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ERRATA

Volume 6, numbers 1 and 2 was missing the following title from the Table of Contents page:

“For Bill: Papers in Honor of William Bates Workman”

—David R. Yesner and Douglas W. Veltre, guest editors

SPECIAL ISSUE:
APPLIED CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN ALASKA

KERRY D. FELDMAN, GUEST EDITOR

APPLIED CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN ALASKA: NEW DIRECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This volume of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* (AJA) brings together papers presented at the 2006 meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) in Vancouver, B.C. In response to a request by the president of SfAA for a significant “Alaska presence” at this most northerly conference ever held by the SfAA, thirty-three papers were solicited and presented, many in the area of cultural resource management (CRM), the rest in applied cultural anthropology. Although not the focus of this volume, CRM research is also a significant form of applied archaeology/anthropology in Alaska, requiring in its full dimension a clear delineation of the human/cultural aspects of such work and, where appropriate, framing the results in relevant anthropological theory.

The essays presented here have two main foci: Urban-based papers primarily on non-Alaska Native populations and urban/rural health/aging research among Alaska Natives. There are several aspects of these papers that are “new” in Alaska anthropology. First, there are three papers on Hispanic populations in Anchorage, by Raymond Wiest and his graduate student, Sara Komarnisky, who are both from Canada; and a paper by Belkis Marín Carrillo from the University of Alaska Anchorage’s master’s program in applied anthropology. No prior anthropological research on any current ethnic group in Alaska besides Alaska Natives, other than one on Filipinos, has been published. Another paper, by Meadow, Meek, and McNeeley from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, examines potential rural-urban migration scenarios in Fairbanks, among northern Alaska Native villagers, that might result from climate change impacts.

Also, new in health and nutrition studies of Alaska Natives for AJA is a paper *authored by Alaska Natives* (Graves et al., who are not anthropologists). As we move

to an expanded post-colonial collaboration in Alaska anthropology, it is hoped that more essays by Alaska Native scholars and researchers will be submitted to AJA. The two papers by Smith et al. on nutrition among rural and urban Alaska Natives were also primarily written by nonanthropologists (co-author Wiedman of Florida International University is an anthropologist and former president of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology); other co-authors of this paper are members of Alaska tribal elders councils. Urban and applied research often involves interdisciplinary and collaborative efforts as is evident in these papers.

Finally, no prior volume of AJA has focused on applied cultural anthropology, although most of the cultural anthropological research in Alaska is and has been of an applied nature. Feldman, Langdon, and Natcher (2005) provide an overview of the history of applied cultural anthropology in Alaska. Their essay summarizes the accomplishments and gaps in applying cultural anthropology to Alaska contexts and issues. For those unfamiliar with the history and dimensions of applied anthropology, the following comments are provided.

The concept of “applied anthropology” dates back to at least 1906, when it was used to announce the establishment of a diploma program at Oxford, while the term “practical anthropology” was used as early as the 1860s by James Hunt, founder of the Anthropological Society of London. (Eddy and Partridge 1987:4)

The British were the first to formally recognize the practical value of anthropology and also the first to employ applied anthropologists.... E. B. Tylor considered anthropology to be a “policy science” and advocated its use in improving the human condition.... Anthropology was first used in

the administration of the British colonies under the rubric of indirect rule (originated by Lord Lugard) by Northcote Thomas in Nigeria in 1908. (Reed 1998)

A simple definition of applied anthropology is offered by van Willigen (1993)—“anthropology put to use”—which is research or work not *primarily or in its origin* aimed at adding *basic, pure, or abstract* knowledge to the discipline of anthropology itself, although the latter can and does occur. One main point of the Feldman, Langdon, and Natcher essay was to explain why the separation of basic from applied research, found elsewhere in the U.S., has been and continues to be illusory in Alaska. As explained by Aron Crowell, director of the Arctic Studies Center of the Smithsonian Institution in Anchorage:

There is a growing recognition that a collaborative, community-based research model can be *applied* in a wide range of contexts and *work effectively within the value systems of both villages and scientific disciplines*. Archaeological excavations, linguistic studies, oral history, cultural landscape studies, subsistence studies, documentation of museum collections and recording of indigenous knowledge of arctic ecosystems are a few examples of current cooperative work. *Both communities and researchers* benefit from consultation, information sharing, cost sharing and co-design of such projects, and *many are organized, funded, or directed by Alaska Native organizations*. Such projects help to support essential goals of Alaska Native communities: the integration of cultural heritage and contemporary identity, social health, education and management of critical resources. Local involvement and educational outreach can be incorporated through many channels. For example, *anthropologists and others contribute to the development of tribal museums, cultural centers and exhibits and to educational materials for schools*. (Crowell 2000, italics added)

Crowell describes numerous collaborative archaeological and other projects in Alaska. For example:

The Utqiagvik Archaeology Project in Barrow (State University of New York, North Slope Borough, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs) was another landmark project. *Research was carried out jointly*, including studies made of human remains recovered at the site. Over the past 15 years, many excavations and field schools have featured close cooperation between Native organizations and the National Park Service (especially its Shared Beringian Heritage Program), University of Alaska, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arctic

Studies Center and other agencies and universities. (Crowell 2000, italics added)

These approaches to research in Alaska have formed and continue to be situated along a continuum, often with no clear boundaries separating them. That is, applied researchers in Alaska can and do add to basic anthropological knowledge and research methods in Alaska, and basic research provides a foundation for effective practice or applied projects. This joining of basic and applied anthropological research has been occurring since 1999 in the MA degree program of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, which offers applied tracks in archaeology, cultural anthropology, and biological anthropology.

There are several kinds of applied anthropology, all of which have occurred in Alaska, beginning with the “traditional applied anthropology” visible in the careers of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown from Great Britain in the early twentieth century who offered data useful to the British colonial administrators for more effective management of indigenous people (the “know-it-all” anthropologist proposes solutions to problems of administering the Other). In the 1950s and 1960s this approach was replaced by “action anthropology” in the U.S., now referred to as participatory action research or collaborative research (Stull and Schensul 1987). It places emphasis on the host community’s control of the identification and proposed solutions to their problems, using anthropological expertise. Policy research, which formally entered applied anthropology in the 1980s, aimed at identifying the assumptions, implementation, and outcomes of policy regardless of the policy intent (Feldman and Langdon 1982).

In that decade, “practicing anthropology” became identified as a potent career track, and the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) was formally recognized within the American Anthropological Association in 1983. Practicing anthropologists are those employed in public and private nonuniversity organizations or agencies. Advocacy anthropology and contract anthropology are other kinds of applied work that complete the typology described in Feldman et al. (2005) regarding the history of applied cultural anthropology in Alaska. Advocacy anthropologists from the 1960s onward abandoned the stance of “value free” science and promoted a moral or social value for the survival and well-being of some group. “Anthropology under contract” simply identifies the nature of the relationship between the anthro-

pologist and the contracting organization: The results of the research are produced for an organization at a specified time under specified circumstances. Applied anthropologists, in Alaska and elsewhere in the U.S., are expected to know all that abstract/basic anthropologists know in terms of anthropological theory, knowledge content, and research methods, but in addition are expected to be able to apply them to specific topics or problems (see Kedia and van Willigen (2005) for current essays on many domains of application). Applied research is often multidisciplinary and is often not conducted in the “Lone Ranger” tradition of a solo anthropologist plunging into an unfamiliar and remote landscape. Embedded in its practice, but not always stated explicitly, is the Marxian notion that through *praxis* (using theory, situational context, and evidence to identify a course of action to produce a socially beneficial result), a researcher actually learns more about the social phenomenon being studied.

If one examines the funding sources for most anthropological research in Alaska from the twentieth to the twenty-first centuries it becomes obvious that it was and is not basic research funding organizations, such as the National Science Foundation, that are interested in knowing about indigenous cultures in Alaska but federal, state, or private organizations needing the knowledge to fulfill their missions. Anthropological researchers in Alaska have often extracted from their applied research what seems relevant for the discipline’s basic knowledge and published this information. In my experience, many university-based researchers in Alaska, before about 1990, had little awareness that their research originated as applied anthropology (because it was solicited and paid for by some organization needing information—anthropology put to use). It

seems as though “applied anthropologist” was a lesser professional identity in Alaska academia. Similar academic pecking order conflicts are found at universities in physics or chemistry departments, in that basic/abstract research is thought to bring more prestige to the researcher (and to the university or department) than applied work and accomplishments (except, perhaps, in the field of medicine, which often views the basic understanding of body organs and functions on a par with research that allows heart transplants, for example, to occur). Alaska might be unique in the U.S. in the way in which anthropologists in university and nonuniversity settings shift regularly and imperceptibly from basic to applied research as it relates to Alaskan indigenous peoples. The applied focus of the essays in this issue is intended to draw attention to that fact, without discouraging basic research. These approaches should not be viewed as being in opposition.¹

INTRODUCTION TO URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY PAPERS²

BACKGROUND

Urban Anthropology did not emerge as a distinct field until the 1960s, following an interest in folk or peasant societies between the 1930s and 1950s (Fox 1977; Sanjek 1990). In the 1960s anthropologists such as Hurt (1961/1962), Ablon (1964), and Martin (1964) were examining Native American identity and social interactions in urban environments such as San Francisco (at least half of Native Americans reside today in urban settings). Interestingly, it was archaeologists who first made urban research a bona fide anthropological focus, as seen in the work by the

1. I was attracted to anthropology after reading a book by Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, and had no idea that anthropological information and methods could be applied to anything. My first graduate fieldwork in 1970 occurred among Northwest Coast people whose elders remembered Franz Boas, and my elderly male key respondent served as Boas’ translator. I was explicitly instructed by the archaeology professor for whom I conducted ethno-historical interviews not to “get involved” in local village politics or matters. This village of 1,100 people, on a remote island about 320 km north of Vancouver, B.C., was completely dysfunctional, due to alcohol consumption, from sundown on Thursdays when their commercial fishing boats docked to Sunday noon when they were allowed to fish again. I saw the need for cultural revitalization, focusing on language revival and economic development, with sobriety values evolving from within the group (the two local Christian churches decried alcoholism but had no meaningful program for dealing with it). I was the only adult in the village other than my local Native friend who was not intoxicated when a woman drowned in her own vomit, unable to roll over. I helped him, and two teenage males, dig her grave on new Grave Island. That summer’s experience went into me very deeply. I did not understand why one could not combine good social science research and applied work. I never took a course in applied anthropology; the first such course was offered at my university, the University of Colorado, Boulder, around 1970. Most applied or practicing anthropologists working in Alaska have not had courses in applied anthropology. The first graduate program (master’s level) specifically offering a degree in applied anthropology was the University of South Florida (USF) in 1974. USF began a Ph.D. program in applied anthropology in 1984.
2. This section derives from a paper that contextualized the presentations in a session co-organized by Kerry Feldman and Raymond Wiest (of the University of Manitoba) for the meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology, 2006, Vancouver, B.C.: “The Northern City and Ethnic Complexity: City as Portal, Place and Process.”

Australian then Great Britain-based neo-Marxist archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1950) and his effort to identify the common processes in the “urban revolution” by which the world’s first cities developed and impacted the nature of human society. This focus continues as a vibrant component of archaeological inquiry today (Marcus and Sabloff 2008), reflecting an awareness of the sociological theories regarding ancient western cities (also see Nichols and Charlton 1997). Eventually it was recognized that the western penchant for dichotomizing human society into “tribal, primitive, traditional, or rural” and “urban, modern, civilized” categories ignored the reality that virtually no human society has been untouched by global forces after the nineteenth century (a trend developing since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), as theorized by Wallerstein (1974), and that any society existing in the present is, *de facto*, a modern society.

ANTHROPOLOGY “OF THE CITY” AND “IN THE CITY”

Urban anthropology research topics were first distinguished as being either anthropology “in the city” or “of the city.” However, there has never been an agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a human settlement as “urban,” although the distinguishing factors are usually assumed to be size (population), density (inhabitants per square kilometer), and heterogeneity (cultural and social diversity). The focus on anthropology “of the city” examines the processes of urbanization itself, how cities use space, grow demographically, and are interconnected in social processes and development (which is often a solely quantitative focus, not dependent on participant observation). Anthropology “in the city” reflects the traditional concern of the discipline for understanding, via ethnography and participant observation, how living in a city influences the way people live and conceptualize their lives (as ethnic groups, communities, etc.). In these studies, the concept of “culture” could be used as a critical analytical component, as it had been used traditionally in anthropology to frame the lives of remote tribal peoples. Cities were thought to be differentiated from rural or “isolated” locales by their emphasis on impersonal

and functional connections among inhabitants (by secondary social relationships, not primary or kin-based relationships that dominated in rural areas). This distinction had been hypothesized by Durkheim (in France) following the theory of Tönnies (in Germany) regarding *Gemeinschaft* (more communal, intimate groups) vs. *Gesellschaft* (more impersonal, contract-based groups caused by capitalism).

Further research, however, revealed the western bias in aspects of these distinctions in that the discovered “villagers in cities” and urban enclaves based on ethnic identity were common not only in U.S. cities but throughout the urban world. The “melting pot” assumptions regarding U.S. cities were challenged and for the most part abandoned.³ Ansari and Nas (1983:6) even thought that some day all of the primary fields of anthropology would become part of urban anthropology. Why? Rural people around the world were migrating to cities in greater numbers after World War II, bringing with them their distinctive traditional cultures, kinship systems, marriage rules, religions, and more, but not abandoning traditional ethnic identities or languages (see Feldman 1994). Although reflecting a romantic attachment to “village life,” the concluding statement by archaeologists Marcus and Sabloff (2008) might be used as a motivation for Alaska-based urban anthropological research:

Only if archaeologists, geographers, sociologists, and historians join in the quest will we come to understand the paradox that makes the city both a brave new world and a potential destroyer of all that was appealing in village life. (Marcus and Sabloff 2008:336)

“CULTURE” AS A PROBLEMATIC ORGANIZING FRAME IN URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY

An eventually recognized problem for urban anthropologists was the traditional organizing concept of the discipline itself: Culture. Urban-living people around the world were discovered to be enmeshed in *interacting cultures*, not in a singular shared way of life. As Susan Wright (1997) in Great Britain, among others inside and outside of an-

3. My neighbors, formerly employed in civilian jobs for the U.S. Army in Anchorage in the late 1970s, moved for a few years to Sterling Heights, Michigan, bought a home, and woke up to find themselves surrounded, they said, by Italians, who read local Italian newspapers, spoke Italian, and chided them for locking their doors at night and not making good pasta. The *Italian Tribune* from that area celebrates its 100th year of publication in 2009. Their online edition features many Italian organization announcements such as this one: “MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2008, Federazione Siciliana del Michigan. The Federazione Siciliana del Michigan will hold a Special Meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Italian American Cultural Center. All Sicilian club presidents and delegates are encouraged to attend to discuss important items for the upcoming year” (http://www.italian-tribune.com/IT_12_26_08_04_Street.pdf).

thropology observed, “culture” in the twentieth century gradually became a contested “field” in social science understandings, not an isolated, bounded concept as offered originally by E. B. Tylor in England and as used by others such as Franz Boas in the early twentieth century. Boas did not engage in much participant observation among Northwest Coast Indian societies, emphasizing instead salvage ethnography; he was uninterested in the acculturative experiences of those among whom he conducted research for a few weeks each summer. Mead and others began studying the acculturation of Native Americans to U.S. society in the 1930s. Now we know that “acculturation” is rarely a one-way street of change; the host/dominant society can and does learn from and acculturate to in-migrating groups, such as Alaska Natives/Native Americans. Absent was interest by Boas in how Northwest Coast indigenous groups were being affected by then-current national and international forces that shaped their lives, although he fought racist views of them and of any ethnic group.⁴ Implied in such an approach to the concept of “culture” are the “old” understandings of the term as described by Wright (1997:3): Bounded and small-scale entities, with defined or even checklist characteristics, essentially unchanging unless outside forces impinge on them, with underlying shared systems of meanings that result in identical, homogenous individuals. This view of culture and its influence on individuals became viewed as not only a myth about cultural essentialism offered by Boas and others, but *this approach is now argued to never have been reflective of any peoples’ lives anywhere, at any time*. Cultural groups have always been in contact with other peoples, always changing, without essential trait list features (Asad 1973; Wagner 1975).

Urban-based studies, in my view, played a major role in identifying the problems of the anthropological believed-in myth about essentialized culture(s), but it took time for even traditionally influenced urban anthropologists to become aware of the mythical quality of their urban ethnographies. In my own dissertation research on urban squatter settlements in the Philippines (Feldman 1973), local “culture” was not a focus or a term used in my study. My dissertation advisor, Robert A. Hackenberg, specifically advised me to ignore cultural phenomena and focus on social, economic, political, and demographic factors to explain why these settlements were located where

they were throughout Davao City (pop. 400,000) and how they represented not slums but Third World efforts at “suburbanization” and hope for a better life amidst extraordinary poverty. That is, one could not explain squatter settlement formation in Davao City by examining the various symbols, rituals, or myths held by the diverse ethnic groups, including tribal peoples, that flooded the city after WW II, seeking “land for the landless” as promised by national politicians. I recall thinking, and writing to myself in my field journal, “How is this research I am doing ‘anthropology’?” As I examined the history of squatter settlements in the Philippines, I became aware that these urban islands of squalor and crime were the results of regional, national, and international factors flowing from U.S. “colonialism” (Feldman 1979). That is, urban lives lived locally in Southeast Asia could only be explained through a global lens, making local “culture” in itself an ineffectual tool for explaining the socioeconomically dependent nature of the local lives I examined.

URBAN-FOCUSED ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN ALASKA

Upon coming to Alaska in 1973, I discovered that “culture” was gradually becoming a concept used in public and private Alaska discourse, one that was to drive indigenous efforts at self-determination via legislative enactments. Finally, I could make use of my traditional anthropological reading and education that had focused on “culture.” Efforts at cultural revival were in full swing, aided by anthropological researchers. However, almost immediately I was unmoored from my cultural theory attachments when in 1975 a Tlingit mayor of a Southeast Alaska town organized a clandestine gathering at Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University) to help him address the cultural impacts of proposed offshore oil lease sales in his area by the Outer Continental Shelf Office (later renamed the Minerals Management Service) of the U.S. Department of the Interior. He told the few dozen of us gathered that his town of about five hundred people, mainly Alaska Natives, would be overrun by oil lease sales impacts, and by drilling if oil was found, and that their traditional Tlingit culture would be severely impacted by the influx of hundreds of oil-related workers. He said that he didn’t know what comprised “Tlingit culture”

4. His research later proved valuable to these Northwest Coast groups in that it documented how they had lived before the western onslaught, and provided information for their own reconstructed use of traditional rituals, stories and more that would have been completely lost to them.

presently (Feldman 1981). He wanted help in defining what aspects of “Tlingit culture” would be harmed. He (a man then in his late twenties, and now a recognized Alaska Native leader statewide) explained that western and Tlingit culture had become so mixed that neither he nor anyone in his community knew how to distinguish them (he noted that Coca-Cola might be found at a potlatch, among other examples of cultural mixing; Coca-Cola was now part of their culture). Anthropologists have been involved for three decades in learning from and at times helping Alaska Native peoples identify their “authentic” cultural traditions. Nevertheless, “culture” has its reality and potency in the social reality of Alaska vis-à-vis Alaska Native peoples. The challenge for anthropologists is to understand how to accurately describe and theorize about indigenous traditions that have experienced two hundred years and more of Russian and U.S. onslaught. When we say “Russian and U.S.” we actually mean the impact of *urban ways of living and related institutions on indigenous rural groups*. More to the point, the anthropological question is how have global urbanization processes influenced the lived reality of Alaskans, most of whom do not reside in villages, and what significance does this global influx have for how “culture” is significant in explaining or understanding the sociocultural dynamics of Alaska. Indigenous anthropologists currently working in Alaska might provide a significant perspective in that regard.

Urban-focused anthropological studies are nearly absent in Alaska, a notable omission given that over ninety languages from around the world are now spoken in Anchorage homes and many of them elsewhere in Alaska’s few but significant towns and cities and at least a fourth of all Alaska Natives “reside” in Anchorage (return and cyclic migration is common, making Anchorage and contributing rural areas an “extended field” for observation). Since 1990, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that an astounding 12.5% of Alaska’s *population growth* was due to *foreign*

immigration, most of the people moving to Anchorage. Within twenty-five years, Alaska is “projected to have the highest foreign migration from Asia and the eleventh highest migration from Latin America in the United States” (Bronen 2003:5). I wonder about the accuracy of these projections, but the trends are clear. What is missing are ethnographic and applied studies in and regarding urban Alaska that reflect the “global village” and transnational living processes underway.⁵

Addressing this nearly absent urban Alaska research were papers presented at the 2006 meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology held in Vancouver, B.C. in a session devoted to “The Northern City.” Three of those session papers focused on Hispanic immigrants and one on the several thousand Hmong immigrants from Southeast Asia now residing in Anchorage (the conference paper on Hmong adaptations to western medicine in Anchorage, by Jacob Hickman [2006], has been published in *Inquiry*). However, none of the presenters in this session except myself were Alaska anthropologists: Raymond Wiest and his graduate student, Sara Komarnisky, are from Canada; Jacob Hickman from Utah is now a doctoral student in anthropology at the University of Chicago (studying Hmong ethical system changes in Hmong refugee settlements in Thailand, comparing them to U.S.-based Hmong moral development experience); and Belkis Marín Carrillo is from Colombia.⁶ Their diverse research methods and foci reveal the extraordinary cultural complexity in urban Alaska concealed in the quantitative summaries and reports briefly summarized below as reported by other disciplines. The emerging global village has a local face and now a primarily urban history in Alaska. One of the most significant human processes worldwide, since the rise of cities six thousand years ago, is occurring, and its presence in Alaska has been virtually ignored by anthropologists.

One might not think of Alaska as a destination for immigrants or political refugees⁷ from Southeast Asia, South

5. By way of contrast, the theme of a 2007 conference in Toronto organized by the Canadian Anthropology Society and the American Ethnological Society highlighted precisely this kind of anthropological urban research: “Indigeneities and Cosmopolitanisms.” Sessions at the conference included a wide spectrum of current postmodern anthropological concerns such as transnational experience, nonessentialist cultural identities, embodiment theory, postcolonial anthropology, varieties of religious experience in transnational urban contexts, as well as the urban identities of indigenous populations. For whatever reasons, such kinds of interrogations of ethnic complexity in Alaska do not elicit similar curiosity among Alaska anthropologists. While preparing to write this introduction, an anthropological colleague asked me if I knew the history of the influx of Tongan, Samoan, and other Pacific Islanders to Anchorage. I said I didn’t know how or when they began moving to Anchorage, or why. That history or story has not been undertaken.

6. Marín Carrillo holds an MD degree from a university in Colombia and completed her MA thesis in applied medical anthropology at the University of Alaska Anchorage (Marín Carrillo 2006).

7. A current MA student in applied anthropology, Cornelia Rogg Jessen, is examining health care issues of refugees in Anchorage as the topic of her thesis. She is originally from Austria, which might partially explain her interest in immigrant issues in Anchorage.

America, Mexico and other equatorial regions. Alaska today is, however, a destination for numerous equatorial peoples, even from northern, sub-Saharan and southern Africa. I have lived in Anchorage since 1973 but only recently has my own anthropological awareness shifted more to the place where I reside as meriting analysis. As with most anthropologists, my interests have focused on Alaska Native peoples, cultures, adaptations, and issues. Undoubtedly, my doctoral research in the Philippines on an urban topic provided an impetus for my awareness that research regarding urban ethnic complexity in Alaska should be undertaken.⁸ There is tremendous need today for anthropological applied and basic research regarding the history and dynamics of the ethnic diversity that has exploded in Anchorage and is proliferating in other urban and regional centers/hubs in Alaska. How does culture (or international socioeconomic forces) influence the roles and occupations, the lifestyles and adaptations, the successes and challenges of very diverse and now intermingled ethnic groups from around the world now living in Alaska? The hotel and food service industry in Barrow has a Filipino face; taxicabs and other businesses in Bethel have a Korean dimension. Inter-marriage is occurring and with what results for culture change and continuity in Alaska? How have educational, medical, mental health, economic, social service, and legal systems responded to this diversity? How have these diverse populations responded to, changed, and contributed to Alaska?

PERSONAL ANECDOTES: MULTICULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF ANCHORAGE

Some personal anecdotal experiences reveal the ethnic complexity that has developed in Alaska. Recently I met a man in Anchorage from Ethiopia who, after twelve years of driving taxicabs in Anchorage, was instructing a younger Ethiopian man in how to engage in this time-honored profession among low-income immigrants for gaining a foothold in an urban place. The older man had a graduate degree from Russia and spoke perfect British English, as did his younger understudy. Another taxi driver from the Macedonia region of Greece told me that, after *twenty years* of living in Anchorage where he has raised his family, when he recently took his children to a family reunion in Greece a physician there advised him to immediately

take his ill children back to Alaska. The physician told the man that his children's "thick blood," due to residing all of their lives in a colder climate, was causing them life-threatening problems in the 106° F Macedonian heat. A Laotian-Cambodian man told me that for twenty years he has lived in Anchorage, raising his children there, with only one teenager now remaining at home in Anchorage to complete a college degree. He distributed over \$10,000 in gifts to his family members in Southeast Asia recently when he and his wife (who is Laotian-Thai) visited "home" relatives during the prior year, buying motors for washing machines, clothes, and any item they noticed as needed among their relatives, some of whom had over a dozen children to support. His goal is to retire and live half the year in Southeast Asia and the other half in Anchorage. His will be an interesting seasonal commute, to say the least. Finally, while vacationing in Mexico, I learned that the second largest source of income for Mexico, after tourism, is money sent from immigrants to the U.S.—an estimated \$20 billion annually (see Corcoran 2007). These anecdotes hint at the extraordinary richness of the meaning of the phrase "global village" as it is experienced in Anchorage and elsewhere in Alaska.

URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY IN ALASKA: TRADITIONAL ACCULTURATION STUDIES OF ALASKA NATIVES

Scant anthropological research has focused on the urban dimension of Alaska Native lives, even after Milan and Pawson (1975) noted that Alaska Natives (primarily Athapascans) began to move into Fairbanks before 1925. Recently, Csonka and Schweitzer (2004) discussed research regarding change and continuity among circumpolar indigenous peoples, including the extensive rural-urban migration now occurring throughout the circumpolar north.

In the past few decades, increasing numbers of indigenous people are also settling down in larger centers away from their home areas. For instance, Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki are playfully referred to as the largest Saami villages or *siidas* in the Nordic countries....According to a recent study (Togeby 2002), about 7,000 Greenlanders live in Denmark, which is equivalent to about 15% of the Greenlanders in Greenland. Two thirds of them are women, and they are spread throughout

8. I gave a paper about urban squatters in the Philippines at the meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association in 1975; there was no interest in the topic among those attending the session. However, the international forces at work then and now explain the large number of Filipinos in Alaska.

the country rather than concentrated in the capital. In 2001, about 10% of Canadian Inuit lived outside the Arctic (Bell 2003; Kishigami 2002). Among the recently better-studied Native urban communities are the Yup'ik and Iñupiat in Anchorage, Alaska (Fienup-Riordan et al. 2000; Fogel-Chance 1993; Lee 2003). In 2003, about 10% of the 274,000 inhabitants of Anchorage were Native or part Native people, which corresponds to almost 17% of the total Native population of the State (Csonka and Schweitzer 2004:62).

Earlier, Dubbs (1975) completed a doctoral dissertation focused on urban "Eskimo" Natives, based on demographic analysis, participant observation, and structured interviews with 190 "Eskimos" residing in Anchorage. Dubbs found that this population was seldom able "to penetrate the cultural and structural barriers erected by the urban system," relying primarily on dysfunctional adaptive behavior patterns based on consuming alcohol and social interactions at Fourth Avenue bars (Dubbs 1975:1). Also in the 1970s, an interdisciplinary team of students studied the needs of Alaska Native elderly residing in Anchorage (Hines 1978).⁹ That study, which I originated with students, discovered that about one-third of elderly Alaska Natives residing in Anchorage in the 1970s had been born in Anchorage, being primarily offspring of mixed-descent families, with white fathers and Alaska Native mothers. Also discovered was that the needs of that elderly population differed greatly from the needs reported by white elderly elsewhere in the U.S. (e.g., the urban Alaska Native elderly wanted better access to traditional Native subsistence foods and wanted their grandchildren to be able to live or stay for long periods of time with them while living in senior housing, which was contrary to public senior housing regulations).

There have been only two MA theses in anthropology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks focused on urban populations, both on "Eskimo" migrants' adjustments to living in Fairbanks (e.g., Daniello 1993; White 1981). Tierney¹⁰ (1991, 2006) conducted ethnographic dissertation research from 1988–1991 on homeless "skid row" populations in Anchorage comprised largely of Alaska Natives, highlighting the differential impact

of homelessness on Alaska Native women (who experienced more discrimination and sexual harassment). Sprott (1994) examined Alaska Natives of mixed ancestry living in Anchorage and whether assimilation was occurring among them. Hamilton and Seyfrit (1994) noted the significant disparities in the greater number of Alaska Native females migrating from rural to urban settings in Alaska, and the possible impacts this could have in terms of individual and "bush" Alaska community survival. The Smith et al. essay in this volume comparatively examines the dietary needs and related behaviors, including social networks, of urban and rural Alaska Native elderly. Rural Alaska Native elderly evidenced higher intakes of Native foods, stronger food sharing networks, and higher family activity scores than did urban Native elders in Anchorage. These findings are not unexpected, but these studies provide a quantitative database for addressing these issues.

In 2006 and 2007, Steve Langdon, James Fall, and Aaron Leggett (from Eklutna village outside of Anchorage) conducted a two-semester class project at the University of Alaska Anchorage that documented how Dena'ina Athabascan people named and used geographic areas in and around the Municipality of Anchorage. This research and student posters, used by Dena'ina spokespersons in testimony to the Anchorage Municipal Assembly, no doubt helped obtain unanimous assembly votes for the name "Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center" for Anchorage's newly constructed building and will eventually result in public signage around Anchorage for those areas when they are able to be funded by various municipality departments. The project will educate tourists and residents about the Dena'ina presence and prior cultural uses of the water, land, and resources of and surrounding Anchorage before the arrival of European and Russian explorers in the region.¹¹ If the National Park Service can fund research on the red light district of early Seward, Alaska, could it also justify funding research on how Alaska Natives used and occupied land and resources in or surrounding Anchorage (and indigenous uses of other urban or semi-urban locales near federally managed national park lands, as is the case in Seward)?

9. Funded by a grant from the Student Originated Studies Program of the National Science Foundation.

10. A doctoral dissertation completed at the Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida. Geraldine Tierney completed her BA in anthropology earlier at the Department of Anthropology, University of Alaska Anchorage.

11. For example, a Dena'ina elder who took part in the class as a key respondent reported that the current Fourth Avenue in Anchorage was a good, forested, moose hunting location. The last battle between Dena'ina and Alutiqs, he said, occurred where Kincaid Park is now located.

UNDERSTANDING ANCHORAGE TODAY: DEMOGRAPHY, CULTURES AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Since 1990 Anchorage has experienced a dramatic increase in ethnic complexity. In 1990 about one in five inhabitants of Anchorage was from an ethnic minority group, rising to one in four by 2000, and headed for one in three by 2010 if the present increases continue (Goldsmith and Frazier 2001). These groups have more younger children, resulting in a 55% increase (6,573 in actual number increase) in the Anchorage School District (ASD) K–12 schools from 1991–2000 even though the ASD grew overall in enrollment by only 11% (Goldsmith and Frazier 2001). As a study in 2005 notes,

The number of Anchorage residents born outside the 50 states grew 60% in the 1990s, up from 13,000 to nearly 21,000. The foreign-born share of the population increased from 7% to 10%. Many of these residents—especially the long-term residents—are U.S. citizens.

International immigration in the past decade is shown by growth in the number of Permanent Fund dividend applications from Anchorage residents who are not citizens—up 14% between 1995 and 2000 and up 10% from 2000 to 2004. Arrivals in Anchorage in the late 1990s were younger, less well-educated, and less likely to come with families; they also had lower incomes than those who came a decade earlier. Lower education levels among many immigrants, compared with U.S. citizens, have also been reported nationwide.

People from throughout the world arrived in the late 1990s, but more were from Samoa and other Pacific Islands than any place else, followed by the Philippines and Mexico. There was significant immigration from Korea and other Asian countries as well. (Goldsmith et al. 2005:9)

Aggregate data and numerical summaries on various aspects of ethnic groups in Anchorage are available in periodic reports prepared by national, state, and local institutions in Anchorage and by research centers and institutes at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Missing are ethnographic studies that provide understanding of these lives rather than simply enumerating their presence. Table 1 summarizes the demographic complexity of Anchorage in 2004.

However, more recent and refined census data (Table 2) provided by the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2007) demonstrates that if Alaska

Natives/Native Americans who are also white (8,979) are added to the total of Alaska Natives/Native Americans in Anchorage, 28,839 individuals or 10.3% of Anchorage is comprised of Alaska Natives/Native Americans. Black or African Americans account for 6.9% (17,642, or 25,287 if enumerating Black/African Americans of mixed ethnicity). Nearly seven percent (6.7% or 17,293) of Anchorage is “Asian.” And finally, Pacific Islanders (1.2% or 3,087) are broken out from the prior census “Asian” populations. Filipinos comprise 48.7% of the Asian population. The Hispanic population has risen to 21,996 (7.9%), with more than half of this group from Mexico. It seems that only 65.9% (184,356) of Anchorage’s “white” population is “white only.” These are astounding numbers and percentages. In ignoring these figures, anthropologists seem tied to McLuhan’s notion from the 1960s of perceiving the present through a “rear-view mirror.” That is, imagining a present Alaska social reality based on how anthropologists imagine the past of Alaska Native peoples, not perceiving the present reality of even Alaska Native peoples.

An indication of the ethnic complexity of Anchorage is found in the diversity of the Anchorage School District, where over ninety languages are spoken in students’ homes. (The ASD is the eighty-first largest school district in the U.S.) The diversity information that first got my attention was from 2005. In 2005, ethnic minorities comprised 44% of the ASD student population (see Table 3).

However, in 2008 the Anchorage School District’s “White” percent dropped to 49% and its “Minority” population increased to 51%.¹² As of 2008, the largest “minority” population in the ASD is “Asian/Pacific Islander” at 13%. The difficulty of the ASD in adequately reporting ethnic complexity is evidenced in the U.S. Census Bureau categories used above. “Asians” (Japanese, Southeast Asians, Chinese, Koreans, India inhabitants, etc.) are lumped with “Pacific Islanders” (Hawaiians, Samoans, Tongans, etc.). “Hispanic” includes students from nations with little in common other than the Spanish

Table 1. 2004 Demographics of Anchorage for ethnicity (n = 277,498 persons)

White	African AkNat/Ind	American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Hispanic
206,877 (74.6%)	23,415 (8.4%)	15,722 (5.7%)	15,348 (5.6%)	2,377 (<1%)	15,181 (5.4%)

Source: Municipality of Anchorage 2004

12. ASD 2008: http://www.asdk12.org/depts/demographics/ethnicity/Ethnicity08_09.pdf.

Table 2. Demographics of Anchorage in 2007 for ethnicity (N=279,671 persons); note diversity of census categories regarding ethnicity

Ethnicity	N=	%=
White [including Hispanic or Latino]	193,075	75.2%
Black or African American	17,642	6.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	16,053	6.3%
Asian	17,293	6.7%
Asian Indian	94	0.5%
Chinese	1,623	9.4%
Filipino	8,414	48.7%
Japanese	544	3.1%
Korean	2,588	15.0%
Vietnamese	218	1.3%
Other Asian	3,812	22.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3,087	1.2%
Native Hawaiian	1,249	40.5%
Guamanian or Chamorro	0	0.0%
Samoan	991	32.1%
Other Pacific Islander	847	27.4%
Some other race	9,613	3.7%
Total population	279,671	100%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	21,996	7.9%
Mexican	11,492	4.1%
Puerto Rican	3,347	1.2%
Cuban	289	0.1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	6,868	2.5%
Not Hispanic or Latino	257,675	92.1%
White alone	184,356	65.9%
Black or African American alone	16,873	6.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	15,275	5.5%
Asian alone	17,041	6.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	3,030	1.1%
Some other race alone	440	0.2%
Two or more races	20,660	7.4%
Two races including Some Other Race	213	0.1%
Two races excluding Some Other Race, and Three or More Races	20,447	7.3%
Total population	279,671	100%
Race alone or in combination with one or more other races		
White	213,206	76.2%
Black or African American	25,287	9.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	28,839	10.3%
Asian	22,962	8.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4,364	1.6%
Some other race	10,888	3.9%
Two or more races	22,908	8.2%
White and Black or African American	4,123	18.0%
White and American Indian and Alaska Native	8,979	39.2%
White and Asian	3,601	15.7%
Black or African American and American Indian and Alaska Native	833	3.6%

Source: after U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey; summative values in **boldface**.

Table 3. Ethnic diversity in the Anchorage School District, 2005

White	56%
Alaska Native/Native American	13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11%
African American	8%
Hispanic	6%
Other/& Multi-Ethnic	6%

Source: Anchorage School District 2005

language. The similarity of Koreans in any cultural sense to Hawaiians is virtually nonexistent. As Goldsmith and Frazier (2001) report, these groups resent the inability of the white majority to view them as members of distinct cultural heritages. More recent information is provided in the Anchorage School District's list of languages spoken by students in 2008, presented in Table 4 (note that these are self-designations or folk classifications of languages and not always linguistically correct; e.g., "Aleut," "Chinese," "Athapaskan," "Tanaina," and "Up Tanana" are not accurate linguistic references).

The papers presented at the 2006 SfAA meetings in Vancouver are the first anthropological ethnographic studies of minority populations other than Alaska Natives in Anchorage (or in Alaska). The focus of anthropological studies in Alaska, as noted above, has been on Alaska Native peoples in rural areas, reflecting the nineteenth and early twentieth-century roots of anthropology in Europe and the U.S. as a discipline devoted to small-scale tribal peoples, exotic in their cultural differences compared to Euro-American cultures and societies. In defense of this anthropological focus on Alaska Natives in rural areas, it should be noted that about 17% of the state's population is comprised of Alaska Native peoples whose cultural identity for most is linked with subsistence and other activities in rural areas, even when they reside in urban areas.¹³ In part this anthropological emphasis on Alaska Native issues is due to the nature of the substantial employment of anthropologists in Alaska in state and federal agencies including the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and many more, whose purview often excludes or does not emphasize people residing in cities (the BIA is an obvious exception). Immigrants from other nations

13. Alaska's indigenous population total is seventh among states in the U.S., but the state of Alaska is number one in the U.S. for the percent of its population comprised of indigenous people.

Table 4. Languages spoken at home in the Anchorage School District, 2008 (N=94 languages)

Afrikaans	Han	Portuguese
Ahtna	Hawaiian	Punjabi
Albanian	Hebrew	Romany
Aleut	Hindi	Rumanian
Amharic	Hmong	Russian
Arabic	Hungarian	Samoan
Arabic (Syria)	Icelandic	Serbo-Croatian
Armenian	Indonesian	Siberian Yupik
Athabascan	Inupiaq	Sinhalese
Bengali	Italian	Sioux
Bosnian	Japanese	Somali
Bulgarian	Kashmiri	Spanish
Burmese	Khmer Cambo	Sugpiaq (Alutiiq)
Cantonese	Kiswahili	Swedish
Chamorro	Korean	Tanaina
(Marls)	Kosraean	Telegu
Chamorro	Lao	Thai
(Guam)	Macedonian	Tlingit
Chinese	Malay	Tongan
Creole	Mandarin	Trukese
Creole (Africa)	Mandinka	Turkish
Cupik	Mien	Twi (Ghana)
Czech	Navajo	Ukranian
Danish	Nepali	Up Tanana
Dinka	Nishga	Urdu
Dutch	Norwegian	Urdu (Pakistan)
Filipino	Nuer	Vietnamese
French	Owan	Wolof
Gaelic	Palau	Yapese
Georgian	Patois	Yoruba
German	Pidgin	Yup'ik
Greek	Polish	Zuni

or from indigenous groups elsewhere in the U.S. such as Pacific Islanders or U.S. Native Americans do not move to Alaska because the hunting, fishing, and gathering of plants, monitored by state and federal agencies, is a focal point of their modes of living.

Absent in the anthropological awareness in Alaska is interest in members of the ninety-plus ethnic and language groups now residing in Anchorage and elsewhere in Alaska, some present since the early 1900s. The "Diversity Index" developed by *USA Today* revealed a 50% diversity index for Anchorage, similar to the 49% index for the U.S. as a whole, meaning that the chances of meeting someone from a nonwhite background was fifty-fifty in Anchorage

(Goldsmith and Frazier 2001). The way that study framed the ethnic composition of Anchorage quickly identifies the significance of the numbers involved. For example, although Anchorage contained 41% of the total state population, 69% of all African Americans in Alaska resided in Anchorage as did 58% of all Asian and Pacific Islanders and about 20% of all Alaska Natives. Whereas an explosive number of Euro-Americans have moved to less crowded and less expensive living 96 km north of Anchorage in the Mat-Su Valley, comparatively fewer ethnic minorities have made that relocation: "the Matanuska Susitna Borough has 10% of the state population, but only 2% of Black, 2% of the Asian and Pacific Islander, and 4% of the Native American population" (Goldsmith and Frazier 2001). The study notes that whereas the ethnic minorities of the Anchorage population were 24%, they comprised at that time 38% of the K–12 enrollment in the ASD;¹⁴ as noted above, minorities currently comprise 51% of this student population.

ETHNIC COMPLEXITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES: ANCHORAGE

There are numerous applied and basic research questions regarding ethnic groups in Anchorage. What is the relationship between being a member of an ethnic minority and social problems, successes, or other issues in Anchorage? Are their children succeeding in academic institutions; are they the primary victims of crimes and assaults or more often the perpetrators; are problematic youth gang members inordinately drawn from ethnic minority groups and if so, why, and from what ethnic backgrounds; are their rates of convictions for felonies similar to their proportion of the population; are their health care needs met and how; are they employed, earning household incomes similar to the dominant group; how do women from these groups fare in Anchorage compared to other women; do they maintain regular contact with families from whence they originate (how transnational is their everyday living); how vibrant or changing are their cultural traditions in Anchorage; how long have members of these groups resided in Anchorage; do their children remain in Anchorage after graduating from high school or migrate elsewhere? How is their humanness being experienced by them or perceived by others in a land "far, far away"

14. In one ASD school (Williwaw Elementary School) that I studied in the 1990s as part of a national experimental project to put Head Start principles into elementary public schools grades K–8, 70% of the K–8 students were ethnic minorities, coming from the surrounding low-income neighborhoods. Today, 80% of Clark Middle School children are non-white, reflecting the ethnic composition of the neighboring area.

from their roots? Are they still members of their “imagined communities” around the globe? How does public policy affect their lives? “Thick description” of these lives, as argued by Geertz (1973:5–6, 9–10)¹⁵ as the hallmark of ethnographic research, has not been attempted by anthropologists.

Below are a few recent nonanthropological studies in justice, health, social services, and immigration statistics regarding Anchorage’s and Alaska’s ethnic groups. These studies cry out for the fine-grained ethnographic research that anthropologists can bring to the understandings of descriptive statistical reports.

The racial tensions and challenges reported by the ethnically different focus groups of the Goldsmith and Frazier (2001) study varied according to ethnic group. For example, Spanish speakers emphasized the language barriers they experienced and the consequent limitations in economic advancement opportunity beyond the service industries of Anchorage (e.g., in food service and manual labor employment). African-Americans, Asians and Hispanics noted ethnic discrimination perceptions: “Bad service in restaurants and stores, belittling comments, people who act afraid or suspicious, and lack of respect are typical examples of subtle discrimination felt by 2/3 of Blacks and almost half of Hispanics and Asians” (Goldsmith and Frazier 2001:5).

SEXUAL ASSAULT, ANCHORAGE: 2000–2001

There were 539 victims of sexual assault in Anchorage in 2000–2001, which is a higher per capita rate than of the U.S. as a whole. Were ethnic minorities primarily the assault victims, 95% of whom were women? Table 5 below

Table 5. Reported female sexual assault victims in Anchorage, 2000–2001

Ethnicity of woman	% of Anchorage Population	% of Assaults
White	77.6%	47.7
Native	10.6%	45.1
Black	7.2%	5.0
Hispanic	6.0%	1.5
Asian	7.3%	1.5
Pacific Islander	1.3%	0.0

Source: Rosay and Langworthy 2003.

reveals that Native women were nearly 7.6 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women from other groups (Rosay and Langworthy 2003:5).

Although 60% of the sexual assault victims had consumed alcohol prior to the assault, the suspect in the assault was unknown to the woman in 44% of the assaults. One senses that culture is in some way a protective factor for women in the above data for Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander women, who reported sexual assaults at a rate significantly lower than their corresponding percentage of Anchorage’s population (perhaps due to the earlier-noted migration of significant numbers of rural Alaska Native females, without families or spouses, to Anchorage). Regarding “race,” the above report notes:

...sexual assaults were strongly geographically and temporally concentrated. Sexual assaults do not occur randomly throughout the Municipality of Anchorage and do not occur randomly in time. Furthermore, the geographical concentration of sexual assaults appears to vary substantially by the race of the victim. There is much to learn about these patterns and the extent to which they vary by race.... Furthermore, we also noted strong racial differences in reporting delay. White victims were substantially more likely to delay reporting than Native victims. (Rosay and Langworthy 2003:26)

Sexual assaults occur primarily in or near low-income neighborhoods in which ethnic minorities are more likely to reside.

For Native victims, sexual assault locations are concentrated in four community councils—Downtown, Fairview, Spenard, and Mountain View. For White victims, sexual assault locations are concentrated (though to a lesser extent) mostly in Fairview and Spenard (Rosay and Langworthy 2003:18).

It is also significant that nearly 60% of the unsolved homicides in Anchorage are of ethnic minority men and women (N=27, of which 16 were ethnic minorities, dating back to 1965).

NONCITIZEN IMMIGRANTS AND ANCHORAGE ARRESTS

Noncitizen immigrants account for a substantially smaller percentage of arrestees in Anchorage than their representation in the population as a whole. This includes arrests for drug offenses, felonious crimes, and violent offenses,

15. A thick description explains not only the behavior of some cultural group but provides a thorough context for it such that an outsider might understand why the behavior is meaningful to the group studied.

and they are “less likely than those with citizenship to have prior criminal histories” (Myrstol 2003:10). The anthropological question is: why?

IMMIGRATION, NATURALIZATION, AND TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS

From what nations do immigrants come, especially those becoming citizens (“naturalized”)? The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) provides the following information. In FY 2001 the INS recorded the admission of 1,401 legal immigrants who declared Alaska as their intended state of residence. The most sizeable national groups came from the Philippines (366), Mexico (126), Canada (94), Russia (89), and Korea (79). In Alaska, in FY 2001, 710 people were naturalized. Of these, the most sizeable national groups came from the Philippines (170), Korea (87) and Mexico (60) (Alaska Justice Forum 2003:1). These numbers merit qualitative investigation. Why are these countries of origin, rather than others, so prominent?

The Immigration and Naturalization Service also maintains data on temporary admissions. The typical non-immigrant foreign national temporarily admitted to the United States is a tourist, but there are also other classes for admission, including students, diplomats, and business people. In 2001, Alaska had significant numbers of students (383), investors (401), temporary workers (473) and exchange visitors (798) given temporary admission. What is the impact of these nearly 2,000 individuals on Alaska, their experiences in Alaska and does ethnicity become a political and economic phenomenon in a multiethnic urban context, as Cohen (1974) has suggested in regard to Africa?

“ALIENS” AND ASYLUM

“Aliens” within the U.S. who are unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution may apply for asylum. In 2001 over 28,000 individuals were awarded asylum throughout the U.S., including thirty-four individuals in Alaska. What are the stories of these people and where do they reside in Alaska?¹⁶

ALASKA RANKING FOR MINORITY GROUPS: THE STATE CONTEXT

Pacific Islanders comprise only about .6% of Alaska’s total population, but this makes Alaska third in the U.S. in terms of their percent of its total population, which is a higher percent than that of California, but one rank behind Utah (the Mormon religion’s presence in the Pacific Islands is evident in the Utah ranking). While about 70% of Alaska’s population is “white,” Alaska ranks near the bottom of U.S. Euro-American percent presence—forty-fourth out of fifty states in that regard; Alabama, by comparison, is forty-third and South Carolina is only one rank behind Alaska. In Maine, 96.9% of the population is white, giving it first ranking in that regard. Idaho is fourth; West Virginia is fifth; Montana is eleventh with 91.1% white. The pattern in the U.S. seems to be that there is no clear geographic pattern except for the northeastern states which are predominately white. African-Americans comprise 3.6% of Alaska’s population, making it thirty-fourth out of fifty states in that regard but Arizona is only one rank behind Alaska. Montana (my natal state) is dead last in that regard, at fiftieth; and at forty-ninth is Idaho.¹⁷

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The circumpolar north became a portal and home for diverse indigenous cultures from Asia over ten thousand years ago and today for peoples from all around the globe. These newer immigrants move primarily to urban Alaska. Anthropological research in Alaska seems stuck on the results of the first “immigration” that seems to have occurred over ten thousand years ago via Beringia, and subsequent immigration waves from northeast Asia down to 4,000–5,000 BP.

The papers in this volume regarding ethnic groups in Anchorage will hopefully foster more anthropological research on these populations as well as on indigenous Alaska Native cosmopolitanism. Broadening our anthropological focus in Alaska to include globalization impacts locally would also contribute to the worldwide understanding of this phenomenon, as represented by the following observation (*IUAES Newsletter* 2008) regarding urban migrants in Asia:

16. See Alaska Justice Forum: http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/forum/201spring2003/a_immigration.html.

17. U.S. Census Bureau 2006.

There were an estimated 192 million migrants worldwide in 2005, up from 176 million in 2000. Migrants comprise 3 per cent of the global population. The number of Asian migrants has increased from 28.1 million in 1970 to 43.8 million in 2000. Migration is now an essential, inevitable and potentially beneficial component of economic and social life in Asia. Governments and scholars in different Asian countries have paid more and more attention to migration in the context of globalization.¹⁸

APPLIED HEALTH, HEALTH CARE, AND MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN ALASKA

Papers in this volume also focus on health, health care, and medical anthropological research. All of these papers reflect an awareness of the rural-urban dimensions and differences, as well as the cultural constructions necessary for understanding and effectively confronting challenges in local health care.

Graves et al. offer an empirically based effort by Alaska Native researchers to understand how a not-to-be-talked-about reality in Alaska—abuse experienced by Alaska Native elders—is perceived by Alaska Native elders. I doubt that this research could have been conducted by non-Native researchers, with the willingness of respondents to be open with the researchers. This research team learned that they had to abandon the western mode of direct questions about “abuse” and begin their discussions with respected cultural tradition bearers regarding traditional views of respect, then query how the breakdown of this tradition has resulted in “abuse” for Alaska Native elderly. Knowing how to frame a question is critical in anthropological research and understandings. We have, perhaps, scarcely scratched the surface regarding how to most insightfully frame questions about complex and troubling dimensions of Alaska Native life. Including or joining Alaska Natives in anthropologically relevant research regarding these populations and troubling issues is needed today.

Hedwig’s paper reveals the complexities of and need for culturally informed treatment of developmental disability in Alaska. His study was conducted with the cooperation of and approval by a western institution serving Alaska Natives with developmental disabilities. The openness of such institutions to critical research is not always provided due to the sensitive nature of the population served and the implications for program funding. In this case, it is significant that a local administrative officer of a local institution had a background in anthropology and welcomed the kind of innovative, culturally grounded client intervention reported by Hedwig. Appropriately serving the high number of Alaska Natives who are developmentally disabled requires searching for culturally informed, individually tailored treatment plans such as that proposed by Hedwig, following the initial suggestion by Scheller (1995) for “culturally relevant services” for Alaska Natives. A human “body” is in large part a cultural construction regarding how a person experiences her/his body, including mental/behavioral problems or illness. Health care for all developmentally disabled requires attention to culturally appropriate treatment plans.

Marín Carrillo’s paper regarding breastfeeding among low-income Hispanic (Spanish-speaking) mothers in Anchorage draws attention to the necessity for holistic systems study of seemingly biological processes such as breastfeeding. Bodies, as experienced and perceived by individuals, have no agreed-on universal reality (with the mind/body Cartesian split not universally accepted either). A woman’s breasts are perceived in France, for example, as primarily intended for a man’s enjoyment, not as a source of nourishment for a baby. Hence, health care professionals in France recommend a very short breastfeeding time for infants. Marín Carrillo’s paper examines this and numerous other factors involved in the breastfeeding decisions of Hispanic mothers now living in Anchorage, which are not as long-lasting as one might expect from breastfeeding cultures. Even the western agency responsible for providing food vouchers for low-income mothers to better feed their children evidenced an unconscious disregard for

18. We should be aware of the political complexity for nation-states, including the U.S., and also perhaps the State of Alaska or Municipality of Anchorage, to draw attention to the increasing ethnic diversity of their populations and whatever image of unity/cultural distinctiveness is being portrayed. In May 2008, for example, Chinese government officials withdrew permission for the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences to hold their sixteenth congress meeting in China in July 2008. Notice of the event’s cancellation was issued by the China Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, with no reason given. Professor Zhang Jijiao, organizer of the conference and member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, released the statement postponing the conference. A blog about this cancellation cited the possibility that the government did not want to call attention to its ethnic diversity at a time when the Olympic Games were to be held in Beijing, emphasizing the unity of all people in China (http://angrychinese.blogspot-city.com/anthropology_a_taboo_topic_in_china.htm).

the importance of breastfeeding among this group. It is significant that Marín Carrillo is a Colombian woman, a mother from a culture that values breastfeeding, as well as a medical doctor.

The two papers by Smith et al. also focus on nutrition and health, but compare rural (Inupiaq) and urban Alaska Native elderly, and the significance of not only traditional foods but elders being involved in harvesting them. The notion of “valuable functioning” is used for holistically understanding the health significance of harvested foods and the communal activities related to procuring, preparing and sharing them. Valuable functioning refers to a state of well-being in which the individual feels that biological needs have been met, which then allows fulfillment of psychological needs. Surprisingly, their quantitative study found that:

Urban elders also reported slightly higher intake of muktuk and whale meat. This anomaly was better understood when the urban elders told of their sources of muktuk and whale. Many of the urban elders received the prized muktuk from the social and tribal events held in Anchorage. It appears that Anchorage is a focal point for many overlapping food sharing networks from around the state. (Smith et al. this volume)

However, overall rural Alaska Native elderly reported higher weekly servings of harvested food (but halibut was an exception, being more consumed by urban Alaska Native elderly). What is now needed is an analysis of the harvested food sharing networks of urban Alaska Natives, and the potential impact of global climate change on these networks.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The cultural dimensions of food, nutrition, and health have been a focus of prior anthropological research in Alaska only among Alaska Native populations. The papers by Smith et al. in this volume highlight a crucial dimension for such studies: How differences in rural-urban locales relate to the nutritional health of Alaska Native peoples. Over half of Native Americans in the Lower 48 reside in cities, and have for decades; this will probably occur in Alaska. Limiting our studies to rural Alaska Native cultures and societies does not reflect Alaska Native reality today. How are Alaska Native traditions practiced, changing, and continuing in urban environments? Do we perceive our discipline as focused almost

exclusively on the traditional Other, and have little interest in the transformations of indigenous peoples in urban contexts, which are now significant for both their lived lives and cultures?

As noted above, in the 2000 Census, the largest minority population in Anchorage was Alaska Native/Native American at 7%. If we include two other Alaska urban locales in that census year, Juneau and Fairbanks, we find that 11% (3,470) of Juneau's population (30,711) were Alaska Native/Native American and 6.3% (5,218) of the Fairbanks North Star Borough (population 82,840). Thus, these three urban areas in 2000 included at least 26,907 Alaska Natives/Native Americans or over a fourth (28.2%) of all Alaska Natives/Native Americans (95,293) in Alaska (pop. 626,932 in 2000), and all of these numbers have increased since then. The percentage of Alaska Natives/Native Americans in smaller Alaska towns can be even higher, as also seen in the 2000 U.S. Census data: 13% (1,843) in Ketchikan, 17.5% (1,546) in Sitka, and 17.8% (503) in Seward. These six locales had about one-third (30,799; 32.2%) of the total Alaska Native/Native American population of Alaska a decade ago.

Even formerly, almost exclusively, Alaska Native regional centers such as Barrow have evidenced major changes in ethnic diversity. Barrow's population in 2000 (4,581) was only 56.4% (2,583) indigenous; 21.3% (975) was white, 10.4% (476) was Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.3% (151) was Hispanic/Latino, 1.1% (5) were Black/African American, and a very large percent—7.5% (343)—was identified as multiracial/non-Hispanic. Even Bethel (5,471) was comprised of only 59.3% Alaska Native/Native American people in the 2000 U.S. Census: 26.1% were white (1,427), 3.2% were Asian/Pacific Islander (175), 1.8% was Black/African American (98), 2.6% were Hispanic/Latino (142), and a large percent (7%) were self-identified as “multiracial” (382). Where are our studies of multiethnic people in Alaska, an obviously significant proportion of Alaska Native peoples today, in both rural and urban Alaska?

Anthropologists in the U.S., following Boas, made “race” a contested category, debunked it, and led the way to a greater awareness of cultural difference as that which differentiates the single “human race.” How do multicultural persons experience a racialized social system in Alaska and the U.S. that expects them to be from one ethnicity (even with a bi-ethnic U.S. president today)?

One might ask, finally, how and why do Alaska Natives also contribute (perhaps pressured to do so by western law

and their own essentialized self-perceptions) to this perception of themselves, ignoring or downplaying the blending today of genes, cultural traits, and behaviors when presenting their Nativeness to the Other or to other Native peoples? An anecdote might reveal the complexity of this issue for some Alaska Natives. I recently was told by an urban-living Athabascan woman that her Tlingit/Filipino husband wanted Filipino food served at home. She said that she had just returned from visiting *her* white relatives in Scotland, who she had always wanted to meet. She hoped that someday Alaska Native people of mixed descent would be encouraged and feel free to celebrate all of their ethnic identities. Just as earlier “salvage” anthropological research helped preserve for many Alaska Native peoples their cultural stories, rituals, languages and material cultural heritage, anthropological research today could better reflect the hybridity of Alaska Native cultures and biological heritage, making it “safe” to celebrate those complexities without losing their continued desire for cultural distinctiveness. These cultures today are truly Alaska Native cultures, made vibrant by complex, individual, indigenous people, absorbing more rapidly, perhaps, than in the past some of the cultural traits of those around them. But the process of culture change has been continuous among Alaska Native peoples for over ten thousand years, particularly for those living on territorial boundaries shared with other groups, where much intercultural borrowing occurred (and even changing ethnic identities and languages).

As we think about “culture” and preserving unique ways of living because we are attracted to them, we might also consider the notion that in the past and present have occurred various social-interactive “fields” available for study, not clearly bounded cultures. One major locus for understanding indigenous culture change today would be Alaska cities and towns where now over one-third of Alaska Native peoples reside, which in the not-too-distant future will likely be home to the majority of Alaska’s indigenous people. To ignore in our research the multi-ethnic and mixed-biological Alaska Native reality, and the urban dimensions of their lives, is not to respect “Alaska Native cultures and peoples.” It is to continue the salvage ethnography of Boas, who today, I think, might not be a Boasian in this regard. Why? Because he assumed indigenous cultures were dying out. They haven’t died out; they have changed and adapted, and that’s how the empirically minded Boas would likely have studied them today.

It is hoped that this issue of AJA will inspire new generations of anthropologists to study “cultures” in Alaska as

they actually are: Contested ways of life and of meaning, lacking essences, impacted by urban-capitalistic processes, and now subject to global influences of commerce and migration experienced locally.

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IMPRESSIONS OF TRANSNATIONAL MEXICAN LIFE IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA: *ACUITZENCES* IN THE FAR NORTH

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ABSTRACT

Labor migration to Alaska was first noted in a central Mexican *mestizo* community in 1966 at the beginning of longitudinal research there. Nearly forty years later, research follows connections from this community to Anchorage in order to begin documentation of work and living experiences of Mexican immigrant workers in seasonal and more long-term sojourns in Alaska. Individual and familial migration as livelihood strategy is examined in the context of a global political economy that propels increasing and ever-more-distant labor migration from Mexico. Attention is given to social relations of transnational living and implications for identity dynamics.

KEYWORDS: transnationalism, labor migration, social relations

INTRODUCTION: *VAMOS AL NORTE*

Alaska is no exception to increased reliance on Mexican labor in the United States. Mexican migrant workers have been moving from their long-established place in the agricultural harvests of the American southwest and low-paying industrial jobs of a few northern cities, like Chicago, to work in many sectors of the economy and diverse regions of the United States and Canada. As the film *A Day Without Mexicans* (*Un Día Sin Mexicanos*) whimsically illustrates, life in “America” comes to a virtual standstill without this labor force. Mexican workers continue to be the backbone of agricultural production in the U.S., but have come to be the mainstay of the food service industry (and not just Mexican restaurants, but Asian restaurants in particular). They also have moved to dominate yard, garden, and home maintenance services and are fast coming to prominence in the construction industry throughout much of the U.S. (Pew Hispanic Center 2007).

Although a relatively new frontier for Mexican labor, there have been long-term work experiences in the state of Alaska since the mid-1950s. Anchorage, Alaska,

is becoming a favored destination of a number of central Mexican communities, a fact not widely known. The expression *Vamos al Norte*¹ has taken on a new significance as Mexican workers have literally moved northward in the U.S. (see De Genova 2005; Smith 2006; Stephen 2007), including the very “North” of Alaska. Climate, cost of travel, and living costs have weighed significantly on who goes to Alaska, how long they stay, and how frequently they return to Mexico, but so do global economic and political conditions that underlie widespread transborder movement of workers in a post-NAFTA time of economic volatility and uncertainty. Social connectedness under such conditions is particularly important in a mobile livelihood (Duany 2002), as is a sense of “community” among transnational workers.

This paper offers perhaps the first descriptive account of Mexicans in Alaska who are living and working transnationally. I explore transnational social relations among Mexicans who originate largely from one central Mexican community in the state of Michoacán. What can they tell

1. “We [Let’s] go North” has for a long time been the expression used for going to the United States for work.

us about how livelihoods and relationships are negotiated in boom labor scenarios and rapidly changing cultural spaces like present-day Alaska? What is the character of transnational connectedness, and of practices, events, and symbols that reflect strength of ties to the community of origin? To what extent is spatial distance still a significant factor in transnational living with current advanced communication (cell phones, telephones, e-mail)? What are the pulls and tugs of places of origin, and how do they compete in the imaginations of transnationals with other places that can also come to be called “home”?

Beginning with a brief historical backdrop to Mexican labor migration to Alaska from the central Mexican *mestizo* community of Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán,² I proceed with a discussion of conceptual notions and theoretical constructs that shape the study and describe the research methods. I then probe the attractions of Anchorage as a transnational work location, the work environment for Acuitzences there, and social relations as part of living in Anchorage and maintaining linkages to the community of origin in Mexico.

