agreement. Sometimes it means an acknowledgement that you are speaking and nothing more.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep. If you cannot make a commitment, say so and give your reason. Follow up with appropriate information when you get back to your office.
- Go with an open mind and enjoy your opportunity to experience another culture.

“Understanding American Indian/Alaska Native Communication Styles,” Dean S. Seneca, Supercourse: Epidemiology, the Internet and Global Health, 1 January 2006 [120] <http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec22591/index.htm>

Current & Relevant Information:

Tribal Community Outreach Strategy:

- Meet Tribal Groups on their own turf (go to the reservation)
- Have food available
- Have door prizes and raffles
- Contact the community health aids, public health nurses, not the physicians
- Time is not a critical Element

Tribal Communication Outreach Participants:

- Elected Tribal Officials
- Traditionalists
- Business Community
- Elders
- Youth
- Women
- Trusted Source
- Community Activist

Tribal Communication Strategies:

- Tribes have a severe distrust of federal government and government employees
- Don't make promises you cannot keep
- Always ask what is the respectful approach to implementing the sharing of critical or important information

- Listen for direction from interpreters and community members
- Watch for body style and facial expressions of your audience
- Remember you are working with the tribes and not for the tribes
- Be honest in building relationships (federal shuffle)
- Find an interpreter who is respected and recognized member of the community, not a stranger!
- Very circular thinking patterns
- Tribal symbols, be tribal specific, caution
- Build your message with tribal community
- Be as graphic, picturesque and as visual as possible
- Talking Circles, beware!
- Utilize the gossip community
- Most of all commitment earns respect

“21 things you can do to be more respectful of Native American cultures,” Vu Le, Non-Profit AF, 9 October 2017 [121] <https://nonprofitaf.com/2017/10/21-things-you-can-do-to-be-more-respectful-of-native-american-cultures/>

Overview:

Today is Indigenous Peoples Day. A colleague asked me to write and encourage people to not use sayings that reference Native American culture (“let’s have a pow wow”) or allude to Native Americans as enemies (“circle the wagons”). I realized that besides our thoughtless usage of phrases, we all probably do other things that are disrespectful. I checked in with a few of my friends and colleagues who are Native about things that they wish all of us who are not Native would do or not do. It has led to some eye-opening conversations.

The tips below, in no particular order, are from Tara Dowd, Inupiaq; Randy Ramos, Colville and Coeur D’Alene; James Lovell, Turtle Mountain Ojibwe; Joey Gray, Métis and Okanagan; Vicki Mudd, nondocumented Cherokee and Blackfoot; and Miriam Zbigniew-Angelova, Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Sauk/Fox, and African-American and Ashkenazi. Sentences in quotation marks are from them. I want to thank my colleagues for their time and suggestions for resources. This is clearly an area that many of us need to learn more about and do better on, and I’m grateful for their time and energy.

I know that Native American history and identity are extremely complex and can’t be covered in a blog post, especially one that is written by a non-Native, but I hope that at the very least, this would be a start for all of us to be more thoughtful in our interactions with our Native colleagues and community members.

Current & Relevant Information:

Understand that being Native means different things to every person. “To some people, it means being Indian. To some, it means being Native. To some it means

being American Indian. Native American. Indigenous. Alaskan Native. First Nations. Some folks exclusively use their tribe's name." Here's an article, for instance, about the complexity of the term "Native American" and "American Indian."

Find out whose land you are on, and honor it. "Remember that every inch of the US land was acquired illegally so that's the deficit that organizations need to understand as they begin working with tribal people and entities." If you don't know whose land you are occupying, here's an awesome [map](#) where you can enter in your city in the US or Canada and it'll tell you, along with links so you can learn more about the Nations or tribes whose land you are on.

Never ask anyone if they're an "enrolled member." There is so much complexity to this question. "You may be 100% eligible and not enrolled." Many people are from multiple tribes. Some people may not have their paperwork for a variety of reasons.

Do not lightly claim that you have Native American heritage. Don't lightly say things like you have an uncle who was a shaman or your grandmother was a Cherokee princess. "No one is a Cherokee princess. No tribes had that term in the history of Indigenous people so just stop with that non-sense. Along with this, you don't become Native just because your DNA test says you are. Like just DON'T." Here's a thought-provoking [article](#) on why so many people claim to be Cherokee.

Avoid sayings that diminish or disparage Native culture. As mentioned above, don't say things like "let's have a pow wow," "lowest person on the totem pole," "too many chiefs, not enough Indians," "Indian giver," "circle the wagons," etc. These phrases are disrespectful, and we still use them every day. "Spirit animal" is another one; some colleagues suggest using "Patronus" instead (that's a reference from Harry Potter.)

Don't "play Indian." As this article states, "While minstrel shows have long been criticized as racist, American children are still socialized into playing Columbus Day celebrations, Halloween costumes, and Thanksgiving reenactments stereotype Indigenous Peoples as one big distorted culture. We are relegated to racist stereotypes and cultural caricatures." Avoid treating Native communities and members as logos, mascots, costumes, caricatures, etc.

Be where people are. Go to the reservation and Native community organizations. Visit your local Native cultural center. Learn about the culture and history.

Support Native artists and businesses by buying Native. Buy art, jewelry, clothing, and other items made by Native people and communities. Do not buy "Native" items that are not made by Native Americans and that are just taking advantage of Native culture to make money; be aware of scams by non-Natives who claim that proceeds from sales are benefiting Natives. These scams are illegal according to the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 and should be reported.

Invite an elder or tribal leader to do an opening prayer or invocations at large events. This is a way to honor and to bring attention to the tribes whose land the event is taking place on. But do your research first so you do it right. And make sure you honor people's time, culture, and expertise by providing an honorarium to the leader or organization.

Understand that there are over 550 tribal affiliations in the US. They are extremely varied and have different languages and cultural customs. This is why it is important to do your research. Do not lump everyone together. A colleague mentioned, for example, being asked to represent the tribe whose land the organization was trying to honor, even though she is not a member of that tribe.

Don't assume that tribal people get money from casinos. "Out of more than 560 Federally recognized tribes, only 224 operate gaming facilities. About three-fourths of those tribes reinvest revenue in the community. In 2006, only 73 tribes distributed direct payments to individual Tribal members." [Note: Alaskan Natives do not operate casinos]

When disaggregating data, make sure to include Natives. Even if they are a small percentage. "I mean, think about it," says a colleague, "They are such a small percentage of the overall population BECAUSE of the injustice done by colonization and ethnic cleansing." It does not help to further minimize people's existence by excluding them.

Don't expect every cultural custom will be explained to you. For example, when you are at a cultural event. As a colleague mentioned, "We don't want to feel like an exhibit and have to explain everything going on." Also, there might be times when people are required not to talk about something. If you work with kids, for instance, be sensitive about forcing them to share their culture. "Some things are not meant to be shared."

If you're at an event, be thoughtful and patient around time. Events may not start or end on time. This does not necessarily mean that people can't be punctual. They may just value other things more highly, such as creating space to build relationships, or to be comprehensive of everyone's stories.

Be sensitive during meal times. Food is a significant part of many communities and cultures. A colleague mentioned that in her tribe, elders eat first, and those who are able-bodied are expected to get plates for the elders or for mothers with small children. Be aware when you are at an event and not just jump directly into the food line.

