

TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR A CHANGING ARCTIC AND ITS
ORIGINAL PEOPLES: CONTESTING THE COLONIAL ‘POLITICS OF NATURE’ OF
OFFSHORE DRILLING IN ALASKA

by

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(Under the Direction of HILDA E. KURTZ)

ABSTRACT

Rising temperatures in the Arctic are spawning a new era of industrial interest in this region. While development projects like the Arctic offshore drilling program present the opportunity for much-needed regional economic growth and employment they also represent a significant risk to the traditional subsistence way of life that has been pursued by the Iñupiat on Alaska’s North Slope for millennia. The difficulties that the Iñupiat now face in terms of finding ways to balance their economic and cultural needs within a changing Arctic have only been exacerbated by a colonial ‘politics of nature’, which has both historically as well as currently worked to limit their abilities to effectively advocate for their own self-determined lives and futures as a sovereign people.

Within the offshore drilling program, this has meant that the concerns and perspectives of the Iñupiat have been marginalized by its decision-making processes because of the intellectual superiority long afforded to Western ways of knowing, which is itself the product of a socially constructed divide between culture and nature that is upheld by dominant society. Such contemporary injustice is further compounded by those ‘well-meaning’ acts of forced cultural

assimilation such as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, which has profoundly altered the economic and political positioning of the Iñupiat in ways that have left them vulnerable to the siren call of offshore development.

By exposing the indirect exploitation and procedural marginalization that the Iñupiat have thus far experienced within the offshore drilling program, this project highlights how intervening in these cycles of injustice requires a willingness to meaningfully engage with cultural difference and other ways of knowing and relating to nature. The integrated understanding of culture and nature held by many indigenous societies like the Iñupiat fundamentally rejects the idea that ‘business as usual’ development scenarios should entail such potentially high environmental and social costs. Ultimately, contemporary global society must be willing to respect and explore these perspectives in order to build an environmentally just future for a changing Arctic that reflects both the contemporary desires as well as the traditional values of its original peoples.

INDEX WORDS: Environmental Justice, Culture-Nature Divide, Iñupiaq Traditional Knowledge and Values, Arctic Offshore Drilling

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: A CHANGING ARCTIC

1.1 Fall Whaling in Wainwright in 2013

It is late September and another evening is quickly fading into darkness as we stand collected under a vast Arctic sky. A general feeling of excitement is palpable as much of the Native village of Wainwright, Alaska has gathered on the beach to welcome in their first fall whale of 2013. It has been a wearisome return journey of many, many hours for both the successful crew as well as all those who assisted in the long, slow process of towing a bowhead whale back in across twenty to thirty miles of open sea. Yet the real work has only just begun as one of the front loader operators, who has been patiently waiting at the ocean's edge, scoops the whale out of the water and transfers it up from the beach onto solid ground. A communal prayer is held and a few photographs are taken and then it is all hands on deck, as the crews and community members work through the night in order to harvest all the different parts of the whale before they spoil. By the next morning, the whale carcass has been reduced to its mere bones and, in time, every household in the village will be given a share of the *maktak* [skin and blubber] that was once described to me as “Eskimo soul food, food for everybody” (PE-5, 2013).

Unlike their neighbors just to the northeast in Barrow, the village of Wainwright has not historically hunted bowhead whale in the fall, instead preferring to fill their annual quota of seven strikes during their traditional spring season. These quotas are currently set for each village by the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, which allocates the block quotas issued by the International Whaling Commission (North Slope Borough, ‘The AEWIC’, 2014). In recent

years, Wainwright whalers have not always been able to successfully fill their quota in the spring. They have therefore begun to intensify their fall whaling efforts. Their actions appear to be part of a much larger trend, observed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), where many North Slope villages are now finding it necessary to go out whaling much more often in the fall. The NOAA has attributed this shift to the impacts of climate change as the thinning of shorefast ice has greatly increased the difficulties associated with the already dangerous task that is springtime whaling (NOAA, 2013).

The spring of 2013, in particular, was highly unusual for Wainwright whalers. A steady south wind kept the stretches of open water (known as leads), where they would normally hunt, closed for most of time when the ice conditions were otherwise favorable (FG-4-4, 2013; FG 5-4, 2013). As a result, the village did not land a single bowhead that spring, which is only the second time in living memory this has occurred. The previous instance took place back in 1968 when offshore seismic testing disturbed the general behavior patterns of the migrating whales (FG-5-2, 2013; CE-2, 2013). Since their springtime whaling efforts were historically sufficient enough to support the needs of their village, it was not until 2010 that the first fall whale was officially landed and recorded in Wainwright. This was followed in 2012 with another fall whale caught by the same captain (FG-5-4, 2013). After their disappointing spring whaling season in 2013, three Wainwright whaling crews were ultimately successful later that autumn. As it stands now, the fall hunt is still an ever-evolving process as crews are constantly learning how to adapt their safety procedures and general practices to the new set of weather conditions associated with whaling out in the open ocean at this time of year. These processes serve to uphold a long tradition of adaptation, which has been affirmed in research supported by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC, formerly the Inuit Circumpolar Conference), whose scientists aver that Inuit

whaling practices have continually been modified “through time to remain functional and socially, culturally, and economically important as conditions have changed” (Freeman et al., 1998, p. 26).



Figure 1.1: Wainwright’s First Fall Whale of 2013 (September 2013)

1.2 The Challenges of a Warming Arctic

The Arctic is currently warming twice as fast as anywhere else on the globe and the Iñupiat of Alaska’s North Slope are now facing the stark reality that their ancestral territory has essentially become ‘ground zero’ for climate change in the United States (Reiss, 2012). Shifting environmental circumstances like the premature thinning of shorefast ice during the spring whaling season have clearly already begun to challenge the abilities of Native communities like Wainwright to continue to safely pursue their traditional subsistence activities in their homelands. In addition, rising temperatures in the region may also soon usher in a new era of

industrial development in the Alaskan Arctic, which represents an additional set of pressures on the Iñupiat as they seek to maintain their traditional lifeways.

The Arctic offshore drilling program recently pioneered by Shell Oil in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas represents one of the first of what will likely be many commercial efforts that will attempt to capitalize on changing climatic conditions in the Far North. Such activities are themselves part of what Banerjee (2013) has called the ‘Arctic paradox.’ Here it is understood that the changing environmental circumstances with which the Iñupiat must now contend, which are largely the product of global development projects focused on nonrenewable resources like oil, coal, and gas, have also made a new round of commercial activities much more feasible in this region. The continuing loss of summer sea ice has thus far facilitated Shell’s recent exploratory efforts. It could also lead to the opening of the Northwest Passage, a long-desired trade route to the north of Canada and Alaska, to general ocean traffic as early as 2020. It is predicted that when this occurs, Arctic shipping lanes could end up handling as much as 25% of the earth’s total sea commerce (Reiss, 2012). Future scenarios also include the possibility of increased levels of marine tourism throughout the region and the eventual opening up of commercial fisheries in the Arctic Ocean once a scientific baseline on available fish stocks has been established (Brigham, 2014). Since many of these development scenarios present an additional threat to Native lands and lifeways, they may very well represent a ‘new round of dispossession’ (Cameron, 2012) now beginning to unfold in the region.

While the Arctic offshore drilling program has been touted for its ability to generate regional economic growth and much needed local job opportunities on the North Slope, it has also raised a significant amount of concern among many Iñupiat who have followed a subsistence way of life in their homelands for millennia. This job vs. the environment dilemma

itself begins to reveal how the offshore drilling program is in many ways an exemplar of the type of injustice that pioneering environmental justice (EJ) scholar Robert Bullard referred to as ‘job blackmail’, which works to exploit the economic and political vulnerabilities of many marginalized communities (Bullard, 1992). In addition, while the Iñupiat, like many Native cultures, have long been praised for their ability to continually and creatively adapt to shifting environmental and social circumstances (Nelson, 1969; Ortiz, 1981), it is important to recognize how they must negotiate these new tensions within a drilling program decision-making structure that has largely been dominated by outside authorities and business interests. A long-standing concern on the part of Native peoples that they must conform to the dominant values and worldviews of non-Natives in order to be ‘involved’ or ‘consulted’ in these type of processes (Stevenson cited in McGregor, 2004b) suggests that the rhetoric of Tribal consultation and cultural inclusion espoused by the federal government within the offshore drilling program warrants a much deeper examination.

This project builds on the work of EJ theorists like David Pellow who argue that it is important to understand the production of environmental inequalities as a sociohistorical process in order to reveal and ultimately disrupt the “deeper workings of power in society” (2000, p. 597). As Pellow contends such understandings help to move beyond the unproductive binary of perpetrator-victim in order to better understand the complicated and often contradictory motivations of various actors in these scenarios. For indigenous peoples, in particular, it also helps to illuminate how complex colonial histories can promote contemporary injustice. This is due to the fact that their communities have generally been assimilated into the larger capitalist economies and bureaucratic structures of dominant Western society in ways that have left them operating at a distinct cultural, political, and economic disadvantage (Ishiyama, 2003).

In this dissertation, I argue that the Arctic offshore drilling program is an unjust act of ‘resource colonialism’ (Gedicks, 1993). As such, the drilling program is both informed by as well as perpetuates those cycles of environmental racism that have rationalized the expropriation and degradation of indigenous lands in the name of national economic growth. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971 is a key piece of federal legislation, which suggests that such colonial ways of thinking have already set important precedents in Alaska in regards to the treatment of Native lands. The passage of ANCSA was motivated by the discovery of the Prudhoe Bay oil fields and the federal government’s desire to open up such a valuable domestic resource to exploitation. While Native Alaskans once laid claim to the entirety of Alaska by virtue of aboriginal title, through this Act they ceded 89% of their ancestral territory to the government, which could now lease these lands as it saw fit (Gallagher, 2001).

This project is not, however, focused on such formalized acts of dispossession per se. Rather it is interested in exploring yet another facet of environmental injustice that has been spotlighted by the offshore drilling program. This is the way that Native peoples are rarely afforded equitable participation within the very decision-making processes that are putatively designed to act as a forum for their perspectives and concerns regarding such development. Such token levels of engagement provide the façade of cultural inclusion while nonetheless reinscribing a form of resource colonization in which the rights and interests of Native peoples are “ignored as irrelevant by both the state and the invading individuals” (Bodley cited in Gedicks, 1993, p. 13).

This project explores how a colonial politics of nature, which privileges Western understandings over the natural world and humanity’s rightful place in it, has over time contributed to both the **indirect exploitation** of the Iñupiat of Wainwright (largely through the

legacy of the ‘well-meaning’ assimilatory powers that were also a major component of ANCSA) as well as their **procedural marginalization** within the decision-making structures surrounding the offshore drilling program itself. Ultimately, these processes have worked in tandem to leave the community of Wainwright vulnerable to the siren call of offshore development.

Yet, the power of Iñupiaq cultural resiliency and the ongoing strength of their traditional values suggest that it is possible to move beyond the ‘false choice’ that has been offered to the Iñupiat, which currently limits their range of options to either welcoming big development into their territories or continuing to live with very few economic opportunities (Honor the Earth, 2012). The challenge is to find ways to move beyond a binary way of thinking born from the nature-culture divide in order to better grapple with the realities of an Arctic that is both Ancestral and Industrial (Zellen, 2008) and whose original people are simultaneously indigenous and modern. In this way, it may be possible to conceive of a form of Arctic development that provides for both the material as well as the cultural needs of this region’s original peoples.

As of late September 2015, the Arctic offshore drilling program has lost considerable momentum with the announcement made by Shell Oil at the end of its summer drilling season that it would not be returning to the Arctic for the ‘foreseeable future’ (Shell, 2015). The U.S. Department of the Interior also recently cancelled several additional offshore lease sales in the region, which were originally scheduled for 2016 and 2017 (Martinson, ‘Interior Dept cancels’, 2015). Such a turn of events represents a marked departure from the federal’s government’s enthusiastic support of the offshore drilling program as a key component of their 2012-2017 oil and gas leasing program, which posited offshore exploration as key to the growth of the United States’ ‘energy economy’ (Murphy, 2012). Yet, at least for now, the federal government and many of Alaska’s legislators nevertheless remain committed to the idea of developing domestic

sources of fossil fuel energy as an ongoing matter of national security (Rosen, ‘Murkowski’, 2015; Ryan, 2015). The proposed 2017-2022 oil and gas leasing program, which was released by the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in March 2016, reflects this ongoing (if decidedly less ambitious) commitment with one scheduled lease sale each in the Beaufort Sea and the Chukchi Sea (Dept. of Interior & BOEM, 2016).

With no other corporate interests immediately ready to launch their own operations in Arctic waters, Shell’s withdrawal is understood to represent a critical moment of pause within a much larger push to open up a warming Arctic to a new round of industrial exploitation. Current circumstances therefore offer an important window of opportunity for critical reflection within both the offshore drilling program, in particular, as well as the overall trajectory of Arctic development. The politically and technically troubled nature of the Arctic offshore drilling program as pursued by Shell Oil is thus explored here in order to glean those important ‘lessons learned’ that could help ensure that future management actions in the Arctic are culturally inclusive and environmentally just.

In particular, this project seeks to build on preliminary research conducted in the village of Wainwright in 2012, in order to better understand why it is that a majority of village residents seemed to support Shell’s offshore drilling efforts. This was originally rather surprising given that many of the national environmental organizations like Greenpeace, which had launched campaigns against the proposed drilling, often made it seem as if Native North Slope communities uniformly backed their efforts. In talking with Wainwright residents, it was also clear that those who supported the development did so despite the fact that they often had significant concerns about its potential impacts on their subsistence way of life. In trying to better understand the positioning of Wainwright residents in regard to this issue, it became

necessary to explore the colonial histories and processes that have help shaped their contemporary realities as Alaskan Natives.

At the same time, I also became interested in understanding why there often appeared to be a palpable tension at many of the community meetings I attended in Wainwright, which were hosted by representatives from either federal government entities like the Bureau of Land Management or oil companies like Shell. While current literature on this topic clearly painted a portrait of frustration at these types of meetings when attended by individuals who resisted the project (Banerjee, 2013), it was not immediately clear why many Wainwright residents who actually supported the development seem equally frustrated by these processes. Despite promises on the part of federal authorities and outside business interests that they would ‘safeguard the culture’ of the Iñupiat (Vercammen & Patterson, 2012), many locals simply did not seem to feel as if their concerns and perspectives were being well-represented. In seeking to find the source of this frustration, it became important to think about the ‘positional authority’ (Said, 1994) that has long been extended to Western ways of knowing and relating to the land and its ongoing implications for those cross-cultural acts of communication now occurring within contemporary development projects like the offshore drilling program.

By exploring those patterns of exploitation and marginalization that have shaped the positioning and experiences of the Iñupiat of Wainwright within the context of offshore development, this project offers a window into an Arctic that is simultaneously ancestral and industrial. In doing so, it seeks to intervene in those processes that have long sought to order the Native ‘Other’ in order to support the abilities of the people of Wainwright to lead their own self-determined lives and to build a future for a changing Arctic that reflects both their contemporary desires as well as their traditional values.

1.3 Dissertation Outline

Chapter 2 of this dissertation details the academic literature and theories that guide this inquiry. Environmental justice theory provides the overarching framework for this project. Three distinct bodies of work are then situated within this framework. This includes: a geographic interest in the idea of nature as a social construction, the critiques of those Native scholars who are concerned with the general treatment and translation of indigenous knowledge by Western scientists and decision-makers, and a post-colonial concern with the lingering effects of those colonial epistemologies and structures of power (Braun, 2002; Wainwright, 2008), which have long sought to control the savage ‘Other’. Such perspectives serve to highlight how the Arctic offshore drilling program is best understood as a systemic act of environmental injustice that is predicated on an ongoing dismissal of other ways of knowing and being in this world. As this dissertation will argue, such injustice is itself profoundly informed by a colonial politics of nature that has long rationalized both the dispossession of indigenous territories as well as the forced cultural assimilation and structural discrimination of Native peoples here in America.

In **Chapter 3**, I sketch out how this theoretical framework has informed my research methodology, which seeks to move beyond ‘research through imperial eyes.’ This type of research has often been conducted as merely another means of exploiting indigenous peoples and their knowledge for the ultimate benefit of colonial powers (Smith, 1999). This chapter highlights the qualitative research methods that were used throughout the course of the project, which were selected as culturally appropriate ways of engaging with both the people of Wainwright as well as the worldviews and values that continue to inform Iñupiaq traditional knowledge and culture. These methods include: focus group interviews with Wainwright residents, interviews with community elders, semi-structured interviews with Tribal leaders,

photo-elicitation interviews, and participant observation conducted at communal hunting events and those community meetings associated with regional oil development.

This chapter also highlights another critically important aspect of my project, which is the research collaboration that I established with the Wainwright Traditional Council (WTC), which acts as the village's Tribal representation. The WTC has recently begun a process of revitalization after a long period of dormancy, which had limited their access to the economic, cultural, and political resources that might have otherwise been available to them as a sovereign nation. Responding to some of the informational needs already identified by Wainwright's own Tribal leaders is thus one way in which this project works to support the ability of their community to collectively contend with the many challenges and opportunities raised by a rapidly changing Arctic.



Figure 1.2: Office of the Wainwright Traditional Council (2013)

Chapter 4 then provides the type of background information that is necessary in order to begin to understand how certain sociohistorical processes in both Alaska as well as specifically on the North Slope have led to the production of environmental inequalities within the Arctic offshore drilling program. This chapter also highlights the resiliency and powers of creative adaption of the North Slope's Iñupiat, who have sought and are still seeking ways to negotiate changing environmental and social conditions in the Arctic on their own terms. This chapter features major events like Alaska's colonization by the Russians, the village of Wainwright's official settlement including the introduction of a Western school system, the eventual discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay, the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, and Shell's recent withdrawal from the Arctic drilling program. Overall, this history highlights the processes of both forced assimilation as well as cultural survival that have heavily marked the current political, economic and cultural terrain of the North Slope. This region is perhaps best understood as a place of both negotiation as well as resistance where deep injustice and the profound potential for liberatory change remain equally capable of informing the future of the Alaskan Arctic and its original peoples.

Chapter 5 represents the first of two results chapters. This chapter focuses on the significant social changes experienced within the living memory of Wainwright residents, which can, in turn, be traced back to the effects of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. ANCSA is the legislative vehicle through which the Iñupiat ceded half of their ancestral territory to the federal government (Gallagher, 2001) and thus experienced the "materiality of colonialism" that has historically been grounded in the dispossession of indigenous lands (Harris, 2004). ANCSA is primarily explored here, however, in terms of the supposedly 'well-meaning' assimilatory powers that were also a significant component of this act. These interventions are

examined in terms of their abilities to further disrupt the deep relationships that Native peoples like the Iñupiat of Wainwright have long held with their lands and with each other (Li, 1999). The legacy of ANCSA is specifically considered here in terms of the ways it has contributed to the indirect exploitation of Wainwright's residents as they struggle to address the high levels of rural poverty and unemployment that still mark their community without sacrificing either the health of their remaining subsistence lands or the core values of their culture. While Wainwright residents have managed to successfully negotiate a fair amount of the social change that has occurred in the wake of ANCSA, it is important to clearly recognize the long lasting implications of these processes in regards to their overall ability to strongly advocate for both the material as well as the cultural and spiritual well being of their people.

The second results chapter, **Chapter 6**, explores the culturally unique conceptualizations of nature that still profoundly inform Iñupiaq traditional practices and lifeways despite decades of assimilatory pressures. Such worldviews are themselves understood to provide the appropriate cultural context necessary to truly engage with their traditional knowledge and values. A failure to consider these interpretive lenses within the offshore drilling program and its decision-making processes is therefore understood here to have led to the cultural misrecognition of Iñupiaq perspectives (Schlosberg, 2007). Such misrecognition has fostered intercultural miscommunication regarding key topics like the overall significance of Native subsistence and the appropriate role of technology. It has also led to the procedural marginalization of the Iñupiat where a lack of meaningful representation has engendered a deep sense of frustration among many North Slope residents regarding these decision-making processes.

As a conclusion, **Chapter 7**, further considers how both the indirect exploitation as well as the procedural marginalization of the Iñupiat within the Arctic offshore drilling program are a

product of a socially constructed divide between culture and nature, which has fundamentally informed how Western society knows and relates to the natural world and to other less ‘civilized’ societies. This section also discusses how the ‘problem of difference’ (Ranco & Suagee, 2007) raises key issues for EJ theorists and activists seeking to speak to the unique realities and issues found within contemporary Native America because they are generally working within a system that equates justice with an ability to treat everyone as if they are exactly the same. Displacing the culture-nature divide from its place of hegemonic supremacy is also explored here as a necessary antidote to both the ‘internalized oppression’ (Alfred, 2009) often experienced by Native peoples like the Iñupiat as well as the growing magnitude of climatic change, which is largely the product of an instrumental understanding of nature.

Before ending with a suite of recommendations designed to support the ability of Wainwright residents to pursue their own self-determined lives, this section highlights how in moving forward, it is important to understand the Iñupiat as a people living at the interface of two worlds characterized by ancestral traditions and incoming industries (Zellen, 2008). Achieving environmental justice in a changing Arctic is contingent upon supporting and enriching the Iñupiat’s abilities to bring these worlds into balance and in doing so, it might be possible for all of us to learn how to become more responsible co-inhabitants of our own complex ‘socioecological worlds’ (Braun, 2002).



Figure 1.3: Wainwright, Alaska (July 2012)



Figure 1.4: Wainwright, Alaska (December 2013)

PE-7

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RESOURCE COLONIALISM AND THE ‘POLITICS OF NATURE’ AT THE HEART OF ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE IN THE FAR NORTH

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I lay the theoretical groundwork necessary to advance an understanding of the Arctic offshore drilling program as an unjust act of ‘resource colonialism’ (Gedicks, 1993). Such an act is both produced by as well as reinforces those cycles of environmental racism that have long marginalized the rights and perspectives of indigenous peoples here in the United States. I argue that this type of contemporary environmental injustice is a product of the ongoing effects of colonial thought and structures of power, which are fundamentally premised on the ‘Great Divide’ between culture and nature (Latour, 1993). These dominant ways of thinking and being have attempted to control both nature as well as Native peoples. Contemporary scenarios like the offshore drilling program should therefore be apprehended as systemic acts of environmental injustice that both exploit the particular vulnerabilities of many indigenous peoples, which are a product of complex, colonial histories, as well as dismiss alternative ways of knowing and being in this world that suggest that there are other possible paths towards ‘development.’

In order to begin to develop this argument, I situate the theoretical work of a diverse body of scholars within an environmental justice (EJ) framework. In particular, I draw on those concepts advanced by: political ecologists who have focused on elucidating how nature as a social construct has tangible ramifications for society, post-colonial scholars who consider the

‘ideological discourses of modernity’ that have led to the historic and ongoing marginalization of non-European ways of thinking and being (Bhabha, 1994), and Native academics and activists who have advanced critiques regarding the translation and general treatment of traditional indigenous knowledge by Western scientists and decision-makers.

As Giovanna Di Chiro (1998) has explained, in the early history of EJ activism and scholarship, the realization that the nature-culture dichotomy had been linked to a long history of environmental racism and colonial oppression led to a significant break from the mainstream environmental movement, which often sought to preserve pristine wilderness and was therefore seen as less responsive to the everyday struggles of many marginalized peoples. Over time, the EJ movement came to recognize humans as an integral part of what should be understood as the ‘environment.’ This, in turn, fostered a growing awareness of the need to examine the linkages between injustice and how certain dominant ways of framing nature have served to marginalize other knowledge systems and ways of interacting with our environments (Di Chiro, 1998). EJ theory is thus employed here as a key point of intersection that allows for a simultaneous engagement with the work of those Native scholars, political ecologists and post-colonial thinkers, who have often participated in parallel conversations. The interweaving of these varied perspectives serves to illuminate how contemporary forms of environmental injustice in the Arctic are deeply rooted in much longer processes of cultural imperialism that have worked to efface other ways of knowing and relating to the natural world.

This chapter begins by situating the offshore drilling program within a burgeoning field of study on climate justice that considers the present day vulnerabilities to climate change that are often typical of Native communities. Such vulnerabilities are seen as being linked to ongoing processes of colonial injustice. These processes have served to marginalize indigenous interests

and concerns in the larger decision-making structures that have not only shaped their current realities, but will also continue to influence their futures. While the climate justice literature has been less engaged with the significance of those scenarios like the offshore drilling program that have only recently been made much more feasible by global climatic change, this project seeks to highlight the importance of the precedents now being set by this development. Here it is understood that if the Alaskan Arctic is indeed the front line of climate change within the United States, any decision-making process that marginalizes indigenous concerns represents a significant challenge to our abilities as a nation to effectively and equitably grapple with the ongoing implications of such change. That the environmental effects associated with climate change will inevitably emerge at lower latitudes in the years to come only serves to expand the geographic breadth of concern for these issues.

The next section of this chapter specifically examines how the idea of progress as a ‘living legacy of colonialism’ (Wainwright, 2008) facilitates a better understanding of such large scale-development projects like the offshore drilling program as merely the latest manifestation of a long history of resource colonialism in America. Here we find that Native lands within the United States have routinely been sacrificed in the name of ‘national progress.’ Indigenous perspectives and values have often been effaced through these processes so that even today Tribal worldviews and lifeways are generally given but token consideration. Exposing the problematic duality that has long existed at the heart of the state’s mandate to promote the ‘national interest,’ further suggests that the rhetoric of Tribal consultation and cultural inclusion that has thus far been promoted by the federal government within the offshore drilling program warrants a much more thorough examination.

This chapter then mobilizes EJ theory, in particular, to draw attention to the processes of indirect exploitation that have left many indigenous communities vulnerable to the promises of local economic growth and development that often represent a threat to the health of their Tribal lands and cultures. Environmental justice theory also suggests that the ability of Native peoples to move beyond the ‘false choice’ of either big development or ongoing poverty in their homelands is contingent upon addressing the procedural injustices that have led to their structural discrimination through a refusal to fully engage with their knowledge, perspectives, and desires for their own futures.

A consideration of the ‘politics of nature’ makes it clear why it is so important for Native peoples to be able to meaningfully participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and lands. This is due to the profoundly different conceptualizations of the natural world and humanity’s place in it that are held by many indigenous societies who do not recognize the divide between culture and nature that has become the hallmark of ‘modernity’. Unlike the dominant understandings held by Western society that view nature as a set of discrete resources to be managed, ‘nature’ for many indigenous peoples is primarily about maintaining balanced relations with the rest of creation. Environmental management scenarios that do not consider these alternative perspectives only serve to perpetuate a form of injustice that valorizes scientific expertise and its particular understanding of the world above all other possible ways of knowing.

A dawning recognition of the potentially genocidal nature of such injustice has led to an increased interest in incorporating the traditional knowledge of indigenous groups into contemporary environmental management scenarios. The next section of this chapter, however, considers some of the very significant issues that have emerged in these translational efforts where overly simplified and hierarchical dichotomies like ‘civilized’ and ‘savage’ remain

pervasive and work to subtly (or not so subtly) guide these interactions. Such impediments include the pre-existing relationships of power that have left many indigenous communities unable to strongly advocate for their own self-determined interests due to limited finances and the processes of political marginalization. That Western scientific expertise is still often used to evaluate the validity of traditional knowledge claims also reinforces a colonial understanding of the intellectual superiority of the West. The traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is therefore often decontextualized as it is treated as discrete bits of data that can be inserted into Western bureaucratic management systems. Yet, these systems are often either unable or fundamentally unwilling to develop a deeper understanding of the worldviews and values that give this knowledge its true meaning and power. Such efforts ultimately neglect the holistic nature of indigenous knowledge systems. Furthermore, when divorced from the people who actively live that knowledge, the dynamic nature of Native knowledge and traditional practices also tends to become obscured.

Such flawed notions of the ‘traditional’, which equate authenticity with a static state, are highly problematic for contemporary Native peoples who must actively negotiate their lives as individuals who are simultaneously both indigenous and modern. It therefore becomes critical to develop a better understanding of creative adaption and cultural evolution as Native tradition. In order to do so, stereotypes of the ‘Ecologically Noble Indian’ must be confronted as the types of limited understandings that are built on Eurocentric imaginings of the savage Other that have never accurately reflected the complex nature of indigenous existence and identities. More nuanced conceptualizations of indigenous identity work to support the abilities of the Iñupiat to effectively respond to the rapidly changing environmental and social circumstances that are the current realities of a changing Arctic.

This chapter concludes by highlighting the work of EJ scholar David Schlosberg (2007) who offers a possible solution to the type of procedural injustice now ongoing in many resource management scenarios like the offshore drilling program. He suggests that a refusal to explore and engage with the complexities of Native knowledge systems, which includes their culturally unique conceptualizations of nature, is a form of cultural misrecognition. Such misrecognition is itself a profound act of dismissal that continues to enliven a cycle of social and environmental inequity. Such injustice must be mediated through a form of ‘recognitional justice’ that seeks to meaningfully engage with cultural difference and other ways of knowing. Attempts to recognize difference cannot, however, afford to ignore the lingering power of those colonial knowledges and power relations that mediate such cross-cultural acts of communication. Environmental justice in a rapidly changing Arctic will likely be contingent upon our abilities to effectively attend to these very issues.

2.2 Justice in a Changing Arctic

The Arctic is currently warming twice as fast as anywhere else on the globe (Banerjee, 2013). Like most of the Iñupiaq villages widely scattered across Alaska’s North Slope, community leaders in Wainwright are facing the stark reality that their ancestral territory has essentially become ‘ground zero’ for climate change in the U.S. (Reiss, 2012). The Arctic offshore drilling program should therefore be understood as both a specific act of environmental injustice against the Iñupiat as well as an early example of one of the many forms that climate injustice will likely take as it begins to occur here in the United States. Developing a deeper understanding of the social and environmental justice issues raised by the drilling program within this specific context highlights how the events now unfolding in the Alaskan Arctic

should be of concern to all U.S. citizens even when the impacts of climatic change, as of yet, still seem so remote from their daily lives.

Environmental justice theorists Paul Mohai, David Pellow, and Timmons Roberts have argued that the emergent issues raised by global climate change both reflect as well as increase pre-existing social inequalities. They see climate change as raising an important set of social justice concerns regarding “who suffers most its consequences, who caused the problem, who is expected to act, and who has the resources to do so” (2009, p. 420). They further suggest that the deep chasms of social inequality, which have rendered many communities both more vulnerable to climate change as well as less able to successfully grapple with its impacts, will likely need to be addressed if climate justice is ever to be achieved (Mohai, Pellow, & Roberts, 2009).

Anthropologist Elizabeth Marino (2012), who has analyzed some of the first instances of climate-change related issues in the United States like the extreme flooding and coastal erosion now occurring in Native communities like Shishmaref, Alaska, has largely echoed these ideas. In her work, Marino has contended that the federal government’s response to these issues, which have thus far mainly occurred in places characterized by high vulnerability and low adaptive capacity, sets an important precedent for how it will engage with these issues when they eventually emerge elsewhere. Marino’s work in the Iñupiaq village of Shishmaref has suggested that residents of this barrier island do not feel as if they have been well represented in the processes surrounding their village’s potential relocation because these procedures have been largely dominated by bureaucratic agencies. In relation to the governmental meetings held around these issues, residents have become increasingly frustrated by the feeling that they are being either asked the same questions or told the same things over and over again at an exhausting round of meetings, yet they are left with little sense that anything has changed as a

result. As of now, such processes and the precedents that they are now setting at the federal level appear to be merely serving to intensify the pre-existing social and economic inequalities already to be found in the far North of Alaska.

Geographer Emilie Cameron (2012) has further suggested that the high vulnerabilities and low adaptive capacities of many of the marginalized communities found in the Arctic need to be evaluated with an eye towards the colonial inequities that have contributed to these conditions. Cameron also insists that the resource extraction activities that are an important element of Arctic climate change in terms of its potential impacts on local populations have not been given their due consideration within the climate change literature. She maintains that an attention to colonialism and its ongoing effects can further illuminate how these activities provoke a ‘new round of dispossession’ now unfolding in the region.

In this light, it is possible to conceive of the Arctic offshore drilling program as one of the first examples of climate change-induced development in the region. It therefore follows that the decision-making structures now guiding this development are setting precedents that are just as important as those related to the federal government’s current attempts to develop climate change mitigation and adaption strategies. How U.S. policy makers contend with these issues now will likely shape the trajectory of a new wave of Arctic development only recently made possible by rising temperatures in the region. These decision-making processes will ultimately either foster or foreclose the possibility of managing a changing Arctic in a culturally inclusive, socially just and environmentally sustainable manner in the years to come.

However, as the climate change justice literature suggests, for equitable processes of participation to occur, it is important to expose the acts of systemic inequity that have worked and still continue to work to diminish the capacities of those communities impacted by climate

change (Cameron, 2012). This is because if these circumstances are left unaddressed, many communities who were not included in the decision-making processes that created these vulnerabilities will likely also be excluded from the processes that are now attempting to address these same vulnerabilities (Marino & Ribot, 2012). The offshore drilling program can itself be understood as an example of ‘accumulation by degradation’ (Johnson, 2010), since such a project has only become feasible because we have so significantly altered our global environment through previous extraction activities. The above line of thinking can easily be extended to suggest that the Iñupiat did not have much say in the larger decision-making processes that contributed to contemporary climatic change, in the same way that they do not appear to be receiving adequate representation in the processes that are now attempting to capitalize on these changes. An emphasis on the historical and ongoing inequities that have led to this marginalization can, however, expose and ideally intervene in this cycle in which superficial levels of inclusion have been used to mitigate local resistance to these types of processes. A general understanding of the ways that the dispossession of indigenous peoples within the United States has routinely been accomplished based on their positioning against a larger national narrative of ‘progress’, is therefore an important entry point into this project.