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: HISTORICAL BACKDROP, THEORY, AND METHOD

I first came to know of several villagers working in Alaska as part of my research into labor migration impacts on household and family organization. My in-depth random sample of the village in 1966–67 included one family with a member at work in Alaska. At that time, a number of workers from Acuitzio were engaged in the Trans-Alaska Pipeline construction, the fisheries, and in food services as waiters and even as restaurant owners/employers. In 1973 I made a passing reference to migration to Alaska: “Mexicans who temporarily and recurrently migrate to the United States are employed primarily in agriculture, although an increasing number find employment in Los Angeles and Chicago factories. Some Acuitzences also work in construction or in bakeries in Alaska” (Wiest 1973:185).

Until 1983, I regularly revisited and conducted research in Acuitzio (e.g., see Wiest 1973, 1979, 1983a, 1983b, 1984), and made informal contacts with Acuitzences in California. After a twenty-year hiatus, I returned in 2004 to begin a three-year multisited investigation of Mexican transnational labor in Acuitzio del Canje; Anchorage, Alaska; and the Dinuba-Reedley area of the San Joaquin Valley, California. This paper focuses on the Acuitzio connection to Anchorage; it is based on a one-month period of fieldwork in Anchorage in the fall of 2005 plus a three-month period in Acuitzio, during which time I was able to continue with Acuitzences who returned from Alaska to visit later that year.

Because I have farm roots in California, I had a natural interest in, and chose to focus my research on, rural proletarianization in Mexico and connections with California agriculture. Hence, nearly forty years passed before I gave specific research attention to Mexicans in Alaska. Personal knowledge of Acuitzences in Alaska, and conversations with some of them in Acuitzio over a period of four decades, left a lingering curiosity as to why Mexicans in Alaska remained below media and even academic radar. To my best knowledge, there is yet no published anthropological discussion of Mexicans in Alaska. Even in Anchorage the influx of Mexican workers has not yet drawn formal attention, including within the academy.³ Indeed, the surprise reaction among both academics and nonacademics in the “lower United States” regarding the large presence of Mexicans in Alaska is striking. A common assumption is that Alaska would offer Mexicans few if any desired traditional foods, amenities, and/or sense of community, yet there is a thriving Mexican food industry in Anchorage and a rising sense of a Latino community, predominantly Mexican. There are more than fifty-five Mexican restaurants in Anchorage, the vast majority being independent or local enterprises rather than global chain franchises. This general unawareness of “Mexico in Alaska”⁴ conforms to the lower profile of immigration as an issue of concern; we did not detect the negative interpretation of

2. Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán is *cabecera* (head town) of the small municipality of Acuitzio. Acuitzio lies in the cool uplands (*tierra fría*), about 35 kilometers south southwest of Morelia, capitol of the state of Michoacán (see Wiest 1973). The 2005 population of the *cabecera* increased to 7,000 from the 1970s population of 3,600. People from Acuitzio are known as “Acuitzences.” All of the workers referred to in this article are from the *cabecera*, Acuitzio del Canje, generally glossed as “Acuitzio” in this paper.

3. Upon presentation of a paper in the Anthropology Department at the University of Alaska Anchorage (Naylor 2005), colleagues acknowledged that immigration of Latin Americans, Asians, and others was only beginning to garner attention. The Society for Applied Anthropology 2006 conference panel in which a version of this paper was presented had its origins in a discussion between Kerry Feldman and me on the importance of encouraging research on recent immigration to Anchorage.

4. “Mexico in Alaska” is the name of one Anchorage restaurant, but it also is an expression that rings well to capture the Mexican presence in Anchorage (see Komarnisky this volume).

immigration that is widespread in the lower forty-eight states. Anchorage has not (yet) become caught up in the United States media, public, and congressional debate and hysteria around undocumented immigration and growing Latinization, as is widespread in borderland regions and northern U.S. urban centers such as Cincinnati, Chicago, New York, or Portland, OR (e.g., *Chicago Tribune* 2007; Cornelius 2006; Garcia-Navarro 2007; Massey 2006; Portes 2006; *The Oregonian* 2007). Preoccupation with lack of documentation is lower in Alaska and consequently there is less fear of being categorized as illegal (see Stephen 2007:152–153). In Anchorage we often heard, and noted in the media, positive comment regarding immigrants—that increasing ethnic diversity adds interest to the local scene, that recent immigrants are very hard workers, and that they are a welcome part of the Alaska boom. Alaska is an increasingly attractive destination, particularly for Hispanics and Asians (*Anchorage Daily News* 2006). At official levels, however, there is some concern with income loss to Alaska from “nonresidents.”⁵

Although Acuitzio connections with Alaska have a considerable history, Alaska is still a “frontier” for Mexican workers in the sense that it represents a significant climatic change, involves greater spatial distance and comparatively more costly transport, and today involves expanding work opportunities largely outside the scope of prior experience for many immigrant workers. This broadened range of employment prospects is consistent with the post-NAFTA rise in Mexican transnational migration in general (Kandel and Massey 2002), and the development of a “culture of migration” (see Cohen 2004) in which the youth, particularly males, express their entry to adulthood by seeking work in the U.S.

Despite the greater distance and separation by two nation-states (U.S. mainland and Canada), the Mexico-Alaska connection cases I deal with conform largely to migration between Mexico and other places in the U.S. If we consider strength of association and emotional attachment, it is as if people can indeed be “two places at once,” much like those people living in the Tijuana-San Diego region or El Paso-Juarez (Hsu 2007). As several people in Acuitzio expressed it to me, “*Están allá y viven aquí*” [“they are there and live here”], which embodies important elements of transnationalism.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Appearance of a “transnational perspective” on migration (Glick Schiller et al. 1992) offered a framework for explicit recognition of “social fields that link together . . . country of origin and . . . country of settlement” and the identity and organizational implications of “multiple relations . . . that span borders” (Glick Schiller et al. 1992:1). Kearney (1991:53) notes that transnational migration spans “boundaries” (legal spatial markers of nations) as well as borders (geographic and cultural contact zones), or connections and relationships of individuals and institutions in different places or states (Kearney 1995; Levin 2002:3). Stephen (2007:19–23) adopts the expression “transborder” migration as a more accurate reflection of the fact that Mexican transmigrants cross a variety of borders (ethnic, cultural, and regional) in both Mexico and the United States, so “transnational” then becomes a subset of transborder movement. The analysis in this paper, however, emphasizes transnational migration, or “movement of people across the borders that differentiate nation-state spaces,” as expressed by De Genova (2005:2). For most Acuitzences, transnational living has come to approximate what Duany refers to as “mobile livelihoods”—“the spatial extension of people’s means of subsistence across various local, regional, and national settings” (2002:358).

Mexican transnational migration has been, and continues to be, primarily *labor* migration (De Genova 2005:6; Wiest 1973), but it now involves a wider social class range in response to economic conditions in Mexico. More than ever before, educated and skilled men and women are joining the rural and urban disenfranchised to work and live transnationally. As one well-educated Mexican in Anchorage stated in response to post-NAFTA conditions in Mexico, “It’s not about adventure, man. It’s about survival” (Naylor 2005:8), making the point that even educated young professionals cannot find work in Mexico.

Transnational labor migration is largely induced by conditions that necessitate the search for livelihood alternatives and/or income supplementation, but there is much more to transnational living than earning money and sending out remittances. Transnational mobile livelihoods are made up of social, economic, and political

5. Identified from the two most recent years’ Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) data, nonresidents are workers who have not received a PFD in one of the two most recent years. Income loss from nonresidents is considered to be around \$1 billion if half the earnings are spent outside the state. According to the Alaska Department of Labor, “a significant portion of the direct income, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars and thousands of jobs, is lost to the Alaska economy” (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2006a:21).

involvements in multiple sites; weighing contradictory ideas and practices as well as identity options and pressures (see Levitt 2004; Mountz and Wright 1996; Striffler 2007); and active juxtaposition of one's own past, present, and pondered future. The specific contexts in which transnational migrants live and work are also dynamic, exhibiting moments of dramatic change that can have profound effects on labor markets and social receptivity. Public opinion shifts, together with individual narratives that reflect contentious representations of self and community, reveal contradictory ideas and practices among transmigrants (also see Grimes 1998:126–127). I encountered hostile criticism of NAFTA among Acuitzences, yet embrace of free markets (as did Grimes 1998:127) and opposition to agricultural labor solidarity in California (not deemed in their interest as temporary seasonal workers). Repression of such apparent contradictions is fueled by at least three interrelated attributes associated with Acuitzio. First, there is a class-based control over land that impedes development of a local labor market and strangles even small private landowners (*pequeños propietarios*) who commonly migrate to the U.S. for work. Second, there is a pervasive suspicion of political process, especially at the local level, that impedes organized resistance and consequently impels people to seek livelihood options elsewhere. Third, atomistic family-focused connections, together with absence of effective community-based collective initiatives, have propelled individual and family dependence on transnational migration.

Radical shifts in assessment of migration to the United States in Acuitzio also reflect changing perceptions of the political economy—from uncritical embrace of out-migration for work and widespread emulation of migration as livelihood strategy (e.g., “migrant syndrome,” Reichert 1981) in the 1960s and 1970s, to contentious opposition to labor migration dependency in the late 1970s when Mexico announced oil reserves and major development plans. Then, with the onset of the Mexican debt crisis in 1983, Acuitzences were back to warm and uncritical embrace of migration as a strategy that continues unabated today. Today, even among those who remain critical of dependence on transnational migration for livelihood, there is recognition that nearly every Acuitzio household depends on transnational migration to some extent and that local commerce and construction could not be sustained without it in the current political economy of Mexico.

Many transmigrants quietly confront identity stereotypes (see Stephen 2007:209–230) by actively maintaining

several identities in connections with different places, e.g., homeland and labor site (Grimes 1998:19–20). For Glick Schiller et al. (1992:11), maintenance of multiple identities is an expression of “resistance to the global political and economic situations that engulf them, even as they accommodate themselves to living conditions marked by vulnerability and insecurity.” In his study of Mexicans in California, Rouse (1991, 1992) illustrates how workers internalize proletarian values (punctuality, reliability, etc., typically glossed by Acuitzences as “time is money”) of the host society but retain meanings and values of their home community. The two are sometimes contradictory, resulting in confusion and tension in workers’ lives, and in what Rouse (1992:41) calls “cultural bi-focality”—alternating views of the world.

Acuitzences confront transnational migration and discrimination with considerable comparative advantage. First, Acuitzio is not an indigenous community; Acuitzio is a *mestizo* community that can still be usefully glossed as “nation oriented” (Wolf 1956). Compared to Mexican transnational migrants from indigenous communities, Acuitzences experience fewer barriers to entry into the mainstream of life in the U.S., where class and ethnic differentiation is becoming more apparent in transnational migration, especially in urban settings. Second, Acuitzences in Alaska are largely in a propertied class in Acuitzio, with access to and use of considerable social capital. Third, Acuitzio has long had an unusually high number of people with immigrant visas or “green cards” (Wiest 1973:184), a legacy that has given momentum to continued favorable positioning for regulation of immigration papers. Although entry to the U.S. without documents is now widespread in Acuitzio, Acuitzences who go to Alaska for the most part have gained legal entry that stems from the parental generation or was acquired through previous work in California in a form of step migration. This underscores a fourth attribute—the considerable generational depth of migration to Alaska from Acuitzio—addressed in this paper.

The importance of networking among Mexican transnational workers to assist in border crossing and job acquisition is well established in the literature (e.g., Cohen 2004; Massey et al. 1987; Kandel and Massey 2002; Stephen 2007). Acuitzences make a strong point of this, including those who have worked in California or elsewhere in the U.S. They readily and regularly highlight that strong social connections with others already working in Alaska are especially important for entry and work there.

Since focus is on social relations with people in Acuitzio, Acuitzio as “place” is used as a convenient gloss on origin identity in this paper. Many Acuitzences in Anchorage do maintain close relations with each other, but there is no organization that encourages assembly of persons from Acuitzio. Spatial distribution in Anchorage has a bearing on interactions, as do long-standing family lines of association and disassociation (i.e., estranged families, although I am unaware of any serious problems between Acuitzences in Anchorage). While Acuitzences are quick to make strongly positive association with their community of origin, they are not typically standoffish; individual Acuitzences may easily have more in common with other Michoacanos, or some other Mexicans, than with each other. Michoacanos may well have a reputation as “self important (*presumidos*),” as noted by Oaxaceños in Oregon (Stephen 2007:213), but we did not note, nor seek out, such attributions in our relatively brief period in Anchorage.

FIELDWORK METHODS

Beginning with a substantial list of contacts in Anchorage based on continued contact with people in Acuitzio, the objective of the research in Anchorage was to locate, interact with, and conduct informal interviews with as many of the Acuitzence population as possible in one month of fieldwork in Anchorage. The recently organized Hispanic Heritage Festival in Anchorage took place within our first few days in Anchorage. Among a sea of apparent strangers, I began to ask about Mexicans, then about Michoacanos (i.e., persons from the state of Michoacán), and eventually about the presence of Acuitzences. Within minutes I was referred to Monica,⁶ who turned out to be from Aguililla, Michoacán, and who in turn referred me to Maria, from Acuitzio, who was extremely busy with the festival. Having made the costumes, Maria was helping to coordinate the dance performances, including the engagement of her own children. She nonetheless took time to meet me. In short order she made an effort to establish who I was through genealogical connections I was familiar with, reconstruct

from her childhood memory recollections of our earlier presence in Acuitzio, and provide me with contact information. Some days later I followed up with this connection, and from there we used referrals,⁷ social gatherings, and networking to expand the study sample. My laptop computer with recent photos from Acuitzio turned out to be an effective introduction for Acuitzences with whom I was unfamiliar, readily capturing their interest (see Figure 1).

Our sample was largely based on snowballing, but serendipity played a role, as the above example illustrates. Direct queries about “Acuitzio” often led nowhere, but on one occasion served well, which in itself told us something about social networking among transnational workers. Research assistant Sara learned that the French Oven bakery not far from her residence regularly made *pan dulce* (Mexican sweet breads). She invited us to join her in a visit to the bakery to help arrange an interview with the owner. Inquiring directly about Acuitzences, within minutes we learned that someone from Acuitzio lived upstairs and worked part-time in the bakery and that one of the larger restaurants nearby was owned and operated by Acuitzences. From that moment on we developed a wide enough range of contacts that the time was too short to engage all of them to the extent desired. I worked with a total of thirty-six persons while in Anchorage, including twelve married couples.⁸ After the



Figure 1. Ethnographer showing participant families scenes and people from Acuitzio. Photo by Shirley Wiest.

6. This name is a pseudonym, as are all other personal names used in this article other than “Sara” and “Shirley.”

7. Sara Komarnisky participated in this project as graduate research assistant (see her article in this volume). While Sara focused on her own particular project objectives for the MA thesis, we cooperated in expanding the social networks that provided our research base. We sometimes met with new contacts together and conducted a few interviews jointly, but for the most part our work took different paths and timetables. Sara remained in Alaska for several months after I left for Mexico.

8. My spouse, Shirley, sometimes accompanied me for interviews. Her presence helped to set an easy tone of sincerity and confidence; she also assisted my recollection of our earlier contacts and experiences in Acuitzio and helped to draw people out on food-related issues (an interest shared with graduate student Sara Komarnisky). Shirley’s presence made it easier to interview women and discuss sensitive topics with them.

fieldwork in Anchorage and our return to Acuitzio, the return of Acuitzences from Alaska enabled us to follow up with several of my research participants as well as others we had been unable to interview while in Anchorage. Our interactions continued as we were invited guests to familial festivities and/or in the form of explicit follow-up and more detailed interviews. These contacts in Acuitzio added an additional young man, six reunited married couples (i.e., six married men working in Alaska reunited with their wives during our stay in Acuitzio), the spouses of two men who remained in Alaska during our stay in Acuitzio, and two other men who recently returned from a period of work in Anchorage, together with their spouses who had remained in Mexico.

Interviews were informal; some were tape-recorded, but most resulted in notes later fleshed out as computer-stored text files. Useful information on the study topic came from discussions with groups of male workers sharing accommodations, with married couples, and with groups of married couples.⁹ Statistical information on immigrants in Anchorage was drawn from Alaska government websites, U.S. Census data, and local media sources. We also consulted with anthropology colleagues at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

WHY GO TO ANCHORAGE, ALASKA?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey, there were 18,584 Hispanics or Latino (7.0%) in Anchorage (population 266,281), of which 8,531 (3.2%) were Mexican.¹⁰ It is very difficult to say how many are Acuitzences and related family members. In the absence of a club or other organization based on identification with Acuitzio, assessment of this question was at best a combination of independent guesses.

None of our research participants had reflected much on the total Acuitzio-derived population in Anchorage, and estimates among them ranged from 200 to over 1,000, variably considering time of year the count would be made and who is being flagged, e.g., just those known to be in

the labor force, or conjugal pairs and children and other relatives; or documented immigrants only, or also undocumented immigrants. The high estimate we encountered seems suspect, but based on the number of contacts we made in August and September 2005 and specific others we were referred to, a total of 500 persons laying claim to Acuitzio as place of origin or affiliation is plausible.

For most Acuitzences, the leap to Alaska is a studied option based on information passed on among family and friends. Indeed, a considerable number of present-day Acuitzences in Alaska follow in the footsteps of a parent, relative, *compadre*,¹¹ or friend. These connections are no less than three generations deep in at least a half-dozen cases, going back to early work on the Alaska oil pipeline in the 1960s and 1970s. The special attraction of Alaska today is readily available work and growing opportunity to move into stable jobs that pay well. Among Acuitzences, we recorded wages of \$9 to \$11 per hour for restaurant waiters, and \$14.50 per hour for a sous-chef, although we were also told that restaurant workers often made only minimum wage (\$7.15 in 2005). Construction workers earned \$13.50 per hour, construction superintendents \$19 per hour, and landscaping/yard caretakers \$15 per hour. These wage rates are within the range of 2006 Alaska wage rates (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2006b), falling typically at the 75th percentile in the food services area (well above the means), and between the 25th and 50th percentile for those in home construction and painting (slightly below the means).

Wages and earnings among Acuitzences are generally higher in Alaska than in California and other parts of the U.S., but so is the day-to-day cost of living. Alaska ranked fourth in 2004 U.S. median household income at \$57,027, ahead of ninth-ranked California at \$51,185, compared to the U.S. average of \$44,684 (Fried and Windisch-Cole 2005:10). Fried and Robinson (2006:4) note, "[A]lthough it's still more expensive to live in Alaska than in much of the rest of the country, the gap is gradually narrowing." Food costs at home for a week for a family of four, December 2005, were \$118 in Anchorage, compared to

9. Discussion with married women in the absence of husbands was limited in this brief period of fieldwork, although my general observations are corroborated by the work of assistant Sara Komarnisky, who spent more time in Anchorage and conducted much of her research alone with married women (Komarnisky 2006).

10. The margin of error is $\pm 1,939$, which likely reflects rapidly changing ethnic identity criteria and uneven participation in census-taking affected by lack of documentation among some immigrants (see U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

11. Literally "co-parent." Although part of the godparent system in Mexico, there are multiple institutionalized bases for establishing *compadrazgo* relationships in which the primary relationships are those between the co-parents. Such relationships create horizontal bonds between equals as well as vertical bonds between people of different social classes and unequal power relations (see Dávila 1971). There also are known cases of connection between *padrinos* (godparents) and *ahijados* (godchildren) as stimulus for migration.

\$109 in Portland, Oregon (Fried and Robinson 2006:9). However, housing costs, while increasing rapidly, are on par with or below those in many parts of urban California. In 2005, median monthly housing costs in Anchorage for mortgaged owners was \$1,628, and for renters \$871, with 44 percent of renters spending 30 percent or more of household income on housing. Anchorage housing costs are well above the mixed urban and agricultural area of Fresno County, California, another of my research sites with Acuitzences. In Fresno County, median monthly housing costs for mortgaged owners was \$1,335, and for renters \$710, but with 51 percent of renters spending 30 percent or more of household income on housing (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

Acuitzio men go to Alaska for work, but women don't go alone. For Acuitzences, this is not notably different from other migration destinations in that women still tend not to migrate by themselves to the U.S. for work. Until the early 1980s, adult women tended not to migrate to the U.S. under any circumstances, but increasing numbers of women are now accompanying their spouses, which is also true in the case of migration to Anchorage. A goodly number of women with Acuitzio or other Mexican origins who have work experience in the U.S. were taken there by their parents, some remaining there as young adults even if their parents or one parent returned to Acuitzio. Indeed, youthful experience elsewhere in the U.S. does serve as a stepping-stone for migration to Alaska among some women there, including a spouse of one Acuitzio man. Prior work experience in the Lower Forty-eight is common for those without prior family or friendship connection with Alaska.

Most Acuitzences make a carefully reasoned commitment to work in Alaska. Because travel is more costly, it means more extended time away from Acuitzio, family, and special events in Acuitzio. There are subtle features that balance against the added distance and cost. Some kinds of work (e.g., landscape and garden work, and to some extent construction and exterior painting) have a seasonal character in Anchorage that does not interfere with return to Mexico in the winter season and can mesh well into a mobile livelihood agenda. This slack period for work in Anchorage coincides with favored festivities in Acuitzio: December 5, *Día del Canje* (marking the exchange of Mexican prisoners for Belgian and French pris-

oners in 1865 during the French intervention in Mexico, 1861–67); December 12, *Día de Guadalupe*; as well as other celebrations of a Christmas season that extends to *Día de los Reyes* (Epiphany), January 6. Married couples with school-aged children in Alaska are more limited in their return options, but December departures from Anchorage minimize absence from school (due to seasonal holidays) and also coincide with the most important festive period in Mexico. December is also the best time to enjoy family outings at Mexican beach resorts. Some families eligible for the annual Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend¹²—which has been around \$1,000 per person in recent years—apply the dividends towards round trip travel costs to Mexico.

Acuitzences in Alaska maintain strong ties to their community of origin in Mexico, especially given the ease of communication by telephone and now e-mail. The actual amount of time spent in Acuitzio is influenced by immigration status (undocumented migrants are constrained in their transnational movements), the seasonal character of some jobs that facilitates time away, the cost of transportation, and the overall earning plan (e.g., some married couples have clear earning goals to supplement Mexico-based earnings for a limited duration). Married men attempt to return to Acuitzio at least every two years, if not annually, with great pressure to return annually if there are children. Young unmarried men tend to remain in Alaska for several years without return to Acuitzio, although there are clear cases of parental pressure to return. Indeed, in one case a man went to Alaska primarily to monitor a young son, staying only long enough to work off the costs of travel. Younger single men are less inclined to have immediate vested interests to attend to in Acuitzio, but it is also the case that these single young men are the most likely to be undocumented, a fact that makes international travel very difficult by air, and even more difficult by car due to the added entry into Canada. To my knowledge, none of our informants had traveled by cargo ship to Seattle or Portland.

Acuitzences in our research regularly expressed appreciation for a less hectic and more relaxed pace in Anchorage in comparison to California or Chicago—an attraction that they say offsets the greater isolation from Mexican culture, particularly local accessibility of desired foods such as

12. To be eligible for the Permanent Fund Dividend, one must have been an Alaska resident for the entire calendar year preceding the date of application for a dividend and must intend to remain an Alaska resident indefinitely at the time they apply for a dividend. Resident children are eligible too. Temporary absence up to 180 days is allowed, as long as applicants meet these criteria (Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, accessed August 4, 2007).

chile (see Komarnisky, this volume). With mounting time between returns to Acuitzio, and especially as children enter the school system, learning English becomes a higher priority and facilitates broader involvement in Anchorage society. As several noted to us, the attractions of living and working in Anchorage can easily result in pressure for permanent relocation there as families become connected with the city through the school system and especially given the relative ease of periodic visits to Acuitzio. Nonetheless, the expressed intent of most Acuitzences working in Anchorage is to return to Acuitzio, both regularly and eventually. Furthermore, even the most established of Acuitzences in Anchorage are propertied in Acuitzio and continue to hold long-term interests there with both family connections and business interests.

WORKING IN ANCHORAGE

The main employment attraction in Anchorage used to be the food services industry, largely because it was a safe and year-round employment opportunity and one based in family and friendship connections to Acuitzio restaurateurs. A few Acuitzences (both men and women) are owners of restaurants and/or specialized bakeries, and while their workforce is not limited to other Acuitzences or even other Mexicans, they readily provide jobs to Acuitzences based on social connections and reputation. Indeed, the ambience of Acuitzence-owned restaurants encourages explicit nostalgia of Acuitzio as “home” through photos and artwork on the walls and in menus (e.g., see Figure 2).

Today, Acuitzences are employed in bakeries, in landscaping and garden service firms, and increasingly in the construction industry as carpenters, drywall workers, and painters (see Table 1). Even men with professional training, such as dentistry, work in several of these occupations in Anchorage, rationalizing they can earn more than attempting to practice dentistry in lower-paying and saturat-

ed professional arenas of Mexico. Typically, there is little prospect for professionally trained persons to work in their profession in Alaska since English language proficiency is required and certification for practice there is a lengthy process; hence, it is easy for them to become locked into jobs in the food services industry or construction.

Table 1 provides an overview of the Acuitzences at work in Anchorage with whom we had direct or indirect contact in 2005.¹³ Among thirty Acuitzio men who work—or recently worked—in Alaska, 36 percent are associated with food services as restaurant cooks, waiters, dishwashers, or bakers (see Table 2). Only one person worked part time washing dishes and part time as a cook, but the three restaurant owners (management) spend part of their time bartending or assisting in the kitchen. Forty-five percent



Figure 2. Acuitzence restaurant menu in Anchorage: Carlos Fine Mexican Restaurant. Note “Acuitzio” photograph on upper left side of menu. Photo by Raymond Wiest.

13. Each individual is identified in Table 1 with a gendered identification number (men are odd numbers; women are even numbers). The occurrence of two persons together (a man and a woman) in the “ID No” column indicates a conjugal pair living together in Anchorage, so this column offers a clear sense of cases where women accompany their husbands to Anchorage versus cases where married women remain in Acuitzio. The next column to the right notes the marital status of each individual and/or conjugal pair. The columns on the left of “ID No” group the individuals into “relationship clusters,” an analytic device to draw attention to relatively strong family and kin connections, joint business ventures, and friendships that involve co-residence in Anchorage. Those within specific clusters tend to have a higher frequency of interaction, but persons assigned to different clusters are in some cases closely linked to persons in other clusters. The Kinship and Generation columns provide a more precise sense of how people are related within clusters and between clusters, using standard kinship nomenclature conventions. However, rather than using “F” for “father” and “M” for “mother” to note the senior men and women in a cluster of related families or family members, I repeat the gendered “ID No” to facilitate easy identification of descendent kinship relationships within and between families, and among others in the table. “Generation” is obvious within family clusters, but between clusters the assignment is based on relative age. Within clusters of families, information under “generation” indicates the relationship to the identified senior link(s), i.e., the number(s) before succeeding letters. For example, “17 SWB+SWBW” is person 17’s son’s wife’s brother + his son’s wife’s brother’s wife.

Table 1. Relationship clusters and employment: Acuitzences in Anchorage, 2005

	ID No	Marital Status	Kinship and Generation			First entry	Men's Employment	Case Notes
			1	2	3			
A	1	M	1			1964	Pipeline construction; retired	Retired in Mexico
	3, 4	M		1 S+SW		1985	Home construction manager	
	5, 6	M			1 SD+SDH	2000s	Retail manager, DVD rental shop	
	7, 8	M			1 SD+SDH	2002	Home construction foreman	
	9, 10	S			1 SS+SSgf	1980s	Home construction	
	11, 12	M		1 D+DH		1990s	Restaurant co-owners with 21 & 22	
	13, 14	M		1 S+SW		1990s	Restaurant waiter	Trained as dentist in Mexico
	15, 16	M		1 S+SW		1985	Restaurant waiter, floor manager	
B	17, 18	M	17			1963	Pipeline construction	Now helps sons in restaurant
	19, 20	M		17 S+SW		1996	Restaurant cook for 11 & 21	Visit Acuitzio once per year
	21, 22	M		17 S+SW		1992	Restaurant co-owners with 11 & 12	Visit Acuitzio once per year
	23, 24	M		17 SWB+SWBW		1992	Section manager, major box store	
	25	M		20 MBS		2003	Restaurant cook and dishwasher	
C	27, 28	M		27+28		1992	Baker in major box store	Visit Acuitzio once per year
	29	M		27 B		1993	Landscape and yard care	Seasonal in Alaska, May–Oct.
D	31	M		33 B		1999	Former restaurant sous-chef	Now accountant in Mexico
	33	M		31 B		2002	Restaurant sous-chef	
	35	M		27 ZH		1999	Restaurant waiter for 43	
	37	M		45 MZS			Landscape and yard care	
	39	M			37		Landscape and yard care	
	41	S			39		Landscape and yard care	
E	43	D	43			1968	Restaurant owner	
	45	M		43 BWB		1986	Restaurant waiter & manager for 43	
	47	M		47			Restaurant waiter	
F	49	M		49		2005	Painter, construction	
	51	S			47 S	2005	Painter	
	53	M		49 WB			Painter; returned to Acuitzio	
	55	S			51 BS	2005	Painter	
G	57	M	57			1996	Seasonal construction	Retired utilities worker, Mexico
H	59, 60	M	59+60			1964	Fish cannery; retired	59 returns to Mexico in winter
	61	D		59+60 S		1980s	Fish cannery	

Kinship codes: F=father, M=mother, S=son, D=daughter, B=brother, Z=sister, H=husband, W=wife, gf=girlfriend (*novia*).

Children below employment age and children in school and preschool are not included in this table.

“First entry” denotes first year of entry into Alaska; those with the “s” (e.g., 1980s) are approximation.

are involved in construction.¹⁴ This includes two men already retired from earlier work on the pipeline in Alaska. It also includes those working in landscaping and yard work since there is a close connection between landscaping/yard work and new housing. Two of the men working as homebuilders are foremen/site managers. Management as a category (13.5%) includes three persons as restaurant owners who also work as bartenders and/or assist in the kitchen (Table 2 employment distribution reflects these task divisions to some extent). Work in fish canneries accounts for two persons (6%), although one is now retired.

Table 3 provides limited information on the employment of women who are spouses of Acuitzio men or daughters and daughters-in-law of these men, as well as the employment of the men. The data are arranged in this table to group together married couples who are together in Anchorage versus cases where the woman stays in Mexico. About half of the married women in Anchorage are primarily “homemakers,” as are the women who remain in Mexico. This reflects the fact that the majority of those described as “homemaker”¹⁵ in Table 3 are taking care of young children. Acuitzio women in Anchorage together with their children give priority to staying at home until children reach school age. Upon children reaching school age, married women do seek wage-earning jobs or become involved in volunteer community work. Childless married women actively seek employment, generally as grocery or department store cashiers. A small number of Acuitzio-linked women with advanced education and training are employed in retail firms or banks or in social services—childcare, health care, and education—while awaiting employment possibilities in their areas of training. Facility with the English language is an asset in most jobs, but essential for jobs beyond the food services industry or retail store cashier jobs.

Acuitzences who live and relate transnationally in Anchorage have chosen Alaska as a place to work in part to deal with the realities of discrimination, surveillance, job competition, and other such pressures more prevalent in the Lower Forty-eight. At the present time they experience a relatively welcoming and supportive society in Alaska, with secure job opportunities and satisfactory earning

prospects. However, there is a paradox between presenting to others the opportunities experienced in Anchorage and facilitating their access to jobs on the one hand and contributing to job competition on the other hand. It is only the currently expanding demand for workers that mutes the potential problem.

I discussed with several Acuitzences whether they experienced discrimination in Anchorage and/or whether they felt that Mexicans in Alaska were taken advantage of. One participant, Rubén, paused and then responded with considerable thoughtfulness.¹⁶ He said that some Mexican immigrants experienced lower than standard wages, but that this generally was not an issue with Acuitzences. I asked whether it would be more the case among undocumented immigrants. Rubén said that one tries to keep undocumented status unknown and that employers generally do not ask. Even then, he noted, some employers attempt to take advantage in the form of lower wages and/or extra work assignments to those who do not have legal recourse. Rubén was underscoring the importance of connections, something he felt was widely appreciated and generally built upon among Acuitzences and certain other Mexican workers he knew of. He maintained that, unless undocumented status becomes known, it is generally not a factor in treatment of workers outside of some unscrupulous employers whose reputation is known among immigrants from Mexico.

Beyond pointing to the strategic character of social networking in recruitment and placement among transnational workers, the example above draws attention to possible systematic exploitation in some firms that may effectively concentrate vulnerable undocumented workers with employers who readily take advantage of workers in exchange for continued work opportunities under a “godfatherly watch.” More than one respondent (none of whom are Acuitzence restaurant owners) told me that a particular restaurant chain had a reputation for taking advantage of those without papers and that Acuitzences tended to avoid seeking work there. My inquiries in that chain suggested a preponderance of waiters from one north-central Mexican state, and several Acuitzence workers agreed this to be the case. While undocumented

14. Percentages are used in Table 2 only to facilitate easy comparison; in such a small sample their use has little statistical relevance to the larger population.

15. The term “homemaker” is employed in the table to concisely reflect nonwaged, stay-at-home persons primarily occupied in domestic routines and childcare. Admittedly, the term does not reflect the complexity of responsibility and work among women in Acuitzio (see Wiest 1983a) or in Anchorage, but it is a term that is at least marginally more satisfactory than “housewife.”

16. The expression here is based on reconstructed notes recorded after the interview, hence, not a direct quotation.

Table 2. Men's employment: Thirty-one Acuitzences in Alaska, 2005

Food Services	#	Construction	#	Management	#	Fish Cannery	#
Cooks/Bakers	4.5	Pipeline, retired	2.0	Restaurant owners	2.2	Retired	1.0
Waiters	5.8	Homebuilders*	4.0	Retail store section	2.0	Active	1.0
Dishwashers	0.5	Painting	4.0				
		Landscaping, yard work	4.0				
Totals	10.8		14.0		4.2		2.0
Percentages	34.8		45.2		13.5		6.2

*Two of these homebuilders are also managers/foremen.

Table 3. Acuitzence married couples and employment, 2005

♂		♀		
ID No	Men's Employment in Alaska	ID No	Women's Employment and Location	
3	Home construction manager	4	House cleaning after construction	AK
5	Retail manager, DVD rental shop	6	Homemaker	AK
7	Home construction foreman	8	Studying for real estate licensing	AK
11	Restaurant co-owners with 21 & 22	12	Homemaker	AK
13	Restaurant waiter	14	Homemaker	AK
15	Restaurant waiter, floor manager	16	Restaurant waitress	AK
17	Pipeline, retired; helps sons in business	18	Homemaker	AK
19	Restaurant cook for 11 & 21	20	Homemaker, volunteer work; plans to work as baker	AK
21	Restaurant co-owners with 11 & 12	22	Prepares food for school district	AK
23	Section manager, major box store	24	Office work; application to school district	AK
25	Restaurant cook and dishwasher	26	Homemaker	AK
27	Baker in major box store	28	Medical office worker	AK
59	Fish cannery; retired	60	Homemaker; grandchild care	AK
1	Pipeline construction; retired	2	Homemaker	MX
29	Landscape and yard care	30	Homemaker	MX
31	Former restaurant sous-chef	32	Teacher	MX
33	Restaurant sous-chef	34	Homemaker	MX
35	Restaurant waiter for 43	36	Baker	MX
37	Landscape and yard care	38	Doctor	MX
39	Landscape and yard care	40	Homemaker	MX
45	Restaurant waiter & manager for 43	46	Restaurant waitress	MX
47	Restaurant waiter	48	Homemaker	MX
49	Painter, construction	50	Homemaker and small retail business	MX
53	Painter; returned to Acuitzio	54	Baker and bakery owner	MX
57	Seasonal construction	58	Teacher, retired	MX

Note: AK = Alaska; MX = Mexico

immigrants are taken advantage of in some contexts, the rising need for workers in many sectors of the economy has left workers in the favorable position of not needing to preoccupy with immigration status because it is not a priority issue in Alaska at the present time. The most obvious drawback is the constrained mobility in crossing borders between Alaska and Mexico.

SOCIAL RELATIONS IN ANCHORAGE

Acuitzences, like other transnational workers, do venture to new places in the United States, but they more commonly build bridges to locations where other Acuitzences have made inroads. As previously noted, social connections are considered particularly important for Alaska, largely to have a place to stay upon first arrival. Antonio made a strong point of this in citing how important it was to have relatives, friends, *compadres* or *abijados* to help one build a secure base.

The sense of community goes beyond the village of origin; friendship networks and voluntary associations in Anchorage include congenial Mexican compatriots from elsewhere in central Mexico (typically from Michoacán or Jalisco). They also include other village settlers or sojourners in other parts of the U.S., especially California, because many who work in Alaska have spent previous years in California, and some marriages among Anchorage conjugal pairs are made up of relationships between Californians of Mexican descent and Acuitzences now in Alaska.

With a sizeable “community” of Acuitzences in Anchorage, there is considerable support gained from linkages to the same “home” community—“*las piedras rodando se encuentran*” [“rolling stones find each other” or “...are drawn together”]. They reside in four different zones, but residential dispersion is no more an impediment to social connectedness in Anchorage than it is between Anchorage and Acuitzio. Most Acuitzences in Anchorage own or have access to occasional use of an automobile.

Basic social features among Acuitzences in Anchorage can be appreciated by referring back to Table 1. Attention is drawn to social relations clusters that reflect the importance of social connections between Acuitzences in Anchorage. Cluster A is a set of families with a three-generation depth of work in Alaska, including a second and third generation of whole families living in Anchorage. Clusters B, F, and H involve two generations of work and family living in Anchorage. Clusters A and B are linked through restaurant ownership and work there. Cluster C involves broth-

ers, one of whom has his spouse and children with him in Anchorage, and the other brother lives with them. Person 19 of Cluster B is *compadre* of 27 in Cluster C. Person 20 in Cluster B is cousin of 25 in Cluster C, and 25 is an in-law of 35 in Cluster D. Cluster D is made up of men who share a common residence while at work in Anchorage; most are married men with spouses in Acuitzio. In addition to linking to Cluster C as indicated above, person 37 is a cousin of person 43 in Cluster E. Cluster E consists of an early migrant to Alaska who became an early restaurant owner there, plus some of his workers whose kinship relationship was not determined with certainty. Finally, Cluster G consists of a man retired from a utilities commission in Mexico. He connects socially via *compadrazgo* with other Acuitzences in Anchorage, and works in Anchorage seasonally to supplement retirement income and to support his children’s education.

Acuitzence men working in Alaska range from 18 to nearly 70 years of age. Our sample consists of four single men (generally younger men, one engaged), thirteen married men migrating alone and supporting families in Acuitzio, twelve married couples arriving jointly in Alaska or who have been united after some period of geographic separation, one older divorced man, and one younger man who married a local Native woman and later divorced. We learned of a few cases of separated or divorced Mexican women, but none from Acuitzio. Unmarried single women from Mexico are still a rarity in Anchorage. Among married couples, the birth of children, the children’s ages, and the capacity to acquire a house figure importantly in the timing of women and children’s journey to Alaska.

Social interaction between families outside the workplace reinforces the sense of interdependence and trust, maintains assistance networks for newcomers from Acuitzio, and offers occasions to reminisce and appreciate mutually enjoyed special Mexican foods, music, and dance. Yet, being Acuitzence does not mean all Acuitzences celebrate together. Families get together in smaller closely linked parties for festive occasions and enjoyment of food, which is similar to who among them would be invited to festivities in Acuitzio. Food is not only appreciated for its taste and material pleasure, but it is one of several symbolic signs of home in Acuitzio (see Komarnisky, this volume). Clothing, dance costumes, music, and artwork are other important items that introduce valued sentimentalities of Acuitzio. For example, an art piece from Acuitzio (see Figure 3) is not only valued as a shared reminder of Acuitzio, but in this case, according to Ivonne, is intentionally displayed on a



Figure 3. Wall art reminder of home: street scene from Acuitzio; art by José Rangel Garcia. Photo by Raymond Wiest.

staircase to be appreciated “from above so my husband can see the street as he would see it from his mother’s house.”

Compared with my earlier experience in Acuitzio, a changing attitude toward marriage and gender roles is operable in the sense of community among Acuitzences in Anchorage. The conjugal pairs we worked with in Anchorage can be described as “companionate marriages,” as Hirsch (2003:2–12) refers to recent marriages characterized by *confianza* (confidence), cooperation, and sexual intimacy. Other marriages, most typically among the older couples, resemble the more traditional form underscored by *respeto* (respect) and exhibit more influence of the *machismo* (manliness) ideology (see Wiest 1983a).

Known marriages between Acuitzence men and Alaska (Native) women have not been long lasting, but do have a bearing on social relations in the larger family when children are involved, in one case engaging extended family to deal responsibly with the needs of children.¹⁷ For example, a paternal grandmother (person 60) stays in Anchorage over the winter months to meet schooling needs of a grandchild whose divorced parents live outside of Anchorage, even though her husband (the grandfather, person 59) returns to Acuitzio during the cold winter months to avoid the pain of cold-induced arthritis and/or rheumatism.

Among married couples who have considerable economic and social investment in Anchorage, discussion about where “home” really is drew out difference of opinion—a difference I found to be gender-marked, at least in superficial expression. Men (including those whose spouses

are with them in Anchorage) are typically outspoken about their desire to return to Mexico, at least in retirement, but for sure to die (as if to underscore the point of finality). Men want to retire and eventually be buried in Acuitzio, because burial in Acuitzio expresses more the sentiment of “important relationships” and “belonging” that is embodied in the representation of place so often used to identify self. Our women informants were far less dogmatic about where they want to end up, even in death, openly challenging their husbands in our presence. Although exhibiting plenty of positive emotionality about their homeland, these women were more practical and reasoned in their response. On weighing the strength of their ties, women pondered their future in terms of their children, including consideration of both expected and unknown changes that may come. So they are considering the future in terms of ages of their children, children’s education, and even what their children might do as adults. And very common among them was the response that they would likely want to remain with their children. They would admit that contemplating an unknown distant future may yield quite different responses from their more immediate futures that give high priority to returning to Mexico, if not to stay, at least for regular visits. Women’s responses reflect the gendered character of parenting (Parreñas 2001); however, the issue is more complex, as I will illustrate.

Most of our discussion was conducted with both husband and wife together, and sometimes in groups of conjugal pairs. Upon hearing the women’s views, men tended to hold to their more dogmatic expression, although as if in some jest, eventually conceding that future conditions may give them reason for a different response than currently envisaged. Although this kind of open exchange around differences is consistent with embrace of a companionate marriage model, I noted that the men I spoke with about their attachments and future plans were all in the age range and circumstance of concern for aging parents in Acuitzio, especially their mothers. Thus, it is likely that relationships with aging parents in Acuitzio that involve direct responsibility of the transnational migrant figure very importantly in the attachment to or quintessential imagining of Acuitzio as “home.” The gender difference noted in acclaimed priority to the Mexican homeland is often reinforced by men’s property interests

17. It is not unusual for undocumented immigrant Latin American men to marry Alaska Native women. The commonly attributed motive draws attention to such unions as a way of achieving landed immigrant status. These marriages are sometimes referred to as “marriages of convenience,” especially when they are short-lived and end in early divorce.

there, hence men's fervent expressions of desire to be buried in Acuitzio. Differential and perhaps competing senses of responsibility to parents and children may even produce tensions between married couples for a time, especially in cases of women remaining dependent on men's earnings. However, the married couples with whom we worked exhibited mutual support, even when one partner was forced by circumstances to temporarily give priority to parental attention over those of spouse and children. For example, Antonio experienced the death of a brother and both his father and mother at different times in one year; consequently he returned three times to Acuitzio from Anchorage, each time adding to the urgency to return to Alaska to help cover costs. Both he and his spouse acknowledged the consequent sacrifice and hardship. Several of our women interviewees indicated that women at home with children in Anchorage are very unlikely to be able to return to Acuitzio in the face of the death of aging parents or other crisis in Acuitzio, once again underscoring the gendered character of parenting.

Married men who deliberate going alone to Anchorage versus taking the wife and children with them do weigh the cost of housing, but also the impact of isolation on the family, especially considering the closed environment in winter that is compounded by not knowing English. But there are other considerations; for example, Ernesto expressed the strong desire that his children have the opportunity to know Alaska before he stops working there. Unmarried men, or married men who leave their spouse and children in Mexico, can live relatively cheaply, especially when accommodated by kin or *compadres* or having access to shared residential arrangements among village associates.

A housing arrangement for men in Anchorage, well known among Acuitzences, cultivates a sense of "community" if not "family" among Acuitzences. A place known as "Big Brother House" is a rented A-frame building that accommodates six men. Located near landscape and yard-care firms and restaurants (Mexican and other) where Acuitzences work, this accommodation has developed a respected reputation within Acuitzence circles as a tightly organized arrangement to keep living costs low while maintaining cooperative and congenial relations among men with different interests and temperaments. Newcomers are taken in if the resident collective approves, meaning that social networking weighs heavily and carries the pressure to conform to collective expectations. Acuitzio married men whose wives remain in Acuitzio are strongly attracted to live there if they do not have ac-

commodation with kin or *compadres*. Acknowledged success currently is based on trust of one individual resident with demonstrated ability as task and financial coordinator. The explicit understanding is that all residents make a contribution to the operation, yet not everyone is expected to do the same things. For example, some enjoy cooking more than others and are appreciated for their skill, so they spend more time cooking than others. Everyone is expected to help clean house, wash dishes, and honor the space of others, including the need for quietness to accommodate differing work shifts. The coordinator presents a monthly operational budget to which each one responds with equal contribution for rent, utilities, and food. This fairly long-standing arrangement has had various coordinators over the years, all guided by the Big Brother House reputation as a desirable living accommodation. Its success lies in the confluence of particular conditions present in Anchorage and the vision of its organizers and offers an attractive model for transnational workers compared with work camp environments elsewhere.

Acuitzences have continued to be largely Catholic, although relatively secular in their expression. Most relevant to the present discussion is that Acuitzences in Anchorage say attendance at Mass is more important to them while in Anchorage than it is in Acuitzio. The connection between church and the family is much more pronounced than in Acuitzio. In Acuitzio, families do not attend Mass together, nor do they sit together, whereas families sat together in Anchorage masses, with parents giving close attention to their children. Men whose families remained in Acuitzio expressed that Mass had a comforting effect on them, reminding them of their families in Acuitzio and offering a moment to nurture their faith in reunification with their families. For Ernesto, attendance at Mass was part of anticipating confirmation of one child and baptism of a newborn upon his return to Acuitzio a few months later.

Spanish-language masses are regular events at the downtown cathedral and at a nearly completed new church in the Anchorage west end designed to serve the growing Filipino and Hispanic population. Significantly, it is named Our Lady of Guadalupe, after the patron saint of Mexico, and resembles early Spanish missions of northwest Mexico and California (see Our Lady of Guadalupe, accessed August 4, 2007).

Catholic churches present occasion and place to meet other Hispanic immigrants, to strengthen the sense of connection with community of origin through familiar religious symbolism, to offer a venue for periodic community

fund-raising events in the familiar form of home (i.e., the *kermesse* [social]), and are the most common contexts for ritual events of baptism, first communion, *quinceañeras*,¹⁸ and on occasion even marriage.

Among Acuitzence transnational workers in Anchorage, sentimentalities for their Mexican homeland are expressed on several levels, invoking shared symbols that range from kin and friendship bonds to national sports and flags and including food preferences, music, and dance. Indeed, several levels are important simultaneously and they almost always are conjoined. In Anchorage, there are times when being Latino or Hispanic is celebrated and marked by special newspapers, festivals, dance troupes, etc. Among Hispanic Latin Americans, Mexicans show prominence in number of population, in number of restaurants, in availability of specialty foods, and coordination and participation in, and teaching of, regional dances of Mexico (see Figure 4, Mexican dances at the Hispanic Heritage Festival 2005, cast as a “family event”). Maria is one Acuitzence who, despite having a very limited command of English, actively volunteers with other Mexican immigrants to introduce Mexican dance traditions to children in Anchorage public and private schools (see *El Sol de Alaska*, accessed October 15, 2005). Acuitzence participation in teaching Mexican regional dances and designing and making suitable dance costumes for the participants answers to a nostalgia, an expressed desire to assure that children growing up as transnationals become familiar with the musical and dance heritage and associated symbols. It also answers to the need for meaningful involvement in the local scene. Participation does not end with those directly involved but embraces the many appreciative Mexican and other Latino or Hispanic observers.



Figure 4. Mexican dance troupe and Acuitzence-made costumes, Hispanic Heritage Festival 2005, Anchorage. Photo by Raymond Wiest.

The swelling Latino community is making its cultural mark while offering opportunity for new combinations of Mexican and Alaskan traditions. This is true not only in the arena of cultural events but also an important feature of the Latino community restaurant scene. The direct participation of Mexican and other Latino restaurants at public events is not only good for their business but contributes a tangible sense of Mexican and/or Latino identity that bridges between nostalgia for homeland culture and dynamic engagement in relationship building in a new environment. Participating in events of a Latino community serves the dual purpose of retaining familiar elements of Mexico while engaging the local scene by actively introducing and recreating familiar and valued practices, yet reaching out to embrace elements of local tradition. These efforts are finding receptive platforms in churches too.

ACUITZENCES IN ALASKA: TRANSNATIONAL MOBILE LIVELIHOODS

Acuitzences in Alaska express the tensions noted by Rouse (1992) in a measured way, and with ambivalence. They may resist “Americanization” (represented by preoccupation with money over social relationships, with a “rat-race” pace, and with depersonalization), but see the Alaska frontier more open to diverse expression than elsewhere in the U.S., and consequently less oppressive.

Aware of the proletarian values of American society, they consciously embrace and adhere to those values as part of holding good jobs in Anchorage. At the same time, they hold dear the prospect of returning to a social and cultural context in Acuitzio that honors time for family and friends. For most Acuitzences in Anchorage, work and leisure should be in balance. They speak openly about trying to resist conditions that deny people sufficient time to maintain family and other social relationships and to enjoy life beyond their jobs. This juxtaposition engenders ambivalence about remaining in Alaska, but at the same time they appreciate that Anchorage offers relatively less job competition, high paying jobs, more satisfaction in work expression, and comparatively more flexibility—due to seasonal breaks—to make return visits to Acuitzio without compromising employment. But home mortgages, purchase of vehicles, etc., put them on a course of preoccupation with the kind of consumption that can interfere with the social values represented by life in Mexico. Hence,

18. Celebration of a young woman’s fifteenth birthday, which marks her transition to womanhood.

the oft-heard expression of measured time in Alaska, and intent to return to Mexico, especially since comparative conditions in Mexico still permit acquisition of comfortable housing and even housing investments there.

Class-based resource control beyond immediate family connections has been a considerable political barrier to collective action in a community like Acuitzio. Consequently, at the present time, villagers view transnational migration not only as a necessity, but also as an alternative to local resistance and collective action (see Gledhill 1998:282–283). Transnational mobile livelihoods are seen as both possible and attractive alternatives in place of resettlement in shantytowns of Mexico City or local marginalization if not impoverishment (see Grimes 1998:126) that are also extolled as offering opportunity to contribute to Acuitzio in ways that will reduce the need to leave home for work. This idea, widely expressed by Acuitzences in Alaska, is eloquently stated in writing by Juan Pablo Jaramillo Ruiz, an Acuitzence in Chicago (*El Canje*, Feb. 2006, p. 6):

Todos tenemos una meta: ser mejores personas, salir adelante y algún día regresar a nuestro pueblo con la firme idea de construir un mejor pueblo para que nuestras futuras generaciones no tengan que salir de este maravilloso Acuitzio. . . . [We all have a goal: to be better persons, to advance and one day return to our village with the firm idea to construct a better village so that our future generations will not have to leave this marvelous Acuitzio. . . .]

Anchorage, Alaska—the transnational link in the present study—is viewed as an attractive alternative both for work and for living, but Acuitzences have not yet organized there for co-operative action in Acuitzio.¹⁹ Indeed, transnational workers in Anchorage were reluctant to respond to open solicitation in Acuitzio to form collective initiatives among workers in Alaska, most probably because they value what might be called the “frontier freedom” of Alaska.

When I returned to Acuitzio from Alaska, I learned from Rubén that there are varied interpretations of the Alaska work opportunity and how the earnings are used. Rubén had worked for several years in Anchorage before he passed on the job he held to a close relative and returned to settle in Mexico. To again paraphrase Rubén from a reconstructed discussion:

I could easily earn \$100 USD per day or more, and in a fairly short time one could amass a significant amount if one lives frugally while away. I went to Anchorage with a clear vision that it would be an opportunity to earn additional income for a limited time period. In the case of married couples, much depends on how couples are situated with jobs in Mexico. If the wife has an advanced education and an income source with which she can more or less maintain herself and children with her earnings, the husband's earnings abroad can then be very much above what is needed for day-to-day living. With a clear plan for their joint future, a married couple can then rationalize to make the sacrifice of familial separation for a limited time in order to achieve some joint goals, such as purchase or construction of a house, start-up of a business, etc.

For Rubén, there is a big difference between persons who go abroad to maintain their families solely from their earnings abroad, and persons like him who had a clear plan of what they were targeting through work abroad. Those relying solely on the earnings of the one working abroad find themselves needing to return over and over, and it is hard, if not impossible, to break out of that cycle. This is the more general experience of Acuitzences noted in my previous research (Wiest 1973, 1983b, 1984).

Rubén emphasized the importance of not being driven by consumer goods, especially expensive items like vehicles (cars and/or pickup trucks). He noted this to be the slippery slope driving the mobile livelihood of a considerable number of transnational workers, citing the case of a close relative who, he suggested, would see no clear end for the need to stay away at work in Anchorage because the relative's wife lacked access to resources beyond her husband's earnings, and on top of that there was considerable pressure from teenage children in the family to acquire a late model pickup truck—a status-marked vehicle in Acuitzio. Rubén drew attention to domestic group organization and planning as most critical for those engaged in transnational labor. However, his sharply critical characterization of options with respect to transnational migration reflects differences in resource control and social capital. Those who already have a viable livelihood in Acuitzio can readily enhance their lifestyle and educational prospects for their children by adding income

19. A new initiative based on use of collective remittances (the 3x1 Program in Mexico), is attempting to challenge stereotypes with clear demonstration of cooperative community-based effort (see Bada 2003; García Zamora 2007:11–12). Originating in Chicago labor unions, the movement has organizational features that may yield success. Impacts in Acuitzio are beginning to be noticed, especially since one of the Chicago organizers is from Acuitzio (Wiest 2006; also see Levitt 2004).

earned abroad. Those who migrate because there are no viable opportunities for them in Mexico, or to provide a higher level of income than available, are usually trapped in a long-term mobile livelihood and sustained transnational living or permanent relocation abroad (see Wiest 1973, 1983b, 1984). The situation for many transnational workers is that the current economic and political conditions in Mexico impel even people with considerable social capital to search for livelihood options abroad, including professionally trained people.

As Duany notes, "Circulation is a way of mobilizing personal and family resources spread widely in space and transcending geocultural boundaries between two or more localities" (2002:380). Most Acuitzences in Anchorage are engaged in the kind of circulation that goes beyond emotionally supportive contacts and regular remittances for maintenance of family members. Property acquisition, particularly investments in lots for potential housing, and house construction itself, is a prominent feature of transnational circulation among Acuitzences at the present time and a pattern repeated throughout much of rural Mexico (see Garcia-Navarro 2007). Those who invested in relatively cheap land in the last ten years as potential urban housing lots (land unsuitable for cultivation but adjacent to the village bypass road), now stand to gain considerably as the real estate market in Acuitzio has surpassed levels associated with the city of Morelia. Hence, for a number of Acuitzences working in Anchorage, property acquisition includes more than one's own home site; it includes investment in housing lots for future development, rental or sale. These business dealings in themselves influence continuity with the village.

A sense of responsibility to family, especially spouses and children who remain in Acuitzio, and aging parents, continues to be paramount for Acuitzences in Alaska. The very coming and going acts to reinforce the importance of connection, and the rekindling of the sense of "home" drawn from the community of origin in Mexico. Returns to Acuitzio involve participation in events and associated symbols that reinforce relationships and connections to home of origin. But that does not mean the sense of "home" is a static notion; it is being renegotiated constantly in the light of changing goals and changing circumstances in Mexico and Alaska—the age profile of transnational families, gendered familial responsibilities, social relationships and agreements, community engagements, earning opportunities, work conditions and wages, living conditions,

educational needs and opportunities for children, tax laws, and currency exchange ratios, etc.

When I asked research participants to speak to their sense of belonging and affiliation, and how place plays into their sense of identity, virtually all participants from Acuitzio said they were "Acuitzences" who happened to be living abroad for particular reasons—reasons that basically iterated the need to address the absence of livelihood options in Mexico at the present time, and to take the opportunity to earn decently in Alaska and thereby contribute to family well-being in Mexico or to contribute to construction of a home in Acuitzio. As one Acuitzence expressed it, "*Mi corazón está con México y mi emoción, pero mi dinero con los Estados Unidos*" ["my heart is with Mexico, and my passion, but my money is with the United States"] and then added, "at least for now." In Acuitzio, people say of family and friends in Alaska, "*un pie allá y otro aquí*," or, "*están allá y viven aquí*" ["one foot there and the other here," or "they are there and live here"]. While both versions capture transnational living, the latter version expresses community of origin sentimentality, suggesting sojourn abroad and "home" in the village in Mexico.

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

This study of a community of Mexican workers in Anchorage who originate from, and share a common affiliation with, the Michoacán village of Acuitzio del Canje offers a glimpse of their work and social relations in Anchorage and the connections they maintain with their homeland. Although our research in Anchorage was of relatively short duration, the study is based in a long-term examination of Acuitzio and follow-up work with Acuitzences returning to visit in Mexico.

While Acuitzences are drawn to Alaska by the same forces that propel transnational migration from Mexico more broadly, this study suggests that they stand in relatively class privileged positions for entry to Alaska and access to jobs there. Transnational living among Acuitzences working in Anchorage parallels much of what is already known about Mexican transnationalism, but highlights some of the special attractions for Mexicans working and living in Anchorage at the present time. A hitherto relatively unknown Mexican urban community of the Far North is shown to be vibrant in its transnational linkages; creative in adaptations to the challenges of climate, living arrangements, and social relations in Anchorage; and facilitated

by wage levels and seasonal work slowdowns in bridging the added distance from Mexico.

The Anchorage research experience was positive for my overall project but offered few surprises since vivid and accurate observations had been offered to me over the years in Acuitzio. Mexican food in Anchorage more than lived up to my positive anticipation, both in homes and in restaurants; and the warmth of personal contacts among Acuitzences, together with people of Anchorage, was striking. However, the high cost of short-term living arrangements quickly gave me an appreciation for the effectiveness of social networking among my research sample. Perhaps most impressionable was the living arrangements of the Big Brother House, which I would single out as worthy of a focused study in itself.

The experience with Acuitzences in Anchorage suggests a rather dynamic engagement with urban life there, while at the same time retention of selected values of their Mexican heritage that are reinforced in their active transnational linkages, including transport of foods, traditional music and dance, and art. Drawing attention to the cases of three-generation families suggests little diminution of Mexican identity and continued strong attachment to the Mexican homeland. I came away from the experience with a firm sense that Anchorage currently welcomes the work quality and cultural contributions that Acuitzences and other Mexicans bring but that Acuitzences are not losing touch with the values of their homeland.

The reflections offered in this paper on transnational living among Mexicans in Anchorage will hopefully stimulate more attention to its mounting ethnic diversity. Among populations originating from complex societies of other countries, particular attention might be given to:

1. ethnic, class, and gender differences in access to jobs and/or job choices, to wage differentials, to treatment of workers, and to social benefit access (e.g., health care, English as additional language training, etc.);
2. innovative worker-organized living arrangements to accommodate primarily married men whose spouses remain in their country of origin;
3. incentives and barriers for women who migrate to Anchorage alone;
4. the extent to which ethnic enclaving affects identity construction in Anchorage and how this may affect communities of origin of transnational workers; and
5. the identity dynamics associated with wider collective social initiatives identified as Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islanders, etc.

Further research on such issues promises an enriched urban anthropology of a key northern city.

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SUITCASES FULL OF *MOLE*: TRAVELING FOOD AND THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND ALASKA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about how transnational lives and identities are lived out as much through what people eat—or say they eat—as through other global cultural flows. This is what I call “eating transnationally”—meals that connect places and the people in them or foods that depend on interconnectedness and mobility across space. Based on multisited fieldwork with Mexican migrant workers and their families in Anchorage, Alaska, and Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán, I investigate the food-related connections and interconnections between Alaska and Mexico. While food often travels long distances from field to table along grocery store and restaurant distribution chains, people also carry foods, recipes, cooking utensils, and ideas and memories about food with them when they travel. This exploration of food and eating in the lives of transnational Mexican workers in Alaska also provides considerable insight into conceptualizations of Mexican people and of places like Acuitzio del Canje and Anchorage in a globalized world.

KEYWORDS: transnationality, food, migration

She said they use the *chiminea*—the old style kitchen—for certain things, those dishes that are cooked in a big pot or that benefit from being cooked over an open flame. Inside are blackened walls, the smell of burning wood, and a rectangle of light that shines in from the doorway. I watch as Rosa¹ toasts each ingredient for the *mole*, a rich sauce made of chocolate, chiles, and many spices—there are a lot of ingredients so it takes a while. Everything gets mixed together into a thick brown sweetly spicy-bitter paste, and then it sits to cool. Later, she puts it into bags—two sizes: small and large. I buy a small one to take back home with me. “Does Ana take *mole* back with her to Alaska, or does Tomás when he goes back to Alaska?” I ask. Ana and Tomás are two of her nine brothers and sisters, the majority of whom live in the United States. “Yes, yes they do, but only a bit of what I make because it doesn’t last as long with no pre-

servatives, but they take some powdered *mole* too. Well, that’s why I’m so busy today, Mama’s going to California tomorrow to visit my other brother and sister and their families—of course I have to make *mole* for her to take to them.”

I think about what Ana, Rosa’s sister, said two months ago while we were in her kitchen in Anchorage eating and talking. I asked her if “authentic” Mexican recipes and ingredients were important to her. She said, “Yes, yes, because, well, it’s not what one eats every day. But, for example, I bring my *mole*; *mole* already prepared there, in Mexico, the way they prepare it in Mexico. And if I bought it here in Alaska? It’s very different. It’s very different, the taste.” “Why is it important? Is it the taste?” I ask. “Ah hah, yes, it’s the taste more than anything. But, anyway, we are so far away that . . . even though it’s not the same we like it.”²

1. All participant names are pseudonyms.

2. This block of text is a creative nonfiction account drawn from a combination of interviews, fieldnotes, and experience. Fieldnote and interview excerpts are indicated as such; they are also indented and not italicized.

This story speaks to eating transnationally. *Mole* is one instance of traveling food, one example of how food connects places (how *mole* literally moves, is packed in suitcases and taken from one place to another), and how food is connected to place (how Ana said that it just is not the same if you buy it in Anchorage). But this is only one example. While food often travels long distances from field to table along grocery store and restaurant distribution chains, people also carry foods with them when they travel.