Don't say costume when referring to native dance outfits and traditional wear. A dancer's outfit is called regalia. As mentioned in this article on pow wow etiquette: "Often pieces of the regalia are family heirlooms. Regalia is created by the dancer or by a respected family member or friend. The feathers in particular are sacred and

highly valued and cared for. The beadwork may take a very long time to complete. Sometimes years have gone into the final completion of a dancer's regalia."

Do not assume Native Americans have high rates of alcoholism. Actually, as mentioned here, Native Americans have "the highest rate of complete abstinence. When socioeconomic level is accounted for in a comparison group, alcoholism rates are no different for AI/ANs than for other ethnic or racial groups." Adds a colleague, "But alcohol WAS used to obtain illegal signatures for treaties and access to lands and resources that belonged to tribal people. So maybe don't invite Natives to do 'business' in a bar without checking in first."

Do not tokenize people. As with other marginalized communities, they'll know if you are only trying to look varied, or to look good for a grant application or something. Spend time building actual relationships, and ensure people and organizations are equitably compensated.

Ensure the voices of Natives are amplified. We've seen when non-Native journalists are paid to tell stories about Native communities and their struggles. Let's ensure the people whose stories are being told are the ones telling them. However, we all need to do our own research and reflections so our Native colleagues are not always having to educate us.

Don't bring up the land bridge theory. Many communities are very sensitive to the theory that Native Americans came over from Asia through the Bering Strait. You can read an article from Native perspectives [here](#), but it may be best not to bring it up.

Check your white privilege. "Native people don't have time or the emotional energy to labor through your hang ups around race issues or your identity crisis." Do your work to understand your own heritage and the privileges that come with it, and understand your family's history, including the parts that may be challenging, that may have involved displacing Natives from their land, for example.

(Update). Use the present tense. Many of us make the mistake of using the past tense when talking about Native communities, and according to this [article](#), "A staggering 87 percent of references to American Indians in all 50 states' academic standards portray them in a pre-1900 context." Many kids believe that Native Americans only exist in the past; they have no understanding of current Native cultures and challenges, and we adults often inadvertently contribute to this. As a colleague states, "the use of only the past tense contributes to the genocidal narrative that we're anything but still here."

"Improving Cultural Competence Working with Native Americans and Alaskan Natives," Dawn-Elise Snipes, SlideShare, 16 December 2017 [122]
<https://www.slideshare.net/DrSnipes/improving-cultural-competence-when-working-with-alaskan-natives-and-native-american>

Current & Relevant Information:

Examples of Opening Ceremonies

- Although indigenous people differ greatly from one another, these examples of ceremonies emphasize similarities in creating a safe space where everyone feels respected and honored
- It was suggested that if we provided a prayer, song and ceremony for Motivational Interviewing, that Native people might have an easier time deciding whether to adopt it.
- Pueblo Example Opening Ceremony
 - The “ceremony” is an attempt to bring sacredness to the healing process when initially meeting with your clients, acknowledging that we are entering a special space. As we enter this space, we leave all our bad feelings and anger on the outside. We enter this space, where we will be interacting, with a clear mind and heart. We say our prayers asking our ancestors for their wisdom and help so that we may have a successful gathering. We ask the Ancient Ones to bring good energy, healing energy, into our space and our time together. We put our thoughts and healing feelings together and become one. – Based on Nadine Tafoya’s experiences
- Maori (Aboriginals of New Zealand)
 - When Maori people invite outsiders (even other Maori communities) into their Marai (special building for spiritual and community activities), they use a ceremony that reminds everyone that we are all one, that everyone is safe within the Marai, and that we all have the same goals.
 - Each group introduces themselves and lets the other know that they come in peace. There is a specific process of talking back and forth and singing. Near the end of this welcoming ceremony, each person from each group greets the other. The men touch noses, thereby breathing the same air and signifying that they are one. The women usually kiss the cheek. Then everyone goes to have tea and eat together. -Based on Kamilla Venner’s experience
- Northwest Canadian Tribe (De Cho)
- Everyone is asked to stand up and form a circle. The leader addresses the people and emphasizes the importance of greeting and honoring each other and acknowledging that we are all one in the world. The circle evolves into two circles that are connected. The person in the inner circle is the introducer while those in the outer circle listen. After you introduce yourself, you move into the outer circle. The first person begins to show the others what to do while music plays (in this case, a CD playing the song “O Siem”, translated “We are all family”, by Susan Aglukark, an Inuit woman).

Adaptation Example



Here is an adapted version of the rulers that does not include numbers but only descriptions. For each ruler, just change the wording to match what you are asking about: *importance* of making a change, *confidence* to make a change, and *readiness* to make a change.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| It's not important to make a change. | You are unsure about making a change. | It is a little important to make changes. | It is very important to you to make changes. |
| You haven't prepared the ground for planting. | A seed is in the soil but hasn't been watered. | Your plant just broke through the soil. | Your plant is ready to be harvested. |

Other ideas for adaptations were provided including using a circle rather than a line, using the growth of different plants (i.e., tobacco, chile, berries) or animals (ex., buffalo, deer, salmon) to represent different levels of importance, confidence or readiness. Please feel free to create your own adaptations to the rulers that best fit your clients.

Advice

- Avoid interrupting, extensive note-taking or excessive questioning
- Refrain from asking about family or personal matters unrelated to the presenting issue without first asking the client's permission to inquire about these areas.
- Pay attention to the client's stories, experiences, dreams, and rituals and their relevance to the client.
- Remember that Native Americans are often visual learners, so provide handouts and visual explanations.
- Accept extended periods of silence during sessions.
- Allow time during session for the client to process information.
- Greet the client with a gentle (rather than firm) handshake and show hospitality (e.g., by offering food and/or beverages).
- Give the client ample time to adjust to the setting at the beginning of each session.
- Keep promises.
- Offer suggestions instead of directions (preferably more than one to allow for client choice)

“Culture Card: A Guide to Build Cultural Awareness: American Indian and Alaska Native,” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, January 2009 [123] <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma08-4354.pdf>

Abstract:

Intended to enhance cultural competence when serving American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Covers regional differences; cultural customs; spirituality; communications styles; the role of veterans and the elderly, and health disparities, such as suicide.

Current & Relevant Information:

Self-Awareness and Etiquette

Prior to making contact with a community, examine your own belief system about AI/AN people related to social issues, such as mental health stigma, poverty, teen suicide, and drug or alcohol use.

You are being observed at all times, so avoid making assumptions and be conscious that you are laying the groundwork for others to follow.

Adapt your tone of voice, volume, and speed of speech patterns to that of local community members to fit their manner of communication style.

Preferred body language, posture, and concept of personal space depend on community norms and the nature of the personal relationship. Observe others and allow them to create the space and initiate or ask for any physical contact.

You may experience people expressing their mistrust, frustration, or disappointment from other situations that are outside of your control. Learn not to take it personally.

If community members tease you, understand that this can indicate rapport-building and may be a form of guidance or an indirect way of correcting inappropriate behavior. You will be more easily accepted and forgiven for mistakes if you can learn to laugh at yourself and listen to lessons being brought to you through humor.