2.3 ‘National Sacrifice Areas’: In the Name of Progress

They talk to me about progress, about ‘achievements’, diseases cured, improved standards of living. I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed. Extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out. (Césaire, 2000, p. 42-43)

Native American scholars have argued that colonial policies in the US often framed their people as primitive savages who stood in the way of economic growth and technological progress (Robyn, 2002). Environmental historian William Cronon has suggested that such a

mindset can trace its roots to the very beginning of EuroAmerican settlement in New England. In this context, Eurocentric notions of property that were linked to visible signs of ‘improvement’ upon the land led English colonists to believe that “Indians appeared to squander the resources that were available to them” (2003, p. 56). The idea that these Indian lands were ‘underused’ thus became the rationalization for their eventual expropriation so that the natural wealth they contained could be accessed in the name of the national interest. Unfortunately, many of these areas experienced extreme environmental degradation as a result of these extraction processes. The idea of ‘national sacrifice areas’, which succinctly describes the aftermath of these efforts, eventually became a common term in Native America after it first emerged in the 1970s in the context of a coal strip-mining project on Navajo lands. The project was proposed as a means of meeting the nation’s perceived energy crisis of the day despite the fact that it was clearly understood that this area would, in the end, be beyond environmental remediation (Grinde & Johansen, 1995). Cherokee activist Justine Smith (1996) has asserted that the notion of national sacrifice areas should be further extended in order to think of the Native communities impacted by such development as ‘a national sacrifice people.’ This is due to the abiding cultural and spiritual connections they have with their ancestral territories, which are relationships that have often come to define them as a people.

However, within the United States a dominant national narrative of ‘progress’ has long worked to suggest that the gift of ‘civilization’ is just compensation for the subsequent confiscation of the material wealth of the ‘Native periphery’ (Henderson, 2000) and that “the culture of the Indian should be eradicated, and he should be grateful to be conquered” (Mohawk, 2000, p. 138). In his analysis of the notion of progress within the United States, historian Collin Calloway (2012) has highlighted how the popular imagery of a ‘Manifest Destiny’ was used to

express the idea that colonial expansion across the continent was not only inevitable, but also divinely ordained. An unfortunate side effect of this growth would be the alienation of Native peoples from their lands. The sentiment expressed by America's founding fathers was that the United States must and would take the lands claimed by Natives, but that it would give them civilization in return as a fair exchange. Any resistance on the part of Native Americans was perceived to be an act of futile resistance to this inevitable march forward. Calloway discloses that although American history "was for a long time written and taught as a single story, a narrative of nation building and unending progress that united the diverse participants in the country's past in a single American experience...The experiences of American Indians during the years of nation building told a story of decline and suffering rather than 'progress' and the 'pursuit of happiness'" (2012, p. 2).

Anthropologist Tania Li (1999) has maintained that the state has often mobilized the rhetoric of progress and its attendant need for development to regulate the relations between indigenous populations and the resources found on their lands. While the end result of these interventions has often fundamentally reordered and disrupted these relationships, these actions have generally been legitimized as being born out of a concern for the welfare of indigenous peoples and their improvement. Such ideas of progress and development end up wearing the same cloak of altruism employed by the European settlers who claimed that one of colonialism's main goals was to benevolently guide those cultures who had 'not yet' achieved their level of civilization towards the same level of modernity that they already enjoyed (Chakrabarty, 2000). However, as development scholars like Jonathan Crush have argued, colonialism's true motivation has always been "about the spatial reach of power and the control and management of other people, territories, environments, and places" (1995, p. 7). Contemporary efforts to access

the resources on Native lands can therefore be seen as merely the latest forms of such domination and as such are often referred to as acts of ‘resource colonialism’ (Gedicks, 1993; Robyn, 2002).

Political ecologists like Raymond Bryant and Sinead Bailey (1997) have further considered the role of the state and its stewardship role in which it is meant to act in the name of the overall national welfare. They point out how ‘acting in the national interest’ usually requires the state to try and operationalize a deeply problematic dual mandate that requires it to both promote economic growth as well as protect the natural environment. They conclude that as this tension is negotiated, the state more often than not ends up promoting those policies that privilege economic development over environmental conservation. EJ theorist Robert Lake and political scientist Lisa Disch have taken this argument even further by working to dismiss the very idea of state neutrality. They instead aver that the state has over time become indentured to the interests of capital. They argue that the logic of the state is not to protect communities and the environment but to “ensure the reproduction of the capital-labor relation by supporting capital accumulation while maintaining legitimation” (1992, p. 672). A continuing belief on the part of individual citizens that the state is advocating for their interests has therefore often led to what EJ scholar Stella Capek (1993) has referred to as a ‘double violation.’ Such a violation occurs when communities are first exposed to a toxic contaminant or other act of environmental injustice and then realize that as the government reacts to their plight (usually with false assurances, conflicting information, or outright dismissal) that they have, in fact, been betrayed by the very institutions that they had always assumed were there to protect them.

Such a lack of state neutrality is particularly problematic for indigenous peoples in the United States. This is due to the paternalistic relationship established between the federal government and Tribes that was yet another product of a Eurocentric belief in the superiority of

Western knowledge and practices. If Natives were framed as the backward ‘Other’, it became clear that they were incapable of pursuing their own development and were instead in dire need of trusteeship (Ziai, 2011). The doctrine of trust therefore plays a key role in federal-Tribal relations and as such it is an agreement that recognizes that federal government has a “responsibility to protect or enhance tribal assets (including fiscal, natural, human and cultural resources) through policy decision and management actions” (Wilkins & Lomawaima, 2001, p. 65). One of the main issues surrounding the idea of trust, however, is the question of whether it represents a legally enforceable responsibility on the part of the federal government to best manage Indian affairs or is instead merely a moral issue that leaves the government with no real binding obligation to modify its actions even if they are of great detriment to the Tribes. This ongoing debate over the exact meaning of trust leaves Tribal peoples exceedingly vulnerable because they can never be sure whether or not the governmental institutions that are meant to represent their concerns will, in the end, be compelled to act in their best interest (Wilkinson & Lomawaima, 2001).

In the specific example of Arctic offshore development, former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar declared that the drilling program would continue to be firmly supported by the Obama administration because it would allow the United States to grow our ‘energy economy’ at home. The federal government did, however, promise to pursue a ‘targeted’ leasing strategy that would protect the interests of the Iñupiat by avoiding areas of high environmental sensitivity or subsistence activity (Murphy, 2012). Yet, if both the general neutrality of the state as well its commitment to advocate for the needs and concerns of North Slope Tribes can be called into question, the fact that oil lease revenues are the second largest source of government funding after income taxes becomes a rather critical fact (Reiss, 2012). That a post 9/11 world allows

these activities to be framed as not just an issue of national progress, but one inherently of national security is also worth noting (Labban, 2011). Meanwhile, oil companies like Shell Oil have pledged to "safeguard the culture, the subsistence hunt, and the lifestyle the people enjoy" (Vercammen & Patterson, 2012, para. 24) in the Alaskan Arctic. In evaluating the depth of their commitment to this task, Shell's recent history of oil development in Nigeria cannot be overlooked. Shell's operations there have not only been labeled an 'environmental disaster,' but also resulted in three separate lawsuits being brought against them in 2009 for their complicity in human rights abuses against the Ogoni people (Center for Constitutional Rights, 2012).

A coalition of Native American groups including Honor the Earth (led by renowned Anishinaabe activist Winona LaDuke), the Intertribal Council on Utility Policy, the International Indian Treaty Council, and the Indigenous Environmental Network have spoken out against the offshore drilling program for these very reasons. They insist that the US has a long history of resource exploitation in which the interests of Native communities have never been prioritized. They have instead only ever been offered the 'false choice' of either hosting large resource extraction projects that may compromise the well being of their lands and identities or foregoing any form of economic development to remain in severe poverty. The coalition's campaign for 'energy justice' frames the proposed drilling program as yet another example of the type of ecological injustice that exploits the particular vulnerabilities of Native communities, who are often spatially, politically, and economically marginalized (Honor the Earth, 2012). This argument, in turn, suggests that is important to consider both the specific vulnerabilities of these communities as well as the ongoing histories and underlying processes that have produced them in order to better understand how they influence the decisions that individual Tribes ultimately make when they are presented with such false choices.

2.4 Indirect Exploitation: Job Blackmail & Colonial Mentalities

“Most people want tomorrow to be like today, but that is never possible. Change comes...[and]... oil, like it or not, has been on balance a good thing for the entire region” (Medred, 2012, para. 43).

It has been said that “colonialism is the process by which we are systematically confused...confusion [is] an agent of control...the struggle [is] to decolonize, to break free, to stand back and view the source of the confusion, in order to develop or resume ways of living that prove to be nondestructive, healthy for the people, and at one with the creative power of nature” (Barreiro, 2005, p. 68)

Contemporary Tribal leaders from North Slope communities such as Point Hope have received a fair amount of press for their vocal opposition to the proposed drilling program (Restino, 2012). Yet, there are many Iñupiat who have chosen to support this project despite their deeply held subsistence concerns. This is, of course, not the first time that Native individuals or groups have chosen to welcome big projects, which hold the potential to be harmful to their environments and livelihoods. For some, it is the result of a ‘psychology of inevitability’ that leaves people feeling as if they have no real power to influence the agendas of either the federal government or the multinational corporations that generally pursue these types of projects. Many people assume that by the time they actually hear about a project, it is most likely already a *fait accompli*, so that their resistance to such ‘progress’ is futile (Gedicks, 2001).

The work of pioneering environmental justice theorist Robert Bullard (1992) also provides another compelling explanation that similarly relies upon a community’s sense that there is no real alternative to the ‘business as usual’ development scenarios that they are offered. As he explained many years ago in the context of predominantly African-American populations that allowed polluting industries into their communities, one of the most common motivations for such support revolves around the need for local economic growth and more job opportunities. This is a dynamic he referred to as ‘job blackmail.’ Jobs vs. the environment trade-offs in

particular suggest that we should be better attuned to how issues of environmental justice “can not only involve direct exploitation, but also indirect exploitation through consent under severe economic pressure” (Vickery & Hunter, 2014, p. 15).

As one such example, geographer Noriko Ishiyama (2003) has considered the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians’ willingness to host a high-level radioactive waste facility on their reservation. Her work highlights the Tribe’s sense that there are simply no other choices left for their survival. She points to a long history of colonialism that has served to structurally limit the contemporary economic opportunities now available to them. Ishiyama supports the current move in EJ studies to move beyond the classic concern with distributive justice (focused on achieving an equal division of environmental goods and bads throughout society) towards a greater emphasis on procedural justice. To that end, Ishiyama suggests that we must attend to both the realities of the capitalist economies in which most Native peoples are today deeply entrenched as well as the institutional structures (or lack thereof) through which such communities are allowed to participate in the development processes that affect them.

Chippewa academic Linda Robyn (2002) has further argued that the historic lack of meaningful participation in the decision-making processes that affect them has been particularly problematic for indigenous peoples. A national agenda that prioritizes economic growth and technological advancement, which is based on a understanding of nature as primarily a ‘natural resource’, invariably leads to the exploitation of the natural world in ways that conflict with Native beliefs focused on balance and reciprocity. These types of alternative understandings are thus rendered invisible by a form of cultural imperialism that consistently privileges the perspectives of the dominant society (Perry & Robyn, 2005).

As much as Native peoples are susceptible to those ‘business as usual’ development scenarios that seek to capitalize on their economic vulnerabilities, their exploitation can occur through an even more covert process, which is the imposition of ‘colonial mentalities.’ Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred has described such mentalities as “the gradual assumption of the values, goals, and perspectives that make up the status quo” (2009, p. 94). For indigenous peoples, such ‘internalized oppression’ “blocks recognition of the existence or viability of traditional perspectives. It prevents people from seeing beyond the conditions created by white society to serve its own interests” (Alfred, 2009, p. 94). Alfred thus goes on to suggest that development that is not founded on a ‘sound traditional basis’ is a danger to indigenous peoples because it only serves to further constrain their abilities to act in ways that reflect their own worldviews and values. While increased wealth may seem like a solution to many of the problems generated by their colonial pasts, he cautions that such development actually perpetuates these processes of dispossession by facilitating the further break-down of those relations and ways of thinking that are so foundational to their culture and well-being as a Tribal people (Alfred, 2009).

Political ecologists and science studies scholars interested in the idea of nature as a social construct have similarly opined that development and conservation scenarios that deny “the legitimacy of other ways of knowing and managing nature” (Goldman & Turner, 2011, p. 17) represent ‘epistemological acts of violence’ on the often indigenous target populations of these projects. For Native peoples like the Ecuadorian Federation of Amazonian Indians who rejected the vision that oil development was the only possible path forward, this has meant that they have had to fight to voice the essence of their own lifeways by contending that “development which destroys our rivers, our land, and our lives is not real development” (Pandam cited in Gedicks, 1995, p. 101). The ‘politics of nature’ thus becomes a key area of

inquiry when it comes to understanding how the erasure of indigenous perspectives by hegemonic understandings of what constitutes ‘nature’ directly contributes to contemporary environmental injustice.

2.5 The Politics of Nature: Resources vs. Relations & the Appropriate Role of Technology

As Bruno Latour has argued, modern people have come to proudly distinguish themselves from the premoderns based on a ‘rupture’ from a past typified by ‘archaic’ modes of thinking that saw humanity as intimately connected to all of creation. A new understanding of an ontological partition between humans and nonhumans allowed ‘moderns’ the freedom to give up the seemingly “ridiculous constraints of their past which required them to take into account the delicate web of relations between things and people” (1993, p. 39). This separation was significant enough to create the “Great Divide between Them – all the other cultures- and Us- the Westerners” (p. 1993, p. 12) in which the West was both distinct from and superior to all those who did not recognize this division between Culture and Nature.

Geographer David Harvey (1996) has also considered how one of the major projects of the Enlightenment was the domination of nature, which supported this hierarchical ordering of other non-European cultures. As Harvey echoes Latour, such control over nature could only be achieved by constructing a previously unrecognized divide between man and nature. If nature became something 'out there,' it became a mere resource that was much easier to control. Harvey details how such a mastery of nature inevitably led to the subjugation of other people, particularly Native societies. Mario Blaser explains how as the idea of progress came to be measured by the distance achieved between society and nature and because indigenous peoples were seen as “located closer to nature than the modern West, the dynamics of progress justified the treatment of Natives, along with nature, as objects of domination” (2004, p. 27).

Some of Harvey's fellow critical geographers, like Bruce Braun and Noel Castree, have taken up and expanded his analysis by further examining who has the power to determine what ultimately counts as 'nature' and what are the material and social effects of these hegemonic understandings (Braun & Castree, 2001). Their argument does not, of course, deny the physical reality of the world, but examines the ways in which understandings of 'nature' are "defined, delimited, and even physically reconstituted by different societies, often in order to serve specific, and usually dominant social interests" (Castree, p. 3, 2001). It is thus argued that environmental politics always involve a struggle to frame nature in particular ways so that any quest for a more socially just and environmentally sustainable future must include an exploration and ultimate acceptance of multiple ways of knowing nature (Blaikie, 2001).

The concept of 'natural resources' is a perfect example of one the dominant ways that nature has come to be framed and it is a central idea that guides most contemporary environmental management scenarios. Yet, many Native peoples fundamentally contest this idea because they insist that it does not in any way reflect their understandings of their environment. Harvey has noted how the separation that Western society created between culture and nature bred "a highly instrumental view of nature as consisting in capital assets- as resources- available for human exploitation" (1996, p. 124) so that our primary relationship to nature has become premised on the concept of 'rational allocation' rather than relationality. However, Native scholars like Gregory Cajete have insisted that from an indigenous perspective based on the interdependency of all creation (humanity included) it is "in every sense abnormal to view the world as dead matter, private property, commodities, or commercial resources" (2000, p. 53). Unlike those societies who have developed this sense of alienation from nature, the main goal of

most indigenous peoples as they intentionally act towards elements of their environment is to “treat Creation as their relative, not a resource” (Johnson, 2007, p. 26).

Chelsea Chapman (2013) has illustrated how these different conceptualizations of nature as relation or resource have informed the environmental debates surrounding oil drilling in the Yukon flats region of central Alaska. Her work further highlights how various energy sources like oil and gas are not uniformly defined and acted upon as natural resources by all societies. Her analysis is also germane to the Arctic offshore drilling process as her research scenario involved a coalition of local Tribal communities trying to prevent an oil drilling operation, which was backed by the regional Native corporation, Doyon Limited. Chapman details how Tribal members resisted the proposed development primarily due to the potential threat it posed to the health of their Native subsistence foods, which were deemed too important to their spiritual and physical well being to jeopardize through industrial activity. This was despite the widespread ‘energy poverty’ they suffered due to the incredibly high prices of heating oil in the region, which would have been potentially offset by the project. The proposed oil drilling was finally defeated due to what Chapman describes as a local insistence that there were other ways of thinking and acting towards the land other than those suggested by the dominant paradigm of ‘natural resource’ management and extraction. For those who understood the oil to be the blood of the earth, its importance as a resource to be exploited was simply not their primary concern.

Although the proposed Yukon Flats drilling project was a success story in terms of a Native group being able to successfully advocate for their own understandings of nature, this type of victory is generally quite rare. Braun (Willems- Braun, 1997) has shown how most of today’s contentious resource issues are framed in terms of technical expertise and the strategic interests of the nation in ways that work to obscure these types of alternative claims. Many

environmental managers, in the end, invoke the might of their ‘scientific authority’ to decide debates whenever these types of environmental conflict arise. In these instances, it becomes critical to recognize that the idea of nature as a social construction also inherently challenges the authority of this type of scientific knowledge and its supposed objectivity. As Latour (1993) has shown, the project of modernity was based on the West’s sense of superiority over other cultures. This was due to its belief that it could mobilize an external Nature based on an engagement with Nature ‘as it really is’, which was revealed to it by science. Contemporary science has been predicated on the inviolability of this clear-cut divide between culture and nature, which has led to an understanding of "science as the progressively more accurate explanation of a real, independent, and pre-existing natural world" (Demeritt 1998, p. 174).

When it comes to environmental management and development scenarios involving indigenous peoples, it is important to recognize how an understanding of nature as a social construction also means that Western scientific knowledge can no longer claim to be a purely objective reflection of reality (Goldman & Turner, 2011). Scientific understandings should instead be understood as being socially mediated by the particular contexts in which they are produced, so that they are always partial (Demeritt, 2001). The Inuit Circumpolar Council similarly supports the idea that no one culture can claim to fully know the world and that “the foundations of cross-cultural cooperation would be significantly strengthened if those enculturated in the scientific, or Euro-American, or techno-industrial, tradition could accept as true the notion that they are as much a product of their own culture as Inuit are of theirs, and that no single tradition has a monopoly on ‘the truth’” (Freeman et al., 1998, p. 172). Such statements are supported by scholars like Paul Nadasdy (2011) who has argued that the notion of scientific ‘expertise’ must itself be expanded in order to accommodate multiple ways of knowing nature,

while David Demeritt has ultimately asked, "Why are the sciences to be preferred over other ways of knowing and relating to nature? (1998, p. 174).

In terms of any inter-cultural exchange of knowledge, the late Vine Deloria, Jr., a highly esteemed Native scholar and member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, believed that the Western world would actually benefit the most from exploring the alternative perspectives held by many indigenous peoples. He explained that when Western society allowed objective observation and reason to become the dominant way that it chose to interact with the natural world, it lost its ability to emotionally connect with an earthly realm that was otherwise understood by many Native cultures as being everywhere imbued with spirit and meaning. This disconnect ultimately necessitated the codification of behaviors in the absence of a more intuitive sense of appropriate action. Deloria feared that a focus on merely controlling a mechanical nature divorced from its more numinous qualities means that “as our knowledge grows, so does our understanding diminish” (2012, p. 241).

The conflict that arose within a beluga co-management regime in the Canadian Arctic represents a prime example of the issues that can arise between those societies who insist on the development of codified behaviors versus those who instead rely on a more relational sense of correct behavior. In this case, local Inuit hunters were instructed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans personnel with whom they collaborated to develop a formal code of conduct for their whale hunts. The hunters, however, insisted this step was quite unnecessary as they already had a very strong moral code that had informed their hunts for millennia. The Inuit hunters saw the belugas as sharing the same social space as them so that their actions were always guided by the necessity of maintaining proper relations with these animals. Such perspectives inevitably clashed with those held by the Western scientists who participated in the project since they

apprehended the belugas as discrete resources to be rationally managed. The fact that their collaborators were not able to recognize how their longstanding cultural ties to the beluga profoundly informed their behaviors, offended many of the Inuit hunters who ultimately felt as if their traditional knowledge was being treated dismissively (Tyrell, 2007).

Like Deloria, Braun has decried the fact that ‘technical rationalities’ have indeed become a “surrogate for moral and political rationalities” (Willems-Braun, 1997, p. 9) within many contemporary environmental management and development scenarios. This has not only contributed to the types of intercultural conflicts described above, but as Braun insists, it has also made it very difficult for modern Western society to explore the alternative types of relationships with nature that could help us to reimagine how we might “responsibly inhabit our complex socioecological worlds” (2002, p. 10). Cajete has similarly stressed that such ways of thinking should not be the dominant guide to our behaviors with the natural world. Nor should we depend on technology to address all of today’s environmental problems, which have largely been engendered by Western science and society’s undue preoccupation with increasing human mastery over an external nature. Rather than seeking to continually increase our control over nature, we need to instead reexamine the types of relationships we have with our environment because “the technologies that humans build tend to follow understanding, or the lack thereof, of their role in the world” (Cajete, 2000, p. 38). According to Cajete’s logic, an understanding of humanity as existing separately from the realm of nature has resulted in the production of technologies that while awesome in their powers have also served to threaten the dynamic flow of life in which humanity is but one co-creator among many. Anthropologist Tim Ingold has further shown how for many indigenous peoples tools and technology are “intended not to control but to reveal. And they are used not in a failed attempt to achieve emancipation from an

alien world of nature, but in a successful attempt to draw the inhabitants of that world into an unbounded sphere of intimate sociality” (Ingold, 2000, p. 321).

During its exploratory efforts, Shell Oil clearly relied on technical rather than moral or political rationalities to counter the environmental and subsistence concerns raised by both North Slope hunters as well as various international environmental organizations. In fact, Shell consistently rationalized its drilling plan in the Chukchi Sea based on the idea that it was using the ‘best technology available’ (Medred, 2012; Demer, ‘Activists’ 2012). Shell’s engineers insisted that their technology would allow them to handle anything that came up in the Arctic and that because the drilling would occur at much shallower depths than many of their other global pursuits, the project itself would be much easier to control. For industrial interests like Shell, the challenges associated with Arctic offshore drilling were largely understood in terms of the scientific expertise and technological capacities at their disposal, which they believed would allow them to successfully control their drilling environment.

Organizations like the United States Geological Survey (USGS) have, on the other hand, come to realize that the Arctic offshore drilling program raises issues whose ultimate resolution might actually require something ‘more than science.’ A 2011 USGS report stated, “while there is a growing base of scientific and technical information for the Arctic...many of the challenges emerging in Arctic oil and gas development decision making are beyond the ability of science alone to resolve” (Mufson, 2011, para. 50). One of the most popular responses to the dawning realization that ‘science alone’ is not enough has been to try and incorporate the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples into these types of management scenarios. Scholars like Leanne Simpson (2004) of the Alderville First Nation have been cautiously optimistic about these general kinds of efforts. She has suggested that after such a long denial of indigenous ways

of knowing, an increasing interest in applying traditional knowledge to these kinds of projects could both work for the betterment of all as well as support the goals of Native self-determination. However, the concern exists that the historical supremacy of Western scientific knowledge over traditional indigenous knowledge still fundamentally presides over these negotiations. The fact that these interactions generally occur in the context of larger political environments in which Native peoples are still at a distinct disadvantage is also cause for further trepidation (Fernandez-Gimenez, Huntington, & Frost, 2006). In the domain of academic interest in traditional knowledge and its translation into Western environmental management and development scenarios, there are several key issues that have been highlighted, which must be addressed before both knowledge as well as understanding can be increased among all parties.

2.6 Translating Traditional Knowledge: Power, Cultural Context, & the ‘Traditional’

Anishinaabe intellectual Deborah McGregor has noted how a current interest in the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples does indeed represent two distinct possibilities: it may be an important ‘foot in the door’ for Native peoples in terms of having their perspectives represented in the decision-making processes that affect their lives or it may be the ultimate form of colonialism- “you have taken our lands; now you are after our minds” (McGregor, 2004a, p. 401). Maori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has also observed the reticence of many indigenous peoples when it comes to sharing their knowledge. She explains that this is due to a colonial history where both the physical subjugation of Natives as well as the exploitation of their knowledge systems were fundamentally linked to the advancement of European interests.

It is in this context of lingering colonial relationships and epistemologies that three of the most dominant and interrelated issues emerge when it comes to the treatment of traditional

knowledge and its translation by Westerners. These include: those pre-existing relationships of power in which these negotiations are still inherently embedded, the problem of decontextualization that often leads to mistranslation, and an inaccurate understanding of what is meant by ‘traditional,’ which is based on a very limited understanding of what constitutes authentic indigenous identities.

When considering the inter-cultural communications that occur within natural resource management scenarios it is critical to remember that the playing fields of power are rarely level and that the participatory capacities of many contemporary Tribes are quite limited after having experienced a sustained era of resource dispossession. It is therefore important to consider how “the existence of treaty rights; past and historic relationships with the non-Indian community; the current economic status of the tribe, and cultural dependence on specific resources” (Cronin & Ostergren, 2007, p. 87) all affect the ability of Native peoples to equitably participate in these processes. In general, there is also a concern present within federal-Tribal relations that the US government has, in the past, devolved many of its responsibilities to Tribes to their local governing bodies under the guise of supporting Native self-determination. In these situations, Tribal resources and governing capacities have often times proven to be inadequate when it comes to grappling with such wide-reaching issues like the health and welfare of Tribal members and environmental problems and protection (Johnson, 2008). A devolution of authority to those who lack the local capacity to address such issues, which does not seek to also rebuild those capacities, thus only serves to perpetuate a cycle of inequitable representation in these processes.

Beyond the very real fear that Tribes might lack the economic, political, or cultural resources that are necessary to strongly advocate for their own self-determined interests, the

question still remains as to whether or not Western knowledge claims will continue to act as “the benchmark by which other knowledge should be judged” (Bates, 2007, p. 89).

Anthropologist Paul Nadasdy has demonstrated how in the case of Canadian co-management efforts, First Nation members have been pigeonholed into the bureaucratic system in ways that make it nearly impossible for their knowledge to be used as the sole basis for management decisions. This means their traditional knowledge is often only valorized as anecdotal evidence if and when it supports the conclusions that have already been arrived at through more 'scientific' methods. Nadasdy worries that Native people's participation in these processes may actually divest them of much of their power to challenge the management outcomes they have supposedly helped to shape. So although such attempts at knowledge integration may appear to be empowering, they may actually only serve to replace "local aboriginal ways of talking, thinking, and acting with those specifically sanctioned by the state" (Nadasdy, 2005a, p. 228).

These issues are compounded by the process of decontextualization that often occurs because Western information-gathering techniques tend to 'cherry-pick' specific elements of indigenous knowledge. The select use of certain elements of a group's traditional knowledge, which is then treated as discrete bits of data, both oversimplifies the complexities as well as misapprehends the holistic nature of Native knowledge (Stevenson, 2004). In general, there is often a feeling on the part of indigenous peoples that scientists are eager to collect their knowledge but are not necessarily keen to engage with “the people who own and live that knowledge” (Simpson, 2004, p. 376). Such a lack of engagement is problematic largely because many Native peoples believe that their traditional knowledge is "not really knowledge at all; it's a way of life" (White, 2006, p. 405) so that it can easily be misunderstood when it is divorced from the people and lifeways that give it its true meaning and power. Mistranslations often

occur at this point because once such knowledge is extracted from its cultural context it often cannot be correctly understood from a solely Eurocentric perspective. An example of a common mistranslation is the way that people look for a 'conservationist' ethic within Native communities. Here, they are misconstruing the key ways in which indigenous peoples interact with their environment since these relationships are based on respect for an animate world that is much more than a mere resource to be managed (McPherson & Rabb, 2011).

Such disparate understandings of an animate world versus an inanimate collection of resources helps to explain the issues that arose between local Yup'ik living near the Qavilnguut Mountains of Northwestern Alaska and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In this case, a regional census for brown bears, which was meant to be part of a larger co-management regime, was proposed that would have involved the radio collaring of multiple specimens. Native hunters in this region strongly objected to this practice as they perceived it to be “an unnecessary harassment of a spiritually powerful species” (Spaeder, 2005, p. 171). Many Native populations believe that it is an act of great hubris to attempt to manipulate any wild animal population, even if it ostensibly for their ‘conservation.’ Seemingly benign interventions like radio collaring and tagging are seen as an affront to the other-than-human personhood and agency of the animal. For indigenous peoples, the focus is generally on controlling our individual actions as humans rather than unduly interfering in the lives of our co-creators (Nadasdy, 2011; McPherson & Rabb, 2011). In this particular instance, after many failed negotiations, Yup'ik Tribal leaders sought legal action against the USFWS in which they cited ‘a fundamental lack of trust’ in their management actions. The inability to forge a cooperative agreement meant that co-management efforts between the two parties ultimately failed.

Mescalero Apache scholar Viola Cordova has shown how such cross-cultural conflicts can largely be blamed on a lack of understanding of each party's conceptual frameworks or 'matrices.' These matrices are based on a person's understanding of humanity's rightful place in the world and they ultimately guide an individual's actions. Cordova insists such matrices act as the "foundation upon which all else is explained" (2007, p. 61) and that without an understanding of another's culturally specific matrix, people will find it nearly impossible to communicate with one another because they are drawing upon fundamentally different frames of reference. Furthermore, Cordova contends that to disregard another's culturally specific matrix and to instead attempt "to convert the 'other' to one's own matrix, regardless of how well intentioned or peaceable, is extermination by other means" (2007, p. 63).

Nadasdy (2005b) has, in turn, shown how a superficial engagement with the matrices that represent Native knowledge and worldviews can create situations where indigenous peoples are critiqued for not conforming to exogenous standards for their behavior. In the case of the Aishihik-Kluane Caribou Recovery Program, Tribal members were attacked by environmentalists who were upset that they had agreed to government-sponsored aerial wolf hunts, which would help to restore the local caribou population. While this method itself was not particularly well-loved by Tribal members, they insisted that it was entirely within their traditional worldviews to take the life of an animal like the wolf in order to protect their community or food supply from predation. Those who felt betrayed by this position averred that the Tribe would only agree to the killing of such a noble creature if they had been 'contaminated' by white society. As Nadasdy notes this is a clear case of the problems that arise when Eurocentric values and assumptions are "used as the basis on which to judge First Nation's beliefs, values, and practices" (2005b, p. 317).

This issue also highlights the concern that knowledge that is labeled as ‘traditional’ "could be misinterpreted as being static and archaic, while societies change through time and develop new approaches and practices" (Mazzocchi, 2008, p. 43). Native academics Marie Battiste and James Youngblood Henderson (2000) have instead contended that what should be understood to be ‘traditional’ about traditional knowledge is not whether or not it emerged long ago in antiquity, but how it has been acquired and is put to use. However, the problems that arise from the more popular understanding of traditional customs as necessarily frozen in time still persist and are clearly evident in Reo and Whyte’s (2011) analysis of hunting practices on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in North Central Wisconsin. In this situation, Native hunters were criticized by surrounding communities for their adoption of modern hunting technologies like rifles. Reo and Whyte have attempted to counter this critique with the understanding that even if the technology used by subsistence hunters may have evolved, the traditional values and moral codes underlying these activities have persisted.

The hunters that Reo and Whyte interviewed insisted that their decision to switch their equipment from bows to rifles was in part influenced by the traditional respect they accorded the animals who offered their lives to the hunters. Since bows actually caused a greater amount of undue pain to the deer because they inflicted more non-fatal wounds than rifles, it only made sense to adopt the more efficient technology. As one Lac du Flambeau hunter declared “We’re accepting of change if it allows us to do our things more efficiently. But along the way we also have to maintain our traditional ways, the original ways of doing things” (Reo & Whyte, 2011, p. 22). Reo and Whyte conclude their analysis by suggesting, “the mistake is to assume that traditions are static and that change is the same as invention” (2011, p. 24).

Joslyn Cassady has noted that in regards to Inuit communities in the Arctic, the idea of the ‘traditional’ can become problematic especially when “the valorization of traditional knowledge may mean that the Inuit have to uphold their ‘authentic’ lifestyle publicly in order to obtain sympathy and political support from the outside world” (2007, p. 95). In Frank Sejerson’s (2004) examination of the relations that the Greenlandic Inuit have to the landscape, he also insists that we must understand their traditional homelands to be ‘memory-’ and ‘vision-scapes’ invested both with the people’s recollections of the past as well as their hopes for their futures. He asserts that a focus on the traditional with its retrospective connotations can hinder the capacity of indigenous peoples to express their relationships to the natural world in any other context than in the past and that this ultimately constrains their ability to enunciate their visions for their own self-determined futures.