In the pages that follow, I will introduce the concept of the “foodscape” and begin to describe the foodscape that arches over and connects Alaska and Mexico. By talking about the kinds of foods, ideas about food, and food practices that are traveling and the people who are sometimes traveling with them, I hope to begin to show how food and the movement of food and food-related things and ideas are wrapped up in configurations of power, the connections between places and the movement of people, commodities, technology, ideas, finance capital, the media, and the daily lives of individuals in extremely complex ways. Lisa Law aptly speaks of the “entangling of foodways in webs of culture, economics, and politics which enable the presence of some foods and not others in shops, restaurants or households” (Law 2001:276–277). It is important to remember that these traveling foods and ideas about foods are a real part—a material reality—of people’s daily lives, as well as a symbol, a marker of transnationality.

Food does more than connect places and people; it “provides a medium through which stories and histories are told and remembered, places described, identities formed and community imagined” (Choo 2004:206), so that the “embodied experience” of eating Mexican food can “[bring] back and [reconnect] memories from homes departed, as well as sounds, textures, and flavors from the past, which are then relived and experienced in the present” (2004:206). The kinds of foods and food-related things and ideas that connect Mexico and Alaska also reflect—in their smells, tastes, and sounds—memories and movement, or “historical moments and transnational movements of people, things, and stories” (Choo 2004:212). This kind of “home cooking” (Law 2001), or the dislocation of place and the creation of a sense of home through cooking and eating, connects Anchorage, Alaska, with Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán.

I am also writing about transnational identity, by which I mean the creation and attribution of fluid and

complex identities grounded in both Mexico and Alaska. The negotiation of such an identity depends on the crossing of borders and boundaries and the exchange of information implied in these movements. Food, as something that is related to transnational identity, is part of the exchange of information and the crossing of borders and boundaries. It is partially through food that places and the people in them are—and become—connected. In this chapter I hope to illustrate these complex interconnections with stories, tastes, images, and analysis. This is what I call “eating transnationally”—meals that connect places and the people in them or foods that depend on interconnectedness and mobility across space.

FOODSCAPE: GLOBAL FLOWS OF FOOD CULTURE

When thinking about globalization, I primarily follow Arjun Appadurai, who sees the complexity of the world arising from “certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics” (Appadurai 1996:33). He proposes the study of global cultural flows as a way to explore such disjunctures, flows that he has termed *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, and *ideoscapes* (Appadurai 1996:33). These *scapes* are fluid and irregular, deeply influenced by the situatedness of different actors, and they “characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles” (Appadurai 1996:33) and, I would argue, the foods and cuisines available in a globalized world. Appadurai’s *scapes* make up *imagined worlds*, “the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (Appadurai 1996:33).

Extending these ideas, I use the analytical concept *foodscape* to draw attention to the global flow of food culture and its relationship to other global cultural flows. Following Theodore Bestor (1999, 2005) and Sylvia Ferrero (2002), the *foodscape* is an analytical concept that draws attention to the global flow of food culture—such as Japanese sushi (Bestor) or Mexican food in Los Angeles (Ferrero) or Anchorage—and its relationship to global capitalism. For instance, due to current conditions of global capitalism, food-related interconnections and disconnections (or disjunctures) have intensified and in some cases have increased so much as to become nearly commonplace. Food is intimately connected to place in that it must be grown somewhere, and in that we associate cuisines with specific places and people. However, food and

ideas about food have become de-territorialized and then re-territorialized elsewhere so that food is connected to place as it connects places with one another. Consider, for instance, the fact that much of the food in North American and European grocery stores is grown thousands of miles away in the so-called Third World, that “Chinese food” (presumably a mish-mash of Chinese regional cuisines) is popular in India and has subsequently fused with regional cuisines there to create new dishes, that a tortilla factory has recently opened in Beijing (Arzate 2005), that sushi is particularly fashionable in North America these days (see Bestor 1999, 2005; Issenberg 2007), or that migrants in Alaska have opened Mexican restaurants and stores in Anchorage and that these same migrants often travel long distances with food from Mexico to be consumed upon their return to Anchorage. These instances—and the many others that are imaginable—have everything to do with the global flow of ideas, people, things, capital, and technology, and they make up a foodscape, a fluid, uneven flow of food culture. The movement of migrant workers and their foods and food practices are also part of a foodscape, as are the foods they encounter in their destination.

One can talk specifically about a transnational flow of food culture in order to draw attention to the fact that these processes are not necessarily worldwide and global, but are anchored in places and more specifically in nation-states (Levin 2002:3). The nation-state remains important (Basch et al 1994; Ong 1999), and a de-territorialized and flexible nation-state “may extend its hegemony over its citizens, who, as migrants or refugees, reside outside of its national boundaries” (Kearney 2004:223). To me, the term “transnationalism” draws attention to the nation-state and to the specific relationships between places in ways that “global” does not. I use transnationalism to refer not only to the “condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space” as Ong (1999:4) does in her study of flexible, “multiply-displaced” Chinese subjects, but also to emphasize, as Michael Levin (2002:3) does, that “transnational processes are not worldwide, but are anchored in places, i.e. states, both homelands and nations of settlement. Both migrants and corporations whose journeys and activities cross borders of two or more states are best referred to as transnational.” As such, while both globalization and transnationalism draw attention to cultural flows, transnationalism draws specific attention to place (Levin 2002). For this reason, this paper is concerned

with the flow of food culture between particular places in specific nation-states, namely, Anchorage, Alaska, and Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán.

In anthropology, early researchers “studied food because of its key central role in many cultures and several wrote pointed pieces on foodways” (Counihan and Van Esterik 1997:1). Later, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966, 1969) and Mary Douglas (1966) wrote about food as something with great symbolic significance that can provide powerful insight into cultural systems. Later still, Sidney Mintz wrote about the history and meaning of food (Mintz 1985, 1996; Mintz and Du Bois 2002), a topic that continues to be studied by researchers like Richard Wilk (2006).

In North America and Europe, a burgeoning interest in food in academia and in popular culture—Food TV and the popularity of cooking shows, classes, and books, the arrival (or rather recognition) of food tourism both at home and away, and the increasing strength and popularity of food-related social movements such as SlowFood, anti-GMO protest, and the widespread interest in organic and fair trade foodstuffs—has resulted in a fascinating, growing, and very interdisciplinary body of literature about the place of food and eating in contemporary society. Recent edited volumes of essays and previously published articles focusing on food (Ashley et al. 2004; Atkins and Bowler 2001; Belasco and Scranton 2002; Counihan and Van Esterik 1997; Korsmeyer 2005; and Watson and Caldwell 2005, among others), specialty academic journals (such as *Gastronomica* and *Food, Culture, and Society*), academic blogs and websites (such as the Critical Studies in Food and Culture blog and message board),³ and panels at conferences attest to the fact that food is a valuable medium through which to understand culture and history, powerful in its “extraordinary ability to convey meaning as well as nourish bodies” (Counihan and Van Esterik 1997:2) because of its material place in everyday life and the universality of eating and cooking among human beings. And, as James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell point out in the introduction to the edited volume *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating* (2005:1): “food practices are implicated in a complex field of relationships, expectations, and choices that are contested, negotiated and often unequal. Food everywhere is not just about eating, and eating (at least among humans) is never simply a biological process.”

3. www.foodandculture.blogspot.com

And so, food is able to act as a symbol, a marker, as well as a reality. Food can symbolize one's identity yet is also physically connected to place, person, and body. Theoretically, this means that one way to look at globalization and its relationship with the individual is to study food. Methodologically, it means approaching food and eating ethnographically, focusing on recipes, ingredients, tastes, memories, performances, and other foods and food-related things and ideas.

The methodology for this project was ethnographic, with particular emphasis placed on participant observation and semistructured interviews. To complement my interest and theoretical orientation in transnationalism and the connections and spaces between places, my methodology was multisited, with ethnographic research conducted in both the origin and migration destination of the migrant workers and their families who are central to my study. I spent time in both Anchorage, Alaska, and in Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán, putting myself wherever food and Mexicanness met, or might meet, and asking questions about food in the lives of migrant workers as well as of those who stay in place.

Since transnational lives and identities depend upon constant interconnections between homes, a multisited approach was especially appropriate due to its emphasis on following the connections made within and between sites. As such, I "followed the people" (Marcus 1995:106) and the food and food-related connections that Mexican migrant workers make between homes as I traveled from Anchorage to Acuitzio alongside migrants and their families who return to Mexico each year, beginning in mid-October through early December and returning to Anchorage after the New Year. For some, this coincides with the end of the summer landscaping season, and for others it coincides with the school schedule of their children, which for most is the holiday season in Mexico. Most have arrived in Acuitzio by December 5, the town's annual celebration of the *Día del Canje* or "Day of the Exchange" of Mexican prisoners for Belgian and French prisoners in 1865 during the French intervention in Mexico, which lasted from 1861 to 1867. An important day for the town and in Mexican history, it

also begins the festive season with December 12 (*Día del Guadalupe*), the *Posadas*, Christmas and New Year's, and *Día de los Reyes* (Epiphany) also as important celebrations during the season. During the time period when the migrants were returning to town, and the time that I visited Acuitzio, there were more and more people in town every day. More parties, weddings, baptisms, and other events are planned during this time, and business picks up for the shops in town.

I focused on the connections and interconnections between places, but I also became one of those connections between places, someone who, along with my research participants, lived in transnational space.⁴ Because I am interested in transnational migration and traveling foods, this is an especially suitable approach. I followed the lead of anthropologists such as Roger Rouse (1992, 2002) and Michael Kearney (2004) who used multisited methodologies in their studies of Mexican migration. In following the flows of people, food, and food culture from one specific place to another, and focusing on the connections and interconnections between places in order to study food as a marker and material reality of transnational identity, my methodology was designed to study the flow of food culture in a foodscape.

ACUITZENCES IN ALASKA

Estimates about the number of people from Acuitzio currently living and working in Alaska vary. Anchorage, the state's largest and most multicultural city,⁵ contains roughly eleven thousand residents of Mexican origin, according to the 2004 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2004). My participants estimate that there are about one thousand men, women, and children in Anchorage who are from Acuitzio, a number that fluctuates depending on the season, with the most people there in the summer.⁶

I worked closely with twenty-six research participants in Anchorage who were either migrant workers, their adult family members, or individuals who owned, operated, or were employed at Mexican restaurants, bakeries, or stores in Anchorage. All of the participants were of Mexican de-

4. Of course, I also carried things and ideas with me when I traveled. One of the participants asked me to carry a backpack of gifts for his wife and son (name-brand clothing and other consumer goods) on my trip from Alaska to Mexico. His son visited me a couple of days after I arrived to collect it. I also traveled with food on my return to Canada from Mexico—bread, cheese, *mole*, candy, and powdered chile.

5. Anchorage has a population of about 278,700, of which 8.2% are foreign born and nearly 14% speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau 2006).

6. For more background information on Anchorage, Acuitzio, and movement between the two sites, see Wiest, this volume.

scent and most grew up in Acuitzio del Canje, Michoacán. Of the semistructured interviews that I did with thirteen of these individuals, eight of the interviews were with women and five were with men. They can be divided into two groups: participants whose immediate families live in Anchorage (ten) and men working in Anchorage whose immediate family live in Mexico (three). All of the participants maintain close ties to Mexico, albeit of varying degrees, and all have family and friends who live there permanently. I tried to work with a range of individuals of different ages, genders, and length of time migrating. However, most of the participants that I got to know the best were women with families, something that could be due to my focus on food and cooking or my own position as a young woman alone in Alaska.

With the economy in Alaska driven by oil, tourism, and commercial fishing (and likely in that order), the jobs that are available for migrant workers are tied to the steady economic growth in those three industries that make up the “core triangle of Alaska’s economy” (Borneman 2003:528). Most of my participants work in the food service industry, whether as waiters or waitresses, cooks, dishwashers, bakers in chain stores like Costco, or in small businesses like the French Oven bakery. Some are even restaurant owners. Other participants work in landscaping, something that can be convenient due to the seasonal nature of the work where people can work for the summer, then go to Mexico for the winter with the promise of a full-time job again the following summer. Still others work in construction (for which English is a necessity), in painting, or cleaning houses, and some have been employed outside Anchorage in salmon canneries or other seafood processing, where 75% of all workers in that industry were nonresidents of Alaska in 2004 (Hadland et al. 2006). Other Mexican migrants, although not from Acuitzio as far as I know, work in Alaska’s vast and isolated backcountry picking morel mushrooms for sale on the global gourmet food market (LeVaux 2005).

Within the wider context of transnational subjects, my research population fits in somewhere between immigrants and guest workers, between relatively permanent and more-or-less temporary residence in Anchorage. By Alaska standards, the people who participated in this study are middle class. Of those who live most of the time with their families in Anchorage, nearly all have homes in both Acuitzio and Anchorage, more than one vehicle, televisions, computers, and cell phones. Some own and op-

erate their own businesses. Most take annual vacations to Mexico and some take additional trips elsewhere: Florida, Niagara Falls, Vancouver, California. Of those participants whose families live in Mexico while they live and work in Anchorage, they, too, have comfortable and modern homes in Acuitzio and well-maintained rental accommodations in Alaska, as well as a car or, more often, a truck.

While some of my research participants were “illegal” migrants to Alaska at first, nearly all did have some legal documentation and right to work in Alaska, with many holding both Mexican and American citizenship. For these legal migrant-immigrants especially mobility is a fact of life, and while they are not as wealthy as Ong’s (1999) very rich and extremely mobile Chinese elite, my participants can and do travel regularly and flexibly between Mexico and the United States.

In each interview with research participants in both Acuitzio and Anchorage, I asked how, when, and why each individual went to Alaska. As with migration to other sites by Acuitzences (Wiest 1973, 1979, 1980), the reason was generally to find work or to join a loved one (usually a spouse) who was already working in Alaska, something also asserted by the *Guide to Alaska’s Cultures* (Bibbs 2006). This is applicable to Mexican migrants more generally. The specifics of each story varied, however, with some people as second-generation or even third-generation migrants, following their fathers and grandfathers who had worked on the pipeline or in related industries. Others came looking for better work and a more tranquil environment than was available in the Lower Forty-eight, including some who had spent time in other parts of the United States, like California and Texas, and others who had not. Still others came with their families to reunite with loved ones after living as long-distance families for years under circumstances that differed for each family. Some migrants spend part of the year working in Anchorage, then the remainder of the year with their families in Mexico, a cycle that repeats each year. Other migrants live in Anchorage most of the time with their families, going back to Acuitzio once or twice a year to attend funerals, baptisms, weddings, the annual town celebration, and to be with family, especially around the holidays.

What is the same is that everyone was coming to find work in Alaska, whether to raise money for a wedding, to build a house in Acuitzio, to put children through school, or to raise their children in Alaska. Nevertheless, everyone that I spoke to and got to know maintained a

connection to their hometown, both through telephone conversations and regular travel back. The maintenance of this connection is the basis of the use of the term “transnational” to describe these people’s lives and identities. I was surprised by how mobile some of these people are, how often they travel back and forth between Mexico and Alaska, and how major life events such as weddings, funerals, baptisms and *quinceañeras*⁷ continue to take place in Acuitzio. Phone calls ranging in frequency from daily to weekly also connect very strongly the people in these two places. Video recorders and cameras taken back and forth between the two places allow family members and friends to “experience” aspects of the lives of those who are far away.⁸ As well, the internet is starting to become more useful for migrant workers in Alaska and elsewhere to keep connected. The town of Acuitzio had a website directed at those who are away, and as I wrote in my field notes, one woman says that her husband uses the internet to read *La Voz de Michoacán*, one of the major newspapers based in Morelia, the state capital of Michoacán (November 8, 2005).

SUITCASES FULL OF MOLE: TRAVELING FOODS

In my conversations with my research participants in Alaska, I found that people traveled from Acuitzio to Alaska carrying not only mole and bread but also things like cheese, candy, and dried and crushed chile. For the most part, these are foods that travel well and are permitted to travel across international borders. The first time I was invited over to Maria and Luis’s place, it was for a dinner party that was attended by others from Acuitzio, Ana, Ivonne, and Fernando. I wrote in my field notes that:

The food was ready so we all went into the kitchen. Maria told us to sit and we all did, except Maria and Ana who served us at the table. We had mole from Acuitzio—Maria and Ivonne each had a bit left and they mixed it together, chicken, rice, beans, salsa, cheese (cheese also from Acuitzio) and tortillas. For dessert we had flan from Costco that Fernando himself actually made. Ana told about how she and her family just got back from Acuitzio and they brought from there the cheese we had, and I guess they brought back bread and some other things—eight suitcases worth! She says she

loves the bread from a woman named Mercedes—it’s homemade and she said she especially loves the *conchas*. Her parents live on the last street in town and I understand the bakery is near there. (September 6, 2005)

Indeed, this kind of thing is not uncommon for people from Acuitzio who live and work in Alaska. In each interview, and in some of my informal conversations with research participants in both Anchorage and Acuitzio, I asked whether or not that person travels with food when they go to Alaska to work or return to Alaska after a visit to Mexico. Most of my participants do travel with food regularly or have at some point, while the few who do not carry food with them know someone who does. In fact, of the sixteen research participants that I interviewed formally, thirteen of them said that they had traveled with food from Mexico to Alaska at least once. Of those, eleven travel with food on a regular basis. As Victor, a young man who had just returned to Acuitzio from his first time working in Anchorage, said:

More than anything food is what I see...that relatives bring their family members when they go there [to the United States]. More than anything, food. Bread, whatever you want, *mole*, bread, meat, cheese, spices. (November 28, 2005)⁹

An interview with Maria made similar points:

Maria: Food, well [I bring] no more than that that they allow us to cross [the U.S.-Mexican border] with, which is like, cheese and *mole*. . . I also bring this chile with lime. Yes, because here [in Alaska] there isn’t any, or like there is chile but it’s crushed. Normally one uses chile for, for fruit. But it isn’t with lime and I bring that.

Sara: I think there’s some in Mexico Lindo [a small Mexican grocery store in Anchorage].

Maria: Yes, but it isn’t the same.

Sara: Ah, it’s not the same.

Maria: [laughs] No, no. And I bring that. Also, you know what? I bring sherry flavored gelatin mix because there aren’t any sherry flavored ones here and I really like gelatin. Ah, I’ve brought Japanese peanuts, but [the ones that are] *enchilados*. *Enchilados*, with chile. And also . . . in Mexico, in Mexico City they sell these gummies. They’re pineapple flavor

7. Celebration of a young woman’s fifteenth birthday marking her transition to womanhood.

8. www.acuitzio.com.mx, now inactive.

9. Interviews were done in English, Spanish, or some combination of the two. The author translated all of the Spanish interviews.

and they have chile [laughs]! Yeah, and I brought a kilo! [laughs] And anyway, I also bring candies. Candies that they don't have here because here there's more variety of Mexican candies. But there are some that aren't here and my kids like them so, well, I bring them and also that *pinole*.

Sara: What's *pinole*?

Maria: *Pinole* is corn, the red corn that's toasted, it's well toasted. Or like, they have, they have to know you, you don't toast it yourself but you take it to the mill and it's like a powder. And they combine this with sugar and it's kind of sweet. You can eat it just like that or you can make *atole* out of it. (September 26, 2005)

As Maria says, she brings food with her when she returns to Alaska from Mexico because those foods are not available in Alaska. Sometimes they are not available at all and other times the exact brand, taste, or level of quality is not available. Food is something important, something about Mexico worth bringing along to a new place.

Ivonne echoes Maria when she talks about the food that she brings and the reasons why she brings food to Alaska with her,

Ivonne: We always bring bread, cheese...

Fernando: *Mole*.

Ivonne: ...Cheese, powdered mole. Uh, we bring *chile perón*. It's a yellow chile, small; they also call it *chile manzano*. But here there aren't any. Sometimes you can find them so you don't have to order something special from one of the, the local produce carriers [grocers]. But you can't find them regularly. Anyway, we bring those, we bring foods that the family [in Acuízio] makes for us, and my mother-in-law always makes tamales before we go. We bring a lot of *tamales*. And, um...

Sara: Oh, great. How do you bring them? In suitcases?

Ivonne: We put them like in a, um, Rubbermaid container. Because if we don't, they [the airline baggage handlers] throw them and break some of the things. (September 28, 2005)

Among the people who regularly bring food with them from Mexico, mole, bread, and cheese were definitely the most common items. In Anchorage, the basic ingredients and foods necessary for Mexican cooking are available, both at specialty shops like Mexico Lindo, Taco Loco, Red Apple, and New Sagaya Market, as well as at large, main-

stream grocery stores like Carrs-Safeway, Fred Meyer, and Costco. There is a *tortillería* in town that makes both flour and corn tortillas that are later sold frozen. While *lo básico* (the basics) are available now in Anchorage, they were not always. Even five years ago, it was much more difficult to find the necessary ingredients; people used to bring even more than they do now. Anchorage is changing; more products are available, different stores are opening up. More of nearly everything, and not only Mexican ingredients, is available now, whereas it was not in the recent past. Miguel and Inez make this point in an interview:

Miguel: And look, around what you're talking about, yeah, we brought [food] before... we brought more things before because there weren't...

Inez: There weren't many things here [in Anchorage]. (October 25, 2005)

Specialized or unusual ingredients are still unavailable or are available only sporadically and often at a high price.

Bringing food is really important to people. As Lisa Law (2001:277) writes, "The absence of familiar material culture and its subtle evocations of home is surely one of the most profound dislocations of transnational migration." Perhaps, then, it becomes important to travel with a piece of home, a piece of Mexico to alleviate this dislocation, so much so that, as Alina's husband said, "when she came here her suitcase was all food, hardly any clothes!" (field notes, October 5, 2005). According to Miguel, who works at a Mexican restaurant in Anchorage, people bring things and food with them because:

Maybe we bring a part of ourselves. We want to bring a little piece of Mexico with us. Look, and even though, even though one has their U.S. citizenship, you know? But I always feel that your heart is always in Mexico... Sometimes I think more than anything food, and more than anything I feel that [some people think that we have] disgraced our country because we have been given the opportunity to live peacefully with our kids. (October 25, 2005)

People are also willing to take risks, as Alina notes:

Alina: I always bring food, even food that I shouldn't bring, Sarita! [laughs]

Sara: Like what?

Alina: Like I've brought some chiles, *chiles perones*. It's like a chile, like smaller than this orange. But, uh, yellow and it's red and really hot! And

you know that one can't bring fresh things here. But I've brought some, Sarita! I've brought chiles, all the food that, no, no [laughs]...I've brought *carnitas*, meat, you can't bring pork. But they [U.S. Customs] didn't look through my bag! They didn't look through it! I've also brought bread....

Sara: *Pan dulce*?

Alina: Yes, *pan dulce*. What else have I brought? The *cazo* [saucepan]. Well, but it isn't an ingredient. But the saucepan where we make the *atole*.

Sara: Oh, so things to cook with too?

Alina: The saucepan, this...I brought chiles, those that I have here for making *mole*. (October 5, 2005)

Government regulations on the movement of meats, seeds, roots, and fresh fruits and vegetables restrict the movement of some foods. My research participants know full well what kinds of things are not allowed and what kinds of things are, as well as how to get around the regulations by putting fresh chiles in a bit of vinegar, for instance. Airline regulations only allow a certain amount of luggage, which also restricts the amount of food and food-related things that travel.

It is mostly women who travel with food. Many of the men I talked to were uninterested in bringing anything with them besides perhaps a few candies or a certain type of chile that they like. In an interview with Miguel and Inez, it seems that they would agree:

Miguel: Yeah, but sometimes people say, "I bring things," well I don't. No, no, no, I don't like it.

Inez: That's a man, but a woman always brings a lot of things [laughs], lots of food, decorations.

Miguel: No, it's going through Los Angeles and having to carry those damn suitcases, no, no, no, no!

Inez: No, but it's that you're a man.

Miguel: I never liked it. And for that reason I, never bother my fellow Mexicans to bring me something. I, yes, enough...one, something, but I just bring my bag and...

Inez: It's much easier [not to carry things].

Miguel: It's much easier [not to carry things]. And of course, like I told you, before people came loaded with stuff because...

Inez: Because there weren't a lot of things here. But now there are lots of things here. (October 25, 2005)

The majority of my participants who regularly travel with food are women whose immediate families live in Anchorage. In fact, of the ten families who live in Anchorage and travel frequently to Mexico, in interviews with a family member, eight said that they always carry food with them. On the other hand, of the six single men who I met and interviewed, only two said they always travel with food, while two others said they sometimes carry food with them when they travel, or that they have in the past. In Mexico, where women are associated with food and cooking, men often do not have access to (or interest in) this information and may not know how to cook at all upon their arrival in the United States. While it has changed somewhat, in Acuitzio it is generally considered inappropriate for a man to do female domestic chores (such as cooking or cleaning) or to attempt to raise children himself (Wiest 1973:189). Furthermore, many households in Acuitzio employ domestic workers to do the bulk of the domestic chores. This is not the case in Alaska, however. In Alaska, men who have migrated alone do learn to cook at the very least out of necessity or because they enjoy it. It is also something considered appropriate. The change in attitude towards cooking by (some) migrant men is likely due to gender role shifts that have resulted out of necessity when men migrate alone as well as larger society-wide changes in the roles of men and women. As a result, some men do travel with food. Consider Antonio, for instance, who I interviewed in Acuitzio:

Antonio: That's where they make the bread, those guys. And it's delicious. It only needs some butter, that's what they [the men who bake the bread] tell me [laughs].

Sara: And you bring this bread to Alaska?

Antonio: To Alaska, yeah. They really like the bread, the bread from here [Acuitzio].

Sara: Who, the people from French Oven?

Antonio: No, friends that I have there, I brought them each a piece or two or three. I took something like, seventy pieces. I took *corundas*, *uchepos*, cheese, and mole as a paste. And, and I brought these sweets. And what else did I bring? Something else I brought. Or like, I brought two suitcases full of...of bread and that, yeah [laughs]...they [the airline] didn't charge me, I didn't pay anything, no. But yeah, they [the suitcases] were really heavy. I had the *corundas* in my backpack. But it was so heavy, right? [laughs]

Sara: That's funny. But [was the food] more for yourself or for friends that you have there?

Antonio: Yeah, for friends, yeah. Yeah, this time I took enough and... I arrived and well, later, later divided it up [for] Luisa, [for] everyone.

Sara: And before you didn't bring anything, or?

Antonio: Before, very little. Or for example, when I was in Texas there, for example twice I, well, even meat I brought sometimes. But we crossed by car and there wasn't a problem. Now, no, no you can't. I took *chorizo*, I took dried meat but right now, no. And anyway, well, chorizo, that they won't let you pass with. Nor chiles that have seeds. We, for instance, we've also brought chiles but in vinegar. We make it with those yellow ones, those...

Sara: The *manzanos*.

Antonio: Yeah, the *manzanos*. And we put them in vinegar in a jar with the lid put on tightly.

Sara: Oh, so you can take them in vinegar but not...

Antonio: A little bit of vinegar so that it won't spill because, ah... in the airport opening the bags, ooh! And all the way to Alaska [laughs]. (November 30, 2005)

In Acuitzio, too, I met people who prepared the foods that people travel to Alaska with. I wrote in my field notes that:

Rosa told me that she's been making *mole en pasta* (mole paste) since she was age twelve. She sells it. Her sister Ana takes some back to Alaska with her, but takes more *en polvo* (powdered) because Rosa doesn't use preservatives, so her mole paste doesn't last as long nor travel as well. (November 26, 2005)

I also met a woman selling bread in the plaza who said that she has sold bread to people on their way to Alaska. As I wrote in my fieldnotes that day,

She has a table in the plaza with bread stacked up on a flowered tablecloth. There are about four or five kinds of rather colorful bread. She said that the bread with the *atole* in the middle is the most popular. A customer can call her and she'll make the bread and pack it up so it'll be ready when people leave to go back to wherever they work in the US. She said that her bread has been all the way to Alaska (December 5, 2005).

However, it is not only food that is traveling; food-related things and ideas also travel between Mexico and Alaska and places in-between. Recipes and ideas, customs such as what time of day one should eat and what kinds of foods are appropriate, and memories about certain foods and times or places where they should be eaten, also travel between places.

Daily meal times are quite different in Acuitzio, with a mid-morning meal and the main meal of the day around 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon, supplemented by a snack or *cena* later on in the evening. In North America, however, social convention and work schedules are arranged around an earlier breakfast, midday lunch, and evening main meal. This is something that many of my research participants said was difficult to adjust to. The times when one ought to eat and what or how much should be eaten are ideas that people bring with them when they move between Mexico and Alaska and back again. It is not only about adjusting to new eating schedules. Those eating schedules are part of the way of life in the United States, part of entering a wage labor economy. Adjustment to a new eating schedule also represents an adjustment to a new way of life. Food and ideas about food thus become directly tied into economic processes and features of wage labor in the United States.

Recipes and other forms of knowledge about food and eating are also things that travel. Many of my participants learned to cook from their mothers and grandmothers in Mexico. One of my participants, Ivonne, who is originally from California, married a man from Acuitzio and they now live in a new home with their three sons in Anchorage. When she married her husband, Fernando, she decided that it was important for her to learn to cook in the regional style, in the style of Michoacán. She makes this point in an interview:

Ivonne: Where Fernando's from, like even the *mole* [is different]. The *mole* in the north of Mexico tends to be sweet. And the *mole* [the] kind from the region Fernando is from, is bitter, it's different. And, um, to the south it's sweet too. So in that central region, the *mole*'s more bitter. Even the way that, like, *atole* is prepared or *menudo*, um, or even the way *enchiladas* are eaten is, it's different from region to region and it's just probably the availability of ingredients, I would say. Just what's more available.

Sara: And how was it for you to learn recipes from your mother-in-law?

Ivonne: It was interesting because she has so much patience. She has a lot of patience and, it was easy because they're not very difficult recipes.

Sara: And you wanted to learn?

Ivonne: Yeah, I wanted to learn.

Sara: For Fernando or for yourself?

Ivonne: For me, because I liked it. And for them [her husband and sons] too, because the food is really good and there are things that Fernando likes. The foods, they're different. For example, the first time that I made lentils, I learned from my grandmother. And when my grandmother makes lentils, she puts cilantro. And Fernando's mom doesn't put cilantro. Anyway, they're...

Sara: And the recipes are written down or memorized?

Ivonne: Some are written down, the more difficult ones that have more ingredients, or if there are measurements involved. But normally, I remember them. Because they're simple. They're simple. And if I don't remember, I could always call her [my mother-in-law]. I call her on the phone: "*Suegra*, how do I make this?" (September 28, 2005)

As Ivonne shows, when she asks her *suegra* (mother-in-law) for help with recipes, connections between people are also built and maintained through food. This also helps in building the transnational social field that connects Anchorage and Acuitzio. Memories and recollections are also an important part of the foodscape that connects Acuitzio and Anchorage. As Simon Choo (2004:209) writes, "the strong connections between the senses and memory facilitates the ability of foods to provide for an imagination of place, community, identity, and time—a connection to childhoods, homelands, reminiscences and nostalgic outpourings—but they also provide a means through which people...connect or reconnect with self and place."

This kind of "home cooking" (Law 2001)—the connection to home created through cooking—is something that was important to my research participants. Indeed, as Miguel said in an interview:

Unfortunately sometimes a person doesn't value our culture, our, each country...each place has their own. Talking about, about food, well they never go to buy it. Even though now we have access to many different kinds of food, we are preoccu-

pied with making our, our own too. The *antojitos*, *los tamales*, *el pozole*. It's that which identifies Mexico, in particular and in general. Because for sure, wherever you want, in all of Mexico I feel that...they're well known, tamales and *pozole*, *si*? Although the *pozole* [can be found] almost wherever [in Mexico]...and there are different kinds of *pozole*. Only that sometimes,...you focus yourself on what you're used to, or how your mother made it in your home. (October 25, 2005)

And as Victoria says, food brings people together, connecting family to each other:

But I dunno, I guess that the food does bring us comfort somehow...somehow to us. Well, like if we're gonna make a party we always cook Mexican food and it does bring family together. It does bring comfort, on us. I don't know why, but it does bring family together, the food. For me it's like, I'm just, I'm gonna make *menudo* and I'm just calling my dad and my mom, I make *menudo*, just come and eat it. And that is the way that we get together. Want it or not but we do get together, 'cause food bring us together. (October 13, 2005)

Food is something that represents home, that evokes memories of home or nostalgia for a different place and time. One evening I went to Maria's house to make *buñuelos*, a crispy, sweet snack traditionally served with *atole blanco* in the plaza (at least in Acuitzio). What is interesting is that getting together to make and eat *buñuelos* evoked memories and discussion about Acuitzio. This is something that contributes to the creation of a transnational social field that connects Anchorage and Acuitzio through imagination. Eating *buñuelos* and drinking *atole blanco* allows for the enjoyment of the taste, aroma, and texture of home (Law 2001), connecting Anchorage to Acuitzio through the senses. The opposite happened for me later on, however. For me, eating *buñuelos* made me reminisce about Anchorage. As I wrote in my field notes: "Sitting in the plaza eating *buñuelos* and drinking *atole blanco* made me think about when we made them in Alaska. The Acuitzio ones are really thin, melt in your mouth and tasty, especially together with *atole blanco*. It was so much fun when we got together to make them [in Alaska]" (December 7, 2005).

While I ate *buñuelos* in the plaza in Acuitzio I thought about Anchorage, something that (at first) seems contradictory. For me, *buñuelos* evoke an evening in Anchorage, while for my research participants, *buñuelos* evoke a variety of evenings in the plaza in Acuitzio. These contradictions

connect Anchorage and Acuitzio through memory and imagination and as social practice; these imaginings also *create* Anchorage and Acuitzio for us. What I mean by that is that by making and eating *buñuelos* in Anchorage while thinking about Acuitzio (or vice-versa in my case), my participants create an Acuitzio, an imagined Acuitzio, or an imagined community (Anderson 1983; Appadurai 1996) of Acuitzences in which they live their lives. In a way, you can be in more than one place and time while eating *buñuelos*: you are at once in Maria's kitchen in Anchorage while also in the plaza in Acuitzio (or vice versa), with memory and imagination negotiating between the two.

People also travel with food-related things. Copper *cazuelas*, *tamale* steaming pots, *comales*, and clay pots are some of the things that people bring. Clay pots, which are used for cooking beans in Mexico and said to give a special and delicious flavor to them, are an interesting case. Upon arrival in the United States, new migrants find out from others in the Mexican community that they are unhealthy to cook in due to the possibility of lead poisoning from the glaze (still known as *greta* in Michoacán).¹⁰ Victoria provides another interesting example of food-related things that travel. As I wrote in my field notes:

In Victoria's kitchen there is a clock and some pots and other things hanging on the wall from Santa Clara del Cobre. She says that her kitchen is too small [in Anchorage], that in Mexico her grandpa ground corn so there were always lots of people in the kitchen there. She also has shelves with little miniature pots on them. She said that in Mexico her grandma has shelves all around her kitchen with little pots on them. Victoria said she wants to do that too. (October 8, 2005)

For Victoria, the idea of what a kitchen should look like is one that comes from her grandmother's kitchen in Mexico, and so do the pots and other decorations that she adorns it with.

EATING TRANSNATIONALLY AND LIVING TRANSNATIONALLY

Food and ideas about food and eating travel regularly and in fairly high quantities between Mexico and Alaska, connecting those places and the people in them. This traveling food becomes both a marker and a material reality of the

transnational connection between places and the transnational lives that people live. Food is deeply symbolic of place in this case of Acuitzio, and it is a place that travels alongside people in their suitcases and Rubbermaid containers on their way back to Anchorage. In this way, people are sometimes "eating transnationally" in Anchorage in that they are eating food that is a "condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space" (Ong 1999:4), anchored in particular places and homes, in this case Acuitzio and Anchorage. While away, food becomes even more important—"Mexican food" becomes an important marker of identity, of home, of Mexico.

While food doesn't really travel from Alaska to Acuitzio, ideas about food definitely do. That food prepared with lard is unhealthy, that sushi is tasty, or that pottery is dangerous due to the threat of lead poisoning are all examples of ideas that travel. My research participants generally carry many consumer goods back to Acuitzio, things like t-shirts and shoes and souvenirs of Alaska as gifts to family members—sometimes up to thirteen suitcases worth!—but they do not bring food from Alaska to Mexico. Typically "Alaska" foods such as smoked salmon, king crab, halibut, and blueberries often have a very short shelf-life, need to be frozen for travel, may not be permitted to cross the Mexico-U.S. border, and are quite expensive. It seems as though remittances, consumer goods, and American ideas about food flow in one direction while food moves in another. People, of course, move from Mexico to Alaska and back again, often making stops along the way.

Eating transnationally is part of how lives are lived across borders and boundaries, and in more than one place at one time. As Nina Glick Schiller et al. (1995:50) write, "transnational processes are located within the life experiences of individuals and families, making up the [fabric] of daily activities, concerns, fears and achievements," so it can be said that many "migrants live transnational lives," something emphasized by Roger Rouse's (1992) "transnational migrant circuit" and his notion of "cultural bifocality." Referring to his work with migrants from Aguillilla, Mexico, and Redwood City, California, Rouse (2002:162) writes:

Aguillillans have forged socio-spatial arrangements that seriously challenge the dominant ways of reading migration. First, it has become inadequate to see Aguillillan migration as a movement between

10. While the original Spanish glaze, also known as *greta*, did contain harmful lead oxide, most glazed pottery today either "contains no lead or is fired at sufficiently high temperatures to neutralize any noxious effects" (Balch 1999). The idea that the glazes are harmful persists among the Mexican community in Anchorage but not in Mexico.

distinct communities, understood as the loci of distinct sets of social relationships.

Kin and friends may live thousands of miles away or in the immediate vicinity. Migrants are able “to maintain spatially extended relationships as actively and effectively as the ties that link them to their neighbor” (Rouse 2002:162). With thanks especially to the growing use of the telephone (and other technologies, I would imagine), people can not only keep in touch periodically but also participate in household decision-making and familial events even from a considerable distance. Rouse (2002) uses the term “transnational migrant circuit” to refer to the fact that “through the continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information, the various settlements have become so closely woven together that, in an important sense, they have come to constitute a single community spread across a variety of sites.” The other sociospatial arrangement forged by Aguilillan migrants is that these migrants orchestrate their lives within the circuit as a whole rather than any one locale—they are living and working within a transnational framework, a transnational space where they maintain two (or possibly more) distinct ways of life. As a result, Rouse refers to their “cultural bifocality, a capacity to see the world alternately through quite different kinds of lenses” (Rouse 1992:41).

The idea that transnational migrants are living their lives in transnational space is also emphasized by Michael Kearney’s (2004) “articulatory migrant network” and by Alison Mountz and Richard Wright’s (1996) description of a transnational community where “alterations in the conceptualization and utilization of space and time enabled the creation of a *single* transnational locale, so that “the space that once divided two physically distant and distinct places—San Agustín, a village in the state of Oaxaca, and Poughkeepsie—has been eliminated” (Mountz and Wright 1996:404). Also, Peggy Levitt writes of “social remittances” that flow between and connect Miraflores and Boston with “fashion, food, and forms of speech, as well as appliances and home decorating styles, attest[ing] to these strong connections” (Levitt 2001:2) between places. Each of these examples allude to the fact that transnational subjects are living their lives in two or more societies simultaneously, societies that may become so intercon-

nected through frequent long-distance communication, the media, the imagination, and the movement of people, money, and things that they may be conceived of as a single transnational space such as “Oaxacalifornia” (Kearney 2004) or Oaxaca-Poughkeepsie, or OP for short (Mountz and Wright 1996). Transmigrants “draw upon and create fluid and multiple identities grounded in both their society of origin and in the host societies” (Glick Schiller et al. 1992:11). As such, their identities also link them simultaneously to more than one nation.

For such transnational subjects, Purnima Mankekar (2005:203) argues, “food acquires a distinctive valence, and a distinctively gendered valence. . . . As markers of cultural continuity/difference, hybridity and/or assimilation, the gastronomic habits of [transnational] subjects become especially fraught areas for contestations and negotiations of gender, community, and kinship.” Quite appropriately, an article by sociologist Peggy Levitt (2004) about the lives of Dominican and Gujarati transnational migrants in Boston is entitled “Salsa and Ketchup: Transnational migrants straddle two worlds,” with condiments essentially standing in the title as markers and material realities of those two worlds.

Certainly, I found that my participants are not only eating transnationally, they are living transnationally. Consider this statement from an article in the *Chicago Tribune* about migrant hometown associations¹¹ in Chicago, one of which is from Acuitzio:

“The nation-state concept is changing” said Gutierrez, 46, who came to Chicago in 1986 and led one of the Midwest’s largest federations of hometown associations. “You don’t have to say, ‘I am Mexican,’ or, ‘I am American.’ You can be a good Mexican citizen and a good American citizen and not have that be a conflict of interest. Sovereignty is flexible.” (Olivo and Avila 2007)

In other words, you can live transnationally. Day-to-day life in Anchorage, right down to the food on one’s plate, can be intertwined with life in Acuitzio and vice versa. Migrants in Chicago, Anchorage, California, and elsewhere are able to be in two places at once, to be Mexican, yet Alaskan, to be both and neither. Memory, capital, information, language, technology, media, food,

11. Hometown associations are clubs that function as social networks whose members pool money earned in the United States to fund community projects in hometowns in Mexico (Olivo and Avila 2007). Organized around hometown, home region, or home state, there is no such group currently operating among Michoacanos in Anchorage. Interest in forming such a group is growing, encouraged by a hometown association in Chicago which recently helped (along with the federal and state governments) to fund two projects in Acuitzio: a retirement home and computers for the school and library.

clothing, and, increasingly, politics connect Anchorage and Acuitzio and the people in them. In the statement above, this applies even to citizenship. Indeed, many of the Mexican migrant workers and their family members I met held dual citizenship and sometimes dual passports. Nearly all had some sort of legal status in the United States; some were formal residents, others held work visas. With this legal status comes ease in crossing borders and flexibility in citizenship, cultural, formal, or otherwise. Indeed, sometimes “flexibility, migration, and relocations, instead of being coerced or resisted, have become practices to strive for rather than stability” (Ong 1999:19). However, even though traveling subjects such as Mexican migrant workers are “increasingly able to escape localization by state authorities, traveling subjects are never free of regulations set by state power, market operations, and kinship norms” (Ong 1999:19–20).

CONCLUSION: RE-PRESENTING ANCHORAGE

In this paper, I have written about how transnational lives and identities are lived out as much through what people eat—or say they eat—as through other global cultural flows. This is what I call “eating transnationally”—meals that connect places and the people in them or foods that depend on interconnectedness and mobility across space (Ong 1999). The foodscape, and the food and food-related things and ideas of which it is made, connects my participants to more than one nation-state simultaneously. Thus, they are eating transnationally by cooking, eating, traveling with, shopping for, talking about, or even reminiscing about foods that connect Mexico and Alaska. Food symbolizes this transnationality, while also literally providing an example of it by traveling between Mexico and Alaska alongside migrant workers and their families. Transnational identity, like the food people carry, depends on these kinds of connections between places and people, on connections to homelands, imagined communities created but also transformed by new places and spaces.

I have explored what kinds of food and food-related things and ideas travel, who travels with them, as well

as how and why they travel. I found that traveling with food is very common and that it is mainly specialty or regional foods that are brought to Alaska, where the basics of Mexican cooking are now available. Government restrictions limit the travel of some foods, while others travel commonly and relatively freely. There is also a gender dimension to the foodscape so that women generally carry more food more often. Finally, many foods and ideas about food travel for nostalgic reasons, for “home cooking” (Law 2001) and the creation of a sense of home in Anchorage.¹² “Home cooking” and the creation of a sense of home through cooking and eating is something that allows my research participants to maintain a “Mexican” way of life in Alaska, to maintain and exist in more than one way of life simultaneously (Rouse 2002).

I also found that the travel of food is tied into the conditions of global capitalism and that the flow of food and food-related things and ideas is related to other global cultural flows. For example, the fact that food moves from Mexico to Alaska at all is tied into international trade agreements, the setting of exchange rates, and the growth of a service-based economy in the U.S., among other conditions of global capitalism, so that there are far more stable and high-paying (relatively speaking) positions in Alaska and other parts of the United States than in Mexico. This makes transnational life advantageous and may encourage forms of flexible citizenship and flexible identities.

Eating transnationally for Mexican migrant workers and their families in Alaska is, then, about the connections and interconnections between places and the people in them, between Anchorage and Acuitzio, between Acuitzences in Alaska and those in Mexico and elsewhere. Traveling foods can be seen as material instances of transnational identity—things that actually travel and connect Acuitzio and Anchorage and the people in them. These traveling foods serve as important markers of Mexican identity, something that becomes especially important while in Alaska. Moreover, the unevenness of the cultural flows—that food travels in one direction (from Acuitzio to Anchorage) while capital and consumer goods move in another (from Alaska to Mexico)—hints at the complexity of the relationship between identity, consumption, and transnationality.

12. For a discussion of other aspects of creating a sense of home in Anchorage, see “Impressions of Transnational Mexican Life in Anchorage, Alaska: Acuitzences in the Far North” by Raymond E. Wiest (this volume). Dr. Wiest headed a larger Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC) funded multiyear and multisited project generally concerned with the “theoretical and practical understandings of the impacts of globalizing forces” (Wiest 2002:10), and the examination of how “mobile livelihoods affect social relations among workers and their sense of identity, their social and cultural positioning, their sense of community, and their sense of empowerment” (Wiest 2002:10). My research is part of this larger project, focusing specifically on food and transnationality among Mexican migrant workers and their families in Alaska.

That people are living and eating transnationally in Anchorage means that the conceptual distance between Anchorage and Acuitzio has shrunk. They are connected spaces. However, popular imagination and the anthropological literature make little mention of the connections between Alaska and Mexico, or of the very rich cultural diversity of Anchorage in particular. Reminders of Alaska are plentiful in Acuitzio. Souvenir clothing with images or locations from Alaska are seen on town residents with surprising (for me) regularity, as are license plates from Alaska and many other American states. During my time in Acuitzio, I was almost constantly reminded of locations *por el otro lado* (on the other side) of the border. My work on this project has also encouraged me to reconcile “Mexicanness” with “Alaskan,” to think about Alaska in new ways—still as the land of stunning natural beauty and seemingly untouched wilderness, of rich Native culture but *also* as a more vibrant cosmopolitan and multicultural place, home to many different people from many different parts of the world who bring their foods and ideas about foods with them (Anchorage Daily News 2006).

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TOWARDS INTEGRATIVE PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN INTERIOR ALASKA: A ROLE FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Severe climate change is one of multiple stressors capable of impacting migration in Alaska. This paper uses a scenario of climate change and rising energy costs to explore potential changes in Interior Alaska that may contribute to higher rates of rural-to-urban migration over the next twenty years in Fairbanks, Alaska. While Fairbanks is planning for the physical infrastructure challenges of demographic growth from outside Alaska over the next twenty years, little holistic attention is being given to challenges in employment, housing, and land use presented by the demographic profiles of potential interior rural Alaska Native migrants. Nearly half of Alaska Natives now reside in urban places in Alaska, a trend likely to be expanded under conditions of severe climate change. Future scenario research should more specifically identify likely indigenous migrant characteristics, employment, and housing needs vis-a-vis urban spatial and environmental issues.

KEYWORDS: Arctic, urbanization, indigenous people

INTRODUCTION

Climate change, in conjunction with other stressors, is expected to significantly affect life in the Arctic in ways that will likely lead to lifestyle, culture, and demographic changes (McCarthy and Long Martello 2005). However, these changes will affect different communities in different ways depending on location, size, economic base, culture, and history. Migration, one potential response to climate change-influenced stress, is an excellent example of an effect that will impact different arctic communities in very different ways. Some communities will struggle with shrinking populations and skewed demographics (Hamilton and Seyfrit 1994) and some will experience population growth.

However, the differential effects of migration demonstrate the linkages between communities and the need to plan for climate change on a regional scale. Anthropology's holistic perspective can be useful in understanding and planning for local and regional population dynamics involving culturally distinctive rural indigenous populations migrating to urban sites such as Fairbanks.

There is growing evidence that climate change will affect human migration patterns as some regions become less livable and people move to more viable regions (McLeman and Smit 2006). As in other areas of the world, climate change in Alaska will not be the sole factor influencing

migration decisions, but in combination with other stressors such as social, cultural, and economic changes it can influence population movements and decision-making about migration. Migration may be a successful adaptive response to climate change-influenced stress for some individuals and communities—allowing people to move to more viable areas and reducing the populations of particularly vulnerable communities. However, the flip side of migration is the effect on host communities and the ability of those communities to adapt to a larger population, particularly at a time when the region as a whole may be experiencing other climate change-related effects. The long-term sustainability of arctic communities depends on considering the effects of both sides of the migration response. Through scenario-building we can examine how climate change might affect migration patterns and suggest how communities, in this case host or receiving communities, might best plan to respond to these changes in ways that ensure minimal environmental, economic, and social impacts of migration flows (see for example Lonergan 1998).

The state of Alaska is already experiencing negative effects from climate change, including erosion and melting permafrost, which may force population displacement. Climate change, in concert with other stressors—particularly energy costs that affect transportation, subsistence practices, heating, and food costs—has the potential to create a migratory “push” out of rural areas and into the state’s urban centers. McCarthy and Long Martello (2005) cite migration to towns as a possible adaptive strategy in arctic communities dealing with economic trends, regulations, and/or the effects of climate change and pollution that may make hunting or fishing in (small) settlements impractical or unproductive. We focus our analysis on the interior region of Alaska, where rural residents still largely depend on their immediate, local environment to supply subsistence foods and important ties to culture, language, and history. We have developed a scenario—one plausible future—in order to explore issues that might arise if climate change and other stressors act to reduce the viability of life in rural communities in interior Alaska.

Climate change, combined with another stressor like rising energy costs, may reduce the viability of rural communities by making subsistence practices more difficult and expensive, increasing the costs of alternative food sources, and making general costs of living too high in comparison to incomes in rural communities. One possible response to these stressors is migration—either permanent movement into urban areas or significantly lengthen-

ing the time rural residents spend in urban areas engaging in wage-work before returning to their home communities. Such changes may cause unanticipated population growth in the region’s urban center—the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough—which will also have its own range of climate-change concerns.

We have selected climate change and energy costs as our two model stressors because both are being raised as concerns by rural residents at public meetings and by individuals (de Marban 2006; Dillon 2005a, 2005b). We propose this scenario as a possibility to be considered—not as a definitive prediction. We use this scenario as a tool to ask a range of questions about the region’s vulnerability and resilience to changes influenced by climate change.

Fairbanks is clearly preparing itself for growth in general and expects a population of 100,000 people in the borough in the next twenty years. The community is likely to reach that benchmark much earlier than predicted given that a recent Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) report revised the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) population up from 86,754 to 96,888 (FNSB Community Research Center 2007). However, the focus on in-migration has been on people from outside the state moving into Fairbanks to take jobs in the growing transportation and high-tech industries. The community may need to evaluate the extent to which migration patterns within the state will shift and bring more in-migration from rural communities within the state—and new residents, particularly Alaska Natives, with different needs and experiences.

MIGRATION IN ALASKA

The history of rural-to-urban migration in Alaska has largely been a steady movement of rural residents (mostly Alaska Natives) into urban areas, with some return flows, that has resulted in overall growth of the Alaska Native population in urban areas and a decline in rural populations in general. The urban Native population is the fastest growing sector of the overall Native population. Between 1970 and 2000, an estimated 27,400 Alaska Natives moved from rural to urban areas—11,000 just between 1990 and 2000 (Goldsmith et al. 2004). However, this trend has not resulted in wholesale abandonment of rural regions. While this migration pattern is fairly indicative of a labor-market model, in which rural residents move to larger communities in search of higher-paying jobs, the

fact that rural Alaska communities have remained populated demonstrates that other factors are at work. The most critical exception to the labor-market model, noted by Huskey et al. (2004), is the role of subsistence culture and practices in rural economies and migration decision-making. Subsistence practices, which include hunting, fishing, and gathering, are only available on a regular basis in rural regions to rural residents and are a significant source of real income for practitioners. The economic value of subsistence foods acts to offset the value of cash wages available in urban areas and therefore helps people stay in rural communities despite lower job opportunities. Similar findings are echoed in other studies. Gardner (1994), in an analysis of a proposed Canadian policy to move aboriginal people from rural communities in the Northwest Territories to larger urban centers, found that, because of the economic importance of subsistence food harvests to rural residents, moving Native peoples into cities where they would not be able to practice subsistence harvests would cost the Canadian government more in transfer service payments because of the need to make up for the loss of in-kind income usually provided by subsistence foods.

In this paper, we use statistics generated on Alaska Native populations to represent rural Alaska. Alaska Natives maintain a slight majority of the population in rural Alaska (51% in 1999) (Wolfe 2000). While other rural residents are likely to experience many of the same stressors we propose as drivers of migration, the wage differences between Native and non-Natives in rural areas may help non-Native rural residents to be more resilient in the face of economic and lifestyles difficulties and may not, at least in the short-term, provide the same migration push factors. While rural Alaska Natives have greater opportunities for subsistence harvesting, changes in energy costs and the physical environment, discussed below, may reduce the contribution of these practices to the resilience of Alaska Natives.

PROFILE OF INTERIOR ALASKA

The interior region of Alaska consists of 453,247 km² between the Alaska Range to the south and the Brooks Range to the north. Boreal forest covers most of the land, and discontinuous permafrost underlies the region. Forty-seven small, rural, largely Alaska Native communities are spread throughout the region. Village populations range from twenty to almost one thousand. The

economy of these villages is predominantly subsistence (hunting, fishing, and gathering). Unemployment ranges from a low of about 20% to a high of 90% or more (Tanana Chiefs Conference 2006). Most rural villages are not connected to a road system and must be accessed by air, boat, or snowmachine (during winter). The population of rural Alaska remains largely Alaska Native, with 58% percent of Alaska Natives living in rural Alaska and the remaining 42% (50,426) living in urban areas (the total urban Alaska population is 482,847) (Goldsmith et al. 2004). About 10% of Alaska's urban population is now comprised of Alaska Native residents. Goldsmith et al. (2004) define "urban" Alaska to include Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough that borders Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, Fairbanks, and Juneau. More than half of this urban Native population resides in the Municipality of Anchorage and about 60% of it in the combined Anchorage–Matanuska Susitna Borough area. The Doyon Alaska Native Corporation area of interior Alaska has about 14.5% (14,128) of the total Native population (119,241) of Alaska (Goldsmith et al. 2004). Some 8,174 Alaska Natives reside in the FNSB, comprising 8.6% of the borough population.

Fairbanks—the urban hub of interior Alaska—is the likely host community for many migrants leaving rural interior Alaska because of its proximity to home villages while offering increased job opportunities. The combined population of the city and FNSB is 96,888. Fairbanks has a history of riding out boom and bust cycles associated with resource extraction: first gold then oil. Population growth not associated with development and economic growth may present new challenges to the community—challenges that can be anticipated and planned for effectively.

Fairbanks last experienced a major population boom in the mid-1970s when the Trans-Alaska Pipeline was under construction. During the "boom," the community was confronted with a range of challenges. Housing was extremely limited and expensive—often only affordable to those who had secured high-paying jobs with the pipeline. The result was the proliferation of substandard housing in scattered areas around the community (Dixon 1978). Although the anticipated spike in unemployment and food-stamp claims did not materialize, this may have been due to an active campaign to dissuade people from moving from the Lower Forty-eight to the community without a prearranged job. Nonetheless, those who came without jobs often did find themselves unemployed for long stretches and were able to avoid claiming welfare only due to their

prior planning before moving north. Environmental concerns also rose along with population. Some were managed with careful planning, such as redirecting traffic flow in the downtown core in order to reduce carbon monoxide emissions. Fairbanks' experience with the pipeline boom, which brought people to the community much more rapidly than is expected under a climate change-influenced scenario, demonstrates some of the areas that may be a concern in the near future, including housing, employment, and the state of the environment.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUBSISTENCE IN RURAL INTERIOR ALASKA

Climate change is a factor often linked with changes in subsistence practices. Alaska has experienced some of the most pronounced warming on Earth in recent decades (McBean 2005; Whitfield 2003) with a mean annual temperature increase of 1.7°C from 1949–2005 (Alaska Climate Research Center 2009a). The interior region of Alaska has seen the most marked warming throughout the state, with mean wintertime temperature increases as high as 5.1°C in Big Delta (Alaska Climate Research Center 2009b). Climate models for the northern latitudes project a “middle of the road” scenario for the region of temperature increases of 2–3°C by midcentury (Kattsov and Kallen 2005). Given current observations of the effects of warming on subsistence practices, the projected warming could result in severe changes that will make subsistence life in rural Alaska increasingly more difficult and perhaps even impractical.

Warming temperatures in interior Alaska will affect subsistence hunting and fishing in myriad ways. For example, salmon—the major subsistence fish of the region—may be adversely affected by changing hydrological cycles brought on by climate change. Changes in river conditions in the region may give a competitive advantage to species other than salmon or salmon species of lower desirability for human consumption, such as dog salmon, versus the tastier and more commercially lucrative king salmon. Warming waters are also making conditions for disease more likely to manifest. The infectious protozoan *ichthyophonus* is already negatively affecting the meat of chinook salmon, forcing subsistence harvesters to catch far more fish in order to have a usable amount (Kocan and Hershberger 2003).

Alaska Natives have long been accustomed to the extreme variability of the arctic and subarctic climate. Through specialized ecological knowledge and flexibility

they have been able to adapt to their often-changing and uncertain milieu. However, the rate of weather and climate changes has become more rapid, thereby challenging their adaptive capacities and adding to increased vulnerability (Krupnik and Jolly 2002; Nuttall 2005). One important mode of adaptation is to continue subsistence practices but engage in longer and more far-ranging hunting trips. While these longer trips may allow communities to continue their subsistence practices, they also require more fuel and supplies for each trip, thus increasing the financial costs of subsistence practices.

Climate change is only one driver of change among many, with the potential for cumulative effects on rural Alaska lands and peoples, including pollution, industrial development, international markets, and energy availability and costs. As these factors increase and accumulate, access to subsistence resources will likely become more difficult, and rural residents may feel forced to move into urban areas or remain in rural villages and attempt to live within extremely stressed social-ecological contexts.

Examining the Yukon-Koyukuk (YK) census region of the interior provides a good example of the complex interactions between a warming climate system and its impacts on subsistence. The YK region makes up the bulk of the interior with 383,320 km², one quarter of Alaska's entire land mass. The region is relatively sparsely populated, so by itself won't contribute greatly to increasing rural-urban migration, but it gives us a good indication of how this scenario might play if scaled up to all of rural Alaska, regional differences notwithstanding.

The YK region is 70.7% Alaska Native (Alaska DCCED 2002). In 2000, nearly half of the adult population was outside of the labor force. Per-capita income was \$9,837, of which \$8,865 came from transfer payments (Goldsmith et al. 2004). Because of the remoteness and high cost of transportation, jobs are rare, and many of working age leave for seasonal jobs or educational opportunities (Windisch-Cole 2001). The low per-capita income points to the important role subsistence practices play in the viability of the region. Residents of the YK region harvest an average of 613 pounds of wild foods per person each year (57% of total required calories) with a replacement value estimated from \$1,900 to close to \$3,200 per person per year (Wolfe 2000). At the average household size in the region, wild food replacement costs could be as high as \$9,600 each year.

The YK region has experienced some of the most pronounced changes in temperature and precipitation in the state, with tangible localized effects being seen and felt

by subsistence hunters, fishers, gatherers, and trappers. Residents of the region have observed¹ physical manifestations of concern to subsistence, including decreased thickness of river and lake ice and the timing of breakup or freezeup of the rivers that can make travel dangerous or impossible during key harvest times; melting permafrost and drying of important fishing lakes; and changes in the timing, quantity, and quality of rain and snowfall. All of these physical changes have ecological effects on vegetation, fish, and wildlife, and the linkages are sometimes nuanced and very complex. For example, increased shrubs and thickets are potentially good for moose in terms of increased forage but are also related to local lake and wetland drying that decreases fish and waterfowl habitats. Increase in shrubs combined with the recent trend of low snowfall also decreases albedo (reflectivity of the sun's radiation), which means more heat is retained at the Earth's surface, contributing to even more local warming effects (Hinzman et al. 2005).

These ecological changes have occurred in years with an average warming of 1.9 to 2.2°C (Alaska Climate Research Center 2009a). Projections of continued warming point to further long-term negative impacts on local subsistence resources and practices. For example, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment projects further changes to freshwater ecosystems. Decreased summer water levels of rivers and lakes, increased sedimentation, decreased spawning grounds for cold-water species, and increased mortality and decreased growth and productivity from parasites are all likely to affect salmon, which make up 57% of the wild food harvest in the YK region, and the nonsalmon fish that account for another 13% (Wrona et al. 2005).

The specific impacts of these changes are hard to predict and must be considered in the context of a whole host of social-ecological factors and changes (McCarthy and Long Martello 2005). However, given the high replacement costs for these resources, any reduction in their accessibility must be considered a serious threat to the region's viability.

ENERGY COSTS AND SUBSISTENCE IN RURAL INTERIOR ALASKA

Energy costs in Alaska in general and rural Alaska in particular are much higher than the U.S. average. Energy use per capita is also much higher in Alaska (1,186 million

BTUs/year) than in the rest of the country (341 million BTUs/year) (Energy Information Administration 2004), making the higher costs even more difficult for residents. At the 2005 Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention, energy costs and their effect on rural communities was one of three key issues forming the theme of the convention. Rural residents noted that the costs of heating oil and gasoline made direct use of those products extremely expensive. In addition, all goods that have to be shipped in to rural communities are more expensive because of higher transportation costs (Dillon 2005a; 2005b). Freight costs to rural Alaska can be as high as \$1 per pound for perishable foodstuffs, making locally procured subsistence foods all the more important. If energy costs make subsistence practices cost-prohibitive, the push towards urban areas may become stronger.

In Anchorage, new migrants from rural Alaska often cite three reasons for their move: rising prices, lack of educational opportunities, and better employment opportunities in urban areas (de Marban 2006). However, it is energy costs that account for the recent upswing in rural-to-urban migration, according to a representative from the Alaska Native Policy Center interviewed by de Marban. One family who left Bethel for Anchorage noted inflation as the primary reason for their move. "The food was outrageously expensive, the gas was bad—it was just astronomical to live out there" (in de Marban 2006). This family had two earners and was still not able to put any money into savings due to their monthly costs.

Residential electrical energy costs in the Yukon-Koyukuk census region are also high. Subsidies, while available, are also susceptible to political pressure. For instance, 2006 was the first year that the state fully funded its Power Cost Equalization (PCE) Program, a subsidy for electrical rates in rural villages. In testimony to a Senate hearing on coastal erosion in Alaska, Representative Reggie Joule explained the politics of subsidies to rural Alaska: "There are also a few legislators who believe that no money should be spent in rural areas and that threatened village residents should simply move to the city" (U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations 2004). Whether from coastal erosion or exorbitant costs, life in rural Alaska is becoming more expensive and subsidies to relieve the burden are politically vulnerable at both state and federal levels. The Denali Commission, a federal agency that

1. Based on interviews in the YK region conducted by McNeeley between 2004 and 2005.

supports infrastructure development in Alaska, has been targeted by fiscal conservatives. Critics view infrastructure services to small Alaska villages as pork-barrel politics (Dillon 2007).