Living accommodations and local resources will vary in each community. Remember that you are a guest. Observe and ask questions humbly when necessary.

Rapport and trust do not come easily in a limited amount of time; however, don't be surprised if community members speak to you about highly charged issues (e.g., sexual abuse, suicide) as you may be perceived as an objective expert.

Issues around gender roles can vary significantly in various AI/AN communities. Males and females typically have very distinct social rules for behavior in every day interactions and in ceremonies. Common behaviors for service providers to be aware of as they relate to gender issues are eye contact, style of dress, physical touch, personal space, decision making, and the influence of male and/or female elders.

Careful observation and seeking guidance from a community member on appropriate gender-specific behavior can help service providers to follow local customs and demonstrate cultural respect.

Etiquette – Do's

Learn how the community refers to itself as a group of people (e.g., Tribal name).

Be honest and clear about your role and expectations and be willing to adapt to meet the needs of the community. Show respect by being open to other ways of thinking and behaving.

Listen and observe more than you speak. Learn to be comfortable with silence or long pauses in conversation by observing community members' typical length of time between turns at talking.

Casual conversation is important to establish rapport, so be genuine and use self-disclosure (e.g., where you are from, general information about children or spouse, personal interests).

Avoid jargon. An AI/AN community member may nod their head politely, but not understand what you are saying.

It is acceptable to admit limited knowledge of AI/AN cultures, and invite people to educate you about specific cultural protocols in their community.

If you are visiting the home of an AI/AN family, you may be offered a beverage and/or food, and it is important to accept it as a sign of respect.

Explain what you are writing when making clinical documentation or charting in the presence of the individual and family.

During formal interviews, it may be best to offer general invitations to speak, then remain quiet, sit back, and listen. Allow the person to tell their story before engaging in a specific line of questioning.

Be open to allow things to proceed according to the idea that "things happen when they are supposed to happen."

Respect confidentiality and the right of the tribe to control information, data, and public information about services provided to the tribe.

Etiquette – Don'ts

Avoid stereotyping based on looks, language, dress, and other outward appearances.

Avoid intrusive questions early in conversation.

Do not interrupt others during conversation or interject during pauses or long silences.

Do not stand too close to others and/or talk too loud or fast.

Be careful not to impose your personal values, morals, or beliefs.

Be careful about telling stories of distant AI/AN relatives in your genealogy as an attempt to establish rapport unless you have maintained a connection with that AI/AN community.

Be careful about pointing with your finger, which may be interpreted as rude behavior in many tribes.

Avoid frequently looking at your watch and do not rush things.

Avoid pressing all family members to participate in a formal interview.

During a formal interview, if the person you are working with begins to cry, support the crying without asking further questions until they compose themselves and are ready to speak.

Do not touch sacred items, such as medicine bags, other ceremonial items, hair, jewelry, and other personal or cultural things.

Do not take pictures without permission.

NEVER use any information gained by working in the community for personal presentations, case studies, research, and so on, without the expressed written consent of the Tribal government or Alaska Native Corporation.

“Effective Tools for Communications and Leadership in Indian Country,” National Congress of American Indians [124] https://sprc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/NCAI_ConferenceBooklet_FINAL_SinglePage.pdf

[NOTE: This reference is from the perspective of the Alaskan Native or their representative]

Overview:

The following materials are based on feedback and conversations from tribal leaders and tribal communications officers from across the country. We have focused on tools, tactics and strategies identified as the main themes that emerged during our conversations and through our own extensive experience working on communications issues in Indian Country over the years.

We want to thank all the tribal leaders and tribal communications officers who took the time to discuss their views on what effective leadership looks like today, the ever-changing communications landscape and ways that communications and advocacy can be strengthened in Indian Country moving forward.

Current & Relevant Information:

Delivering Your Message

Native Americans have a long and varied history of storytelling and culturally unique ways of communicating with one another and with other communities. When

communicating across cultural lines (whether that is between tribes or to non-Native communities), you should seek to incorporate this rich tradition of storytelling and oral histories into your messaging.

By also following the general tips below, it may be necessary to alter or amplify a storyteller's method of communicating in a way most appropriate with the audience, but in doing so, creating a unique and culturally appropriate example.

No jargon allowed. Simply put, speak simply. Acronyms and obscure language may make you appear knowledgeable, but you'll likely leave your audience behind. Instead, use everyday language that is easy to understand, avoid long-winded sentences and make sure that everything you say harkens back to your key messages.

Be prepared for the tough questions. There are always multiple sides to an issue. Consider what your "opponents" might say about the issue and be prepared to respond to their comments in ways that support your key messages.

Practice. Make sure that you know your messages inside out. Role play with colleagues, practice in front of a mirror and simply talk out loud. The last thing you want in an interview is to appear unprepared.

Making the Most of Your Meetings

Whether meeting with elected officials, community leaders or government agency staff, there are certain things to consider before, during and after your meeting.

Existing relationships matter. Personal relationships make a difference and can pave the way for productive and fruitful community engagement. Be sure to build relationships with key elected officials and their staff when you aren't asking for something. Likewise, it is critical that you have relationships with key officials that are different from those that your lawyer or lobbyist might have.

Make sure you know how much time you have. Find out beforehand how much time you have for your meeting and plan your talking points accordingly. If you have a half-hour meeting, say everything you want to say in 15 minutes, then leave the remaining 15 minutes for Q & A. Ending a meeting early can send a positive message as well.

Tell your story through visuals. If possible, tell your story through visuals. People like photos and graphics, maps, etc. Avoiding memos will be appreciated. And, if you have to leave paper behind, leave two pages at the most.

Past history shouldn't take up valuable time. Assume that leaders and public officials will have been briefed before your meeting. This will allow you to avoid using valuable time to review background and history. You can always provide more information if asked for it.

Come prepared. Make sure you have a focused agenda, you are clear about what your “ask” is, you have spent time reviewing or memorizing your talking points and your materials are ready to be distributed.

Be clear on roles. If multiple members of your team attend the meeting, be clear about who will deliver which message. Have a plan on who covers each topic before you start your meeting. Planning and coordination can make a tremendous difference in helping you elicit support for your issue.

Reinforce your key messages. Deliver your key messages at the beginning, middle and end of your presentation. Your messages should come through in your presentation, your materials and your follow-up recap memo or note.

Follow up. Make sure to follow up with a call or a note so you can answer any lingering questions, as well as express your appreciation for the meeting time. Everything is about relationship building.

Community Engagement

Building and strengthening relationships with varied entities in your community allows you to develop your work in new and meaningful ways. Always take the time to engage your community, using these tips as a guide.

Don't count on the local media to tell your story. Consider paid advertising and direct mail as a way to tell your story in your own voice while educating both tribal and non-tribal members about your latest news or campaign. Engaging with local media, while important, can take a lot of time and they won't always get your story right.

Know who you need to know—be strategic in the development of relationships. Identify top opinion leaders (county commissioners, school board members, the local chamber, rotary, faith leaders and others) who have the greatest influence in the community. Cultivate relationships with these groups and, most importantly, educate them on what you are doing, through mailings, briefings and electronic updates. Over time, you can create a “Friends of” list of people that you can count on for support and turn to during times of need.