2.7 Adaptation as Native Tradition: Confronting the ‘Ecologically Noble Indian’

It is important to comprehend how the relatively stable worldviews or matrices of indigenous peoples consistently inform highly dynamic knowledge systems in which their ‘traditional’ practices are themselves constantly evolving. This realization helps to facilitate a deeper appreciation of creative adaption and ongoing transformation as being key elements of most indigenous societies. Native American writer and poet Simon Ortiz has argued that rather than compromising their authenticity, these changes actually allowed Native peoples to consistently “make use of foreign ritual, ideas, and material in their own- Indian- terms” (1981, p. 8). He celebrates this ability as a critical means of cultural survival that allowed Native peoples to weather the socio-political forces of colonialism that bore down upon them. Ortiz’s viewpoint is important to consider given that Native peoples have long had to cope with the common misconception that at the time of European contact their cultures had not changed in

millennia. Rather than recognizing that all cultures are dynamic, there was a sense that the beliefs, customs, rituals, modes of sustenance and stories of all Native American societies had already become permanently fixed (Mould, 2004).

Postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha has shown how such static notions of otherness have, in actuality, always worked as a means of domination and control. He explains how these discourses were purposefully employed by the 'colonial master' to arrest and fetishize the culture and knowledge of the 'Other.' Through such a process, the colonized culture "once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yolk of oppression. Both present and mummified, it testifies against its members" (Fannon cited in Bhabha, 1994, p. 110).

Such static notions of what constitutes the authentic 'Other' continue to play a significant role in contemporary Native American EJ issues. This is because of a colonial history that has positioned Indian tribes as unique political entities who have been granted at least some rights to self-government and the maintenance of cultural difference, which is itself dependent on a Tribe's ability to manage its own environments. The 'problem of difference' arises from this political arrangement known as 'measured separatism' because Native activists end up working in a system that understands fair treatment as the attempt to act toward cultural minorities in a 'color blind' manner rather than through the accordance of 'special privileges' (Ranco & Suagee, 2007; Robyn, 2002; Williams, 2005). The contested notion of 'special privileges' has become an issue in many environmental debates in which non-Tribal members take offense to what they see as the unfair privileging of Native peoples (Robyn, 2002). This is especially so when Natives are perceived to have relinquished such privileges due to their modernity. These issues serve to

highlight how problematic contemporary conceptualizations of indigeneity can be to Native nations attempting to assert their Tribal sovereignty and control over their own environments.

The case of the Makah Indians of the Pacific Northwest (van Ginkel, 2004) works as an exemplar of the very type of discord that emerges when the ‘special privileges’ that Native Americans have been afforded through treaty rights become conflated with the ability of these societies to conform to static conceptualizations of indigeneity. Here the Makah had expressly reserved their right to continue their aboriginal whaling practices in the Treaty of Neah Bay. Yet, their attempts to revive the tradition after it had fallen out of use for several generations were bitterly opposed by environmentalists. Much like the Lac du Flambeau deer hunters, their adoption of technologies like motor powered boats and high-powered rifles were seen as a sign of their inauthenticity. The conflict became so heated at one point that banners were actually made that read, "Save a Whale, Harpoon a Makah." As van Ginkel maintains, “when attributed to colonial ‘natives’ or romantic ‘primitives,’ authenticity could be a straitjacket, making every engagement with modernity (religions, technologies, knowledges, markets or media) a contamination, a ‘loss’ of true selfhood (Clifford cited in van Ginkel, 2004, p. 59).

A 2011 *New York Times* article (Yardley & Olsen, 2011), which covered fall whaling in Barrow, seems to hint that North Slope residents are vulnerable to the same critiques. Rather than celebrating the resiliency of the Iñupiat as they actively contend with the significant set of new challenges currently posed by warming temperatures in the Arctic, the article focuses on their use of modern equipment like forklifts as part of their adaptive process in a manner that seems to “reject the notion that a hunt using modern adaptations could remain a traditional event” (Heimbuch, 2011). The perspective captured in the article may seem like the product of a harmless misunderstanding. However, these accusations of inauthenticity can be quite dangerous

because they have the potential power to thwart the natural processes of evolution enjoyed by any healthy culture or community and are especially limiting to people like the Iñupiat who are attempting to respond to externally imposed forces of rapid change in their ancestral territories. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith has highlighted the inherent injustice of this viewpoint given that “at the heart of such a view of authenticity is a belief that indigenous cultures cannot change, cannot recreate themselves and still claim to be indigenous. Nor can they be complicated, internally diverse or contradictory. Only the West has that privilege” (1999, p. 74).

In the context of the Arctic, it becomes critical to confront an antiquated yet persistent mindset, which rests on a very limited and limiting understanding of what constitutes contemporary indigenous identities. The long-standing image of the “Ecologically Noble Indian” has been particularly problematic in this regard because such an idea is largely based on a Eurocentric longing for a simpler more ‘primitive’ past, and was never, at any time, an accurate reflection of the realities of indigenous existence (Krech, 1999). The tendency to imagine Native cultures as having a mystic connection with the Earth denies the agency of indigenous peoples whose traditional knowledge and perspectives were not magically and effortlessly transmitted to them but were gradually acquired over time through careful observations made as fully engaged actors in their environments (Nelson, 2006). These stereotypes also tend to ‘freeze’ Native cultures so that they are expected to conform to certain preconceived notions of environmental stewardship and what constitutes authentic tradition. Otherwise, they run the risk of being accused of “not acting as Indians should” (Krech, 1999, p. 26) in ways that can have significant cultural and political ramifications. A partial remedy to this issue, is the acceptance of a more nuanced conceptualization of indigeneity as “a process; a series of encounters; a structure of

power; a set of relationships; a matter of becoming, in short, not a fixed state of being” (de la Cadena & Starn, 2007, p. 11)

Overall, post-colonial scholars like Homi Bhabha (1994) have argued that in order to truly decolonize our societies, we need to intervene in those processes that have worked to mummify Native peoples and their traditional knowledge by recognizing the existence of multiple knowledges and practices that exist side by side. Anthropologist Martina Tyrrell has also insisted that an understanding of the “multiple and overlapping ways of perceiving the world” (2007, p. 585) should encourage all cultures to allow their own knowledge systems to continue to evolve and expand through their interactions with one another. Native scholar Deborah McGregor has hopefully suggested that such a willingness to explore and embrace other ways of knowing and being in the world could mean, "instead of competing with one another, or having one dominate the other, the two systems [Aboriginal and Western] can benefit from a mutual exchange of information and a sharing of lessons learned" (2009, p. 94).

As of now, the potential still exists for the traditional knowledge of Native peoples to be only nominally included in those environmental management processes that are still largely premised on the epistemological assumptions and cultural values of the dominant Western culture (Stevenson, 2004). However, the consensus found across the broad range of scholars cited above seems equally clear: to achieve an environmentally just and decolonized society, we must strive towards a critical pluralism in our decision-making in which difference is communicated and engaged with and voices from the margins are recognized and represented (Schlosberg, 2007). The environmental justice concept of ‘recognitional justice’ exists as a potential solution to many of these issues raised here that should necessarily be evaluated when it

comes to considering the best ways to address the current environmental injustice rendered upon the Iñupiat in the guise of the Arctic offshore drilling program.

2.8 Recognitional Justice in a Changing Arctic

It has been argued in the course of this chapter that since the outset of colonial administrations, Native peoples in America have long been excluded from the environmental decision-making processes that have affected them. Such a lack of direct participation has contributed to systemic acts of environmental injustice, which are perceived by many Native peoples to be genocidal in nature (Schlosberg, 2007). This is because the unique relationships that Native peoples often have with the natural world, which do not coincide with those generally held by dominant Western society, have been overlooked in most environmental management scenarios (Robyn, 2002).

As critical theorist Nancy Fraser has argued, it is this problematic failure to recognize difference that suggests culture “is a legitimate, even necessary terrain of struggle, a site of injustice in its own right and deeply imbricated with economic inequality. Properly conceived, struggles for recognition can aid the redistribution of power and wealth and can promote interaction and cooperation across gulfs of difference” (2000, p. 109). EJ scholar David Schlosberg (2007) has also argued that it is not enough to merely focus on the idea of ‘just distribution.’ He contends that it is a fundamental lack of recognition in the social and political realms that foments the type of procedural injustice that leads to the unjust distribution of social goods and bads. Recognition is therefore itself a distinct component of justice. Furthermore, the key to “understanding recognitional injustice lies in understanding the social norms, language and mores that mediate our relation between those who are denigrated and so less well-off in the scheme of justice” (2007, p. 16).

Schlosberg has asserted that cultural 'misrecognition' has often contributed to the structural discrimination of indigenous peoples. Here he offers the example of EPA limits on the level of dioxin that paper mills are allowed to release into a stream based on a national average of fish consumption. The EPA's calculus does not factor in the subsistence lifestyle of many Native peoples whose customary consumption of fish is much higher, so that they may ultimately be exposed to a much more extreme level of risk. Fraser adds to this idea by suggesting that misrecognition is best understood as an 'institutionalized relation of social subordination' that reinscribes patterns of cultural domination. Fraser also focuses on this type of subordination as something that is experienced by the individual who must be reinstated as "a full member of society, capable of participating on par with the rest" (2000, p. 113). By focusing on the individual as the 'misrecognized party', she suggests that it is possible to avoid the reification of culture that equates the right to difference only with those group identities that are considered 'authentic.'

An emphasis on the recognition of difference adds another dimension to the concept of procedural justice by highlighting how 'participation' in the decision-making process does not necessarily ensure equitable representation for many indigenous peoples. Daniel Faber's notion of 'ecological democracy' as the antidote to ecological racism, demands that "those communities of people suffering ecological injustices must be afforded greater participation in the decision-making processes of capitalist industry and the state (at all levels)" (1998, p.1). While this is certainly a critical step towards environmental justice, it is important to note how the parameters for participation that allow for Aboriginal peoples to be 'consulted' in these processes have often forced them to conform or acquiesce to the dominant paradigm (Stevenson cited in McGregor, 2004b). Such imposed conformity works to decontextualize their knowledge and values in ways

that diminish the efficacy of the contributions they might otherwise be able to make to contemporary development and environmental management scenarios (McGregor, 2004b).

Much like Paul Nadasdy's previously outlined concern that the participation of indigenous peoples in the bureaucratic process often works against their own interests, Dene scholar Glen Coulthard has similarly warned against the uncritical acceptance of the general rhetoric of 'recognition.' In the context of the politics of settler-colonialism in Canada, he admits that as a 'radical minority' in their ancestral territories, indigenous peoples must often necessarily engage with the apparatus of the state. He nevertheless warns that in a society still heavily marked by the ongoing legacies of colonialism, any recognition extended by the state can often be but a "cheap gift of political and economic inclusion" (2014, p. 173) where the terms of such inclusion are always laid out in the interest of the dominant parties who generally seek to maintain the status quo.

That the legitimate recognition of cultural difference is fraught with these types of issues does not, however, suggest that the endeavor is unworthy. As development scholars like Michael Edwards (2008) have insisted, the processes of positive social change must necessarily occur within the confines of the inequitable social and political structures in which the disadvantaged realistically dwell. EJ theorist David Pellow (2000) has averred that developing a better understanding of the processes and social hierarchies that work over time to produce environmental inequalities can help to identify more effective interventions in these overarching cycles of inequity. Many political ecologists similarly note that critiquing the social forms of access and control over resources that mediate a given community's interaction with their environment is part of their field's larger project of not only better understanding the world, but also actively contributing to its change (Bebbington, 2004; Watts & Peet, 2004). Environmental

justice in the Alaskan Arctic thus begins with a more nuanced understanding of how Native participation in those decision-making processes that will profoundly affect both their access to their ancestral territories as well as their abilities to maintain their traditional lifeways is constrained by the power of colonial knowledges and processes “that live on in the present...and have ongoing political effects” (Wainwright, 2008, p. 14).

2.9 Conclusion

In terms of thinking about achieving environmental justice for the North Slope’s Iñupiat it is important to understand the larger epistemologies and processes of colonial dispossession and cultural assimilation that have shaped the contemporary lives of Natives in America. As historian Claudio Saunt has summarized, for the Indian “the narrative of progress foretold his demise. Science determined he was inferior, technology regarded him as primitive, and business deemed him an obstacle to development” (2005, p. 181). As it turns out, those same processes that over time came to frame indigenous peoples as the savage ‘Other’ also simultaneously worked to dismiss and ultimately even obscure the alternative perspectives held by these ‘uncivilized’ societies. As an understanding of static notions of indigeneity came to be encapsulated in stereotypes of the ‘Ecologically Noble Indian’ so did nature come to be predominantly understood not as a set of relations based on mutual respect and reciprocity but as a natural resource to be managed in the name of the ‘national interest.’ Such ways of knowing and being in the world predicated on a neat divide between culture and nature, contributed to the further marginalization of indigenous peoples as the territories that were often central to their own understandings of who they were as a people were sacrificed in the name of economic growth and development. Alienation from their homelands increased the economic and political marginalization of many Native groups. This then left them vulnerable to the monetary promises

of large-scale resource extraction activities in ways that only further compromised their lands and sustained a vicious cycle of exploitation and expropriation.

Contemporary resource management scenarios have made a move towards considering the traditional knowledge of the indigenous peoples whose lives will likely be impacted by their decision-making processes. However, this is often done in a piecemeal manner that is largely ineffective because indigenous knowledge is a holistic system of embodied practice that is primarily about one's ongoing relationship with creation (McGregor, 2009). As such it cannot easily be compartmentalized nor can it be properly understood when divorced from the cultural contexts that act as its interpretive framework. Such knowledge negotiations have also tended to unfold in a dynamic where indigenous peoples have been willing to acknowledge the validity of Western science because their cultures have long been based on the "acceptance of different incompatible stories with no felt need to reconcile them" (McPherson & Rabb, 2011, p. 132). On the other hand, Western scientists have themselves rarely evinced a similar willingness to admit that indigenous peoples have their own equally legitimate way of interacting with the world and coming to knowledge (McGregor, 2009).

EJ theorist David Schlosberg has suggested that "an extension or reconstruction of expertise beyond modern scientific knowledge, to include traditional, cultural, and alternative forms of knowledge and representations of nature" (2007, p. 198) is needed to address the types of procedural injustices that have otherwise unfolded. In terms of moving towards the meaningful recognition of cultural difference it is also important to contend with the contemporary lives of Natives in the United States whose traditional knowledge and values have long informed their ongoing evolution as a people. In the realm of indigenous rights, it is particularly important that those 'special privileges' afforded Tribes, which are inherently a

product of Native sovereignty, are not conflated with static notions of ecological nobility. Such a conflation both denies indigenous societies the dynamism afforded any healthy culture and also, perhaps most importantly, effaces the lingering effects of those colonial acts of dispossession, forced assimilation, and structural discrimination that have actively sought to terminate Natives lives and lifeways here in America.

The theoretical framework established here, will ultimately be used to detail how the offshore drilling program is an act of resource colonialism that is both premised on and perpetuated by two distinct processes of environmental injustice: 1) the indirect exploitation of the North Slope's Iñupiat, which has made them deeply vulnerable to the 'false choices' currently being offered and 2) a type of procedural injustice that misrecognizes and thus marginalizes their perspectives and concerns within the offshore drilling program's decision-making processes.

Before exploring these specific issues, however, the next chapter, **Chapter 3**, will first explain how the theoretical framework outlined here informs the overall design of this research. This research has, in particular, been guided by the critiques advanced by Native scholars regarding the treatment of their traditional knowledge and its translation by Western scientists and decision-makers. By employing culturally appropriate research methods and by establishing a collaborative research relationship with the Wainwright Traditional Council as a way of recognizing the Iñupiat as the 'people who own and live' this knowledge (Simpson, 2004), this projects works to provide the cultural context necessary for a truly meaningful engagement with the traditional knowledge and values of the Iñupiat as contemporary indigenous peoples. In doing so it endeavors to move beyond a long-standing legacy of research conducted "through imperial eyes" that has sustained the processes of colonial exploitation and injustice. By

responding to many of the informational needs outlined by local Tribal leaders, this project seeks to support the abilities of the people of Wainwright to make well-informed decisions regarding their own self-determined lives and futures as a sovereign people.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY: MOVING BEYOND ‘RESEARCH THROUGH IMPERIAL EYES’

3.1 Introduction

The design of this research is informed by the theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter. The broad goal of this project is to explicate the offshore drilling program as an act of environmental injustice that is a direct result of the ongoing effects of colonial thought and structures of power that have long sought to order the indigenous ‘Other.’ This research seeks, in particular, to illuminate how a peculiarly Western understanding of nature as ontologically distinct from the realm of culture has guided contemporary resource management scenarios in ways that have worked to marginalize indigenous interests and concerns. The inequitable nature of the decision-making processes inherent to these projects has been exacerbated by colonial histories that have included the dispossession of indigenous territories and the forced cultural assimilation of Native societies. These processes have challenged the sovereignty of Native peoples and have often diminished the economic and political powers of Tribes within the United States. All of this has occurred within the context of a trust relationship established with the U.S. federal government that has pledged to uphold the health and integrity of indigenous cultures and lifeways. Such support has often been undermined by a notion of progress that is inherently premised on both the exploitation of the natural world as well as the ‘unfortunate’ necessity of exploiting Native lands for the overall good of the nation.

Interviews conducted with Wainwright residents during the course of this project seek to advance an understanding of the offshore drilling program as an environmentally unjust act of

‘resource colonialism’ by answering two key questions. The first seeks to understand why it is that a majority of Wainwright residents seemed to support the offshore drilling program despite the deep-seated nature of their concerns regarding its potential impacts on their subsistence way of life, which is so integral to their identities as indigenous peoples. Based on both the theoretical framework that was established in the preceding chapter and an understanding of this region’s history, which will be developed in the following chapter, Chapter 4, this project has focused on the long-term legacies of the Alaska Native Claims Act (ANCSA) of 1971 as a means of answering this first question. ANCSA is fundamentally premised on a Western understanding of an external nature that is in direct conflict with the conceptualizations of nature held by most Alaskan Native societies. This project therefore specifically asks: How has ANCSA and the cultural changes it has precipitated affected the community of Wainwright’s abilities to effectively advocate for their own interests and concerns within the larger bureaucratic processes that are now shaping the trajectory of a new era of development in the Arctic?

This project also seeks to understand why it is that many Wainwright residents who purportedly supported offshore development were nevertheless frustrated by their participation in its decision-making processes in which they did not feel well-represented. This particular area of inquiry was guided by the literature on both indigenous traditional knowledge and its translation by EuroAmerican scientists and decision-makers as well as the material and social ramifications of Western society’s socially constructed divide between cultural and nature. Such theories suggest that it may be an ongoing lack of meaningful engagement with the Iñupiat’s own understandings of ‘nature’ that has contributed to their procedural marginalization within the offshore drilling program and its decision-making structures. This project thus asks: How do the Iñupiat of Wainwright make sense of their own relationships to nature and how have these

understandings shaped the cross-cultural acts of communication that are meant to play a key role in the drilling program's decision-making processes?

This project employs a mix of qualitative research methods in order to explore these two general areas of inquiry. Selected methods of data collection include: focus group interviews with Wainwright residents, interviews with community elders, semi-structured interviews with Tribal leaders, photo-elicitation interviews, and participant observation. While most of these methods are considered to be relatively standard fare among qualitative researchers, they have been specifically selected for inclusion in this project with an eye towards the culturally unique values, practices, perspectives and protocols of the Iñupiat of Wainwright. In this chapter, I will therefore outline both the general theoretical underpinnings for each selected method as well as their suitability as a culturally appropriate research method. I will then turn to a discussion of my data analysis process, including the use of critical discourse analysis within this project.

Many of the questions posed to participants throughout the course of this project were designed to elicit the perspectives of Wainwright elders, leaders, and community members about the changing conditions and issues they have faced both historically as well as currently. These are understood to be important viewpoints that should be well represented in the larger decisions now being made that will shape their collective futures. Actively seeking out such information is therefore an important first step towards creating an equitable decision-making process. The act of asking such questions also helps to establish a forum in which residents are encouraged to discuss the possible solutions and best ways forward that they themselves envision for their community. This aligns with the work of acclaimed Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), who has argued for the need to decolonize Western research methodologies so that research itself is no longer merely wielded as a tool of the colonial state. In particular she has critiqued the

‘indigenous problem’ around which many researchers have framed their projects based on the underlying assumption that any issues that indigenous communities now face are a product of their own inherent deficiencies, rather than the overlapping processes of colonial oppression and marginalization that they have endured. The ultimate issue “is not just that they are blamed for their own failures but that it is also communicated to them, explicitly or implicitly, that they have no solutions to their own problems” (Smith, 1999, p. 92). The guiding ideas set forth by Smith that both Western as well Native researchers must strive to move beyond the exploitative and disempowering paternalistic nature of many past research projects has influenced various facets of this project in ways that are worthy of their own brief consideration.

3.2 Moving Beyond ‘Research Through Imperial Eyes’

Smith has insisted that “‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (1999, p.1). As she explains, the knowledge of Native peoples has historically been exploited in ways that have worked to promote the interests of imperial powers while simultaneously marginalizing indigenous concerns, values and ways of knowing. In the same way the colonial exploitation of indigenous lands and resources benefited non-Natives, so has most contemporary research involving indigenous peoples only proven to be valuable to the non-Native researcher (College Board cited in Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000). This has meant that Native peoples often talk about research “in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument” (Smith, 1999, p. 3).

The Indigenous Health Research Development Program, which was focused on Aboriginal health research in Ontario, once stated that “recognition of the historical legacy of colonization needs to be ideologically embedded within any research paradigm” (2005, p. 50)

such that an inability to recognize the exploitative history of colonialism by any researcher should result in their denial of research access to indigenous communities. Smith has specifically suggested that in order for Western researchers to begin to attend to these histories and ultimately decolonize their research, they must always ask themselves the critical question, “Whose knowledge has been extended by research?” (1999, p. 164). If their research is to become more useful to the indigenous communities with whom they work, researchers must also make sure that it is made accessible to them through a process of ‘sharing knowledge.’ Smith sees such knowledge sharing as not merely the one-time distribution of data, but as a long-term commitment that ideally works over time to demystify the research process itself. In this way it is possible to advance the abilities of indigenous peoples to act as researchers within their own communities.

Smith contends that many research projects ultimately misunderstand indigenous ways of knowing and only reassert the ‘positional superiority’ of Western knowledge. Her understanding of this type of ‘research through imperial eyes’ serves to highlight how the offshore drilling program and its accompanying Tribal consultation process, which is meant to engage with the perspectives of the North Slope’s Iñupiat, perpetuates a similar injustice. As a non-Native researcher, I worked to develop a collaborative research agreement with the Wainwright Traditional Council (WTC), which acts as the village’s Tribal representation, as a partial remedy to these types of issues. Wainwright’s community leaders are currently seeking ways to maintain control over their own self-determined lives as a sovereign people as they strive to collectively negotiate the environmental and social changes and challenges they now face. Finding a way to satisfy the well-founded desire within Wainwright for more local job opportunities without compromising the cultural values that inform their traditional subsistence lifestyle is one of the

most difficult challenges that the WTC currently faces. Documenting both the contemporary concerns as well as traditional knowledge of their community was thus understood to be a key activity, which would help facilitate a process of informed decision-making as they evaluate all possible courses of future action.

My training in strategic communication within the interdisciplinary Integrative Conservation (ICON) degree program further supported the ideas advanced by Smith that I should not only ask the types of questions that a Native community like Wainwright might actually want the answers to, but that I also needed to try to ask those questions and summarize and return their responses in a way that made sense locally. Through my collaboration with the WTC, I therefore sought to not only fine-tune certain elements of my research questions in response to the informational needs that had already been identified within Wainwright but to also employ culturally appropriate research methods throughout this project. I also endeavored to make the results of my research easily accessible to Tribal and community members. This is a process that entails developing a certain awareness of appropriate cultural protocols. While the nature of my knowledge-sharing with the WTC has been rather conventional in the sense that it has largely entailed the preparation of technical reports, this is itself a response to the Tribe's request that the information be prepared and presented in ways that would be acceptable to federal agencies and decision-makers. Within the confines of these types of standardized formats, I worked to make these reports more locally accessible by avoiding too much technical jargon and by accurately translating Iñupiaq words using the Wainwright dialect with the help of a locally fluent speaker. Over time, I also learned that at meetings and in my reports it is important to acknowledge the contributions of community elders first and foremost as a sign of respect for the esteemed position they hold in Iñupiaq society. Due to this understanding, I also

tried to do little things like using larger fonts in my reports for their reading ease. By making my research immediately useful to the Tribe and by being able to participate in processes (detailed more fully below) that constitute their revitalization as an active organization that may some day employ their own local researchers, I have begun what I only hope will continue to be a long and fruitful process of mutual knowledge sharing with the WTC and the larger community of Wainwright.

3.3 Preliminary Research & Collaboration with the Wainwright Traditional Council

My first introduction to the community of Wainwright, AK occurred during the month of July 2012. During this time, I conducted a door-to-door household survey for the village's Native Corporation, Olgoonik. I also coordinated a simultaneous mail survey that was sent out to all non-resident Olgoonik shareholders. The survey was entitled "Community Perceptions of the Social, Cultural, and Environmental Impacts of the Presence of Oil Companies Using Wainwright for Staging Areas and Employee Base Camps for Oil Exploration in and Extraction from the Chukchi Sea." My experience conducting this survey served to fulfill the summer internship requirement that is an important facet of the ICON program. Such first-hand experiences are seen as a way of gaining valuable knowledge in terms of not only working across the disciplines but also with those communities who are most likely to be impacted by the conservation or development issues that are the foci of ICON students and their research efforts.

My participation in this survey was the serendipitous result of an email that had been sent in May of 2012 to UGA's Environmental Anthropology listserv by Dr. Harvey Meier, who was then acting as a consultant to the Olgoonik Corporation (OC) Board of Directors. A fellow graduate student in the ICON degree program whose home department was in Anthropology forwarded this email to me due to her familiarity with my Alaskan research interests (an early

and very productive example of some of the perks associated with interdisciplinary collaboration!) Meier's email explained that OC Board members had become concerned about the offshore drilling operations that might soon be occurring near their village because they felt that "non-natives engaged in oil exploration do not understand the community's culture and way of life. Consequently there is a belief that the community's infrastructure and way of life will be significantly disrupted and subsequently changed forever, very likely in a negative way (Harvey Meier, personal communication, May, 8, 2012).

The Board was therefore casting a broad call for help from the academic community in the hopes of finding those that were willing to assist in the creation and implementation of a long-term plan that would help Wainwright residents to preserve their culture and way of life in the context of this impending development. A survey that formally assessed the perspectives and concerns of community members about these activities was seen as an important first step in this process. The goal of the project was to use community feedback from the survey to eventually develop a set of cultural and environmental guidelines that oil companies would have to follow in order to be allowed to pursue their work in Wainwright. Such guidelines would "be consistent with Iñupiaq values and will serve to balance the influence of the oil company's westernized culture on the community's traditional culture and subsistence lifestyle" (Shaw & Meier, 2012).

The survey instrument that was used in this project was collaboratively developed with input from Dr. Meier, Olgoonik Board Members, several professors from the University of Fairbanks' Sharing Project, including Dr. Harvey Kofinas (University of Fairbanks) and Dr. Shauna Burnsilver (Arizona State University), and me. Once the survey was finalized, formal approval for this project was also obtained from Wainwright's Tri-lateral Committee. Over a month's time, 121 surveys were completed by 153 individuals (if there were 2 heads of

household present at the time of the survey, both were encouraged to participate). In late August of 2012, an “Executive Summary of Key Findings” from this survey was prepared by Dr. Meier and me at Olgoonik’s request so that it could be presented to Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Hayes during his official visit to Wainwright to discuss the Obama administration’s plans for its offshore leasing program in the Arctic. I also completed all the data analysis for this project and subsequently compiled a Final Report, again under the supervision of Dr. Meier, which was submitted to the Olgoonik Board in September of 2012.

My experience helping Olgoonik to conduct this survey made it possible for me to subsequently develop my own research project focused on Wainwright, which was based on my newfound familiarity with the locally specific issues and concerns associated with offshore drilling near the village. In particular, I was struck by the fact that while a majority of survey respondents indicated that they supported offshore development, there was hardly a single individual that did not mention some kind of concern that they had regarding this type of activity. Issues ranged from the effect of industry helicopters on the patterns of the caribou migration, to the long-term ramifications of an oil spill on key subsistence species like bowhead whales and walrus, or the increased possibility for drugs and alcohol to be illegally imported into the community by a new wave of outside workers coming into the region. Exploring this tension between the support professed by Wainwright residents for offshore drilling and the long litany of concerns that it clearly raised for their community ultimately became one of my primary areas of research interest.

My participation in this survey effort also helped smooth the way for my future collaboration with the Wainwright Traditional Council, which has proven to be a fundamental component of this project in terms of attempting to ‘decolonize’ my research efforts. Due to the

contacts I had developed during my time in the village, I was able to obtain a formal letter of support from the WTC, which granted me permission to conduct my research in the village. This document acted as the formal catalyst to my research collaboration with the WTC. It also served the important purpose of satisfying UGA's Institutional Review Board requirements, which were also a part of the funding conditions of my National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement grant.

At the same time that I was reaching out to the WTC in order to obtain their approval and to finalize my research plans, the Tribe also happened to be developing its own application for a 3 year Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) grant dispensed by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). The Tribe's grant application was entitled, “‘*Atauchikun*’ [all together], Embracing Change” and the stated goal of the project was to ensure that the “Tribe utilizes their traditional knowledge to protect and preserve their culture, subsistence activities and economy from the impact of local oil industry development” (WTC, 2013). The timing of their grant-writing was such that I was able to be included in their application as both a partner as well as a ‘leveraged resource’ who would be able to help them to fulfill Objective 1 of their grant, which was outlined as follows: “By the end of the 24th month, the project team will have completed twenty interviews with local elders, hunters, residents, and Tribal leadership about current subsistence activities in order to document and retain indigenous knowledge regarding Native food sources, traditional practices, and concerns about coming cultural changes” (WTC, 2013). In exchange for my help with this particular objective, the Tribe both allowed me to use their office space to conduct all my interviews as well gave me unlimited access to their office equipment including phones, faxes, and their VHF radio, which is a popular source for local news and announcements within the village.

The WTC's *Atauchikun* grant project was awarded funding in September of 2013. In order to fulfill my research obligations to the Tribe by helping them to meet Objective 1 of this grant, I submitted a Draft Report entitled “‘The Sea is Our Garden’: Negotiating Environmental and Social Change and Communicating Cultural Difference” to the WTC on June 12, 2014. That same day, I also presented the preliminary results of my research at a community meeting hosted by the WTC. The goal of this meeting was to both introduce the village to the grant project as well as highlight the significant progress that had already been made towards the project's goals.



Figure 3.1: Presentation of Preliminary Results to the Community of Wainwright as Members of the WTC Look On (June 12, 2014) Joan Herrmann

In May 2015, I again traveled to Wainwright in order to workshop any desired revisions to the Draft Report with members of the WTC and on June 8, 2015, I submitted my Final Summary Report to the Council. As of April 2016, the WTC is now drawing on the data included in this report (among other resources) to help satisfy Objective 3 of their grant project. This aspect of the project is largely a continuation of the goals outlined in Olgoonik's earlier survey efforts in that it involves the development of a related suite of legal documents that would detail the environmental and cultural guidelines that industries would be obligated to follow if

they wished to operate within or near Wainwright. Although the submission of my final report satisfied all my formal obligations to the Tribe, I have continued to act as an informal consultant during this phase of the project by contributing to the Wainwright Community Guide that is now in draft form. I have also submitted comments and suggestions to the research protocols and memorandums of understanding that are being developed by the Tribe in order to better guide future research interest and efforts in their community.

As noted earlier, my research collaboration with the WTC informed the overall design of this project in terms of helping to shape the research questions that I asked and the methods that I used. My experiences working with Olgoonik and the Tribe also helped me to familiarize myself with the standard North Slope research protocols that became another important element of my research design. Such understandings greatly aided my efforts in the recruitment and fair compensation of all those Wainwright residents who ultimately chose to participate in this project.

3.4 Project Participants

All Wainwright residents were invited to participate in this project in the hopes of documenting the diverse interests and various concerns held by a wide spectrum of community members. This meant that the input of Tribal leaders, community elders and local hunters was actively sought out. However, both young adults as well as village residents who were less directly involved in a wide range of subsistence activities (when compared to the most active members of their community) were also encouraged to share their knowledge and perspectives. A variety of methods were used to reach out to possible project participants including flyers posted in public places like the post office and two grocery stores, announcements made by Tribal employees over the VHF, visits (with prior approval) to monthly elder luncheons to

encourage their participation, attendance (again with prior approval) at Tribal Council, Tri-lateral Committee and City Council meetings to inform local leaders about my project and invite them to participate, and eventually simple ‘word of mouth’ as more participants became involved in the project and told others about it.