Because energy infrastructure in Alaska villages was largely built under low oil prices, few alternatives to diesel power generation exist. Some villages throughout Alaska have begun to investigate other sources of energy production; Arctic Village and Venetie are investigating solar energy, and Galena has completed a feasibility study for a small nuclear power plant. However, prices remain high across rural Alaska. In Table 1, we report the average cost of fuel, the PCE subsidy, and the average residential rate of energy per kilowatt hour in Yukon-Koyukuk villages. Compare these to an average 13.53 cents/kwh in Fairbanks. At a conservative residential usage rate of 3,000 kwh/year, customers in Ruby would pay \$1,260 in electrical costs over a year, versus \$402 in Fairbanks.

Number two diesel, the fuel most commonly used for heating homes and buildings and generating electricity, cost an average of \$3.34 per gallon in Interior Alaska in 2005 (Alaska DCCED 2005). However, prices were as high as \$5.40 per gallon in some communities. In 2006, Saylor and Haley (2006) reported that home heating costs across rural Alaska averaged 10% of median household income, as compared to 3.1% in Anchorage and 4.8% in other urban areas on the road system. Some relief is available for this category of energy cost as low income households in Alaska may be eligible for the federal Heating Assistance Program subsidy. Gasoline, used to fuel the snowmachines that are the primary vehicle for wintertime transportation and subsistence hunting in rural Alaska, cost an average of \$4.36 per gallon in interior Alaska in

the first half of 2007 but ranged from \$2.89 per gallon to \$7.00 per gallon depending on the community (Alaska DCCED 2007). Given the low incomes in rural areas, costs that take away from the economic benefits of subsistence practices, in combination with generally high living costs, could have very detrimental effects on rural communities, reducing their viability and increasing their vulnerability by lowering the ability of residents to support themselves. The Alaska Department of Commerce found that “[s]ignificantly increased fuel and energy costs, combined with high unemployment rates, limited local economies, and local governments struggling to provide basic local services continue to present rural Alaska communities and households with challenging circumstances with no long-term solution in sight” (Alaska DCCED 2007). Increasing costs in multiple energy sectors will likely continue to serve as a migration push, especially to the most vulnerable sectors of the population—single parents, the disabled or chronically ill, and the elderly.

Subsistence practices, of course, go far beyond mere economic benefits. The practices of subsistence harvesting are critical to the survival of Alaska Native cultures and languages (Active 1998; Anderson 1998; Nelson 1973; Thornton 1998). If costs become prohibitive, more rural residents may be forced out of the region and into cities, disrupting not only rural populations but also entire cultures.

HOST COMMUNITY EFFECTS

Migration affects not just the home community—which will need to grapple with population decline, changing demographics, and culture shift—but also the host com-

Table 1. Residential energy costs in the YK census region

Villages	Average price of fuel FY 2006 (\$)	Power source	kwh/gallon	Average residential rate (cents/kwh)	Average residential rate with PCE* (cents/kwh)
Galena	3.06	diesel	13.24	33.00	15.19
Huslia	2.82	diesel	13.46	54.16	19.87
Kaltag	2.28	diesel	13.94	48.59	19.60
Koyukuk	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nulato	2.40	diesel	13.15	52.33	19.78
Ruby	n/a	diesel	n/a	65.00	42.00
Fairbanks	n/a	coal	n/a	14.00	n/a
Anchorage	n/a	mixed	n/a	13.40	n/a

* PCE = Power Cost Equalization Program. Based on data from FY 2006 Statistical Report of the Power Cost Equalization Program, Alaska Department of Energy, <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/pub/FY06PCEreport.pdf>.

munity, which will need to integrate new populations into the social, economic, and environmental systems of the community without harming new or existing residents in the process. For example, a rapid rise in migration to urban centers since World War II left urban planners and politicians scrambling to provide adequate community services and housing for new residents (Graves and Graves 1974) with the unintended outcome of urban sprawl that has had consequences for land use, transportation, and air quality in many urban regions. Greenwood et al. (1991) note the lack of attention paid to host community vulnerabilities and adaptations in migration studies. Important host-community questions include the impact of new residents on the job market (Todaro 1969), ability to house and educate new residents (Graves and Graves 1974), and the environmental impacts of population growth—particularly in regions already experiencing environmental vulnerabilities (Hunter 2005; Lonergan 1998). For the purposes of this paper, we have selected a sample of possible areas of vulnerability that Fairbanks may experience in light of the scenario outlined above.

Fairbanks provides an opportunity to examine the issues that may face urban Alaska under a new migration regime and how those issues could be addressed through targeted planning. When Fairbanks last boomed, during the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline in the mid-1970s, the most common fears were increased crime, increased stress on welfare systems, and the environmental stress of adding many new vehicles to a community already struggling with poor air quality (Dixon 1978). In fact, major crime rates did not rise, new migrants looking for work on the pipeline did not tend to use the welfare system, and traffic planning was effective in addressing downtown air quality issues (Dixon 1978). However, some problems did arise with a rapid increase in population and may again be relevant with an influx of population from rural Alaska. Housing and unemployment both became issues during the boom. Although the borough was able to address the primary environmental issue of the time—air quality—other environmental issues related to land use and climate change are likely to arise with rapid population growth.

Fairbanks is preparing to grow—both physically and economically—and expects a population of 100,000 by 2018, if not sooner (FNSB Community Planning Department 2005). The community is also aware of and concerned about many of the potential effects of climate change, as evidenced by a 2006 resolution that “recognizes a responsibility to develop a community under-

standing of the potential impacts, risks, and opportunities of climate change and learn what local actions can be taken and then consider appropriate steps to address these issues” (FNSB 2006). However, this resolution focuses predominantly on the physical threats from climate change and on possible mitigation strategies—as opposed to adaptation strategies such as planning for demographic shifts. The recently adopted Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) provides a possible roadmap for Fairbanks’ growth but does not necessarily address issues specific to an influx of people from rural Alaska. In the following section, we review employment availability, housing affordability and availability, and some aspects of the environmental health of the region under a scenario of in-migration from rural Alaska.

EMPLOYMENT

New migrants into Fairbanks (and other urban areas) may be leaving rural communities because of lack of economic opportunities combined with reduction in subsistence viability. Therefore, they are likely to be seeking employment in the host community. In order to accommodate new migrants, the host community requires a growing economy capable of producing enough jobs for those seeking work. An unfortunate outcome of some rural-to-urban migration has been rising unemployment rates in urban areas as more people move to an area than there are jobs to employ them (Todaro 1969). An important component of creating jobs for those seeking work is to ensure that jobs are spread across the economy and not concentrated in one sector, so that jobs are available at a variety of skill and education levels and in a diversity of fields.

The unemployment rate for the FNSB overall was 5.8% in 2006, which is down from a recent high of 7.0% in 2003 and slightly down from a rate of 6.0% in 2000 (FNSB Community Research Center 2007). Alaska Natives are more likely to have jobs if they live in urban areas (46% of urban Natives are employed while 36% in remote rural and 19% in other rural areas are employed) (Goldsmith et al. 2004). An important question is how much job experience new migrants from rural Alaska might bring to the city—this is one way to gauge their ability to compete for available jobs. The low levels of rural employment may indicate that rural residents have less job experience than their urban counterparts.

Education rates are another possible measure of ability to compete. Alaska Native education rates are climbing. In

2000, 75% of Alaska Natives had high-school diplomas; 35% of women had some college credit; 26% of men had some college credit; and 6% of Alaska Natives had college degrees (Goldsmith et al. 2004). However, this compares to 91.8% of the FNSB population with at least a high-school diploma and 27% with a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Both lower education levels and less job experience put new in-migrants at a competitive disadvantage when looking for work in Fairbanks.

Availability of jobs may become an issue if more people move into Fairbanks—although a larger population may also spur more development and more demand for labor. In recent years, this has been true for the FNSB. As the population of the FNSB increased from 83,809 in 2001 to 85,930 in 2004 (FNSB Community Research Center 2005), an increase of 2,121 people, jobs in the borough increased from 34,700 to 37,200 (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2005)—an increase of 2,500 over the same time frame.

Job diversity in Fairbanks is an issue under consideration in the new Regional Comprehensive Plan. At present, 30% of all jobs in the FNSB are government-related. The next most common industry is trade, transportation, and utilities (which includes retail, wholesale, air, and ground transportation), which provides 20% of the borough's jobs. Education and health services and leisure and hospitality both contribute 11% of local jobs (FNSB Community Research Center 2007). Construction is the fifth-ranked industry with 8% of jobs. However, the industries with the greatest growth (most recent statistics are from 2004–2005) are natural resources and mining, manufacturing, and financial activities (FNSB Community Research Center 2007)—so employment diversity in the region may change in the coming years.

The need to both create new jobs and diversify the local economy was addressed in the FNSB RCP—demonstrating that the community is aware of the need to strengthen its economy in several ways. The goal for job creation is to establish the borough as the center of economic activity for interior Alaska. Some of the proposals for economic growth include increasing the borough's role in supporting statewide energy development; developing and maintaining Fairbanks as the transportation hub for the Interior; and emphasizing development and expansion of mining, local manufac-

turing, agriculture, tourism, conventions and hospitality, and forest-related businesses (FNSB Community Planning Department 2005).

Because new industries will create new jobs and new kinds of jobs, the borough has also recognized the need to train the local population to work in new industries. The RCP proposes that the borough define necessary employee skills and provide training for local residents in conjunction with employers, support increased minority participation, and encourage the provision of day-care service to support employment (FNSB Community Planning Department 2005). Alaska Native-specific vocational training programs are also available through the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) and may help new migrants to Fairbanks integrate into the local job market much faster and more successfully. The FNA program supports people while they complete two-year certificate programs through the University of Alaska Fairbanks and its Tanana Valley Campus. At present, sixty-six people are enrolled in FNA's program. FNA did not have a cap on enrollment in the program, making it an excellent resource for new migrants from rural Alaska.

The FNSB has thus far more than kept up with job creation and has good ideas about how to continue this trend. Some areas of concern are availability of jobs if people are not already skilled or experienced. This gap in job preparation may leave the community vulnerable to rising urban unemployment rates as more people move into the city in search of work. However, the availability of job training through both local government and nonprofits may greatly alleviate that vulnerability.

HOUSING

When Fairbanks boomed in the mid-1970s, one consequence was the increase in substandard housing in the region. As housing prices rose rapidly and housing availability shrank, many residents who could no longer afford standard housing in the area “ended up living in saunas, garages, Quonset huts, partially-built or partially destroyed dwellings, storage sheds, tents or other types of unconventional housing” (Dixon 1978). The legacy of these unconventional, but resourceful, dwellings is clearly visible in the region, and much of the unconventional construction has continued due to a lack of building codes outside of the

2. The City of Fairbanks has adopted the International Building Code 2000 Edition, with amendments for use within city limits. In the FNSB, outside city limits, the borough does not require building codes for personal residences, although houses financed by banks may be required to meet standards acceptable to the financial institution.

Fairbanks city limits.² Other communities have also noted similar concerns about housing availability. In a study of the effects of migration from rural to urban areas in the Northwest Territory, Canada, in the 1990s, Gardner (1994) found that adequate housing for new migrants would be a significant problem for the host communities.

Housing seemed to become more available in Fairbanks between 2001 and 2006. There was a 34% increase in housing availability during that time. However, by 2006 the first-quarter rental vacancy rate was an “almost non-existent” 1.5%. One year earlier, the vacancy rate was 9.8% (FNSB Community Research Center 2007). Local realtors attribute the drop in availability to the effects of soldiers stationed on nearby Ft. Wainwright returning from duty in Iraq coinciding with a loss of housing on the base (Eshleman 2007)—highlighting the need to plan for growth on a regional scale. Home sales rose 14% from 2003 to 2006 with prices rising 34% during the same period (FNSB Community Research Center 2007).

Differences exist between Alaska Natives and non-Natives in terms of types of housing occupied. Sixty-three percent of Alaska Native housing units were rentals compared to 46% for the FNSB general population, therefore the decline in rental vacancies may disproportionately affect new Alaska Native migrants if the trend continues.

Average monthly rent in 2006 was \$989. The most recent median household income (2005) was \$4,713 per month (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). On average, rents don’t exceed 30% of monthly income—the level at which households are considered overburdened. However, median household income statistics from 1999 (the most recent available) show that levels range greatly—from \$25,901 to \$62,917—depending on census tract. At least some residents are likely to fall into the housing overburdened category. The median household income for Alaska Natives in the FNSB (in 1999) was \$31,046 or \$2,587 per month. With an average rental cost of \$989, monthly housing costs could cost Alaska Natives well over 30% of monthly household income.

As in the 1970s population boom, if population exceeds housing space, rents may increase before new housing is created. Affordable housing may need to become a priority for local government so as not to create a situation, as during the oil boom, where the lowest income people find themselves without adequate housing. According to the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), a state-run federally funded housing program, in summer 2007

they were at or above capacity in their two family housing programs. AHFC maintains 253 family housing units but had approximately eighty-five families on a waiting list. AHFC also provides subsidy vouchers for eligible residents to live in market housing. As of summer 2007, the corporation was over-issued on vouchers with 349 families using them and another 200 families on the waiting list. The FNSB has identified the need to provide affordable housing in its RCP, stating that it “encourage[s] measures that provide residents access to safe and affordable housing” (FNSB Community Planning Department 2005). However, the RCP does not outline any specific actions it will take to increase affordable housing in the community. An argument can also be made that a lack of federal government funding for low-income housing is responsible for the shortages in that market (Levy 2006) and it is the federal government’s responsibility to remedy the situation. The current shortage in both the general rental market and the affordable housing market point to a need to address these issues before the FNSB population increases any further.

In addition to providing affordable housing, another consideration is the physical placement of affordable housing developments. When areas are developed with only affordable housing, they tend to form areas of concentrated poverty. These areas within cities have been linked to a range of human costs, including reduction of private-sector investment, an increase in prices for low-income households due to lack of commercial competition, inhibition of educational opportunities because schools are usually funded by local property taxes, higher levels of crime, and political and societal divisions (Berube and Katz 2005). The potential for the creation of “shanty towns” during the population boom associated with the pipeline was a serious concern for Fairbanks lawmakers at the time (Dixon 1978). Today, with increasing understanding of the effects of concentrated poverty on residents of those areas as well as the broader community, the FNSB has addressed the issue through the RCP. The borough specifically notes that specialized housing intended to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, low-incomes, and the elderly “should not be congregated or clustered in any specific area” (FNSB Community Planning Department 2005). The understanding that affordable housing must be carefully integrated into the community as a whole is an important first step in providing safe and affordable housing and will serve the community well when, or if, additional housing is added to the community.

LAND USE

As Dixon (1978) noted, a combination of population boom and housing shortage pushed the creation of substandard housing on the outskirts of Fairbanks in the mid-1970s. Even as Fairbanks' growth has slowed over the past thirty years, its reach beyond the urban core has continued. It is important to note that growth beyond current boundaries is likely to continue under any population growth scenario—not just rural-to-urban migration—and should be considered as a general issue facing urban areas in Alaska. However, the issue of population growth in fragile or hazardous areas is a topic under consideration in the migration literature (Hunter 2005; Lonergan 1998) and is, therefore, included in this paper for that reason.

Population growth combined with a shortage of affordable housing might again stretch the boundaries of Fairbanks further into previously undisturbed and possibly permafrost-rich lands. Besides the adverse effects of urban sprawl on land use and air quality, building on permafrost soils can have disastrous effects for the structure, including subsidence, damaged foundations, and other structural problems. If climate change continues to contribute to permafrost melting in the Arctic, these effects may multiply in the Fairbanks region. Across the state, infrastructure damaged by climate change is expected to have a real economic cost for communities. Estimates of the costs to repair and maintain infrastructure damaged by melting permafrost, flooding, and erosion are 10–20% higher than usual over the next thirty years (Larsen et al. 2007). This estimate considers only public facilities such as roads, airports, and schools. Costs for damage to private residences would be borne by the owner and insurance companies.

One of the concerns already identified by the borough through the RCP is development pressures on marginal lands and the need to balance development to meet human needs with mitigation of adverse environmental impacts. The strong ethic of individualism and personal choice in the region appears to inhibit strong regulations about the placement and sizing of developments. In addition, maintenance of a rural lifestyle, demonstrated by large lot sizes sited away from other development or residences, is an important consideration for many residents. However, some specific recommendations from the RCP do indicate a general movement towards slowing the rate of sprawl and protecting sensitive areas from heavy development. The plan calls

for discouraging intensive residential infill on marginal, permafrost-rich lands and limiting residential development on lands with a slope greater than 20% (FNSB Community Planning Department 2005).

An important consideration also being addressed by the borough is the need to increase population density in the downtown area in order to slow the rate of sprawl and to make the best use of existing infrastructure (water and sewer lines, for example). Rather than approach this goal with regulations, the borough is attempting to achieve it with incentives. While incentive-based plans, as opposed to regulations, may be less effective in the short term, within the context of a politically independent community, incentives may be an appropriate approach because they attract less political and economic opposition and rely on individual choice for their success. One set of actions recommended in the RCP is to develop programs and physical structures in downtown that encourage use beyond the regular workday such as theaters, restaurants, housing, recreation, and waterfront amenities including access to recreational trails (FNSB Community Planning Department 2005). These increased and improved amenities in the downtown core may help to attract further investment in the downtown. The borough is in the planning process of an intensive downtown revitalization effort designed to bring residents and business back into the central core (Eshleman 2006). This planning must integrate a range of residences and employment opportunities for all residents and meet, in particular, the specific health, educational, and family needs of the rural Alaska Native migrants transitioning into the urban locale in response to environmental and economic stressors.

Whether population growth in the FNSB is due to rural-to-urban migration, in-migration from other states, or natural increases, the reality of planning for growth that takes into consideration the environmental health and environmental state of the region will be critical to long-term viability of the community.

CONCLUSIONS

The community of Fairbanks is clearly planning for growth in the next twenty years. It is addressing issues of economic development and diversity, protection of marginal lands and slowing the growth of the physical footprint of the community, and revitalization of the downtown area which will support both of the other two goals. However, two critical issues remain in the ability of Fairbanks, and

likely other urban Alaska cities, to adapt to a wave of rural-to-urban migration. First, recommendations included in the RCP are intended to guide development plans but are not a guarantee of their implementation. Like the 2006 Awareness of Climate Change resolution (FNSB 2006), implementation of the recommendations contained in the RCP will require both financial capabilities and political will. Second, the migrants the region seems best prepared for are those moving to the area to take specific jobs—particularly in the oil industry or in other industries being courted by the area. An increase in rural-to-urban migrations within the state may present challenges for which this city is not prepared. Rural migrants might not have jobs awaiting them upon their arrival, the average lower educational experience of Alaska Natives might require additional job training for new migrants, and the lower average annual income for rural Alaska Natives might mean that new migrants are less financially able to buy or rent housing immediately upon arrival. More focus on job training programs and providing affordable housing are two ways the borough and city could help ease the transition for migrants and reduce stress on local social service agencies and the Fairbanks community in general.

The trend toward urban growth and rural-to-urban migration is clear around the world, and climate change appears to be playing an increasingly large role in migration decisions, particularly when combined with existing stressors like rising energy costs. As some communities become more vulnerable to multiple stressors, others must begin to plan to reduce their own vulnerabilities, integrate new residents, and stabilize the population, economy, and environment of the region. Foresight and integrative planning could help host communities avoid some of the challenges of rural-to-urban migration such as an increase in the unemployment rate for the area, rapid development of housing that does not meet adequate standards for humans or the environment, and environmental degradation related to large urban populations. While Fairbanks has considered many of these issues, its focus on in-migration from outside of the state directly related to economic development may leave it unprepared for the unique needs of indigenous rural migrants from within the state. Scenario building, as done above, can help host communities consider who is likely to migrate, on what time scale and in what numbers, what needs must be met, and what attributes new migrants will bring to their host community that can contribute to strengthening the community as a whole.

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ALASKA NATIVE ELDERS' VIEWS OF ABUSE: THE TRADITION OF HARMONY, RESPECT, AND LISTENING

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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.

KEYWORDS: Alaska Native culture, aging, gerontology

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.¹ Until that occurs, more and more Alaska Native elderly will be forced to reside where services for them are available.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Key informant interviews were conducted with fifteen individuals from Yup'ik/Cup'ik, Athabascan, Aleut, Iñupiat, Alutiiq, and Tlingit heritage, comprised of three Alaska Native elders from each cultural group, about their perceptions of abuse of elders in Alaska today. Directly addressing "abuse" with the respondents did not result in an open discussion of the issue because, quite likely, it was too direct a question for such a highly charged area of familial life. A team member suggested using the more culturally appropriate terms "respect and disrespect" rather than the term "abuse."² Each individual respondent was asked how they defined an elder, how respect was traditionally shown to elders, how they would define disrespect and how Alaska Native communities could address issues related to disrespect for Alaska Native elderly.

The participants were primarily from urban or hub areas of Alaska. Snowball sampling was used to locate and engage the respondents in the project. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects. The ages of the respondents ranged from fifty-five to eighty-seven years. The minimum age of fifty-five years of age was chosen to follow guidelines for age limitations established for federally funded programs for the elderly.

Thurman et al. (1998) stated that there has been a history of mistrust for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people with regards to the government, health officials, and mental health providers. Issues of confidentiality, quality of care, and depersonalization are prevalent. Due to the history of mistrust, it is vital to use American Indian or Alaska Native recognized culture bearers, as were the respondents in this study, in order to receive the most open and perhaps useful information from Alaska Native research participants. The respondents engaged

in this project are valued within the Native community and have acquired advanced knowledge about their cultural norms and values. Some of the respondents have held highly visible political and directive positions in local, tribal, and health agencies. Several of the elders engaged in the project are often invited to speak at local, statewide, and sometimes international conferences and workshops and are viewed as leaders in their community of origin. Several of the respondents are known as Alaska Native storytellers, healers, and spiritual leaders and are involved in teaching indigenous knowledge to their tribe, community, and families.

Elders were given a brief introduction to the purpose of the project. Each respondent signed an informed consent form. The interviews were held either in the elder's home or in a public place. The duration of the interviews was approximately one hour, and each respondent received a \$50 gift. The interviews were semistructured with the same set of questions asked of each respondent. Each interview was recorded and transcribed at a later date.

The open-ended interviews were analyzed using a grounded theory approach to interpreting qualitative data (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Grounded theory allows for the hypothesis or major analytical themes to be derived directly from the raw data. As the coding process began, concepts emerged from the data and were linked together. The conceptual frame that emerged was refined into the hypotheses. These hypotheses were then validated and examples of direct quotes from the Alaska Native elders were used to support the conceptualizations.

The aim was to allow the elders to describe in their own words what respect and disrespect mean, how they are manifested, and how to address the issue of abuse. This approach allowed for a systematic analysis of the words, phrases, and concepts described by these culture bearers.

Three levels of analysis were used within the grounded theory paradigm (open coding, axial coding, and selected coding) to break down the data, conceptualize it, and put it back together. Open coding allows for broad themes from the data to emerge; axial coding allows for similar themes to be merged together into subcategories; and selected coding allows for refining, filtering, and integrating the data into an explanation or theory that is grounded in the data. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and downloaded into the qualitative software ATLAS.ti.

1. Branch stated that there has been an ongoing decrease in the number of state grants, as well as a lack of adequate Medicaid reimbursement, resulting in the unavailability of personal care services in many areas of the state.
2. Jim LaBelle, Research Associate, National Resource Center for Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Elders, Anchorage.

Cultural consultants from each cultural region were engaged to provide guidance in understanding concepts, cultural beliefs, historical events, oral stories, terminology, and rituals. The cultural consultants were selected for their advanced knowledge of Alaska Native cultural ways, their ability to speak their Native language, and their connection to the elder wisdom. When the final draft of the report was developed, the consultants were contacted once again to verify the accuracy of the analysis.

The cultural consultants were given \$100 for their participation in the project.³ In addition, to ensure inter-rater reliability, an independent reviewer analyzed a sample of the interviews and found results similar to the findings presented in this paper.⁴

EMERGENT THEMES

Several key themes emerged from the above 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.⁵ They explained the role of an elder in the following manner:

...elderly is when a person is old. But the elder is a wise person because they experienced life, they went through the mill...

I think elder sometimes can be young. Elder is the one that is mature, has wisdom to make right decisions, had experience in life...

...I think an elder is integrated in your tribe that’s older than you, or you have the great knowledge of your affiliation of dance and stories. We’d honor them...

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, as explained by participants in the following manner:⁶

...It doesn’t necessarily have to be a person who has reached a certain age...

Some people age and grow old and whatever happens, they end up dying...

...there’s elders (elderly) who people don’t show respect because they’re abusive, maybe they drink too much, they don’t do things right...abuse their family...

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.

...It’s a curious way how it happens because the elders don’t come forward and start telling people what to do. They wait until they’re asked...

3. Cultural consultants: Floyd Guthrie, Tlingit; Rita Pitka-Blumenstein, Yup’ik; Anna Frank, Athabascan; Vickie Hikes, Iñupiat; and Larry Merculieff, Aleut.

4. Shelly A. Wiechelt, Ph.D., research assistant professor, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York.

5. Hamilton-Cannelos (1986) stated that chronological age alone does not necessarily make one an “elder.” For her project, the Elder respondents were identified by the community as Elders due to their advanced knowledge of traditional norms and values.

6. In the NRC report *Conferences of Alaska Native Elders; Our Dignified View of Aging*, Alutiiq elders stated that respect is based upon chronological age. Alutiiq elders are held in high esteem and given special treatment given their advanced chronological age.

... An elder in life is there and is willing to help and has a wealth of knowledge and natural education, is willing to pass it on, if they are asked. They are not going to intrude on someone's life. There's a triggering mechanism, I guess, you have to ask for help or advice or assistance...

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 non-verbal request for spiritual help was implicit in the action of offering the food to the elder. There was no need for words.⁷

You don't just go over and ask them... Bringing the food and then those elders would advise you on who to talk to... So we asked them in the traditional way, just bringing that food, taking a plate of food. You put food on it and bring it to an elder and you give it to them... So we asked them in the traditional way, just bringing that food.

...these outward signs or symbols that indicate a deeper knowledge and a deeper understanding of the social, spiritual needs of people. It's an interesting thing...our spiritual and social inquiries and needs. The outward sign in this case was just bringing that food on a plate and not saying anything...with that plate of food and put it down there and sat down. He looked at it, looked at me. We didn't say a lot. But it was a sign. After he looked at me a couple times he kind of got the message. I could see it.

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.

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL VALUES: EMERGENT THEMES FROM GROUNDED THEORY RESEARCH

"LISTENING"

Of the fifteen elders engaged in the project, thirteen mentioned the importance of listening. Three elders and several cultural consultants identified the tradition of listening as *the most important value of Alaska Natives*. This finding supports the research reported in Fienup-Riordan (2007) regarding

Yup'ik "words of wisdom." Further study of this emphasis on "listening" in all Alaska Native cultures is needed.

...listen...that falls into our number one value which is respect for young people and ourselves and our elders...

This...listening and hearing...this respect is deeply ingrained in all indigenous peoples, this respect.

Many elaborated upon the process of the oral tradition or listening, which involves intent, mindfulness, observation, expansion of intuitive knowledge, and immersion. The majority of the elders interviewed affirmed the importance of "the tradition of listening" as a highly structured system that holds an essential association to the relationship between respect and disrespect of elderly Alaska Natives.

...It is good to pay attention; it is good to listen to others.

...(elders) tell you something over and over long enough, it's gonna make sense. Grandpa said things over and over...he felt strongly in his traditional values...

Vital to teaching the tradition of listening is the discipline of the physical body and mind. Restricting body movements and giving exclusive attention to the elder storyteller is a component of the tradition of listening. Self-discipline and delayed gratification are strengthened in this process while the mind and body are quieted. During storytelling, children are strengthening positive thinking skills by connecting with the possibilities in life. Their cognitive ability for creative imagery is enhanced.

...[in the past]...when our elders are talking, we can't move [around], we don't whisper, we don't look around, we just stay [still] and listen. We did that because we first heard it in our home that was taught to us in our home. At that time, the elders, the grandpas and grandmas, used to talk to children including their own grandchildren, with their playmates, they would sit, no sound, no one gets up to drink water, no one goes out (leaves). That's how much they respected their elders...

While the above statements identify how the listener completes the reciprocal relationship between elder communicating knowledge necessary for the next generation and the listener, much more than a didactic relationship between

7. Sometimes Athabascan elders do offer unsolicited advice, but do so in a culturally appropriate manner. Such a culturally appropriate manner is to voice the advice indirectly with nuances that might be indiscernible to an outsider, but are usually loud and clear to other (younger) Athabascans (Phyllis Fast, personal communication, 2008).

wisdom giver and wisdom receiver surrounds the cultural construction of speaking-hearing among Alaska Natives.

STABILITY AND HARMONY THROUGH ANCESTRAL WISDOM

The elders provide balance and harmony within the community through their connection to the ancestral wisdom of the past. In the past, when harmony was lacking in a community, the entire community was at risk. The interdependency among the members of the community helped Alaska Natives survive in a very harsh environment.

Respect I think had much to do to enable all of us to live in as much harmony as possible.

Without this connection, there was an increased lack of equilibrium and constancy among people, which could result in an unbalanced earth, as explained by an Athabascan elder. There is an Arapaho proverb that states, "When we show respect for other living things, they respond with respect for us." This proverb supports the corresponding unbalanced nature of the earth, in response to unbalanced people.

We're all supposed to be balanced. And, if we aren't balanced then things start going wrong, they start going awry. People notice that things are out of balance...it's not only in your personal lives but it spreads out across the earth. The earth itself, if it's out of balance it will put its self back in balance through its own natural processes; governments, everything else, in all things.

The tradition of listening gives birth to respect of elders and vice-versa, which provides direction and strength *to the community*. Several of the Yup'ik elders used the likeness or analogy of a boat without an anchor as a metaphor for the connection and stability that one can derive from listening and learning to respect elders.

You're the one that operates that drifting all over; the boat and you learn how to anchor it. So if you don't listen to your elders, you're like a boat without a driver, without an anchor, and it drifts all over. That's why elders used to tell us to listen when they tell stories.

...This is what stability...; respect the elders like an anchor line on a boat. It keeps the boat safe; prevents it from drifting aimlessly all over the place; Likewise, the young people they drift aimlessly all

over the place, twiddling their fingers. Don't know where they've been and don't know where they are, where to go.

Thus, community harmony and balance cannot occur without the tradition of elders speaking and other members listening. But more is involved in this integrative view of community, authority, wisdom, and listening. What does "listen" mean?

LISTENING AS A CULTURAL PARADIGM

The skills related to the Alaska Native listening paradigm may be attained through repeatedly listening to the stories of the elders, which have been handed down from ancestors. The experience of listening to elder storytelling, or the oral tradition, allows for observation, development, and self-directed performance of required skills. Attainment of the skills involves a very mentally active process by which cognitive abilities are strengthened; and, if one doesn't listen to the elders, one learns painfully by trial and error. It is essential for elders to pass the traditional knowledge to the next generation so that the members of Alaska Native cultural traditions can have long, productive, and joyful lives.

...If I don't listen to my parents, my teachers, I won't have nothing. I won't have knowledge...

... They say that if I listen to my parents, I will have long life, longer life, happiness. Otherwise, I won't have a long life. This is what I experienced...

Self-discipline and delayed gratification are strengthened in this process. Repetition of the stories increases the probability of the ability to recall the story at a later time, and the meaning can be applied to the ever-changing situations, emotions, and needs of the listeners. Redundancy in storytelling and ritual actions, especially regarding sacred oral texts, is a way for the group to overcome "noise" that competes for the hearer's attention. In Alaska today, "noise" would include western notions of human value (individual, unshared wealth or harvested food), entertainment (television, radio, music, sports stardom, drugs, alcohol, etc.). When experiencing a time of difficulty, connecting with the teachings from the stories will support the healing process.⁸

...learned by listening to the stories by the elders.
Go to storytelling and my mother storytelling

8. Hamilton-Cannelos (1986) described that for Yup'ik people the delay of gratification, self-discipline, and individual accountability are components of learning Yuuyaraq (becoming a human being) and are linked to the prevention of suicide.

every evening and learn to respect the elders by respecting them. We don't ask questions, we just listen. And these stories tell the same thing over and over....

That was our school by listening. They talk about the legends, myths, and the morals of the stories of how to have a good life. This is how to listen and pay attention.

... You just watch them and they never even watch you. If you make a mistake, you correct....

...the villages are dealing with a complex world right now...the elders completely understand....

So the elders always remind us. Like they point to me and say this man has eight great-grandchildren, maybe nine. They too have all the life skills, survival skills of the ancestors. They too have the answers, solutions that they would need to survive....

TRADITIONAL WISDOM IS EXPERIENCED OUTSIDE OF STORIES

The elders noted that, despite the historical disruptions to the dissemination of cultural knowledge experienced by Alaska Natives today, the wisdom has been protected and is available, not only in stories that elders tell but in the traditional food, songs, drumming, traditional language, and ceremonies of Native people. It is interesting to compare our findings with a recent reviewer's comment regarding how Yup'ik elders responded to viewing Yup'ik artifacts in a Berlin museum.

The Yup'ik delegation transformed anthropological material culture into moral teachings, ceremonial songs, hunting lore, dance steps, and vehicles for cultural pride....The enduring message of this book is to listen to the *qanruyutet* (teachings) of the ancestors and to return to a way of "living within the drum." This is a meaningful metaphor on which the elders linger: It is a way of living in harmony with one's community and being true to Yup'ik identity. (Fienup-Riordan 2007:111–115)

A Tlingit elder noted that the information is stored in the permanent memory of Alaska Natives in an almost mystical sense (that is, to be Native is to feel summoned when exposed to traditional values, drumming, etc.).

...when you eat Native food from your culture that you have never had before, your body knows and your spirit knows....

...That's what I hear, the Tlingits singing (Tlingit language). That's what it say, it all left us, they understand. It will be brought back again. So that's where I come in, is trying to remind the people. And let them listen to this song, when they open this box on knowledge and wisdom....

He [brother] said he could always hear the drums that called him and I told him the drums called me, too. Even if you're not raised around the culture, it's something in you that calls you and he felt it, too.

THE TRADITION OF LISTENING

The Alaska Native tradition of listening, as gleaned from these interviews, is holistic, balanced, and interconnected. The tradition of listening, which is crucial to cultures based on oral tradition, is connected with teaching through the stories, which have been passed from the ancestors through the elders. The stories contain the guidelines for the experience of living a happy life, enhancement of family cohesiveness, balance with the natural world, and ultimately survival. The tradition of listening is connected with the mental, spiritual, and physical balance within the individual, the community, and with the natural world.

LISTENING IS HOLISTIC

It is essential to take into consideration the interdependence among the parts, or a holistic perspective, when delving into the concept of listening from the Native worldview. The beliefs involved encompass the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the self. Balance and harmony with the natural world is maintained in this process. These interdependent quadrants of the being cannot be precisely separated.

From the western perspective, listening involves focusing on the cognitive act of hearing attentively, or the ability to hear and focus upon something.

...There is a real difference between hearing and listening....

...you should and you have to know the difference between listening and hearing. Hearing is just being able to hear noises, sounds, voices, whatever it is, and indicating that, yes, you hear something.

The tradition of listening goes much deeper than simply being attentive and hearing. It involves intent, mindfulness, observation, expansion of intuitive knowledge, and immersion. Listening involves opening your mind,

spirit, and heart so that the information becomes integrated into being.

Elders, they ask you to listen. The other thing is they ask you to open your mind. So what they're saying while you're listening will get to you so that you will put it in your mind in your memory to understand that you can reflect on later in life; it will come back to you.

The separation of the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of listening is inappropriate, from the Alaska Native listening paradigm.

... Our (Native) school is for the soul. It's no different than physical and spiritual things. Their anatomy is the same way, how you treat it...

... I think that the traditional and cultural ways of dealing with a person is that they recognized that a person is comprised of mind, body, and spirit conducted their life...⁹

LISTENING INVOLVES INTERCONNECTEDNESS AMONG COMMUNITY MEMBERS

It is also important to keep in mind that the self is viewed as encompassing others into the self, with an interdependent self having permeable boundaries and less differentiation (Berzoff et al. 1996; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Roland 1996). The individual is not the focus, but rather the entire group is the focus and how the individual supports the family and the tribe, and their connection to all people and the natural world.

... Peace in the community is very important; that's a Cup'ik value. Stick together, help each other. Here's something bad, too, from individuals.

... we're all connected. And ultimately we do see that we are all connected either earlier or later.

ELDERS AND THE TRADITION OF LISTENING

Elders take on the role of instructors and leaders within the oral tradition, teaching values. The values are intrin-

sically connected with becoming a healthy human being and help with maintaining a positive life-path and balance and harmony with the natural world. The elders stress the importance of mindfulness and learning by observation, which are components of the tradition of listening. Elders intuitively know when balance is needed and they will restore the balance by singing a song and/or telling a story.

... When elders are talking to you, you listen to them. They are your teachers...

This is our traditional education. Traditional education is subtle and indirect. You learn by observation and listening by people telling their experiences or stories.

... The stories and legends were methods for teaching us how we should live and how we shouldn't live...

BODY LANGUAGE AND THE TRADITION OF LISTENING

Increasing knowledge about body language is a fundamental element of the tradition of listening, according to the respondents in this study, and can serve as a protective factor. By attentively observing and immersing oneself in the tradition of listening, one can know others through their facial expressions, gestures, and movement. A Yup'ik elder described the manner in which these tools help a person throughout life to understand others and assist with emotions and health issues.

... how you learn to today, I'm an elder so when I'm working with the people, I do exactly what the elders told me. I watch their expressions, listen to their voice and, ah... and, ah, their facial and their gestures in their body movements. And you'll know if they're not telling you real things. That's why I do the healing by listening.

TRUSTING INSTINCTS AND INTUITION IN AN ORAL TRADITION CULTURE

The elders in this study emphasized that learning to trust one's instincts and intuition are necessary elements of the

9. Indigenous words for "listening" seem to reflect the above perspectives. In the *Comparative Eskimo Dictionary* by Fortescue, Jacobson, and Kaplan (1994:346) one finds the word "*tusilaag*—be hard of hearing or disobedient," as spoken in among eastern Canadian Inuit. The Inuit dialect has the word as *tusilyhaq*—"to become deaf." Obviously these words are variations of the same word, and likely the Canadian Inuit meaning is the full meaning of the "become deaf" word found in northern Inupiaq Alaska. That is, "to be hard of hearing" refers to the character of the listener—the listener is said to be disobedient. This is different among Alaska Inupiaq than a speaker not being able to be heard, which is simply due to loudness in the speaker's voice (not to the disposition of the disobedient listener): *tusaqsari*—"be able to hear" (op. cit. p. 345) Likewise, "listen" in north Alaska Inupiaq is *naalak*, and in the eastern Canadian Inuit the word is *naalag*, which means "listen, obey, be well-behaved" (op. cit. p. 206). There is something similar in Ahtna-Athabaskan, in the dictionary by James Kari (1990:547) where the word for "listen to, understand" is *O=d=i=Ø'+ts'al ts'aan*. This seems different than the physical act of "listening" in that "he is listening intently" is *dzitel'aa*, 'aa.

oral tradition, which can enhance balance and connectedness. One can then connect with her or his internal sense of knowing, which can guide the person through life's difficulties. When someone lacks the ability to listen and quiet oneself, there is lost the ability to recognize and trust one's instincts, or internal sense of knowing. In this way, the person becomes lost without an anchor. Without this connection, people are at risk.

We don't listen to our elders, our instincts. Instincts are our elders but we argue with our instincts. Yeah. So you question the instincts. That's the reason why elders used to tell us, "Don't ask questions."

Can you change the weather when it's bad? No. We are the natures. Our elders are nature. Our being is nature. Our instincts are our nature. But we learn to question: should I or shouldn't I? And when it says do it, we go ahead and don't do it. When our instincts says do it and we didn't do it then we feel I should've done it. I should've go ahead and do it, afterwards.

TRAINING IN LISTENING BEGINS BEFORE BIRTH AND DURING SLEEP

Elders thought that Native people begin teaching the tradition of listening before birth. The fetus, as a human being, is beginning to listen, observe, and connect with the feeling of love from the outside world. One of the Tlingit elders interviewed expressed it this way:

My mother used to sing this song while I was still inside of her. And she talks to the children, tells them the story. She's training the unborn child. So, she's a teacher. So when the baby is born, he already has a start....

It is the vibration of the love and compassion in the voice of the mother that has a positive effect upon the fetus, in the elder's view. The positive impact of the connection with the vibration from the voice can be connected with providing a safeguard for the unborn. An Aleut elder explains the process in the following manner:

And so the elders would talk to a fetus inside the womb because they know the vibration of their voice that is the most important aspect of what they're sharing. Especially when it comes from a place of love and compassion.

Elders noted that after birth the training continues, even while asleep. The elders will gently whisper the stories of the survival skills and ancient songs in the ear of the

slumbering child. A Tlingit elder told us that the child will retain the information in their unconscious memory or permanent memory:

I did not have grandparents. They died at an early age. So all I had was three great uncles. They conveyed all their skills, life skills, survival skills, answers, solutions. So I have it. They used to talk to me when I was asleep. Real quietly, talk in one ear then the other. So that's how they trained me.

...we grew up in an orphanage. ... They did not allow us to talk our language or sing songs, or tell stories. They forbade us. So we grew up without this knowledge. We do not know the songs, the stories... it's all in your memory, everything your great, great, great uncles all told you. It's lost in your memory. ... While the babies were asleep, the elders would be singing songs, ancient songs. They would tell stories while the children were asleep.

LISTENING AND RESPECT

There is a fundamental connection between the tradition of listening and the capacity to accept and express respect for the self and others. While the tradition of listening may seem simplistic on the surface, it is connected with a complex set of values and way of life. The multifaceted core set of behaviors, beliefs, and concepts are fundamentally interlinked with the development of respect and disrespect of Alaska Native elderly and the maintenance of balance and harmony with the natural world.

Respect toward an elder, to be able [to] listen to them. ... There is a real difference between hearing and listening. ... When you listen is when you take things inside of you, assess them. ...

The ability to listen in the traditional sense is ultimately connected to the ability to respect. When an individual lacks the ability to listen in the traditional manner, disrespect is present. Within this context, respect is intrinsically linked to the tradition of listening. From the Alaska Native paradigm, respect is understood to mean understanding, accepting, and following the ancestral wisdom as a guideline for the life-path.

Because I respect my grandmother, I learn from her. If I disrespected my grandmother from my father's side, I wouldn't listen to her, I wouldn't be gathering those things. Today, I still gather those, summer time for winter use; the sour docks, pond greens, and berries that grow. Because I respect my grandmother, I learn those things from her. She taught

me. If I didn't listen to her words; my late grandmother _____, I wouldn't be doing those things.

The Yup'ik, Iñupiat, and Tlingit elders and cultural consultants stated that the cycle of respect involves honor and love.¹⁰ The first component of the process begins with the external experience of being loved, honored, and respected by others. Next, the individual internalizes the experience. Finally, there is recognition and acceptance of those attributes by others. The cycle of respect begins by elders and adults giving love, honor, and respect to the young. The elders intrinsically know how to activate others and therefore recognize when the child is ready to listen and seize the opportunity to connect with the child.

...we [adults and elders] also need to listen to young people, they have challenges that we never had...we can learn from them too...

...Elders respect us first, before we learn to respect them...

Elders quietly discipline with honor and love toward children. Within this worldview, harsh words and physical punishment are inappropriate. When teaching children, elders speak from their heart, connect with the child, and project the vibration of love from their voice.

...grandfather...felt that was a very harmful thing to do to punish a child....

...my grandparents never hit me, they never jerked me....

RECOGNIZING INDIVIDUAL INTRINSIC WORTH AND VALUE

In order to respect others, elders observed that first one needs to recognize that people are valuable and worth love, honor, and respect. Without the recognition and acceptance within, one cannot engage in a reciprocal relationship with elders. When elders and adults treat the young with love, honor, and respect, the children can recognize and accept these things within themselves. They connect to it and ultimately begin the process of recognizing and accepting the natural world, elders, and others in a mutual, reciprocal manner.

How can you respect if you don't respect yourself?
Because you are very important person to yourself.

You come first. Then give your specialness [sic] to others.

It explains what the respect is. You have to learn to respect yourself; listen to you.

When an individual recognizes and accepts the love, honor, and respect internally, elders and others will intuitively recognize and accept these attributes. This is a reciprocal, cyclical process by which respect, love, and acceptance is shared, which creates harmony within, with others, and with the natural world.

...so respecting elders, things seemed to have harmony...

...the elders say that nothing is created on the outside unless it's created on the inside first...

There are exceptions to this process, which involve a caveat whereby the individual has experienced extreme disrespect for extended periods of time, either as a child or adult. When these individuals are given respect, they reject it because they have built up a defense of resistance and fear that protects them from the pain related to experiences of being disrespected. Disrespect involves lack of understanding and connection to the ancestral knowledge and traditions. The disrespectful person is separated and unbalanced from the natural world, ancestral wisdom, and the elders.

The elders gave detailed descriptions of the components of teaching the ancestral wisdom to the youth. Elders are concerned because some of these components of disciplining children have been forgotten or lost. When the children were removed from their homes during the boarding school era in Alaska, the cycle of loss of traditional parenting began. This cycle of loss continues today because many parents and grandparents do not know the ways of traditional parenting. Hamilton-Cannelos (1986) included this quote from a Yup'ik elder:

...They said to turn over the teaching of our children to them...Now look at our children!

TEACHING RESPECT THROUGH STORIES

Through the stories of survival, youth are taught how to respect the earth, the animals, the plants, the weather, and other people. The elders teach through the stories of ancestors and their own stories of survival. The oral tradition

10. The Aleut and Athabascan elders interviewed did not describe the respect in the same cyclic manner, yet this does not mean they do not hold the same belief. Follow up with the Aleut and Athabascan elders is needed to determine whether or not this is the case.

teaches about respect for all that surrounds us: the earth, animals, and families and communities.

That's the way. The reason why we have to respect the elders; they went through that path. They only tell you from their experience. They didn't go to school, they didn't write everything. They didn't write down instructions what their life is going to be. They only tell us through their experience how to survive. How to respect animal, plants, weather. That's the old world and now we're trying to go back to that old world and if it's a good path. Most of it is good path. . . .

Elders' narratives hold the sacred stories of Alaska Natives. The stories, told by elders that are handed down from their ancestors, teach how the world began, how to survive, social values, and cultural connections. The stories teach respect for the self, earth, animals, plants, and others. The stories comfort children.

...we figure things out through the stories; the morals to the stories. And they tell us not to make fun of people. Like story of the devil fish and the fox. And fox was telling you; you ugly, you're ugly. And cause of that. Fox turn red when he got embarrassed and then he went to somebody's campfire. That's why he got dog feet; when he got embarrassed, only one that's white is the end of the tail. Cause when she got embarrassed, she got red and then she got embarrassed, she put her face in the fire; charcoal and that's why he got black face, I mean dark face. So all those things like that is morals. It fires back when we do it to the human people. People, those elders are telling us stories and the morals are true. . . .

...Because it's comforting. Telling a preschool child of bedtime stories I think is the best time to remember things because you sleep through 'em; carry them in our sleep. In the world, the storytelling is biological instinct. I think it's same thing as building a campfire.

The survival skills are taught by listening, observation, and participation. Parents and grandparents teach the skills to the youth. Sometimes, grandparents take over parenting when alcohol and lack of parenting skills is involved within the family.

The Inupiat way; like I said my dad showed us by living it, 'course as a child growing up we didn't understand [that he was teaching us], we were participating. We went out hunting and fishing and then when there was somebody in need in the community he would go help that individual and so

we learned in a traditional manner by observing, participating, and listening.

The kids that I knew lost their parents due to alcohol. So it was the grandparents that raised them. So the grandparents conveyed, through their stories, conveyed all the life skills, survival skills to their grandchildren. They gave them life skills, survival skills. They gave them, conveyed all the answers, solutions that kids would need to survive in this era. Era that we call space age is still that way. So these are my teachers. They were not even thirty years old but they were raised by grandparents. So they had all the knowledge of the grandparents.

Teaching the traditions begins in the home, with parents and grandparents teaching children how to become "real human beings" (one who respects self, others, and the natural environment). The instruction needs to begin early in life to increase the probability of a positive impact upon the child.

Behavior is you start at home, how you treat your brothers and sisters and how you behave towards your mom and dad at home. At home that was first taught in the family; they teach their children. They don't want to teach their children until they get older. It's wrong, it's very, very wrong to teach them when they get older. It's now and the parents being example at home.

...I was so thankful that my first son caught a mukluk and also with my youngest son caught mukluk, the same thing happened. And those elder ladies and guys were so happy, they started teasing my boys that they were great hunters and my boys learn it from their father who used to love to hunt. Those things makes the elders spirit go up and make them happy. It also makes your children happy too, they have smiling face, they're happy. Little things like, put your family together more, I think.

The Yup'ik/Cup'ik elders mentioned that, in the past, males were trained in a community house, or *qasgiq*. The community house served as a place for ceremonies, singing, and dancing. When boys reached the age when they could leave their mothers, they moved to the *qasgiq* to be trained to become men. The community house served as a social and spiritual center.

[Traditionally] Eskimos do, they have what they call *qasriq*—a meeting place where elders are together, they talk to young people, young boys how they should hunt, respect the sea, respect the atmosphere, how it was made and watch the weather very closely. . . .

...Because Eskimos need to watch the weather very closely. Because the only way that time was by hunting; subsistence hunting. And when they are talking to young people, there are some boys that don't want to listen to elders are saying and when somebody, a young man steps out of [*qasriq*], try to go out, a guard, somebody stops them right there. And let them go back and listen to elders say about life. Okay, other things; let me see...and also they listen and follow the traditional Cup'ik teachings. They listen to the elders' fathers.

Traditionally, Yup'ik/Cup'ik girls were trained by their mothers, separate from the males. They were trained about becoming women, how to assist in the transmission of the culture, how to enhance their mates' hunting success, and how to preserve and prepare food for their family and community.

We [females] were taught at home and the boys were taught at *qasriq* [men's house]. And the boys would go to the *qasriq* and the men that were in there taught them also. As we know, *yuuyaraq*; the way of life.

It was my mother who taught me how to live life. What she taught me was about marriage life and how I should raise my children or how to prepare my husband when he's ready to go out to sea, out to land wintertime so he'll survive...

...And one thing; well this was what my mother used to tell me; now you're growing up and you have two brothers who are growing; this was when I started my menstrual first time. "Don't you ever step over your brother," because if you ever do that, "*jumajistullu-ggu*," that means that the animals that is to get will be so scared that he won't be able to get. That's what my mother used to tell me...

HELPING THE ELDERLY IS A RECIPROCAL PROCESS

The traditional training of children involves training them to help the elderly. This is a reciprocal process by which they will be helped when they become elderly.

They said this man next door is a friend of your uncle. So, you have to, he's way past fifty (years of age), so he can't do much by himself. So they always ask now you go help him. Pack water for him, cut wood, chop wood. Pack it in his house before it gets dark. So that's how they said. This is the old way. One day you are going to become an elder. If you don't help the elders now, so when you become an elder nobody is going to help. So that's how they trained us...

A Cup'ik elder told us that sharing resources with others is an essential value among Alaska Native people.

That way, sharing. I love sharing; sharing food or anything; something, even what I make with my hand like sewing. And from that I know that some of my children have learned and they do that.

...And my children; my six children were in school, if husband got some seal after hunting, then I would ask one of them [children] to bring one of them; an elderly woman and after I've cooked I would ask one of them to bring them to an elderly guy. Whenever they do something, they do that, they share and it makes my heart so happy because they've seen me doing this when they were growing up. Bring some food or some meat to elders...

A Yup'ik elder told us that learning from experience involves acceptance. When things are negative, one needs to learn to accept this experience. In the same manner, one needs to learn to accept the positive experiences in life.

...so, when elders tell you, learn from experience and things like that. The missing link to that is, you have to learn to accept. Learn to accept what's good and what's not good. They're the same thing.

PART I CONCLUDING COMMENTS

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.

Definition of disrespect—not living correctly. Out of balance with nature or out of balance with other people.

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 ELDER'S 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 "listen-

ing.” 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 2004 report of the National Indian Council on Aging noted:

Although little is known about elder abuse in Indian country, the existing literature and accounts by Indian elders and their families, tribes and advocates suggest that it is a serious and pervasive problem. *The experiences of Indian elders with abuse, however, and their attitudes about what should be done about it appear to differ from those of non-Indian elders, suggesting the need for new responses to prevention.* (National Indian Council on Aging, June 2004, emphasis added)

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). As one of our respondents expressed it:

[Grandfather] mostly talked about how to get along...as Native people we're not conflictual [sic] people...in old Native communities, you use other people to resolve conflicts...things got worked out without anybody getting super angry...if things got really bad...the punishment was shunning, nobody talked to you...banishment...

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.

I think there might be a reluctance to put blame on a family member...They don't want to blame anybody...

...Elders will not knowingly say something that will harm a member of their family or even someone they don't know...

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.

Okay, they don't know nothing what goes on in our village but they come in and tell us how to live. They never experience our food, they never experience our life but they come in and try to change what we are. And that's disrespect. . . .

...And they have no secrets; everything is special there to them and when somebody comes and criticizes them, that's disrespect. And try to change their lives, how to live. . . .

Our respondents noted their numerous interactions with non-Native institutions, such as health care facilities, schools, churches, and non-Natives at conferences. The elders respect and maintain the protocols of the institutions. Yet, some of the respondents reported that the institutions do not follow Native protocols when Natives are invited to share their cultural knowledge.

So, all of us when we work in the office, we have to go under the protocols of that government, but we never follow the protocols of the elders.

Because we're living in two worlds. It's to respect them and respect ours. I'm talking Native way; Native protocol.

Some of the respondents reported that health care professionals treat them in a disrespectful manner because they assume they do not understand their own bodies.

...just 'cause you're Indian, they (medical staff) treat you like you don't understand. It's your body, you know what it needs and what's wrong with it! But they act like you don't understand.

Some elders reported that using the prescription phone-in system is difficult to manage when their eyesight is fading and they have arthritis. The also said that long waits for medical care are difficult for elders who are not feeling well.

The hospital, I moved back up because I didn't have any hospital coverage down there and here we get total care which is great. But for an elder after waiting to get this and that and get prescriptions, it's very tiring. They should hire more to get more help. They want us to use the phone-in prescription; now, to do that I can barely use the phone, I can hold it like this or that but all these numbers you have to put in and push—yes, no—and I have at least 14 different medicines I take. I can't do that on the phone. That lady upstairs, she's 80, she can't do that. Some of them can't even see the numbers to call in. It hurts to sit; a lot of us have arthritis.

...One time I went to get a blood draw every month so I called and just for them to take a tube

of blood out of my arm, I wait half an hour, 45 minutes and one time I was so sick with the flu or something and I waited and waited and waited and I found out that they didn't even sign me in. That happens a lot. . . .

Non-Natives often lack respect and understanding for Native traditions, songs, and regalia. Non-Natives sometimes view sacred cultural traditions as a form of entertainment. For Alaska Natives, the songs and regalia are connected to the spiritual belief system and it is offensive when the spiritual nature of traditions are not recognized and respected.

Nobody understand those lines [tattoos]. They look at them like decoration. They don't know the meaning of them. Or the earring here. Whatever. They think they're decoration. Our dances are not decoration. Our dances are not decoration. It's not entertainment. It's moral. If you want to know about respect and disrespect, you should figure it out from that. Which is respect and what is following.

It is the elder's role to pass on traditional knowledge to the community and family. They protect the culture by fulfilling this obligation. The elder respondents discussed that sometimes elders are treated by Natives as well as non-Natives as though they lack intelligence.

... when you don't pay homage to your elders, when you no longer view their advice as important. . . .

Disrespect; when you disrespect your elders, and they tell you what you ought to do as you grow up, if you don't listen to them, if you don't do what they tell you to do; the words, you forget and you don't use them; that's disrespect!

So it is important to respect our elders. They told us that if we don't listen to what our grandparents and parents say, then we are disrespecting our way of life; like *allerkutet* (what to do) and *inerkutet* (what not to do).

... well, the absence of respect in today's society, we don't listen to our elders. . . .

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).

They don't even take the time to smile... recognition of their presence. . . .

...Like in the store and the kids are rowdy and you're behind them and they don't care if they could knock you over. They don't say excuse me and a lot of them forget to say please and thank you.

A lot of times we lock them up in old folks' homes, pioneer homes, you know we don't encourage our young ones to spend time with them.... Instead of utilizing their knowledge and their willingness to help us, we ignore them....

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.

They treat them like they're nuisance. Like they're children that they don't really know what they want, what they're saying. I think that's the saddest part, you know.... I think the people think of them as a burden, or an old fool that doesn't know what he's talking about. Yes, he's still kind of stuck in the past but he has a lot of wisdom.... They have the history, which is not written. The kids used to disregard.... We didn't bother listening to the stories, which in essence gave us our history. Today we know we should have listened. 'Cause it's not written down anywhere.

...When you leave them out of your life then when you are doing that then you are truly disrespecting them....

VERBAL ABUSE

Verbal abuse was frequently mentioned as experienced by Alaska Native elders. This of 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 your self, 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.

...and some are saddled with great-grandchildren...not because they don't want the children but they are challenged with vibrant active young children for long periods of time which is a hardship for them.

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.

Some of children don't want to help them but give them a hard time by drinking alcohol excessively or not listening to them....

...They were taught in living helping each others but then this liquor spoil the families and the family always been drinking and she was the one that told me that, beat her up when they're drinking. And that thing started when they're drinking.

Today the families they are all drinking. Raising hell and Cain. So the elders, sometimes they beat them up, throw him out. That's because the alcohol is in charge.

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.¹¹ For some families, the elder's social security check is the only source of income.

...taking advantage of them...elders say that the only time that the grandkids come is when they know my social security check is here.

...the time some of the families start changing. You know, some of the families' children start depending on their folks to living there with them.

Money-wise I used to see kids take their parents' money just for their own use and they'd have to do without, not a whole bunch 'cause it's a small town. I've seen it happen, take their social security check because a lot of them didn't speak English, so sign it with X and they'd keep part of it without asking. I saw it a couple of times.

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.

I think we would do well if we would ask ourselves in introspection about why we treat the elders that way we do. If it's negative and abusive, it's because there's a legacy of spiritual sickness that's been transferred from generation to generation and the elders understand that. That legacy we have to make the decision to stop with our generation. To the extent that we don't, the next generation is going to suffer that legacy and they're gonna go through their stuff.

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."

One elder reflects on her decision not to teach her language to her children. She regrets her decision, yet she made the decision with the intent of helping them have a better life.

Today, I realize I have made a big mistake by not talking to my children in Cup'ik but only in English all the time. This was my mistake. I wanted them to be able to converse well in English so that they could have good jobs....My father did not care much for school and my having to hide and read perhaps affected the way I decided the fate of my children's speaking in English rather than Cup'ik. I wanted my children to be competent in English speaking....

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.

When the missionaries came up, my father become a Christian...they do the Eskimo dancing there...used to go across and watch when they were doing that. They catch the time they were still doing this, shaman. And while they were dancing, a man they see through the wood, there was a little tiny hole, it go through and ever since then it wasn't good to become Christian to watch. So that's why our family never teach us all that, just to go to church.

Yeah, it was more like underground. The churches had some say about it. But we began to realize that they could no longer stop us from potlatches and so on. We discovered somehow the church system lost their divine power and authority. They can't stop us. Even to this day....

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

11. Poverty rate statistics for Alaska Natives were retrieved from the Alaska Federation of Natives website on October 25, 2005 at: <http://www.nativefederation.org/ance/purpose.php>.

defines this experience as cultural genocide, historical trauma, and multigenerational grief.

During the colonization of Alaska, a loss of cultural transmission as a whole occurred (Lehrman et al. 1991). Alaska Natives have experienced a history of cultural losses, such as loss of language, extended families, subsistence lands, spiritual beliefs, and parenting of their children. They have experienced a history in which the basic foundation of the social life that bonds their culture and communities together has been damaged. The holocaust that the tribes of Alaska Native peoples experienced resulted in trauma that has been handed down to the next generations. The cultural holocaust has affected the psychology of Alaska Native cultures, communities, families, and individuals across generations (Graves and Shavings 2005).

Many believe that the soul and the psyche of generations of Alaska Native peoples have inherited the pain, loss, and frustration of their ancestors. As a result of loss of cultural patterns, identities, relationships, and unresolved massive psychic traumas, many Alaska Native people are experiencing chronic social problems today (Graves and Shavings 2005). The culture was severely damaged and Alaska Native people have endured multifaceted cultural and historical distress, which has been associated with many chronic social problems such as substance abuse, suicide, family disruption, community and interpersonal violence, and mental health issues (Graves and Shavings 2005). Bigfoot (2000) stated that Native families have a collective history of trauma and abuse. This trauma and abuse can be connected to the abuse of the elderly. The history contributes to a higher proportion of disrespect among Alaska Natives.

Peter (1988) studied the loss of the context that gave meaning to the lives of the Gwich'in Athabascan people of Alaska. Peter stated that there is a human response to the processes of disruptive social change. There is an initial numbness, confusion, and despair when people are uprooted from the context that gives meaning to their lives. The loss of context impairs the ability to attach meaning to events and the ability to heal from the experience. The loss of context feels threatening and, unless the individual learns to understand the situation and cope with it, he/she will experience a sense of helplessness with regards to the future. A disorientation of purpose will result in anxiety and despair.

EXAMPLE OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA: THE UNANGAX

Unangax elders on the Aleutian Islands have been profoundly impacted by colonialism and historical trauma.

Many experienced evacuation and relocation during World War II. When they were returned, they discovered their community was devastated by the military's destruction.

They didn't prepare for us. They just, the Navy came one day, you know. They said they bombed Dutch Harbor and the Japanese captured Attu.... Then they chased us out of the village 'cause they were afraid the Japanese would bomb the village. While we were in the camps they burned the village.... The Navy burned the village....

...I went back home to Atka, like I said, in '81 to live... But I wasn't really accepted. It took me a good two years to fit back into the community....

Peter (1988) provided three principles for helping people reconstruct a meaningful system after a severe loss experience:

1. The process of reformation will entail conflict. Allow expression of anger, frustration, and hostility.
2. Stage of differentiation: groups who have experienced loss will need to organize their own patterns on their own terms without outsider interference.
3. Time is needed. Decolonization is a time when the structure of meaning is developing within people and can connect them to the land.