Conduct community briefings for tribal members, the general community and casino staff. Often times, tribes interact with the community only when there is a sensitive community issue at hand. By conducting a community open house for tribal and non-tribal members, you can raise awareness around the tribe's latest goals and accomplishments.

Engage tribal members who cannot attend meetings in person. Choose tools that allow tribal members to stay involved in alternative ways, such as webcasts or cable news channel broadcasting of tribal meetings.

Know your vendors. Tribes often support the surrounding community through the use of local and regional vendors. Who are they? Are they supportive of your tribe?

Make sure you educate the people you are doing business with. They are messengers within your community and should be supportive of what you are doing.

“Meetings: Native Style,” Richard Regan, govloop.com, 19 April 2016 [125]

<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/meetings-native-style/>

Overview:

The council circle has been a mainstay of American Indian/Alaska Native culture. This cultural meeting setting built around a fire has served Indigenous people as a place where stories are shared, strategies agreed upon and emotional connections strengthened.

Current & Relevant Information:

Although the council circle may differ based on its cultural context, each gathering is grounded in the following traditions.

A group of people comes together to discuss a particular issue. Everyone around the council circle has an equal chance to speak. A “talking stick” is circulated in clockwise fashion around the circle to identify the speaker. Oftentimes, the talking stick is an object of particular cultural significance to the group.

Participants speak only when it is their turn. While they are awaiting their opportunity to speak, they are encouraged to listen intently to others without interrupting the person who has the talking stick.

Members of the council circle are not required to speak at all. They can remain silent and forego their chance to talk until their turn comes around again.

The leader of the council circle is responsible for maintaining the circle protocol.

According to the Ojai Foundation Center for Council Training, the council circle improves meetings in the following ways.

It enables people to speak from the heart by pushing feelings into the conversation. It forces contributors to come out from behind themselves in moments of truth. This increases the meaningfulness of individual experiences.

Secondly, the council circle empowers members to listen from their hearts when a fellow colleague has the talking stick. This requires listening without judgment in the spirit of open-mindedness even if you disagree with the speaker’s words.

Thirdly, the council circle creates an environment of spontaneous conversations. It places participants in the moment as they avoid thinking about what they are going to say. This forces associates to listen completely when their comrades have the talking stick. They learn to wait their turn until the talking stick comes to them to decide what they want to say.

Finally, this contemplative process guides talkers to speak “leanly” by cutting to the chase and avoiding the need to put a little mustard on their comments. By being cognizant of the need for others to make contributions to the discussion, you will use the minimum amount of words to communicate your point. Speaking leanly may mean not talking at all.

Try the council circle practice at your next staff meeting. You will create more honest discussions, realize increased efficiencies and build increased engagement while getting meaningful work accomplished.

“Tribal Protocol Manual,” United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, September 2012 [126] <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1226/ML12261A423.pdf>

Abstract:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s (NRC’s) Tribal Protocol Manual provides guidance to foster effective interaction between NRC staff and tribal governments and instructional background information to NRC staff on the historic relationship between the Federal government and Native Americans.

Current & Relevant Information:

Remember that many NRC meetings include not only tribes but other vested third parties such as:

- State or Local government representatives
- Representatives of local public interest groups
- Contractors and/or Consultants
- Other Federal Agency employees

Staff should try to familiarize themselves with, and address each participant’s motivation for attending the meeting and their particular concerns.

Meeting Logistics:

Select meeting sites or locations that are reasonably accessible to all parties from both a logistic and economic perspective.

Visual Aids:

Visual aids are very useful and greatly appreciated by nontechnical audiences. Maps, facility plans, and Power-Point presentations can assist in illustrating and punctuating NRC’s verbal presentations. Advanced technical data may be difficult to comprehend depending on the expertise and experience of your audience. Accordingly, seek to know your audience and use plain language. Strive to ensure that your presentation is easy to understand so that your audience fully understands what is being presented.

Meeting Outcomes or Conclusions:

During meetings with Native American Tribal representatives, staff should seek to:

- a) Exchange all information and ideas with the appropriate tribal attendees;
- b) Obtain reactions to proposed NRC plans or actions with the appropriate tribal attendees;
- c) Reach agreement on processes or procedures for maintaining communication and solving disputes; and
- d) Seek to develop communication and understanding, along with concurrence.

NRC staff should hesitate assessing a meeting's outcome immediately following the meeting. Although it may appear that parties have reached consensus or are in concurrence, tribes, like other sovereign governments, may have additional meetings and may need to follow additional processes independent of the meeting with NRC, in order to develop and incorporate final thoughts, opinions, and plans of action.

When preparing notes or summaries of the meeting, staff should make efforts to hold follow-up meetings or communications in which designated parties from the tribes, the NRC and other stakeholders present, have a chance to review the "draft" summary. This will ensure an accurate accounting of the views and intents of all parties.

Whenever possible, staff should consider including in the summary an informal assessment of the meeting from a tribal member (if a previous relationship has been formed).

If a dispute or difference of opinion arises regarding the meeting summary, consider oral inquiries or discussions, in order to clarify issues and to resolve differences. Most tribes prefer face-to-face and, to a lesser degree, telephone exchanges as the preferred means of information exchanges.

Tribal Meeting Etiquette

Clear and respectful communication is paramount in Tribal meetings. When people from different cultural backgrounds meet, problems can occur and are often manifested in differences in body language, response or lack of response to specific issues, cultural interpretations, and unexpressed expectations.

These communication challenges can be met through various means, such as cross-cultural awareness training, recognition of possible personal bias or preconceived notions, and cultivation of a responsible tribal contact, who can instruct NRC staff on customary and acceptable behaviors of the tribe.

Tribes place great value in listening to their guests and to other tribal members, and often reserve comments until all pertinent tribal members have been informed. Accordingly, it is important that NRC staff acknowledge this approach to communication, and practice respect and patience when meeting with and discussing issues with tribal representatives. Likewise, many tribal members appreciate reciprocal treatment when they are speaking, preferring not to be interrupted until they have completed communicating their ideas and concerns.

In addition, although most tribes will be comfortable participating in meetings being conducted in English, certain tribal members, such as elders, might be more comfortable and receptive when presented with the option of having an interpreter present at the meetings.

The staff should contact FSME's Intergovernmental Liaison Branch for assistance in arranging for translators. Because meetings with tribes are official meetings with another government entity, staff should seek to respect tribal leaders and address them by their proper titles and names. Tribal participants should always be introduced first and allowed to address the meeting participants first, if desired.

Often, a tribal representative, including an elder or spiritual leader, will open a meeting with a prayer, a song or an invocation. While Staff need not participate in such, staff should display respect for the tribes' customs and beliefs in this tradition.

Tribal members often will not start a meeting until everyone is present, and NRC staff should recognize that some tribes may delay meetings and pace agendas accordingly. This means that although a meeting may be set for a certain time (start, duration, and end), the meeting may start fifteen, twenty, or thirty minutes later than the stated opening time. Awareness that other cultures may have a different approach to time constraints and scheduling should help put at ease those with a more structured approach to these considerations, and will help staff demonstrate patience, understanding and acceptance.