Based on established research protocols on the North Slope, all participants received financial compensation for their time. Local Tribal leaders (who generally had the shortest interviews) received \$50.00, photo-elicitation participants received \$75.00, focus group participants received \$100.00, and elders received \$100.00 (this sum was further supplemented by additional compensation provided by the Tribe.) While it is possible that some participants were mainly motivated to contribute to this project by the cash compensation, village residents have certainly had enough experience with outside researchers that the promise of incentives has become a standard and therefore very expected aspect of the research process. In a village where full time employment is quite difficult to obtain, but the cost of living is inordinately high, it also feels only appropriate to offer compensation when one is conducting a well-funded research project within the community. It should be noted, however, that regardless of the original motivation, most participants seemed willing and engaged in the interview process once it began.

In the end, a total of 38 individuals participated in this project. Twenty-eight community members participated in 6 focus groups, 5 elders volunteered for either a one-on-one or group interview, 5 Tribal leaders were interviewed, and 10 people signed up for individual photo-elicitation interviews where they were asked to take photographs that were then printed out and used as the guide to a follow-up discussion of the images. Many of the same individuals who volunteered for these photo-based interviews also participated in either a group discussion or

local leader interview. The youngest participant in this project was 18 years old and the oldest participant was 81 years of age. Overall, 14 females and 24 males took part in this study.

3.5 Research Design

Focus groups

Six focus groups were held with a minimum of 4 people and a maximum of 7 individuals. The range of participants included groups of active hunters and whalers to young *aakas* [grandmothers] and small family groups. Every participant in this project had their name removed from the relevant transcripts and they were instead given their own coded designations in order to protect their anonymity. These coded designations will be used throughout the rest of this project whenever quoting individuals or generally referring to their statements. Each type of interview was given a unique code. Individual focus group participants were coded as followed: FG- focus group #- individual participant #. So for example, for the third focus group conducted, the first speaker would be referred to as FG-3-1.

These group discussions were designed to capture the feedback of community members on three broad topics. The first goal of these conversations was to flesh out a long history of social and environmental changes in the Arctic to which the Iñupiat have long adapted. This information also helps to draw out how regional histories and processes, which most notably includes the passage of ANCSA, have both hindered and at times heightened the sovereign powers of the Iñupiat in ways that have profoundly influenced their contemporary economic, political, and cultural positioning within these large-scale development scenarios.

A second theme concerned the offshore drilling decision-making process itself. These discussions acted as a forum for the hopes and concerns held by the Iñupiat of Wainwright regarding this potential development. This was largely motivated by the results of my

preliminary research, which suggested that these perspectives had not been well represented in the decision-making processes regarding offshore development thus far. A related area of inquiry sought to assess local feelings of agency and preparedness (or the lack thereof) in terms of being able to negotiate this new era of great impending change as a people who have always drawn upon their cultural values in order to collectively negotiate new challenges. Participants were asked about local governance issues, (which in the wake of ANCSA includes Tribal, city and corporate entities) and their experiences with federal decision-makers and outside business interests in the context of the offshore drilling decision-making process.

The third theme focused on those aspects of Iñupiaq traditional knowledge and practice that most need to be accurately conveyed to outside decision-makers. Participants were also asked about those elements of their traditional knowledge and practices that should be documented and/or strengthened for the future benefit of the Tribe given the understanding that it has always been the cultural values and unique skill sets of the Iñupiat that have allowed them to successfully negotiate significant periods of change in their ancestral territories (Hensley, 2009). Overall, this category of information can help the Tribe to target their efforts in terms of both their communication strategies with outside officials as well as their own internal efforts to support and preserve their traditional knowledge and practices through focused activities and cultural programs. These activities and programs can aid them in combating a common issue faced in many contemporary Native communities known as ‘intergenerational segregation’ in which the traditional bonds between elders and youth and the transmission of knowledge and skills that was a product of these relationships have become increasingly strained. This is largely because many youth prefer to look towards and mimic what they see as more popular ‘Western’ lifestyles and activities (Cameron, 2012).

Overall, focus group discussions were seen as a culturally appropriate research method to explore these topics given the communal rather than individualistic nature of Iñupiaq society. The ability to cooperate has always been so essential to Iñupiaq life and survival that the concept of “every man for himself” is virtually nonexistent (Nelson, 1969). ‘Cooperation’, ‘Sharing’, and ‘Responsibility to Tribe’ are in fact three of the core cultural values of the Iñupiat (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 2006). If ‘consensus living’ describes one of the key aspects of Iñupiaq culture (Gallagher, 2001), it seems valid to employ a research method that allows community members to gather and collectively discuss both the past, present, and future of their community as well as the decisions being made both locally and nationally that will affect their shared futures. In terms of discussions about Iñupiaq traditional knowledge, focus groups are also helpful in that they reflect the relational nature of this knowledge. As Tim Ingold has explained, such knowledge:

is not merely applied but generated in the course of lived experience, through a series of encounters in which the contribution of other persons is to orient one’s attention- whether by means of revelation, demonstration, or ostentation- along the same lines as their own, so that one can begin to apprehend the world for oneself in the ways, and from the positions, that they do. In every such encounter, each party enters into the experience of the other and makes that experience his or her own as well. One shares in the process of knowing, rather than taking on board a pre-established body of knowledge (2000, p 145-146).

For many Natives peoples, traditional knowledge is largely understood as a product of their collective experiences so that if it is ‘owned’ at all, it is not by one individual but by the entire community whose members each contribute to one another’s learning process (Cajete, 2000). Focus groups are therefore an ideal way of engaging with such knowledge because it highlights the importance of the interactions between group participants and creates a space for

dialogue that more closely resembles the ‘commonplace’ situations in which these conversations would normally take place (Bedford & Burgess, 2001). The fact that most of the groups that I interviewed in Wainwright generally were comprised of people who were family members or acquaintances who hunted or gathered in the same places or had been involved in communal hunting and harvesting events only served to strengthen the natural flow of these conversations as stories were traded, minor details questioned and corrected, and problems and issues discussed within the easy give-and-take of people with shared histories and experiences. This method also speaks to the critiques of indigenous knowledge that suggest that it often suffers from a process of decontextualization because focus groups are seen as way to emphasize the importance of social context as the setting where both meaning and collective understandings are negotiated (Wilkinson, 1999).

One-on-one or group interviews with community elders

The knowledge and perspectives of community elders was specifically sought out during the course of this project due to the highly respected position they hold in Iñupiaq society where ‘Respect for Elders’ is another core cultural value (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 2006). The Tribe also expressed a definite interest in documenting the stories of their elders so that they would be able to retain these unique perspectives for the future benefit of their people. Interested elders were offered the option of participating in a 1-on-1 interview or group discussion based on their comfort and convenience. One elder opted for an individual interview conducted in his home while 4 other community elders chose to be interviewed as a group at the Tribal office immediately following an elder luncheon at the community meeting hall next door. These interviews are coded CE-1 through CE-5 for each of the five community elders who participated.

The same general interview guide used for the focus group discussions was also employed here, although the structure of the interviews was much looser to allow the elders to freely share their recollections from the past and to generally speak about whatever they most preferred to discuss. Many of these discussions involved stories from the ‘old days’ including hunting tales from earlier times and what it was like in the village before there was any regular employment, modern law enforcement, or such ‘conveniences’ as indoor heating and plumbing. Elders also shared their concerns regarding whether or not their cultural values were being passed on to the newest generations of their Tribe who appeared to be much less appreciative of the ‘easy life’ they now led and were often distracted by new technologies like video games and smart phones. Overall, the elders who participated in this project offered many valuable critiques and suggestions about present conditions and future courses of action for their community.

Semi-structured interviews with local leaders

Five individuals, who in the Fall of 2013 held Tribal leadership positions, were interviewed using a semi-structured format, which again meant that there was space within the interview for each leader to elaborate more fully on their own interests, particularly when it came to any issues that they felt were important to their community. This meant that the conversation sometimes took a turn towards the Fukushima nuclear disaster and its potential effects on subsistence foods, or Iñupiaq language retention, or the need for on-the-job training for community youth. In the end, these were all topics that represented a densely related web of issues, but whose relevance could not easily be predicted at the start of this project. Local leader interviews are coded LL-1 through LL-5 for each of the 5 individuals who participated.

These interviews were designed to assess the Tribe’s and community’s organizational capacities and abilities to forcefully advocate for their own self-determined futures. This area of

inquiry was informed by the idea that environmental injustices are often the product of the procedural marginalization of other ways of knowing and being in this world (Schlosberg, 2007). Leaders were asked how they felt about the Tribe's current abilities to influence regional and national decision-making processes and whether they had their own ideas as to how the interests of their community could be best represented. They were prompted to specifically discuss the potential power of the Tri-lateral Committee as a coalition of Wainwright's leaders who were seeking to resist a 'divide and conquer' strategy when it came to representing their village to outside authorities and business interests. They were also asked to assess the degree to which general community members were now involved in local decision-making processes. If they felt that the current level of participation was not adequate, they were also encouraged to provide any suggestions they might have regarding how to increase these levels.

These interviews were also designed to elicit a better understanding of how deeply the offshore drilling program and its decision-making processes had engaged with the traditional knowledge and values of the Iñupiat. This area of inquiry was motivated by the literature on traditional knowledge and its translation, which suggests that the level of such considerations can range from a token level of inclusion to a more elusive ideal that involves an opening up of intercultural deliberative spaces that allow the knowledge horizons of both Western and Indigenous knowledge systems to be expanded through mutual interaction (Robards & Lovecraft, 2010; Mazzocchi 2008). Leaders were queried about the role that they thought their knowledge and values were both currently playing in the larger decision-making processes as well as what role they thought it should play in the future. In recognition of the fact that these leaders were also engaged citizens who held their own hopes and fears for their community, they were invited to talk about their visions of the ideal future for their families and the village

of Wainwright. Since they were also generally more aware of both the governance processes that would help shape these futures as well as the logistical stumbling blocks that they might encounter along the way, they were then asked to discuss what, if anything, they felt needed to happen now for their community to be able to achieve that ideal future.

Photo-elicitation interviews:

Ten individuals agreed to take photographs of what “nature meant to them as an Iñupiat” and then participated in photo-elicitation interviews about their images. This prompt and the ensuing interviews were designed to facilitate a conversation about the culturally specific ways that the Iñupiat know and interact with the natural world. This dissertation proceeds from the premise that ‘nature’ is not a term that is universally understood and related to in the same manner by all societies. Many indigenous peoples like the Iñupiat might actually struggle to relate to dominant Western conceptualizations of nature as a distinct entity. The need to flesh out the different ways that the Iñupiat relate to nature and thereby make sense of the world and their place in it comes from the fact these perspectives are often overlooked by non-Native decision-makers who try to engage with the traditional knowledge held in communities like Wainwright. When such knowledge is apprehended through the interpretive lens of Western worldviews, which take the inviolability of the divide between culture and nature as an ontological reality, the traditional knowledge of Native peoples is often mistranslated. Such mistranslations exist as acts of cultural misrecognition that can ultimately constitute the ‘extermination by other means’ of the alternative modalities of the ‘Other’ (Cordova, 2007).

It should also be noted that the photographs produced as a result of these interviews may eventually serve the additional purpose of documenting the current state of development of the city of Wainwright and some of the subsistence lands that surround it prior to this new era of

great potential change. They may also act as another cultural resource for the Tribe by visually documenting many of the hunting and gathering practices and food preparation techniques currently employed by Wainwright residents.

In general, the use of photographs in ethnographic inquiries is seen as a way to explore how people see and understand their own realities (Canal, 2004). The photo-elicitation interview, in particular, has been described as an effective means of generating insights from an ‘insider perspective’ that allows for a better understanding of how local peoples perceive their own relationships with the world around them (Cannuscio et al., 2009). Photo-elicitation as a qualitative research method therefore seems well suited to an exploration of the cultural values and ideas concerning the natural world and their place in it that inform Iñupiaq traditional knowledge.

My preliminary research in Wainwright also suggested that photo-based interviews would be a method that would work well within the confines of traditional Iñupiaq culture. Having been inside many homes in Wainwright during the course of the survey that I conducted for Olgoonik, I couldn’t help but notice that people often had many family photographs displayed on their walls. They also were usually very willing, when time permitted, to go through the photos with a guest like me to identify family members, share old stories, etc. The great emphasis placed on these pictures is likely a product of the high value that the Iñupiat place on their kinship ties, which obviously does not directly translate to a similar regard for photos of nature. However, such observations did lead me to believe that photographs, as very familiar and often beloved objects, would be a good starting place for conversations of a less concrete nature like “what does nature mean to you as an Iñupiaq?”, which would likely not prove to be very productive within the standard interview format.

In terms of the steps followed when conducting these interviews, the process began by printing out all the photographs that participants took with the digital cameras that I had provided them. These photos were then used as a guide to the interviews, which all followed the same basic format:

- 1) Participants were asked to first pick out the top 5 pictures that really captured what nature meant to them as an Iñupiaq. For each of these photographs, participants were then prompted to give a short descriptive title to the photo, to generally explain what was going on in the picture, to describe what they were thinking about when they took the picture, and to discuss what it was about that photograph that really captured what nature meant to them as an Iñupiaq.
- 2) They were then asked to organize the remaining photographs into piles based on related themes. Each thematic group of photos was then discussed in terms of what was generally going on in each photo and how the photographs were related.
- 3) Several follow-up questions were then asked. Participants were prompted to provide a few short words or sentences that expressed what nature meant to them. They were also asked whether they felt that non-Natives from outside the community might think about or act differently towards ‘nature’ when compared to someone from Wainwright. Lastly, they were asked whether they had ever heard the term “the sea is our garden” used locally, and if they were familiar with that term, what it meant to them.

Participant Observation

The importance of participant observation to this project cannot be overstated. This method was often employed both at communal hunting activities as well as at community meetings held in Wainwright regarding possible industrial development in the region. In general, participant observation has been described as a way of coming to a better understanding of

phenomena from another's point of view (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). It is a particularly powerful method for exploring traditional knowledge given that such knowledge "cannot be separated from the people who hold and practice it, nor can it be separated from the land/environment/Creation" (McGregor, 2004a, p. 390). The experiential and contextual nature of traditional knowledge means that it can never be adequately described through the standard interview process but must be directly experienced in order to be fully understood.

However, participation observation has also been credited with the ability to help researchers to increase their familiarity with their research context in ways that then help them to develop increasingly insightful questions (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). I certainly found there to be a very fruitful synergistic effect between the information I gathered in the course of my interviews and the observations I was able to make as a participant observer. Oftentimes an object or practice that I had only been told about became immediately understandable to me when I saw it in the field or vice versa, something I had previously observed made it much more possible for me to ask questions during my interviews that were more refined as I came to better understand the related nature of Iñupiaq world views and practice.

The first time I observed a communal hunting event in Wainwright as the collective embodiment of Iñupiaq traditional knowledge and values was in July 2012. At this time, the community was successful in working together to herd a number of beluga whales into shallow waters where they were harpooned and brought to shore for harvesting (see **Figure 3.2**). The meat from this hunt was then divided into shares that were distributed to every household in the village.



Figure 3.2: Communal Beluga Whale Hunt in Wainwright (July 2012)

During my primary field season in the autumn of 2013, I acted as a participant observer at the landing of Wainwright's three fall whales (by the Iceberg 2, 17, and 6 whaling crews.) However, it was only later that I would appreciate the significance of these events as only 2 fall whales had ever been previously caught in Wainwright's recorded history- one in 2010 and the other in 2012 and both by the same whaling captain (Iceberg 17). During their traditional spring whaling season in 2014, I was also present for the landing of Iceberg 17's whale (the third and final whale landed that season.) This whale proved very difficult to bring up onto the shorefast ice because it was melting very rapidly that spring. This meant that the water was so shallow at the ice's edge that the whale's flippers were getting caught on the sandy bottom. Eventually a new landing spot further down shore was selected, which involved several additional hours of towing. Once the harvesting began, I became much more of a participant rather than just an observer by helping for the first time to 'hook' the long strips of maktak off the whale (see

Figure 3.3- I'm in the blue). In the spring of 2015, I again helped at whale camp, this time with Iceberg 14's whale (which was the second of only two whales successfully landed that spring.)



Figure 3.3: Iceberg 17's Spring Whale (June 2014)

Jack Oktollik

It was through these direct experiences that I gained a much finer appreciation for the highly cooperative nature of these activities as the enormity of the creature and task before them means that it truly takes a whole village to successfully butcher the whale. This is especially true because the harvesting process must be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible. This is because it is much safer to minimize the time people have to spend out on the ice by open leads where the weather can change quite suddenly. Also, the innards of the whale begin to decompose once the animal has been killed so that all edible parts must be removed as soon as possible.

Through participant-observation, I also came to truly appreciate how the whale hunt remains an extremely physically and mentally challenging endeavor despite all the 'new advances in technology' that crews now take advantage of like motor-powered boats, snow machines, and even front loaders and fork lifts. The harvesting of the whale itself is a 24+ hour task that requires both a fair amount of mechanical logistics and ingenuity as well as physical

strength and stamina. This is usually undertaken by crews who may have spent the last half day or more towing the whale in from where it was struck, which is a task that was itself likely preceded by several days of active hunting. Amazingly enough, if the weather is cooperating and the whales are still running, most whaling crews only take a day or so to rest after the harvest has been completed before they go back out to hunt. Once they have seen to their equipment and restocked their provisions they will return to the ice. They will continue to repeat this cycle until the ice is either too unstable to continue safely or they have met their annual quota set by the AEWCC.

In both 2014 and 2015, I earned a *niniq* [share] of the whale (see **Figure 3.4**), which is given out to everyone who actively helps harvest the whale. Each successful crew also gives out shares to the entire community during *Nalukataq*, Thanksgiving (for which I was present in 2013), and Christmas celebrations.



Figure 3.4: Niniq from Iceberg 17 (June 2014)

I also attended several of the meals served to the community by successful whaling crews. Crews usually feed the village these smaller meals twice: just after they have finished fully processing the whale they host a *nigipkai* [from *nigipkaq*= to feed] in order to give everyone a ‘taste’ of the fresh catch and they serve again at their *apugauti*, when they are putting their boat away, signaling the end of their hunting season.

Also very importantly, I was able to act as a participant observer at a number of community meetings during the fall of 2013. These included those held around oil development within the NPR-A (in which Wainwright is embedded), one meeting regarding a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management sponsored study designed to establish the traditional offshore hunting grounds of Wainwright residents in the context of oil exploration on Alaska’s Outer Continental shelf, two meetings hosted by oil companies that were specifically about the offshore drilling program, and two sets of meetings that had to do with Wainwright’s efforts to develop their own comprehensive development plan. Attending these meetings provided me with valuable first-hand observations of the power dynamics and general communicative processes occurring both between outside authorities and business interests and the people of Wainwright as well as those taking place among villagers themselves. The meetings I attended included:

August 27: Wainwright Comprehensive Plan Community Meeting, plan described as “a guide for future development” and a “a tool to manage change” (from meeting handout) that was being jointly developed by the North Slope Borough Department of Planning and Community Development, Umiaq (a subsidiary of Barrow’s village-level corporation, Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation or UIC), Olgoonik Corporation, City of Wainwright, and Wainwright Traditional Council. The purpose of the meeting was to seek community feedback on 4 main components of the plan: 1) Human/Cultural Environment (including subsistence), 2) Natural Environment

3) Built Environment, and 4) Land Use. The threats and opportunities posed by local economic growth and development were also discussed.

September 18 & 19: Subsistence Advisory Panel Meeting for the NPR-A, hosted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with Tribal representatives from Nuiqsut, Anaktuvak Pass, Atkasuk, Point Lay, Wainwright and Barrow (open to the general public). This meeting included industry updates from Conoco Phillips, Linc Energy, Nordaq Energy, and Shell Alaska. Shell discussed the potential for a pipeline for offshore oil being built across NPR-A lands, but would not consider any questions pertaining to offshore science or issues at this meeting because they were not under the jurisdiction of the BLM. (Shell was also the only representative that did not have any handouts of its presentation available.) Tribal representatives from Nuiqsut, which is the village that has been most directly impacted by ConocoPhillips's Alpine oil field operations, were particularly vocal in this meeting about their frustrations with the NPR-A's management process because they felt it solicited but then did not adequately take into account their subsistence concerns or traditional knowledge.

October 2: Statoil Community Meeting, mainly to discuss the preliminary results of their study on "Local and Traditional Knowledge of Marine Mammals and Sound", which was conducted in order to understand how "marine mammals and subsistence may be affected by: sound in the air and water, smells, visual disturbance, and behavior and context" (from meeting handout). This study was motivated by concerns expressed by local communities regarding potential oil industry impacts. Statoil representatives also indicated at this meeting that "no decision has been made whether to drill [offshore]."

November 5: Shell Alaska Venture Community Meeting Update. Discussed plans to move forward with drilling focused on the Burger prospect in 2014, but indicated that they "may

postpone if not ready” and that their research activities would ensure that their exploration plans were “about making decisions with sound science.”

November 7: Presentation of Draft Final Report, “COMIDA: Impact Monitoring for Offshore Subsistence Hunting”, [COMIDA= Chukchi Offshore Monitoring in Drilling Area]. Presentation by Dr. Stephen Braund on project designed to help establish baseline data on marine subsistence uses in the Chukchi Sea. Overarching goals were to complete an assessment of the socioeconomic effects of increasing offshore oil and gas activities in the region and the development of mitigation strategies to lessen the effects of such development.

November 14 & 15: Wainwright Leader’s Comprehensive Plan Meeting, with representatives from the North Slope Borough, City Council, Traditional Council, and Olgoonik (private meeting). The main objective of this meeting was to review the Draft Comprehensive plan in order to move towards a Final plan.

December 5: ConocoPhillips Community Meeting to discuss ongoing projects in NPR-A, mainly the new Greater Moose’s Tooth 1 Development Project that is located near Nuiqsut (over 200 miles away from Wainwright.) This was a rather cursory meeting given that the proposed operations were not seen as immediately impacting Wainwright and its residents.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data Organization and Coding

I used different research methods for certain areas of inquiry in this project (i.e. photo-elicitation interviews were focused on developing a deeper understanding of the culturally unique ways that the Iñupiat know and relate to nature). There was, however, a crossover of topics that occurred from one method to the next. In my experience, conversations about local governance could easily segue into discussions about traditional practices passed down from an

elder in ways that represent a holistic perspective in which a person's action out on the land or in a community meeting are guided by the same ideas of appropriate behavior. Interviews were transcribed and the resultant data was analyzed holistically so as to reflect the idea that traditional knowledge cannot be subdivided into neat categories nor should it be divorced from the people who understand it to be part of their ongoing spiritual and material relations with all of Creation (McGregor, 2009). A holistic approach to data analysis is also supported by the idea that data collected from a variety of sources (including individual community members, elders, proficient hunters, and leaders) and through a mix of methods creates a 'triangulation' strategy. This ensures that not only will the bias of dominant individuals or groups be minimized but so will the inherent weaknesses of any one method (Maxwell, 2005).

Once my primary field season was complete, I began the data analysis process by transcribing all the interviews that I had recorded. This process itself proved rather challenging at times with the focus group conversations, in particular, often requiring many hours of careful listening in order to distinguish between multiple male or female voices. I relied heavily on notes taken during each focus group to credit comments to the appropriate speaker. Attempts to accurately identify and transcribe unfamiliar Iñupiaq words also made the transcription task challenging. An elder in the community volunteered to help me with some of the more difficult passages and to double-check my spelling on other words, such that I am generally confident that my translations are accurate. However, background noise was itself a significant issue because group meetings in the village tend to be rather boisterous affairs where children are often present and freely entertaining themselves, cell phones ring and are answered, etc. In addition, during one focus group, which was conducted at the home of one of the participants at their request, the recorder picked up a lot of noise from the ever-present VHF radio (which did not sound as

overbearing at the actual time of the interview). In general, these experiences were an important lesson in figuring out how to be open to the cultural realities of different research contexts and interview settings, while also exerting enough control over the situation as a researcher to be able, in the end, to obtain quality data.

Once the interviews were transcribed, the data was emically coded into substantive categories as common themes and concepts began to emerge directly from participant responses (Maxwell, 2005). Originally, I began analyzing the data with an eye towards the preliminary themes suggested by the project's theoretical framework (i.e., 'indirect exploitation', 'procedural injustice', 'cultural misrecognition' 'colonial epistemologies' 'nature as a set of relations vs. discrete resources'). However, as I reviewed the transcripts over and over again, I also made sure to pay attention to those themes that were not anticipated by this framework but that began to emerge with some frequency like, the importance of 'Eskimo soul food', the idea of 'technology as distraction', or the cultural and economic implications of the Native Corporation 'dividend check.'

The process of sharing my preliminary results with the WTC and the larger community of Wainwright was also an important aspect of refining and testing the validity of these themes. This step accords with the research guidelines offered by entities like the Native American Center for Excellence (NACE). NACE has outlined the steps needed to conduct research in indigenous communities that will build mutual trust and ensure collective benefit. Making sure to discuss emergent findings with the relevant community is the type of 'reality check' that will "increase the degree to which findings are presented in a valid and culturally grounded manner and will decrease opportunities that incorrect or incomplete interpretations will damage the community" (NACE, n.d.). Once I had a chance to both discuss my preliminary results at a

workshop attended by WTC members as well as present them at a larger meeting to the village of Wainwright, I was able to gain a better understanding of whether or not the community felt well-represented. With minor adjustments, I was then able to proceed with further analytics. This was done with the assurance that my interpretation of important themes within the data was accepted as an accurate portrayal of the full spectrum of community strengths and weaknesses, Tribal capacities and cultural concerns, communicative and governance issues, and people's individual hopes and fears as indigenous peoples facing rapid change in their ancestral territories.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the lens through which the data and these emergent themes were interpreted. CDA recognizes that language is always political since its use ultimately affects the distribution of important social goods, like money and social status (Gee, 2014). This analytic method is fundamentally concerned with the power relations that shape discourse, which itself is understood to be dialectically related to society and culture (Richardson, 2007). Gee (2014) further explains that if discourse analysis is “the study of language in use” (p. 8) than critical discourse analysis is not only interested in understanding how language works, it also seeks to “speak to, and perhaps, intervene in, institutional, social, or political issues, problems, and controversies” (p. 9) in ways that can contribute to social justice.

My data analysis process was guided by the fact that the Iñupiat of Wainwright often felt as if they were misrepresented within the decision-making process surrounding the offshore drilling program. Many residents expressed a sense of frustration where they noted that although they may be allowed to speak their mind at community meetings, it ultimately seemed to have very little impact on the program's management decisions (LL-1; 11-5, 2013). In these types of instances where people feel like they either have to constantly repeat themselves or are simply

not being ‘heard’, CDA helps to draw out the relationships of power that have contributed to this sense of inequitable representation. While the scope of power relations influencing Arctic politics and development is quite vast, this project has focused most of its attention on two important sets of dynamics. The first is the relationships between the community of Wainwright and the federal and commercial interests involved in offshore drilling. Local relationships among community members and between entities like the Tribal Council and relevant Native Corporations are also an important component of this analysis.

As an example, in my analysis I was drawn to a piece of text in which a Wainwright elder was expressing his displeasure with the common scientific practice of radio collaring or tagging animals to track their movements. I was largely interested in this section of text because I had heard this elder bring up this same point at almost every meeting I had attended as a participant observer in the Fall of 2013, which included everything from community meetings with Shell regarding offshore development and the Bureau of Land Management’s Subsistence Advisory Panel meetings. While the repetitive nature of these comments could be potentially dismissed as the cranky or absentminded musings of an old man, CDA helps to reveal the much larger power relations at play here. His statements can instead be understood as representing multiple attempts by an elder, who is highly respected within his own community, to contest a bureaucratic system that consistently privileges the expertise of Western scientists over the experiential knowledge that had been carefully accumulated by the Iñupiat for millennia. While Shell oil representatives and federal officials always allowed the elder to speak his mind, such actions are the likely product of a desire to avoid a serious cultural gaffe by ignoring him since the Iñupiat take care to defer to their elders and their wisdom. That the elder felt that he needed to constantly repeat himself, however, highlights a set of unequal power relations where Western scientific practices

are not likely to be augmented in deference to the perspectives of those Iñupiaq knowledge holders who are highly regarded as ‘experts’ within their own communities. Such power imbalances ultimately underscore to the need to more carefully attend to the positioning of indigenous peoples within bureaucratic structures like the offshore drilling program where a wide gulf remains between ‘being allowed to speak’ and actually being heard.

CDA also helps in many ways to respond to Smith’s (1999) concerns about the inequitable nature of much of the research undertaken with indigenous peoples, which were detailed at the outset of this chapter. Smith has warned that the pursuit of knowledge undertaken within the context of unequal relationships of power can lead to research that both exploits the knowledge of its participants while also marginalizing their perspectives and concerns. CDA is therefore often used by those researchers who recognize that science itself is never value-free and who seek to focus on social problems and political issues in a way that is attuned to the roles they themselves play in these processes (van Dijk, 2001). As a non-Native scholar working with an indigenous community, this awareness is particularly important since it is understood “that while the researcher can be sensitive to and knowledgeable of indigenous methodologies, they are still presenting their views as perceived, interpreted, and produced through their own lens” (Indigenous Health Research Development Program, 2005).

CDA therefore helps to highlight how representations of the world, social relations between people, and people’s social and personal identities are discursively constructed (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) so that the different ways that people talk about entities like ‘nature’ can be understood to have potentially profound ideological effects. CDA is used to situate what is said “in the context in which it emerges, rather than just summarizing patterns or regularities in text” (Richardson, 2007, p. 15). An example of the importance of paying attention

to such a contextual politics of nature comes from a section of text that I analyzed in which an older hunter was unhappy with a federal government that was “trying to tell us how to live our lives up here” (FG-2-2, 2013). Taken at face value, such a complaint sounds like your everyday gripe concerning the imposition of outside authority. Within the full context of this passage, however, CDA reveals how the speaker is not just contesting this imposition because it is unwelcome, but also because it is seen as completely ill-founded. This is due to the fact that as an Iñupiaq, the speaker sees direct experience with local natures as the most legitimate means to obtaining knowledge. An attempt to ascribe appropriate behaviors in the absence of such experience is thus seen by many Iñupiat to be devoid of any epistemological value or authority. Much like the elder before him who contested the wildlife biologists’ practice of collaring animals, this statement can actually be read as a counter claim against the superiority generally afforded to Western ways of knowing and relating to nature that has often resulted in ‘well-meaning’ but ultimately disruptive interventions in their lived realities as indigenous peoples.

Taken as a whole, I opted to use CDA because it appeared to be a very appropriate way to approach the holistic perspectives and traditional knowledge of the Iñupiat in which cultural context is understood to play a key interpretive role. I also chose to use CDA because the issue of Arctic offshore drilling is inherently enmeshed in hierarchical structures of power encompassing stakeholders as various as the federal government, international oil corporations, national environmental groups, and Native communities like Wainwright. Even though the federal government has promised Tribal consultation as a means of engaging with the subsistence concerns of the Iñupiat within this program, the power dynamics involved may mean that such processes only exacerbate the very inequities they are meant to address. This is because the different worldviews that the Iñupiat hold as indigenous peoples are invariably effaced within

an infrastructure that has been established by social actors whose natural tendency is to privilege certain discursive framings over others. While this process does not go uncontested, it is important to recognize the way that it potentially constrains what knowledge and actions are ultimately deemed legitimate within these type of natural resource management scenarios (Keller, 2011). This is, in fact, a primary critique of many EJ scholars who suggest that the structures of the state can themselves contribute to environmental inequities, particularly in terms of their tendency to privilege ‘expert’ knowledge over ‘lay’ or experiential knowledge (Kurtz, 2009).

CDA as applied to the data generated by this research establishes a baseline understanding of the diversity of discursive practices that the Iñupiat themselves currently employ to make sense of both their relationships with nature as well as their current positioning as indigenous peoples collectively facing a new era of potential change in their ancestral territories. In many cases, CDA also helps to reveal how the Iñupiat of Wainwright are actively pushing back against the current parameters of their participation in the decision-making processes that will help shape the future of the Alaskan Arctic. A better understanding of how the Iñupiat know and relate to nature helps to illuminate how their traditional knowledge and perspectives have often been marginalized or misinterpreted within Western scientific and bureaucratic decision-making structures. This is due both to an inattention to the cultural context that informs and supports Iñupiaq traditional knowledge as well as the ongoing relationships of power that often rationalize this dismissal. Overall, this analysis seeks to both highlight the interpretive schemes used by the Iñupiat that have been pushed to obscurity by these practices as well as expose and thus ideally intervene in those discursive practices that have been employed by federal authorities and corporate interests to legitimate such injustice.

3.7 Conclusion

Overall, Smith (1999) has averred that decolonizing research is inherently a political project that should support the goals of Native self-determination. Furthermore, such a process requires that the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is neither apprehended (and therefore ultimately misinterpreted) through the lenses of Western culture nor should its worth be established through a comparison to Western systems of thought. In the end, the research design of this project was intended to support Smith's idea that decolonization demands an engagement both with indigenous traditional knowledge in its own context as well as with the people who own and live that knowledge on their own terms.