TOWARDS SOLUTIONS: PREVENTING ELDER ABUSE

Because elders are reluctant to discuss issues of abuse for reasons described above, identifying solutions to prevent elder abuse is a sensitive, complex, and problematic issue and must be approached in a culturally appropriate manner. Because elders viewed the western system of justice as one of the causes for the breakdown in Alaska Native traditional values and modes of conflict resolution, solutions to abuse issues should likely come primarily from within Alaska Native organizations. The issue should likely be framed, as the elders in our project preferred, in terms of a holistic understanding of respect, disrespect, and listening. These understandings could be emphasized at the highest organizational levels of Alaska Native political and social identity (such as the Alaska Federation of Natives, regional health corporations, and the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood) down to regional and village councils. Educational materials could be prepared about these issues for relevant western federal and state organizations, Alaska Native families and youth, religious and educational organizations, and other relevant groups and individuals, re-

flecting the views and wisdom of elders as identified in our research. In our research report, upon which this paper is based (Graves et al. 2005), we recommend several modes of cultural resilience which might holistically re-establish some of the harmonious integration recommended by our respondents. These included an emphasis on the culture of Alaska Natives as a source of protection and positive health in general, and renewed emphasis on storytelling and developing listening skills for youth. Specifically we recommended re-establishing rites of passage for both boys and girls in becoming members of their cultural groups (Pingayak 1976), continuation of the naming of infants tradition based on ancestral names and identities (Hamilton-Cannelos 1986), smudging,¹² and the Potlatch Partners Athabaskan tradition (for Athabascans),¹³ among others.¹⁴ How these or other approaches might increase the tradition of respect and lessen elder abuse within the Alaska Native community would only be known after discussions about elders and abuse occur at significant levels within Alaska Native organizations. Clearly, educational efforts are needed both within Alaska Native communities and as the latter interface with western peoples and institutions, including elementary, high school, and postsecondary institutions.

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.

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12. Smudging is a common practice for Natives and is used to cleanse energy. The smoke is seen as carrying the thoughts and prayers. Negative energy that is being held inside can be released and replaced with a sense of peace and purification.

13. The Potlatch Partners ceremony of Athabascans is one of the several profound celebrations that instilled a mindset of respect for mankind and creation at an early age. A family of a young child picks a partner, typically someone not related to the family. A person had one or more partners for life, usually of the opposite gender. The women in the village would honor the men for three days with Native dancing, sharing of food, and gift-giving. The following year or so the men would reciprocate or "pay back" the women. Potlatch partners not only celebrated relationships within the community, but strict Native protocol was essential when invitations carried by two male runners were extended to outlying villages. Sharing, caring, and humor were important values ingrained by these celebrations throughout one's life. But above all, respect was the most important traditional value that strengthened relationships for the individuals, families, and communities. Information provided by project team member Pat Frank.

14. Other ceremonies, rituals, and cultural systems may include grieving ceremonies, medicine lodges, counsel of elders, family support systems, wailing songs, belief systems about the journey of life, tea partners, etc.

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MEASURABLE BENEFITS OF TRADITIONAL FOOD CUSTOMS IN THE LIVES OF RURAL AND URBAN ALASKA IÑUPIAQ ELDERS

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Elders from the Alaska Villages of Buckland and Deering

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ABSTRACT

The trend to move Native elderly people from rural communities to urban communities for greater access to medical care and social services prompted the researchers to compare health and nutrition parameters between rural and urban settings. This paper studied existing community-based services for Iñupiaq elders in two rural communities and found no strong evidence to recommend that urban locations are better than rural locations as these individuals age. A total of 101 Iñupiaq elders over fifty years of age were surveyed: fifty-two in the rural villages of Buckland and Deering, and forty-nine in urban Anchorage. Traditional food customs support the nutritional health of the rural Iñupiaq elders as demonstrated by higher intakes of selected nutrients, stronger food-sharing networks, and higher participation in community harvest activities than reported by urban elders.

KEYWORDS: Native elderly, food-sharing networks, food intake, mental and physical health

INTRODUCTION

This article describes the effects of traditional food customs in measurable terms and compares elders from two rural Iñupiaq villages in northwest Alaska with Iñupiaq elders living in urban Anchorage. With Alaska Native older adults living longer, it is important to measure the role of traditional food habits in their lives. Previous researchers have contributed narrative data on aging in the Arctic from the elders' perspective. Interviews by Graves and Shavings

(2005) in nineteen Alaska villages, Collings's (2001) work among the Inuit, and the work of Hopkins et al. (2007) among the Yup'ik all recorded elders' views on healthy aging: the importance of being active in community activities, being close to family, and having access to traditional foods. This research suggests considerable capacity for resiliency in the midst of change. Callaway's (2004) assessment of health markers identified in the National Science

Foundation's Social Transition in the North Study of the 1990s began quantifying health impacts on Native older adults resulting from changes in Native communities.

Policy makers often suggest that Native older adults should leave their historical rural home and move to urban communities, where it is believed they have more access to nutrition, health, and social programs. Tribal leaders disagree and have stated, "Elders need to be near the river where they were raised" (Branch 2005:1). Rural villages have kept the core traits of traditional food customs through the influence of their traditional governing bodies such as the Elders Council, even though technologies around them are changing (Craver 2004).

For this essay, "food customs" includes family and community food-related activities that result in the obtainment of protein, energy, and essential nutritional nutrients. Iñupiaq peoples reside north of the Arctic Circle near the Bering Sea coast in northwestern Alaska and are characterized by their continued dependence on harvested fish, game, and plants, known as a subsistence lifestyle (Burch 2006). Although no village today can be considered to embody true subsistence living (i.e., that all raw materials come from the land and sea), the harvest of fish, wildlife, and plants is considered by Native peoples as a vital connection to the land and to cultural tradition.

Native older adults are the fastest growing age group of Alaska's population (Goldsmith et al. 2004; U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Life expectancy has increased from 64.4 years in 1980 to 69.5 years in 1997 (Lanier et al. 2002). Considering that adequate nutrition is fundamental in maintaining health, this study quantifies the current benefits of food systems in rural and urban communities.

Survey methodologies explored the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic differences of Iñupiaq elders living in rural and urban areas?
2. Are there differences in food systems in the rural and urban settings?
3. What are the differences in nutrients provided by the two food systems, rural and urban?

METHODS

Villages were recruited during the summer of 2004, and data from Iñupiaq elders were collected during the summer of 2005. Nutritional food customs survey instruments used by other researchers with Native individu-

als were adapted to describe food customs. Instruments were reviewed by a committee of Native individuals on faculty at the University of Alaska Anchorage to ensure cultural appropriateness before submission of the tools for Institutional Review Board (IRB) review. Prior to the nutrition survey, measures of food-sharing networks had been developed by Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and rural data were collected during the spring of 2005 (see Callaway 2003; Magdanz et al. 2002 for complete ADF&G protocols). Urban food sharing data were collected with the nutrition survey during the fall of 2005. Signed release forms authorizing use of the ADF&G data were obtained at the same time consent forms were signed for the nutrition study.

Dietary intake data were collected using the ninety-eight-item Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ) that estimates intake of store-bought foods eaten over the last year. An additional page of foods harvested in Alaska (AK Foods) was tested by authors (Smith 2008), and then slightly altered for the Arctic to include local species. Data from both the ninety-eight-item FFQ and AK Foods were tabulated by Block Dietary Associates (Berkeley, CA) then combined to determine the total intake. The Alaska foods list included fish species by name, and items such as *muktuk* (whale fat and meat) and *agutuq* (a mixture of animal fat and some combination of berries, greens, or fish) that are not included in the Block FFQ protocols. All known food composition data were submitted to Block to allow them to compute nutrient intake from the Alaska foods recorded on the survey form. By combining the two food frequency data sets, nutrient intakes were determined for individuals. Where sample sizes were sufficient, mean data were compared by age, gender, and location.

A food frequency questionnaire was selected over the twenty-four-hour food recall methodology because the advisory committee felt that the tool was more respectful when younger researchers were interviewing older Native individuals. The committee suggested that the probing questions in using a one-day twenty-four-hour food recall might be considered disrespectful to the survey participants.

IRB REVIEW

The research protocols of survey questions received IRB reviews by the University of Alaska Anchorage and Florida International University, as well as a courtesy review by the Alaska Region Indian Health Service IRB.

INCLUSION OF COMMUNITIES IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

All quantitative data collection tools and field methods were reviewed by the communities involved, and their suggestions were incorporated in the final survey. Community leaders in Buckland and Deering suggested that data be collected in a one-to-one setting with the researcher to show respect to their elders, as well as facilitate consistency of data collected. The research process was conducted with community involvement and oversight consistent with the guidelines presented in *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* by the National Science Foundation (1986), and the *Alaska Federation of Natives Guidelines for Research* (1993). Survey participants were instructed that they could choose to answer some, all, or none of the survey questions; thus sample sizes varied question by question.

STUDY POPULATION AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

The rural villages were isolated, and access was completely by air or boat. The two rural communities have populations of less than three hundred people each. Small grocery stores provide canned and dry goods as well as limited supplies of fresh milk, fruits, and vegetables on a periodic basis. Few nutritional support programs are available for older adults. The rural communities primarily harvested sea mammals, salmon, caribou and local plants and berries. Whales are harvested erratically.

The urban population lived in the largest community in Alaska: Anchorage. Congregate meal and home-delivered meal programs are available, as well as numerous chain-type grocery stores.

RECRUITMENT OF ELDERS

All survey participants were community-dwelling, non-institutionalized individuals. All rural Iñupiaq individuals who lived in the two survey villages, and who had a fiftieth birthday by December 2005 were eligible to participate. This resulted in a census sample of 94% of all eligible rural Native older adults living in the two villages. The urban group was an availability sample recruited using a modified snowball technique. This group was not randomized, and no age stratification or matching to rural sample was attempted. The urban survey group represented the first fifty completed interviews, as opposed to

the rural group, which consisted of all eligible individuals in the villages that were willing to participate. The tribal authorities in the two survey villages negotiated that all eligible participants were to be offered a small monetary gift. In the urban community, a similar honorarium was offered to participants at the beginning of the interview.

STATISTICS

Data were analyzed and compared by location using t-test, X^2 , and Mann-Whitney U-tests depending on the type and distribution of the data. Strengths of relationships among variables were measured by Spearman's rho correlations.

SURVEY TEAMS

Survey team members had previous work experience with older adults, Alaska Native populations, and Alaska communities. The core research team consisted of the researcher, Janell Smith, and Penelope Easton, professor emerita from Florida International University. Easton had worked as one of the earliest territorial dietitians in 1948–1950. Her age and experience made her welcome at the Tribal Council meetings. During the summers of 2004 and 2005, graduate students taking a master's level course in public health field research methodology at the University of Alaska Anchorage assisted in the collection of data. These students received intense training on survey methodology and use of the specific tools for this project, including IRB training provided by the Epidemiology Program at the Alaska Native Health Board, which is now part of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Information on how to show respect to Native older adults and how to work with Native tribal councils was provided by the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian elders at the University of Alaska Anchorage. (See Keebler et al. 2005 for students' descriptions of their experiences.)

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY GROUPS

Demographic characteristics of the Iñupiaq elders living in rural and urban locations are presented in Table 1. Mean ages for rural elders were older: rural = 62.3 years and urban = 57.6 ($p = 0.007$). Major differences were found in

Table 1. Characteristics of Iñupiaq elders living in rural and urban locations

	Rural (n = 52)		Urban (n = 48)		X ²	p
	#	(%)	#	(%)		
Age					9.78	0.021
50–59 years	24	(46%)	34	(71%)		
60–69	14	(27%)	10	(20%)		
70–79	12	(23%)	2	(4%)		
80+	2	(4%)	2	(4%)		
Education					5.99	0.112
1–6 grades	9	(17%)	4	(8%)		
7–12 grades	29	(56%)	29	(59%)		
> 13 grades	14	(27%)	12	(25%)		
No response	0	(0%)	3	(8%)		
Time at Rural/ Urban Location					30.29	<0.001
< 4 years	1	(2%)	27	(57%)		
5–20 years	13	(25%)	17	(35%)		
> 21 years	38	(76%)	4	(8%)		
Living Status					0.82	0.364
Lives alone	8	(15%)	11	(22%)		
Lives with others	44	(85%)	37	(78%)		
Number in household					1.75	0.417
1	10	(19%)	12	(25%)		
2–4	28	(54%)	28	(59%)		
> 5	14	(27%)	8	(16%)		
Employment					0.27	0.601
No employment	18	(35%)	19	(39%)		
Full/part-time employment	33	(64%)	27	(57%)		
No response	1	(2%)	2	(4%)		
Income					1.99	0.734
< \$5,000	17	(33%)	12	(25%)		
\$5,000 to \$19,999	15	(30%)	18	(37%)		
\$20,000 to \$49,999	12	(23%)	10	(21%)		
>\$50,000	4	(8%)	4	(8%)		
No response	4	(8%)	4	(8%)		

the age distribution of the rural and urban samples ($p = 0.021$), which may suggest irregularities in sampling design but may also suggest the greater ability of rural communities to maintain the health and well-being of their aging elders. Rural elders had lived longer at their current residences ($p < 0.001$). Rural and urban elders were similar in years of education, living status, the number of individuals living in the household, current employment, and income. The short length of the residence of Iñupiaq elders in the urban sample may have prevented detection of differences in food customs. In the future, as younger urban Native individuals reach older age, more significant differences may be found.

DIFFERENCES IN FOOD SUPPORT SYSTEMS

In rural Native communities, extended family members and family-based food-sharing networks provide food for Native elderly (Caulfield 2002; Manson 1995) but also contribute socially structured and valued food activities, such as planning for the hunt or harvest, food practices such as the actual harvest, and preparation, storage and distribution of food (Callaway 2003; Magdanz et al. 2002). These food activities are essential in organization of food production activities, serve to increase personal interactions between Native older adults and the community, and provide opportunities for the sharing of traditional knowledge. Rural elders reported a similar frequency of hunting and fishing as urban elders (Table 2), but a higher frequency of berry picking/harvesting wild greens ($p = 0.020$) and activities for food preparation/preservation ($p = 0.028$).

For this study, a food sharing event was defined as an occasion that a Native older adult was given an amount of harvested foods. Edible pounds were calculated to be approximately 50% of the harvested weight. Rural elders from Buckland and Deering reported fifty-five sharing events versus three by the Anchorage Iñupiaq sample. Rural participants reported that they received more food ($p = 0.001$), and had more sharing events than reported by their urban cohorts ($p = 0.001$) (Table 3). Urban households reported using less than 10% of the edible pounds of subsistence foods reported by rural elders and only 5% of the sharing events. Rural households with individuals over fifty years of age reported sharing 2,600 pounds, compared to just 250 pounds reported by urban households.

DIFFERENCES IN INTAKE OF ENERGY AND MACRONUTRIENTS

Mean self-reported food intakes using two food consumption survey instruments were calculated, and the totals compared between rural and urban respondents (Table 4). Both groups were similar in mean reported macronutrient intake of energy, grams protein, grams fat, fat as percent of

calories, grams carbohydrates, and carbohydrates as percent of calories.

For evaluation, data were grouped by gender, age and location. Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) issued by the Institute of Medicine (1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2005) were used as intake standards. Mean intakes are presented in Table 4 by age above and below seventy years, and by gender. Urban women over seventy years

Table 2. Participation in selected community activities by Iñupiaq elders living in rural and urban locations

	Frequency of Participation				Likert Score ¹			
	Rural (n = 52)		Urban (n = 47)		mean ± sd		t-test	p
	#	(%)	#	(%)	Rural	Urban		
Hunting and fishing					2.1 ± 1.3	2.2 ± 1.0	−0.81	0.420
Never	29	(56%)	18	(37%)				
Rarely	6	(12%)	8	(16%)				
Sometimes	8	(15%)	19	(39%)				
Most of the time, regularly	6	(12%)	4	(8%)				
All the time	3	(6%)	0	(0%)				
Berry picking/harvesting wild greens					3.0 ± 1.5	2.3 ± 1.0	2.38	0.020
Never	17	(33%)	16	(33%)				
Rarely	1	(2%)	13	(27%)				
Sometimes	15	(29%)	15	(31%)				
Most of the time, regularly	9	(17%)	5	(10%)				
All the time	10	(19%)	0	(0%)				
Food preparation/preservation					3.1 ± 1.5	2.6 ± 1.2	2.25	0.028
Never	16	(31%)	12	(25%)				
Rarely	4	(8%)	12	(25%)				
Sometimes	10	(19%)	15	(31%)				
Most of the time, regularly	8	(15%)	8	(16%)				
All the time	14	(27%)	2	(4%)				

Significant p-values are presented in **boldface**.

1. Likert rating for survey responses: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = most of the time or regularly, and 5 = all of the time.

Table 3. Characteristics of food-sharing networks used by Iñupiaq elders living in rural and urban locations

	Rural (n = 40)	Urban (n = 48)	Mann-Whitney U Test	
	mean ± sd		z value	p
Edible pounds of subsistence foods per household	2,606 ± 2,724 Range 0 to 12,738	251 ± 421 Range 0 to 1,600	−6.07	0.001
Food-sharing network events	55.1 ± 8.4 Range 12 to 217	2.9 ± 0.5 Range 0 to 13	−7.28	0.001

Significant p-values are presented in **boldface**.

Table 4. Mean nutrient intake reported by Iñupiaq elders by location, gender, and age with comparison to dietary reference intakes (DRIs)

	DRIs ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}			Rural = 52		Urban = 49	
	Age, y	M	F	M = 25 < 70 = 20 > 70 = 6	F = 27 < 70 = 18 > 70 = 8	M = 29 < 70 = 28 > 70 = 0	F = 19 < 70 = 17 > 70 = 3
Energy, calories	51–69 70+	2,204 2,054	1,978 1,873	4,152 4,159	3,063 2,972	5,505	2,928 1,359
Protein, g	51–69 70+	56	46	186 227	142 157	238	119 69
Fat, % calories	51–69 70+	20–35%		36% 35%	37% 34%	37%	37% 36%
Carbohydrates, % calories	51–69 70+	45–65%		44% 40%	43% 43%	45%	47% 41%
Vitamin A, RE	51–69 70+	900	700	1,598 1,910	1,013 1,204	1,919	947 420
Vitamin B12	51–69 70+	2.4		6.9 5.9	4.8 3.9	11.3	5.3 2.6
Vitamin C, mg	51–69 70+	90	75	310 346	184 288	318	216 57
Vitamin E, a-TE	51–69 70+	15		21 18	15 15	23	14 5
Folate, mcg	51–69 70+	400		533 498	416 367	836	424 223
Calcium, mg	51–69 70+	1,200		1,099 924	853 1,071	1,424	837 244
Iron, mg	51–69 70+	8		40 36	27 32	48	20 13
Sodium, g	51–69 70+	1.3 1.2		4.7 4.3	3.5 3.3	6.9	3.6 1.7
Fiber	51–69 70+	30	21	19 16	13 13	34	18 10

1. Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board. DRIs for vitamin A, vitamin D, arsenic, boron, chromium, copper, iodine, iron, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, silicon, vanadium, and zinc. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Science, 2001.
2. Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board. DRI for calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, vitamin D, and fluoride. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1997.
3. Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board. DRI for energy, carbohydrates, fiber, fat, protein, and amino acids (Macronutrients). Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2002.
4. Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board. DRI for thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, folate, vitamin B12, pantothenic acid, biotin, and choline. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2005.
5. Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board. DRIs for vitamin C, vitamin E, selenium and carotenoids. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000a.

of age ($n = 3$) reported the lowest average intake of calories (1,359, range 1,354 to 1,365); in contrast, urban men under seventy years of age ($n = 28$) reported the highest average calorie intakes (5,505, range 1,286 to 12,934). Due to the unequal distribution by age groups, statistical comparisons were not deemed valid, although interesting. Percent fat of total calorie intake approximated the upper range recommended by the American Heart Association Guidelines of 20–35% (American Heart Association 2000). Carbohydrate intakes were near the lower end of the range of 45–65% of total calories as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2005). Low intake of carbohydrates among individuals prone to glucose intolerance may be a healthy strategy to control blood glucose levels, possibly forestalling or diminishing the effects of diabetes mellitus.

Similarities and differences in nutrient intake trends were noted. All groups were consistent in reporting low mean intakes for folate, calcium, and fiber near or below DRI recommendations. Rural and urban males reported mean intakes for most of the selected nutrients above DRI values. This was in sharp contrast to urban females over seventy years of age, who reported low or marginal mean intake for calories, vitamin A, vitamin B12, and vitamin E. Due to the small sample size of the urban elders over seventy years of age, the impact of gender, location, and the small food-sharing networks found in the urban community could not be explored further. The authors could not conclude that urban elders over seventy years of age appeared to report more difficulty in meeting nutritional needs than did rural elders of the same age; however, these trends may prove accurate with additional research. When in the urban location, the Iñupiaq elders did appear to change their eating patterns: older females reported less food intake and younger males reported more. Both changes may increase their risk of malnutrition and increase chronic diseases of under-intake or over-intake.

When looking at the combined data from all rural and urban respondents (data not shown), 23 (23%) of the Iñupiaq individuals reported calorie intakes below 2,000 calories per day, and 10 (10%) individuals reported intakes of < 56 grams of protein per day. Both intakes approached minimum nutrition intake recommendations for U.S. populations.

DIFFERENCES IN INTAKE OF HARVESTED FOODS

The term “harvested foods” was used to designate foods obtained by hunting, fishing, or gathering compared to “store-bought foods” purchased at the store or ordered and shipped to the community. Rural elders from Buckland and Deering reported higher mean weekly servings of most harvested food examined: fruit and vegetables, fish, foods from the sea and the land. Rural elders also reported considerably more intake of salmon, dried fish, Native berries, greens, seal oil, and caribou. Two exceptions were halibut and *muktuk*/whale meat. Halibut is available in southeast Alaska, in the Anchorage area, and not generally available on Alaska’s northwestern coast. This may explain the higher use of halibut reported by the urban elders. Intake of *muktuk* and whale meat was low in both groups, although urban elders also reported slightly higher intake of these items. This anomaly was better understood when the urban elders told of their sources of *muktuk* and whale. Many of the urban elders received the prized meat as gifts given at multitribal social events held in the Anchorage area, in contrast to rural elders in these communities who received *muktuk* and whale from family-based food-sharing networks. It appears that Anchorage is a focal point for many overlapping food-sharing networks from around the state. Native older adults living in rural areas may be somewhat more limited in their access to *muktuk* and whale if the village was unsuccessful in harvesting a whale during that particular season.

CONTRIBUTION OF HARVESTED FOODS TO NUTRIENT INTAKES

Harvested foods made significant contributions to several nutrient groups of the rural and urban Iñupiaq elders examined in this study (Table 5). Standardized nutrient content information for many harvested foods is limited or incomplete (Heller and Scott 1967; Nobmann 1992; USDA National Nutrient Database). The contribution may be greater if the nutrient content were known.

Data from rural elders indicated that harvested foods contributed 64% of the total reported intake of protein, compared to 41% for urban, almost 2 to 1. The difference perhaps indicates the deep integration of the rural elders into the local harvested food-sharing systems. For urban elders, harvested foods generally contributed less than one-third of the total nutrients consumed.

Table 5. Percent contribution of harvested foods to nutrition intake

	Rural % (n = 52)	Urban % (n = 48)
Macronutrients		
Protein, g	64.1	41.6
Energy, calories	27.5	21.2
Fat, g	25.5	25.4
Carbohydrates, g	5.6	3.0
Vitamins		
Riboflavin	60.6	35.8
Vitamin B12	45.6	19.7
Niacin	43.8	25.6
Vitamin A	39.9	19.7
Thiamin	27.4	13.9
Vitamin C	22.6	10.3
Vitamin D	13.9	28.8
Vitamin E	11.7	6.7
Vitamin B6	10.5	7.4
Folate	6.0	2.3
Minerals		
Iron	54.2	39.6
Phosphorus	50.6	30.3
Zinc	38.2	19.4
Potassium	33.2	17.5
Calcium	13.8	5.9
Sodium	11.9	7.7
Magnesium	7.2	5.6
Fiber	0.3	0.6

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIABLES

Table 6 examines relationships between nutrition and food customs reported by the Iñupiaq elders as a total group, using Spearman rho correlations due to the unequal sample sizes and distribution of data. Negative correlations indicate inverse relationships (i.e., as one variable increases, the other decreases), whereas positive correlations indicate corresponding increases (i.e., as one variable increases, so does the other). Increased age did not appear to influence the intake of energy and protein, although this has been reported for other population groups (Blaum et al. 2005). Longevity in the rural location appeared to have a strong relationship to decreased intake of energy ($p = 0.045$) when compared to increased energy intake reported by urban respondents. Likewise, participation in community activities also showed a strong positive relationship to increased intake of protein ($p = 0.040$). A harvest of large arctic animals requires an array of distinct social roles for procurement, food processing, storage and preservation. Negative relationships were found between intake of protein and the number in the household ($p = 0.002$). This relationship may reflect the challenges faced to feed all within a network during the year of the study or possibly that the elders may give preference to feeding others in the household before feeding themselves. Higher education levels may give opportunities for employment and increased cash income but may also restrict time for harvesting food. Characteristics of food-sharing networks were quite different in the rural and urban locations, but the differences did not seem to be reflected in re-

Table 6. Spearman's rho correlations among select nutrition intake, community support variables, and demographic characteristics as reported by all Alaska Iñupiaq elders (n = 75)

	Nutrient Intake			
	Energy		Protein	
Community support variables	rho	p	rho	p
Participation in family activities	-0.004	0.967	0.139	0.183
Participation in community activities	0.181	0.099	0.224	0.040
Food-sharing networks				
Number of edible pounds of harvested food	-0.011	0.920	0.110	0.309
Number food-sharing episodes	-0.024	0.839	0.045	0.699
Demographic characteristics				
Age	-0.173	0.086	-0.096	0.341
Years of education	-0.160	0.118	-0.213	0.036
Time at rural/urban location	-0.201	0.045	-0.095	0.346
Number in household	0.041	0.689	-0.305	0.002

duced intake of total energy or protein. As the number of Native older adults continues to increase, these issues should be revisited.

CONCLUSION

These data provide insights based on quantifiable data for the benefits of traditional food customs based on the self reports of the participating Iñupiaq elders. Participation in rural community activities provided greater nutritional health to the elders. Harvested foods provided over 60% of total protein and 40% of energy intake for elders living in Buckland and Deering. Within the Iñupiaq culture, the harvest and preparation of traditional food provides bridges from past to present, thus bridges generations. Traditional Iñupiaq foods are a defining aspect of the Iñupiaq culture. Further studies should examine healthy components of the Iñupiaq diet that encourage the use of harvested local plants, berries, meats, and fish (such as high intake of fish containing omega-3 fatty acids, low intake of salt, and high intake of low-cholesterol meat from caribou). Teachings of the elders could provide appropriate balance within Iñupiaq communities for younger individuals to continue a deep appreciation of the rich food heritage if incorporated into nutrition education programs (Smith and Wiedman 2000). These programs could be used to help guide food choice decisions by young families as they combat the bombardment of advertising messages that promote foods purchased from global markets known to be associated with poor health outcomes. These findings concerning participation in community activities and retention of food heritage may apply to other Native groups, as well.

The constraints of culture and remote geography indicated that a self-selected population should be used. The small number of frail individuals, those over the age of seventy, in the urban group may have limited the strength of comparisons. Differences in many of the variables may have been higher if rural and urban groups could have been matched by age and gender. Data collection occurred during a short period of time during the summer and fall of 2005, and limited observations made through brief encounters may inadvertently be imprecise if the observations could have been measured over multiple seasons. However, despite possible limitations, this new information substantially adds to the total body of knowledge that could be useful in future studies.

Even with these limitations, these findings are consistent with elders' testimony given at the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Elders' meetings in seventeen Alaska communities (Graves and Shavings 2005), when they said that older Native individuals were not happy when they moved from Alaska rural villages to urban locations because they "couldn't get their Native food" and "they didn't know anyone."

The harvest of subsistence foods links generations through the sharing of indigenous knowledge needed to harvest and distribute food. Traditionally, links in these food-sharing networks extend from the hunters to Native older adults, thus fulfilling traditional expectations for food support anticipated by individuals as they age and their physical abilities to hunt and gather food decline. The participation in village activities by older individuals as part of traditional food customs acknowledges the respectful role of elders as keepers of historical memory, ensuring their significant place within the community. When older Native community leaders move away from the rural community, the distance prevents involvement in these traditional activities and appears to change food intake. Providing support services within the cultural framework of rural communities may be advantageous, rather than moving aging Native individuals to urban health and social services.

This information about the positive value of food customs used by Alaska Native older adults has implications for policy decisions, land development, and management of natural resources. Limits placed on land use, more restrictive hunting and fishing regulations, and oil and mineral exploration have decreased traditional food harvesting activities in these communities. Access of Iñupiaq elders to the natural resources that contribute a significant portion of their nutrient intake has come under challenge in both domestic and international political arenas. Policies that enhance Native older adults' food customs and assure continued availability of the natural food resources would promote nutritional health for all older Alaska Natives.

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HARVESTED FOOD CUSTOMS AND THEIR INFLUENCES ON VALUABLE FUNCTIONING OF ALASKA NATIVE ELDERS

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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 inclusion 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.

KEYWORDS: Alaska Native older adults, elders, health, diet, subsistence, food customs

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 diverse 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 commu-

nities. 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.¹ From this initial study, fresh Alaska salmon prepared in traditional ways² 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-five³ 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.

METHODS

DESCRIPTION OF DATA SOURCES

The compilation of data describing food culture forms the foundation of this paper. The primary sources are narrative data from testimony given by over six hundred attendees at the twenty Voices of Our Elders conferences of elders sponsored by the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders (NRC) at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Meetings from one to five days were held during 2004–2006 in Anchorage, Angoon, Barrow, Bethel, Buckland, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kodiak, Kotlik, Kotzebue, Metlakatla, Napaskiak, New Stuyahok, Nome, Nuiqsut, Old Harbor, St. Paul Island, Unalaska, and Wainwright. Meetings were structured to allow for casual discussions among older Native individuals selected by their communities to converse on issues deemed important by the attendees.⁴

1. The research project was funded by the National Science Foundation Student Originated Studies Program and received an award for the best project NSF funded that year. Data remain unpublished.
2. Currently, USDA does not allow harvested meats to be served in funded food support programs for the elderly without passing federal meat inspection. Work is ongoing to permit inspection of locally harvested meats by Alaska Native tribes to serve in Native elderly feeding programs (Title VI programs), which would be less expensive, lower in fat, and a higher quality meat than purchased beef or chicken that requires continuous frozen transport that is frequently a problem to remote, isolated Alaska communities.
3. Considerable discussion was presented at the Voices of Our Elders Conferences on who were “elders” and who to include in the “elderly” or older adult classification. Being “elderly” to them was not a chronological phenomenon as often found in western culture (Social Security comes after sixty-five, because of the seventy-three years of life expectancy for Caucasian populations), but was based in part on general trends of declining physical and mental functioning ability. Age fifty-five is commonly used by the U.S. government for determining services for older individuals in the general US population, and age fifty for American Indian, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.
4. Transcripts are on file at the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Comments gathered at the Voices of Our Elders Conferences are supplemented with data from several studies, observations, and field notes by the authors from their work in Alaska communities. These sources included the quantitative Iñupiaq elders survey collected during 2004–2006 (see Smith et al., this volume), and the WIC Healthy Moms Study (Rody et al. 2002; Smith et al. 2008). Also included are Smith's field notes from her work in Unalaska with the State of Alaska/U.S. Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, and the University of Alaska Anchorage Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies; Easton's field notes are from her work as one of the first territorial dietitians from 1948–1950 and her involvement in four research projects with Smith during 1996, 2001, 2004, and 2005. LaBelle's notes result from his Iñupiaq upbringing in rural northwestern Alaska, attendance at boarding schools for Native children, and his many years of work as a leader and administrator for Native organizations, Alaska state government, and most recently as a key staff member at the NRC. Wiedman, an anthropologist, observed and participated in the food-related activities that were occurring during the visits to four villages participating in the WIC Healthy Moms Study during the summer of 2001.

Graves and Shavings (2005), in their initial analyses of the Voices of Our Elders Conferences, noted the strong similarities of comments concerning many issues, even though testimony came from twenty different locations representing Native groups from geographically dispersed and unique cultural backgrounds. Graves and Shavings focused on how communities (and community systems) support elders and thus how they show respect to elders.

DEFINITION OF ELDERS

Within Alaska Native communities, the role designator of "elder" usually denotes individuals identified as community leaders and role models, compared to "elderly" that simply indicates aging individuals (Graves and Shavings 2005). All older individuals from Alaska Native communities involved in this project are referred to in this essay

as "elders" in order to comply with the style used by this journal, unless "Elder" is part of the name of an organization to which we refer.

The Iñupiaq Elders Study compared Iñupiaq individuals living in urban and rural communities. To ensure sufficient sample sizes to make valid conclusions, the Iñupiaq Elders Study included individuals fifty years and older. This demarcation is consistent with the use of fifty years of age to be eligible for the Title VI food programs for Native individuals living in Alaska.

DEFINITION OF SUBSISTENCE

"Subsistence" is a legal term used to describe the hunting, fishing, and gathering of foods.⁵ LaBelle noted that subsistence is essentially a western term to describe the traditional harvest of foods by Native people. Many indigenous groups in Alaska have their own words, or value concepts, to describe the activity of harvesting and sharing foods. In some cases, there are variations of the term within cultural groups. It should be noted that the quantitative data collection was in Iñupiaq villages, and concepts may differ if similar data were collected in other indigenous communities. Wherever possible the authors have used the terms "traditionally harvested food," or "harvested foods" instead of the word "subsistence" or "subsistence foods."

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Within a theoretical framework, the authors examined narrative and quantitative data to increase the understanding of elders' views, which rate the acts of participation in harvested food activities as vital to their personal fulfillment and thus their achievement of quality of life. The authors acknowledge the contribution of Sen (1993:30–53) in the use of the term "value functioning" to provide a theoretical explanation of the achievement of capacity and thus well-being. MacClancy and Macbeth (2004:5–6) characterized food as both "nature" and "culture." They describe food as important both "physically and socially, we consume it and make it part of ourselves."

5. Section 803, Title VIII of the federal law, subsistence is defined as the customary and traditional use in Alaska of fish, wildlife, and other renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption, for the making and selling of handicraft articles from the nonedible byproducts of fish and wildlife taken for direct personal or family consumption, and for customary trade, barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption.

DATA COLLECTION

Methodology for the collection of the narrative data from the NRC Voices of Our Elders Conferences has been previously published by Graves and Shavings (2005) in their examination of other key topics. Elders' testimonies referred to in this examination concerned their desire to consume traditionally harvested foods, even though the respondents may not be currently living that lifestyle.

Quantitative data were collected during the summers of 2004–2006 in Buckland and Deering (both Iñupiaq villages) and among Iñupiaq individuals living in Anchorage. All survey participants were community-dwelling, noninstitutionalized individuals who had a fiftieth birthday by December 2005. The rural sample was 94% of all eligible Native older adults living in the two villages. The urban group sampling was different from the rural group. This group was not randomized and no age stratification or matching to rural sample was attempted. The urban survey group represented the first fifty completed interviews of Iñupiaq individuals located through community groups, as opposed to the rural group, which consisted of all eligible individuals in the villages that were willing to participate.

PROTECTION OF SUBJECT RIGHTS

All research protocols received Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews by the University of Alaska Anchorage and Florida International University, as well as a courtesy review by the Alaska Region Indian Health Service IRB.

All data were collected consistent with the guidelines presented in Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic by the National Science Foundation (1986), and the Alaska Federation of Natives Guidelines for Research (1993). To that end, the study was designed to accommodate as much community participation by the elders as possible and to foster a productive partnership between the Native elders and the researchers. Tribal elders' councils invited the NRC to hold a Voices of Our Elders Conference, and all community elders were invited to attend. The elders received no compensation for sharing their thoughts and wisdom, although a contribution was made to the local tribal council by the NRC. Tribal councils distributed small stipends to elders who contributed in the quantitative survey.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The proposed conceptual model describes the harvested food customs in Alaska Native communities and the benefits of the food customs for Native elders. It was designed to include common aspects of food harvest, food preparation, and consumption that we are proposing as factors that influence the achievement of valuable functioning by Native elders.

The conceptual model illustrates the presence and relationships of eight constructs (Figure 1) that were repeated in various communities in various ways in the narrative data. The presentation of the constructs within circles is a creation of the authors for the purpose of this paper and for understanding the importance of harvested food in the aging process among Alaska elders. Although Kawagley (1995) indicated that the circle within a circle is a traditional theme among many Alaska Native groups, our model uses overlapping circles showing that relationships between constructs are neither linear nor hierarchical but have intertwined interconnections that appear to be of equal importance.

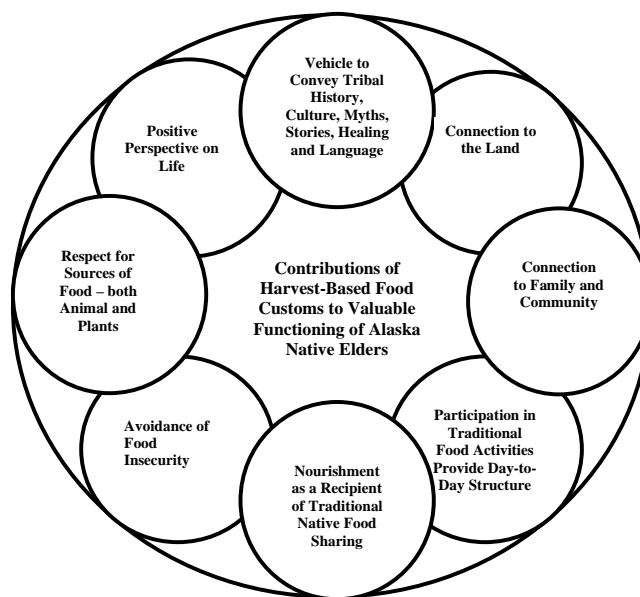


Figure 1. Proposed model of the contributions of harvest-based food customs to valuable functioning of Alaska Native elders

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTS

The remainder of the paper presents observations and other data that explain each construct with the recognition that food customs are only part of the total culture of population groups.

HARVESTED FOODS ARE A VEHICLE TO CONVEY TRIBAL HISTORY, CULTURE, MYTHS, STORIES, HEALING, AND LANGUAGE

Narrative data indicated that the processes and use of traditionally harvested food is a conduit to transmit and convey culture. Testimonies from the elders indicated that through the discussion of food and the participation in the harvest, preservation, and use of traditionally harvested foods, much of the strength of the culture, myth, stories, healing, and language is retained.

Contemporary elders in Atka, a community in the Aleutian Islands, felt that they were losing their traditions after many of their former elders died during their World War II internment. They recruited a traditional dancer from islands off the coast of Russia who spoke a similar Aleut dialect. She was able to talk with non-English-speaking Atka elders about dances of their childhood. Guided by the arthritic hands of the few remaining elders, the contractor was also able to follow elders' instructions in order to train young women on how to prepare and sew with walrus and seal skins. Harvesting of sea mammals is heavily regulated in the Aleutian Islands, unlike other areas of the state, thus special permission was necessary to allow the villagers to obtain the furs from other Alaska communities to construct the dancers' costumes (Smith field notes, 1992–1994).

In many communities, elders have preserved traditional food history, songs, and dances, often in secrecy to circumvent outside efforts to eliminate them from their culture. After visiting a regional dance festival in northwestern Alaska, we inquired if the village sponsored a youth dance group. An elder told us that dancing had been prohibited by early religious groups, especially a dance where a "man turned into a bird" (Smith field notes, July 2004). It was interesting to note that even though community decisions had been made years ago not to perform the bird dance,

individuals in the community still knew the dance, and the elders continued to keep the topic in discussion.

In another village in southwestern Alaska a similar conversation occurred. Elders were essential in reintroducing dancing to the community after many years of discussion. Through the years, elders of the community had privately videotaped their peers performing traditional and family dances before they died so the knowledge would not be lost. These tapes were used to train the current troupe of youth dancers (Smith field notes, December 2003).

Similar to the problems of retaining the dances, the effect of years of western teachings of school teachers, boarding schools, missionaries, and health workers emphasized the foods and eating styles of the Lower Forty-eight western society (Easton field notes, 1948–1950). Today's elders were children during those years and remember the difficulties of retaining their food customs, such as use of traditional greens and rosehips. Native people have adopted the changes in food supplies and circumstances into their customs. For example, U.S. Army surplus supplies given to food programs following World War II included powdered milk and pilot crackers (Easton field notes, 1948–1950), and those products were reported on twenty-four-hour recalls collected during the WIC Healthy Moms Study in 2001. Aleut seal harvesters were paid in cans of corned beef to harvest seals following the United States' purchase of Alaska from Russia in the late nineteenth century. Vestiges of the addition of corned beef as a food staple are still found at community potlucks in the Aleutian Islands in the form of corned beef soup, which locals call "Aleut Soup" (Smith field notes, 1994–1996).

Testimony given at the NRC Voices of Our Elders Conferences support the importance of gathering and sharing food and the contribution of these food-related activities to the fulfillment of life among Native elders. One seventy-four-year-old speaker described how she was raised by her grandmother in a village located on the riverine plains of southwest Alaska. She said:

We never stayed still. There used to be lots of fish in those days. My grandmother in the fall would make salted fish in the barrels, then the fish eggs, and they would get mousefood⁶ in the fall. They started traveling, and [carried with them] mousefood, berries. They used to take fish that was salted with the mousefood, and it was very

6 "Mousefood" is grains gathered by a mouse and buried in shallow tunnels that sprout in the fall or spring rains. The tender green sprouts are often one of the first fresh foods available. Mousefood is eaten much like one would eat a small salad or fresh greens. Tradition dictates that the sprouted grains be replaced with a piece of food to thank the mouse for his work—we were told it was frequently dried salmon.

good. A lot of rabbits down there where she was at. She watched them, that's why she knows them. They never used to waste foods. So they did things really well. They used to make tundra greens after they had been working, rowing, drying fish, and make braided mats and baskets, and containers, and make string and make kinda a thread out of it, and thread from discarded pants—jeans, and then make little nets. They never stayed still, they always were ice fishing. They never stayed still, being outdoors. Again, not staying idle at all. She didn't know how big she was, when they used to go to Kwethluk, a place of [on] the River. She would see this little old woman at the end of her life, watching her. That's the one that had reached the end of their life, a little small old lady, a person who has reached the end of her life. She was happy. I am happy because I do these things.

Across Alaska, elders are being called upon to revitalize local Native languages as teachers in the village schools. Elders are also encouraging public meetings to be held in traditional languages.

Results from the Iñupiaq Elders Study indicated that most of the elders spoke English. Twenty-four percent of the 101 elders reported that they spoke both English and Iñupiaq, and a small number indicated that Iñupiaq was their primary language. Elders described being punished for speaking in their Native languages at boarding schools. Today, the village schools have Native days where elders share myths and stories with the children, and even teach traditional skills, language, and culture classes.

The qualitative data presented in the previous paper (Smith et al. this volume) provide insight regarding the meaning of “valuable functioning” to Iñupiaq elders. Elders must be able to fulfill perceived roles as leaders and mentors in order to achieve valuable functioning. While communities make distinctions between those who are old and those who are revered elders, qualitative data showed that older individuals in general anticipate respect from family and from younger members of the community. Graves and Shaving (2005) describe the elders' views of respect in greater detail.

Data from the NRC Voices of Our Elders Conferences showed that elders expected themselves to be role models and leaders. Achieving the status of elder could be considered an indicator of also achieving valuable functioning. The elders expressed that they were trained to exemplify traditional cultural values and proper community be-

havior. With their wisdom, the elders saw their role as individuals capable of and responsible for helping their communities anticipate and find resolution to problems. The processes of securing and processing food provided the opportunities by which cultural values could be observed and thus the community would learn. Elders contended that through transmitting the knowledge they had been given by their own elders, they believed that continuity of the community was assured.

HARVESTED FOODS PROVIDE CONNECTION TO THE LAND

In the keynote speech at the 1980 Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting, William L. Iggiagruk Hensley spoke about the Iñupiaq relationship with and the importance of (traditional) Iñupiaq lands. He said:

We fought for the land because it represents the spirit of our people, because it represents an intimate knowledge of the environment our people grew up with for ten thousand years.... Our fight for land was a fight for [our] survival.... We cannot look to corporate or political life to fill the void of a century of psychological repression.... A renaissance of our language and culture will give us the basis for the renewal of our people” (Mauneluk Association 1980:1).⁷

In the NRC Voices of Our Elders Conferences, testimony from elders across the state of Alaska reported that when elders are sent to locations away from the village and traditional lands, the elders are without family, and thus are without their traditional foods. Adverse life quality resulted. In the words of the elders:

When they relocated our elders—three died, they willed themselves to die.

When elders go to the regional senior center, their life shortens because they are not with their people.

When elders are sent out, they miss their food... the elders miss having family around.

There are varying opinions as to the value of moving rural elders to urban communities. To many elders, the move is an undesirable separation from their home community and traditional lands, away from family, away from traditional foods, and it removes them from participating in seasonal activities, which is the focus of their life in

7. *Northwest Arctic NUNA* is the local newsletter published by the Maniilaq (formerly Mauneluk) Association in Kotzebue, Alaska. The word *nuna* means “of the land” in the Iñupiaq language.

the village. To the western-oriented medical community, the move of older individuals from rural villages to urban communities offers increased access to medical care. The increased access is often viewed as a positive atmosphere to prolong life. The elders who testified in the NRC Voices of Our Elders Conferences contended that the western belief lacks broad understanding of the importance of the benefits elders perceive from being in their home communities.

Despite their age, elders want to continue to be in the locations of summer camp and in the places of the activities with which they are familiar. "Going to camp" involves returning to the physical places where a family had lived and had hunted for generations. The desire to "go to camp" may return elders to a simpler schedule or perhaps provides time to reflect on life issues important to them. Inupiaq elders described hunting caribou along the same mountain trails today as when their grandfathers took them hunting sixty or seventy years earlier.

The caribou comes down that trail and I sit on this side of the trail behind the rocks so they can't see.

Camps as a harvest technique focused considerable person-hours during a short period of time to secure food that would be used over many months or for the year. From a larger perspective, camps also gave younger individuals and children time with grandparents and extended family to hear stories and to learn values by example.

In the WIC Healthy Moms Study (Rody et al. 2002) participants were asked to estimate how much time they spent at "camp" each year. Their responses indicated that time in camp had declined. However, we also noted that with increased technology (faster boats, snowmachines, and four-wheelers that can travel back and forth to camp) they have been able to continue the harvest of wild foods yet maintain residence in stationary villages for cash paying jobs and so that their children can attend schools.

One Inupiaq man told us that he still remembered the exact location where he first saw his wife-to-be as she picked greens. He had missed a caribou and was tracking it down near her village. He told us that the caribou had "found" his wife (Smith field notes, 2005).

HARVESTED FOODS PROVIDE CONNECTION TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Elders emphasize the importance of family and community support by their active encouragement to maintain strong family ties and value for the extended family.

Notes from the 1978 Puiguithaat ("Wise Council") Elders Conference sponsored by the North Slope Borough defined the importance of participation in the community to maintaining good mental health. Elders reported that they wanted "to be close to family," and to have "community support."

Continued immersion in family relationships and community roles is vital to the well-being of rural elders. Optimally, over their lifetimes elders build complex social webs that continue to engage them in family and community decisions (Magdanz et al. 2003; Smith and Wiedman 2000). Not only does the status of "elder" bring responsibilities, but also the traditional kinship patterns and food production lifestyles in each village delegate specific roles for them to fulfill. From a broad perspective, these roles are particularly powerful positions in everyday activities when access to resources is concerned. The authors are proposing but have not specifically tested the impact of an urban location on the elders' well-being. Roles pertaining to food procurement, processing, storage and distribution place them in influential and authoritative positions as compared to elders in the urban setting where traditional activities are much more limited. Equally, as social and economic conditions change in many rural villages, it is unknown how these systems will adapt and how elders will fare.

Conversations with elders at the NRC Voices of Our Elders Conferences provided their perspective that community support is provided to Native elders out of respect, seemingly independent of the physical abilities of the elders. The difference between providing services "out of respect" and "out of need" may be subtle, and the differentiation hard to describe. One of the primary examples of community support is gifts of raw and prepared food. Other community support included walking to the store to purchase groceries or to pick up mail, giving elders rides to community events, washing dishes, sweeping snow from walkways, and delivering water or firewood to the elders' homes. Similar comments were obtained from both rural and urban participants.

The elders in a Tlingit fishing community in southeast Alaska stated that government-regulated wild food harvest quotas should allow for celebrations in order to honor deceased loved ones, as well as provide sufficient quantities for visiting children and grandchildren. Often these grandchildren and great-grandchildren will spend summers with grandparents, depleting the traditional foods when they want to take some of their heritage back to their

homes in bigger “urban” communities such as Juneau, Fairbanks or Anchorage. One elder told the survey team, “Two halibuts do not feed many grandchildren” (Smith field notes, 2001). Because these issues are complex, comments from the elders contained deep emotional feelings.

Access to harvested wild foods may vary between locations based on normal cyclical patterns of animal reproductive growth. Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) data for over twenty years for Kivalina in northwest Alaska showed variations in the harvest of individual species, but consistent total harvest amounts per capita over time.

Cultural values are mirrored in the practices and behaviors that shape community interaction with the older adult, and through these activities the identity of the elder is defined. Native elders associate the manifestation of these cultural values as “respect.” When Graves and Shavings (2005) analyzed the data from the NRC Voices of the Elders Conferences, they concluded that the ability to share wisdom is seen as the primary role of the elder in Native communities. Elder speakers indicated that access to their children and grandchildren was important, in that the elders felt that they had a responsibility to share their wisdom:

When he looks at his grandchildren, his great grandchildren, he feels “normal” when they come to see him. . . .

My husband needs to leave to get [medical] care . . . at the same time he wants to help his whaling crew get ready for the upcoming whaling season.

Data from the Iñupiaq Elders Study indicated that as a member of extended families, only 17.8% of the rural elders surveyed reported that they frequently ate alone, versus 22% of urban elders. The number of individuals living in rural households ranged from one through fifteen and a mean of 3.63 ± 2.69 , compared to somewhat smaller urban households with a range of one through nine people and a mean of 2.94 ± 1.94 . Rural and urban samples were recruited using different methodologies, and larger urban samples may yield different results.

Elders councils are commonly found in rural Native communities. Elders councils were found in all of the ten villages where our teams collected data, and all nineteen villages that participated in the NRC Voices of the Elders Conferences. We received reports that elders councils met

on a regular basis and when special problems arose. Elders also serve on village government boards in both participatory and honorary positions. In one village, our research team was invited to attend an elders council meeting during our stay, although our senior research member (age eighty-three) was the only one of our group asked to sit at the main table. The principal topic for discussion that day was planning activities for the youth during the summer.

VALUE OF COMMUNITY LIFE

In order to quantify the values of community life as part of the Iñupiaq Elders Study, survey questions were included to illustrate the mental and physical components of quality of life as defined by Ware et al. (1996). The multidimensional SF-12.v2 tool (Ware et al. 1996) provided two scores:

1. a physical component score (PCS) that is a composite score based on levels of self-perceived physical function that include the role of physical, bodily pain and general health; and
2. a mental component score (MCS) based on self-perceived mental health, role of emotional,⁸ social function and vitality (Table 1).

Rural elders had significantly higher scores than the national SF-12 norms for mental functioning (MCS). The normed MCS score for U.S. populations was 49.37 (Ware 2005); the rural Alaska Native score was 53.9 ± 1.1 ($p = 0.001$), and the urban score was 51.3 ± 1.7 ($p = 0.263$). Comparing groups by location, rural elders reported higher mental health scores than the national norms and higher scores than those reported by urban elders ($p = 0.040$). Rural elders also reported higher social functioning scores than urban elders, although the differences were not statistically significant.

Physical functioning component scores (PCS) were examined. Both groups reported lower scores than national SF-12 norms for physical functioning, which was 49.63 (Ware et al. 2005). Total PCS for rural elders were slightly higher than scores reported by urban elders, 43.4 ± 1.5 and 39.1 ± 6.2 , respectively. Component scores of the physical functioning scale received further examination. Comparing Iñupiaq elders by location, rural elders reported less pain ($p = 0.001$) and more vitality ($p = 0.007$) than reported by urban elders. All mean PCS component scores

8. Ware et al. (1996) used the terms “role of physical” and “role of emotional” to describe tangible and intangible aspects of health.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of SF-12.v2 Total Mental (MCS) and Physical (PCS) Component Scores as reported by Alaska Iñupiaq elders living in rural and urban locations

	SF-12 Normed Scores	Rural n = 52	Urban n = 48	t-test between location	p-value
Total Mental Component Score	49.4	53.9 ± 1.1	51.3 ± 1.7	1.36	0.177
Social Functioning	50.0	48.2 ± 11.6	43.7 ± 12.8	1.85	0.067
Role Emotional	50.0	46.4 ± 13.0	48.1 ± 12.9	-0.66	0.513
Mental Health	50.0	53.9 ± 9.5	49.9 ± 9.4	2.08	0.040
Total Physical Component Score	49.6	43.4 ± 1.5	39.1 ± 6.2	2.36	0.020
Physical Activity	50.0	47.4 ± 12.9	46.3 ± 9.7	0.47	0.636
Role Physical	50.0	47.1 ± 12.3	46.9 ± 10.6	0.07	0.949
Body Pain	50.0	39.8 ± 14.9	26.0 ± 10.4	5.34	0.001
General Health	50.0	44.7 ± 12.2	45.1 ± 10.8	-0.21	0.835
Vitality	50.0	58.8 ± 11.1	53.4 ± 7.7	2.78	0.007

Higher SF-12 scores indicate higher functioning (such as higher body pain score indicates less pain and greater ability for physical functioning). **Boldface** text indicates significant differences as indicated by p-values less than p = 0.05.

were less than the SF-12 normed scores for U.S. populations with the exception of vitality.

For elders who participated in the Iñupiaq Elders Study as a group (n = 75), participation in family activities correlated to higher SF-12.v2 physical functioning scores ($\rho = 0.26$, $p = 0.023$), and higher SF-12.v2 mental functioning scores ($\rho = 0.24$, $p = 0.040$) (Table 2). Relationships between participation in community activities were strong for SF-12.v2 mental functioning, but only approached significance.

While the reported ρ values are statistically significant, indicating a high probability that the measure of the relationships did not occur by chance, the ρ values were modest, indicating these variables explain only part of the impact of these variables on the SF-12 PCS and SF-12 MCS scores.

The authors proposed in this essay that when elders are able to fulfill their anticipated and expected roles, the

elder has achieved valuable functioning. The traditional harvested food lifestyle allows elders to maintain valued roles to provide guidance and support for young families. The authors suggest that the continued community involvement appears to make significant contributions to the mental and physical health of Iñupiaq elders. It is possible that the ability of Iñupiaq elders to continue in advisory and supportive roles may be at the heart of defining valuable functioning for the elders. Elder speakers at the NRC Voices of the Elders Conferences said:

I listen to my father and my grandfather. They tell me how to approach the game, how to hunt, watch the weather, watch the ocean currents, conditions, ice conditions, the weather. I've learned those from my own experience and my father telling me. I can prove that they were right. This I tell to you.

The elders are the backbone of the community, the elders are always there, the elders. Always have

Table 2. Spearman's rho correlations among measures of functioning as reported by combined rural and urban Alaskan Iñupiaq elders (n = 75)

	Measures of Functioning			
	SF-12.v2 Physical Functioning Component Summary Score (PCS)		SF-12.v2 Mental Functioning Component Summary Score (MCS)	
	ρ	p	ρ	p
Community support variables				
Participation in family activities	0.26	0.023	0.24	0.040
Participation in community activities	0.13	0.260	0.20	0.085

Boldface text indicates significant relationships as indicated by p-values less than p = 0.05.

the elders on the representatives like the council, we always had one or two elders on the council. [The] woman's club needs to have one or two elders on the board. . . . they always watch, they are the overseers. They make sure everyone comes to the meetings. . . .

They always stand up first and give advice. They say something of comfort. They hear anything that's not quite right, they step in and say something. Elders aren't afraid to say what they think and believe. [They motivate] . . . the club to . . . do thing in the village because they [make the group] . . . more willing.

PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL FOOD ACTIVITIES PROVIDE DAY-TO-DAY STRUCTURE

Elders remain at the core of the harvest process (in planning, timing, and supplying hunting equipment and tools), even though younger community members may perform the actual harvest work. Elders frequently provide cash for the purchase of fuel and ammunition that younger hunters need to secure the harvest. Through this relationship, elders are able to have their allotments of fish and game. Many elders expressed concerns surrounding the loss of the Alaska Longevity Bonus⁹ in 2004, and wondered how their role would change in the future because of diminished ability to fund the harvest activities of young hunters.

At a Nalukataq (whale festival) in a large coastal Iñupiaq village during the early summer of 2004, we watched as whaling captains relinquished their customary roles to direct the distribution of whale meat to elders of their families who then made decisions as to the individuals who were to receive choice cuts of meat. In talking with elders throughout the week during the preparation for the festival, we learned that within the privacy of family groups, elder men had instructed and encouraged the preparation of the hunting crews. Elder women oversaw the routine cleaning of family homes and freezers while the hunt was in progress to prepare for the whale's arrival, as one would prepare for the arrival of a guest in their home. Between the harvest and the festival, elders directed the care and treatment of the meat and the preparation of the other special foods and gifts to be given away at the event.

Without exception, when we talked with elders about changes in their food resources that they have observed over the years, they expressed concern over the changes in the systems of obtaining food and possible uncertainty about future supplies of food. Their conversations and comments showed a group focused on problems concerned with their perception of declining access to Native foods. To elders, retention of lifestyles and food customs was the highest priority. The elders expressed the opinion that traditional food customs and related practices and beliefs to perpetuate food rituals involved with celebrations and the honoring of the deceased are declining. It is their opinion that once these rituals are lost, they will be lost forever. The elders said that the loss of food customs has been caused by a loss of knowledge of food preparation, loss of hunting and fishing sites, insufficient government-regulated wild food harvest quotas, and changing weather patterns.

Although there are younger members of the communities who are learning and practice the customs, the real knowledge continues to be held by the elders. Reinforcing the traditional methods with the application of modern technology perhaps may lessen the chipping away of their cultural heritage. For example, one Tlingit elder worked with her son to make "Indian chips" (dried fish skin) in a dehydrator designed for vegetables and fruit. She was able to retain the flavor of her life while using her skill within her reduced physical capabilities since she can no longer stay up all night watching a fire to keep the drying process uniform.

Wiedman (field notes, summer 2001) describes his observations of an aging couple using a variety of old and new methods to process fish and berries for the freezer and smoked coho salmon for a memorial party scheduled for the fall. He talked about the seasonality of the various types of fish and the government regulations for what can be caught and when. When asked about how they smoked the fish, she said the smokehouse belonged to her mother. She then picked up the phone and called her mother to ask if the smokehouse was open for my visit. The smokehouse was just a few feet from the back door, down a plant lined path. Smoke gracefully rose from the center of the roof.

The close density of surrounding houses and buildings impressed upon Wiedman that this was the oldest part of the community, with buildings dating back to the

9. The Longevity Bonus was paid to individuals over the age of sixty by the State of Alaska and was abruptly ended in the spring of 2003. Each elder formerly received \$250 per month.

1800s. With a quick introduction she left him standing there with his head in smoke between rafters full of a wide assortment of fish of different sizes and colors. Wiedman's observations continued:

The hostess's "brother" went about his task of collecting dark thin dried salmon strips the size of candles hanging from the rafters. The sunrays through the smoke-hole produced an array of colors of the fish strips. The smoked fish were a translucent white and pink to a burnt orange in the sunlight. The "brother" talked about the kinds of fish, where they were caught, who caught them, and how the colors indicated how long they were in the smoke. He mentioned that this smoke house belonged to his sister and her mother's people. In a joking tone, he noted that he was not her brother, but was married to her sister. He spoke about the types of wood burned, where they traveled to get it and how the fire in the central metal fire place was kept smoking without producing too much heat. Throughout this time, he constantly kept busy removing the cotton string from the fish strips just removed from the rafters. These observations illustrate the continuing roles and power of elders in this four-generation extended family. Both of these elder males no longer actively fish for a cash income, yet they were fully involved and had specific food production roles and tasks. This complex web of family and community responsibilities combined with a traditional food lifestyle maintains a range of daily and seasonal activities that may promote physical and psychological wellbeing for all ages, especially elders. (Wiedman field notes, summer 2001)

MEASURES OF PHYSICAL FUNCTIONING

Elders' participation in the food-gathering activities is partially influenced by their level of physical functioning. In order to measure the importance of activities of daily life and physical abilities, the survey instruments of Katz et al. (1963) and Lawton and Brody (1969) were included in the Iñupiaq Elder's Study. The Activities of Daily Living (ADL) (Katz et al. 1963) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) (Lawton and Brody 1969) scales are widely used to evaluate levels of physical ability to perform daily self-care activities. ADLs include self-care activities such as bathing, eating, and dressing, and IADLs include more complex instrumental activities of daily living such as making meals, shopping, and cleaning. The ADLs and IADLs were developed for urban-based mainstream populations and may not capture the activities of the harvesting lifestyle found in Alaska communities.

The low frequency of ADLs reported by rural and urban Iñupiaq elders were not significantly different ($X^2 = 2.32$, $p = 0.127$). Both groups reported a few limitations of ADLs: 10% of rural elders had at least one ADL limitation and 20% of urban elders did. The most frequently reported ADL identified by the total group were difficulties with walking (12%), and difficulties with bathing (9%).

Similar patterns of few IADLs were found between rural and urban Iñupiaq elders ($X^2 = 0.09$, $p = 0.763$): 25% of rural elders reported at least one limitation, and 22% of urban elders did. The most frequently reported IADLs were difficulties in performing heavy housework (18%) and problems with shopping (12%).

Data from the NHANES III study conducted in 1988–1994 among individuals fifty-five years and older indicated that of the national sample of the U.S. population, 33.7% reported problems with walking, 36.8% with bathing, 51.6% with heavy housework, and 34.8% with shopping (NHANES III 1988–1994).

Within Native communities, physical abilities do not appear essential when warning crews of subtle weather changes or notifying family and community members when conditions are "right" to put out the salmon nets. The advisory role established through cultural traditions allows older individuals to have options to direct their own lives and continue to achieve "valuable functioning" even though physical abilities have changed or are changing. The authors propose that if the elders are not in their community surroundings, their participation in community activities would decrease and thus the level of perceived valuable functioning may be also diminished.

TRADITIONAL FOOD CULTURE PROVIDES NOURISHMENT AS RECIPIENT OF TRADITIONAL NATIVE FOOD SHARING

In Alaska, working as a family group harvesting and distributing harvested foods is identified as a food-sharing network. The networks reinforce the cultural identity of the group as well as enabling the procuring and sharing of essential food. Food sharing in Alaska is a traditional cultural practice that occurs to the present day (Callaway 2003; Caulfield 2002; Magdanz et al. 2002) and is one of the defining attributes of the "harvested wild food, or subsistence lifestyle."

Consistent with Mauss's (1988 [1954]) classic anthropological writings highlighting the benefits of reciprocal relationships evidenced by gift exchanges, feasts, and gifts of food, food-sharing networks link generations and

families through a web of social interactions. Also transmitted are community norms and standards. Food sharing networks appear to serve as a highly resilient response to uncertain food supplies (Magdanz et al. 2002) through the distribution of harvested food to members of the kin network.

Food sharing data were collected in five Iñupiaq villages in northwestern Alaska (Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Noatak, Shungnak) from 1994-2008 by field anthropologists from ADF&G, using protocols published in Magdanz et al. (2002). The purpose of the ADF&G extensive data collection was to describe characteristics of harvesting and food-sharing networks in rural Alaska communities.