Staff and management should promise only what can be delivered. Views, opinions, materials and ideas must be presented honestly and openly. Statements made by NRC staff and management to tribal leaders should be expected to be taken on face value and will often be viewed as representing the position of the NRC. As in communications with all others, staff and management should offer, discuss and promise only what can realistically be delivered.

Reservation Etiquette

Tribes differ significantly in their willingness to allow visitors on parts of the reservation away from official buildings or tourist attractions. It is advisable to inquire in advance about specific tribal rules, attitudes, and customs before visiting parts of the reservation away from "public" areas. Above all, the reservation is the home of the tribe and its people and the privacy of the people should be respected.

Some things to know about visiting reservations include:

- ▶ Do not assume that you are free to wander the reservation or ask tribal members direct questions about their lives. This may be considered particularly rude in most Indian cultures.
- ▶ Some tribes consider pointing to be offensive and some tribes may attach cultural, religious, and metaphysical significance to pointing that makes it even more so.
- ▶ NRC staff may find it useful to develop personal working relationships with members of the Tribe who can help with communication and protocol information.
- ▶ Photography may be restricted. Ask permission to photograph individuals, ceremonies, or meetings. Do not assume that it is permissible or appropriate to take photographs.
- ▶ When visiting cultural or sacred sites, ask the tribes how you should behave at the site. Be respectful of all artifacts. Refrain from handling or otherwise disturbing these artifacts.

Recommended Behaviors and Other Communication Considerations

- ▶ Before you meet with the tribe, learn to pronounce the tribe's name. Always pronounce it properly.
- ▶ Be conscious of your conduct. Many Tribal cultures place great emphasis on judging character by one's action, conduct, and response. The appropriate conduct is to be conservative and considerate. Often credibility and integrity will be judged during the first 5 minutes of conversation or introduction. As a representative of the Federal government and NRC, your actions are indicative of your awareness of the government-to-government relationship with tribal nations.
- ▶ Try not to be judgmental about how tribal meetings are run. Tribal sovereignty includes the tribe's rights to reach decisions and conduct meetings however they wish.
- ▶ Keep your voice at a moderate or reasonable level. Speaking loudly may be interpreted as arrogant or disrespectful.
- ▶ Elders are highly respected in tribal communities, whether or not they hold any official position. They are the repository for the continuity of tribal culture and are often the source of considerable intuitive wisdom.
- ▶ When speaking with and listening to tribal elders and other tribal representatives, practice patience. Some tribal members allow for greater pause time between speakers, even in their own language; a pause indicates the other

person is considering what you said. Some Indian elders may respond by telling a story or an analogy to illustrate a point. A hurried follow-up question may disrupt their response to your initial questions. Therefore, if you are in a hurry, you may get no answer at all.

- ▶ Staff should give their undivided attention to the person who is speaking. By practicing impatience, staff may display culturally inappropriate behavior. If an issue is important to discuss, it is important that all parties give the time necessary to adequately discuss and ultimately resolve the issue. It is considered especially rude to look at your watch, yawn, walk out, raise your hand, or shake your head while a tribal elder is talking.

- ▶ Sometimes prolonged eye contact is inappropriate. Not making or holding eye contact is respectful behavior. While in meetings, maintaining direct eye contact for extended amounts of time with tribal elders, leaders, and members is considered inappropriate in many tribal cultures.

- ▶ When beginning an important discussion, or when responding to questions by tribal elders or officials, inappropriate laughter may be considered a lack of respect or seriousness, or as belittling the subject of the questioner.

- ▶ The NRC staff should dress respectfully as for any business meeting with a high elected official or a distinguished representative of another government. Some tribal leaders are sensitive to unprofessional, overly casual attire when meetings are held with representatives of the Federal government, especially at meetings held in the Washington, D.C., area, such as at NRC headquarters' offices. More casual attire may be appropriate when meetings are held at locations outside of the D.C. Metropolitan area, such as those held in states located in the West, and particularly for attendees who meet regularly with tribal officials, and/or go directly from their work place to attend such meetings.

- ▶ Tribal representatives may not be familiar with NRC terms, vocabulary, acronyms, vernacular and standard operating procedures. NRC staff should seek to develop an understanding of prior involvement, education and training of the tribe as these relate to the technical or licensing matter at hand. Some tribes may be better served by NRC staff limiting use of, or providing greater explanations for, certain technical or licensing terms or phraseology, while other tribes may have greater experience with, and understanding for, the subject matter. Staff should respect, and not underestimate, the knowledge of tribal officials, while being conscious of the use of terms and concepts presented to ensure that both Tribal officials and NRC staff communicate effectively.

In summary, strong relationships are built on trust and honesty. As representatives of a professional government agency, consider:

- ▶ Respect...For tribal interests, cultural variability, customs, agendas.

- ▶ Respect...For tribal Council leaders as officials of another government.
- ▶ Listen...Carefully; ask questions for clarification.
- ▶ Consider...What you say; do not promise what you may be unable to deliver.
- ▶ Communication ...Is key to successful relationships. Communication established early and often in the process results in more effective communication throughout the process.
- ▶ Staff Familiarization ...With tribe-specific information. Get smart, understand the tribal history and current tribal issues, concerns, and expertise of the tribe or tribes you may find yourself working with.
- ▶ Face -to -face Meetings...Get to know the tribe and its technical resource staff and council representatives. Meetings are the most effective method for achieving this important goal, followed by phone calls. Letters are essential, but can be bureaucratic and inefficient methods of communication.
- ▶ Familiarity and Continuity...Is essential for establishing and maintaining effective relationships.
- ▶ Visibility...Tribes and their concerns should be highlighted during introductions and at the meeting table.
- ▶ Adaptability...Exhibit flexibility, sensitivity and empathy in tribal relations.
- ▶ Patience ...Take time to understand, communicate with, and work with the tribes who have an interest in NRC activities.

“Native American Home Etiquette – Native American Pow Wows,” Jamie K. Oxendine, powwows.com, 25 November 2019 [127]

<https://www.powwows.com/native-american-home-etiquette/>

Overview:

Native Americans from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the Arctic to the Tropics were quite cordial and rather kind to guests in the home. Europeans and later Americans noticed certain mannerisms concerning a guest at home that was far beyond their own concept of providing hospitality.

Even after the massive persecution from both Europeans and later Americans the indigenous people of North America were still quite benevolent to each other and even the White Man when it came to having guests in the house.

Here are some very general policies that were common among many Tribes across Native America. One must remember that these are not set in stone and are not laws as there were vast differences among all Native American Nations.

Current & Relevant Information:

THE ETERNAL COOKING MEAL

Among the Eastern Woodland Peoples, it was common to always have a large container of food on or near the lodge fire.

In the North East this container was usually a very large calabash (gourd) or wood bowl kept simmering via hot stones and full of some kind of food stew. This was typically a stew of meat or fish with vegetables. When one was obliged, they would partake of the stew and eat. The stew was retained by always replacing what had been taken. For example, if a piece of meat or fish was removed a piece of meat or fish was added. If stock was removed then water and other fillers or thickeners was added and so forth.

Among the South East Nations, a large earthen clay container of hominy (grits) was always available on the fire in a lodge and some dried or smoked meat or fish was also kept nearby.