The following chapter works to provide further context to this research project by providing a brief history of the state of Alaska and its treatment of North Slope Natives, whose experiences as indigenous peoples are relatively distinct from those of Tribes in the contiguous United States. Differences include the much later arrival of EuroAmerican settlers, the particular 'boom and bust' cycles of resource extraction activities that have occurred in this region, and the Alaska Native land claims settlement process, which was neither informed by any pre-existing treaties nor entailed the creation of reservations. Although it is recognized that the Iñupiat think of themselves as having lived in this region since *aipaani* 'time immemorial' (Brewster, 2004), this chapter will significantly limit its scope by beginning at the general era of colonial advancement into the Far North. The purpose of this chapter is to provide important background information on the colonial histories and processes of forced cultural assimilation and creative adaptation that have shaped the unique economic, cultural and political positioning of the Iñupiat within the offshore drilling program. It also helps highlight how the program itself is perhaps

best understood as merely the latest manifestation of an entrepreneurial interest in their ancestral territories held by ‘outsiders’, with which the Iñupiat have long contended.

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND: COLONIAL HISTORIES AND THE ‘REAL PEOPLE’ OF ALASKA’S NORTH SLOPE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sketches out the relevant national, regional, and local histories that have contributed to the complex political, economic, social and cultural terrain currently shaping the abilities of the North Slope’s Iñupiat to grapple with the realities of a changing Arctic. An understanding of the colonial histories and cultural disruptions that the Iñupiat of Wainwright have collectively negotiated as a people is an integral component of understanding environmental injustices involving indigenous peoples as both a product as well as an extension of those ‘well-meaning’ yet ultimately assimilatory processes that have long sought to order the Native ‘Other.’ This chapter, however, also highlights how the Iñupiat have not been passive participants in this process. They have, in fact, often attempted to adapt to these changes on their own terms. At times, this has involved their active contestation of the conditions of their participation in the larger bureaucratic structures in which the North Slope’s Iñupiat have become increasingly enmeshed.

This chapter spans a time period that begins with the Russian colonization of Alaska and ends in the Fall of 2015 with Shell Oil’s announcement that it would be withdrawing from the Arctic offshore drilling theatre. This chapter loosely follows a chronological ordering of key events (see **Figure 4.1-Figure 4.3** for a three part timeline of featured events) in which deviations from the standard order occasionally occur as the focus telescopes back and forth between regional and national events and a more localized perspective. This means that

everything from the arrival of commercial whalers to the Alaskan Arctic, the official settlement of the village of Wainwright, the discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay, the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, and the progression of the Arctic offshore drilling program will all be considered along the way.

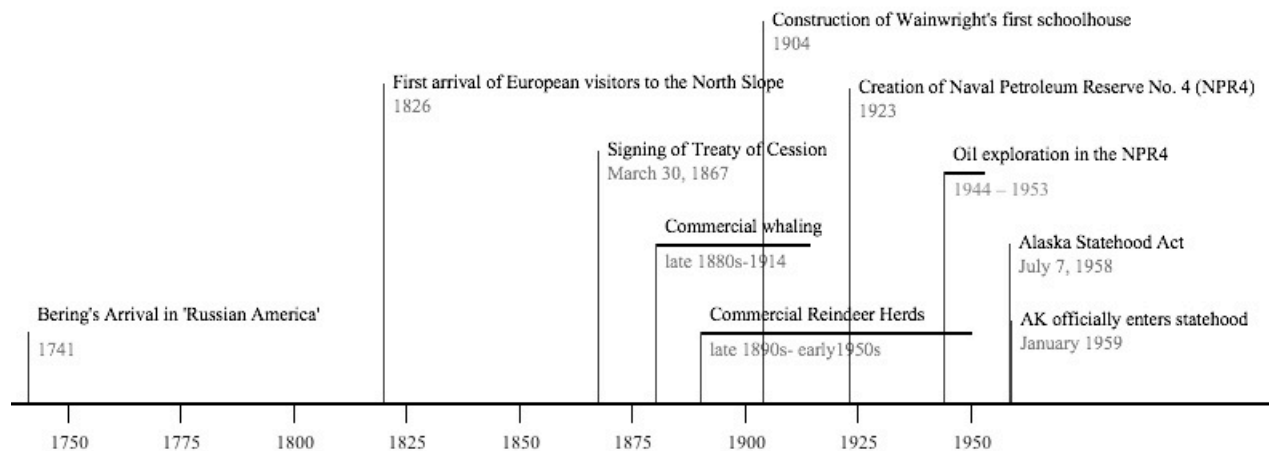


Figure 4.1: Early Alaskan History to Statehood

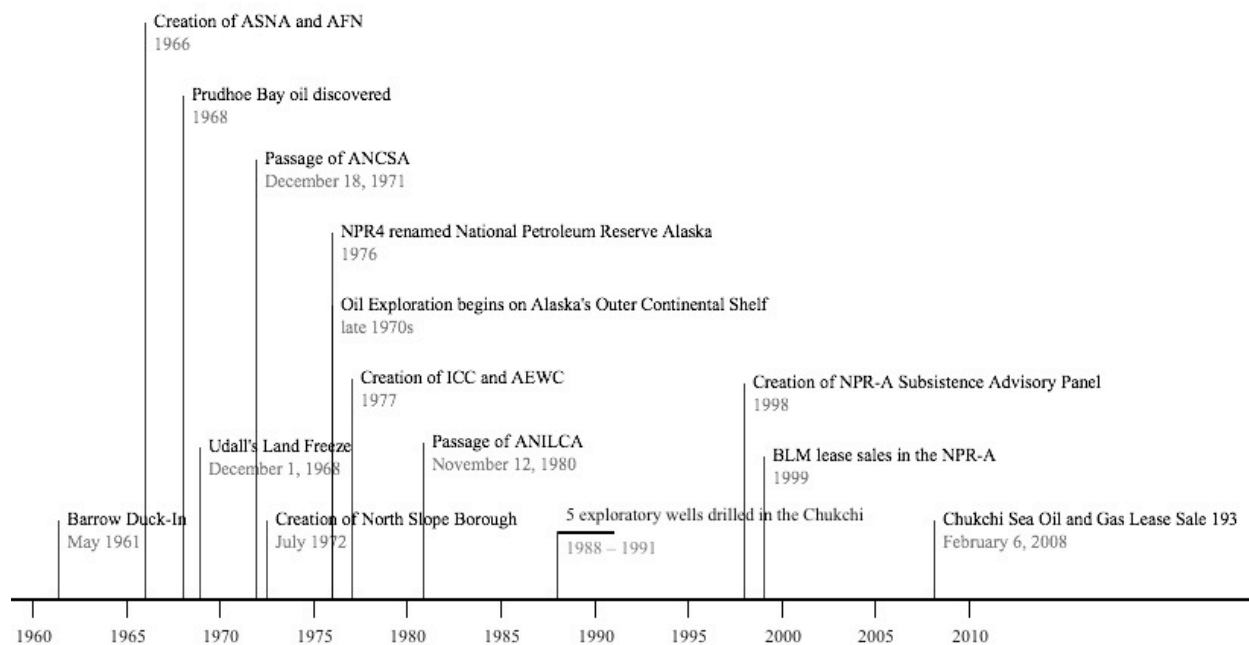


Figure 4.2: Lead-up to ANCSA and Beyond

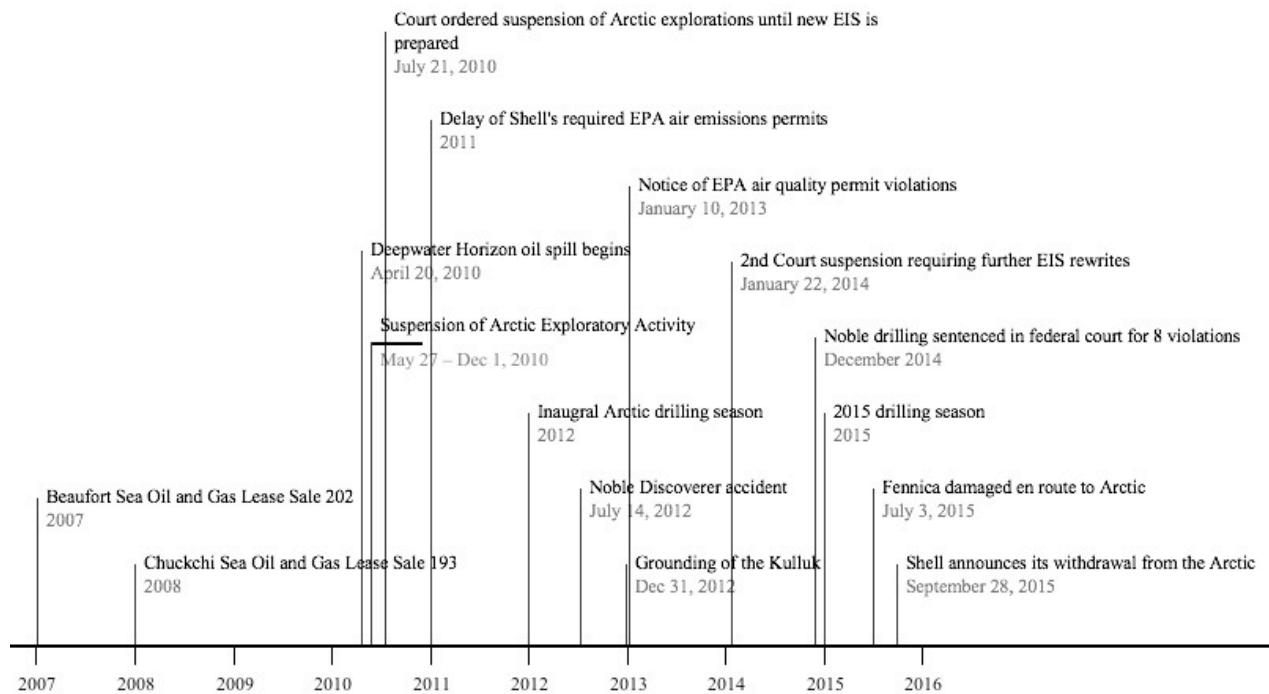


Figure 4.3: The Arctic Offshore Drilling Program

This chapter concludes by placing the proposed Arctic offshore drilling program and the many environmental and social issues it potentially raises within the larger context of the many changes that the Iñupiat of Wainwright have successfully negotiated throughout their history. The core values of Iñupiaq traditional culture are advanced as key contributors to this resiliency, which have guided the Iñupiat through these transitions from the ‘ancient’ world of their ancestors into the modern world (Hensley, 2009). In this new era of impending change for the Arctic and its peoples, this chapter is motivated by the wisdom of one Wainwright elder who was traditionally taught that in the excitement of moving forward in the land, it’s always important to remember to occasionally look back to remember from where you came. Guided by this knowledge, one can always find the right path home, no matter how unfamiliar the current terrain (LL-4, 2013).

4.2 Brief History of Alaska: Colonization, ‘Seward’s Folly’ & Statehood

The Danish explorer Vitus Bering, acting in the interests of Russia, arrived in what would soon be called ‘Russian America’ in 1741. It was quickly discovered that this region, which would ultimately come to be known as Alaska, possessed an abundance of fur-bearing land and sea mammals that acted as an economic draw to the area (Naske & Slotnick, 1987). At the peak of Russian occupation, however, there were never more than 700 settlers in Alaska and most were intent on developing the area as a commercial enterprise. This meant that earning a quick profit rather than making Russian America their permanent homeland was always the primary focus. Very few Russians therefore ever attempted to penetrate the unexplored regions of the continental interior, preferring instead to concentrate most of their energies on the area’s rich shorelines (Zellen, 2008). It was here that the Russians had their first encounters with the Aleut, who traditionally inhabited the coast and are one of the 11 distinct culture groups that are considered indigenous to Alaska (Alaska Native Heritage Center, 2011). Up to 80% of the Aleut population is believed to have been lost within the first two generations of contact with the Russians (Naske & Slotnick, 1987). This was due to both disease outbreaks as well as the fact that the Russians, in general, ignored their aboriginal rights and often enslaved and forcibly relocated those whom they encountered.

Eventually, in the face of both intensifying commercial competition from the United States and England as well as diminishing profits as a result of overhunting, Russia opted to sell the entirety of Russian America to the United States. This sale was accomplished through the signing of the Treaty of Cession on March 30, 1867 where the United States paid \$7.2 million, approximately 2 cents per acre, for all of Alaska. Secretary of State William Seward helped broker this treaty and was for many years afterwards ridiculed for this seemingly extravagant

expense given that the area seemed to experience ‘chronic unprofitability.’ This led many people to refer to both Alaska and its purchase as ‘Seward’s Folly’ (Zellen, 2008).

At the time of the sale, it was known that Alaska’s 586,412 square miles contained a number of ‘uncivilized’ Tribes that would now be subject to the laws of the United States. However, there was no move to extend US citizenship to these Tribal peoples, although such an offer was made to all Russians and their Creole descendants who were present in Alaska at the time of the sale (Banks, 2007). The Organic Act of 1884 did recognize that in the Territory of Alaska, Alaskan Natives should “not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or now claimed by them” (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998, p. 906). How such individuals might be granted title to these lands was, however, left for future Congressional action to decide.

Historians have suggested that the formal acquisition of Alaska by the US began a long process of ordering the ‘Other’ in which Alaskan Native cultures were disrupted in an attempt to “create order out of perceived chaos, to reinforce white hegemony, and to further the colonial project in Alaska” (Banks, 2007, p. 32). The processes of colonialism did not, however, go entirely uncontested by Alaskan Natives. The Tlingit Indians of Southeast Alaska, in particular, challenged the sale of Alaska, arguing that Russia had no legal right to sell what it had never truly owned. In 1935, the Tlingit, along with the Haida, were finally given Congressional permission to sue the United States for the withdrawal of lands under the Tongass National Forest Proclamation of 1907 on the grounds that this was territory on which they still claimed to hold aboriginal title (Berardi, 1998; Paul, 2003). This debate was not actually settled until the 1968 Court of Claims decision *Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. United States*, which built on an earlier ruling that the Treaty of Cession between Russia and Alaska did not, in fact,

extinguish aboriginal title. The court awarded the Tlingit and Haida a cash payment of \$7.5 million in compensation for the permanent loss of over 16 million acres of their ancestral lands (Naske & Slotnick, 1987; Paul, 2003).

When President Eisenhower signed the Alaska Statehood Act on July 7, 1958, the issue of Native land claims remained unresolved. At the time of Alaska's official entrance into statehood in January of 1959, no Native group had ever signed a treaty with the US government so that their traditional territories remain unceded. This state of affairs was highly problematic given that the Statehood Act allowed the state of Alaska to claim 103 million acres for itself from unreserved federal lands. This clashed with other provisions in the Act in which there was a disclaimer that the state could not claim title to any lands that might also be subject to Native title rights, which at this point was more or less the entirety of Alaska (Haycox, 2002). In response to the concerns raised by these land claims and the aboriginal rights of Alaskan Natives, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall mandated a total 'land-freeze' on Alaska on December 1, 1968. The state's land selection process (and all pending oil-lease sales on federal lands) was therefore put on hold until the issue of Native land claims could be satisfactorily settled (Gallagher, 2001).

While the Aleut were greatly impacted by the arrival of the Russians and all Natives would eventually be affected by Alaska's entry into statehood, it is important to note that many groups, especially those living in the extreme North of the state, did not have sustained contact with the outside world until the late 1800s. While the timeline that has been constructed so far has brought us to the point of Alaska's entry into statehood, it now becomes necessary to take a chronological step backwards. This move allows for a more nuanced consideration of the early development of the North Slope's Iñupiat who would play a major role in both prompting

Udall's land-freeze as well as actively fighting for the eventual settlement of Native land claims in Alaska. Before proceeding with an analysis of these pivotal 20th century events, it is important to review the unique history of this region and its original peoples, with special attention paid to the Iñupiat of Wainwright.

4.3 Regional History: Ulġuniq & the North Slope

The Inuit, along with the Yup'ik, have long been collectively referred to as 'Eskimos.' Eskimo was a name given to them by outsiders and although it was commonly thought to mean “eater of raw meat”, contemporary linguists suggest that the term may actually come from an Ojibwa word that roughly translates into “to net snowshoes” (Kaplan, 2011). The Inuit are a people whose traditional territory stretches across the circumpolar North from Greenland, through the Canadian Arctic, to the western edges of Northern Alaska (see **Figure 4.4**).



Figure 4.4: Territorial Expanses of the Inuit (in shades of blue)

From the Language Gulper: <http://www.languagesgulper.com/eng/Eskimomap.html>

The Iñupiat are a subset of the Inuit who have lived for centuries on Alaska's northern shores and today are mainly concentrated in a region commonly referred to as the North Slope,

which begins in the interior just north of the Brooks Range and stretches down to the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas. Although the exact length of their occupation in this region is still debated, the Iñupiat describe their ties to the region as existing ‘since time immemorial’ (Brewster, 2004). The term Iñupiat is how they have always referred to themselves and it means the ‘Real People’ in the Iñupiaq language (Hensley, 2009).

Iñupiaq residents of the North Slope village of Wainwright have traditionally called themselves the *Ulguniġamiut*, the people of *Ulguniq*, which is the area’s original name in Iñupiaq (Nelson, 1969). Wainwright received its contemporary moniker from its inlet, which was given its English name in 1826 in honor of British Naval officer Lt. John Wainwright (North Slope Borough, ‘Wainwright’, 2014). The people of Wainwright trace their lineage to two groups of Iñupiat who amicably maintained overlapping territories in this region. The *Utuqqaġmiut* were originally an inland people that mainly hunted caribou along the Utuqqaq River and migrated seasonally to the coast in order to trade and hunt for sea mammals. The *Kuugmiut* are generally thought to have been predominantly coastal people who lived along the Kuk River and its tributaries (see **Figure 4.5**).

Early trading posts opened by white settlers in locations like Icy Cape acted as a further draw to the coast for these two groups, who eventually intermingled as they permanently settled in the seaside villages of Point Lay and Wainwright (Ivie & Schneider, 1988). While historic sites scattered around the Wainwright Inlet confirm the area as a popular seasonal camping spot used by these early peoples, the contemporary location of the city was set by the 1904 construction of the village’s first formal schoolhouse. The necessary building materials were carried North by boat so that the school’s location was itself largely “dictated by ice conditions

and convenience. The vessel's captain unloaded at a favorable looking site" (Milan cited in Bodfish, 1991, p. 264).



Figure 4.5: Sketch Map of Wainwright and Surrounding Area
From Ivie & Schneider (1988)

Although European explorers had visited the north coast of Alaska as early as 1826 (Brewster, 2004; Rasmussen, 1999), and commercial whaling ships entered Arctic waters by 1848, it was not until the late 1880's that the first sustained introduction of non-Native influences truly came to this region. Prominent Barrow resident Sadie Brower Neakok has singled out the profound effects that men like her white, whaling father Charles Brower had on the traditional lifeways of the Iñupiat, who had inhabited Alaska's northern shores largely undisturbed for centuries. When whaling crews eventually began to overwinter in the region in the 1880s this led to prolonged contact with the Iñupiat. Neakok considers the whalers of this time to be the 'most important agents of change' in this era as they introduced new whaling practices and equipment like shoulder guns. They also brought rifles and Western foodstuffs like flour, sugar, and alcohol,

for which many Iñupiat soon developed a taste (Blackman, 1989). These whalers also unknowingly brought diseases like influenza, measles and tuberculosis to the region, which had devastating effects on local populations (Brewster, 2004).

The whaling industry itself proved to be relatively short-lived, however, and by 1914 the invention of vulcanized rubber meant the bowhead's flexible baleen, which was mistakenly referred to as whalebone, was no longer in popular demand as corset stays (Blackman, 1989). The collapse of the whaling industry represents the end of merely the first of many 'boom and bust' cycles that have since occurred in this region (Jorgenson, 1990). For a time, trapping for arctic and red fox furs filled the void left by the collapse of the whaling market. Native hunters would trade these pelts for Western dried goods at stores run by men like Charles Brower, who then exported these furs to the lower 48 for a handsome profit. While the prices for pelts fluctuated from year to year, fur trapping was one way for the Iñupiat to supplement lean incomes up until the 1960s when the demand for fox furs plunged and the prices they could command soon followed (Brewster, 2004).

Commercial reindeer herding efforts were also underway in this general time period. These animals were originally brought to the area in the late 1890s in an effort to feed several commercial whaling crews that were forced to spend an unplanned winter in Barrow. As it turned out, such efforts were unnecessary since local hunters were able to provide them with ample provisions of wild-caught caribou. This small imported herd, however, eventually grew into a regional industry, which was overseen by local schoolteachers who acted as representatives of the federal government. Local Iñupiat were then hired as herdsman who tended to the animals out in the field. Herd size is believed to have peaked in 1935 with over 30,000 animals accounted for, but by the early 1950s most of the herds had disappeared from the

region. This was largely due to the fact that the herding lifestyle, which required prolonged periods of time away from home, was incompatible with the labor-intensive preparations and careful timing needed to maintain the traditional whaling practices of the Iñupiat (Brewster, 2004).

Missionaries also proved to be an important presence at this time as the power of the shaman was diminishing (Brower, 1994). Iñupiaq shamans were traditionally seen as having special powers including the ability to fly and transform themselves into animals and they also “sang special songs to encourage animals to give themselves to hunters, established taboos to ensure successful hunting, and cured the sick” (Brewster, 2004, p. 124). However, their influence with local populations started to wane in the wake of their inability to contend with the major disease epidemics that swept into the region (Brower, 1994). The Iñupiat ultimately responded to most efforts to Christianize them with a syncretic melding of new and old beliefs. Like shamans, missionaries were thought to possess certain powers as a result of their direct connection with the spirit world and the new prohibitions that they passed down were generally treated in a manner similar to Iñupiaq customary taboos (Blackman, 1989).

Men like Charles Brower bemoaned many of these changes, however, including the fact that the church’s rule that no work be performed on the Sabbath meant that hunters and whalers missed valuable windows of time where the weather was opportune or animals were migrating through the area in large numbers (Brower, 1994). He was also critical of the fact that the missionaries forced locals to transition from their traditional sod homes to wooden framed ones, since these new homes were poorly insulated and ventilated and much more difficult to properly heat (Blackman, 1989). In addition, missionaries ordered the destruction of all of the ceremonial dance halls known as *qariyit* (singular *qargi*) (Brower, 1994). The *qariyit* functioned as

important clan meeting houses where the men would convene to prepare their equipment for the whaling season and the people would often gather for communal feasts and celebrations (Spencer cited in Bodfish, 1991). Brower opposed this suite of actions because he was dismissive of a process where “‘reforms’ are forced on people faster than conditions warrant” (Brower, 1994, p. 232). A Wainwright teacher who spent three years in the village with her husband in the early 1900s seems to have reached a similar conclusion. In a book detailing her experiences in the Far North, she wrote of her own frustration with the reforms she was meant to impose upon local residents:

I should reprimand them. I’m not doing my duty if I don’t. But I’m tired of reprimanding them. How do I know all this is for their good anyway- all these reforms of ours? I’m tired of interfering with other people’s lives, telling them what they should and should not do. They have got along for a good many centuries without us. Probably their way is the equal of ours, perhaps better for this part of the world (Forrest, 1937, p. 224).

4.4 The Legacy of the BIA Schools

From their outset, however, the schools established by the U.S. government throughout the region, were based on an English-only education because administrators believed “in integrating Iñupiat children into a non-Native world” (Brewster, 2004). A transition to a regular school schedule was initially very difficult for many villagers who were used to pursuing a semi-nomadic subsistence lifestyle (Blackman, 1989). The English instruction they received in school, which was focused on the outside world and its values, also created an ever-widening gap between these children and their parents rooted in a traditional way of life (Brewster, 2004).

Charlie ‘Etok’ Edwardsen, who would go on to become a critical figure in the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, roundly critiqued the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school system as essentially employing a method of ‘subjugation by education.’ By the

time he attended school in the late 1950s, the BIA had instituted a program that shipped Iñupiaq school children down to boarding schools in Southeast Alaska or the lower 48. Edwardsen describes how Iñupiaq children were taught how to read and write in a language not their own, using textbooks that featured unrelatable scenes and characters from a world that was still very foreign to them. He suggests that these schools failed in their mission to integrate these children and instead left them in an uncomfortable limbo because the “whole educational process offered by the BIA teaches Indians to despise what they are and where they are from, and to hate what they are not and will never be: white men” (Gallagher, 2001, p. 78). Edwardsen avers that like many of the missionaries, BIA schoolteachers were so focused on what they were contributing to Iñupiaq communities by helping them to ‘cope’ with modern society, that they never truly comprehended the richness of the social fabric that they were destroying in the process.

Iñupiaq politician Willie ‘Iggiagruk’ Hensley has advanced similar critiques of both the early missionaries as well as the BIA school system. He suggests that the missionaries “never really understood us, and abetted by the federal government, they made decisions that should have been made by our own people, using their power to repress our ability to govern ourselves” (Hensley, 2009, p. 222). Hensley has also denounced the fact that the formal education he received was based on the belief that there was nothing of apparent value in Iñupiaq culture so that its mission was “to disconnect Native children from their roots” (2009, p. 72). Much like Edwardsen, Hensley insists that many Iñupiaq youth were taught to feel as if “they were not adequate, did not measure up, and had to change from who they were into someone else” (2009, p. 204). He explains that like many Iñupiaq parents, his family acted as ‘compliant participants’ in this process because they believed that by sending their children to school, they were giving them a chance at a better life. His parents’ actions were also guided by the fact that over

millennia, the Iñupiat had learned to cooperate with one another for their mutual survival so that their culture is based on the presumption of truth and good will on the part of others (Gallagher, 2001). Their lives were fundamentally guided by the principles of nonaggression and sharing where direct conflict is to be actively avoided whenever possible because it breeds a type of dysfunction that can threaten the well-being of the entire community (Ott, 2013). The Iñupiat were therefore inherently “a people loyal to the United States, trusting the white man and his laws” (Gallagher, 2001, p. 17).

As Hensley explains, this trust in the ways of the white man meant that many Iñupiaq school children were essentially set adrift in a sea of cultural change that worked over time to instill a deep sense of inferiority in many of his people. The eventual discovery of oil on the North Slope helped the Iñupiaq to enjoy an increasing quality of life in terms of the goods and services they were ultimately provided. However, such improvements could never truly address the cultural confusion and lack of self-worth that plagued them, which often led to a desperate cycle of alcoholism and familial violence that was at times only exasperated by this new-found prosperity (Hensley, 2009). The discovery of oil would also test the faith of the Iñupiat in the U.S. government’s commitment to act as the self-appointed guardian of their Tribal rights in the face of the massive amounts of potential revenue associated with the development of these deposits.

4.5 National Petroleum Reserve- Alaska

More than any other commercial enterprise, it is indeed the oil industry that has over the years both significantly contributed to the improvement of infrastructure and the expansion of services now enjoyed by the Iñupiat of the North Slope as well as acted as a fundamental challenge to the maintenance of their traditional values and lifeways. The village of Wainwright

is itself entirely embedded in what is today known as the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. History suggests that in 1923, Interior Secretary Albert Fall's prestige had been greatly diminished by his involvement in the Teapot Dome scandal. The controversy arose when it was revealed that Fall had brokered several oil sales where Navy reserves in Wyoming and California were leased to private companies at suspiciously low rates. In order to salvage his tarnished reputation and to reestablish himself as the 'people's protector of oil on public land', Fall made recommendations to then President Warren Harding to set aside four large national oil reserves to be administered by the Secretary of the Navy (Paul, 2003). Later that year, President Harding set aside 22.8 million acres on Alaska's North Slope as the Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 (NPR4 or Pet-4), which was to be opened up if the Navy ever experienced a shortage in their oil supply (BLM, 'National Petroleum', 2014). This land was selected based on oil seepages found near Cape Simpson and because the government considered the region to be free of 'private ownership interest.' This was despite the fact that scattered throughout the region were Iñupiaq homes and seasonal hunting camps, some of which had been consistently maintained for hundreds of years. The establishment of the NPR4 entailed the displacement of some Iñupiaq families and a denial of traditional use to many others, regardless of the government's claims that this land that was essentially free of private ownership rights (Gallagher, 2001).

Longtime Barrow resident and son of Charles Brower, Harry Brower, has described how WWII prompted an increase in energy demands in the US, which led the Navy to begin exploring the NPR4 for oil in 1944. At this time, exploratory base camps were established near Barrow. Natural gas was found just outside of Barrow in 1949 and although the Navy was able to immediately take advantage of this resource in their new installations, the US government was prohibited from selling natural resources from the Reserve to the public. It was not until this rule

was eventually overturned in 1964 that Barrow residents were able to purchase this gas for use in heating their homes, which has helped them to maintain much lower heating costs than those experienced in other more remote villages to this day.

Local residents did, however, begin to receive more immediate benefits from the exploration in other ways. Although the Navy was initially reluctant to hire Iñupiaq men onto their oil exploration program in the NPR4, some local employment opportunities were eventually extended to men like Brower, who was hired on to help map the North Slope. The Arctic Research Laboratory (ARL) was also opened at the Navy's Barrow basecamp and the ARL itself began to hire locals in increasing quantities. The oil exploration program was eventually shut down in 1953, but the ARL, which was renamed the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory (NARL), continued on at a smaller scale up until 1980 (Brewster, 2004). Over the years NARL's collaborations with Native residents of the North Slope actually helped to cultivate very positive relationships between Arctic scientists and local peoples (Brewster, 1997). Harry Brower, who was originally hired by NARL to be a carpenter, eventually spent 25 years working with them as a close collaborator on many of their scientific projects. Based on his long-standing reputation with NARL scientists, Harry would also go on to play a major role in many of the North Slope Borough's early studies on bowhead whales (Brewster, 2004).

The NPR4 was eventually renamed the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A, see **Figure 4.6**) under the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. Under this same act, responsibility to oversee the Reserve was transferred from the Navy to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) housed under the US Department of the Interior (BLM, 'National Petroleum', 2014). An NPR-A Subsistence Advisory Panel (SAP) was created in 1998 as a seven-member panel whose participants are drawn from local and regional Tribal governments.

This includes the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS), which represents the entire North Slope as a whole, and the six Iñupiaq communities that have territories within or very near the Reserve: Wainwright, Point Lay, Barrow, Atqasuk, Nuiqsut, and Anaktuvuk Pass. The SAP has no real authoritative power of its own, but is instead meant to make recommendations to the BLM “regarding issues, concerns, and possible impacts to subsistence resources or harvesting due to oil industry activities” in the NPR-A (BLM, “NPR-A Subsistence”, para. 1, 2014).



Figure 4.6: NPR-A (Anaktuvak Pass is not shown, but sits roughly 146 miles due south of Nuiqsut in the central Brooks Range)

From US Dept of the Interior, BLM: http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/energy/oil_gas/npra.html

The BLM began conducting lease sales in the NPR-A in May of 1999 in the Northwest and Northeast Planning Areas. Over the years, oil companies like ConocoPhillips and British Petroleum have had multiple active leases in the area. As of 2011, President Obama has

instructed the Department of Interior to hold annual oil and gas lease sales in the NPR-A under the direction of the BLM (BLM, ‘Federal oil’, 2014). In recent years, residents of Nuiqsut, in particular, have become especially vocal in their opposition to the increasing encroachment of ConocoPhillips’ activities, especially its Alpine oil field (Bourne, 2008). Alpine (otherwise known as the Colville River Unit, see **Figure 4.7** on page 115 for its location) was originally sited outside the confines of the Reserve, but it has continued to sprawl ever closer to both the NPR-A as well as the village. The new Alpine satellite oil field, CD5, the first oil development located in the NPR-A (although it is actually sited on land owned by Native Corporations within the Reserve) is now open and an additional extension of the Alpine field within the Greater Mooses Tooth Unit of the Reserve proper is expected to begin production by 2018 (ConocoPhillips, 2015; Demarban, 2015). In general, Nuiqsut residents have complained that current levels of industrial activity and traffic have disrupted their way of life by altering the migration routes of the caribou they rely on for their subsistence needs (Bourne, 2008). This is despite the fact that Alpine was originally touted as a model of new technology that allowed for nearly ‘roadless’ development that would minimize its environmental impact and have the “smallest footprint ever” (Miller, 2013, p. 193).

The creation of the NPR-A is important to consider here because it has long had a direct effect on those local Iñupiat who have traditionally pursued a subsistence way of life on their ancestral lands. For communities like Wainwright that are completely surrounded by the Reserve, its rules and policies add yet another layer of bureaucracy to the complex patchwork of regulations that seek to exert control over their subsistence pursuits. As noted earlier, the Obama administration has also recently expressed the federal government’s renewed desire to develop the NPR-A’s oil and gas resources as a ‘safe and responsible’ way of “meeting the nation’s

energy needs while reducing our dependence on foreign oil” (BLM, ‘BLM releases’, 2014, para. 2). This may well mean that in the years to come the presence of outside authorities will be increasingly felt by local residents as extraction activities in the Reserve continue to intensify. In the context of the offshore drilling program, the NPR-A may also end up serving a key role. This is because a pipeline through the Reserve that would eventually connect with the existing Trans-Alaskan Pipeline System is currently the favored route for any offshore oil to take. Alaskan legislators are fully aware, however, that such development would not go uncontested and would likely raise serious concerns resulting in environmental lawsuits (Bradner, 2012; Granitz 2013).