Smith (2007) in the Iñupiaq Elders Study examined a small subset of the ADF&G food-sharing network data to determine the impact of the shared foods on the nutritional intake of Iñupiaq elders. To accomplish this, ADF&G food-sharing data from Buckland and Deering were compared to data from urban Iñupiaq elders living in Anchorage collected using the same ADF&G survey forms by Smith and her students. Only two variables from the ADF&G survey were used and compared between two rural communities (Buckland and Deering) and an urban location (Anchorage):

1. differences between gross total amounts of harvested foods (calculated from the combined total of food received); and
2. the number of food-sharing events that provided food to elders' households.

Although different sampling techniques described previously were used for the rural and urban samples, the household networks of rural Iñupiaq elders had almost twenty times more food-sharing events than urban networks. Rural elders reported a mean of 55.1 ± 8.4 food-sharing events with a range of 12 to 217, compared to urban elders' 2.9 ± 0.5 events with a range of 0 to 13. Rural households also shared more pounds of harvested foods. On average, rural households received $2,606 \pm 2,724$ pounds with a range 0 to 12,738, ten times more than the urban households' 251 ± 421 pounds with a range of 0 to 1,600.

While the harvest amounts vary, the remarkable adaptation of the rural traditional lifestyle within urban Alaska is important. Food-sharing networks bind rural and urban family members together as well as reinforce cultural heritage that both groups hold in common. Climate changes in Alaska that affect food harvests may severely impact

the social fiber that supports both rural and urban Native elderly. Modest food support resulting from fewer food sharing events may increase the vulnerability of the health and well-being of Native elders. These concerns should also be studied in any investigation of impacts of climate change on Alaska Native individuals and communities.

The term "harvested wild foods" was used to designate wild foods that are obtained by hunting, fishing, or gathering compared to "store-bought foods" that are purchased at the store, or ordered and shipped to the community. (A full description of factors related to the nutrition status of such foods is found in the other paper by Smith et al. in this issue of AJA). Alaska and Canadian Native populations continue to use high quantities of harvested foods on a regular basis (Kuhnlein et al. 2004; Smith et al. this volume), in contrast to declining use of indigenous foods reported among the Hopi (Kuhnlein and Calloway 1978:16-23) and Navajo Indians of the southwestern United States (Wolfe 1985:323-344).

Rural elders in our Iñupiaq Elders Study reported that harvested foods contributed 64% of the total reported intake of protein and over half of the intake of riboflavin (61%), iron (54%), and phosphorus (51%). For urban elders, harvested foods generally contributed less than half of the total nutrients consumed: protein (42%), riboflavin (39%), iron (40%), and phosphorus (30%). Even though urban Iñupiaq elders received smaller quantities of harvested foods than rural elders, the amounts are an important contribution of vital nutrients.

For both groups, intake of protein by males exceeded minimum requirements by three-fold. Mean protein intake by rural women exceeded twice the minimum protein requirements for women. Urban women over seventy years of age reported mean intakes of 69 grams, slightly above the minimum Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of 46 grams. The mean calorie intake reported by Iñupiaq elders living in Buckland and Deering ($3,594 \pm 2,122$) and in Anchorage ($4,319 \pm 3,129$) exceeded federal nutrition guidelines of the dietary reference intakes (DRI) published by the Institute of Medicine (2000, 2002) of approximately 2,000 kilocalories.

However, these guidelines may not be appropriate for active individuals living in an arctic climate. Recommended calorie intakes are based on data collected in the series of Nutrition and Health Examination Studies of the general U.S. population by the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (NHANES 2008). The NHANES studies did not include

assessment of Native populations, nor populations living in Alaska. The U.S. Army estimates that individuals participating in winter maneuvers in Alaska may require higher energy requirements that may exceed 4,500 calories per day (Edwards and Roberts 1991; King et al. 1993) in order to maintain body weight.

Body weights result from energy intakes that are moderated by physical exercise. Excess energy intake has an outcome of increased body fat. Mean Body Mass Index (BMI), a measure of body fat (Keys et al. 1972), was 27.3 ± 4.9 for rural elders and was 26.6 ± 5.3 for urban elders. While the use of BMI to assess Native populations in arctic climates may be problematic (Smith et al. 2004), nevertheless, the mean calculated BMI for the surveyed elders was only slightly above estimations of “ideal” BMI of less than 25. Individuals at the upper end of the standard deviations may exceed a BMI of 30, which may indicate excessive body weight. However, Smith’s earlier analyses of body weight of Alaska women failed to correlate BMI with increased body fat.

HARVESTED FOODS PROVIDE FOOD SECURITY

From the outside (etic) perspective, there appears to be a surplus of food in rural Alaska. The authors were surprised to find that 37% of the elders surveyed reported that they were worried that they may not have enough to eat. Food insecurity reports from younger rural Alaska women were also 37% in the WIC Healthy Moms Study (Smith et al. 2008). The younger women who reported being food insecure reported moderate intakes of calories or protein (mean intake was 1,493 calories with 59.6 grams of protein). This may suggest that the expression of food insecurity by those living within rural Alaska communities may be influenced by anxiety based on actual or perceived changes in social, economic, and environmental conditions.

To understand this phenomenon, we discussed the high rates of food insecurity reported by the younger women from the WIC Healthy Mom Studies¹⁰ with elders during our visits to the villages in 2004–2005¹¹ and at the NRC Voices of the Elders Conferences.¹² Elders could re-

call times or heard first-hand accounts in the oral tradition of food shortages or of outright famine in their communities. This could explain why some elders remain concerned about food security in spite of the appearance of ample staples. In some ways, the elders were looking ahead with concern for what the future might hold (LaBelle field notes, 1988–2008).

The literature is limited on intergenerational anxiety or concern about sufficient food by younger members in response to periods of starvation experienced by their parents in previous years (see Yehuda et al. 1998:841–843 and Sindler et al. 2004:189–196 for World War II holocaust survivor reports, for examples). However, the closeness of family members and the emphasis on oral tradition among Alaska Natives may have influenced feelings of an insecure food supply in rural Alaska among younger Native women. It is also possible that these younger women (age nineteen to thirty-eight) living in rural areas surveyed in 2001 may have had good reason to be more concerned than elders about the adequacy of the overall food supply, but only a focused investigation on that topic would reveal whether this was true or not. However, the percentage of both elders and younger women in villages who expressed food insecurity concerns is noteworthy. It is possible that food insecurity may increase as rising fuel costs for heating homes and for operating hunting/fishing modes of transportation in rural Alaska negatively impact both food harvests and household income available to purchase food at village stores/co-ops or to have food flown in from urban centers.

There may be other anxiety-producing influences in Alaska Native communities related to the elders’ perceptions of insufficient food for older village residents. Campbell (1991) in her classic definition of food insecurity included the precept of “socially acceptable food.” The impact of recent environmental protest on the harvest of arctic wildlife and sea mammals (seals, sea lions, and whales) in the popular press may invoke personal conflict between the elders’ beliefs of their traditional cultural role as stewards of land and water resources versus their portrayed abusive role as “harvesters” presented in the media. High rates of food insecurity could also be an expression

10. Villages in the WIC Healthy Mom Study asked to remain anonymous. Their locations were a coastal Tlingit village in southeast Alaska, an Alutiiq village located on the Alaska peninsula, a coastal village in southwestern Alaska in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and a coastal village on the Beaufort Sea. Data from Fairbanks was used for a comparison ($n = 103$).

11. The villages of Buckland and Deering asked to be identified in the Inupiaq Elder Study ($n = 101$).

12. Voices of Elders Conferences were held in Angoon, Barrow, Bethel, Buckland, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kodiak, Kotlik, Kotzebue, Metlakatla, Napaskiak, New Stuyahok, Nome, Nuiqsut, Old Harbor, St. Paul Island, Unalaska, and Wainwright ($n > 600$).

of the elders' concerns towards changing village social climates. Elders may fear that the anticipated holistic care (including provision of food) may not materialize or continue in the future.

RESPECT FOR SOURCES OF FOOD— BOTH ANIMAL AND PLANT

The respect for all aspects of the universe is integral to the relationship of the Native peoples with their food sources. Kawagley, a Yup'ik Native from southwest Alaska, wrote, "Alaska Native worldviews are oriented towards the synthesis of information gathered from interaction with the natural and spiritual worlds so to accommodate and live in harmony with natural principles and exhibit the values of sharing, cooperation, and respect" (Kawagley 1995:11). He quotes Lopez who concluded, "The spiritual landscape exists within the physical landscape" (Lopez 1986:11). He writes of beliefs regarding the delicate balance between the "human, natural, and spiritual world" (Kawagley 1995:15) and quotes Chief Seattle (1790–1866) who stated, "This we know: the earth does not belong to man; the man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself" (Kawagley 1995:17).

The intertwining of people with other occupants of the physical world provides a holistic foundation for relationships between humans and the environment and fosters observance of spiritual beliefs. Elder speakers at the NRC Voices of the Elders Conferences reinforced Kawagley's observations:

Growing up with all these traditional values, when I was observing my parents and grandparents, they really respected the land, the rivers and animals, and the fish and birds. They put back into the earth the bone remains of the animals instead of putting them in the trash or fed [the bones] to the dogs.

One thing that my grandmother told me also to share things...never to be stingy...I remember growing up I went ptarmigan hunting and caught a lot of ptarmigan...and when you gave more...more will come back to you...Sure enough those animals tend to come to you when you give some of your catch away and share with others...

They went out to get it but the whale put a hole in the Qayaq [boat], and it sank so far down that they said, "Qayaq stop!" And the whale stopped.

Somehow they paddled across out there and made it and they spent all night there...He was the last whale hunter.

When they catch game like seal, walrus, whatever is edible. They try to share it with neighbors. They said it has returned; somehow even they don't know about Creator, they know there's somebody providing resources for them at that time.

Over coffee one morning, an elder who had lived most of his life "Outside" (meaning outside of Alaska, in the Lower Forty-eight) said that when he came back to his village and harvested a seal, it was difficult in his old age to crawl across the ice to put water in the seal's mouth. We asked about the cultural basis of this practice, but he told us that he didn't know. What he told us was, "When I don't do it, I feel bad" (Easton field notes, 2005).

HARVESTED FOODS CONTRIBUTE TO A POSITIVE VIEW OF LIFE

Participating in harvested food traditions appeared to be a significant contribution to a positive view of life. Participants' views of life were assessed using self-reported health assessment and by the perceived health benefits of harvested foods.

Associated with all food gathering are many adventures and resulting stories. Telling these stories livens conversations for many years. Although not specifically defined or measured, humor is a vital part of rural life and food gathering. Gentle teasing and repeated descriptions are part of many conversations and may contribute to the benefits of this lifestyle. Our team members were included in the teasing and the laughter.

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

During visits to rural Alaska communities, a repeating phenomenon was observed. Elders expressed a general sense of optimism about life that was reflected in the reporting of their general health, even when their observed health was considered to be quite marginal. Self-reported general health is an expression of the nontangible aspects of health and is often a reflection of an individual's perception of their ability to function within his or her environment beyond the mere presence or absence of Pathak's (1996:217) "five D's": death, disease, disability, discomfort and dissatisfaction. Among rural elder respondents, 81% reported their health to be "excellent," "very good" and

“good,” compared to 76% reported in urban areas. Only 19% of rural elders and 25% of urban elders reported their health as “fair” or “poor.”

Elders stated that their health is better in the rural than in the urban setting, and some individuals reported that they moved back to rural villages for this reason. Being away from family was one of the main reasons that elders reported why they were reluctant to move to urban areas, even to seek health care.

Alaska rural elders reported few limitations of their activities, even if their observed health was less than ideal. Combined observations of rural elders bear this out.¹³ For example (Smith and Easton field notes, 2004–2005):

“Barry” brought us a jar of frozen fresh salmon eggs that he had prepared by layering the roe and salt in canning jars, then storing them in the freezer. We ate them on the homemade bread he also shared with us. Barry is 54 years old, partially deaf, and has two arthritic knees. He is often asked to go out-of-state with the village fire fighting team to maintain their base camp. His leadership style and camp management skills have won favor with the Federal Forestry Service personnel. He produces and sells homemade bread and doughnuts to keep “busy” and to supplement his income.

“Lucille” cares for her husband, and sells hand woven grass baskets for extra cash. She said that her aunt showed her how to pick grasses to make baskets using the tall green grass that grows on the coastal sand dunes. Her aunt was trained by her grandmothers’ sister (Lucille’s great aunt). Lucille has charge of her grandson while her daughter works at a job in another community near by. We frequently saw her zipping around town on her 4-wheeler with the baby’s head perched on her back, peering from beneath her kuspuk.

“John” reports that he is often unable to get out of the village following his stroke. In town he walked with a profound limp, and accepted a ride on a four-wheeler when one of the young boys in the village stopped. He said that he had to quit hunting 12 years ago. He lives with a niece, which was fine, except that he could get Native food only two-three times a month. As a result he had to eat a lot of “white man’s food.” He would have liked things to be different, but “this was the way it was.”

A positive view of life was not unexpected from this population. Fienup-Riordan (1983:175–186) wrote of

the Alaska Native philosophy that words have power to change the future. It seemed possible to us that if elders reported their health as “good,” their health would be “good.” Similar positive projections on future events have been reported by biologists when recording information about the harvest of wild game, sea mammals, and fish. As one elder said, “the fish have ears,” implying the belief that the elder’s comments about the fish could determine the elder’s ability to catch the fish in the future (Smith field notes, 2005).

PERCEIVED HEALTH BENEFITS OF HARVESTED FOODS

Harvested wild foods are believed to have healing properties. Narrative data from the NRC Voices of Our Elders Conferences supported the belief that health is benefited by consuming harvested foods.

I told the doctor, I’m going home; I don’t like White (man’s) food... (home to) eat my Eskimo food and I don’t want to be sick no more.

If we don’t receive our foods, there is something missing because not only do the food (feed) our physical self... they also nourish our spiritual and emotional self... because they bring back a lot of memories and happy times.

The elders perceive that harvested foods have greater value than similar non-Native foods, such as harvested salmon is better than commercially canned salmon. A number of health research projects confirm the elders’ traditional wisdom and have reported the biological importance of eating Native foods. Adler et al. (1996) studied traditional diet and harvest activities in villages in southwest Alaska and the Alaska interior and found significant trends in the relationship between eating a traditional diet high in protein and improved glucose tolerance, when combined with adequate levels of exercise. Other studies (Murphy et al. 1992:1390–1392; Murphy et al. 1995:680; Murphy et al. 1997:275–277) found that individuals who reported eating more traditional food were less likely to have diabetes and hypertension. Wiedman (1987:43–71) found similar phenomena in his work among the Oklahoma Cherokee, where diabetes increased after individuals transitioned to store-bought foods away from their traditional food patterns, away from lower-fat foods and higher exercise.

13. Fictitious names have been used and similar observations of several individuals have been combined.

The traditions surrounding harvest rituals contribute special value beyond the actual food gathered. An example was presented during one of three field visits. The oldest woman in the village was very upset that her family was not going to take her to fish camp so that she could pick berries. She told team members in numerous conversations that it was “time” to pick salmonberries. Even though she was not without food, it appeared that she thought her life was not complete because she could not participate in the act of food gathering. Despite their age, elders want to continue going to locations of summer camp and to the places of familiar activities. We asked a respected community member if her family’s assistance in our research efforts was causing a conflict with their mother’s (and grandmother’s) desire to pick salmonberries. We were told that her grandson was taking her to fish camp to pick berries that afternoon.

In a small village in the upper Aleutian Islands, local leaders as well as the elders told us that “the sea is our way of life.” One community leader mentioned that after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill when village fishermen were prohibited from fishing during the 1989 season, the U.S. government sent cases of commercially canned salmon as a replacement. She said, “It wasn’t just loss of food; it was the loss of our heritage. Fishing is what we do” (Smith field notes, 2001).

In many Sugpiat villages impacted by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the elders’ role in overseeing the gathering of subsistence foods from the shoreline was interrupted. The event disconnected the elders from their community members culturally, physically, and spiritually. Some mussel, cockle, and clam beds remain visually contaminated by the oil spill. Elders continue to grieve twenty years later; even the simple pleasures of walking on the beach can evoke memories of the destruction. Elders also reported changes in their health when they had to rely on processed and canned foods, especially increases in hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes in communities impacted by the oil spill (LaBelle field notes, 1988–2008).

Elders often reported negative health consequences when they have to rely on western processed and canned foods. LaBelle theorized that this may explain why “potlatches” featuring harvested foods shipped in from outlying rural communities are so popular among urban Native people who have little or no access to traditional foods and who are away from extended families (LaBelle field notes, 2008).

Another elder summarized the multifaceted holistic nature of the benefits of traditional foods in this way:

When we eat our food, we enjoy and we remember being in fish camp when we eat it. And when we get a lot of salmonberries, we do think about our experience in picking berries and consider them blessing. There’s also the fact of eating together with family and spending time with family cutting fish, family bonding just preparing the food. So it’s a lot of mental health, spiritual and family bonding just eating it. Our food has a lot more holistic approach to it when we eat it.

DISCUSSION

“Elder” is a status that has common threads throughout all Alaska Native cultures. The range of Native elders from whom these data flow strengthens the conclusions presented. The proposed conceptual model presented in this paper is an effort to describe aspects of participation in harvest-based food culture as it impacts valuable functioning achieved by the fulfillment of traditional roles for older individuals living in Alaska Native communities.

Data presented here indicated that harvesting of traditional foods used knowledge patterns set forth by previous generations that are transmitted through current elders. A striking illustration of their importance in food harvests was our experience of a whaling captain saying that he had to get to the beach early so that he would have time to listen to the elder men’s advice and warnings before the hunt (Smith field notes, 2004). Even with the numerous activities involved in preparing for a whale hunt, he credited the last-minute information given by the elders with keeping his crew safe and for his success as a whaling captain. When we attended the Nalukataq, the whale festival, former whaling captains, now in advisory roles, took turns standing on the bluff to watch conditions at sea.

On the other hand, elders living in urban areas may have limited social status based on the lack of a social position to fill related to food harvesting. Psychological and social tensions may develop and affect the individuals’ views of their quality of life when away from their home communities.

Participation in the activities of harvest and food preparation served to unite families with their history, and food sharing also provided a structure for family interdependence between communities (Burch 2006). Narrative data indicated that culture and food are inseparable for elders. As one elder reported, “Our food is medicine. It

feeds the body (and) . . . feeds the Spirit" (NRC Voices of the Elders Conferences).

It appears that in the minds of the elders, retaining lifestyles and food traditions is one of their highest priorities. If we were to summarize all the comments made by the elders, as a group, the elders' conversations and comments focused on problems concerned with the availability of sources and declining access to Native foods. The factors influencing the disappearance of Native food customs and knowledge are complex as communities react and adapt to globalization, technology, and global warming. Native communities in Canada reported that they face increased competition with recreational and commercial fisheries of salmon, halibut, and crab, and with game regulations from multiple government agencies (Nadasdy 2004). Similar competition has been reported in Alaska communities as well. The loss or restriction of hunting and fishing sites may further reduce opportunities for elders to share with younger generations the food preparation knowledge needed to perpetuate food traditions, including those that comprise a major part of honoring deceased ancestors and his or her family. Wage-earning jobs outside the villages may pull youthful resources away from the influence of elders. The extensive role of food in the traditions of memorial festivals mirrors the elders' values of sharing and reciprocity. These events are much like the stories told by elders of sharing food today, resulting in increased future harvest. Preservation of food becomes a symbol confirming traditional values and beliefs. Elders predict that once food rituals are lost, the rituals and ceremonies will be lost forever and that the elders must be teachers to the younger community leaders. The authors suggest that participation in the harvest of food forms the core of valuable functioning for Alaska Native elders, as well as providing essential sources of nutrition for sustained activity.

LIMITATIONS

Consistent with Fisher and Ball (2003:24) there may be limitations inherent when broad complex social systems are examined in brief studies: "when the health, social and economic disparities of American Indians and Alaska Natives are viewed outside of the historical context, that events and practices have the potential to be misunderstood and to be addressed in ways that perpetuate rather than resolve problems."

There is always the possibility that as outsiders, the authors have oversimplified or misunderstood the complex

nature of the elders' comments. This paper in no way attempts to minimize the importance of cultural differences and the benefits of diverse diets of the 229 federally recognized Alaska tribes. It was our goal to use their comments to increase our understanding of harvested food customs and the relationship to quality of life as older individuals living in Native communities move through the aging process.

One of the goals of the authors is to provide data to the villages as they seek their own solutions to problems concerning preservation of the harvested food culture within their communities. The application of the information presented will no doubt be as diverse as the communities from which the constructs were derived.

Developing a representative sampling technique for urban elders was difficult. Thus the data collected in this study may be skewed and ability to generalize these data to other urban Native elders may be weak.

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 well-being) 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 (Figure 1) 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.

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THE BOUNDARIES OF INCLUSION FOR IÑUPIAT EXPERIENCING DISABILITY IN ALASKA

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ABSTRACT

For Alaska Natives experiencing disability and their families, encounters with “western” biomedical service-delivery bureaucracies represent a form of biopower that severely limits individual and community choice, reinforces normative alignments of difference and otherness, and hinders community inclusion for individuals labeled with a disability. This paper examines the dynamic interplay of power within disability service-delivery bureaucracy in Alaska by emphasizing agency as particular moments of constructive engagement with institutional constraint and introduces creative innovations in the planning process for people experiencing disability. To illustrate this, the experiences of an Iñupiaq family in dealing with biomedical service-delivery institutions in Alaska and elsewhere in the United States are described. A fundamental question addressed is whether current service-delivery problems that exist in rural Alaska could be alleviated through cultural understanding regarding the appropriate care and treatment of community members.

KEYWORDS: disability, health service, Alaska Native, Iñupiat

BACKGROUND

Native Americans and Alaska Natives have the highest rate of disabilities of any ethnic group in the United States, at 21.9% (Bryan 1999; Marshall 2001). This compares with 20.0% for African Americans, 19.7% for Caucasians, 15.3% for Latinos, and 9.9% for Asian/Pacific Islanders (Bryan 1999; Houtenville 2005). The common definition of disability (used in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1996) is “a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, or caring for one’s self” (Bryan 1999:5). However, definitions of disability are socioculturally generated and reflect biases concerning notions of health and normalcy. Few anthropological or other social-scientific

studies (Scheller 1995; Roberts et al. 2001; Wilcox et al. 2001) have examined the problems inherent in the cross-cultural delivery of services to developmentally disabled individuals among Alaska Native peoples. My MA thesis (Hedwig 2006) attempted to address this relative absence in the literature. Selectively condensing this work in the following text, I will examine precontact Iñupiaq approaches to defining, classifying, and treating “disabled” community members and discuss how these cultural understandings were transformed through encounters with colonial medical institutions.

As a result of contact with non-Native groups, I argue that western biomedical modes of “managing” disability¹ were imposed upon Alaska Native communities through

1. Byron Good (1994) argues that it is necessary to (1) treat biomedicine as a cultural system with its own set of implicit value judgments and assumptions about the world and the human body that shape the experience of health, disease, illness, and healing; and (2) take seriously the medical practices of other cultures, not as part of a system of beliefs that is inherently flawed and in need of correction, but as sets of knowledge(s) that are continuously and selectively drawn upon in the context of everyday life.

sets of practices and techniques Michel Foucault referred to as biopower (Rabinow and Rose 2003). Foucault theorized biopower to be those practices of “legibility” (Scott 1998) by which governmental institutions extend control over and discipline the bodies made subject to its gaze of surveillance, often in subtle, covert ways (Foucault 1973). Power becomes productive, in the Foucauldian sense, when individuals interact with these institutions of the state through the experience of everyday life. For Alaska Natives experiencing disability and their families, encounters with “western” biomedical service-delivery bureaucracies represents a form of biopower which:

1. severely limits individual and community choice;
2. reinforces normative alignments of difference and otherness; and
3. hinders community inclusion for individuals labeled with a disability.

Modifying Foucault’s perspective and emphasizing agency as particular moments of constructive engagement with power, I will introduce creative innovations in the planning process for people experiencing disability. To illustrate this, I describe the experiences of an Iñupiaq family in dealing with biomedical service-delivery institutions in Alaska and elsewhere in the United States. A fundamental question addressed is whether current service-delivery problems that exist in rural Alaska could be alleviated through the use of cultural understanding regarding the appropriate care and treatment of community members.

Focusing on biopower runs the risk of denying agency to those individuals who interact with (i.e., subject themselves to) the institutional structures through which disability services are administered. It is for this reason that it is necessary to explicitly emphasize agency within the structures of constraint and practices of regulation and control imposed by the state. Overemphasizing these constraints at the expense of the strategic and calculated choices of individuals as they attempt to maneuver through such bureaucracies generates only partial understandings of the dynamic interplay between structural constraint and lived experience. Similarly, use of terms such as “western” and “biomedicine” run the risk of essentializing the diversity of forms and manifestations that exist within such theoretical constructs. In this regard, “biomedicine” as used here is not intended to imply a monolithic entity that destroys all ways of knowing in its path. Rather, it takes on new forms in diverse cultural contexts and may be understood and used in strategic ways by various indi-

viduals and groups. Thus, “encounters with biomedicine” need not always imply a one-sided power relationship with the “consumer” of services continuously being duped by biomedical authorities. As discussed below in the context of an Iñupiaq man experiencing disability and the encounters he and his family experienced in seeking out and obtaining services, these encounters represent possibilities for “changing the relations of surveillance” (O’Neil et al. 1998) and creating new forms of engagement with biomedical institutions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper uses information derived from experiences working with an Iñupiaq family and a local, nonprofit service agency where I conducted an internship sponsored by the University of Alaska Anchorage Department of Anthropology (spring semester 2003, extended through summer 2003) and was offered subsequent employment as a care coordinator (August 2004–July 2005) of services for this and other families. While an intern and employee of the agency, I learned about the current protocols and procedures for providing services to people who experience developmental disability through various federal, state, and local service-providing agencies and organizations.

The qualitative data presented here comes from field notes, observations, and interviews taken within the service-providing agency’s central headquarters in Anchorage, as well as their regional hub office on the North Slope. Some additional observations were made in an outlying North Slope village. Informal interviews were conducted with agency personnel as well as the family and individual receiving services. During my internship I learned about agency procedures and practices and engaged in internship tasks in two Iñupiaq communities. Approximately four weeks of my internship were based on the North Slope, returning to the Iñupiaq community in which intern data were gathered in February 2005 in order to facilitate the personal futures planning process (described below) for the individual and family who are the focus of this research. As an intern and employee with the nonprofit agency, I had access to strategic planning and financial documentation, as well as historical documentation, which I used to formulate an understanding of how decision-making has occurred in Alaska with regard to program development and implementation. Additional records were examined at public and university libraries

(including the Archives and Manuscripts Department at the Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage) to contextualize my analysis.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON DISABILITY

Historically in the United States and Western Europe, people who experienced developmental disabilities (and their families) comprised a devalued class without much voice in what was done to and for them by more powerful groups within society (Ferguson et al. 1992). Medical professionals urged parents of children with developmental disabilities to place them in an institution, where, in many cases, horrific conditions prevailed. This approach is quite different in comparison to how various indigenous groups understood and responded to disability prior to the contact period.

One of the first anthropologists to study the social and cultural significance of disability was Ruth Benedict, who in 1934 studied the diverse ways in which epilepsy was treated in American Indian and Siberian cultures (Klotz 2003). Benedict noted that the trance-like states associated with epilepsy were valued and believed to be signs of spiritual authority and power. She contrasted this understanding with that of biomedicine, where the same condition is branded as “abnormal and reprehensible” and a diagnosis carries tremendous social consequences for some unfortunate individuals (Klotz 2003). This was an important contribution in terms of bringing scholarly attention to the ways in which disability is culturally constructed, but her analysis perhaps reifies the differences in cultural treatment of “disability” for “other” cultural groups.

Robert Edgerton’s (1993) *The Cloak of Competence: Stigma in the Lives of the Mentally Retarded* was the first ethnographic attempt to understand and analyze the experiences of people with disabilities from an emic perspective in the United States. His “passing and denial: the problem of seeming to be normal” identified the daily struggles that deinstitutionalized individuals with developmental disabilities face in a society that is not prepared for their inclusion. Passing and denial represented two distinct strategies used by people to negotiate disability in a world of nondisabled others. Edgerton’s work brought much-needed attention to the stigmatizing effects of being labeled “disabled” as well as the boundaries of inclusion and “normalcy” that prefigure relationships between disabled and nondisabled individuals.

Benedicte Ingstad and Susan Reynolds Whyte’s (1995) *Disability and Culture* was one of the first works to emphasize the importance of qualitative research methods in studying disability as a sociocultural construct. They note that the deprecating stigma associated with being labeled “mentally retarded” in certain “western” contexts is by no means universal and that definitions of and approaches to managing “disability” vary greatly across cultural contexts (Klotz 2003). The links between personhood, identity and disability are explored in various “local” contexts and presented as ethnographic case studies that together make a substantial contribution to anthropology and disability studies. A second volume entitled *Disability in Local and Global Worlds* was co-edited by Ingstad and Whyte in 2007. Among other things, this volume explores the changing contexts in which disability continues to be defined and lived in diverse cultural settings. It also examines the intersections of local, national, international, and transnational understandings of disability as embodied in various institutions such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization and lived by individuals, and the plurality of forms and appropriations of disability that emerge in various contexts. The formation of “association-al communities and collective identities around biomedical categories” (Ingstad and Whyte 2007:15), in this case disability, is referred to as biosociality. This is described by Ingstad and Whyte as a sense of belonging and relation (both to other people and the state) that is based in a biological condition, not as blind acceptance of biomedical hegemony, but frequently as a strategy of resistance and livelihood, where “disability” becomes a social, political, and economic bargaining tool.

Service delivery has benefited from scholarly research as well. Bryan’s (1999) *Multicultural Aspects of Disabilities* focuses on the problems inherent in service delivery cross-culturally and explains the historical and cultural significance of disparities between ethnic groups in terms of disability prevalence and local access to treatment services. Marshall’s (2001) *Rehabilitation and Native Americans with Disabilities* evaluates understandings of disability in American Indian and Alaska Native populations specifically and sheds light on barriers to successful service delivery that, she argues, are the result of indigenous cultural constructions of disability that differ from those of biomedical service-delivery institutions. Manson (2000) offers useful recommendations and directions for further research in program and policy development as well as general insight into the cultural problems associated with

service delivery to American Indians and Alaska Natives. Similarly, Browne and Fiske (2001) offer powerful firsthand testimonies of First Nations women's difficulties in dealing with Canadian health care institutions and highlight some of the fundamental obstacles in providing services that are responsive to local cultural understanding. While this literature review is necessarily selective and partial, it provides an overview of the intellectual genealogy of disability studies, anthropology, and health service delivery to Alaska Natives and highlights current research trends within this growing area of scholarly interest.

PRECONTACT IÑUPIAQ UNDERSTANDINGS OF "DISABILITY"

The degree of accommodation offered to individuals who required assistance for everyday life functions in traditional Iñupiaq cultures is a point of discrepancy in the literature. Dorothy Jean Ray (1975:244), for example, cites Dr. Edmonds (early 1890s), who noted that "the crippled and abnormally formed babies were quickly disposed of" and that infanticide was very common. Similarly, Robert Fortune (1992:84) cites Captain Hooper (1881), who stated that the "northern Eskimos destroyed all deformed infants at birth," and he himself asserts that there seems to be little doubt that sometimes deformed or crippled individuals were allowed to die because of the greater needs of the community. While these examples would seem to support the infanticide "solution" to disability, they actually exist in stark opposition to traditional cultural values regarding treatment of fellow human beings. Early non-Native visitors to Alaska could not possibly have been exposed to the full range of scenarios and decision-making frameworks that families and communities considered to accommodate people with limiting conditions, and the literature appears to misrepresent traditional Iñupiaq treatment of such individuals in this regard.

There are numerous examples that support this hypothesis. Jolles (2002), for example, notes in her analysis of the Siberian Yupik community of Gambell that a mother who has a child with a condition that is perceived to cause and will result in death may take her own life in exchange for the life of the sick child. This concept is fundamentally different from the infanticide scenarios described in some of the literature. Rather than a burden to be eliminated, the affected child is believed to be healable, and in this example the life of the "incomplete" human child is valued over that of the parent. The cause of the affliction

is believed in many cases to be spirit possession or object intrusion, as opposed to genetic or biological causes that result in chronic, perhaps degenerative and untreatable conditions, and the mother's behavior is a sacrifice that is believed to be best for the survival of the child and ultimately the group. Infanticide was not considered to be an effective option in this example, and the mother's actions reflect her understandings of the cycling of life and death and the curability of her child's condition. These nuances would have been imperceptible to outside observers.

While Fortune (1992) does cite numerous examples of what has subsequently been referred to as infanticide, he too points to the underlying value placed on caring for people, especially for the elderly and disadvantaged. He describes an account where Dr. Simpson in 1855 was impressed by the care that Barrow Eskimos provided to those who needed assistance and quoted Simpson as stating that clothing, food, and "every comfort they possess" was offered and these provisions could be relied upon (Fortune 1992:84). An additional account by Beechey in 1831 noted that the oldest person in the vicinity of Cape Thompson was a "cripple," suggesting that there was community capacity for care and that individuals were cared for throughout the course of their lives (Fortune 1992:84).

Providing for those who are in need and sharing what one has were important Iñupiaq values in precontact times and they continue to be today (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, www.ankn.uaf.edu). These values, passed on by elders to youth through careful teaching and rich oral traditions, constitute what it means to be Iñupiaq and are repeated in stories past and present. A relevant example comes from Robert Mayokok's (1960) *Eskimo Stories* where in his telling of "The Blind Man and the Polar Bear" lessons are revealed regarding fair treatment and care of those who are in need. In this story the socially and physically isolated blind orphan is living with his grandmother, who helps provide for his care. They are poor and live alone. The grandmother combed the beaches looking for dead seals and walrus and they preserved the meat to last them through winter. She also fished for tom cod and would travel to villages at times in search of meat and clothing. One evening a polar bear approached their shelter and tried to attack them. The grandmother ran and grabbed the blind boy's bow and arrow, and she directed him and helped him aim his shot. The bear was vitally wounded, but the grandmother told the boy he had missed so she could hoard the meat and keep it for herself. She continued to feed him scraps and she would eat at a

location away from the boy so he would not smell the fresh meat. As a result of the grandmother's selfish treatment towards the boy, a spirit in the form of a loon visited him and offered help. The boy crawled on the back of the loon and was taken on a ride diving down into the cold waters. When they surfaced, he could see again, and they repeated this several times until the boy's vision was fully restored. Upon returning to his home, the boy saw a polar bear hide hanging on the wall and he knew it was the polar bear that had attacked them. He did not say anything to his grandmother about what she had done, believing instead that it was best to "only return good for evil" (paraphrased from Mayokok 1960:18).

This story of the Blind Boy and the Polar Bear offers considerable insight into Iñupiaq notions of difference, the special spiritual attributes often associated with people who are different, and the values of sharing and taking care of and providing for others. Additional evidence concerning the inclusion of disabled individuals into traditional Alaska Native communities can be found in the exploration records of Captain James Cook and Lieutenant King (Ray 1975). Excerpts by both Cook and King describe a family consisting of a husband, wife, small child, blind elderly man (possibly a grandfather), and a "frightful cripple" that approached their ship in an *umiak*, asking for assistance in performing a healing act involving the blind elderly man (Ray 1975:42). Lieutenant King was directed to hold his breath and exhale on the elderly man's eyes and then spit on them. The "frightful cripple" was described by King as a young man who "had a disorder in his face which had already destroyed one eye, and the sides were much swelled, and one half of his mouth and nose in a sad condition...and his legs were so contracted that he was obliged to crawl about on his knees and hands" (Ray 1975:43).

There are several aspects of this exchange that warrant consideration. First, the "frightful cripple" was present as a member of that family, and the mother (who was there on behalf of the blind elder) was engaging him as well as her husband in the event and referring to him as a family member. Second, the "cripple's" presence suggests that this individual had access to a social support network and was not left behind. The question of why the family came to the white explorers in the first place for assistance is also interesting. Perhaps the reputation of explorers as men who had potentially useful items such as medicines factored in, or the diminishing status and effectiveness of the shamans (*afatkut*) in the face of disease and colonial

encroachment. It is also noteworthy that Cook and King were specifically instructed by the family to perform a procedure on the elderly man's eyes that was congruent with their Iñupiaq understanding of acceptable and appropriate treatment, despite their otherwise great eagerness to locate these men specifically and seek out their services.

Archaeological work in the vicinity of Point Barrow offers further evidence that care was provided to the disadvantaged, even in times of community hardship (Langdon 2002; Zimmerman et al. 2000). Autopsies of the "Frozen Family of Utqiagvik" revealed growth arrest lines due to periods of food scarcity as well as lung and bone conditions that would have had "disabling" consequences. This family provided care for each other even through periods of shortage, as evidenced by the presence of numerous growth arrest lines, suggesting that the difficult times were followed by periods of recovery. It is interesting to note that no family member was abandoned for their condition or limitation even during times of great strain on the community.

Similarly, Zimmerman et al. describe a frozen mummy of a five-to-eight-year-old girl with a chronic lung and liver condition that was dated to 800 years ago (nearly three centuries earlier than the frozen family). A number of growth arrest lines were present in this example as well, and her lower intestine was filled with gravel, sand, pebbles, and animal hair, suggesting that she was possibly chewing on hides during a period of great food shortage (Zimmerman et al. 2000). Zimmerman et al. suggest that the girl survived her disability because she had a family and a community to care for her. A toboggan made out of baleen, likely a transport device so that her family could assist her in getting around, was found buried alongside her (Zimmerman et al. 2000).

All of the above examples suggest that precontact Iñupiaq culture had an inherent capacity to provide care for those who would have required special assistance to meet the requirements of everyday life in harsh arctic environments. While some examples of infanticide have been noted in the historical record, it is my contention that this literature essentializes those practices that were witnessed (by outsiders) towards some people with observable differences and that the universality of such practice is unlikely. By observable, I am referring mostly to physical disabilities that would have been readily noticeable to outsiders. Developmental disabilities, mental illness, and other conditions more dependent on the culture-specific parameters that shape their experience and meaning

would have been very difficult if not impossible to identify. This is perhaps why early researchers had a tendency to correlate shamanic behavior with mental illness, or why John and Edith Kilbuck were inclined to declare an “insanity epidemic” in the Yup’ik village of Kwethluk in 1890 (Fienup-Riordan 1991). The fact that the earliest accounts of people with disabilities referred to physical conditions rather than developmental ones points to the problem of detectability in cross-cultural contexts and has led to a possible misrepresentation of Iñupiaq cultural tradition with regard to the care and treatment of community members.

From a cultural materialist perspective, infanticide serves the function of reducing strain on the group. When individuals cannot “earn their keep” in society, they are killed to alleviate the burden. This is an incorrect interpretation of the range of Iñupiaq decision-making strategies in my view, because it overlooks other possible options that were available to individuals with disabilities and assumes that the first reaction is always one of pure survival, with the child almost instinctively left to die. This is not to be taken as an argument that infanticide did not happen. There are examples of it happening, and during times of great strain, when the whole of the community was facing hardship, it may have been one of the only options. However, the above examples illustrate that it was likely a last resort only; that disabled individuals appear quite frequently in traditional stories as well as ethnographic and historic records; that developmental disability and mental illness would have been difficult to identify by outsiders; that disability was interpreted and managed in different ways by Iñupiaq people; and that traditional cultural values were and are strongly associated with sharing, respect, and taking care of one another, particularly the elderly and disadvantaged.

It is also possible that there were taboos attached to infanticide, that it was considered a potentially risky thing to do and that there were rules to be followed to ensure the spirit of the child was safe and protected. Simon Paneak of Anaktuvuk Pass tells an interesting story that may offer insight to a discussion of infanticide (Campbell 2004). He speaks of a mother who died shortly after the birth of her child and was hauled (along with her child) to a dry location outside the village and left there by villagers. It was winter, and a very cold scene is depicted, where it is presumed that the child too dies. The villagers do not hear an end to the crying, however, and the child comes to the village to try to “talk to the people who were trying to kill it” (Campbell 2004:13). The child was jumping around

incessantly until it turned into a “very bright fire and the people couldn’t see any child in it, except for the flying fire” (Campbell 2004:14). Paneak describes that only *afat-kut* (shamans) had the ability to get the child to stop jumping around, but he did not understand how it was done. It is difficult to ascertain the precise meaning of Paneak’s story, but it is significant that the spirit (presumably) of the abandoned child is seemingly disturbed as a result of the infanticide and that culturally specific steps needed to be taken by the shaman to appease it.

By incorporating this modified understanding of infanticide to disability and its treatment in precontact Iñupiaq cultures, the tenacious assumptions of biomedical categorization of disability become apparent and the interpretation of meaning difficult to speculate upon. Non-Native explorers, missionaries, traders, profiteers, military personnel, etc. observed a culture quite unlike their own, and their own behavior was often quite abnormal from the perspective of the Iñupiaq.

THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE: HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE UNITED STATES AND ALASKA

Perhaps the best example of the distorted U.S. perception of the meaning of “helping Natives” with developmental disabilities comes from the contiguous United States with the passage of legislation in 1903 that created a separate facility for the treatment of Native populations in Canton, South Dakota, known as the Hiawatha Asylum for Insane Indians (Bhatara et al. 1999). The proponents of the asylum were concerned with alleviating suffering among Native Americans by providing better care than available in jails or hospitals. They argued that a separate institution for Native Americans was needed because they had unique mental health afflictions and would be better off living among members of their own “race” (Bhatara et al. 1999). Whether this was motivated by a sincere desire to help or a desire to control through removal and isolation is an important question to consider. Within three decades, however, the Hiawatha Asylum was shut down due to allegations of mistreatment. A 1933 investigation conducted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs determined that a “large number” of patients who had spent time at Hiawatha showed no sign of mental illness whatsoever (Bhatara et al. 1999).

This model of administering segregated care to indigenous peoples experiencing disability was replicated during the early years of U.S. “ownership” of the territory of Alaska. The first attempts to do so occurred at Sitka in 1867 (Fortune 1992), the same year that the territory was purchased from Russia. Facilities consisted of the hospital already built by the Russians, but treatment was not offered to Native peoples initially. While some individual doctors offered their services freely, often at their own expense, with limited facilities, limited stocks of drugs, and few staff, most Native peoples were unable to receive care. In 1868, an incident involving a sick Tlingit woman who was moaning in pain in the streets of Sitka, noticed by an officer and subsequently given access to care, set a precedent in terms of government responsibility to provide care. A single room in the upstairs “wretched” portion of the hospital was set aside exclusively for the care of Native peoples (Fortune 1992:142).

Due to U.S. Navy limitations in establishing regular medical infrastructure, health care for Alaska Natives was subsequently expanded and administered via the Revenue Cutter Service and the Marine Hospital Service (which later became the U.S. Coast Guard and Public Health Service respectively) (Fortune 1992). During this time the need to provide a hospital for the exclusive care of Natives was increasingly recognized. There was also a growing awareness that the federal government would likely be forced to assume the burden of care, and “if it was the desire of the government to save the Native people from extinction,” a hospital was “absolutely indispensable” (Fortune 1992:159). While such a hospital was not built for another decade (in Juneau), the concept that “as a nation” the U.S. owed it to the Natives to provide health care was beginning to gain momentum. In a study entitled “The Treatment of the Mentally Ill in Alaska, 1844–1912,” Thomas G. Smith stated:

From 1884 to 1900, the policy of the Federal government toward the mentally ill of Alaska was one of indifference and neglect. Although this neglect cannot be excused, it can be explained. First, the care of the mentally ill was traditionally a state and local responsibility. Second, the Gilded Age was a period of general federal neglect in territorial matters. Third, Congress considered other issues more important than the care of a few victims of insanity in Alaska. Finally, in a period of economic instability, the federal government wished to avoid the expense of caring for the insane of a remote and politically impotent terri-

tory. (Undated draft report, Albrecht Collection, Archives and Manuscripts, Box 20, University of Alaska Anchorage Consortium Library)

A common theme found throughout the historical analysis of outside medical intervention in Native communities is the belief that Native medical systems were ineffective and inadequate before European, Russian, and American arrival, and thus medical care for Natives was their responsibility, in order to “save them from extinction,” pull them out of savagery, and “fix” them culturally. Interestingly, the “tremendous need” for medical care for Natives was often only recognized through the inability of these groups, whether military personnel, teachers and missionaries, adventurers and traders, etc., to set up their own medical infrastructure. In other words, it was believed by American colonists that their own difficulties in setting up medical infrastructure meant that Alaska Natives must have an even greater need for this infrastructure. Because biomedical models of administering health care were difficult to implement in Alaska (due to lack of resources and personnel, rugged terrain, and lack of existing infrastructure), it was perhaps assumed that Native communities experienced particularly atrocious medical conditions that required intervention. This theme of assuming responsibility for the care of Alaska Natives was repeated throughout the contact period and used as justification for further colonial expansion and penetration.

When medical care did arrive for Native people in the Arctic, it was not offered to individuals who had previously consulted an *afatkuq*, because their practices were thought to be demonic (Blodgett 1979; Chance 1990; Fortune 1992; Spencer 1959). Interestingly, the word for an *afatkuq*’s helping spirit (*tuunraq*) also came to be translated as “pretending to be a devil” (Fortescue et al. 1994). This linguistic correlation is likely the result of influence from the Presbyterian Church, and its presence is revealing about missionary attitudes towards shamanic practices generally, as well as the perception of threat to Presbyterian control associated with these practices. Not unlike that which occurred with the Hiawatha Asylum for Insane Indians (where many shamans were placed simply because they were shamans), shamans in Iñupiaq regions were often labeled as insane or as doing the work of the devil, partly because their work presented a challenge to the authority of the Presbyterian missionaries and the imposition of Christian values, but also because the behavior they were observing was taken out of context, and

the value, importance, and meaning (within an Inupiaq cultural framework) was lost. Shamans were framed as imposters, and the failure to cure newly introduced diseases, coupled with missionary propaganda and systematic downplay of the institution led to shamanism's decline (Blodgett 1979; Fortuine 1992; McLean 1997; Ray 1975; Spencer 1959).

The Congressional Act of June 6, 1900, gave authority to the governor of the Alaska Territory to make contracts "for the care and custody of the insane," and the Morningside Hospital in Portland, Oregon received the contract (contracts were granted to the lowest bidder) in 1904 and managed to hold on to it until 1962 (Foulks 1972). At Morningside, care was primarily custodial, conditions were unsanitary, and there were no educational or therapeutic programs or activities (Albrecht Collection, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Box 20, University of Alaska Anchorage Consortium Library). There was no differentiation between adults and children, and without separate rooms, the entire facility was filled with nothing but beds (no furniture), and staff, numbering so few, simply provided oversight and monitoring with little to no interaction with patients. For nearly two generations, individuals with disabilities and intensive medical needs were not regular members of communities, and community capacity for care was reduced, the result of the hegemonic thrust of American colonialist ideology, with biomedicine and its institutions simply one part of an overall process of cultural encompassment (Dufort 1992; Manson 2000; Marshall 2001).

In a report to the Department of the Interior in 1954, it was concluded by a committee established to research the problem that "the fundamental principle of contract care outside the territory was impractical," and it was recommended that a "modern mental hospital" of no less than 350 beds be established in Alaska (Albrecht Collection, Box 20; Fortuine 1992; Foulks 1972). A follow-up report by the U.S. Public Health Service in 1956 found that because of its distance from Alaska, vital contact with family and friends was lost to the "hospitalized Eskimo," which created "secondary psychiatric difficulties" (Foulks 1972). Also, it was found that many individuals ended up staying for much longer periods of time than necessary due to the high expense of transportation to and from Alaska. Considering the numbers of "crippled" individuals registered in Alaska at that time, and the many more Albrecht claimed were unregistered, it is clear that there was a tremendous lack of services available

for individuals experiencing disabilities under American policy and law at that time.

In 1962, the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) opened a 225-bed facility for the mentally ill in Anchorage, Alaska, and as more individuals who had been previously hospitalized at Morningside returned to Alaska, a second facility, the Harborview facility at Valdez, was built to accommodate the developmentally disabled and other individuals who did not suffer from psychiatric conditions but required long-term care (Albrecht Collection, Box 20; Foulks 1972).

DISABILITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN ALASKA SINCE THE 1970S

Several pieces of key legislation affecting individuals with disabilities and Alaska Natives emerged in the 1970s. Perhaps most significantly, the precedent-setting *Garrity v. Gallen* decision (in New Hampshire) mandated that all public mental institutions be shut down (Racino 1999). Other states (Alaska among them) had been following similar trends (often referred to as "normalization") since the early 1970s, but full deinstitutionalization did not occur for Alaska until the closing of the Harborview facility in Valdez in 1997 (City of Valdez 2005; Scheller 1995). For people with disabilities, Title V of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1974) (later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) were significant pieces of legislation (Scotch 2001; Wright and Wright 1999). Title V offered the first official form of legal protection from discrimination on the basis of disability, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) set forth "explicit requirements that all children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education and related services, regardless of the cost" (Scotch 2001:384).

Legislation pertaining directly to Alaska Natives includes the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. The two most significant congressional findings in relation to this act were:

1. This act was an attempt by the U.S. government to divert responsibility to provide health and other "service" programs back to Native peoples, using rhetoric such as, "prolonged Federal domination... has served to retard rather than enhance the progress of Indian people and their communities... and has denied the Indian people an effective voice in the planning and

implementation of programs...which are responsive to the true needs of Indian communities”; and

2. Native peoples have the right to control their relationships “both among themselves and with non-Indian governments, organizations and persons” (Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act 1975).

What this has translated into for disability service programs for Natives is that individual Native corporations, local governments, and tribal councils have an increased choice in terms of how to use federal and state funding and how to configure service-delivery infrastructure. For instance, in the North Slope Borough, services for people with disabilities are contracted out to nonprofit service-providing agencies, but funds are still channeled through the federal and state Medicaid Home and Community-based Waiver Program (HCBW)² (Ahmaogak 2003; anonymous communication 2003). In the Northwest Alaska Native Association (NANA) region, however, services are also funded through the Medicaid HCBW program but are delivered locally through the Maniilaq Association (anonymous communication 2003). This expression of regional autonomy and choice regarding services for people with disabilities is a relatively recent phenomenon, made possible in many ways by legislation passed in the 1970s. Many communities are learning (perhaps relearning) to provide care and opting to administer services and interface with federal and state funding agencies on their own, while others (including the North Slope Borough) are forging relationships with nonprofit agencies and developing new programs and capacities for care (anonymous communication 2003). While much work remains to be done, by promoting choice and creating new ways to allow for local control, new opportunities for the development of innovative programs designed to meet the specific needs of specific communities might be cultivated. Nevertheless, the bureaucratic maze through which services for people experiencing a developmental disability are currently negotiated is bewildering (Hedwig 2006:82–97), as seen in Figure 1.

One should try to imagine the impact on an Inupiaq family when they encounter this process, and how the process becomes what Bourdieu (1990) refers to as a

“structuring structure”; that is, bureaucratic structures, principles and “dispositions” that shape the behavior and expectations of those who must interact with and conform to them. The underlying message of these structures is clear: families are not capable of supporting their developmentally disabled family members on their own and only by subjecting themselves to the clinical gaze and associated bureaucratic constraints can “appropriate” levels of support be obtained (Foucault 1973). However, despite these constraints, there remains potential for constructive engagement with power, both in the form of strategic manipulations of (and maneuverings within) such

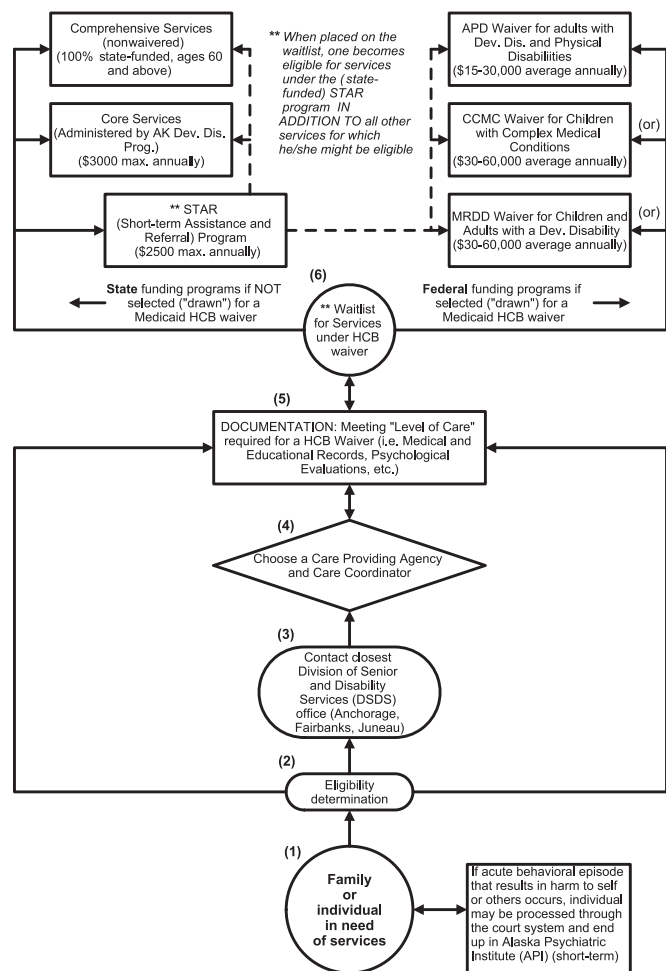


Figure 1. Developmental disability service delivery in Alaska and the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver (HCBW) Program

2. A Home and Community-Based Waiver (HCBW) is a method of paying for services for a person who is deemed eligible. Under section 1915 (c) of the U.S. Social Security Act, individual states may request waivers of certain federal requirements to develop Medicaid-financed community-based treatment programs (Harrington et al. 2000; Kitchener et al. 2004). The Medicaid HCBW is the primary source of funding for individuals who experience a developmental disability in Alaska, and in 2001 the state spent \$82,023,871 towards the waiver program (Kitchener et al. 2004). There were 2,589 waiver recipients in Alaska in 2001, with an additional 1,002 on the waiting list for such services (Kitchener et al. 2004). Approximately 1,436 of all eligible participants (including the waiting list) were Alaska Native.

bureaucracies, and in the creation of new structures and practices of service delivery. The case study in the following section illustrates this.

AN IÑUPIAQ FAMILY EXPERIENCES DISABILITY

Jimmy (a pseudonym) experiences what biomedical practitioners have labeled a disability. According to his mother, when he was around fourteen or fifteen years of age, his family became concerned after observing him “staggering down the road” and behaving strangely. His performance in school greatly diminished and he reportedly failed the ninth and tenth grades, dropping out of high school altogether in tenth grade. Because the frequency of such incidents increased and Jimmy’s behavior was becoming increasingly uncharacteristic for him, he was sent to a treatment facility in Seattle for one month where little “progress” was reported (note the mode of sending the individual out of state for treatment) (researcher field notes, 2/11/2005; comprehensive psychosocial needs evaluation, 2/2005). Upon returning home, Jimmy was observed talking to himself frequently and laughing out loud at inappropriate times. His mother reports that he attempted suicide by taking pills, which precipitated a two-week stay at a hospital in Anchorage. Jimmy was subsequently placed in and out of various treatment facilities, including Charter North and API (the latter the result of refusal to take prescribed medications, which prompted a resurgence of aggressive behavior). It was only upon return home from his three-month stay at API that Jimmy’s mother recognized that he was abusing inhalants (i.e., “huffing”). This inhalant use is thought to be the cause of his current developmental disability. He was also reportedly using marijuana and drinking. Jimmy subsequently stayed upwards of six months at a school in Texas, and his mother reported that this turned out to be a horrifying experience for him.

In my experience working with Jimmy, his behaviors are understandable in light of his own internal struggles about his disability, personhood, Iñupiaq-ness, and sense of being in the world. When Jimmy looks at a cousin, sibling, or community member who he knows and sees them doing well, he experiences a real sense of grief and anxiety (researcher field notes 2/10/2005, 2/11/2005). He recalls what life was like before the instances of huffing and substance abuse left him “disabled.” This fills him with sadness, rage, jealousy, and anxiety. His mother reports that his behavior led to his being ostracized within the commu-

nity, and many of his friends and cousins have abandoned him. His younger brother is in a military unit outside of Alaska, and it makes Jimmy sad to think that (as the oldest child in the family) he has not been able to honor his family in the way his brother has. Due to his behaviors at home and in the community (including several run-ins with the law), a dwindling support network, and a general lack of support services to help Jimmy in his everyday life, he and his family decided it would be best for him to move to Anchorage, where it was believed a more extensive range of support could be obtained. Jimmy’s experience in an urban environment further complicates the ways in which he sees himself. How he negotiates this experience is evident in his continual requests to go home. Jimmy’s experience straddles two seemingly disparate worlds, and when he perceives his otherness with respect to either of them, he may position himself in opposition to this. For example, Jimmy may ask staff, “when can I go home,” but when he is reminded that his next trip home might not be for awhile, he may quickly follow up by asking, “when can we go to town.” His navigating the experience of disability operates in a similar manner.

Jimmy now engages in “passing and denial,” a struggle to appear to be normal in the eyes of his peers and community members (Edgerton 1993). This struggle is perhaps amplified by his personal reflections about his “disability” and competence, as well as his experience in an urban area. For example, he might talk about getting a nice car despite the fact that he does not have a driver’s license or a job, or fill out a job application that he knows requires a high school general equivalency diploma (GED), which he does not have. Jimmy appears to fiercely defend his personhood and normalcy by talking about things he perceives to be valued aspects of personhood but knows might be outside his reach. He shows this tendency towards his Iñupiaq cultural heritage as well. For example, he gets excited when talking about whaling, following leads in the ice, getting a job with the North Slope Borough, and raising a family in his hometown, etc., but his mother reports that she has heard him in his room crying at night and she believes that he gets depressed when thinking about his life and how he has not yet had an opportunity to go whaling and experience activities that others in his community have experienced.

While in community and social settings Jimmy strives to appear “normal” in the eyes of others, in clinical or medical settings he has learned to do the opposite and “play up” his disability when he knows it can be used

to his advantage (researcher field notes, 4/3/2003). This is what Ingstad and Whyte (2007) refer to as biosociality, where claims to personhood, social status, citizenship, and belonging are made with respect to a biological category, which becomes a basis for social bargaining and negotiation, or what Certeau (1984) referred to as spatial action within the practice of everyday life. During my research, before I even met Jimmy, I was given a standard briefing that included a stack of paperwork that was his case file to read. The file contained medical and clinical information, police records and histories of misbehavior, planning documents including the Plan of Care for the Medicaid HCBW, and various psychosocial evaluations. I felt overwhelmed myself by the paperwork on that first day and struggled to sift through it, imagining what Jimmy would be like when we met. I was advised to be cautious given his history of aggression but to get to know him at the same time. The paperwork itself became a substitute for actually spending quality time with Jimmy and getting to know him. I wondered why it was necessary agency protocol to read through all the negative aspects of his life; what was “wrong” with him medically, what he had been in trouble for in the past, what he has difficulty doing, etc. It seemed there was a person somewhere inside that paperwork that was not getting validated, whose voice was not heard. In an attempt to locate this person behind the paperwork, a new kind of planning process was developed in close collaboration with Jimmy, his family, and the care-providing agency. This process is outlined below.

PERSONAL FUTURES PLANNING

In contrast to the deficiency-based emphasis of service-delivery bureaucracy (which can be viewed as a technique of biopower), there are possibilities for constructively engaging the structuring structures that Bourdieu theorized. The personal futures planning process, initially developed by the agency in response to calls for “person-centered planning” by disability advocates and scholars but modified in the context of this research, is an example of this type of engagement (Callicott 2003). I had the opportunity to facilitate a personal futures planning session for Jimmy that involved his family, loved ones, and support staff. The objective was to help illustrate Jimmy’s personhood from his own perspective and provide a working “road map” of his goals and dreams (Figure 2). The process emphasizes the voice of the individual requesting services, which is frequently lost in stacks of medical and clinical documentation, and seeks to create a visual depiction of this voice in nonnarrative form. This depiction then becomes the cover sheet for a case file and the first document that medical, clinical, and agency staff would see. Jimmy’s personal futures plan, shown below, is an example of how the productive workings of biopower can be countered, rather than busily reinforced through the normal workings of service-delivery bureaucracy.

The narrative description of the plan (written by myself in close collaboration with Jimmy) is also included (see below), as both a descriptive compliment and a point of contrast to the visual depiction:

Jimmy is a strong, independent, capable, creative and family oriented full blooded Inupiaq, born and raised on the North Slope of Alaska, proud of his cultural heritage and upbringing, and diversified in his interests and pursuits. He values the relationships he has developed over the years, in his home village and elsewhere, particularly with his father, who helped teach Inupiaq cultural understandings and subsistence practices to him such as whaling and duck and caribou hunting. Jimmy is knowledgeable about the ice and its various forms, and knows how to “read” it in order to locate the bowhead whale, the most central subsistence pursuit within arctic coast Inupiaq cultural, economic and spiritual life. While Jimmy has not yet had the opportunity to work with a crew under the leadership of an umialik (whaling captain), this is a dream of his, and an important part of his understanding of personhood and identity as an Inupiaq male. His father has been a member of a whaling crew in



Figure 2. Artist's rendition of Jimmy's Futures Plan, 2006. (Completed by artist J. B. for Jimmy, May 2006.)

the past and Jimmy is extremely proud of this. He sees it as an important rite of passage towards manhood, leadership and independence, and would like to honor his father by having the opportunity to participate in the harvest, both as a whaler and community member.

While Jimmy has a deep respect for his Iñupiaq culture and would ultimately like to return to his home village to raise a family with the same values that his father taught him, he feels that he needs to “spread his wings” and be exposed to a more urban environment (like Anchorage or Fairbanks) so that he can enjoy a wider range of social and employment opportunities and receive training in construction and electrical engineering. He would ultimately like to give back to the community by working for the North Slope Borough, building houses and configuring electrical components. Jimmy has fond memories of helping his father complete their home and would like to continue honing his own construction skills so that he might one day serve his community and contribute to its character. He enjoys “cigar rides” with his father, as it provides an opportunity for male bonding, sharing of thoughts, feelings and experiences, and learning.

Jimmy comes from a loving and caring family, and the words “I love you” are exchanged frequently, especially between him and his mother. He is mathematically oriented, and is able to recite some formulas and has a general understanding of their potential applications. He also has a knack for poetry and abstract thinking. He has kept a journal of his various poetic creations, and expressed a desire to begin working on a new one, reflecting his paths in life and the ways in which he has grown and adapted to new situations. Jimmy would like to pursue a GED so that he can continue to refine his academic interests, as well as obtain a well-paying job (or an apprenticeship leading to a job) that might ultimately help him support a family. He plans on returning home after two to three years in Anchorage or Fairbanks with a “clean slate,” so that he can show his friends, parents, siblings and relatives (by example) that he is committed, has acquired useful skills, held a job and obtained the necessary training, education and treatment to be successful in his chosen path.

Jimmy is physically strong and active; he enjoys participating in sporting activities such as basketball, football and running. He is a great athlete, and can run considerable distances without tiring (although he admits that cigarette smoking has compromised this somewhat). He also enjoys

working out, and wants to own a bowflex exercise machine someday so that he can have a “bowflex body” that would be attractive to women. He is talented at drawing and loves music, including Black Sabbath and Metallica. On occasion, Jimmy will also listen to classical music, as it helps him to relax. Jimmy owns a guitar, and although he has never taken lessons, he likes strumming it and is musical with his phrasings. He has expressed a desire to take guitar lessons so that he can learn to play his favorite songs as well as write new ones.