For many Native American Nations there was no set meal time. Whenever one was hungry, they dipped in the containers and had something to eat. This was often referred to as The Eternal Cooking Meal as described by Europeans and later Americans. After White Contact the original containers were replaced with metal trade goods of iron, tin, brass and copper.

Guests were always fed. In fact, the normal greeting for guests was not “Hello” or “How are you doing” or even “Good to see you” it was always “Have you eaten?”

Even in the leanest of times it was the duty of the clans/families to do their best to keep The Eternal Cooking Meal. One can easily assume that this was very hard to do in a bitter winter or a very dry summer yet it amazed the White Man that the accumulating, conserving, storage and distribution of food stuffs by Native Americans during very sparse times was nothing more than remarkable.

BEING POLITE IN THE LODGE

From the Longhouses and Wigwams of the Northeast to the Adobes of the Southwest and from the temporary Igloos of the Artic to the Open Lodges of the Southeast as well as from the Tipis of the Great Plains to the Cedar Plank Houses of the Northwest, there was a certain accommodating protocol of life in the home of all Native Americans.

This decorum did vary greatly from Nation to Nation and Tribe to Tribe and even Clan to Clan but there was a general set of what one might call “Mutual Consideration” or “Common Courtesy” or just better yet plain old “Civility” and “Good Manners.”

Assume guests are tired, cold, hungry and thirsty.

At no time worry guests with troubles of the host.

By no means sit while Elders stand.

Compliment guests.

Do not trouble or pester guests.

Give thanks to The Creator for company.

Lend help to Elders with entering or leaving the lodge.

Never sit while any guests stand.

Offer guests the places of honor in the lodge and the best food available.

Protect guests as members of the family or clan.

Repay calls of courtesy and do not delay in communication.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

If the lodge door is open one may enter directly but if the door is closed one should announce their presence and wait for the invitation to enter.

Follow the customs of the lodge and not one's own. Remember to "follow the rules of the house" not necessarily the territory.

Accept any food offered.

Be grateful for any and all offers from the host.

Bestow great respect to the Woman of the lodge as she is the keeper of the flame.

Compliment the host.

Give thanks to The Creator for hospitality.

Never worry host with guest troubles.

Present the host with a gift.

Repay calls of courtesy and do not delay in communication.

GOOD MANNERS FOR ALL

Be humble and show respect to all but grovel to none.

Do not interrupt others speaking.

Do the best not to walk between persons talking.

Keep the fire open and do not block one from the fire.

Let silence be your motto, listen and then speak.

Never stare at others and as you speak keep your eyes low.

Show kindness and humanity and great humility.

Speak softly and with a clear voice.

Talk with others but do not force conversations.

CONCLUSION

Europeans and later some Americans knew of some of the mannerisms above as all cultures have very specific rules of etiquette for being civil. But for various reasons such decent behavior had become lost among the European explorers and later colonists when meeting new and different cultures. Such respect also vanished among the later American colonists and settlers pushing ever more across North America.

Unfortunately, assimilation, removal, relocation, and more assimilation of Native Americans created a massive injury to the well-practiced lodge etiquette for all peoples of Native America.

Sad but many of the courtesies of the Native American Culture that was developed over centuries are not always found among Native Americans today. It is not surprising to find The Native American People not treating each other with veneration. In fact, the opposite is quite true and one does not need to do a study or research of the phenomenon. All one needs to do is step back and witness the poor treatment and disdain that some Native Peoples have towards each other.

It is for this reason that we must all seek wisdom from Elders and those of proper knowledge and use the most basic of common understanding to be kind to each other regardless of culture and history.

“A Guide for DOE Employees: Working with Indian Tribal Nations,” Department of Energy, December 2000 [128]

<https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/DOE%20Guide%20to%20Working%20with%20Tribal%20Nations.pdf>

Overview:

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) employees and contractors frequently work with Indian tribes or nations as part of their jobs. The purpose of this guide is to help DOE employees and contractors initiate contact with tribes and build effective relationships.

DOE maintains a unique government-to-government relationship with tribal nations. This guide presents an overview of the history of the relationship between the tribes and the Federal government, as well as the laws and Executive Orders that define that relationship. The guide discusses the Federal government’s trust responsibility

to the tribes, tribal treaty rights, and the Department of Energy's American Indian policy.

The guide also discusses important cultural differences that could lead to communication problems if not understood and provides examples of potential cultural misunderstandings. In particular the guide discusses tribal environmental beliefs that shape tribal responses to DOE actions. The guide also provides pointers on tribal etiquette during meetings and cultural ceremonies and when visiting tribal reservations.

Appendix 1 gives examples of the tribal nations with whom DOE currently has Memoranda of Understanding.

While this guide provides an introduction and overview of tribal relations for DOE staff and contractors, DOE has also designated Tribal Issues Points of Contacts at each of its facilities. A list of these Points of Contact for all DOE facilities is provided in Appendix 2. DOE staff and contractors should consult with the appropriate tribal representatives at their site before initiating contact with a tribal nation, because many tribes have rules and procedures that must be complied with before DOE staff or contractors may go on tribal lands or conduct interviews with tribal members.

Appendix 3 is the complete DOE American Indian Policy. Appendices 4-6 are Executive Orders that govern the relationship of all federal agencies with tribal nations.

DOE employees and staff are encouraged to educate themselves about the history and culture of tribal nations near DOE facilities. This guide provides a first step in that direction.

Current & Relevant Information:

Building a Relationship with Tribes

- It is particularly important to tribes that tribal sovereignty and tribal officials be treated respectfully. Dealing with a senior tribal official should be seen as equivalent to dealing with a very senior U.S. official. For instance, if you have an appointment with the President of the United States, the Secretary of Energy, or the CEO of a major company, you make sure you are on time, have all the information that may be needed, and are respectful of the time pressures these officials are under. The same kind of respect should be extended to tribal officials, as they are of equivalent rank in their nation.
- The history of the relationship between the Federal government and a particular government may influence how the tribes relate to DOE staff. DOE staff should learn about DOE's past and current involvement with the tribe in question to avoid duplication and to understand the context in which the relationship will take place.

- Due to the long and complex relationship between the Federal government and Indian tribes, tribes often mistrust the Federal government. Trust must be earned over time. DOE staff can earn trust by educating themselves about how tribal governments operate, demonstrating respect for tribal values, having a proactive interest in tribal welfare, and following through on commitments. Be respectful, predictable, and credible.
- The tribes' understanding of DOE's trust responsibilities also defines their expectations of DOE staff. Learn what their expectations are. Your agenda and expectations may be different than the tribes'.
- Tribes interpret consultation to be "a give-and-take process intended to develop consensus." Simply recording their views is not considered consultation.
- Recognize that tribal governments must deal with the entire welfare of the community, so these governments may be slow to get to DOE issues. Like most governments, tribes experience changing priorities with changing administrations. Also, due to a variety of factors, a high turn-over rate occurs frequently in tribal staff, and tribal governments are often understaffed. Be aware that changes, such as staff turnover, may affect your schedule.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver. If a proposed action requires acceptance or approval from someone else within DOE or another agency, explain in detail the steps you will take to secure approval; but don't over-promise. With a long history of broken promises from the Federal government, tribes may see you as untrustworthy if you can't deliver on your promises.
- If you don't have the information, offer to get it.
- Consider collaboration with other DOE offices and other federal or state agencies as a way to take actions you could not accomplish alone.
- Work to strengthen the capacity of the tribe to achieve its own goals. For example, the ultimate objective of protecting the health and environment of tribes may be achieved most effectively when environmental programs are carried out by the tribal governments. Whenever possible, bring resources, training, and other forms of support to the working relationship with tribal governments.