Until such issues come to pass, it appears that the existence of the NPR-A’s substantial yet widely scattered pockets of oil will continue to remain largely unnoticed by the national public. The relatively uncontroversial history of oil exploration in the NPR-A stands in stark contrast to the frenzy that followed the 1968 discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay, which sits just outside the Reserve (see **Figure 4.7**). Unlike the NPR-A, this discovery would not only become a national news story, but it also would force the issue of Native land claims in Alaska to the fore and profoundly alter the social, cultural, economic, and political realities of the North Slope’s Inupiat.

4.6 Discovery of Oil at Prudhoe Bay & Alaskan Native Land Claims

In 1968, a team of Atlantic Richfield (ARCO) employees was drilling for oil in the north Alaskan interior near the Brooks Range. They were nearly ready to give up after what appeared to be a fruitless search, but were contractually obligated to drill one last well. They decided that as they were heading North to the coast where they would ship their drill rig out by sea, that they would stop in Prudhoe Bay to drill one final well. In doing so, they stumbled upon North America’s largest oil field to date (Reiss, 2012). The size of ARCO’s discovery confirmed earlier

claims made by companies like British Petroleum (BP) that there was a significant amount of oil waiting to be exploited near Prudhoe Bay (Paul, 2003).

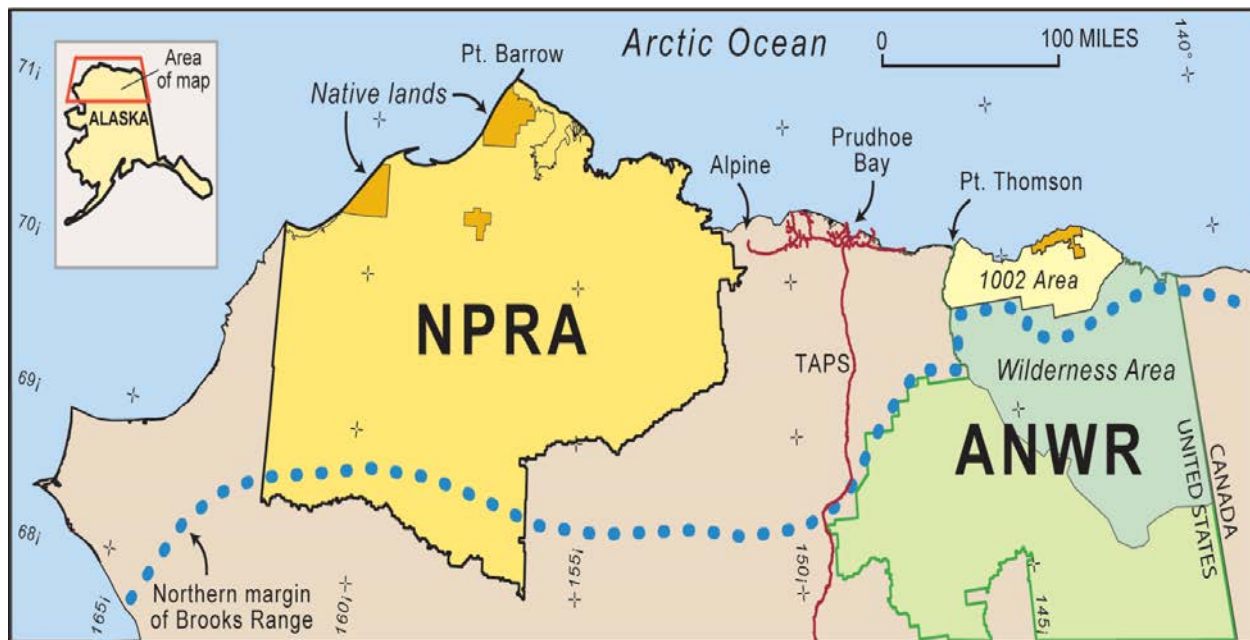


Figure 4.7: Map of NPR-A and Prudhoe Bay (location of Alpine oil field and beginning of Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) also shown)

From U.S. Geological Society: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2002/fs045-02/figure1.html>

By February of 1969, ARCO, BP, and Standard Oil had announced their plans to jointly build a \$900 million dollar pipeline, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline system (TAPS), in order to bring Prudhoe Bay oil down through Alaska to the ice-free port town of Valdez and on to waiting markets. The pipeline would be one of the largest of its kind in the world and would necessarily cross lands that were still actively claimed by the Iñupiat (Gallagher, 2001). In April of 1969, Tom Kelly, the Alaska Commissioner of Natural Resources announced the state's plan to auction off nearly 450,000 acres in oil lease sales in the Prudhoe Bay region on September 10th of that year. The prospect of exploitation quickly reached such a level of excitement that Fortune Magazine trumpeted that the 'Hot oil rush in Arctic Alaska' had begun (Paul, 2003). When the lease sales were conducted that September, the state of Alaska brought in \$900 million of potential profits in just one day.

However, several years prior to this event, the Iñupiat of Alaska's North Slope had begun to organize themselves under the simple premise that their people had never been conquered nor had their land ever been sold. This meant that aboriginal title to the North Slope still rested in their hands so that such lands and their leasing rights did not rightly belong to either the federal or state government. Charlie 'Etok' Edwardson formed the North Slope Native Association in 1966, which would quickly be renamed the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA). ASNA was "composed of the Eskimo people of the Northern Slope of the Brooks Range in Alaska with the express intent of securing in court our aboriginal rights and title to said land" (Gallagher, 2001, p.120).

Edwardson credits the Barrow Duck-In of 1961, which was one of the first instances of collective action on the part of North Slope Natives, as the motivation behind ASNA's creation. He explains that this event taught him "that the people, all of the people, acting together could win" (Gallagher, 2001, p. 110). The genesis of the Duck-In itself actually stretches back to the Migratory Bird Act of 1918, which sought to protect certain game species that crossed back and forth between the US and Canada. This act was drafted in accordance with standard management practices of the time that worked to protect select species of ducks and geese by advocating for a total hunting ban during their typical nesting season, which generally lasted from March until September. The problem with this approach was that it did not take into account the fact that many of the bird species covered by the Act migrated to the Arctic expressly to nest so that their presence in the region fell entirely under the hunting moratorium. This was highly problematic for many Iñupiat, who hunted these birds as a critical source of fresh meat during the spring subsistence cycle. When Alaska was still a Territory back in the 1920s, it tried to address this issue by permitting the taking of Treaty bird species by those in 'absolute need.' By the early

1960s, however, the US Fish and Wildlife Service began to enact a new management plan that sought to strictly enforce the original treaty of 1918 (Sepez, 2002).

As Edwardsen describes it, the Barrow Duck-In was prompted by the routine village visit of a Fish and Wildlife agent, who arrested several Iñupiaq hunters on May 31, 1961 because they had taken eider ducks ‘out of season’. Two days later, the agent was confronted by 138 hunters who presented themselves en masse with eider ducks in hand, demanding that they also be arrested. Over 300 Barrow residents had also signed a petition to President Kennedy demanding that their subsistence rights be protected and that all pertinent treaties should be amended to recognize those rights. The Secretary of the Interior’s immediate response was to insist that the perpetrators be arrested, but by that time Barrow residents were so well organized that the local women were also willing to present themselves for arrest and there was simply no way that local jail facilities could process and hold that many people all at once. Canadian subsistence hunters had also spontaneously joined the protest and when a territorial court in Canada ruled that the Act did not apply to subsistence hunters, the federal government here in the US finally agreed to drop all charges. Although the Act was not amended at the time, an informal policy came into place where subsistence communities were notified of the imminent arrival of Fish and Wildlife Agents so that any incriminating evidence could be safely stored out of sight (Gallagher, 2001).

ASNA’s origins can be traced to the Duck-in because Edwardsen realized that by working together his people could succeed in pressing their claims. Once ASNA was formed, Edwardsen immediately reached out to Tlingit lawyer Louis Frederick ‘Fred’ Paul to represent the organization’s interests. Fred Paul was known for his earlier work on the Tlingit and Haida’s efforts to sue the US government over their lost ancestral lands. On the behalf of ASNA, Paul

soon filed a claim with the Bureau of Land Management, which was the overseer of the NPR-A. This document insisted that the Iñupiat were the rightful owners of the entirety of the North Slope “based on aboriginal title by reason of occupation from time immemorial which title has not been extinguished now or ever” (Paul, 2003, p. 137). Paul’s son, Fred Paul Jr., soon took over ASNA’s cause and he initiated the formal processes necessary for the Iñupiat to eventually be able to sue multiple oil companies like ARCO and BP on the grounds that the Iñupiat considered any oil exploration on the North Slope to be a form of trespass that violated their rights as owners.

When the Office of the Interior announced the sale of 4.5 million acres near the North Slope community of Point Hope in September 1966, Paul Jr., now acting as the main legal representative of ASNA, questioned how the US government could dispose of lands on which the Iñupiat had quite recently made a formal claim of ownership. In response, the Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall assured him that although the Point Hope lease sale would take place, no formal action would be taken on it or any other lease sale until the issue of Native land claims could be properly settled (Paul, 2003). Udall’s preliminary injunction was widely interpreted by governmental agencies as a blanket call against finalizing any land selections, which resulted in the now infamous ‘land-freeze’ that Udall formalized in December of 1968. Udall’s decision quickly created a political atmosphere that led to “a sustained and energetic effort to resolve Native claims” (Zellen, 2008, p. 33) by Iñupiaq activists and big oil companies alike.

Back when Edwardson had created ASNA with the goal of organizing the Iñupiat of the North Slope, his long-term aspirations had always been aimed towards a Congressional settlement that would resolve their land claims once and for all. Even though major oil deposits had not yet been located in the region, he fervently believed that big oil was there and that when

it was found it would create a tremendous pressure to establish clear title to the land. Edwardsen admits that he was essentially counting on the white man's eagerness to access this oil to provide the ultimate motivation for a land claims settlement with his people. The discovery of oil would also add to the Iñupiat's advantage because it would be very difficult for the US government to adopt its standard strategy when it came to Native land claims, which was to try and shortchange Tribes by suggesting that their lands were essentially worthless. By the time oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay, Edwardsen fully understood that "oil-society's hunger for it- had given Native claims the priority they had never had before" (Gallagher, 2001, p. 208).

The oil companies behind the pipeline project did indeed prove to be powerful allies to the Native settlement cause if only because they were equally impatient to have the issue resolved so that they could commence their construction. They proceeded to send their own lobbyists to Washington to press for a settlement and their money and power would prove to be highly influential in terms of keeping settlement legislation moving through Congress. On the other hand, many conservation groups worked to block construction of the pipeline and even the land settlement itself, which they believed would likely end up as a "raid on the public domain of Alaska" (Paul, 2003, p. 290). Edwardsen was particularly disgruntled by those environmentalists who spoke of their concern for how wildlife would be impacted by such development, but who had nothing to say about the needs and ultimate fate of the area's original peoples. His frustration with many of the draft impact reports on the pipeline, which said nothing about his people, led him to ask, "Why is it that the Western civilization worries about things and does not worry about people?" (Gallagher, 2001, p. 21).

Within the first year of its formation, ASNA joined up with the Alaska Native Federation (ANF), which was created also created in 1966 as a statewide organization that represented the

interests of all Alaskan Natives. It was the AFN that would ultimately take their demands for a land claims settlement to the US Congress. AFN's ability to present a united front certainly gave Alaskan Natives more bargaining power, but it also raised serious issues among the many Tribes who were each seeking to act in their own best interest. The biggest issue was the land-lost vs. population-proportion formulas to determine the percentages that each tribe would receive from any settlement. The Iñupiat preferred the former where any cash payment would be divided according to the amount of lands given up in the settlement, while more populous tribes who laid claim to much less territory preferred the latter where the settlement would be divided according to the population numbers of each Native group. The Iñupiat, whose traditional territory represented 15% of the entire area of Alaska but whose people only represented 4% of the Native population, argued for their side based on the idea that they would be giving up more land than any other group. Other Tribal groups, which included the Tlingit and Haida who had already lost and been compensated for 99% of their land, but who represented 16% of the Native population, strongly favored a settlement based on population size. The Iñupiat further insisted that it was the discovery of oil on their lands that was more or less the only reason that a land claims settlement for all Alaskan Natives was given any kind of serious consideration (Paul, 2003). The Iñupiat also argued for a lands-lost rather than population formula because it was more in line with the idea that this settlement represented governmental recognition of their legal rights through aboriginal title and was not a federal welfare or poverty relief program for Alaskan Native populations (Gallagher, 2001).

In the fall of 1970, internal tensions had reached such a breaking point that Edwardsen, acting as the Executive Director of ASNA, withdrew his organization from the AFN. Edwardsen believed that this defection would allow the Iñupiat to broker a separate settlement with the US

government that would be more amenable to their interests. AFN leadership soon realized that the loss of ASNA would be a serious detriment to their cause as much of the media attention on this issue had been centered on the North Slope (Paul, 2003). In order to keep ASNA within the Federation, its Board members agreed to set up 12 regions within Alaska parsed out along Tribal lines, rather than create one state-wide organization to administer settlement monies as had been originally suggested. A land-lost formula would then be used for the distribution of lands and money awarded in the settlement process and 50% of any money from regional oil and mineral development would be given to the local region with the other 50% distributed among the other regions (Gallagher, 2001). Joe Upicksoun, the acting President of ASNA at the time, found this compromise to be satisfactory and he promptly allowed ASNA to rejoin the AFN. Edwardsen reportedly wept at this news and less than 2 weeks later, AFN Board members representing the Yup'ik of Bethel and the Tlingit and Haida of Southeast Alaska worked together to have some of these revisions overturned. Most significantly, the original per capita formula was reinstated for the distribution of the entirety of the cash settlement (Paul, 2003).

4.7 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971

Overall, the final claims settlement signed into law by President Nixon was a major improvement over two earlier bills that had each been promoted by either the Senate or House of Representatives. S. 1830 would have allowed for a mere 10 million acres of land for selection and it would have mandated that all compensation would be entirely dispensed in terms of population. H.R. 3100 would have only granted ownership of actual village sites and surrounding areas that were no more than three times the size of the village site, which would have resulted in 80,000 acres being distributed among all Natives in Alaska. The bill that was actually signed into law was written by the Nixon administration itself and was sent to Congress on April 6, 1971.

After months of Congressional debates, President Nixon finally signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) on December 18, 1971. ANCSA had assembled all its members for this event and each region was asked to cast a vote indicating whether they accepted or rejected the provisions of the Settlement. There was only one dissenting vote- from the Arctic Slope representatives. Edwardsen and his colleagues felt that the Iñupiat had fought hard and had gotten much more than they were originally offered in the settlement, but that they had also given up so much. In the end, Native tribes were awarded 11% of the 365 million acres that make up Alaska, the entirety to which they had once held aboriginal title. Edwardsen also believed that both the Iñupiat and the state of Alaska had made a major error in not pressing for the dissolution of federal control over the Naval Petroleum Reserve 4 and the Arctic Wildlife Refuge (Gallagher, 2001).

On the other hand, Fred Paul, the Tlingit lawyer who represented the interests of the Iñupiat of the North Slope throughout the land claims process, was like many other Alaskan Natives in that he was proud of their accomplishments. He has described the settlement as “the largest, if not only, *bloodless* redistribution of wealth in the history of humankind, let alone the United States” (Paul, 2003, p. 13). In the end, ANCSA extinguished all long-standing aboriginal claims to territory in exchange for almost 44 million acres of public land and nearly \$1 billion in compensation (Edwards & Natarajan, 2008). At the time, the US government considered the Act to be exceedingly generous given that it was the largest land settlement in US history (Huhndorf & Huhndorf, 2011). It was also considered to be an ethical improvement on the historic treaty policies that guided federal-tribal relations in the lower 48. Such policies had generally created reservations where the tribes did not actually own their land because it was held ‘in trust’ for them by the federal government (Skinner, 1997).

What ANCSA did instead was create 12 regional for-profit Native corporations (plus a 13th corporation created for Native Alaskans living outside the state) and more than 200 village-level corporations, which each belong to one of these regions. Every Alaskan Native would become shareholders in both a regional as well as a village-level corporation. Through ANCSA, these corporations were granted ownership of a majority of the land with the exception of the 13th regional corporation, which did not receive any land allotments. The village corporations received surface rights to 22 million acres, while the regional corporations owned the subsurface rights to these same lands. The regional corporations also divided ownership (including subsurface rights) to another 16 million acres of land. The remaining settlement land was meant to go towards individual allotment applications, town sites and historic sites, etc. The regional corporations also received most of the \$962.5 million in settlement money (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998).

The expressed intent of this corporate structure was to assist Native Alaskans by avoiding the perceived paternalism of the lower 48's reservation system and instead giving them "control - as corporate stakeholders - over their land and other natural resources and the profit motive for economic development" (Berardi, 1998, p. 91-92). Many have argued that ANCSA did succeed in providing Native Alaskans with unprecedented economic opportunities and ultimately some measure of political power (Huhndorf & Huhndorf, 2011). Some regional corporations were decidedly more fortunate than others in this regard given that the lands they received contained valuable resources like timber and oil. The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), whose shareholders are the Iñupiat of the North Slope, has certainly benefited from the fact that its five million acres contained the Prudhoe Bay oil deposits (Hensley, 2009). ASRC is currently the largest corporation in the state of Alaska in terms of the number of people it employs and it

handles over a billion dollars in annual business generated by its many subsidiaries located in places as diverse as Alaska, Mexico and the Marshall Islands, which are involved in everything from petroleum refining and marketing to construction and government services (Reiss, 2012). On the other hand, many Native corporations received title to lands that had very little market value so that they have struggled to maintain profitability.

ANCSA critics have also pointed out that regardless of the extreme financial success of some Native corporations, the Act, in general, has still largely failed to alleviate the conditions of rural poverty experienced by many Native individuals and families that it once promised to address (Berardi, 1998; Edwards & Natarajan, 2008). Another critique of ANCSA concerns the rapid social changes that it ushered in as once communal lands were necessarily transformed into corporate property (Huhndorf & Huhndorf, 2011). This new form of ownership divorced the land from the traditional management structures and practices that had long ensured its viability as productive grounds for their subsistence. Native Tribes were forced to adapt new administration strategies that treated their land like an ‘asset’ to be managed for maximum profit. This clearly stood in marked contrast to their traditional relationships to the land where it was viewed as the ‘cultural touchstone’ through which they maintained their value systems and cultures (Zellen, 2008). Local villagers, whose livelihood and sense of cultural identity is inextricably linked to their subsistence way of life, themselves became shareholders in village and regional corporations whose very nature shifted their priorities away from the maintenance of subsistence and towards their profit margins. Steve Langdon (1986), a longtime critic of ANCSA, thus suggests that the ‘internal contradictions’ that are inherent to this system persist as some of the most problematic aspects of this legislation.

ANCSA also extinguished all traditional land-related rights including those of aboriginal hunting and fishing. At the time of ANCSA's passage, the Secretary of the Interior promised to "take any action necessary to protect the subsistence needs of the Natives" (Lee, 2003, p. 508), but the issue of subsistence still remained a critical point of contention. The 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was mainly designed to protect 110 million acres of land by placing it in the federal conservation system, but is also sought to address the issue of Native subsistence rights. ANILCA was in many ways the national follow-up to Alaska's own 1978 subsistence law, which identified the subsistence of any Alaskan resident as the highest priority use on public lands, which would trump the interests of sport hunting and fishing if resources ever became scarce. ANILCA grants subsistence rights on all federal lands to all rural Alaskans, without specifically adding any provisions for Natives. It does also mandate that federal officials who oversee lands such as the NPR-A must consider issues of subsistence in their overall management plans (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998).

While a number of improvements had clearly been made, some scholars of ANCSA have argues that the state and federal government's inability to extend specific rights to Alaskan Natives represents an ongoing "failure to recognize subsistence as an aboriginal right with cultural meanings for Native peoples" (Huhndorf & Huhndorf, 2011, p. 393). The Inuit Circumpolar Council, which advocates for the cultural rights and interests of all Inuit, further insists that subsistence must be properly understood as "a highly complex notion that includes vital economic, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions...Subsistence means much more than mere survival or minimum living standards. It enriches and sustains Inuit communities in a manner that promotes cohesiveness, pride, and sharing" (cited in Kuokkanen, 2011, p. 219).

By placing control over their land and subsistence resources in the hands of the Native corporations, the fear exists that ANCSA has not actually supported Native self-determination but has instead stripped Tribal members of their abilities “to determine for themselves the course of their economic and cultural lives” (Berardi, 1998, p. 107). In the end, the passage of ANCSA has alternately been interpreted as either “the beginning of a great era for Native people in Alaska ...[or] one more step in the plan for termination of the Native way of life in Alaska” (Langdon, 1986, p. 33). In the wake of ANCSA, the issue of subsistence remained a top priority for many Iñupiaq leaders who creatively sought out ways to address these concerns in a new era characterized both by new found prosperity on the North Slope as well as a much more limited scope to their aboriginal rights.

4.8 Creation of the North Slope Borough

The creation of both the North Slope Borough as well as the Inuit Circumpolar Council, which seeks to represent the political and cultural interests of all Inuit, were both motivated, in part, by a desire to protect the subsistence rights of the Iñupiat. They were also largely the result of one man’s efforts (Hensley, 2009). Eben Hopson was an Iñupiaq from Barrow who served in Alaska’s territorial legislature. When Alaska became a state in 1959, he was elected to its first State Senate. Hopson is also credited with helping to organize the protest efforts of Barrow residents during the Duck-In of 1961 (Blackman, 1989). Hopson later became the first Executive Director of ASNA and he was also the second Vice President of AFN. Hopson eventually left his position at ASNA and moved from Barrow to Anchorage to become the Executive Director of AFN during the height of the land claims process (Paul, 2003). In 1972, Hopson is said to have had “the inspiration to incorporate the North Slope Borough as an Iñupiaq government based upon Prudhoe Bay as a tax base” (Brewster, 2004, p. 16). Hopson served as the North Slope

Borough's first Mayor and he was reelected to office in 1975. His primary goal was to provide North Slope residents with the same basic services enjoyed by their fellow Americans in the lower 48. He therefore spent much of his energies trying to modernize villages, many of which still lacked basic services including schools, health clinics, power plants, water and sewer facilities, adequate housing and roads (Hensley, 2009). Hopson served as the Borough's mayor until his death in 1980.

Hopson and his colleagues succeeded in creating the North Slope Borough as a unique 'home-rule' government, which encompasses 90,000 square miles and unites the eight predominantly Iñupiaq villages found on Alaska's North Slope (Brewster, 2004). Local Iñupiaq leaders like Hopson designed the Borough to derive its funding through property taxes placed on all oil field development. These monies were then funneled back to local communities in the form of both extensive infrastructure expansion projects as well as the creation of new programs to provide much-needed educational and health services to the region. The Borough's zoning, permitting and planning powers were also seen as a way to help protect the subsistence lands that fell under its jurisdiction as a municipal government. In the end, both the Borough's powers to safeguard Native subsistence resources as well as the significant improvements in the quality of life it was able to achieve for many of the North Slope's Iñupiat were closely linked to the oil extraction process (Zellen, 2008).

As of 2010, oil monies comprised almost the entire budget of the North Slope Borough with over \$250 million in annual tax revenue generated by the onshore facilities operating at Prudhoe Bay (Reiss, 2012). However, production levels from Prudhoe Bay have been steadily declining over the years. The concern now exists that the volume of oil moving through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline may soon drop below the point where it will be physically possible to

maintain the continuous flow necessary to operate safely. Edward Itta, a former Iñupiaq mayor of the North Slope Borough, explained that his hesitant support of the Arctic offshore drilling program was based on his realization “that my biggest responsibility was maintaining the economic well-being of the borough and that largely has to do with maintaining oil in the pipeline” (Birger, 2012, para. 30).

This situation is further complicated by both the extremely high cost of living on the North Slope as well as the low levels of employment found in many of its rural villages. The 2010 census for the village of Wainwright reveals a 26.3% unemployment rate so that many families depend on their shareholder dividends from ASRC and their village level corporation, Olgoonik, to supplement their incomes. A majority of people in Wainwright also rely on their subsistence pursuits to supply over half of their diet (North Slope Borough, 2010). A reliance on subsistence certainly helps them avoid many of the costly foodstuffs offered at local stores, but it does not allow them to completely circumvent the market economy since they still must purchase and often replace their high dollar hunting equipment, which includes things like snow machines, motor boats, and rifles. Wainwright leaders and community members have also identified the dearth of local job opportunities for young people in the village as one of the primary threats to the maintenance of their community and traditional way of life. They fear that this deficiency will continue to encourage high levels of outmigration by youth who are not likely to return to live in the village after relocating elsewhere (North Slope Borough, ‘Wainwright Comp’, 2014). The task that remains is to continue to find ways to balance the economic needs of the North Slope Borough and its Iñupiaq residents with their cultural needs as indigenous peoples. While the creation of organizations like the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission have made great strides in helping to address these

issues, their activities have also raised a number of concerns regarding the general treatment of indigenous traditional knowledge and values within contemporary environmental management and development scenarios.

4.9 The Inuit Circumpolar Council & the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission

During his time as Mayor of the North Slope Borough, Eben Hopson also founded the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC, originally known as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference) in 1977. The ICC was envisioned as means of reuniting the approximately 150,000 Inuit scattered across the Circumpolar North whose common culture predated their division into the four modern nation-states in which they now dwelled, namely Russia, Canada, the United States, and Greenland (then ruled by Denmark). Hopson saw this union as means of combating many of the contemporary political and economic pressures that challenged the maintenance of their traditional lifeways, which emanated from both within their individual countries as well as at an international level (Hensley, 2009). The four primary goals of the ICC today are listed as: “strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar region; promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level; develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic, and social development of circumpolar regions” (ICC-Canada, 2015)

One of the issues that motivated the formation of the ICC were rumors of an impending international whaling ban that would likely be supported by the U.S. government. The moratorium that followed proved to be foundational to the creation of another culturally important organization, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission. In 1977, the International Whaling Commission enacted a ban on all bowhead whaling due to a growing concern that these animals were in steep decline, which was based on scientific estimates of their populations

(Freeman et. al, 1998). At the same time, a highly publicized ‘Save the Whales’ campaign found adamant support in both the Carter Administration (Hensley, 2009) as well as environmental organizations like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. The North Slope’s Iñupiat, who have often described themselves as the ‘people of the whale,’ were dismayed, however, to learn that their subsistence hunt of the bowhead would be banned along with all other commercial pursuits. Such a blanket ban did little to recognize the “deep-rooted, spiritual, and material relationship” (Sakakibara, 2010, p. 1004) that the Iñupiat have long maintained with these whales, which has played a central role in shaping and maintaining their cultural identity. Iñupiaq hunters also strongly contested the validity of the biologists’ low populations estimates as compared against their own intimate knowledge of these animals (Freeman et al., 1998). In particular, the Iñupiat knew that bowheads can swim for long distances under the ice or along the far side of the open leads where the animals would not be spotted by biologists and they therefore insisted the bowhead’s actual numbers were much higher (Brewster, 2004).

The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, originally representing nine (now eleven) whaling communities, was thus formed to both preserve the health of the bowhead whale population as well as to protect Native whaling rights (North Slope Borough, ‘AEWC’, 2014). Against threats of non-compliance with the total ban, the AEWC was able to negotiate an interim agreement with the US government. This was replaced with a comprehensive agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 1981 that finally recognized the ‘cultural and nutritional needs’ of the Iñupiat by establishing harvest quotas, which are reviewed and reissued every five years (Freeman et al., 1998). As it turns out, Iñupiaq hunters like Charles Brower’s son, Harry Brower, were also able share their traditional knowledge of whale behaviors with scientists from the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management, which

helped them to confirm that bowhead population numbers were, in fact, quite healthy (Ahmaogak, n.d.; Brewster, 2004, Reiss, 2012).

While the AEWC eventually found success in advocating for their aboriginal whaling rights, the original hunting ban still serves to highlight the bias against the traditional knowledge of the Iñupiat that was held by official decision-makers who hesitated to consider any evidence that disputed the claims of governmental scientists. In contemporary research supported by the ICC, the 1977 moratorium has been held out as a concrete example of the types of cultural imperialism that can arise in the context of environmental management scenarios in the Circumpolar North that inevitably involve competing value systems and paradigms (Freeman et al., 1998). Here the ICC has argued that the perspectives of ‘urbanized’ peoples vs. those who mainly follow a subsistence way of life are markedly different and that they invariably come into competition with one another in ways that tend to threaten the lifeways and values of Arctic peoples. They further explain that for the first group, nature is mainly ‘a dream, an ideal’ where people tend live their lives “far removed from the life-through-death reality of feeding one’s family that remains the everyday circumstance for half of humankind” (Freeman et al., 1998, p. 156). On the other hand, the Iñupiat see humankind as an integral part of nature, “just another part of the food chain” (Hensley, 2009, p. 30) and over time they have developed profound relationships with their environment based on a daily and attuned engagement with their surroundings. In these cultural clashes, however, it is often the perspectives of those members of the dominant society that generally live the farthest removed from nature that are ultimately advanced over those who live closest to nature. In such acts of cultural imperialism, many indigenous peoples are ultimately forced to follow rules and regulations that conflict with their own understandings of the world (Freeman et al., 1998).

Despite the many successes of the North Slope Borough, the ICC and the AEW in advancing the economic and political powers of the Iñupiat, both a highly problematic dependency on the monies generated by the oil industry as well as a tendency to privilege the knowledge of non-Native decision-makers continues to persist. The Arctic offshore drilling program has therefore been welcomed by many North Slope residents due to its potential to create local job opportunities while it has also been roundly contested by others who are concerned about its impacts on their subsistence way of life. In casual conversations held during the preliminary phases of this research, many residents also suggested that such development was likely to occur regardless of “whether they liked it or not.” The fact that Shell Oil’s attempts to pioneer offshore oil drilling in the Arctic eventually encountered a host of legal challenges and technical difficulties suggests that such efforts need to be more fully evaluated in terms of the social issues and environmental concerns that they have raised.

4.10 The Arctic Offshore Drilling Program

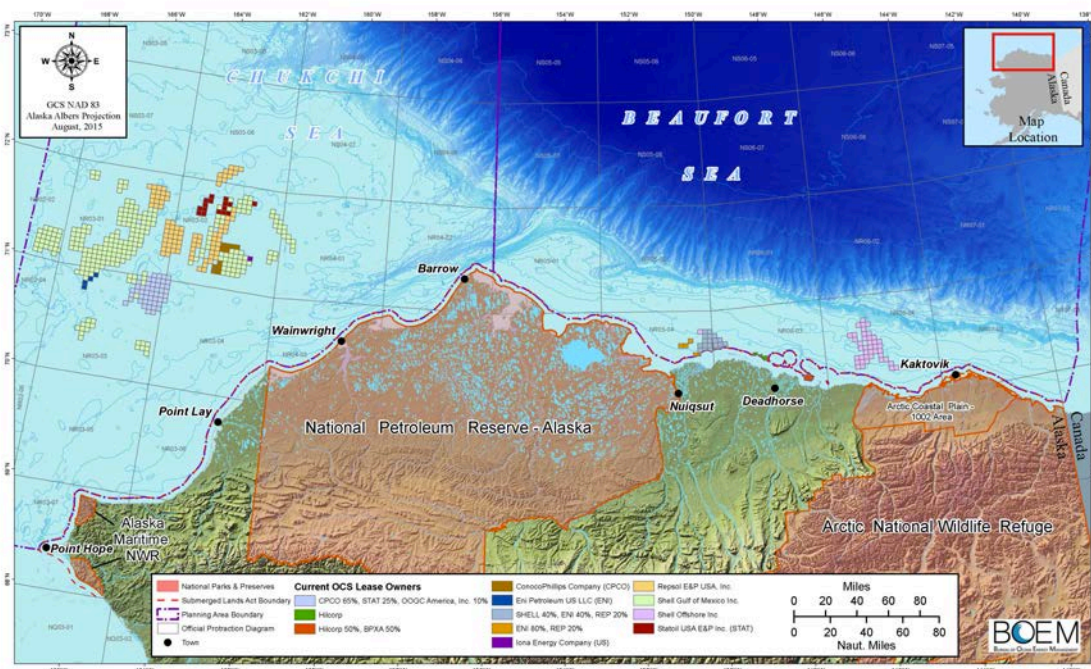


Figure 4.8: Overview of Active Leases on the Arctic OCS (as of August 2015)
From BOEM: <http://www.boem.gov/Arctic-Overview/>

Oil exploration and leasing on Alaska's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) began in the late 1970s and since then it has occurred primarily in the Beaufort Sea. Prior to the summer of 2012, 30 exploratory wells had been drilled in this region with most activity concentrated just offshore from Prudhoe Bay. The Chukchi Sea, in contrast, has only ever experienced very limited exploratory activity. In 1988 and 1991, two different lease sales were held in the Chukchi Sea, which resulted in Shell drilling four exploratory wells at its Burger, Klondike, Crackerjack and Popcorn prospects. Chevron also drilled a fifth exploratory well at its Diamond prospect (Dept. of the Interior, 2013; MMS, 2007). Hydrocarbons, mainly in the form of natural gas, were found at all wells. However, without the discovery of any appreciable oil, further efforts were considered to be economically infeasible and all leases were subsequently allowed to expire (Reiss, 2012; Dept. of the Interior, 2013).