Jimmy would like to live independently, find a woman with whom to settle down and start a family, and be a community leader and contributor. He has a lot of passion and energy, which offers virtually limitless potential and opportunity. Jimmy can be a loyal friend and is very loyal to his family. He values the importance of discovering his own manhood and personhood. He has taken some important steps in his life towards realizing his goals and dreams and will continue to do so with the support and dedication of family, friends and loved ones. (Personal Futures Planning Session, 2/10/05)

These documents could potentially help a staff or community member learn more about the experience of difference and exclusion than an entire case file. In my own experience working with Jimmy, had I been presented with his personal futures plan instead of the mass of deficiency-oriented paperwork that emphasized little more than his diagnosis and clinical history, I would have been better equipped to understand how he thinks and feels about himself in the world. I wondered why the agency personnel with whom he interacted had not prepared such a personalized plan for him earlier. This information would have been of far greater benefit to both Jimmy and his support team. It is also a way to counteract the dehumanizing and stigmatizing effects of engagement with biomedical modes of providing support for people with disabilities.

DISCUSSION

Contrary to much of the arctic literature, which essentializes particular observations of cultural practices towards “disabled” individuals in precontact Iñupiaq contexts (i.e., infanticide), this research emphasizes that the social parameters of difference and community inclusion are more fluid and socially situated than has been previously noted in Alaska. This is perhaps due to the fact that the non-Natives who generated these early writings were interpret-

ing their observations through their own cultural blinders and failing to recognize the subtle intricacies of Iñupiaq human organization and decision-making frameworks. Colonial medical administrators, missionaries, and education reformers used these same writings to justify “helping” or “saving” the Native peoples from the trappings of their own cultures, which were deemed inferior. Current biomedical service-delivery bureaucracies contain many of the same colonial assumptions about difference, personhood, normalcy, and community inclusion. However, there are perhaps more opportunities presently available for constructive engagement with these institutions to better meet the needs of people who experience a disability. The personal futures planning process described above represents one such opportunity. Other opportunities include the collaborative relationships being forged between tribal governments and service-delivery agencies and the exercise of agency at the local level in terms of how services are delivered (as seen in the differences between North Slope and Northwest Alaska administration of disability services).

As a result of innovations in the planning process, communication between Jimmy, his family, and the service-delivery agency greatly improved. Moreover, Jimmy has begun to take proactive steps towards the realization of his expressed desires by setting challenging yet attainable goals with his family and support team. At the planning meeting, Jimmy’s mother commented that “he was really shining,” as Jimmy spoke clearly and enthusiastically about his future. This event illustrates how the structuring structures of disability service delivery in Alaska, as a form of biopower, can be ruptured and potentially reconfigured to challenge rather than reinforce the structures of power, authority, and disciplinary control that shape the experience of disability. It also shows how individuals, families, and communities have a degree of maneuverability within these structures that allows for creative and strategic engagement. While these structures have certainly had a profound effect on traditional Iñupiaq cultural understandings of difference, belonging, and group membership, it is clear that current community-based disability service-delivery models in Alaska could benefit from deprivileging western biomedical understandings and focusing instead on honoring the expressed needs of Iñupiaq communities, families and individuals. The personal futures planning process is an important example of how care-providing agencies can learn to better listen to the communities they are in the busi-

ness of serving. It also provides a forum for families and supported individuals to voice their concerns and choose the service-delivery strategies most suitable for them. The extent to which traditional cultural understandings regarding care of individuals who experience a disability are accommodated should be entirely up to the community. If an individual or community decides to not receive agency support, that too should be honored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to reduce the negative impact of depersonalized bureaucracies and “disabling” constructions of disability on Iñupiaq families who experience a developmental disability by way of a family member, I offer the following recommendations with respect to program and policy design and implementation:

The cultural background of service recipients must be considered as equal to the cultures of the service practitioners and providing agencies (Kagawa-Singer 1994). Policy cannot be developed in a vacuum and transplanted freely into any community. Rather, it must allow for and encourage dialogue and collaboration between Iñupiaq and other Alaska Native communities, care-providing agencies, and federal and state policy makers and purse-string holders and be sensitive to the “local” cultural, political, and economic nuances of the community in question.

Iñupiaq community and supported individual feedback must be continuously integrated by the agency into its service-delivery strategy. When working in an Iñupiaq or other Alaska Native community, the care-providing agency must work hard at establishing a visible and viable presence. Of paramount importance, the agency must be honest and understandable to the community regarding why they are there and what services they can (and cannot) offer. It is also important to communicate the structural, economic, and bureaucratic constraints that limit the possibilities for action.

The right to live in the community of the supported individual’s choice must be maintained and expanded. Also, service-providing agencies and communities alike must continue to work at the legislative level to advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities to live in the communities of their choice by securing federal and state funds through the Medicaid HCBW program as well as other grants to allow for innovative and flexible program design.

Competitive agency salaries to encourage local administration of programs, and Native practitioner hire should be developed. The hiring and training of staff locally represents an ongoing challenge for any care-providing agency, especially those working in predominantly Native cultural regions of Alaska, where the number of potential employees varies considerably in response to seasonal subsistence activities, short-term employment opportunities, etc. (Hamilton and Seyfrit 1993). Allowing for these seasonal movements within flexible hiring protocols will encourage local hire without compromising other important community activities.

Flexibility in problem solving is needed by both the community and care-providing agency. Community-based care administered from the bottom up must play a central role in increasing access to services for individuals experiencing developmental disability in Alaska. In all instances, choice at the community level should be respected and honored.

Innovative and collaborative planning such as the personal futures process described above should become a regularly implemented planning tool for all individuals receiving support. This includes not only individuals supported in rural villages but also those living in large urban areas such as Anchorage, where over ninety different languages are represented (Feldman et al. 2005). Use of such planning methods can be a powerful de/restructuring apparatus in the face of bureaucratic constraint.

Ultimately, the commitment to work towards increasing opportunities and maximizing the quality of life for individuals experiencing disability must remain at the heart of any service-providing agency's organizational values. If the injustices of the past and present (towards both people with disabilities and Alaska Native communities generally) are to be responsibly addressed and eliminated, this goal must serve as the driving force behind all health service-delivery protocols and community engagements. It is my hope that what I have presented here will help create new dialogues about disability in Alaska, new directions for research, and new possibilities for transformation of existing service-delivery structures.

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BREASTFEEDING DECISIONS AMONG LOWER SOCIOECONOMIC HISPANIC WOMEN IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA: THE NEED FOR A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to answer the question: What are the factors that influence the initiation and maintenance of decision to breastfeed among lower socioeconomic level Hispanic women in Anchorage? Hispanic culture is rightly considered a breastfeeding culture. However, numerous researchers have shown that Hispanic women in the U.S. have different breastfeeding patterns compared to women in their home countries. This pilot study examines this complex issue among primarily immigrant Hispanic mothers in Anchorage. It attempts to understand the experiences of breastfeeding among a nonrandom sample of twenty Hispanic mothers via grounded theory. It argues that to successfully promote breastfeeding of infants among this population beyond six months requires education for health care professionals, for breastfeeding promotion organizations, and for Hispanic mothers. This education must holistically address the medical/biological, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and emotional challenges of breastfeeding among this vulnerable group of Hispanic mothers.

KEYWORDS: infant nutrition, Hispanic mothers, Alaska

INTRODUCTION

The research question and findings of this pilot study regarding breastfeeding decisions among lower-income Hispanic mothers in Anchorage are first contextualized regarding breastfeeding data in the U.S. and Alaska.¹ Then a brief overview of the breastfeeding culture among Hispanic populations is presented. Finally, the findings are presented and recommendations provided regarding breastfeeding behaviors, issues, and problems among the study population.

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE POLITICS OF BREASTFEEDING IN THE U.S.

It was only as recently as February 14, 2003, that the U.S. Senate passed Bill S.418 to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to clearly define breastfeeding as “the feeding of a child directly from the breast or the expression of milk from the breast by a lactating woman.” The promotion of breastfeeding programs was authorized by Public Law 89-642, known as the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. Section

1. This paper is derived from the author's master's thesis, 2006, in the Department of Anthropology, University of Alaska Anchorage. An earlier version was presented at the meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Vancouver, B.C., in 2006. The author also holds an M.D. degree from Colombia. The author wishes to thank the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center and Providence Family Medical Center for allowing this study to occur with volunteer mothers from their programs. In addition, the author acknowledges the assistance of the faculty and her fellow graduate students in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, particularly her thesis committee members: Professor Kerry Feldman (chair), Professor Steven J. Langdon, and Professor David Yesner. The opinions expressed, however, are her own.

21 of this act states that the secretary of agriculture shall establish a breastfeeding promotion program to promote it as the best method of infant nutrition, foster wider public acceptance of breastfeeding in the U.S., and assist in the distribution of breastfeeding equipment to breastfeeding women. As part of the “war on poverty” of the 1960s, some programs such as food stamps were reoriented and new food assistance programs were developed. It is in this social and political context that the special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program was created (Berry 1984; Fitchen 2000; Leonard 1994) in 1972 by the federal government. WIC’s mission is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care. More information and critical analysis of the WIC program in Anchorage will be presented later.

During the 1970s and into the 1980s, when baby formula companies were losing markets in North America and Europe because mothers were shifting back to breastfeeding, they started promoting bottle-feeding and baby formula food in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Companies were alleged to have used seductive advertising and promotional incentives to encourage doctors and departments of health to support the use of their products. The advertising associated this style of feeding with “modernity” and “prosperity,” thus inducing unsuspecting and illiterate impoverished mothers to associate their families’ well-being with the use of formula food. International protests against the Nestle company began in 1977. With help from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF), this effort culminated in a set of regulations ensuring the ethical promotion of such products. These regulations are known as the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes. All countries signed the convention except the U.S., which argued that deregulation would negatively affect American companies economically (Ervin 2000; International Baby Food Action Network 1999; Van Esterik 1997). The implementation and promotion of this code is through the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) and it is the product of WHO and UNICEF working together on infant and young child feeding policies. The International Code aims to protect all mothers and babies from inappropriate company marketing practices. It bans all promotion of breast milk substitutes, bottles, and teats. It aims to ensure that

mothers receive accurate information from health workers. Subsequent resolutions of the World Health Assembly have clarified and amplified the International Code.

The U.S. recognized the importance of breastfeeding by signing the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion, and Support of Breastfeeding which was adopted by WHO and UNICEF (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2000). As a result of national and international attention brought to this issue, the State of Alaska approved a law (Senate Bill 297) in 1998 stating that breastfeeding did not constitute “indecent exposure” or other similar offenses in any public or private location.

BREASTFEEDING IN ALASKA

Alaska has one of the highest breastfeeding rates in the nation. The states with the highest breastfeeding initiation rates are Oregon (88.6%), Alaska (88.5%), Utah (88.2%), and Washington (87.9%), and the states with the highest breastfeeding rates four weeks after birth are Utah (79%), Alaska (78%), and Washington (75%). However, the average duration of breastfeeding in Alaska was only 11.2 weeks, which falls very short of the 12 months recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Moreover, the average infant’s age at first dietary supplementation was as early as six weeks (Carothers and Cox 2003; Perham-Hester 2003; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2000).

Alaska statistics (as of 1999) of breastfeeding initiation by ethnicity show that 95% of Hispanic mothers and 88% of non-Hispanic mothers initiate breastfeeding (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Division of Public Health 2002). Breastfeeding initiation rates in both the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and general Alaska populations currently exceed the U.S. Healthy People 2010 targets. However, mothers in the U.S.-funded WIC program had duration rates at six months decreasing from 58.4% in 2001 to 48.3% in 2003, which is below the 50% target goal (WIC 2004).

Several reports have shown that even after the efforts of government programs such as WIC and of private pro-breastfeeding organizations such as the La Leche League (none of the mothers in this study consulted La Leche League), initiation breastfeeding rates have increased but do not have the expected results. One of the reasons for these results could be that the breastfeeding decision is not addressed as a complex process. The decision of whether

to bottle or breastfeed is often presented in the literature as being primarily based on nutritional and economic issues, and the breastfeeding promotion campaigns often focus on general education rather than including a cultural or ethnic focus (Dettwyler and Fishman 1992). This approach tends to ignore breastfeeding as more than a simple and natural process that flows from our human biological status as mammals. Breastfeeding is actually a highly culturized behavior that can be modified by cultural perception (De-Bocanegra 1998; Denman-Vitale and Krants-Murrillo 1999; Kannan et al. 1999; Libbus 2000; Rassin et al. 1994; Sweeney and Gulino 1987; Van Esterik 2002). Medical researchers have often or usually ignored the cultural and ethnic variation of humans in favor of an abstract "human being" experiencing a health challenge.

The factors influencing a woman's choice of feeding method are complex and varied. Factors in her home and family environment, social, cultural, and socioeconomic influences, her knowledge and educational background, and the quality of her contact with health professionals all contribute to the multidimensional nature of her infant feeding decision (Kannan et al. 1999; Rassin et al. 1994; Sweeney and Gulino 1987).

THE HISPANIC POPULATION IN ALASKA

According to the 2002 Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Hispanic population in Alaska in the 1990 census was 17,803, which represented 3.2% of the Alaska population. In the 2000 census, it was 22,160, which represented 3.5%, and the 2002 estimate for the Hispanic population was 26,751, which represented 4.2 % of the Alaska population (Burnham 2004). As the numbers above indicate, the Hispanic population in Alaska was estimated to have increased by 8,948 (50.2%) in the twelve years between 1990 and 2002. This is an extraordinary growth rate.

Anchorage is home to more than half of the Hispanic population of Alaska. Over 75% of Hispanic persons living in Alaska are under forty years of age. According to the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, there were 29,864 births to Alaskans for the three-year period of 1998 through 2000. Approximately 6% of these births were to Hispanic mothers, which is a higher rate than the percentage of the Alaska population comprised of Hispanics.

BREASTFEEDING AMONG HISPANIC POPULATIONS

Hispanic cultures are considered to be breastfeeding cultures. However, initiation and duration of breastfeeding rates can vary very widely by country of origin (Libbus 2000). Breastfeeding behaviors in these countries are influenced by the same factors described in other cultures such as education level, urban versus rural residence, economic status, and contact with modern health care systems (Pérez-Escamilla 1993). At present, breastfeeding is a general health concern in Latin American countries because breastfeeding initiation and maintenance rates have decreased. This situation has a major impact on child health due to the fact that developing countries sometimes have nonpotable water supplies and inadequate sewage systems and waste treatment facilities. The risk of gastrointestinal and infectious diseases increases, and they are the major causes of mortality in infants and children. Statistics published by UNICEF in Latin America show that in general breastfeeding initiation is about 95% after giving birth and continues to six months at a 50% rate (www.unicef.org/infobycountry/latinamerica.html).

There are two important values in the UNICEF information:

1. the duration of the breastfeeding can range from six months in Brazil or Paraguay, twelve months in Colombia and Mexico, to twenty-four months in Bolivia and Peru; and
2. the weaning process is very early, around four months. Therefore, exclusive breastfeeding could be considered short in duration. However, the duration of breastfeeding is about one year.

There are several studies (Espinoza 2002; González et al. 2002; González-Méndez and Pileta-Romero 2002; Pérez-Escamilla 1993; Pérez-Escamilla et al. 1993) that show the following factors as important in the breastfeeding decision among Hispanic women in their countries:

- the economic advantages of breastfeeding;
- women who live in a home where the head of household is her partner tend to breastfeed less than women living in a home where the head of household is another woman or the mother; and
- girls seem to be favored by a longer period of breastfeeding. "This has been suggested to reflect the belief that a male child's growing process demands more food" (Espinoza 2002).

Possible reasons for decreasing breastfeeding rates are the increasing number of women joining the labor force and heading households. There are also three cultural beliefs specific to Hispanic women and their breastfeeding practices (Weller and Dungy 1986):

1. Emotions from the mother are transmitted to the baby via breast milk such as anger and it can do damage to the baby;
2. the baby “eats” a part of the mother, and thus women “waste themselves” (deteriorate and age faster by breastfeeding); and
3. a pregnant woman must stop breastfeeding because her milk produces diarrhea in the baby.

BREASTFEEDING RATES IN THE U.S. AND ALASKA

Breastfeeding rates in the U.S. have increased; however, breastfeeding remains relatively low among certain ethnic populations and lower-income groups (Ahluwalia et al. 2005). The profile of mothers with low breastfeeding rates has been described as younger women, with limited socioeconomic resources, with a low education level, employed full-time, and with low self-esteem (Ahluwalia et al. 2005; Carothers and Cox 2003). Hispanic women have a good initiation rate in the U.S. but it declines before six months.

Table 1 below provides the initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding in Alaska, comparing all infants with WIC mothers’ infants. Alaska has one of the highest rates of breastfeeding initiation (87.4%) (Abbott Laboratories Ross Products Division 2003). This percentage exceeds the Healthy People 2010 target, which is 75%.

The WIC population has a very good initiation rate. Breastfeeding rates at six months increased but in 2001 and

2002 this rate decreased. Breastfeeding at twelve months, as at six months, decreased. Surprisingly, breastfeeding rates, both initiation and continuation for at least four weeks postpartum, were lower among WIC and Medicaid mothers compared to non-WIC and non-Medicaid clients (Abbott Laboratories Ross Products Division 2003). This result seems counterintuitive: why do mothers in federal programs devoted to improved nutrition for mothers and infants from low economic households breastfeed less than other mothers? The research reported in this paper identifies the complex factors involved.

In terms of ethnic variation in breastfeeding initiation and duration in Alaska, White mothers are more likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding than Alaska Native mothers, and they continue breastfeeding for more than six months at a higher rate than Asian/Pacific Islander mothers. Black women have the lowest breastfeeding initiation rates, not only in Alaska but also in all of the U.S. What is of specific concern for my research is that Hispanic mothers have lower percentages than the combined non-Hispanic mothers. Only 80.6% of Hispanic mothers in Alaska initiate breastfeeding and only 71.4% continue it at four weeks postpartum, whereas 91.3% of non-Hispanic mothers initiate and 80.1% continue breastfeeding at four weeks (Perham-Hester et al. 2004).

RESEARCH METHODS FOR THIS PILOT STUDY

RESEARCH GOALS AND DESIGN

This research attempted to understand the experiences in breastfeeding among a specific group of Hispanic mothers in Anchorage and the implications of these experiences related to their decision to breastfeed their babies or not and how they maintained this decision throughout the first six months after the baby was born. It concerns the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about the breastfeeding process among low-income Hispanic women participating in the WIC program. To accomplish the goal of the research, a descriptive nonrandomized study design was used, utilizing quantitative and qualitative data (however, with a sample of only twenty mothers, statistical arguments cannot be offered). The sample for this research was comprised of twenty Hispanic mothers, two physicians who provide service to these mothers, and three nutritionists from the WIC program. The mothers were divided into two groups, differing in regard to how long they breastfed

Table 1. Alaska breastfeeding rates at initiation and six months postpartum

	1993	2000	2001	2002
Initiation Rates				
All Infants: Alaska	76.7%	88.5%	88.3%	87.4%
WIC Infants: Alaska	49.7%	82.8%	84.6%	82.2%
At Six Months Postpartum				
All Infants: Alaska	31.3%	50.2%	50.8%	50.2%
WIC Infants: Alaska	23.1%	47.2%	46.2%	41.7%

Source: Mother Survey, Abbott Laboratories, Ross Products Division, 2003. http://www.ross.com/images/library/bf_trends_2002.pdf

their infants. Group A ($n = 10$) had these characteristics: Last child six to twenty-four months old; breastfed or has been breastfeeding the last child for six months or longer; a participant in the WIC program; a Hispanic mother; able to read Spanish or English; of age eighteen or older. Group B mothers ($n = 10$) were different only in that they breastfed their last child for three months or less (breastfeeding had already stopped). This study attempted to understand what might explain the differences between the breastfeeding durations of these two groups.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS, RECRUITMENT, INFORMED CONSENT, AND INSTRUMENTS

A mother was considered Hispanic if she or her mother was born and raised in a Spanish-speaking country. This sample was not chosen at random because the expected population of immigrant Hispanic mothers available for the study is difficult to identify in terms of a numerical universe of possible subjects. The invitation to participate in the project depended on at which WIC office the mother was registered: Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center or Providence Family Medical Center. On a weekly basis the list of appointments was reviewed at one of these two local WIC programs. Mothers were selected who met the profile for the research project. A mother was then directly called (no messages were left on answering machines or with third persons) and asked if she was interested in participating in this project. The interview was scheduled immediately before or after her WIC appointment in order to avoid requiring the mother to make another visit to the WIC office. At the Providence Medical Center WIC office, the mothers were contacted through a posted flyer in which the project was explained. If the mother was interested in participating, she signed the consent form and then the researcher contacted her. All mothers received a fifteen-dollar thank you stipend after the interview.

A consent form for mothers was provided in Spanish or English; the mothers decided which language version to use. Participant confidentiality and voluntary participation was assured. This project received approval from two institutional review boards: from the University of Alaska Anchorage and Providence Health System. Other consent forms were given to health care or social service providers who participated.

Data were collected in three WIC offices. Providence Family Medical Center and Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center WIC offices were selected because their

Hispanic clients were significant, and the third was the Providence Hospital Medical Center WIC office because it had clients with different demographic profiles. The mothers were interviewed in two WIC offices: Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center and Providence Family Medical Center. The mothers from Providence Medical Center were interviewed in Providence Medical Center because there was no private place available for the interviews.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The research included a written questionnaire and a personal interview focusing on the following question areas.

- How did these Hispanic women make their decisions about breastfeeding their babies?
- How was that decision maintained during their babies' first six months?
What kinds of supports did they receive from their social networks: primary social units (primary social units are based on kin ties and domestic groups), social units based on common residence (neighborhood), groups based on common culture of origin (Hispanic community), groups based on religious belief systems, and groups based on common work (employment supervisor and co-workers)?
- What kind of knowledge did the Hispanic women have about the benefits of breastfeeding?
- What were their perceptions of social norms about breastfeeding, including breastfeeding in public or in the workplace?
- What did they think was/were the purpose(s) of a woman's breasts?
- How did breastfeeding interfere with other aspects of their roles as women?

The health providers included a physician, two dietitians, one prenatal program assistant, one social worker, and one WIC coordinator. The interviews were made by the researcher and the mother in a closed room. Some mothers were accompanied by their partners and children. Sixteen questionnaires were completed in Spanish and four in English. Ten mothers were from Providence Family Medical Center, nine mothers from the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center, and one mother from Providence Alaska Hospital Center.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were applied to the research data. The questionnaire information was analyzed with descriptive statistics of demographic data, and a grounded theory analysis was applied to the qualitative

data (Bernard 2002; Kearney et al. 1994; Punch 1998, 2000). Due to limitations of space, this paper will describe the results of the study and direct the reader to the complete data summaries in my thesis (Marín Carrillo 2006), upon which the results presented here are based. Because this pilot study was aimed at a holistic understanding and identification of factors related to breastfeeding decisions, relying primarily on the self-reports of mothers, rather than on a statistical factor-analysis explanation, emphasis will be on statements from mothers and direct quotes that illustrate the mothers' views.

STUDY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The characteristics of the mothers in this study were the following.

- All were in the WIC program, which implies a low to very low household income.
- 75% (n = 15) did not have any medical insurance.
- 70% (n = 14) did not receive food stamps.
- 75% (n = 15) could not speak English.
- 80% (n = 16) did not have their extended family in Alaska.
- 60% (n = 14) did not have a formal job.
- 85% (n = 17) had early breastfeeding contact.
- 65% (n = 13) had some breastfeeding education.
- 65% (n = 13) had a normal delivery.
- 50% (n = 10) had medical conditions resulting from breastfeeding.

BREASTFEEDING AMONG HISPANIC MOTHERS IN ANCHORAGE

All of the mothers in this study planned on breastfeeding their babies in accord with traditional Hispanic cultural practice, but half of them breastfed less than six months due to biological/medical problems, social factors, and/or cultural beliefs. These are complex factors, often interconnected, and probably not even a very well-funded, comprehensive survey research project using factor analysis would be able to tease out the most meaningful hierarchy of problems/factors/cultural beliefs such that public health education of Hispanic mothers and health care or nutritional providers would know how or where to focus most attention. What will be argued in this paper is that individuals and agencies interested in improving the breastfeeding success of Hispanic mothers must be aware of all

of these factors, even though it is not possible at present to identify which among them is most important. That is, besides being "Hispanic," each mother is an individual, with her unique history, home and sociocultural environment. An emic understanding of cause/consequence and situation leads to an awareness that breastfeeding is not simply the decision of an individual mother. A holistic understanding of the local social context, of service agency culture and practice, and of healthcare provider maternal care assumptions and practices are also needed to improve the breastfeeding success rates among this group (and this is probably true, also, for other ethnic groups in Anchorage or elsewhere in the U.S.). A qualitative understanding of breastfeeding from the perspectives of the mothers provides the foundation for my conclusions.

INITIAL DECISION TO BREASTFEED

All mothers in this study initially made the decision to breastfeed their children. Fourteen mothers made the decision before getting pregnant and related the decision to previous experiences in their family and home countries. These participants found that witnessing other women breastfeeding made them feel comfortable and confident with the act of breastfeeding. One mother stated:

I always knew that I would like to breastfeed my babies. I wanted to breastfeed for at least one year. I breastfed my first baby for thirteen months and with my second baby, I have been breastfeeding for seven months so far.

Another participant related:

I really did not think whether or not I would breastfeed my baby; I knew I would do it because my mom, my aunts, my sisters, and other women in my family had breastfed their babies. I have always believed that breastfeeding is the normal way to feed babies; for me formula was not an option. Breastfeeding is normal and common in my home town and in my country. I remember in my hometown seeing women sitting on the steps of the church and breastfeed their children or in the farmer's market and nobody would stare at them. It was a very common event.

Seventy-five percent of the mothers of this study reported that their mothers were the most important person in their breastfeeding decision. For example:

For me, the most important support in breastfeeding has been my mother. She and I are very close,

and she always talked to me about how important breastfeeding was.

BIOLOGICAL/MEDICAL FACTORS

All mothers in this study believed that breastfeeding was superior to bottles and formula. However, some of the mothers did not know that breast milk contained antibodies and immunological substances to protect their babies against some illnesses and that breast milk is easily digested and nutritionally correct. Even the mothers that started formula before two weeks described the emotional feeling of connectedness as the best part of breastfeeding. Even the mother who breastfed for only one week stated:

There is nothing like holding the baby and having them looking up at you with those eyes. There is no bottle stuck to their mouth and you are like, yeah, it's cool, really cool.

When asked why she quit if breastfeeding was a very good emotional experience, she replied:

Because it was so painful for me; my sore nipples and bleeding nipples were very bad.

A significant biological factor referred to as the "let-down" reflex (Lawrence 1999) played a role in some of the discontinuance of breastfeeding due to pain experienced by the mother. This reflex is a neurohormonal response produced by stimulation of the nipple during breastfeeding, resulting in the flow of milk from milk-secreting cells in the breast tissue to the baby's mouth. It is considered to be a universal response, even if a woman is unaware of this occurrence. However, let-down is not governed by the hormonal response alone but is also affected by physiological factors. Women who chose to breastfeed may find themselves confronting a barrage of new sensations and emotions for which they are unprepared, such as the sensation in the let-down reflex. Some women find the let-down reflex very painful and describe red-hot wires brushing their nipples. This reflex not only is important in the first days after a baby is born but also during a breastfeeding because the let-down reflex always occurs when nursing the baby (Lawrence 1999). The let-down reflex is described by some mothers to be very painful, as in the case of this mother:

My milk was down three days after my baby was born, I had pain and a fever. It was terrible but after that, everything was okay.

However, let-down can be viewed by a mother as a normal event, as with this mother:

The breasts are there and they are not doing anything, while breastfeeding they are there and they have to work, so it is normal to have a little pain.

The let-down reflex is a very important issue in breastfeeding. It has been the reason why many mothers abandon breastfeeding: it is painful, it is unpredictable, and it can be present when the mother is not ready to breastfeed, causing an embarrassing situation. The let-down reflex has been related to the insufficient milk syndrome, which this study found to be the most common reason given for abandoning breastfeeding.

SOCIAL FACTORS RELATED TO BREASTFEEDING

There are many social factors that one should examine in relation to a Hispanic mother's breastfeeding decisions. These social factors include how long she has resided in Anchorage, her marital status and whether she is the head of a household, her income level, education profile, English speaking ability, age, employment status, whether she has health insurance or participates in federal/state programs for lower socioeconomic households, her legal status in the U.S. (which determines the federal or state programs for which she might be qualified), and her social networks—especially those with relatives and other women who might provide support needed in relation to breastfeeding. Also important is the mother's concern about social disapproval in the U.S. for public breastfeeding. Thirteen of the twenty mothers noted that they considered breastfeeding in public places as a major issue. One mother said:

My breastfeeding period was a short time; therefore, I did not have many opportunities to breastfeed in a public place. However, I was worried about it because I am very shy person.

Another mother explained:

To breastfeed in public places is very hard. People sometimes give me unfriendly looks, but I've got to feed my baby regardless.

In this sample of Hispanic mothers, there was little to no impact that could be identified regarding breastfeeding decisions influenced by friends, co-workers, and employers. However, mothers less than twenty-five years of age breastfed less than older mothers. Being employed

was not a noticeable factor in breastfeeding cessation decisions (at-home mothers breastfed even less than employed mothers), nor was the length of time mothers resided in Anchorage a distinguishing factor. I will not comment on the question of legal status of my sample because I did not ask about it, in that I thought it would be unethical to do so and would have precluded obtaining research volunteers from this at-risk population. The social networks of these mothers were quite limited. For some mothers the only family and social support was the baby's father. The baby's father support was ambiguous in terms of behaviors supporting breastfeeding for half of these mothers. More significantly, fourteen of the twenty mothers lacked fluency in speaking and understanding English, whether spoken or written. The mothers received little formal breastfeeding education from health care providers or agencies, and never in Spanish.² Six (30%) of the twenty mothers did not receive any education from WIC or healthcare providers about breastfeeding. This seems due to the lack of Spanish speaking personnel in doctor's offices, hospitals, federal, state or private agencies, and little awareness among the above of the importance of communicating in Spanish with immigrant Hispanic mothers who lack proficiency in English. Fourteen mothers did not have medical or dental insurance; they could have been eligible due to income level for Medicaid benefits, Denali KidCare program, help through the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and food stamps but were not enrolled in the above programs (legal status concerns?). It is common for these immigrant parents not to apply for various aid programs because the lawyers working in their immigration process recommend that they not accept public aid that might be perceived as a burden on the state. This burden could be a negative factor when the parents' immigration status is determined. Regarding the variables of living with the baby's father, being the head of the house, and mother's marital status, a direct relation with breastfeeding was not found, even though other studies have found that married women tend to breastfeed and maintain breastfeeding for a longer time than single mothers and that the father's approval is a significant factor in the decision and maintenance of breastfeeding (Espinoza 2002; Korenman et al. 2002; Littman et al. 1994).

CULTURAL BELIEFS HINDERING BREASTFEEDING

Cultural beliefs among Hispanic cultures (Arguijo Martínez 1978) that hindered breastfeeding were expressed by some of the mothers related to becoming pregnant while nursing another child, multiple births (twins etc.), the belief that boys are stronger than girls, and premature births. One mother who became pregnant while nursing an infant stated:

My mom, who lives in Mexico, told me, because I was pregnant again, I had to stop breastfeeding. My milk would produce diarrhea to my baby.

Another mother who became pregnant while nursing said:

I stopped breastfeeding my first daughter because I was pregnant again. In my country it is said that the mother have to stop because her milk is not good anymore for the baby. But now I am pregnant again and WIC told me to continue breastfeeding since there is no problem for my second daughter.

Differences regarding perceptions of infant gender are illustrated by this mother who explained:

Some women told me that breastfeeding was painful; of course it was, but not too much. The breasts are there and they are not doing anything, while breastfeeding they have to work, so it is normal to have a little pain. With this baby, who is a boy, I feel more pain than with my daughter. This is because boys are stronger than girls.

A mother who stopped breastfeeding during the first month gave as a reason having had a set of premature twin babies. She stated:

My babies were born premature and they were in the NICU for two weeks. I tried to breastfeed them but it was very hard. Therefore, I decided to start formula when they were one month old.

Another mother who had a premature delivery continued offering breast milk to the baby until the infant began sucking. Breastfeeding twins and triplets has been documented and mothers can provide adequate nourishment for more than one infant (Lawrence 1999). The key in this case is education about how to do it.

In western societies, women's bodies are generally viewed as sexual objects. Breasts are viewed as objects of

2. In 2007 the WIC office at the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center added a person in their education program who speaks Spanish.

sexual pleasure for men rather than organs to feed a baby (Beasley 1998; Dettwyler and Fishman 1992; Marchand-Lucas and Castro 2000). Marchand-Lucas and Castro (2000) stated that cross-culturally the duration of breastfeeding is inversely related to the strength of the breast as a sexual object. The image of the ultra-thin woman with attractive breasts has come to stand for beauty, sexiness, and success as women and this image has been considered to be a possible negative breastfeeding influence (Dettwyler and Fishman 1992). Six mothers in this sample showed concern with their weight, and they were very careful about their diets; one mother stated:

Yes, I am concerned about my weight. I like to look good. If a mother breastfeeds her baby and only eats nutritional food, she will have her normal weight.

Twelve mothers were overweight, and some of them were concerned about that. One said:

Yes, I am worried about my weight, because after my first baby I ended up fat, and right now, I am pregnant again. I do not know how I would control my overweight. No, my husband does not say anything about me being overweight, but I do not want to be fat.

Others were not worried about weight and one of them stated:

If I am overweight or my breasts sagged, it is no big deal for me. In addition, people always change with time, so what is the problem?

It should be noted that for some health care providers interviewed in this study, six months of breastfeeding meant a successful breastfeeding process. However, for the mothers the concept of success of their breastfeeding process is not related to time. On the contrary, in this study, 75% of the mothers (n = 15) felt that their breastfeeding process was successful because they were able to provide health and a stimulating connectedness to their children through the process of breastfeeding, independent of the temporal duration of breastfeeding over time.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES: USING WIC FOOD VOUCHERS

One might not consider that there could be negative experiences of the mothers using WIC vouchers, such as that reported below. One mother explained:

You know why some women feel embarrassed to use the WIC vouchers? Now I know why. Last week I was in a grocery store and the woman in front of me wanted to use a WIC voucher, but the cashier reprimanded her for mixing her own groceries with the WIC groceries. This woman did not speak English, so I talked to the cashier and the manager. I told them it was not this woman's fault that the cashier had to use two different systems for the WIC products. I told the mother that she should tell WIC about this because it was probably a common occurrence.

The ability of a woman to continue breastfeeding contrary to pressures from a coworker to discontinue the effort is revealed in the following mother's statement. She is the head of the household, with a low household income, low education level, and works full time. However, she is one of the mothers with the longest breastfeeding period (thirteen months). She stated:

I believe that breastfeeding is the normal way to feed babies. Yes, I do, I breastfeed my daughter. I have two daughters. I am practically alone since my partner (second partner) visits us once every two months for two or three days. I work full time, and my daughter is fed with breast milk and soup. I work in a restaurant; my boss supports me in my decision to breastfeed. Sometimes it is not possible to pump because the restaurant is full and I cannot be absent for fifteen minutes. I have one or two days off per week. When I am off from work, my daughter is sucking all the time. It is good for my milk production. One of my coworkers, who is American, asked me "Why do you breast feed your baby if there are so many good formulas?" My coworker also said "It is gross."

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to my graduate studies in cultural (including medical anthropology), archaeological, and biological anthropology, I had been exposed almost exclusively, in relation to health issues, to the biomedical course work offered at a medical school in my home country of Colombia. I was not sufficiently aware of the class-based nature of pregnancy and birthing, of the cultural complexities surrounding this most fundamental human experience, and of the usefulness of a critical approach in assessing a nation's health care system. I focused on my patients as individuals, trying to motivate and educate them as individuals to take more

active roles in their own health care challenges. It is now clear to me that only a holistic approach to health issues, especially breastfeeding, can have a lasting and significant impact on creating more healthy populations. The factors influencing breastfeeding cessation in this study included medical, cultural, socioeconomic, and emotional factors.

A visual summary of the factors related to the decision to end breastfeeding is presented below in Figure 1. I included acculturation and depression as factors although considerations of space for this paper precluded further discussion of those two factors. Note that insufficient milk, or the perception of this syndrome by the mother, results from all lines of causation. If the mother perceived real or imagined insufficient breast milk for the baby, formula feeding commenced. Most of the factors are open to influence from a holistically envisioned program to improve breastfeeding duration among this population.

A holistic understanding of the above factors, which includes the systemic interactions of mothers with the medical-legal-service agencies related to breastfeeding, is provided in Figure 2 below. Note that I include baby formula companies because they are subject to review by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the latter has oversight of the WIC program. The most reliable and widely used statistics about breastfeeding in the U.S. are, interestingly, provided by a leading baby formula company.

EDUCATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The mothers in this study desired to breast-feed their babies, but some of them quit early because of biological/medical problems, social issues, or cultural beliefs. These problems could be addressed and minimized through education programs. However, the education programs must be tailored to meet the needs of these mothers, not only about the art of breastfeeding, the scientific understanding of breast milk and a baby's nutritional needs, but also about resources that exist locally.

Education programs for nurses, doctors, and public health officials, as well as information made available to Hispanic mothers, must be focused on:

- the art of breastfeeding and the nutritional facts regarding breast milk and an infant's nutritional needs;
- how medical and social/bureaucratic phenomena "work" in the U.S. and Alaska and ways families might adapt/adjust to those new conditions;
- community services available to mothers;
- legislation related to breastfeeding, immigration, and labor; and
- because fathers have been identified as the main source of social and emotional support for many breastfeeding women in Anchorage, prenatal breastfeeding education must include the father of the baby. The fathers need the same basic breastfeeding information that their partners receive.

The challenges in implementing these recommendations are: Hispanic women are fearful regarding many things such as economic success of the family, unfamiliar social situations, legal immigration issues, and loss of self-esteem. All these factors make them vulnerable. As a result they do not trust others easily. Gaining their trust must be the first step.

Any breastfeeding campaign among Hispanic women in Anchorage (and maybe elsewhere in the U.S.) must address:

- How to mount a convincing educational effort among the fathers? They need to actively support their spouse's decision to breastfeed because Hispanic mothers are

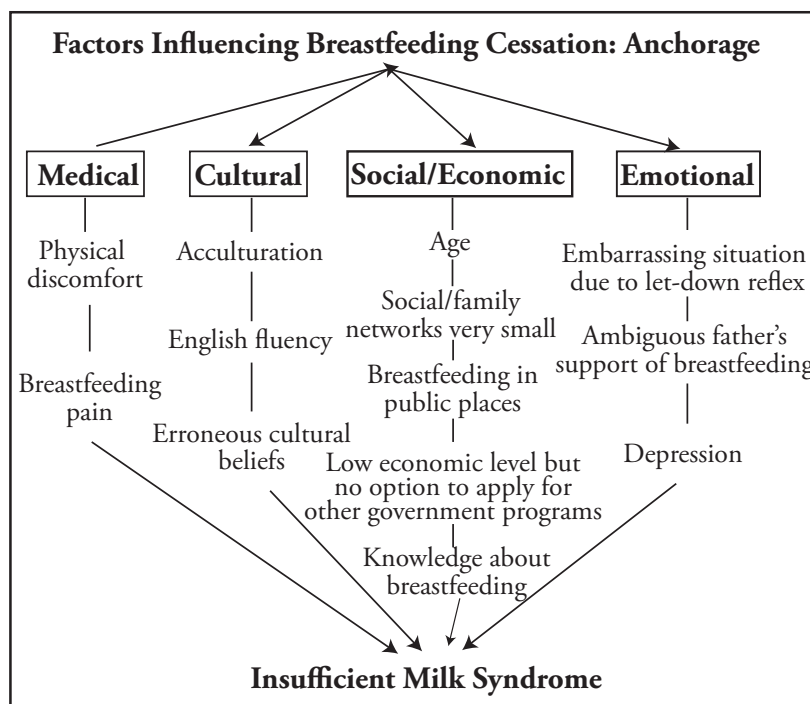


Figure 1. Factors influencing breastfeeding cessation

expected to take care of the babies while the fathers work outside of the home.

- The transportation problems that lower socioeconomic Hispanic women experience regarding attendance at any breastfeeding educational or related programs.
- Agencies such as WIC, whose goal is a nutritionally well-fed mother thus enabled to provide nutritious breast milk to an infant, must critically evaluate their process of educational interaction with Hispanic clients; professionally trained, Spanish-speaking nutritional advisors must be used for Hispanic mothers.
- A final recommendation, based on information from women in this study, is that any education program must be addressed within a Hispanic context and be provided in Spanish when requested by the mother.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It was a privilege to work with this group of Hispanic mothers regarding breastfeeding issues and challenges in their lives. Likewise, I was privileged to work with the highly devoted and professional staff of the programs noted above. My suggestions for improving breastfeeding among Hispanic women should in no way lessen the appreciation for the exceptional health and social services they provide, day by day, to Hispanic and other low-income immigrant people who now call Anchorage home.

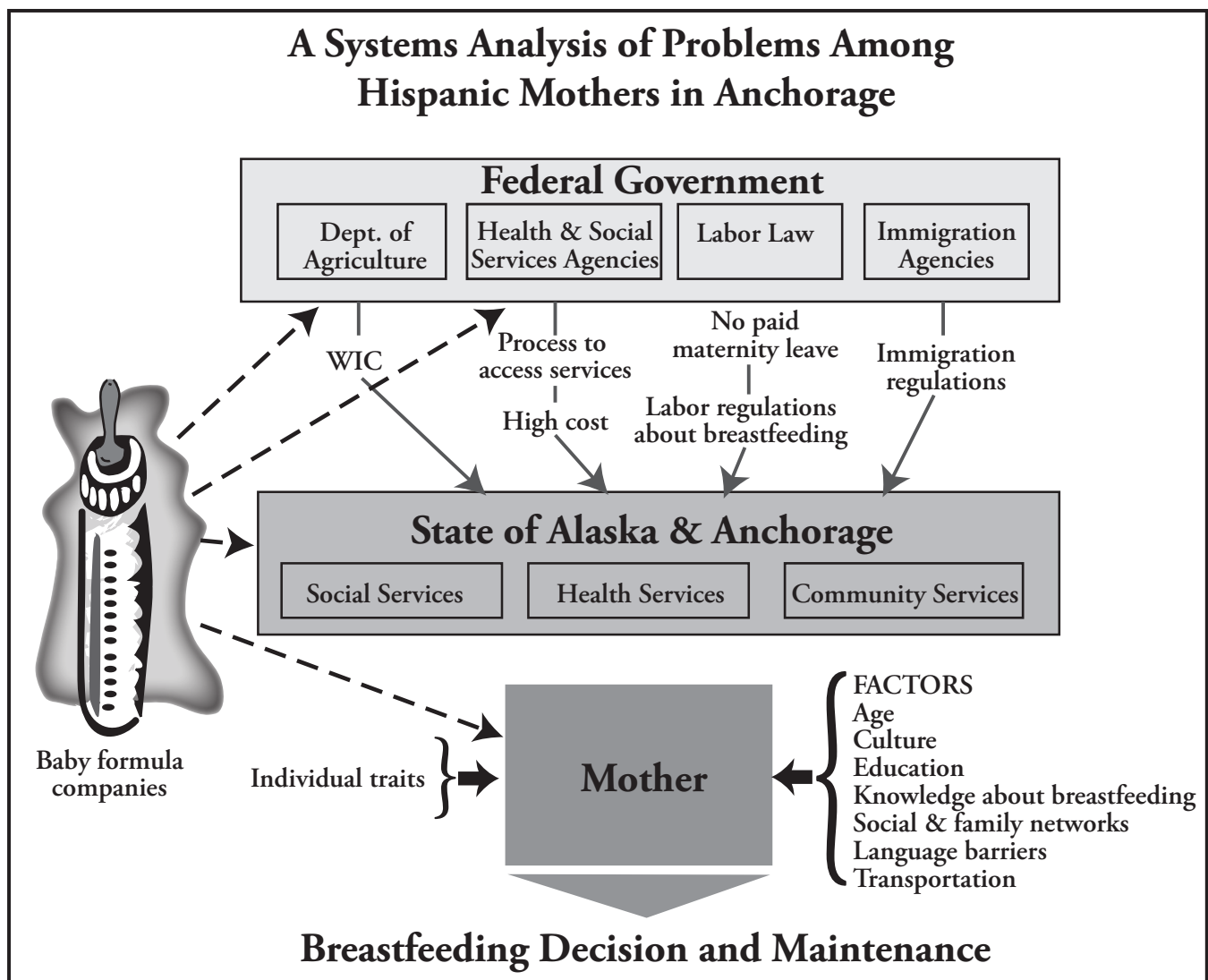


Figure 2. A systems overview of breastfeeding among Hispanic mothers in Anchorage

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RESEARCH REPORT

AN ANANGULA PERIOD CORE-AND-BLADE SITE ON AMAKNAK ISLAND, EASTERN ALEUTIANS

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ABSTRACT

UNL-469 is a prehistoric site located on Amaknak Island, in the city of Unalaska. Test excavations conducted in 2007 recovered a number of blades and microblades, as well as flake tools and a single biface. Radiocarbon analysis of charcoal samples resulted in dates ranging from 8040 cal BP to 6740 cal BP. The dated occupation occurred during the Late Anangula period, one of the least-known phases of Aleutian prehistory. The lack of investigation of sites dating from this period has led some previous investigators to suggest a hiatus in the human occupation of the eastern Aleutians. Excavations at UNL-469 have filled the gap and also produced the oldest biface known from this region.

INTRODUCTION

UNL-469 (called the “Amaknak Quarry Site” after a nearby modern sand and gravel pit) is located on the eastern side of Amaknak Island’s southern peninsula, approximately 15 m above current sea level (Fig. 1). The site was discovered in 2003 by Richard Knecht, who noted blades and other lithic artifacts eroding from the bank along the quarry access road. A charcoal sample collected in 2005 by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers archaeologist Diane Hanson yielded a date of 6150±50 BP (Beta 208986).

In August 2007, archaeologists from Cultural Resource Consultants, LLC, tested the site to determine its boundaries and characterize the age and extent of cultural deposits (Fig. 2). Ten 50 cm by 50 cm test units were excavated at various points around the site, one of which was later expanded to 75 cm by 75 cm.

STRATIGRAPHY

As a result of military construction in the 1940s, topography in the immediate vicinity of UNL-469 has been significantly altered from its prewar form. Approximately 1 m of modern overburden overlays much of the site, and trenching operations were necessary to reveal the original (pre-WWII) ground surface.

The uppermost stratum beneath the original ground surface was a thin (ca. 3 cm) layer of loamy soil and decomposed organic material. This “A” horizon represents the only apparent soil development in the stratigraphic sequence. Sediment below the original surface consisted of numerous layers of bedded volcanic tephra (Fig. 3). Several “signature” strata were observed throughout the

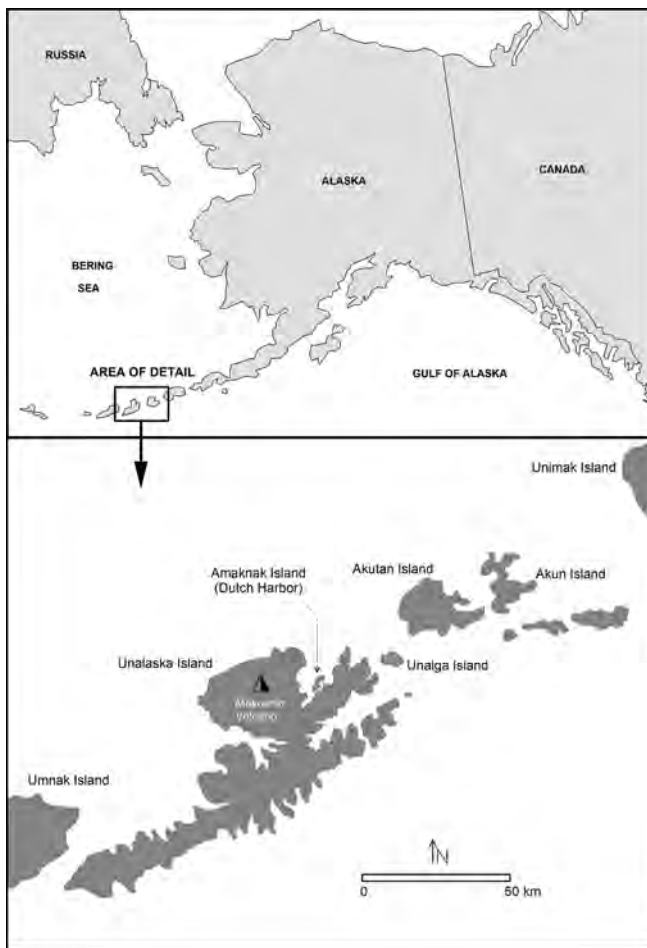


Figure 1. Location of Amaknak Island

excavation, most notably an orange layer near the surface and the coarse yellow-orange ash of the 9,000-year-old Makushin pyroclastic event. This distinctive layer, immediately underlying the cultural deposits at this site, is a diagnostic horizon marker for the entire Unalaska Bay region (Dumond and Knecht 2001:27). Cultural deposits consisted entirely of lithic artifacts and charcoal flecks, and, in rare cases, charcoal lenses. No cultural material was observed in or below the Makushin layer at UNL-469. The significance of the Makushin pyroclastic layer in the context of regional chronology and culture history will be discussed later in this article.

RADIOCARBON DATES

Four radiocarbon dates were obtained from the 2007 excavations at UNL-469, and one from 2005 testing by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. All but one of the samples were wood charcoal, the single exception being an un-



Figure 2. Excavation at UNL-469, view to the south

identified substance, possibly a soil organic (Beta-237111). AMS analysis was used for all samples. Results are presented in Table 1.

The dates obtained from radiocarbon analysis span a period of approximately one thousand years, from 8040 cal BP to 6740 cal BP. The youngest date (6000 ± 40) was obtained from an eroding face of the site at the uppermost limit of cultural material. The oldest date (7160 ± 40) may be unreliable in that the sampled material was likely a soil organic and not charcoal. However, a charcoal date obtained from the same excavation unit was dated to 6820 ± 40 (7730–7580 cal BP). A number of charred and scorched rocks were present in this square, as was a relatively large amount of charcoal. This feature, located from 20 cm to 30 cm below the surface, was tentatively identified as a hearth (Fig. 4).

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS

Lithic materials were the only artifacts recovered from the site; organic artifacts did not survive in Amaknak's highly acidic volcanic soil. A total of 172 discrete stone artifacts (cores, tools, and debitage) were collected. Of

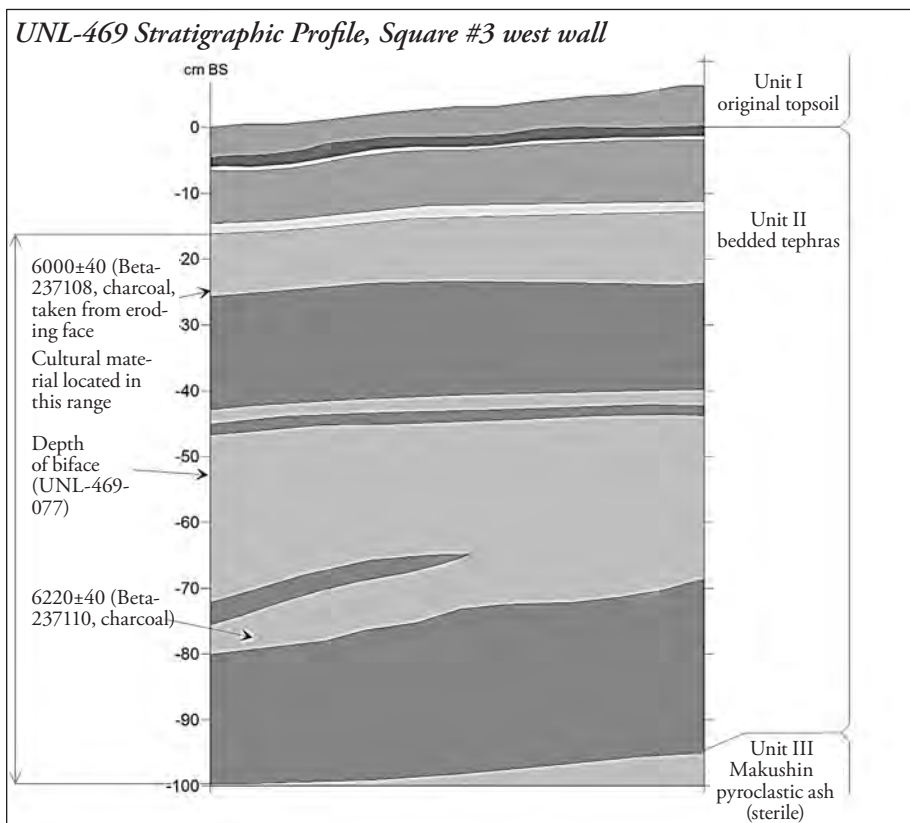


Figure 3. Stratigraphic profile

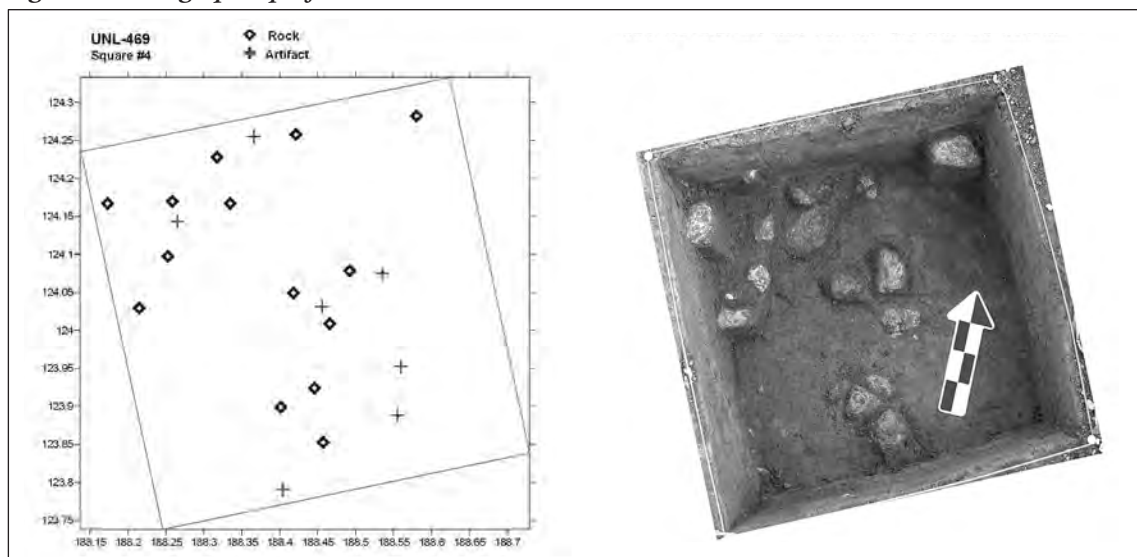


Figure 4. Possible hearth feature

Table 1. Results of radiocarbon dating analysis for UNL-469

Description	¹⁴ C Years BP	Calibrated Age*	Lab Number
Eroding face (2005)	6150±50	7170–6890 cal BP	Beta-208986
Eroding face (2007)	6000±40	6950–6740 cal BP	Beta-237108
Square 4, 12 cmbs	6820±40	7730–7580 cal BP	Beta-237109
Square 3, 80 cmbs	6220±40	7080–7000 cal BP	Beta-237110
Square 4, 30 cmbs	7160±40	8040–7920 cal BP	Beta-237111

* Radiocarbon determinations were calibrated with OxCal 3.1 using the IntCal 04 curve; see Bronk Ramsey 1995, 2001)

these, twenty-two pieces were surface finds eroding from the site's exposed face, and 150 pieces were collected from six different excavation units. The majority of recovered material was debitage, comprising 75% of the collections (129 pieces). There were twenty-six blades and microblades (15% of the total collection), ten retouched or utilized flakes (6%), three large cobble choppers, and a single biface. A burin spall, an angular piece of pumice, and a single core fragment were also recovered.

Basalt, crypto-crystalline silicates, and obsidian are the basic raw materials for chipped stone industry at UNL-469, together comprising 93% (by weight) of the total assemblage. These are consistently the key materials for lithic industry throughout the eastern Aleutian archaeological sequence, from the Anangula period to early historic times (Knecht and Davis 2004:89–90). Obsidian is the single most significant lithic material, making up nearly half of the artifacts found at this site. Siliceous sedimentary argillite (chert) was favored for blades and microblade production at the site, while obsidian was preferred for retouched flakes and was also used for the single biface point found at the site. Basalt was the least frequent material across all tool categories, used for just 25% of flake tools and only a single blade. Other rock types occurring in limited quantities include sedimentary rocks such as siltstone and mudstone.

Considerable effort was likely involved in procuring raw materials. Of the major rock types present in recovered artifacts, only basalt is widely available in the eastern Aleutians (from bedrock outcrops, beach cobbles, and volcanic flows). The source of the extremely fine-grained basalt found at UNL-469 is not known, although the origin of basalt from three sites on Umnak Island was determined to be a single flow at Black Creek on Mount Vsevidov (Mason and Aigner 1987:604–605). Chert outcrops are scarce, although sources are present at nearby Pyramid Peak (2 km distant) as well as Beaver Inlet (approximately 10 km distant).

Two obsidian samples from UNL-469 were analyzed by X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum Conservation Institute. In both cases the source was determined to be the Okmok caldera on Umnak Island, over 150 km from Amaknak (Slobodina and Speakman 2008). Although obsidian also occurs on Akutan Island, Okmok is the geologic source responsible for more than 95% of all sourced obsidian in the Aleutians. No obsidian sources are known on Amaknak or Unalaska. In general, the obsidian used

for tool production was not of particularly high quality, containing numerous air bubbles, inclusions of nonglassy stone, and other impurities.

BLADES AND MICROBLADES

Blades and microblades constitute the basis for lithic industry at this site, comprising 63% of the tool count (Fig. 5). Crypto-crystalline silicates (especially cherts) were clearly the favored materials for blade and microblade production at UNL-469, accounting for 65% (by frequency) of the recovered examples. This compares with 57% for the Anangula collection (Del Bene 1982:177, 183), and 43% for the Russian Spruce site on nearby Hog Island (Dumond and Knecht 2001:26). Obsidian accounted for less than one-third of the UNL-469 blade collection (31% by frequency), and there was only a single example made from fine-grained basalt. Preferential material use is even more apparent when examining microblades only: 75% are of chert and 25% are obsidian. Approximately 25% of the blades from the site show evidence of retouch or use-wear.

A recurring question in studies of Aleutian lithic industries is whether microblades exist as a functional class of tools distinct from larger blades and flakes. An examination of blade size distribution in the recovered assemblage may elucidate aspects of this problem. To maximize the sample by including broken sections, blade width is used as an indicator of length. Previous studies have shown that while there may not be a direct linear relationship, there is still a strong correlation between blade width and length (Aigner 1978:88; Dumond and Knecht 2001:20). When frequency is plotted against blade width (in 4 mm intervals), a break in the curve is apparent at 13 mm, and edge modification is restricted to the widest blades (Fig. 6). One medial blade fragment is bimargin-



Figure 5. Microblades from UNL-469

ally retouched, and three others show unifacial retouch (all wider than 25 mm). Although the sample size is quite small ($n = 26$), the size and retouch distribution is similar to that described for UNL-115 (the Russian Spruce site on Hog Island, ca. 9000 cal BP). The Hog Island distribution ($n = 150$) showed a break in the curve at 10 to 12 mm, and retouch was restricted to blades wider than 11 mm (Dumond and Knecht 2001:20). As noted by Dumond and Knecht (2001:28), this distribution does not match that from Anangula, where Aigner (1978) has argued that there was no separate class of microblades. In his appraisal of the Anangula collection, Del Bene (1982:207) found a unimodal distribution over a wide range of sizes, supporting Aigner's hypothesis. A larger sample from UNL-469 would undoubtedly have filled in some blank areas in the curve, but similarity with at least one other regional site is nonetheless apparent.

SHAPED TOOLS

The single shaped tool recovered from UNL-469 is a fragment of a pointed obsidian biface (Fig. 7). The piece, recovered from 53 cm below the surface, is broken across its width, leaving a fragment 3.2 cm in length, 2 cm in width, and 6.5 mm in thickness. Dorsal and ventral faces are discernable, indicating manufacture from a flake blank or perhaps a large blade. The tool was crafted with bifacial parallel pressure flaking on both the dorsal and ventral faces. Although extensively shaped on both faces, the flaking is more evident on the dorsal side. No denticulation is apparent, although fine, feathered retouch is present on both margins near the point's tip. Slight notching is apparent on both margins, suggesting the presence of a hafting element.

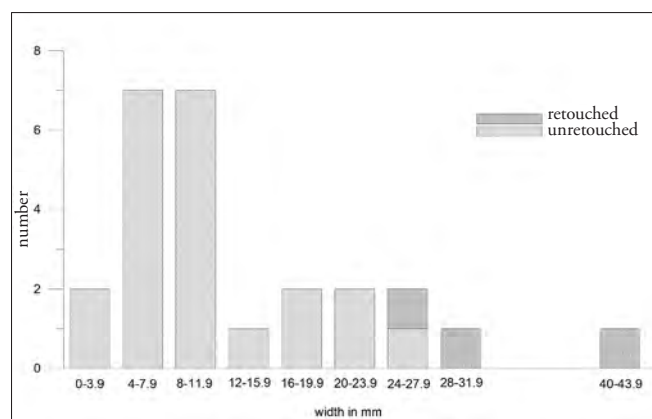


Figure 6. Blade and microblade width distribution, $n = 26$

Eighteen whole pointed bifaces and a number of fragments were recovered from the Sandy Beach Bay site on Umnak (6000–5000 BP). However, the Sandy Beach Bay bifaces are all flaked from tabular basalt, which Aigner interpreted as a pragmatic adaptational response to changing raw material type and form (Aigner 1983b:53). The significance of early Holocene bifacial manufacturing in the Aleutian context is taken up later in this analysis.

OTHER ARTIFACTS:

CORES, BURINS, FLAKES, AND CHOPPERS

A single chert blade core fragment was recovered from the site (UNL-469-0005). The piece is tablet-shaped, removed to rejuvenate or prepare a striking platform. Some crushing is apparent on one margin, while two microblade scars are visible on separate faces. The scars are at right angles to each other, indicating core rotation of approximately 90° during the blade manufacturing process. A similar core side was recovered from Hog Island, seemingly removed in preparation for rotation (Dumond and Knecht 2001:18).