Why Does Culture Matter?

- The critical characteristic of culture is that it provides a group or society with a shared sense of meaning.
- Different cultures have different interpretations of what behaviors mean. It is easy for people from different cultures to offend or misinterpret each other's behavior by assuming that behavior will mean the same thing to someone from another culture.

- Cross-cultural miscommunication is an important concern when working with Indian tribes.
- Ultimately, people-to-people relationships are the seeds of effective, positive, and productive government-to-government relationships. The success of these relationships often depends on how informed the participants are of each other's history, government, culture, and appropriate etiquette.

Tribal Culture and Etiquette

Communication with people in Indian communities involves communication across cultures, akin to communication with someone from a foreign country. What does it mean to communicate with someone from a different culture?

Culture operates at two levels. Objective culture includes the visible aspects of culture — language, religion, ritual, dress, art and dance, political and economic institutions. Subjective culture refers to the beliefs, attitudes, values, behavior patterns, and modes of communication that are shared by a group. Subjective culture provides a way of understanding the world that is shared with other members of the group. It tells people within a group what their experiences mean. Behavior that means one thing in one culture may mean something very different in another. In many cases we are not even aware of when our own culture defines the meaning of a behavior in ways that are at odds with the interpretation provided by another culture. As social critic Marshall McLuhan once stated: "Culture is like a glass dome. As long as you are inside you don't know you are enclosed." So, we may feel insulted or put-upon by someone else's behavior, based on behavior that means something entirely different in their culture. Or we may give offense to someone else by engaging in behavior that is not offensive in our culture, but that is highly offensive in theirs. This is why it is essential that you know as much as possible about a tribal community before you begin to interact with it. The more you know about a culture, the less likely you are to create cross-cultural misunderstandings.

At the same time some cultural lessons can only be learned through actual interaction with the other culture. So, if your responsibilities involve communication with tribes, you need to interact with people from that tribe. This can't just be formal interaction within official roles. To understand a culture, you need to understand its people. That requires regular and continuous interaction-- not just officially, but socially as well. The result should be that you continue to learn from and respect the tribal culture with which you are working.

Etiquette is the part of culture that demonstrates respect, courtesy, and cooperation with others. Thus, mistakes about etiquette may communicate disrespect or a lack of deference or concern for other people's feelings. It's important to remember that there are currently nearly 560 federally recognized tribes, and some that are unrecognized as well. Many of these tribes speak very different languages and differ in other fundamental ways. Most Indigenous Americans think of themselves not as

“Indian,” but as members of a tribe; e.g., Navajo, Pueblo, Seneca. No two tribes are the same. Some are very progressive, some are very conservative, some are very traditional, and some are very contemporary.

Nevertheless, there are some generalizations about Indian cultures that are useful, and they are presented below. Some general guidelines for etiquette are provided later in this section.

Examples of Potential Cultural Misunderstandings:

In most Indian tribes, communication tends to be implicit, and much is conveyed without articulating the particular message. The nonverbal and situational context becomes very important. An example would be that in the tribal world all forms of traditional expression — names, words, intonations, drumming, dances, masks, brush strokes, chants — have unique symbolism and are the outward manifestation of a deeper reality (as they are in most religions).

There are significant differences in what is important in the dominant American culture and what is important in most tribal cultures.

The dominant American culture tends to emphasize:

- earned status
- individual achievement
- self-reliance
- independence
- factual/scientific thinking
- planned time
- individual competition

Tribal culture tends to emphasize:

- ascribed status
- relationships that are stable and harmonious
- reliance on others
- intuition
- time stretches
- cooperation

To illustrate, in the dominant American culture, a young person who performs exceptionally well academically or athletically would be showered with recognition

and pushed to maximize his or her potential. In tribal culture, the exceptional performance of a single individual might be minimized in order to achieve harmonious relationships among all the young people.

Here are some of the areas in which there are frequent cultural misunderstandings when agencies deal with tribal cultures:

- Government agencies place great importance on schedules and time. Tribes place greater emphasis upon achieving consensus and harmony, and usually tribes believe that consensus and harmony are far more important than schedules and time. A meeting that might be announced for a few hours might go on for many hours until a conclusion is reached that brings about stability and harmony in relationships between members of the tribe. An agency may feel that it is essential to have a tribal response the following week in order to meet a goal; a tribe may feel that it is essential to take all the time necessary in order to discuss an issue that might affect the life of the tribe for generations.
- Tribal elders are treated with great respect, whether or not they hold elected office or an official position. In the dominant American culture, people's status is usually defined by their official position.
- Agencies feel they must justify their decisions based on facts and scientific thinking. Tribes often feel that intuition is a better guide to the underlying relationships and essential truth.

As these examples illustrate, there are significant differences in the cultural context in which a DOE employee operates and that in which tribes operate. These differences always hold the potential for cultural misunderstandings. The best way to overcome these potential misunderstandings is through regular communication and interaction. Maintain an attitude of open-mindedness and adaptability. A sense of humor, particularly an ability to laugh at one's self, may overcome otherwise difficult moments.

Tribal Environmental Beliefs

In mainstream American culture, there is a distinct separation between the "sacred" and the "mundane" (the everyday tasks of earning a living, finding food and shelter). But most American Indian tribes and individual tribal members conceive of spirituality and sacred sites and activities as including all aspects of their way of life — a "holistic" or all-comprehensive existence. Indian people believe all living things are interconnected. The spiritual and natural worlds are not separate. Spirituality is a part of everyday life. For example, plants and animals are not only necessary for subsistence, but also possess spiritual significance and serve ceremonial purposes. Therefore, gathering sites are not just subsistence sites; they may be traditional, cultural places. Where non-Indian cultures may make a distinction between an economic activity, Indian people might consider both to have spiritual significance.

In Indian culture, celebrations, stories, songs, and dance are not “entertainment.” These activities teach skills that determine the future success of younger tribal members as providers and productive members of the tribe and ensure the existence of the tribe for generations to come. Through subsistence activities, children learn respect for the wildlife and fish that are important for their subsistence. They also learn to share, respect, and provide for their elders, care for the land, and coexist with other human beings and cultures.

The vitality of Native American culture, health, religion, and the environment are inextricably linked. It may be difficult for a tribe to separate threats to their environment from threats to their health and culture. Many factors make these links much stronger for tribal members than for non-Indians.