At the time, these explorations did not go uncontested by the Iñupiat of Alaska's North Slope. Although it was primarily concerned with on-land oil explorations, *United States v. Atlantic Richfield Co.*, which was ruled upon by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in 1980, was a case that set important precedents regarding exploratory activities pursued in this region in the wake of ANCSA. Here the United States government (acting on its fiduciary duty to the Iñupiat) and the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS, the North Slope's regional Tribal organization) attempted to sue the state of Alaska and multiple oil corporations for criminal trespass on Iñupiaq lands based on aboriginal title (*United States v. Atlantic Richfield Co.*, 1980). However, the court ruled that ANCSA had "extinguished not only the aboriginal titles of all Alaska Natives, but also every claim 'based on' aboriginal title" (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998) so that the Iñupiat had no legal cause to make such claims.

When ICAS and the Ukpeagvik Inuit Corporation (UIC, Barrow's village level Native Corporation) later attempted to sue the US government to stop the then-proposed offshore oil development in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, which was seen as a threat to the integrity of their ancestral hunting grounds, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals passed a similar ruling in 1984. In this case, the Iñupiat argued that they possessed unextinguished aboriginal title to the many miles of offshore waters that they had used for millennia. However, the court found that if the Iñupiat had at one time possessed an exclusive aboriginal right to Alaska's offshore areas, this right was also extinguished by ANCSA (ICAS v. United States, 1982; ICAS v. United States, 1984; Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998).

In *Amoco Production Co v. Village of Gambell*, Alaskan Natives once again sought an injunction against oil and gas leasing on the OCS based on ANILCA's requirement that the federal government must consider the impacts of public land development on subsistence. However, in 1987 the Supreme Court ultimately overturned two earlier decisions in order to rule that the OCS was not part of Alaska and was therefore beyond the territorial reach of ANILCA (*Amoco Production Co v. Village of Gambell*, 1987; Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998). This meant that development in this region was not subject to even ANILCA's relatively weak provisions in regards to the protection of Native subsistence rights. As a whole, this suite of rulings effectively left the Iñupiat with no legal cause to contest offshore development in terms of either aboriginal title or their subsistence rights.

Alaska's OCS eventually saw a brief lull in exploratory activity. Before the summer of 2012, the last Arctic offshore well was drilled in 2003 in the Beaufort Sea near Prudhoe Bay. New lease sales were held for the Beaufort Sea in 2003, 2005, and 2007. The 2003 sale, Beaufort Sea Oil and Gas Lease Sale 186, which was the eighth sale ever to be held in this region, resulted

in 34 leases being sold to three companies for a total of \$10 million. In 2005, Lease Sale 195 resulted in 117 leases being purchased by Shell Offshore, ConocoPhillips and Armstrong Oil for a total of almost \$47 million. The 2007 Beaufort Sea Lease Sale 202 resulted in 90 additional leases purchased by six companies, including Shell Gulf of Mexico and ConocoPhillips Alaska, for a total of \$42 million (BOEM, 'Historical Lease Sales', n.d.). The validity of this last lease sale was contested in Court by the North Slope Borough and Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, but an August 2009 ruling by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the sale (North Slope Borough v. Minerals Management Service et al., 2009).

When the Chukchi Sea Oil and Gas Lease Sale 193 was held on February 6, 2008 as part of the Interior's 2007-2012 oil and gas leasing program, a significant level of renewed interest in the Outer Continental Shelf was readily apparent. The sale is one of the largest underwater oil lease sales in US history with 487 leases sold for a total of \$2.7 billion. Shell Oil alone purchased 275 leases for an estimated \$2.1 billion (Reiss, 2012; Dept. of the Interior, 2013). With a total of 5,355 blocks up for sale in the Chukchi, leases were purchased by seven different companies (see **Figure 4.9**) including Shell Gulf of Mexico, ConocoPhillips, StatoilHydro USA E & P, the North American Civil Recoveries Arbitrage (NACRA), Repsol E&P USA, Eni Petroleum US, and Iona Energy Company (BOEM, 2008; MMS, 2008).

BP's *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April of 2010, which stands as the worst such spill in US history, temporarily put the fate of these lease sales in question. On May 27, 2010, then Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar responded to this disaster by announcing a six month moratorium on deepwater offshore drilling that also suspended exploratory drilling in the Arctic (which is not considered to be 'deepwater') (Dept. of the Interior, 'Salazar calls', 2010). However, by December 1st of 2010, the Department of the

Interior announced that it would continue to honor its existing leases in the Arctic. Although it would not conduct any further lease sales in the Chukchi or Beaufort under its 2007-2012 plan, it would move forward with its processing of those drilling permit requests associated with earlier lease sales (Dept. of the Interior, ‘Salazar announces’, 2010).

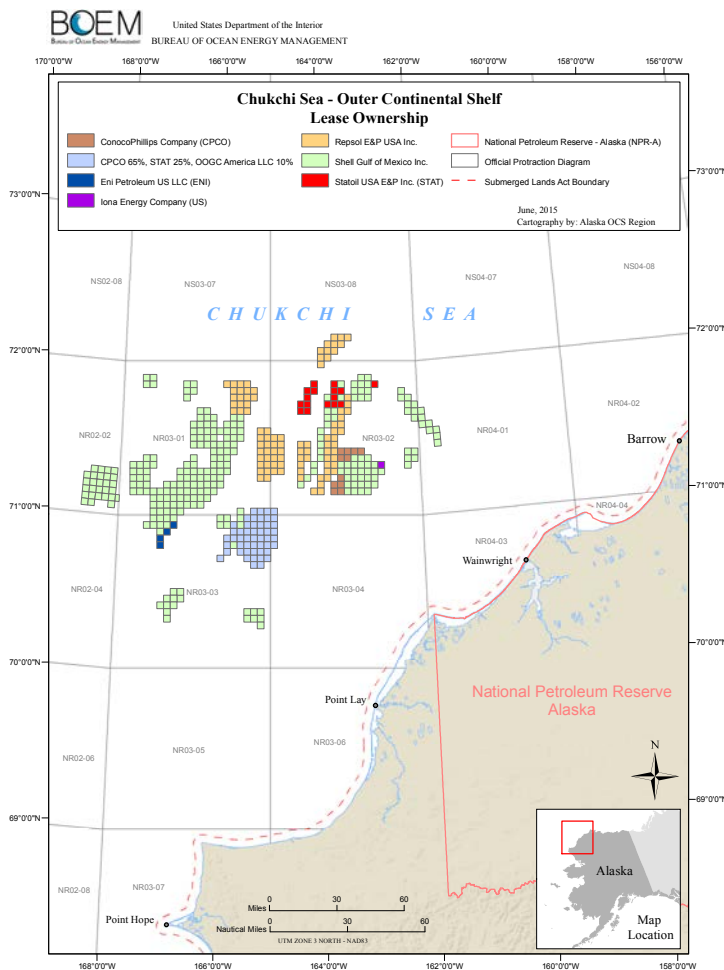


Figure 4.9: Active Leases in the Chukchi Sea (as of June 2015)

From BOEM: http://www.boem.gov/uploadedFiles/BOEM/About_BOEM/BOEM_Regions/Alaska_Region/Leasing_and_Plans/Leasing/Chukchi_Leases_Owner.pdf

Even with the suspension lifted, Shell Oil as the pioneer in offshore drilling efforts in the Chukchi was unable to drill in 2011 due to delays associated with the EPA’s air-emissions permits, which were required for their drillships. The original approval of these permits had been successfully contested by a coalition of national environmental groups in alliance with the

Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC), Native Village of Point Hope (the village's Tribal Council) and the North Slope Native non-profit organization, Resisting Environmental Destruction on Indigenous Lands (REDOIL), which focuses on social and environmental justice issues that impact Tribal peoples in Alaska. The emission permits were therefore remanded and necessarily resubmitted before gaining final approval (Reiss, 2012). Despite these setbacks, the federal government began to confidently promote its offshore leases as a key component of the Interior's new leasing program for 2012-2017 and these explorations were touted as a critical means of helping the US to continue to grow "our energy economy at home" (Murphy, 2012).

Shell Oil did, however, soon encounter several rather significant technical setbacks during its inaugural 2012 Arctic drilling season, which was itself drastically foreshortened by issues associated with both its spill response barge, the *Arctic Challenger* as well as the barge's legally mandated Arctic Containment System (ACS). The *Arctic Challenger* did not actually meet its certification requirements until October of 2012 while its ACS, which featured a dome that was designed to be lowered down in the event of an underwater well blowout, failed its initial deployment test. As a consequence, Shell Oil's drilling permits were only given partial approval in late August of 2012. Shell, in the end, was only authorized to drill top hole sections that would not penetrate into potential hydrocarbon-bearing zones until such time as the *Challenger* and its ACS were in place and fully functional. Ultimately, Shell only completed one top well at its Burger A site in the Chukchi Sea and one at its Sivulliq N site in the Beaufort Sea before the end of its 2012 drilling season (US Depart. of the Interior, 2013)

In addition to Shell's issues with the *Arctic Challenger*, both of its drilling rigs, the *Kulluk* (working in the Beaufort Sea) and the *Noble Discoverer* (stationed in the Chukchi Sea) were issued multiple air quality violations by the EPA for the very permits for which Shell had

previously struggled to gain final approval. As a result of these violations, Shell was forced to agree to pay \$1.1 million in fines (EPA, 2013; Murphy, 2013). Shell's subcontractor, Noble Drilling, was also found guilty of eight felony offenses stemming from environmental and safety violations aboard the rigs and was required to pay \$12.2 million in fines (Rosen, 'Shell contractor,' 2014). Each of the drilling rigs were also separately involved in two very well-publicized accidents. The *Noble Discoverer* slipped its anchor near Dutch Harbor on July 14th and nearly ran aground so that it needed to be sent off to Asia for extensive repairs. The *Kulluk* then later ran aground on December 31st and experienced such heavy damage that it was eventually scrapped and replaced with the *Polar Pioneer*. The additional costs and time needed for repairs and the acquisition of a new rig meant that Shell Oil was unable to resume its drilling activities in 2013 (Broder, 2013; Funk, 2014; Restino, 2015; Vercammen & Carter, 2012).

A January 2014 Court of Appeals ruling resulted in Shell Oil also missing out on the 2014 drilling season. This ruling had its genesis in a 2008 suit filed by the Native Village of Point Hope as lead defendant alongside 12 other co-defendants including REDOIL. Here the legality of the Oil and Gas Lease Sale 193 was contested on the grounds that the pre-sale environmental impact statement (EIS) completed by the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) was inaccurate (Rosen & Cole, 2015). This suit was itself part of a larger critique that suggested the MMS acting under the Bush administration had rushed the permitting process and had overlooked critical information that might have otherwise delayed approval. The MMS was also roundly criticized for its managerial actions leading up to the *Deepwater Horizon* spill, which led to its reorganization into 3 separate units including the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the Bureau of Safety and Environmental

Enforcement (BSEE), and the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (BOEM, ‘The Reorganization’, n.d.; Reiss, 2012; Rosen, ‘Myths’, 2015).

The specific legal challenge raised within the suit was based on the idea that the MMS had violated several key pieces of federal legislation, most notably the National Environmental Policy Act. In particular, it was argued that the MMS had left out important pieces of information regarding potential impacts. It had also drastically underestimated the environmental impacts associated with offshore development in the Chukchi because it had based its assessment on 1 billion barrels of recoverable oil. However, this number was understood to actually represent the minimum amount that would likely be extracted (Native Village of Point Hope et al. v Salazar et al., 2010; Restino, 2015). A 2010 ruling by the Alaska District Court found that this document did have significant data gaps and this resulted in a freeze on any exploratory drilling activities until a rewrite was completed by BOEM in August of 2011. Its approval by then Secretary of the Interior Salazar made it possible for Shell Oil to drill in 2012 (Native Village of Point Hope et al., v. Salazar et al., 2010; Rosen, ‘Interior Secretary’, 2015). However, a January 2014 ruling by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated a moratorium on any drilling activities in the Chukchi Sea until a new EIS incorporating further rewrites was completed (Rosen & Cole, 2015). BOEM’s final rewrite released in February of 2015 was then approved by Secretary Jewell in March, which revalidated the 2008 lease sales and gave BOEM permission to formally consider the revised version of Shell’s Chukchi Sea Exploration Plan, which it had submitted to the Department of the Interior back in August of 2014 (Rosen, ‘Interior Secretary’, 2015).

It is also worth noting that in March of 2015, the Native Village of Point Hope opted to withdraw from this long-standing suit stating that the new federal safeguards for Arctic

conditions, which were largely put into place as a result of the lawsuit, had accomplished their main objectives (Restino, 2015). Point Hope as a community had itself been at times bitterly divided by the prospect of the offshore drilling program. Its Native corporation, Tikigaq, had long supported the development, while its Native Village, particularly under the guidance of its former President Caroline Cannon, had been very vocal in its opposition to the program. This opposition subsequently informed the Native Village's involvement in a number of these types of lawsuits (Demer, 'Iñupiat Tribal', 2012; Yardley & Olsen, 'Arctic Village', 2011). A desire to derive economic benefits from this development has been suggested as a primary motivation for their withdrawal. Jack Schaefer, the current president of the Native Village, has, however, insisted their decision was informed by the belief that "We will not be giving up our protection of our subsistence rights as Iñupiaq people of Point Hope, but need to redirect our efforts in order to be a part of the oversight of all OCS exploratory drilling in the Chukchi Sea" (Rosen & Cole, 2015). This language is similar to that used in July of 2014 to announce the creation of the Arctic Iñupiat Offshore (AIO), which is a new company comprised of ASRC and the six village level corporations from Barrow, Point Hope, Wainwright, Kaktovik, Atkasuk, and Anaktuvuk Pass. Immediately following its formation, AIO entered into an agreement with Shell Oil, which would have given them the option of acquiring an interest in Shell's Chukchi Sea activities. AIO was described as a chance for Iñupiaq shareholders to receive direct benefits from this activity while also giving them a 'seat at the table' in terms of representing their subsistence and economic concerns (ASRC & State of Alaska, 2014).

With both the new EIS approved as well as the backing of the AIO, Shell moved forward in 2015 with its plans to drill six exploratory wells in the Chukchi Sea over multiple seasons. Rather than having one drill rig stationed in the Beaufort Sea and one drill rig in the Chukchi

Sea, Shell opted to keep both its rigs in the Chukchi so that it could simultaneously drill two wells at its Burger prospect (Rosen, ‘Shell’s new Chukchi’, 2014). These plans were soon cut in half, however, by the Department of the Interior when it ruled that Shell could only drill one well at a time. This was due to the fact that their proposed wells, Burger J and Burger V, were only separated by 9 miles when Fish and Wildlife Service regulations regarding the incidental take of marine mammals like walrus required that they had to be at least 15 miles apart in order to minimize impacts. In late July of 2015, the Interior Department granted Shell conditional approval to drill two consecutive wells. Permission, however, once again came with the provision that they could not intrude into hydrocarbon- bearing zones. This was because Shell’s icebreaker, M/V *Fennica*, which contained the emergency capping stack required in the case of a well blowout, had scraped bottom in early July en route to the Arctic and needed to be sent back down South for repairs (BSEE, 2015; Martinson, ‘Interior allows’, 2015).

In the end, Shell was only able to drill at its Burger J site before announcing on September 28, 2015 that it did not plan to pursue further operations in the Arctic for the ‘foreseeable future.’ Shell cited several key factors in its decision, which included the disappointing results from its test well where the oil and gas found was not in sufficient quantities to warrant further exploration. The decreasing economic feasibility of such operations was itself exacerbated by the fact that the price of oil had fallen from \$90 a barrel when Shell first launched its Chukchi plans to currently less than \$50 a barrel. Shell officials also suggested that a ‘challenging and unpredictable federal regulatory environment’ further deterred their exploratory activities (Martinson, ‘Shell calls off’, 2015; Shell, 2015).

As it stands now, Shell still has active leases in both the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, which are not set to expire until 2017 and 2020 respectively (since their original ten year leases

were extended after the temporary court-ordered suspension of exploratory activity.) Both Shell and Statoil recently requested a suspension of their OCS leases, which would have essentially acted as a 5-year extension on these activities. In October 2015, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement denied these requests while also cancelling Lease Sale 237 in the Chukchi Sea (originally set for 2016) and Lease Sale 242 in the Beaufort Sea (scheduled for 2017) due to low corporate interest and weak market conditions (BOEM, ‘Alaska Leasing’, n.d., Martinson, ‘Interior Department Cancels’, 2015). In November of 2015, Statoil, in turn, announced that it would also be withdrawing from the OCS. Statoil cited Shell’s disappointing well results as one of the major reasons behind its decision to abandon its leases in the Chukchi, which includes 16 Statoil operated leases and its stake in 50 leases operated by ConocoPhillips. Statoil suggested that it would likely return to the area in the future while ConocoPhillips itself noted that its plans for its Devils Paw prospect in the Chukchi were still ‘on hold’ (Demarban & Klint, 2015; Statoil, 2015). BOEM, on the other hand, is still moving forward with exploratory activities on the OCS under its current 2012-2017 oil and gas leasing program. A public comment period is now open as part of BOEM’s environmental impact statement preparation process for the Beaufort’s Sea’s Liberty Unit. This is in response to the Development and Production Plan submitted by Hilcorp Alaska to BOEM in September 2014 (BOEM, ‘Hilcorp’, n.d.; Rosen, ‘Myths’, 2015).

It is no longer likely that the Arctic offshore drilling program will play a significant role in any oil and gas leasing strategies pursued by the federal government in the immediate future. However, Alaska politicians like Senator Lisa Murkowski remain staunchly committed to promoting offshore drilling in the Arctic (Rosen, ‘Murkowski’, 2015). It also appears that despite the current administration’s professed desire for the United States to become a world leader in

actively addressing climate change and its impacts, the federal government is itself not entirely willing to foreclose the possibility of offshore drilling in the Arctic (Ryan, 2015). The proposed 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas leasing program, which was released by the Department of the Interior and BOEM in March 2016, confirms the federal government's ongoing commitment to this type of development. While it contains much fewer lease sales than those held under the auspices of the 2012-2017 drilling program plan, the newly proposed program includes two scheduled lease sales in the Arctic Ocean: one in the Beaufort Sea in 2020 and one in the Chukchi Sea in 2022. These potential lease sales are scheduled later on within the program in order "to provide additional opportunity to evaluate and obtain information regarding environmental issues, subsistence use needs, and infrastructure capabilities, as well as results from any exploration or development activity associated with existing leases" (Dept. of Interior & BOEM, 2016). Shell's and Statoil's withdrawal from the Arctic offshore drilling theatre therefore represents a critical moment of pause within both the OCS drilling program itself as well as the larger trajectory of regional industrial development now made increasingly more feasible by the realities of an ever-warming Arctic. The many environmental and social issues that have been raised by the offshore drilling program thus provide an important opportunity to reflect on those 'lessons learned', which must be considered if a changing Arctic is to be managed in a culturally inclusive and environmentally just manner in the years to come.

4.11 Conclusion: Negotiating Change & Inupiaq Values

At the broadest level, the Arctic offshore drilling program has often been presented as an inevitable outcome of a post-9/11 world where the drive to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy is seen as very much an issue of national security (Labban, 2011). The Obama administration has further argued that even as the nation attempts to transition to cleaner energy

sources, our current reliance on oil and gas will continue for some time so that developing our domestic resources should remain a key priority (Ryan, 2015). A more detailed understanding of the history of the Alaskan Arctic and its peoples serves to illuminate how such a national push to promote the nation's 'energy economy' is situated in and must inevitably contend within the contemporary political, economic, and cultural terrain of the North Slope and its Native villages. For many Iñupiat, the various cultural and social changes associated with North Slope oil production have not always been welcome. Yet, the general advancements made in their material well-being in the wake of ANCSA and the creation of the North Slope Borough, have led a quite a few local leaders to contend that "oil, like it or not, has been on balance a good thing" (Medred, 2012, 'Shell gets OK', para. 43).

Arctic researcher and author Barry Zellen has argued that the Iñupiat have long been forced to negotiate between 'Two Arctics'. This includes both an 'Aboriginal' Arctic of once pristine isolation where traditional subsistence activities have been pursued for thousands of years as well as an increasingly 'Industrial' Arctic, which began to emerge as far back as the early years of the Cold War when military politics sought to capitalize on the area's strategic positioning. Zellen thus contends that much of the post-ANCSA history of the North Slope, in particular, should be understood as an attempt by the Iñupiat to use their new economic powers to "intermediate the collision of these two worlds, and to bring them into balance" (2008, p. 231).

Throughout this process, the Iñupiat have also simultaneously relied on their cultural values to aid them in these negotiations (see **Figure 4.10** for a list of the core values of the Iñupiat). Iñupiaq politician William Hensley credits the Iñupiat's ability to successfully weather the post-ANCSA period of rapid change that they experienced to the strength of their traditional

values. Hensley avers that their values “allowed us to cross over from the ancient world to the modern, without obliterating our identity in the process. They had allowed us to keep the best of the old world as we sought to survive in the tumultuous new order” (2009, p. 220).

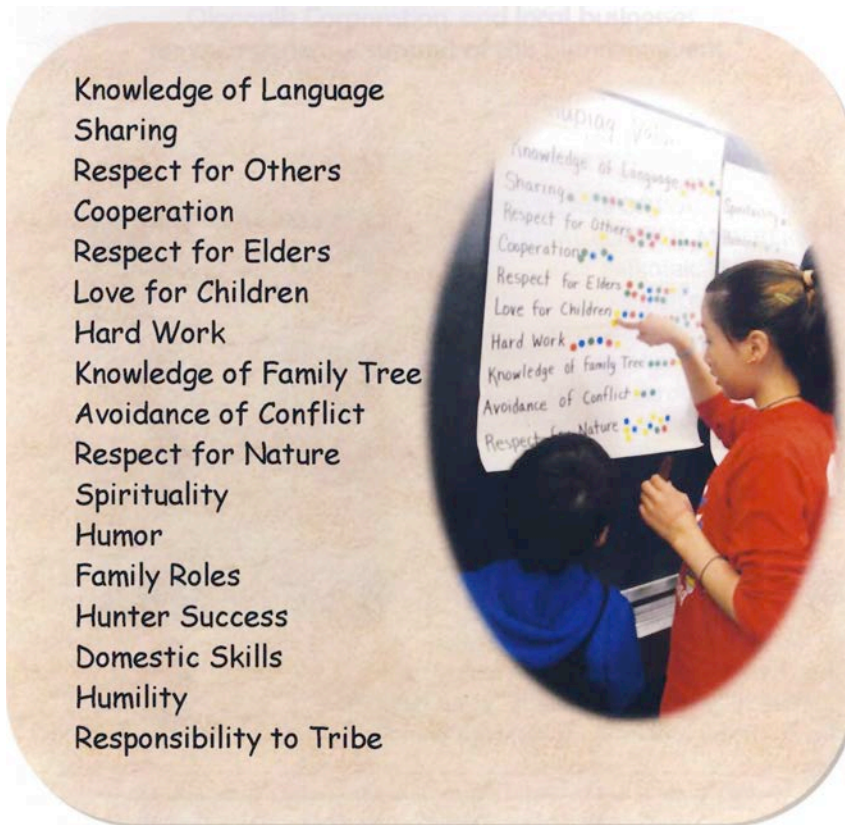


Figure 4.10: Iñupiaq Cultural Values (from 2013 Wainwright workshop hosted by the WTC where residents considered the importance of their traditional values)
From Native Village of Wainwright (2013)

In the specific context of the offshore drilling program, Wainwright leaders have expressed a desire to protect and enhance their traditional, historical, cultural and subsistence resources and practices while facilitating development activities in appropriate locations that provide economic opportunities for residents and future generations (North Slope Borough, ‘Wainwright Comp’, 2014). Tribal leaders have also specifically stated that they wish to use “their traditional knowledge to protect and preserve their culture, subsistence activities and

economy from the impact of local oil industry development” (WTC, 2013). It is in this way that the Iñupiat of Wainwright hope to maintain their identities as indigenous peoples while they also seek to assert their citizenship as fully engaged actors within contemporary society.

From the colonial ordering of the Native Alaskan ‘Other’ to ANCSA’s attempts to economically integrate the Iñupiat into the ‘American mainstream’ (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998) it is important to recognize both the power of these assimilatory processes as well as the resiliency of this area’s original peoples. This project argues that to fully understand the unjust nature of the offshore drilling program it is important to see how the colonial histories and processes outlined here have shaped the contemporary ability of the Iñupiat to meaningfully participate in the larger decisions now being made that will profoundly affect their lands and lifeways. In the following results chapter, Chapter 5, the ongoing effects of the Alaska Native Claims Act is considered as a prime example of one of the many ‘well-meaning’ attempts to prepare the Iñupiat ‘for a non-Native world’ that should, in fact, be understood as leading to the indirect exploitation of many North Slope residents. An understanding of how the Iñupiat of Alaska’s North Slope have been rendered politically and economically vulnerable to the siren call of offshore development thus becomes key point of inquiry in this project.

On the other hand, it is important to recognize how the Iñupiat’s unique worldviews, values, and ways of knowing remain an important and vibrant part of their culture despite decades of assimilatory pressures. As I will contend in my second results chapter, Chapter 6, these ways of thinking continue to play a critical role in their ongoing abilities to strike a balance between an Arctic that it is both their ancestral ‘homeland’ as well as increasingly a national frontier for resource exploitation. While local leaders like the Wainwright Traditional Council have clearly articulated their belief that their traditional knowledge and values should continue to

guide them as a people in this new era of change, the federal government and relevant commercial interests have largely engaged with these alternative perspectives through merely token forms of cultural inclusion. This dismissal of the culturally unique ways that the Iñupiat know and relate to the natural world, in turn, contributes to the procedural marginalization of the Iñupiat within the very forums that have been purportedly designed to address their concerns within the offshore drilling program.

The procedural marginalization of the Iñupiat within these decision-making processes is understood to work in tandem with those processes of indirect exploitation that are the ongoing legacy of ANCSA. Taken together, they suggest that the offshore drilling program is merely the latest manifestation of a much longer history of colonial domination in Alaska that has worked against the interests of the Iñupiat. The Iñupiat have nevertheless consistently attempted to both assert their rights as indigenous peoples as well as articulate their own understandings of humanity's rightful place in the world, which suggest that there are alternatives to the 'business as usual' development scenarios currently being advanced in the Far North. As a matter of justice in a changing Arctic, it is important to meaningfully engage with both the contemporary realities as well as the traditional values of the Alaskan Arctic's 'Real People', the Iñupiat.

CHAPTER 5

INDIRECT EXPLOITATION AND THE LEGACY OF ANCSA: CULTURAL ASSIMILATION AND NATIVE ADAPTATION IN A CHANGING ARCTIC

5.1 Introduction

We [the Iñupiat] have been adapting for many years, we're still adapting to things, changes today... Our people, they were forced to adapt when the missionaries came, when the US took over Alaska, when the BIA came. The children who were growing up had to adapt to moving away for a time period to get their education. Our people had to adapt to work. Our people had to adapt to the way we live because we never lived in permanent houses 150 years ago, one place.... We're adapting today like our people did for hundreds of years. (LL-3, 2013).

Native peoples have long had to contend with a Western understanding of indigenous identities, which measured 'civilization' against 'savagery' as the distance achieved between society and nature (Blaser, 2004). The cultural authenticity of Native cultures often became erroneously linked to their ability to conform to a primitive state of 'ecological nobility'. Such oversimplified images have worked over time to limit Native sovereignty by suggesting that there are certain ways that 'real Indians' should act and that only those groups who adhere to these stereotypes should be allowed to retain any claim to their cultural rights, ancestral territories, or traditional practices (Krech, 1999; Nadasdy, 2005b; Perry & Robyn, 2005; van Ginkel, 2004).

Such static understandings have also tended to obscure the lived realities of many contemporary Natives societies who are actively negotiating their identities as a people who are simultaneously both indigenous and modern. In contrast to these stagnant notions of authenticity,

environmental anthropologist Richard Nelson (1969), who spent over a year's time in Wainwright in the late 1960s, has insisted that an ability to adapt to difficult and changing circumstances is a hallmark of Iñupiaq culture. Nelson credits an Iñupiaq ability to quickly adapt and continually evolve as a critical skill that made it possible for them to not only survive but to actually flourish and expand throughout much of the circumpolar world. Geographer Chie Sakakibara (2010) has also more recently contended that it is the Iñupiat's "strength in innovation and their faith in adaptability" (p. 1010) that has allowed them to sustain their traditional whaling practices as current warming trends in the Arctic have begun to create new environmental hazards like thinning ice and changing winds and currents. Innovation has allowed the Iñupiat to maintain their relationships with the bowhead whale, which are so integral to their culture, in order to actively uphold their identities as indigenous peoples within a rapidly changing Arctic (Sakakibara, 2010).

The adaptive capabilities of the Iñupiat have also helped them to contend with the processes of forced assimilation that they have experienced over many decades. Like many Native societies, the Iñupiat have at times found themselves to be the object of those types of cultural interventions that were often rationalized by the belief that it is the 'white man's burden' to spread the West's superior knowledge to the rest of the world (Mohawk, 2000). Despite this cloak of paternal altruism, such interventions have tended to not only compromise the economic and political powers of Tribal peoples, but have also attempted to fundamentally reorder the relationships they have with their lands (Li, 1999).

The choices that contemporary Native peoples make regarding development in their territories must therefore be understood in the context of larger processes of colonial injustice that have limited their current economic opportunities and worked to disrupt their lifeways

(Holifield, 2012; Ishiyama, 2003). In Alaska's Far North, many of the assimilatory processes that the Iñupiat have encountered were framed as 'well-intentioned' efforts that have nevertheless profoundly altered Iñupiaq society as they have attempted to negotiate these new forces of change. The end result of many of these efforts has led geographer Emilie Cameron to contend that "governmental intervention has never been neutral for northerners, even and perhaps especially when it was well-meaning and designed to specifically prepare Inuit for a changing world" (2012, p. 111).

After decades of governmental programs and policies that have sought to integrate the Iñupiat "into a non-Native world" (Brewster, 2004, p. 36), it is important to recognize Iñupiaq cultural resiliency and their ability to adapt to these impositions. On the other hand, the political and economic realities on the North Slope that are largely a product of these assimilatory practices must also be given their due consideration. That the Iñupiat are a diverse people who neither uniformly condemn nor support the offshore drilling program is not a sign of any cultural inauthenticity but rather a reflection of the fact that they have actively negotiated the interface of incoming industry and ancient tradition, which has been the reality of Native life in Alaska's Far North for many decades. Rather than focusing on how the Iñupiat "should act" as Native peoples, it therefore becomes more important to attend to the issues raised by scholars like Noriko Ishiyama (2003) who has considered how the ongoing legacies of colonial histories have added a significant layer of complexity when it comes to engaging with contemporary indigenous issues and identities. Such an understanding merits a much deeper examination of the processes and histories that contribute to acts of environmental injustice that impact Native peoples like the Iñupiat.

In this chapter, I focus on the legacy of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971 as an exemplar of the type of imposition of Western ways of knowing nature that claimed to be in the best interests of Natives in Alaska. The ostensible goal of ANCSA was to assist Alaskan Natives in their bid for self-determination by helping them transition to a modern economic society. Cherokee scholar Jeff Cornassel (2012) has, however, argued that the integration of indigenous peoples into the market system has never been an altruistic act. Rather, such integration is a method that has been commonly used by colonial powers to replace “kinship relationships” with “market transactions” in ways that have rendered Native lands deeply vulnerable to exploitation.

Within Alaska, the perceived need for such a transition was based on the prevailing belief that to change the ‘culture of poverty’ found in rural Alaskan villages, “one needed to change the culture” (Berardi, 1998, p. 91). ANCSA’s corporate model therefore attempted to impose new understandings of the natural world on the Iñupiat, who traditionally did not just live *off* their lands, but who understood themselves as living *in* them (Gallagher, 2001). The legacy of ANCSA’s corporate settlement structure is therefore largely examined here in terms of the fundamental contradiction it has created within Iñupiaq society as they endeavor to maintain the delicate balance between the needs and values encoded in their traditional subsistence lifestyle and their well-founded desire for local economic growth and development.

This chapter traces the ways in which the contemporary positioning of the North Slope’s Iñupiat within development scenarios like the offshore drilling program has been deeply influenced by the regional processes of indirect exploitation that are an important facet of ANCSA’s lingering legacy. In this chapter, I draw on focus group discussions and community elder interviews to identify and explore four broad categories of social changes, which reflect the

types of assimilatory processes that the Iñupiat of Wainwright have negotiated as part of the ongoing effects of ANCSA. Supporting evidence from photo-elicitation and local leader interviews is introduced here, as well.

The four broad categories of social change considered here were first identified based on the fact that they represented the types of changes that were frequently identified by Wainwright residents as being significant to their community. These categories were then refined based on contextual readings of the data which established linkages between these changes and the positioning of the majority of Wainwright residents, who supported the offshore drilling program largely based on its potential economic benefits despite their deeply held subsistence concerns. A final stage of analysis further interpreted these results based on their potential relationship to ANCSA and its associated processes of ‘economic integration’ and cultural assimilation. Through this iterative process, I derived four broad categories of social change, including: ‘False Choices: An Easier Life (Doesn’t Come for Free), ‘‘Internalized Oppression’ & the Dividend Check’, ‘Dividing Culture from Nature: Technology as Distraction’, and ‘Diminished Capacities & Divided Communities: Tribal Power in the Wake of ANSCA.’