A single burin spall of green chert (UNL-469-0165) was recovered from the site investigation. Like all burin spalls from the Anangula collection (Aigner 1977:84), this one shows no evidence of use or retouch. The material (chert) is consistent with evidence from Anangula,

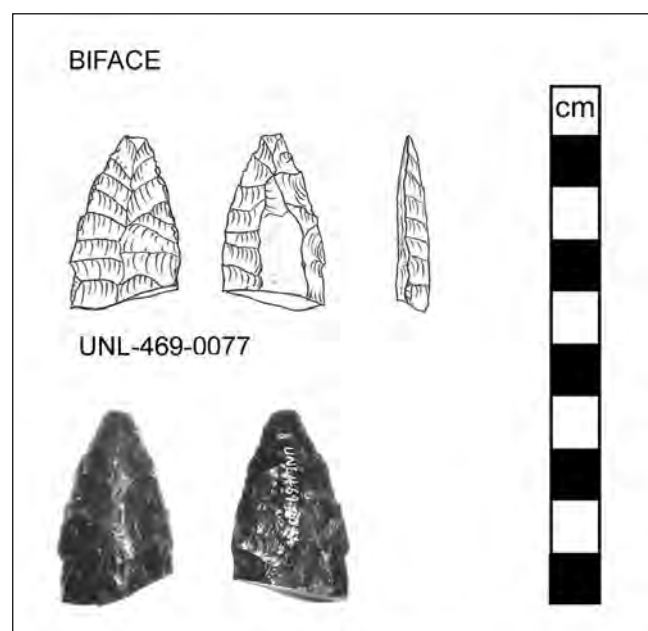


Figure 7. Biface fragment

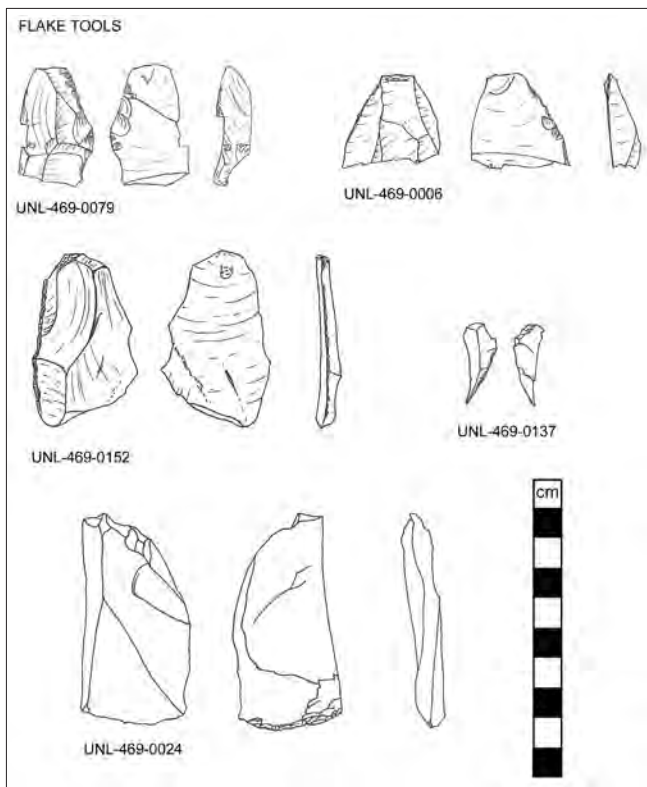


Figure 8. Flake tools



Figure 9. Cobble choppers and pumice artifact

where 79% of the spalls were of siliceous argyllite (Del Bene 1982:204). In form the spall is indistinguishable from the Anangula examples (illustrated in Aigner 1977:93). Burins and burin spalls, along with microblades, are considered to be essential components of the Anangula technological format. Used as scrapers or engravers, burin spalls were employed to cut grooves on bone and ivory for microblade insets and thus were important for manufacturing composite projectile points (Del Bene 1982:72, 303).

Twelve lithic flakes recovered from UNL-469 show either retouch or use-wear. These were generally tools of expediency, used for multiple tasks such as cutting, scraping, and piercing. Such ad-hoc tools are common from sites throughout the Aleutian sequence, although this classification may mask much functional variation (Aigner 1983b:99; Knecht and Davis 2004:96). Obsidian was the favored raw material used for these flake tools, exactly 50% by frequency. Occurrence of chert and basalt was 25% each. A selection of retouched flake tools is shown in Fig. 8.

In addition to the smaller artifacts, three large worked cobbles were recovered from UNL-469. These pieces are sized 11 x 9 cm, 9 x 7 cm, and 9 x 6 cm (Fig. 9). The sizes are quite comparable to the 11 x 7 cm “pebble chopper” recovered at Hog Island (UNL-115-898, Dumond and Knecht 2001:33) and the four “split pebbles...used for hacking” from Anangula (Aigner 1977:99). Similar pebble choppers also occur frequently around Nikolski Bay on Umnak Island (Laughlin 1975:514). Large cobbles might have been used as net sinkers as well (Laughlin and Aigner 1966:48), although the pieces in question do not resemble the distinctive grooved weights and sinkers from later phases of the Aleutian sequence. All three examples are extremely fine-grained basalt or andesite with few phenocrysts or silicate inclusions.

Flaking is apparent to varying degrees on all three examples. Remaining portions of water-worn cortex indicate these artifacts’ origin as beach cobbles. A deliberate cutting edge is apparent on only one (UNL-469-0148), while the other two examples may have been flake cores used as choppers.

With only a single exception, all artifacts collected at UNL-469 are chipped or flaked. Only one possible example of ground stone, a burned and blackened piece of vesicular volcanic rock (a pumice or scoria), was recovered. Pumice was used to fashion abraders, and several were recovered from the Russian Spruce site on Hog Island (Dumond and Knecht 2001:24). This example, however, shows no scor-

ing or use facets, and has clearly been cracked and burned by fire (Fig. 9). This artifact was recovered from a feature tentatively identified as a hearth (Fig. 4).

CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT, AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

The degree of global climate change during the Holocene (ca. 11,000 BP to the present) has been small in comparison with events such as the rapid cooling of the Younger Dryas (ca. 12,500 to 11,500 BP) (Meese et al. 1994:1680; Stager and Mayewski 1997:1834), although still significant in impacts on human occupation and subsistence. A major globally distributed Holocene cooling event (sometimes called the “Younger Younger Dryas”; see Mason 2001) occurred between ca. 9000–8000 BP. Global indicators of the ninth millennium cold period are evident from the GISP2 Greenland ice cores, diatom deposits from Lake Victoria in East Africa, and the ice core from Taylor Dome in Antarctica (Stager and Mayewski 1997). In Alaska, a similar record is presented by diatom deposits in the Bering Sea (Baldauf 1982; Sancetta and Robinson 1983; both quoted in Mason 2001), presumably associated with the expansion of both sea ice and terrestrial glaciers. The end of the Younger Younger Dryas around 8000 BP signaled the retreat of large continental ice sheets and stabilization of global sea levels (the “Early to Mid-Holocene Transition” or EMHT) (Stager and Mayewski 1997:1834). This transition ushered in the “Postglacial optimum” or the Atlantic Period in the classic European sequence. It is in this context that the occupation at UNL-469 occurred.

Sea-level records in the Aleutian chain following the last glacial maximum are poorly delineated and extremely localized due to the great variety of glacio-tectonic and geomorphic paleoenvironmental settings (Jordan 2001:509). Subduction of the Pacific plate along the Aleutian trench generates great thrust earthquakes, and the Quaternary volcanoes extending along the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian chain are among the largest and most explosive of the entire circum-Pacific region. Eustatic sea-level rise from a minimum around 18,000 BP was thus complicated by regional tectonic movements and related volcanism (Mann et al. 1998:122–125).

Raised beaches and marine terraces (relict shorelines) are common throughout the Aleutians and may offer relevant evidence for reconstructing local sea-level histories. Dates from archaeological sites are also useful indicators

of potential early shorelines. Three of the oldest sites in the eastern Aleutians (UNL-469, Hog Island, and Anangula) are all located on ancient marine terraces between 15 and 20 m above current mean high tide, suggesting a higher sea level during the early Holocene.

Data from the western Alaska Peninsula indicate emergent shorelines at 25, 16, 6, and 2–3 m asl (Jordan 2001:517). Radiocarbon dates from these features, used to construct a sea-level curve, demonstrate a general pattern of shoreline emergence as isostatic uplift matched or outpaced eustatic sea-level rise (Fig. 10). Jordan (2001:517) concluded that the 16 m shoreline on the Bering Sea side of the western Alaska Peninsula was the most significant leveling-off during the early Holocene, as this stand lasted for about 1500 years (from about 9000 to 7500 BP). Both the dating and position of this stand are in fairly close agreement with findings from UNL-469 (14–15 m asl, dated from 8000 to 6800 BP).

A hypothetical reconstruction of Amaknak and Unalaska around 7000 BP showing sea levels at the 15 m contour, not accounting for highly localized tectonism and isostasy, is likely only an approximate representation of the actual paleo-shoreline. The reconstruction (Fig. 11) nonetheless offers useful insight regarding general topography during the eighth millennium stillstand. Inundation of topographic lows on Amaknak formed at least three individual islands and several smaller islets. Many of the barrier strands and spit formations had not yet developed or were beneath sea level (including the spit that forms Dutch Harbor and the beach containing the historic village and modern town of Unalaska). The numerous islands and embayments would have offered an abundance of sites suitable for habitation and subsistence activities. Maritime adaptation is inferred from the lack of terrestrial faunal habitat as well as the obvious need for watercraft.

HUMAN COLONIZATION OF ALASKA AND THE ALEUTIANS

Pope and Terrell (2008:11–12) concluded that major Late Pleistocene climate and sea-level oscillations slowed or thwarted circum-Pacific migrations before 50,000 BP and that unstable coastal environments made living on the coasts difficult. A postulated overland human entry into Alaska after major deglaciation around 14,000 BP coincided with the Bölling-Alleröd warming event. Ice-free coastal environments were present by ca. 17,000 BP,

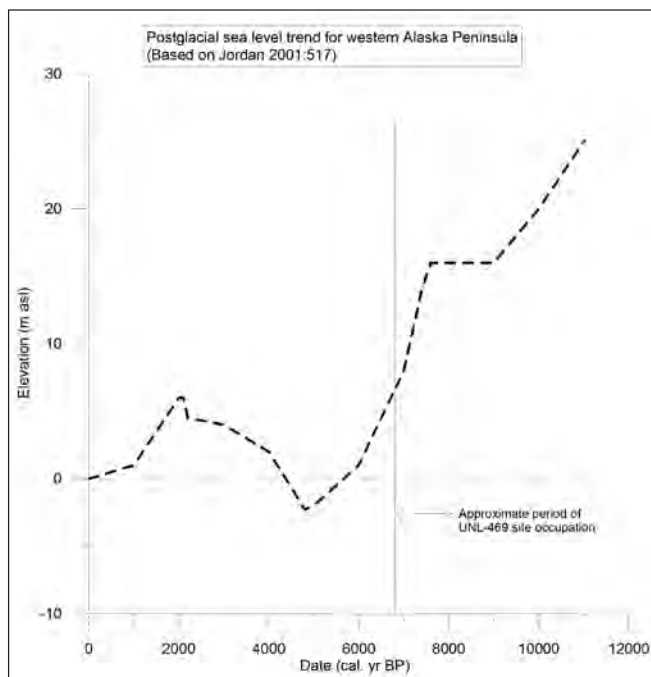


Figure 10. Sea-level curve (after Jordan 2001)

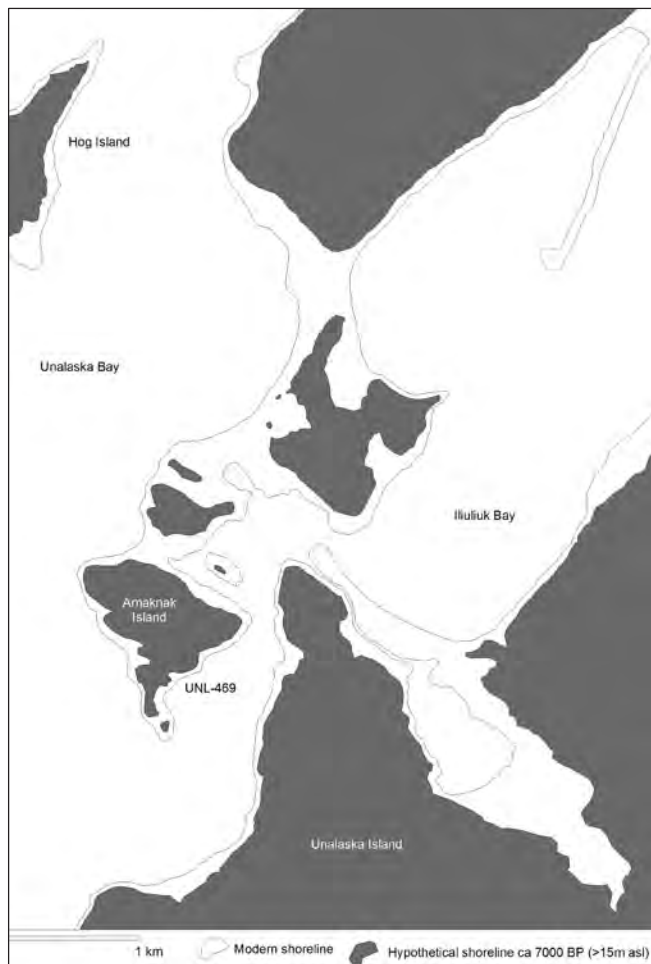


Figure 11. Reconstructed shoreline of Unalaska Bay ca. 7000 BP

however, leaving open the possibility of early coastal migrations (Fedje and Christiansen 1999; Fladmark 1979; Josenhans et al. 1997), the significance of which is obvious in the Aleutian context. Fossil insect evidence from sea-floor cores also indicates a sea-level stillstand at the -50 m contour as late as 11,000 BP, leaving substantial portions of the Bering land bridge accessible for human migration (Elias 1996:117–118).

On the basis of extrapolated tephra accumulation rates, Dumond and Knecht (2001:27) concluded that deglaciation of the lower elevations in the eastern Aleutians was complete by 11,000 BP or even earlier. This date corresponds with that postulated by R.F. Black (1975:161) for glacial retreat from the lowlands of Umnak Island. The earliest known human occupation of the Aleutians is documented at the Anangula Blade site on Ananuliak Islet off Umnak Island. Radiocarbon dates from Anangula, though potentially suspect in their reliability, span a period from approximately 10,000 to 8000 cal BP (Aigner 1977:72; Mason 2001:108). The only other Aleutian sites known from this period are on Hog Island in Unalaska Bay, dating from 9300–8300 BP, although numerous undated sites containing core and blade material have been located in the general vicinity (Veltre et al. 1984). Anangula occupation ceased by 8200 BP, and that at Hog Island by 8000 radiocarbon years BP, coinciding with the onset of the EMHT. As noted by Erlandson and Moss (1996), this period was a time of intense transition for Pacific communities, reacting to postglacial warming, deglaciation, sea-level changes, and biotic adjustment.

The occupation at UNL-469 occurred precisely during the EMHT, a period when the general lack of known or investigated sites has led archaeologists to speak of a gap in the record or even a “hiatus” of human presence. Indeed the general paucity of early Holocene sites across eastern North America led Caldwell (1958) to posit a major population reduction due to the difficulties of adjusting to postglacial conditions. In the intervening five decades it has become increasingly apparent that a great part of the problem lies in the difficulty of finding early Holocene sites, buried by tons of alluvium (and in the Aleutian context, volcanic ash) (Knecht and Davis 2001:272; Yesner 1996:246). Nonetheless various theories supporting the hiatus (at least in the Aleutians) have been advanced, notably the catastrophist explanation suggesting that enormous volcanic eruptions extinguished human life (L.T. Black 1981; R.F. Black

1975). A more recent hypothesis is that advanced by Mason (2001), proposing that an adverse climatic effect (warming following the Younger Younger Dryas) extinguished the Anangula culture and related communities on Unalaska. Mason suggests that the Anangula subsistence strategy was dependent on ice-obligate species such as walrus and ringed seal and that the resource base collapsed as sea ice retreated during the eighth millennium. Lack of faunal preservation at Anangula-age sites means that evidence is lacking and conclusions inferred; however, remains of similar pagophilic species are found in relative abundance at Neoglacial period (ca. 2500 to 3500 BP) sites such as Margaret Bay and Amaknak Bridge on Unalaska (Crockford and Frederick 2007; Davis 2001).

CATASTROPHIC SCENARIOS

The dating of the occupation at UNL-469 and the position of cultural deposits within the stratigraphic sequence have considerable significance for regional cultural history. As mentioned previously, the distinctive coarse ash stratum representing the Makushin pyroclastic event is a diagnostic horizon marker throughout the Unalaska Bay region. In the course of the 1997 Hog Island site investigation, this layer was radiocarbon dated by researchers at the Department of Geology and Geophysics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks to 8070 ± 50 (ca. 9000 cal BP). The investigation concluded that “the volcanic material was deposited in a rapid and cataclysmic surge that would surely have eliminated any living thing in its path” (Dumond and Knecht 2001:27). Dumond and Knecht (2001:27) speculated that the occupation at Hog Island (and by extension anywhere around Unalaska Bay) might have been ended by this catastrophic eruption.

The “catastrophic scenario” has a well-known parallel precedent on neighboring Umnak Island; it has long been suggested that the powerful eruption that created the Okmok caldera also overcame the Early Holocene settlement at Anangula. The event either annihilated outright this oldest known Aleutian occupation or disrupted the resource base to such an extent that the inhabitants were forced to flee elsewhere (L.T. Black 1981; R.F. Black

1976; McCartney and Turner 1966). This cause of the so-called “post-Anangula hiatus” has been challenged in recent years, with new research suggesting that adverse impacts from climatic factors were more to blame than catastrophic volcanic eruptions (Mason 2001:117). This hypothesis has great significance for regional culture history, as the author suggests that an ecological vacuum resulting from warming climates at the end of the Younger Younger Dryas extinguished the Anangula peoples on both Umnak and Unalaska. These islands were, in this interpretation, subsequently recolonized from the Alaska Peninsula by newcomers deriving from the bifacial Takli Alder culture (ca. 6800–6500 BP).

Results from the excavations at UNL-469 appear to refute the idea of a lengthy hiatus. Site stratigraphy and dating indicate that reoccupation of Unalaska Bay began quickly following the massive eruption, because deposits of cultural material at UNL-469 directly overlay the Makushin pyroclastic layer. At Hog Island as well, several blades were recovered from just above the Makushin tephra (Dumond and Knecht 2001:12), closely matching the stratigraphic position of cultural material from the Quarry site. The duration of any human absence from Unalaska Bay was so brief as to be virtually invisible in the stratigraphic record. The introduction of new technologies from the Alaska Peninsula is not ruled out, although continued reliance on core and blade techniques for several more millennia also suggests considerable cultural continuity in the eastern Aleutian region.

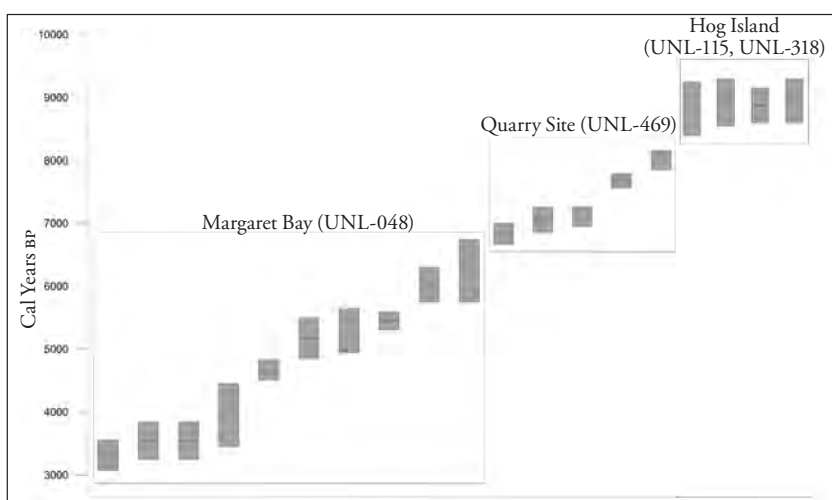


Figure 12. Radiocarbon dates from sites around Unalaska Bay (data from Dumond and Knecht 2001, Knecht et al. 2001; dates calibrated with OxCal 4)

ALEUTIAN CHRONOLOGY AND BIFACIAL TECHNOLOGY

The five radiocarbon dates obtained from UNL-469 date the site to between 8000 and 6800 BP. This date range crosses the somewhat arbitrary boundary between the Early and Late Anangula phases of Aleutian prehistory (9000 to 7000 BP and 7000 to 4000 BP respectively). This period is the least-known segment of the Aleutian Tradition (Knecht and Davis 2001:273), and UNL-469 is the first from this “chronological gap” to be investigated (see Fig. 12). Of particular interest in this context is the emergence of bifacial technology, a technique not seen in the exclusively unifacial lithic industry of the Early Anangula phase. Bifacial techniques are assumed to appear at the onset of the Late Anangula phase (ca. 7000 to 4000 BP), although Knecht and Davis (2001:272) suggested that “bifaces will eventually be found to be a rare, but present, component of the Early Anangula tool kit.” The oldest occupation at the nearby Margaret Bay site (Level 5, ca. 6000 BP) contained stemmed and bipointed bifaces, becoming more abundant in later levels (Knecht et al. 2001:56). Bifacial flake artifacts dating to ca. 6000 BP were also found at Sandy Beach Bay on Umnak (Aigner 1983b; Aigner et al. 1976) and formed the fundamental basis of lithic industry by ca. 3000 BP at the Amaknak Bridge site.

Retouch on the assemblage recovered from UNL-469 is almost exclusively unifacial. Bimarginal retouch was evident on three pieces, while true bifacial manufacturing was present on a single artifact, the broken projectile point (UNL-469-0077). At least two obsidian flake tools (UNL-469-0006 and UNL-469-0079) show retouch on both faces along a single margin. One medial blade fragment (UNL-469-0033), also obsidian, is bimarginally retouched. The rarity of both bimarginal retouch and bifacial flaking indicates that unifacial technology was the dominant mode of lithic industry at this time. The presence of a true biface, likely the oldest example ever recovered from the Aleutians, raises questions about the origins, development, and adaptation of this technology. Bifaces, which to the best of our knowledge appear in the archaeological record just at this time, increase steadily over time until the core and blade format finally disappeared during the Amaknak phase (after 3000 BP) (Aigner 1977:100; Knecht and Davis 2001:278).

The next-oldest bifaces so far recovered in the Aleutian Islands are those from Sandy Beach Bay on Umnak (ca. 6000–5000 BP), where eighteen whole pointed bifaces and a number of fragments were recovered. Based on excavations at Sandy Beach Bay, Aigner (1983b:53) explained the emergence of bifacial flaking as a pragmatic adaptational response to changing raw material type and form. Earlier Anangula industry, exclusively unifacial, was suited to the locally available fine-grained argillites. Regular blades produced from this material required only expedient unimarginal retouch. The tabular basalt at Sandy Beach Bay and Chaluka produced irregular flakes, requiring a new (bifacial) production system. Bifaces from the nearby Idaliuk Bay site (ca. 4200 BP) were also of basalt, although of a substantially glassier variety than those from Sandy Beach Bay (Aigner 1983a:92). Aigner’s interpretation, based solely on indications from a single island (and indeed from sites within a 20 km radius), becomes less plausible when the broader regional picture is examined. Evidence from Unalaska demonstrates true bifaces both far earlier (i.e., immediately post-Anangula) and of disparate materials (obsidian and fine-grained basalt).

UNL-469, a thousand years older than either Margaret Bay or Sandy Beach Bay, shows substantial affinity with Hog Island and Anangula. Continuity is demonstrated by reliance on the core and blade technological format as well as other overlap in artifact forms and type. The geomorphological similarity between Hog Island (20 m asl) and Anangula (17–20 m asl) noted by Dumond and Knecht (2001:28) (both situated on ancient marine terraces with relatively high elevations) is also shared with UNL-469, at 14–15 m asl. Other known (although undated) core-and-blade sites from around Unalaska Bay are situated at similar elevations (Veltre et al. 1984).

SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Analysis of lithic materials recovered from UNL-469 demonstrates considerable similarity to earlier sites in the region and supports the basic continuity of Aleutian prehistory as suggested by Laughlin (1975), Dumond (2001) and Knecht et al. (2001). Not surprisingly, the closest affinity is with the Russian Spruce site on nearby Hog Island. The types and usage of raw materials and lithic technology format all suggest a close relationship between the occupations. The material culture is clearly a continuation of the technology seen at Anangula, the earliest known occupa-

tion of the Aleutian chain. Radiocarbon dates obtained from the Quarry site overlap with those from both Hog Island and Anangula.

The (admittedly scarce) occurrence of bifacial tools at UNL-469 is the earliest evidence of this technology from the Aleutians. The appearance of bifaces is still somewhat puzzling and may be evidence of new technology deriving from cultures on the Alaska Peninsula. Conversely, bifacial flaking may have been an autochthonous development representing a technological shift in response to changing climate conditions (Mason 2001:116). The well-developed form of the UNL-469 biface, however, may suggest an external influence.

The dating of UNL-469 also extends our knowledge of human presence in this region into the "hole in the progression of clearly dated occupations," and may support Dumond's contention that the site at Chaluka, lacking blades, was erroneously dated much older than it actually is (Dumond 2001:290–292). There is now a clearly dated succession of prehistoric sites from around Unalaska Bay, from the Early Holocene to the Early Modern contact period. The sites include Hog Island (ca. 9000 BP), the Amaknak Quarry site (ca. 8000 BP to 7000 BP), Margaret Bay (6000 BP to 3000 BP), the Amaknak Bridge site (3000 BP to 2000 BP), and Summer Bay (3000 to 1000 BP). Dating of the Quarry site suggests that neither volcanism nor adverse climatic impacts extinguished life on Umnak and Unalaska between 9000 and 6000 BP. Similarity of technological format links the site with both previous and later occupations, spanning the Early to Middle Holocene ecological transition. There is no appreciable Middle Holocene gap in the occupation, lending credence to the suggestion that human presence in the eastern Aleutians was continuous throughout prehistory.

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REVIEW

AN ALEUTIAN ETHNOGRAPHY

*By Lucien M. Turner, edited by Raymond L. Hudson, 2008. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks
Hardback, 242 pages, 58 figures and maps, 16 color plates, 4 tables, 2 appendices, index. ISBN 978-1-60223-028-6*

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After the purchase of Alaska by the U.S., American military and government scientists and explorers flocked north to take stock of the exotic new territory. Among the larger and better-known expeditions are those of Lt. Frederick Schwatka (1883), Lt. Henry Allen (1885), and the Western Union Telegraph Expedition (1865–1867). The Smithsonian Institution under Spencer Baird sent naturalists on these expeditions to make collections and observations for the museum. These men included Robert Kennicott, William H. Dall, and Henry W. Elliott. At the same time the U.S. Signal Corps began collecting meteorological information in the territory. Manning these weather stations were naturalists recruited by the Smithsonian, including Edward W. Nelson and the mostly overlooked Lucien M. Turner.

Turner set up a meteorological station at St. Michael and manned it between 1874 and 1877. After a brief stay at the Smithsonian cataloging his natural history collections, he returned to Alaska. Until 1881 he lived and worked in the Aleutian Islands as a meteorologist for the Signal Corps. Over more than three years in the Aleutians, he spent almost eighteen months in Unalaska, four months on Atka, and eleven months on Attu. While on Atka and Attu he was a lone outsider, but he learned to speak Russian and Aleut and shared the daily lives of the villagers.

I was familiar with Turner's work from "Contributions to the Natural History of Alaska," published by the Signal Service in 1886. Although primarily concerned with the natural history of the Yukon Delta and Aleutian Islands, it contains numerous ethnographic tidbits. The details presented made me wish Turner had written an ethnography

to accompany his natural history. Sometime in the 1990s, I met Ray Hudson, who had discovered the unpublished Turner ethnography in the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian. Actually the manuscript was a "Descriptive Catalog" of the artifacts Turner excavated from prehistoric middens or acquired from his hosts. It is liberally sprinkled with ethnographic observations and Turner's thoughts and speculations on Aleutian culture and history. Hudson expressed an interest in publishing this manuscript, but the long, rambling account, obviously a very rough first draft, needed considerable editing.

After many years the manuscript is at last published. Hudson has done a wonderful job. He is a gifted writer, and his clear prose is enjoyable reading. He is completely familiar with Turner and with the Aleutian Islands and their people. He has organized Turner's manuscript by editing the sometimes rambling thoughts of the original into topical chapters. These are supplemented by information from Turner's published works, and together provide some of the most complete information available on specific aspects of nineteenth-century Aleut technology and life.

About one-fifth of the book is a biography of Lucien Turner. Dr. Lydia Black always stressed to her students the importance of understanding the background and biases of ethnographers and historians. Hudson does an outstanding job of bringing Lucien Turner to life. He also provides a valuable critique of Turner's work and compares it to the well-known works of Dall, Elliott, and Ivan Petroff. All in all, Turner comes off well in the comparisons. He is an honest and reliable observer and genuinely

liked and respected the people he lived with. Hudson lists several aspects of Turner's sojourn that make his work particularly valuable. He learned both Russian and Aleut and could communicate directly with the people. He also spent considerable time living, often as the lone white man, in isolated communities. His observations make clear he participated in the daily lives of the people. He spent more continuous time in the Aleutian Islands than did any of the other observers. Turner's work provides the only observations on life in the villages on Atka and Attu.

Ethnographies of the people of the Aleutians are rare. Ivan Veniaminov (Veniaminov 1984) wrote the most detailed and extensive. Although he included information on the Central Aleuts (Atkhans), his information mainly concerns the eastern Aleutian Islands and specifically Unalaska Island. Most generalizations about Aleut traditional culture since Veniaminov are based on his work. Later ethnographic information in Jochelson (1925, 1933), Lantis (1970), Laughlin (1980), and Liapunova (1987, 1996) are also strongly biased toward the eastern islands.

That said, Turner's work is not a complete or standard ethnography. He does not systematically describe the culture of the Aleuts of any community. Instead the work is a collection of observations on aspects of the people's lives. His observations are punctuated by explanatory comments, either offered up by his hosts or from his own speculations. It is not always possible to tell which. The result is a personal narrative with very human glimpses of both the Aleut people and Turner living with them.

After the introductory biography of Turner, the book opens with a brief description of the Aleutians, the Near Islands, and the existing communities. The next five chapters elaborate aspects of the material culture—houses, boats, clothing, weaving, and fire making. Some of this information is invaluable, for example the descriptions of gut sewing, preparation of bird skins for sewing, and fire making. Of particular interest for an archaeologist are his correlations of the tools excavated from a prehistoric site with these activities. Chapter 8 is a description of hunting tools and techniques, again correlating archaeological specimens with the activities. His archaeological collections included materials ranging from fully formed, well-executed objects to broken, incomplete, and crudely made or expedient examples. He also provides a brief account of the introduction of European items into the world of the Aleut.

Following the general Hunting chapter are chapters entitled Mammals, Birds, Fish and Invertebrates, and Plants. Again these are not complete and comprehensive accounts of hunting these animals. Instead aspects of the tools, technology, and especially the attitudes and beliefs of the people are described and discussed. Hudson supplements these sections with information from Turner's other work, especially the natural history. The chapter on mammals is limited almost entirely to whales. The all-too-brief account of Steller's sea cows is unique. Some of the information on birds, and on fish and invertebrates, is quite detailed and also not to be found elsewhere. Tucked into the text are bits of information on the preferences, opinions, and usefulness of species from the Aleut point of view. Turner gives full credit to his Aleut consultants for their knowledge and experience. He also includes women and children in his descriptions of community life, who are often missing from the other sources.

The last few chapters range more widely, from language and origins, politics, social relations, warfare, to slavery. None is complete and they leave only a garbled picture, but all offer fascinating glimpses of life in Aleutian villages in the nineteenth century. They also offer the perspective of the Aleuts themselves on aspects of their past and former beliefs. The weaknesses of Turner's work are most obvious in these chapters. Nevertheless they contain information that will fill gaps left by other ethnographers and result in a more complete picture of historic Aleut life.

In all, this is a welcome addition to the literature on the Aleutian Islands. It presents a variety of new information and is easy to read. It offers a personal glimpse of life in the islands in the late nineteenth century and almost uniquely lets the voices of the Aleut people peek through in a way most ethnographies, especially from that era, do not.

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REVIEW

2000 YEARS ON THE KING SALMON RIVER: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FOR UGA-052

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The King Salmon River involved here (there are others of this name) heads at Mother Goose Lake on the central Alaska Peninsula and flows 60 km or so in traversing the 30 airline km to Ugashik Bay on the Bering Sea, where it empties alongside the Dog Salmon and Ugashik rivers that drain lands farther to the northeast. On the right bank of the King Salmon at roughly its midpoint, the site UGA-052 lies on a Native allotment that has been awaiting ownership transfer. As the author notes, the cultural geographic context is enough to make the position interesting—between the northern Alaska Peninsula (sociolinguistic Yupik), the Kodiak Island group (Koniag), and the Aleut zone to the southwest (Unangan).

From 2003 to 2008, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) located and mapped at least sixty-six major depressions on the site. Excavations reported by Hoffman include not only those by the BIA archaeologists between 2002 and 2004, but also results of a field school of Hamline University that he himself conducted in 2003. With full-color illustrations throughout, the publication is visually striking.

UGA-052 is divided spatially and culturally between two zones, the higher “inland” zone a few hundred meters from the river and the lower “river” zone on the King Salmon banks. The former, trenched and pitted by BIA archaeologists, included at least sixty surface features, depressions largely round or nearly so in discernible outline, and between 16 and 44 m in max-

imum visible dimension. The river area, on the other hand, included three depression complexes apparently representing multiroom houses, plus two (recent) square depressions and a round one, and was taken on by the Hamline field school.

The work of the two parties demonstrated an overall age and cultural separation: seven age determinations in the inland area ranged from 1530 ± 40 to 1720 ± 40 ^{14}C years (calibrated and estimated to date between AD 230 and 620), with artifacts indicating aspects of the Norton cultural horizon; from the river zone six determinations in evidently prehistoric multiroom houses range from 150 ± 40 to 530 ± 60 ^{14}C years (calibrated and estimated to date from AD 1300 to sometime before contact), with artifacts suggesting a recent Thule- or Koniag-affiliated occupation (the Thule-Koniag distinction in this period being uncertain). In addition, an apparent Norton-affiliated occupation outside one of the multiroom houses provided a ^{14}C age of 1280 ± 50 years, and a sample from the presumed floor of a multiroom house was aged at 1020 ± 70 ^{14}C years, suggesting a Norton contamination (whereas another from a hearth in the same room was among those in the Thule/Koniag range). Putting these together, the Norton-related occupation is presumed to date from about AD 250 to 850, heavier and earlier in the inland zone, slightly later and much less evident at the river bank, with Thule/Koniag occupation beginning around AD 1400 and lasting for several centuries but ending before the Russian period.

The mid-period of abandonment, from AD 850 to perhaps AD 1300, is marked by relatively massive tephra deposits indicative of heavy volcanic activity.

For both inland and river zones, careful tabulations are presented of stone artifacts and waste material. For the river zone, to which organic preservation was entirely limited, are also tabulated a few hard organic artifacts as well as faunal and floral remains, and observable wooden structural remains are mapped and discussed. The artifactual material from the two zones, plus the carbon dates, provide a general confirmation of findings reported by Winfield Henn (1978) from his work in the Ugashik River drainage, of a massive Norton-period occupation succeeded in late times by an occupation reminiscent of the so-called Thule period of the northern peninsula. The tabulations for UGA-052 are followed by discussions of activities apparently engaged in at the site and the possible functions as a settlement in the two periods. Finally, the presence of the unmistakable volcanic episode between the two occupations leads author Hoffman to suggest that the multiroom house occupants were colonists newly moving into an abandoned area, making use of some special artifact forms as they accommodated to a region with resources partly unfamiliar to them. Much of this discussion is stimulating, although for various reasons is not convincing in all respects.

A major weakness in the data is the modest size of the sample. This is, of course, a direct result of limited time spent on the site. In inland-zone excavations, BIA crews of five persons spent a total of twenty-two days in the two years of 2003 and 2004, testing thirteen depressions in total, of which the nine covered in this report (all of those receiving more than a 50 x 50-cm test pit) had a total of 32 m² exposed, yielding 127 stone implements and a somewhat greater number of potsherds. In 2003, the Hamline field-school crew of six spent thirty-six days (including days off?), clearing a total area of 38 m², from which they recovered only sixty-three nondebitage objects, largely of stone but including some matting and a few organic artifacts. One is thus inclined to skepticism in terms of some blanket conclusions. There are two of these in particular.

The first is that the absence of apparent remains of the transverse slate knife (*ulu*) in the two multiroom houses chiefly tested at the riverside can be taken to suggest that three bipolar chert or chalcedony cores found in the floor of one of the houses represent a previously unsuspected Thule-period technique for deriving flake implements

with which to butcher fish. At the edge of the same house, of course, were reportedly undisturbed Norton deposits productive of chipped stone. And yet this suggestion in regard to the possibility that hard quartzite stone was used for some cutting tasks during the Thule-related period of polished slate is worth further consideration, given that chips of similar material have been reported consistently in excavations of houses of the period on the northern Alaska Peninsula (although almost all of these are in areas with juxtaposed or stratified Norton-period remains). But in terms of the overall limited number of slate implements recovered from the river-zone houses at UGA-052, the absence of even the fairly common transverse knives seems understandable as sample limitation (for instance, only seven examples of identifiable projectile insert blades, usually so plentiful, are reported). That this sample absence of knife fragments, together with the just-possibly intrusive bipolar cores, is sufficient support for the colonial nature of the Thule-period occupation, in which people were unfamiliar with local resources and were trying something new, seems to stretch a doubtful point.

The second is that the Norton houses of the inland zone (none of which received more than a single trench) were predominantly round, without any indication of a side entry. This may, the author suggests, be a possible indication of Aleut-zone influence, an area where Unangan people were partial to more nearly round houses entered through the roof. In my own experience in the region, the surface indication of any semisubterranean house more than a few centuries old is bound to be round, and traces of shallow, sloping side entries to Norton houses are invisible. This is doubly the case where volcanic ash deposits of some depth postdate the occupation. One must therefore hope strongly that in future excavations of houses like those of the inland area of UGA-052, major efforts will be made to more carefully clear the houses themselves as features worthy of interest—and worth more than a trench.

Somewhat the same unhappiness can be extended to the excavations within the apparent confines of the multiroom structures. The expanded excavation areas in those depression complexes are mapped as much more than mere trenches, but the extensive artifact and waste-material distribution maps seem to say that the excavators never ventured outside their squares. No presumed articulations between rooms were fully explored; where tunnel connections between rooms were encountered, it was only the portions of them lying within the excavation square that were revealed, and where room edges are

located it is again only those within an excavation square. The square grid, of course, is an imposition on a site that permits easy and effective measurement of the locations of objects found in an unsquare natural world. But that the square itself should have such a strong hold on the archaeological conscience that the specific feature—the house, in this case—is not followed in its own right is lamentable. The house form, after all, is a primary artifact indicative of much that is social and worth exploration in all its dimensions. Thus, in the UGA-052 excavations we do not really know the complete form of any house of any age.

As a last and final note (and I hope a constructive one, having been there myself), a flaw in this otherwise handsome contribution to a BIA publication series lies in some minor and mechanical editorial matters. In the present text, for example, “lead” appears more than once as the past tense of the verb “to lead,” rather than the more appropriate “led”; “laying” shows up where “lying” is indicated; and “bulk” is used rather than “balk” or “baulk” (at the edge of squares). These are only a few examples of the kinds of minor boggles that all of us are susceptible to, and which can be righted by a carefully chosen copy editor.

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REVIEW

ARCTIC SPECTACLES: THE FROZEN NORTH IN VISUAL CULTURE, 1818–1875

*By Russell A. Potter, 2007. University of Washington Press, Seattle
Paperback, 258 pages, index, notes, bibliography, and a special appendix entitled "Arctic Shows and Entertainments, 1819–1896: An Annotated Chronological Checklist." ISBN 978-0295986807.*

Reviewed by Robert E. King

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Russell A. Potter, a professor of English at Rhode Island College and the editor of the *Arctic Book Review*, has created a fascinating window to something mostly forgotten today: the western world's fascination with the Arctic during the nineteenth century and how it was depicted in visual culture. This nearly unquenchable interest in the Arctic, leading to its successful multifaceted portrayal for public consumption, was stoked by the various arctic explorers of this century, including many who barely survived to tell their tales. Ironically, many of their trips were launched to help rescue earlier explorers who didn't survive. At this time, the Arctic was still a little-known land of both beauty and danger and one ripe for conquering. It was a place as foreign as another planet is to us today, where heroic adventures could still be had. Nineteenth-century arctic exploration was a continuing soap opera of sorts. The many tales of hardship, suffering, and even death that were associated with these expeditions only added further interest for many people and fueled visual interpretations.

Sometimes realistic, sometimes not, the arctic visual culture of this time included book and (somewhat later) magazine illustrations, engravings, paintings, panoramas, magic lantern slides (shown in pre-electric projectors), and even early photographs, including some for sale at the 1876 Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia and the later stereo-view 3-D pictures created for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. My favorite of the early photographs shown in the book, however, is a rare

Ambrotype glass-plate picture from the 1850s of a dapper man in a top hat at a panorama show where he is seeing a romanticized painted background of an arctic inhabitant with caribou.

Related to this form of entertainment, the nineteenth century was also a time when public exhibitions sometimes included the display of living people from "exotic" cultures, so that Inuit people were at times shown alongside other arctic "curiosities." The book describes some of these types of events, including their often tragic results for the Natives removed from their homelands to other climates and diseases that claimed their lives.

As the subtitle indicates, the book first focuses on the year 1818 and three events. All relate to one of the underlying points of the book: growing popular fascination with the Arctic and yet how little was known about it. Chapter 1 starts with a quote from Mary Shelley's famous novel of 1818, *Frankenstein*, which was set in part in "those icy climes" of arctic mystery. Her fictional captain sails into open water at the North Pole, which was a popular misconception of the time. Turning to reality, under a British plan by Sir John Barrow (yes, the namesake for Barrow, Alaska), two real arctic expeditions were both launched in 1818. One commanded by David Buchan set off for the North Pole (and its presumed open water) while the second expedition, under John Ross, would search for Baffin Bay and attempt to locate the legendary Northwest Passage.

The latter was a long-sought prize that had been sought in vain by earlier explorers, including the late eighteenth-century legend, Capt. James Cook, who visited Alaska in the 1770s. And it was also one of the goals that drove many of the other nineteenth-century arctic explorers, including a young lieutenant under Buchan. This young man, along with the rest of Buchan and Ross' crewmembers, fortunately survived and returned home in the fall of 1818. While the Arctic had defeated them, they were not portrayed as failures but instead praised for their heroism and courage in surviving near disasters. Capitalizing on public interest from the two 1818 expeditions, in 1819, the London public was treated to an elaborately painted panoramic map of the "View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen," where Buchan had gone. It was displayed in two large circular rooms for which an entry fee was charged. It was a first for London and drew astonished crowds. Members of both expeditions became famous, and some were enticed to try again to conquer the Arctic, including, most notably, Buchan's prior-noted young lieutenant: the man later to be known as the ill-fated Sir John Franklin.

While public interest in these earliest arctic expeditions was great, and more panoramas would follow along with a rising flood of other types of arctic images to meet rising public demand, the real blockbuster was indeed Franklin's ill-fated expedition of 1845, which followed several earlier notable expeditions by the same man, with some also nearly ending in disaster. But his final disappearance after 1845 became a world mystery and a fourteen-year obsession to find out what happened to him and his men. Solving the mystery itself became a driving force for further expeditions, and with each one, more visual information was produced illustrating both the alluring beauty and enticing danger of the Arctic. The Arctic was thus portrayed as a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde kind of place, and the volume of illustrations about it only increased due in part to its "split personality."

Yet while telling about the obsession with Franklin and his own ill-fated obsession to find the Northwest Passage, Potter's book gives us many other fascinating arctic stories, including that of John Ross and what became of him after his earlier unsuccessful 1818 Arctic Expedition. Ross, a Scotsman who once dubbed Eskimos "Arctic Highlanders," ended up living for months with Inuit people over a decade later during a subsequent expedition. And these arctic adventures, too, would result in still more publicity and visual representations of the

Arctic. However, this didn't necessarily result in a truer understanding of its reality. A good example to the contrary was the 1835 exhibit in London of the northern "Continent of Boothia," a new and popular panoramic picture of the Arctic made of twenty-one panels. While reportedly based on Ross' expeditions, it incorporated earlier ideas of the Arctic. For many, the most popular feature of the new exhibit was the alluring way in which the sky was painted. Thus, people flocked to see arctic pictures sometimes as much for their artistic merit as their truth in representing the frozen north.

Photography arrived in time for Franklin and his 1845 expedition. It was the first one to be equipped with state-of-the-art Daguerreotype camera equipment. Accordingly, Franklin and members of his expedition were photographed before they left, and later engravings were based on these early glass-plate pictures. Otherwise, no other photos survive of their ill-fated trip. However, a multitude of images (often based on sketches) began appearing as early as the late 1840s of the various expeditions that tried to find Franklin. In 1851, a new panorama show opened for the London public, illustrating the search for him. Potter's book shows a rare handbill advertisement for it.

Another fascinating story in the book is that of American explorer Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, who helped turn attention from American Indians and the conquest of the American West to the Arctic. He, too, went in search of Sir John Franklin. However, Kane's untimely death in 1857, while in his thirties, only fuelled panoramic interpretations of his exploits that toured the United States even during the Civil War period of the 1860s. Interestingly, the year Kane died, a melodramatic play opened in London called "The Frozen Deep," which had been developed by Wilkie Collins, a protégé of Charles Dickens. Its arctic story, involving a supernatural subplot, was yet another way that the nineteenth-century public "learned" visually about the frozen north.

Potter's book concludes with more recent arctic expeditions, including one by American Charles Francis Hall, who returned from the Arctic in 1862, three years after the remains of the Franklin Expedition had been found. Thus, interest in Hall's expedition turned more toward the ethnographic revelations (and photos) he brought back of Inuit people of northern Canada. He also took some of them in person to visit Queen Victoria and London society in a disastrous pattern pioneered by earlier arctic explorers.

Other stories that conclude Potter's book include the history of the painted works of American artist Frederic Edwin Church and photographic artist William Bradford. Both were at the close of the Panoramic Era in the 1870s and the end of the period covered in the book. An interesting Epilogue added by Potter tells how in the 1880s and later, the ways of marketing images of the Arctic changed, in part due to the coming of motion pictures. Such are topics that other authors can, and do, explore in other books. But thanks to Potter, we have a most interesting and detailed history of this earlier period of how the Arctic entered the visual culture of the nineteenth century.

REVIEW

NORTHERN TALES: TRADITIONAL STORIES OF ESKIMO AND INDIAN PEOPLES

Selected and edited by Howard Norman, 2008. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

*Paperback; originally published in 1990 by Pantheon Books; 360 pages, introduction, maps, notes, bibliography.
ISBN 978-0-8032-1879-6.*

Reviewed by Patricia H. Partnow

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SUMMARY

Howard Norman, an English professor at the University of Maryland and a past finalist for the National Book Award in fiction, has compiled about one hundred tales of various genres from the arctic and subarctic regions of North America and Greenland. He has thrown in a handful of narratives from Hokkaido (Ainu) and eastern Siberia as well. Professor Norman has grouped the tales into eight categories based not on indigenous genres but on their central themes (e.g., village life, origin stories, trickster tales), prefacing each grouping with an essay that explains what the stories from the various regions have in common. The introduction and prefaces discuss some of the issues that are important in considering indigenous oral tradition: the underlying worldview of indigenous societies, spiritual and physical relationships between people and animals, repercussions of breaches of taboos, the nature of trickster characters, the importance of social connections, and the reestablishment of harmony as a plot focus. Each story (with a few exceptions) is referenced to a printed source. A few narratives that are apparently transcriptions from recorded sessions are not identified by date, interviewer, or the context in which the recording was made. A comprehensive bibliography completes the volume.

DISCUSSION

I was surprised not to have encountered this book before. It was originally published as one in a series within

the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library, a trade publication. Despite its nonacademic origins, the book's sources are the standard ethnographies and folklore collections that are familiar to Alaska anthropologists and folklorists (e.g., Edwin Hall, Waldemar Jochelson, Richard Nelson, the Alaska Native Language Center, Osgood, Fredson, Cruikshank). A spot check indicates that Norman has reprinted the stories verbatim from their original sources without embellishments or stylistic changes. In addition to mining the literature available as of 1990, the editor added narratives he obtained from research of his own in Canada.

This collection's greatest strengths are well-written and thoughtful editorial comments and the cultural breadth of the selections within the context of northern societies. The book is best suited for an educated nonspecialist audience with an interest in world folklore motifs (though the editor does not tie the selections into a motif index). It is not particularly well-suited for use in an academic setting for several reasons:

- The stories are taken out of cultural context. For instance, although the editor speaks to several representative occasions in which the narratives might be recounted, his information is general rather than tied to specific events, locations, or situations. In addition, the reader is left to infer cultural beliefs and understandings from the stories, rather than having them explained at the outset. This approach is not a fatal

flaw in itself, but with several dozen cultural groups represented in the collection, the reader is left with far too much work to do. A little more guidance would have been helpful. When, for instance, is a story thought to be humorous by the storyteller? What is the attitude or affect of the storyteller when recounting a particular tale? Two examples from Alaska illustrate how the dearth of cultural information decreases the book's instructional value: first, an Inupiaq story about a grandmother and her orphaned grandson would be far richer if the editor had explained that this is a culturally meaningful duo in a predictable situation; and second, a John Fredson story about Wolverine is reprinted without an explanation of the special place Wolverine holds in Athabascan cosmology, his particular personality, and his unique spiritual powers.

- The collection makes no reference to folkloric conventions of motif or structure; that is, there is no meta-folkloric element to the volume.
- A number of important issues are absent in the editor's discussion. Among these are differences between oral and written lore, intellectual copyright, narrative frame, the storytelling event as a generative experience and time-bound performance, and indigenous narrative genres.

- The lack of an index and footnotes—ameliorated somewhat by the helpful list of sources at the end of the book—decreases the book's scholarly utility.
- Nearly all of Norman's sources are written. In a few cases, they were written by the original storytellers, but in most they consist of translations or paraphrases of original stories that were supplied by the researchers rather than storytellers.
- The editor has provided us with no indication of his criteria for including a story in the collection. The seeming arbitrariness is illustrated by the curious lack of coastal Tlingit lore—certainly among the best documented of any in Alaska.
- The book is attractive and illustrated with line drawings that are based on designs taken from the publication *Crossroads of Continents*. Unfortunately, the illustrations are not tied culturally to the stories. For instance, a Dena'ina story is accompanied by a Bering Strait bow drill design and a Nunivak Island seal drawing. In addition, I found a few minor typographic errors (Asen Balikci's name is misspelled, for instance).

In all, this is a book that would be a fine gift to a lay person, and the editor's nine essays would make a useful collection for a freshman college class that is beginning an exploration of indigenous folklore and oral tradition.

REVIEW

WILDFLOWERS OF UNALASKA ISLAND: A GUIDE TO THE FLOWERING PLANTS OF AN ALEUTIAN ISLAND

By Suzi Golodoff, 2003. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.

Paperback, 272 pages, drawings, photographs, map, pronunciation guide, indices. ISBN 1-889963-18-6.

Reviewed by Douglas W. Veltre

Department of Anthropology, University of Alaska Anchorage

Wildflowers of Unalaska Island is the first book of its kind to deal solely with the Aleutian Islands. While focused specifically on Unalaska Island in the eastern Aleutians, much of this book is relevant to the whole of the archipelago and the lower Alaska Peninsula.

The book begins with a helpful introduction, in which the natural and human history of the Aleutian region is succinctly reviewed. Here, Golodoff touches upon possible geological explanations for the differences among the plant communities of the western, central, and eastern portions of the archipelago. She also outlines the variety of small-scale, local habitats that render plant communities on Unalaska Island diverse, and she provides a few notes on the Aleut (Unangan) language plant names that are included throughout the book.

The bulk of the book is devoted to descriptions of over 160 species of flowering plants. These are organized by taxa, not by color or by location as in some other flower guides. For each plant, a color photograph and a line

drawing supplement text describing the plant's features, habitat, and—particularly interesting from an ethnobotanical perspective—usefulness as a food, raw material, or medicine. In addition to common and scientific names, Aleut names, where known, are provided for the eastern, Atkan (central), and Attuan (western) dialects. *Wildflowers* concludes with a bibliography, a pronunciation guide for Aleut plant names, and indices to Aleut names, botanical names, and common names.

Overall, this is a welcome book. It is not overly technical or jargon-laden and thus will appeal to a wide range of readers, including those interested in Alaska Native ethnobotany. One of the clear strengths of *Wildflowers* is the contextual depth of the detailed, yet straightforward, plant descriptions, a quality attributable to Golodoff's long-term residence in Unalaska and her obvious familiarity with and respect for the larger natural and cultural world of the Aleutians.

The previously printed review of *Being and Place among the Tlingit* was an earlier version and failed to include several important changes that corrected errors and clarified several topics. THIS VERSION SHOULD BE REGARDED AS CORRECT AND IS TO BE THE BASIS FOR QUOTATION AND CITATION. The previous version is to be disregarded as it fails to reflect the full range of views of the reviewer. I would like to thank the editor, Owen Mason, for printing the correct version of the review.

Stephen J. Langdon

June 4, 2009

REVIEW

BEING AND PLACE AMONG THE TLINGIT

By Thomas F. Thornton, 2008. University of Washington Press in association with Sealaska Heritage Institute, Seattle. Paperback, 247 pages, three maps, eight figures, eleven tables, one appendix, index. ISBN: 978-0-29598749-1.

Reviewed by Stephen J. Langdon

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While numerous but generally limited studies of the complex place-naming practices and patterns developed by Alaska's indigenous groups have appeared over the years, Thomas F. Thornton's new volume offers a more expansive and holistic ethnographic view of how place characteristics and names are woven into the fabric of existence by the Tlingit people of southeast Alaska. *Being and Place among the Tlingit* is an outstanding contribution not only to Tlingit ethnography but also offers a powerful set of conceptual tools that other anthropologists, not only in Alaska, should find illuminating and stimulating.

The book consists of six chapters and includes a guide to the Tlingit language at the front, a preface, and a somewhat dangling appendix listing living resources used by Tlingit and their seasonality of use. In the preface, Thornton describes his fieldwork in various Tlingit village communities initially while working as a researcher for the Subsistence Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and then subsequently through numerous grants that enabled him to elicit and compile place names for virtually all of the Tlingit kwaans (regional groupings) from an impressive group of Tlingit-speaking elders, many of whom are now deceased. He also briefly mentions the research that was the basis for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Washington but does not inform us about the period and actual amount of time of any of his field-

work. In addition to this formal, direct elicitation of place names, Thornton has accessed and obtained numerous additional Tlingit place names from a variety of published (such as De Laguna's volumes on the Yakutat Tlingit) as well as unpublished (Thomas Waterman's manuscripts) sources and developed a database incorporating both the elicited and the manuscript-based place names. This integrated database, which has been used to prepare a fine set of GIS maps, is neither identified nor discussed in this volume but is the basis for another volume that is currently in preparation (Thornton, personal communication).

Theoretical perspectives are laid out in chapter 1 where Thornton positions his understanding of a "sense of place" as both a powerful universal dimension of human experience as well as an existential location of wide-ranging cultural construction involving language, image and power among other things. He holds the view that the experience and understanding of culturally constructed place can only be accomplished through the intersection of being on-site with a substantial degree of awareness of the cultural system. I am in full agreement with this claim. Thornton lays out four "cultural structures of emplacement" that he regards as central to the Tlingit fusion of place and being. These are social organization, language and cognitive structure, material production, and ritual processes. The next four chapters explore each

of these in turn. In the elaboration of these conceptual sites, Thornton frequently references Tlingit narratives collected in the 1940s by Walter Goldschmidt, a volume Thornton edited for its publication as *Haa Aanyí, Our Land* (Goldschmidt and Haas 1998), and Tlingit oratorical performances presented in volumes edited by Nora and Richard Dauenhauer.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the practices through which Tlingit bring their social organization (matrilineal descent, kwaan, moiety, clan and house principles) into contact with geographic locations by providing names that, among other things, illustrate critical events of the past that are viewed as creating the relationship of the people to the place. Here, as in chapter 4, Thornton draws heavily on his long-term, deep relationship with Sitka Kaagwaantaan elder Herman Kitka to demonstrate how understanding of place and past ancestral activities in places inform and dictate Kitka's sense of self. Thornton might have included discussion of petroglyphs (Figure 1) as Tlingit markers of emplacement, but this is an example of regional differences not addressed in the book; Thornton is not nearly as conversant with southern Tlingit cultural practice (where there are far more petroglyphs) as his research has primarily been with northern Tlingit.

In Chapter 3, Thornton elucidates the linguistic and cognitive foundations of Tlingit place-naming principles in answer to the query "What's in a Name." He provides a case study of Tlingit place names embedded in a version of the Salmon Boy story/myth told in Sitka that illuminates ancestral ecological conditions and provides detail useful for travel, resource timing, and locational contexts. Intriguingly, the story takes place from the vantage point of a salmon and thus demonstrates an important principle



Figure 1. Noyes Island petroglyph

of Tlingit relationality—how to see from the perspective of another. In this chapter, the syntactic structure of Tlingit language that produces an active rather than passive orientation is presented, as are the Tlingit words (for example *heen* = stream, river) that provide the basic building blocks of Tlingit place descriptions and names. Thornton shows how Tlingit provides a fine-grained terminology for locating phenomena in relation to the observer.

Material production as a "structure of emplacement" is elaborated in Chapter 4. The seasonal round of activities of "subsistence" production occur in "locales" where "projects" of "procurement" take place and thus create the impetus for landscape-making through experiences and naming. Thornton lays out and discusses the way traditional (ecological) knowledge, embedded in the names and traditions, when linked to the relational and spiritual dimensions of Tlingit resource acquisition makes for responsible, sustainable resource continuity.

The exquisite Tlingit ceremonial, the memorial potlatch (*koo'ex*) serves as the focus of chapter 5, where ritual as a site of emplacement is explored. Thornton provides excellent examples of how potlatch oratory grounds Tlingit existence in place and links generations. He also shows how Tlingit potlatch speakers use powerful emotional themes, linguistic forms, and demonstrations of deep personal effect to fuse these elements and use them as an agent of collective bonding. In the conclusion, Thornton eloquently lays out how a philosophy of place and being that emphasizes connections and care-taking promotes "biocultural health," and persuasively argues that such enormously valuable, but endangered systems need to be cherished, celebrated, and emulated.

Throughout the volume, Thornton deftly weaves in accounts of how Tlingit practices associated with place were continually challenged and eroded by white immigrants and government officials and how various Tlingit resisted and found means to sustain their cultural system, albeit somewhat altered, in the face of this onslaught. He also explores how technological adoptions, economic changes, and governmental policies have also altered and eroded the manner in which Tlingit are able to experience place. Despite these significant changes, Thornton contends that Tlingit "emplacement structures" "persist and adapt... as axes of identity, community, and place-building" providing "wellsprings of being" (2008:196).

The ethnographic approach taken by Thornton provides an insightful foundation for encountering Tlingit

cultural practice, but it is important to recognize the limitations of that approach as well. It does not provide a systematic gazetteer à la Robert Galois' (1994) impressive study of Kwakwaka'wakw settlements in British Columbia, nor is it a single-source based comprehensive approach to a region like *Shem Pete's Alaska* (Kari and Fall 2003). Thornton's approach, which might be termed a panethnic presentist perspective (he refers to it as an "idealized temporal composite"), does not pose or even countenance variability along the well-recognized linguistic (dialectical), regional (kwaan division), or social (clan and house groups) divisions that characterize Tlingit life. Nor does he explore how that variability may in fact be the basis for contested claims in Tlingit existence, a reality that continues to surface in certain Tlingit groups. Another vantage point missing from the panethnic presentist perspective is a temporal one in which place name characteristics such as distribution and construction might be used to approach significant questions about Tlingit longevity on the coast, patterns of movement identified in clan oral traditions, and other topics related to change through time. However, it should be noted that Huna Tlingit place names in Glacier Bay (Sit' Eeti Geeyi) are used in the book to demonstrate the processual (becoming rather than existing) aspects inherent in Tlingit place naming, which in turn can be used to implicate temporality as it relates to periods in the past when processes revealed by the place name could be observed. Also missing is attention to the impacts of the historical period on place naming, although, as noted above, Thornton describes the forces that have increasingly separated Tlingit from the places and language that traditionally fused to provide their template of being. Since the late 1700s, the Tlingit have been in contact with and interacted with various westerners, but Thornton does not examine how those contacts might have affected places named and place-naming practices. Finally, although Tlingit groups interacted extensively with their neighbors such as the Eyak, Haida, Nishga, and Coast Tsimshian among others, Thornton does not examine the possibility that some Tlingit names may have entered the language as loan words resulting from contact with these groups. Particularly significant in this regard is linguist Jeff Leer's observations about the apparent Eyak linguistic foundation for a number of Tlingit place names in northern southeast Alaska.

It is interesting that while it is commonly assumed (and Thornton leans in this direction as well) that western (European and American) visitors typically engaged

in place-naming colonialism by ignoring or rejecting indigenous place names, such practices were far more characteristic of the early explorers and traders due to their minimal contact with and lack of linguistic comprehension of the Tlingit than they were of at least certain American colonizers who came later. John Muir, perhaps surprisingly, eschewed elaborate place naming schemas for locations he visited in order that subsequent mapping expeditions would identify and use local Tlingit names. While place-naming colonialism is characteristic of many U.S. governmental and military personnel, some of the later map and chart makers of the Coast Survey acted upon Muir's sentiments. An example of this effort to incorporate local Tlingit place names can be seen in the vicinity of Tuxecan Island (along the west coast of the Prince of Wales Archipelago) where virtually all the cartographic names are Anglicizations of Tlingit terms elicited from Tlingit experts, perhaps those hired to guide the Americans through these waters. In this area of the Prince of Wales Archipelago, it appears that the coast surveyors memorialized one such assistant by naming a prominent peak in the vicinity, Mt. Kogish, after him. This name is a relatively discernible Anglicization of Kukeesh (now Kookesh), a prominent Raven "chief" in the area at the time (Orth 1971).

One final note of interest concerns the cover of the book. I am quite familiar with the image, as it has been a powerful iconic statement for generations of Tlingit fishermen from the village of Hoonah linking them to their traditional fishing grounds in the Inian Islands of Icy Strait. The drawn image is of a rock formation that is called the "Indian Head" by the aforementioned fishermen. In that sense the rock formation and its name are emblematic of the processes that Thornton carefully and elaborately details. However, there are ironies here in that there is no current Tlingit language term for this rock (it has only an English name) and the rock only attained its iconic significance in the early part of the twentieth century when salmon purse-seine fishing in the Inian Islands began. The Tlingit likely adopted the English term at that time and wedded it in quasi-traditional fashion to their being.

We certainly expect that there will be future publications where Thornton will follow up on this truly special volume to provide us with additional analyses drawing on the extensive database he has developed and his excellent interpretive skills to illuminate more of the complexity of place and being in Tlingit life.

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