The Significance for DOE of Tribal Beliefs on the Environment

- Environmental risks are often viewed not just as risks to the health of present tribal members, but also as threats to the continuity and integrity of the culture.
- Activities that non-Indians might interpret as “economic” activities (such as gathering food) may be considered “spiritual” activities by tribes.
- Many Indians practice a subsistence lifestyle, depending on fishing, farming, ranching, hunting, and gathering. The implications of this subsistence lifestyle are that the direct exposure of Indians to contaminated resources may be much greater than the equivalently direct exposure to non-Indians, and the consequences from the loss of resources are much greater.
- Many tribes use plants, roots, and other natural resources for medicines and in religious ceremonies. Their faith in the healing and spiritual power of natural resources depends on its purity and may be threatened if a resource is contaminated.
- Knowledge about what, where, and how a tribe uses natural resources may be proprietary information that the tribe does not want to release to DOE for fear the information will be misused. Establishing a methodology for collecting and releasing information may require careful collaboration between the tribe and DOE.

Tribal Decision Making and Meetings

Tribal governments place great emphasis on reaching decisions that produce long-term resolutions and benefits for future generations. Some tribes talk of making decisions that will produce benefits for the next seven generations. Native Americans see continuation of their culture being dependent on natural resources and keeping the land in pristine condition.

Since creating harmony and protecting cultural continuity are important tribal values, tribal meetings tend to allow for everyone to express their views. Tribal decision-making processes may seem slow and cumbersome to those who have to meet

schedules and deadlines. DOE staff and contractors need to be flexible when estimating the time required by the tribe to reach decisions or to respond to questions.

Meetings with tribal officials usually start with words of spirituality, prayer or invocation. These prayers are intended to create a positive atmosphere that will lead to mutual understanding and a good outcome for all parties involved. U.S. government rules about separation of church and state do not apply to tribes. They do not necessarily see them as separate, and as sovereign nations they are free to follow their own cultural norms.

Pointers on Tribal Meeting Etiquette

- Always be conscious of your conduct. Tribal cultures put great emphasis on judging character by one's action, conduct, and response. The appropriate conduct is to be conservative and mindful. Often credibility and integrity will be assessed within the first five minutes of conversation or introduction. As a representative of the Federal government, your actions are indicative of your awareness of the government-to-government relationship with tribal nations.
- Don't be judgmental about how tribal meetings are run. Tribal sovereignty includes the tribes' rights to reach decisions and conduct meetings however they wish.
- Keep your voice to a moderate level. Speaking loudly may be taken by tribal elders, leaders, and members as arrogance, or may be interpreted as a talking down to them, (i.e., a federal agency taking a paternalistic position).
- Elders are highly respected in tribal communities, whether or not they hold any official position. They are the repository for the continuity of tribal culture and are often the source of considerable intuitive wisdom.
- When speaking with a tribal elder, allow more time for a response than you normally would allow. First, English is a second language for many tribal elders. Also, tribal people allow a greater pause time between speakers, even in their own language; a pause indicates the other person is considering what you said. Indian elders may respond by using a story or an analogy to demonstrate their point. A hurried follow-up question may disrupt their response to your first question. Therefore, if you are in a hurry, you may get no answer at all.
- Give your undivided attention to the person who is speaking. Being impatient about time is culturally inappropriate behavior — if something is important enough to talk about, it is important enough to give whatever time is necessary to discuss and ultimately resolve the issues. It is considered especially rude to look at your watch, clip your finger nails, yawn, walk out, raise your hand, or shake your head while a tribal elder or a tribal leader is talking.

- Sometimes prolonged eye contact is inappropriate. In “Indian Country,” not making or holding eye contact is respectful behavior. While in meetings, maintaining direct eye contact for extended amounts of time with tribal elders, leaders, and members is considered inappropriate in some tribal cultures. Because tribal representatives are not making eye contact doesn’t mean they aren’t listening.
- When beginning an important discussion or when responding to questions by tribal elders and officials, laughter may be taken as a lack of seriousness or as belittling the subject or the questioner.
- Tribes may attach much greater significance to proposed DOE actions than DOE staff. Tribal people have a highly personal vested interest in DOE activities because they know from experience how DOE actions may impact their communities, the environment, and their livelihood. DOE staff may have difficulty in appreciating what DOE’s actions mean in the context of tribal culture.
- Some tribal leaders are sensitive to unprofessional, overly casual attire when meetings are held with representatives of the Federal government, especially with those representing the Washington, D.C. headquarters office. Casual attire in the West is more acceptable, particularly among those who meet regularly with tribal officials and go straight from their work place to meetings. However, for a business meeting dress respectfully as you would when meeting with any high elected official or a distinguished representative of another government.
- DOE terms, vocabulary, acronyms, and standard operating procedures may not be familiar to a tribe. DOE staff need to develop an understanding of the prior involvement, education, and training the tribe has had. Some tribes may need DOE staff to limit or explain the use of terms, while other tribes may already have an understanding of the subject matter. Never underestimate the knowledge of tribal officials; but at the same time, be conscious of the terms and concepts you are using to ensure that both tribal officials and DOE staff are effectively communicating.

Cultural Ceremonies

Cultural ceremonies are the bedrock of tribal identity as a government and people. Ceremonies are the reaffirmation of ancestral knowledge handed down from generation to generation. In this manner, songs, dances, prayers, and cultural ceremonial dress are direct links to cultural, religious, and family history. Tribal members’ participation in cultural ceremonial life means a commitment to cultural and religious values and teachings. When it appears appropriate, DOE staff and contractors may want to plan their visits so they have the flexibility to participate in a social or cultural event that will help build understanding and foster trusting relationships.

Things You Need to Know About Tribal Etiquette During Cultural Ceremonies:

- Respect for cultural ceremonies is best shown through action. During invocations, prayers, or opening songs, be observant and determine appropriate behavior based on the behavior of tribal members.
- Show your respect for tribal ceremonies by allowing sufficient time to observe the entire ceremony. Just “putting in an appearance” may be seen as insulting and may increase suspicion about your sincerity.
- It is customary to remove hats for the duration of the invocation, prayers, or songs.
- While prayers or invocations are being said, lower your head and don’t look around.
- Ask permission before taking pictures. Many tribal members are sensitive about being photographed. A general rule of thumb is to ask whether it is permissible to take pictures, video tape, record, or otherwise document cultural ceremonies before reaching for a camera.

Visiting Tribal Reservations

Even though there are no immigration officials requiring passports, entering a reservation is entering the property of a sovereign nation. DOE staff and contractors are guests of the tribe of which they are visiting, and must observe the tribe’s customs and laws. Tribes differ significantly in their willingness to allow visitors on parts of the reservation away from official buildings or tourist facilities. It is wise to inquire in advance about tribal rules and attitudes and to request permission before visiting parts of the reservation away from official buildings. Above all, the reservation is the home of the tribe and its people, and the privacy of the people should be respected.

Things You Need to Know about Visiting Reservations:

- Don’t assume that you are free to wander about or ask tribal members direct questions about their lives. This is the height of rudeness in most Indian cultures.
- Never point (especially when visiting the Navajo Reservation). Pointing is seen as very rude and offensive and has cultural, religious, and metaphysical significance that makes it even more offensive.
- DOE staff may find it helpful to develop personal relationships with members of the tribe who can help with communication and protocol information.
- Photography may be restricted. Ask for permission to photograph individuals, ceremonies, or meetings. Don’t assume automatically that it is appropriate.
- When visiting cultural or sacred sites, be respectful of all artifacts. Refrain from handling or otherwise disturbing these artifacts.

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