The first category of broad social change, ‘False Choices: An Easier Life (Doesn’t Come for Free),’ represents both an obvious fondness for the old ways as well as a sense of appreciation for the relative ease of today’s daily chores. Yet, many people also realize that their access to modern conveniences has been accompanied by both a high (and rising) cost of living as well as the diminishment of their self-sufficiency as most people are no longer able to directly acquire all their needs from the land. The relationships that the Iñupiat have traditionally maintained with their lands have therefore become increasingly compromised by the need to exploit these territories for their continued economic well-being. As the chance for a ‘better life’

is increasingly tied to the ongoing development of their ancestral lands, such ‘false choices’ inevitably affect the decisions that communities like Wainwright make in ways that reveal the indirect yet nevertheless unjust nature of these processes.

The second category, ‘Internalized Oppression’ & The Dividend Check’, considers the perspectives of Wainwright’s adult residents who fear that younger generations now take this ‘easier life’ for granted and are losing sight of both the original purpose of ANCSA as well as the cultural value once placed on hard work. A dependency on the incomes earned through these dividend checks exacerbates an increasing disconnect between the land, each other, and the forms of knowledge that are foundational to this way of life. As Western perspectives and values are increasingly accepted as the ‘status quo’ by each successive generation, it becomes much more difficult for the Iñupiat to move beyond such forms of ‘internalized oppression’ in order to articulate alternative visions for their own ‘development’ that would more closely align with their traditional values and worldviews (Alfred, 2009).

The third category, ‘Dividing Culture from Nature: Technology as Distraction’, captures the sense that the same technology that has made life easier can also act as a detriment because people today are not always as focused on interacting with each other as a community. They are also paying less and less attention to the natural world around them. A Western world’s preoccupation with an external nature to be manipulated and controlled is reflected in the technologies that it has produced. Wainwright residents therefore fear that an increasing reliance on such technologies fosters a ‘Matrix-style detachment’ from the world (LL-1, 2013). Such a way of being stands in fundamental contradiction to an Iñupiaq understanding of humankind as an integral part of nature (Freeman et al., 1998). This represents a significant challenge to many contemporary Iñupiat who are seeking to strike a balance between these two worldviews so that

they are able to successfully meet their material needs without compromising their cultural and spiritual needs.

The fourth category, ‘Diminished Capacities & Divided Communities: Tribal Power in the Wake of ANCSA’ is largely drawn from my interviews with Wainwright’s Tribal leaders. It considers how the corporate structure set up by ANCSA has ‘blessed’ the Iñupiat with the monies that they now receive in the form of dividend checks, but it has also worked against their abilities to collectively voice their concerns as a sovereign people (LL-3, 2013). ANCSA’s diminishment of Wainwright’s Tribal powers represents the types of ‘well-meaning’ colonial processes that have actually worked against the abilities of indigenous peoples to assert control over their own environments and self-determined futures. An offshore drilling program that relies on a Tribal consultation process with a Tribe just now struggling to regain its sovereign powers represents a form of injustice that uses token levels of participation to minimize outright resistance to its decision-making processes while also painting itself with a patina of cultural inclusion and concern.

As a preface to the exploration of these four broad categories of social change, it is important to briefly consider the environmental changes with which the Iñupiat of Wainwright must now contend. While these changes are largely beyond the theoretical purview of this chapter, a concise review of these changes provides important context to this analysis for three reasons. First, the categories of ‘social’ and ‘environmental’ are for the most part meaningless to the Iñupiat who do not operate according to the same nature-culture divide that governs most Western ways of thinking and acting towards the world. Most of the environmental changes they now face therefore also raise a related suite of social concerns and challenges within their community. Second, the Iñupiat face significant environmental challenges as a result of climatic

change regardless of whether or not there is any new industrial activity in the region. Many of these changes will likely require high dollar mitigation tactics in the near future. Others represent an additional stress on the community as they now struggle to try and quickly learn how to safely adapt their subsistence practices to meet the realities of an ever-warming Arctic. Third, the environmental changes with which they Iñupiat must now contend and the additional pressures that the offshore drilling program represent to the maintenance of their subsistence way of life are both a product of rising temperatures in the region. These temperatures are themselves a result of the global extraction activities that have precipitated climatic change. The challenges the Iñupiat now face in terms of local environmental changes and the possibility of new industrial incursions are both the result of a process of “accumulation by degradation” (Johnson, 2010), which has threatened the ecological health of the Arctic while also making offshore drilling much more feasible to pursue. In thinking about their own futures in a changing Arctic, Wainwright residents are therefore concerned about both ongoing social as well as environmental changes and they can readily identify those environmental issues that represent the most pressing or persistent problems to their community. Tackling these issues will likely precipitate further adaptations and social change as they continue to negotiate the intertwined realms of Iñupiaq culture and Arctic natures.

5.2 Environmental Changes in Wainwright

Wainwright residents are learning that rising temperatures in the region are producing a host of rapidly shifting environmental conditions. Villagers can, in fact, readily list a long litany of recent environmental changes, many of which have already been noted elsewhere in the literature on climate change in the Circumpolar North (Carothers et al. 2014; Cochran et al., 2013; Cuomo, Eisner, & Hinkel, 2008; Lynn et al., 2013; Marino, 2012). Residents are also

learning that these changes often raise other complex and not-readily-resolved issues for their community, many of which represent the deep debates surrounding their need and desire to continue to evolve as contemporary citizens of this nation while continuing to honor the timeless values of their culture.

In Wainwright, issues highlighted by community members include melting permafrost that has compromised both the structural integrity of multiple homes in Wainwright (see **Figure 5.1**) as well as critical village infrastructure like water and sewage lines. Increased rates of coastal erosion have also resulted in seaside homes that have been damaged or necessarily relocated. This is, in fact, a widespread issue in the Far North of Alaska where Native villages like Shishmaref and Kivalina are already seriously considering the need to relocate their entire community due to the extreme rates of erosion they are currently experiencing (Cochran et al, 2013; Mooney, 2014; Reiss, 2012, Sutter, 2009; United States GAO, 2009).



Figure 5.1: “Global Warming: Our Permafrost is Melting”

PE-4

Prior efforts to address Wainwright's own coastal erosion, including a sea wall built with sand-filled bags, are generally remembered as expensive efforts that did not prove to be successful in the long-term (FG-2, 2013; PE-2, 2013). As a result, more recent mitigation efforts have been pursued including a new 500 foot rock sea wall (See **Figure 5.2**), which now offers protection to 25% of Wainwright's most critical infrastructure and was completed in the Fall of 2013 (North Slope Borough, 'Wainwright Comp', 2013).



Figure 5.2: “Our Erosion”

PE-2

“Our beach used to be at least 15 feet out from the edge of those rocks, other side used to go way out there” (PE-2, 2013).

Coastal erosion has also contributed to the loss of many *siglauks*, ice cellars dug into the ground that the ‘old people’ traditionally used to store their food, as they have been either completely washed away or inundated with seawater and sand as the result of violent storms (see **Figure 5.3**) (FG-1, 2013; PE-4, 2013). When located further inland, these cellars have also been lost due to cave-ins caused by unstable permafrost. At least one in-town cellar owned by a

Wainwright elder also became compromised when it began to smell like sewer so that for safety concerns it is no longer used. The loss of ice cellars is significant because local whaling captains are required to have one so that they can properly store their catch (FG-5, 2013).



Figure 5.3: “Disaster”

PE-4

Village residents also complain that even with modern chest freezers, they cannot really store enough subsistence foods to provide for their families throughout the winter without access to an ice cellar. As one Wainwright woman put it simply, “If we had a cellar, man, I’d be rich in food” (FG-3-2, 2013). A lack of access to proper storage facilities was also cited as a contributor to an incident that troubled many Wainwright residents in the summer of 2013 when many communal beluga shares were left unclaimed after a particularly productive harvesting session. The major issue was, of course, that fresh food had been wasted, but there was also some concern about how such an issue could be interpreted by people from outside their community in

ways that would potentially work against the maintenance of their subsistence rights (PE-10, 2013; FG-4-7, 2013).

Other problems cited by Wainwright residents include changes in the ice conditions throughout the seasons. While a late freeze-up in the fall is an issue because it leaves the shoreline much more vulnerable to the full force of fall storms, the premature thinning of shorefast ice during their traditional spring whaling season is especially concerning to Wainwright residents. Wainwright whalers have had to intensify their fall whaling efforts as an adaptive response to this issue and they are now actively learning how to modify their safety procedures and traditional practices to the new set of weather and ocean conditions associated with this time of the year. A problematic absence of ice floes in the summer that usually help support healthy populations of walrus, a key subsistence species, has also been noted. The lack of summer ice means that it can be much more difficult to hunt walruses who are now adrift in the sea rather than basking out in the open on small bergs. The animals themselves also appear to be struggling to adapt to this change as stories of unusually large, and often fatal, walrus haul-outs [when they come onto the land and gather on beaches] have become fairly common.

Shrinking ice coverage has also led to the increasing occurrence of malnourished polar bears arriving in the village and this has created its own unique set of problems and concerns. A polar bear and her cub who had swum in from the sea sparked a minor controversy in the village when both were shot by the mayor. The polar bears were found lying exhausted on a beach to the south of the village, their fur still wet from the water. Many villagers were upset because their traditional teachings advise that is wrong to take the life of a mother while she is still nursing her young. The animals were also somewhat removed from the village proper at the time and had not yet done anything to overtly threaten the safety of the village (PE-7, 2013). Others rationalized

the killing for the sake of the village's children, who often play outside unattended, by saying that the polar bears were so skinny that had they been allowed to recover they would surely have proven themselves to be a menace due to their sheer hunger and desperation. In many ways this issue can actually be related back to the problems associated with the lack of food storage facilities in the village. As it turns out, excess beluga shares from the summer before had been left to decompose on the South side of town and it was feared that the smell alone would invariably draw the creatures closer to the village (FG-3, 2013).

The occurrence of new animal species, especially different types of birds and insects, and the delayed or early migration of other more commonly seen game animals have also been observed. The appearance of sick subsistence species including caribou, seals, walrus, and polar bear is particularly alarming to Wainwright residents. Focus group participants mentioned catching sick caribou that ultimately had to be left (or burned) in the field because they were found to have disturbing abnormalities like large tumors, abscesses on their hides, strange white spots on their livers, extreme malnourishment, and in one instance the freshly killed animal even 'smelled funny.' Unhealthy seals and the polar bears that eat them have been found with their fur falling off and/or with little sores or 'red dots', a condition that most local people believe is linked to radioactive contamination that has traveled from Japan on the ocean currents as a result of the Fukushima disaster (FG-4, 2013; FG-5, 2013). While there is a genuine concern for the overall well being of these animal populations, residents are also very worried about how these illnesses might affect the health of their community in the long-term, even if they have been assured by outside scientists that the meat is 'safe' (FG-4, 2013; LL-3, 2013).

In general, it is clear that many of the environmental challenges that the Iñupiat of Wainwright now face raise both a wealth of associated ecological as well as social concerns. A

brief review of these issues has been included here in order to not lose sight of the fact that the offshore drilling program is not the only significant issue raised by rising temperatures in the Far North for communities like Wainwright. It is also important to recognize that the North Slope Borough's current operating budget is derived almost entirely from Prudhoe Bay oil monies (Reiss, 2012) and that most local families are highly dependent on the shareholder dividend checks they receive from their corporations (that also derive much of their profits from these same industries) to cover even their current expenses. As the situation stands now, an ability to respond to many of these environmental challenges at either the regional level (like Borough-funded seawalls or the relocation of homes) or the level of the individual (such as buying bigger, safer boats to pursue fall whaling or digging new ice cellars), is therefore very ironically linked to an ability to maintain a continuous flow of oil through the Trans-Alaskan pipeline.

This situation alone suggests that the 1971 passage of ANCSA must be thoroughly reexamined in terms of its claims to support the self-determination of Alaska's Native peoples through their economic integration into the American mainstream. A deeper exploration of the shifting social circumstances prompted by ANCSA within the village of Wainwright helps us to understand how such historical processes have often acted as a form of 'indirect exploitation' (Vickery & Hunter, 2014). Such processes have generally made many North Slope communities deeply vulnerable to the 'false choices' (Honor the Earth, 2012) and acts of 'job blackmail' (Bullard, 1992) that have often sought to exploit the vulnerabilities of marginalized populations. Many of the understandings that are included here have also been shared with Wainwright's Tribal leaders. This information may help them to identify the exact nature of the obstacles that their community now faces as they try to collectively and proactively plan for their futures as people who desire to be simultaneously both traditional and modern.



Figure 5.4: “Something Different”

PE-1

“There’s not normally things like that. That’s when the permafrost starts to melt I think, and it just falls on the ground...[This picture] shows that our environment is changing as more things start to come and global warming starts to warm up” (PE-1, 2013).

5.3 False Choices: An Easier Life (Doesn’t Come for Free)

FG-3-1: We lived the old ways, I should say, which was very good to me. I loved it, I miss it. I dearly miss it.

FG-3-4: Me too, it’s kind of hard in a way, but, yeah, our people that lived longer than we did, I bet their chores were hard, like getting ice and getting *aluaq* [coal] and whatever they do, right?

FG-3-1: And dog teams.

FG-3-2: Now they don’t even do that any more.

FG-3-4: Nowadays they don’t do that.

There is a clear sense of nostalgia in Wainwright for the old days. The above focus group alone, comprised of a group of young grandmothers in their 50’s and 60’s, fondly recalled collecting coal on the beach for their *aakas*’ [Grandmothers’] stoves in exchange for some fresh baked bread or a little money to go buy a piece of candy or how those same *aakas* would send them down into the cool, dark depths of their ice cellars to retrieve special treats. They talked

about how everyone in the village used to line up at the one payphone in town to make their calls and how you would have to wait outside of the little shack that served as the village's post office to see if your name was called for a mail pick-up. They reminisced about running as children with everybody from the village to greet the small planes that came in or their favorite- the *North Star*, the supply barge that arrived in Wainwright once a year to deliver its goods and who had a captain that always freely passed out candy to them all (FG-3, 2013). Some elders even recall how as young children they lived in the traditional sod homes that exist now only as widely scattered archeological sites (CE-1, 2013). Others also think back to a time when everyone looked out for the village children and did not hesitate to *sauk* [scold] someone else's child if they were misbehaving and since there was no paid work, people hunted and labored together in extensive groups to prepare themselves for the long winter (CE2-5, 2013).

There is also a simultaneous appreciation among Wainwright's adult population that the past involved a lot of hard work. The same women from the highlighted focus group above remember how as they grew older they had to haul their own stove oil across town in 5 gallons buckets that they then had to pour into their fuel tanks so that they greatly appreciate the stove oil truck that now delivers it right to their homes (FG-3, 2013). Another woman recalled how the need to help her family with all the demanding daily chores limited her own options as a young adult:

I wasn't allowed to go [away to school at Mt Edgecumbe], because I had to help my parents, my father was in the National Guard and I had to help my mother cut ice, and spill the *quqtaq* [honey bucket] and get water and pump stove oil and you know, things like that. Go inside the cellar, feed the dogs, actually I grew up dog sledding too, with my grandpa (FG-6-4, 2013).

A photo-elicitation participant also came in with a picture of Wainwright's snow fence (see **Figure 5.5**) and a rather charming story about how 'back in the day' it could even sometimes be a challenge to make it to school after a storm:

They used to dig me out from my own little house over there so I could go to school, it was the janitors for the school, they'd go "Okay, wind blew last night" and I used to be the first one to go to school, and [they would say], "[Personal name]'s not here, okay, got to go dig him out." So they used to dig me out, just enough holes so I could hear them, I'd be waiting. And then when they put their hand out, and they'd just pull me up, go to school. Yeah, nowadays when they put these snow fence up, I hardly see it, no snow banks over there. (PE-4, 2013)



Figure 5.5:“Less Snow Built Up to the Houses in Wintertime”

PE-4

Village residents like the above photo-elicitation participant admit that a lot of the changes they have seen in their community have been good changes that “make life easier for us” (PE-4, 2013). Yet, as another hunter who grew up in the ‘old times when there was dog

teams' explained, the Iñupiat as a people used to be very self-sufficient so that the trade-off is that "this life is easy and it's good, but we now have to pay for it" (FG-2-2, 2014). He further explained that while he appreciates this new way of life, it has also meant things like new diseases, federal taxes, and a general diminishment of their autonomy. Even more directly, the costly outdoor gear and bullets and replacement parts for their snow machines and boats ultimately mean that while they may have been given the 'easy life' it certainly does not come for free.

The high and rising costs associated with living in the village was, in fact, one of the major concerns that Wainwright residents held for their own futures. Grandmothers who are already struggling to help support their families wonder how they will feed their young when even 50 cents more might make it impossible for them to buy some of the products they now depend on to meet their needs (FG-3-1, 2013). A whaling captain's wife also insisted that the high costs associated with village life have proven to be a major obstacle for many of Wainwright's whaling crews. The maintenance of such a key cultural event has itself often become tied to the structure of the Native Corporation as those dedicated to the whaling tradition usually have to commit the entirety of the dividend checks they receive from their regional corporation to this task. For many whalers this means that they also have to forego buying things like snow machines and four-wheelers that would aid them in their other subsistence pursuits. As the captain's wife further describes how things have changed:

Early when we were whaling, there was about 17 or 18 crews who were out whaling [as compared to the 4-5 crews who are consistently active now]. Cause money was, I mean the prices were *utukkuu* [tiny], now it's humungous and there's only a few that work...we depend on our ASRC dividend, we don't get to spend our ASRC dividend the way we want to, cause we go whaling" (FG-5-1, 2013).

When local gas prices have been known to rise to as much as \$8-10 a gallon and a loaf of bread alone costs \$10 (Quinn, 2008), Wainwright residents complain that it is largely the high cost of freight that is killing them. While several airlines used to compete with each other to service rural routes, now there is only one company that flies out to the village of Wainwright, which means prices for the gas, food and dry goods they must necessarily import all seem to keep climbing (FG-2-1, 2013).

There is also a definite sense of frustration that for all the improvements that have been made “we are living like a third world country over here. People here still got honey buckets and no running water” (FG-4-2, 2013). Wainwright residents therefore not only wish for things like the subsidized natural gas currently enjoyed by communities like Barrow due to their proximity to Prudhoe Bay oil fields, but they also want to be able to have the same access to the ‘stuff’ that most of their fellow citizens in the lower 48 take for granted. As one Wainwright resident explained:

Just like if you show something on TV, why can’t we have that too? Can you share it, or can you send it or something, the stuff they have for every day, they get it easy, no cargo plane, nothing. You know all these stuffs nowadays and all the things you have to buy...Everything from pop and groceries, chairs, anything like that, new table, anything. And they show them everyday on TV, you see them on TV and then it’s there and why can’t they ship it to Alaska or something. It’s a free world, the United States, all over, Hawaii, the lower 48, Alaska, all together. And then we can’t have that stuff, why can’t we have it too?” (FG-1-2, 2013).

The high cost of living is also exacerbated by the fact that there are limited opportunities for full-time work in most North Slope villages. The 2010 census for Wainwright reveals a 26.3% unemployment rate with an additional 39.8% of the population considered ‘underemployed’ because they work less than 40 hours a work. Shareholder dividends from

ASRC (the North Slope's regional corporation) and Olgoonik (Wainwright's village level corporation) help residents supplement lean incomes and over 2/3 of Wainwright's households get at least 50% of their diet from subsistence foods. Unfortunately, as noted above, subsistence pursuits themselves require a fair amount of cash input and even the heaviest subsistence users generally cannot entirely avoid buying costly foodstuffs from either of the village's two stores. The 2010 census therefore shows that food insecurity is still a major issue in Wainwright with 46% of households indicating that there were instances in the preceding year where it was difficult to obtain healthy meals for their family and 30% reporting that there were, in fact, times when all household members did not receive enough to eat (North Slope Borough, 2010).

The possibility of more local jobs being created by offshore operations is thus one of the major reasons that people in Wainwright support this type of development. As one Wainwright resident explained, "maybe I might go to work for them someday. At least I would have a job [if companies like Shell came to Wainwright]. Maybe someday I will be sitting in an office and not laboring, cause I have labored my whole life, and odd jobs to odd jobs. Something that's open, I will go for it, and if I do get hired I would be happy" (FG-6-2, 2013). Such statements clearly mirror the ideas behind Bullard's (1999) EJ concept of 'job blackmail' in which members of many marginalized communities ultimately accepted the idea that access to much-needed employment opportunities would necessarily involve certain trade-offs, like the potential health of their environments. For this Wainwright woman, the job opportunities that might be offered by Shell represent a rare chance to improve her life by becoming something more than just a temporary labor and finally procuring steady, full-time employment.

This is not to say, however, that the maintenance of their subsistence is not a major priority for the people of Wainwright. Residents are concerned for their children as they worry

whether they will still be able to hunt with the significant increase in ocean and air traffic that would likely result from any offshore development (FG-1-1, 2013). An oil spill in icy seas is, of course, understood to be potentially catastrophic in its effect. A Wainwright elder echoed the sentiment that I heard others of his age group suggest, which was essentially a warning to oil companies that if they drill in the ocean they need to be cognizant of the fact that they are always operating at the mercy of Mother Nature. Offshore drilling is clearly an issue that has been thoroughly discussed among his peers and according to his perspective:

When the ice start piling...[it's] going to knock them [drilling platforms] down...Mother Nature doesn't care about how big they got, on the ocean. They might make the ocean, our animals might be gone pretty soon, maybe, if they drill in the ocean. We'll see when they start drilling in the ocean...Elders, some of them, always talk about not to drill or drill. They think if they make a mess like that, in the ocean, these animals are going to be gone, like walrus, beluga, seals, bearded seal, fish. If they make an oil spill like that, everything is going to be gone, you know (CE-1).

People are also not so naïve as to think that the oil companies have their best interests at heart. They know that while the oil companies may publically profess a concern for their culture, such entities are fundamentally motivated by their profit margins. As one resident noted, when the oil company comes to drill, “they do it in their best favor, they won't do it in a Native corporation's favor or the people's favor. They do it for their oil company and they will do it however, they will do it in their way... they don't want to fork the money over to us” (FG-4-1, 2013). Others also worry that the state and federal government will take too much of the profits that rightfully belong to them and their children and grandchildren who are the descendants of the people that have survived in these lands for thousands of years (FG-2-2, 2013). Such concerns clearly suggest that despite a long-standing cultural tendency to presume good will on the part of others (Gallagher, 2001), the Iñupiat as a people are no longer so trusting that they

believe that the federal government will always perform its fiduciary responsibilities to protect their cultural rights and interests. This is especially true in the face of such potentially large profits. Such a perceived lack of state neutrality (Lake & Disch, 1992) invariably colors the concerns of those who fear that offshore development will only lead to the further loss of control over their ancestral lands.

Yet, in the end, what the people of Wainwright want for their future is the commonly shared human desire to ensure ‘a better life’ for their children. The false choices with which they have been presented have thus far suggested that large development projects like the offshore drilling are the only viable means towards this goal. A ‘psychology of inevitability’ (Gedicks, 2001) is also present within the community in which most residents assume that if the federal government wants a project to go through, it will invariably happen. These forces have worked in tandem with an Iñupiaq pragmatism where many people also recognize that times have already radically changed on the North Slope. They therefore feel that it is important for the younger generations to be able to operate in both the world of their ancestors as well as today’s world. As one older hunter explained, he ultimately supported offshore drilling in the region, despite the many concerns he had about its associated environmental impacts because “we need the money, we need the jobs, we know our children need it because they wouldn’t know how to survive up here without all that” (FG-2-2, 2013). A Wainwright mother added, “I want to make a better home for my kids, you know, I want to see my kids bloom in this new technology. Send them off to college so that they can be, so that they can benefit my community... I would pretty much like my kids to go to college, become something and help our community become a better community maybe” (FG-6-2, 2013).

That a ‘better life’ for the people of Wainwright comes at the possible loss of a subsistence way of life that is deeply integral to their identities as Native peoples suggests that a colonial narrative that posited civilization as a fair exchange for the dispossession of indigenous lands and the disruptions of traditional lifeways still deeply informs federal-Tribal relations today. ANCSA’s rhetoric of benign concern for the welfare of Alaskan Natives also tends to obscure the fact that the improvements that the Iñupiat experienced in terms of their material well-being after its passage were not without significant cost. The Iñupiat, in fact, relinquished claim to both half their ancestral territory (Gallagher, 2001) as well as their aboriginal right to subsistence. Their integration into a market economy also served to diminish their traditional sense of self-sufficiency as well as their Tribal autonomy over their own lands.

For the Iñupiat of Wainwright to have successfully negotiated this much social change in the living memory of their village is undeniably a testament to the strength of their cultural values, which North Slope leaders like Willie Hensley (2009) have credited as the source of their ability to pass from ‘the ancient world’ into this ‘tumultuous new order.’ Perhaps the greatest injustice enacted by ANCSA is the fact that it has attempted to diminish these very values. By forcing Native Tribes in Alaska to treat the land like an ‘asset’ to be managed for maximum profit, it has become increasingly difficult to recognize it as the ‘cultural touchstone’ through which they have always maintained their culture and its values (Zellen, 2008). While it was “oil-society’s hunger for it” (Gallagher 2001, p. 208) that gave Native land claims the strength it never had before, ANCSA has essentially worked to instill that same hunger in Native Alaskan societies who never held such an instrumental view of nature and who have often conversely understood oil to be the blood of the earth (Chapman, 2013).

By fundamentally tying the ongoing exploitation of Alaska's oil reserves to the 'easier life' now enjoyed by the North Slope's Iñupiat (which, as noted, still lags far behind the amenities and services that other U.S. citizens generally take for granted), ANCSA has made it very difficult for the Iñupiat to resist the 'false choices' currently being offered them in order to articulate any alternative claims on their environment. As a Native North Slope organization, REDOIL's clever acronym promotes both an imagery of red oil as the earth's blood oil as well as a sense of the violence to Native cultures that its extraction potentially entails. While the strategic use of such imagery shows the possibility for epistemological resistance to the dominant narrative of inevitability surrounding further oil development in the region, a majority of people in villages like Wainwright still give their hesitant support to offshore development for one fundamental reason- the economic opportunities that it potentially represents.

5.4 'Internalized Oppression' & The Dividend Check

Many Wainwright residents describe a very similar dream of a 'better life.' As one of the village's Tribal leaders described her ideal future for their community "I would like to see 70, 80% employment, being happy, healthy people who are motivated by employment while practicing their subsistence way of life and living our cultural values within the westernized environment just as they are practiced in the traditional way of living. That's what I would love" (LL-5, 2013). Yet, many people also recognize that even if the oil companies actually promote local hiring initiatives, high rates of village-level employment may be difficult to achieve because there is a lack of qualified individuals to take on these positions. Local leaders are very aware that most oil industry jobs in Prudhoe Bay are now held by outsiders who fly up to the North Slope to do their jobs and 'then go home' and that they are largely hired because they have the necessary training and qualifications (LL-3, 2013).

The problem in Wainwright, as one elder complained, is that their youth do not appreciate how easy they have it nowadays and that when he was young he learned responsibility by doing chores like getting water or getting the coal and that kids today “are just sleeping, turn the switch on, turn the game on, turn the TV on” (CE-5, 2013). All the Wainwright elders I spoke with talked about how their traditional spring whaling practices, in particular, had taught them the value of hard work. Many of them had worked when they were young men as ‘boyers’ out at the whaling camps, where they were expected to tend camp and perform duties like feeding the dog teams, keeping the tents warm, preparing meals, etc. You had to work at whaling camp if you ever wanted to prove yourself to the elders and eventually earn a spot in a whaling boat (CE1-5, 2013). The idea that if ‘you do nothing, you get nothing’ was therefore traditionally instilled into the minds of Wainwright’s youth at a very young age. In contrast, most children in Wainwright today are now the recipients of quarterly dividend checks and they have learned to expect that money will just be given to them (CE-5, 2013). One Wainwright leader admitted that he felt like their children did not really have a full appreciation of the history of the land claims process so that they grew up believing that “everything is given to you and you don’t have to work for it” (LL-2, 2013).

In terms of pursuing future job opportunities, many youth cite the fact that the necessary training is often held outside the village as a major obstacle. Outside training can make it hard for young people who simply don’t like to leave the village or who might be supporting their families through part time labor, hunting, caregiving, etc. (FG-2, 2013). However, a group of young men further admitted that even when training opportunities were sometimes offered right in the village or people were paid to attend them, very few individuals were motivated to pursue these offerings because:

they're so used to their daily routine around here, they don't want to do nothing, like some people they're so used to being home, watching their kid... they are so used to doing that, they've been doing that for a long time, I don't think they'll, they're not even trying to make an effort to go out and find a job" (FG-4-2, 2013).

In general, Wainwright elders have very little patience for this type of perspective. This is because they recall a time when job opportunities on the North Slope were virtually nonexistent. They remember how in the 1940's there were so few employment options that many young Iñupiaq men joined the National Guard instead. Limited wage labor finally became a possibility on the North Slope in the 1950s with federal projects like the DEW [Distant Early Warning] Line, which was a system of radar stations across the Arctic that acted as a Cold War defense mechanism and included an installation just outside Wainwright. These positions were competitive and often required employees to leave their home villages to follow work across the Slope. It was not until the creation of the North Slope Borough after the passage of ANCSA in the early 70s that local jobs became more available during a construction boom that included everything from new schools and administrative buildings to more housing. This was also a time that most children were sent out of the village to complete their high school education (CE2-5, 2013). One Wainwright elder therefore bluntly explained his frustration with the youth today:

Today our young people are having high school in the village. They don't have to go anywhere, they can go to school from their home, their own hometown, and when I look at the first people that went to high school from here to Edgecumbe, Chemawa and Oklahoma and Sitka, anywhere, for almost the whole year, springtime they went home, right after. And today, when you look at, you can go to school from your own village, and some students, some high school students they graduate. And they graduated for nothing, they just stay still a bum, no job, they'd rather stay home, they don't try to find a job, they want to be a bum, educated bum, that's what we call them, what's a better name for that?" (CE-2, 2013).

Such statements represent the type of disconnect that is beginning to occur between successive generations as ANCSA's corporate structure continues to displace traditional relationships and understandings with those ways of thinking that are much more accepting of the current status quo. In the lead-up to the passage of ANCSA, Etok Edwardsen was adamant that any settlement they received was understood to be a result of the aboriginal title they held on their lands and should not at any time be thought of as merely a social welfare program. As he insisted, the entire settlement was premised on the idea that it was "a LAND claims settlement, not a federal welfare program or another piece of antipoverty legislation" (Gallagher, 2001 p. 206).

One of the problems associated with ANCSA, however, is that it never really succeeded in stimulating economic growth in many of the Native villages that were originally sited for their value as subsistence areas and were often quite remote. The stark difference in the demands of a subsistence economy vs. a market economy meant that many of these communities were simply situated in 'economically nonviable locations' (Berardi, 1998). Employment options in places like Wainwright have therefore remained so limited for so long that people have learned how to make do with their shareholder payouts. Younger generations who are not as familiar with the history of this legislation have even begun to think of the regular shareholder checks that they receive as 'free money.' Those who have always experienced an easier life, who "just turn the switch on", also seem to be losing a sense of the value that the Iñupiat traditionally placed on hard work where it was once understood that if you "do nothing, you get nothing."

ANCSA's corporate payout structure and its support of a lifestyle that is increasingly far removed from a way of life where one's survival depended on mutual cooperation and hard work, has worked together over time to create a certain level of complacency among Wainwright

residents. The lingering effects of this legislation on communities like Wainwright thus begins to closely mirror Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred's critique of colonialism as a "multigenerational and multifaceted process of forced dispossession and attempted acculturation- a disconnection from land, culture, and community- that has resulted in political chaos and social discord within First Nation communities and the collective dependency of First Nations upon the state" (cited in Corntassel, 2012, p. 16). The Native corporation as a state-imposed structure and a reliance on the corporate dividend check that it provides has similarly created a dependency that should be rightly understood to be another form of cultural domination (Jorgenson, 1990).

In the end, these processes have worked on Iñupiaq society to distance them from their traditional relationships with the land and the subsistence culture that it supports. This has led to a form of internalized oppression in which more Westernized perspectives and values, which accept nature as a resource to be manipulated for humanity's benefit, are increasingly accepted as the norm. Such 'colonial mentalities' have made it difficult to envision other forms of development that might consider additional factors beyond just the net profit margin such as the social and environmental costs accrued not only to human societies but also to the entirety of creation. As Alfred (2009) and Corntassel (2012) have contended, finding ways to reestablish those connections to the land and to each other that have always sustained Natives culture like the Iñupiat are a key aspect of the broader project of decolonization, which works against the dependency and discord that are the long-term manifestations of colonial disruptions.

This reinvisioning of other alternatives offers resistance to those indirect forms of exploitation, which capitalize on not only the economic but also the social vulnerabilities of those indigenous communities who have weathered the forces of acculturation. Unfortunately, the technology that has ushered in an 'easier life' for the people of Wainwright has only served

to widen rather than diminish the disconnect between Iñupiaq culture and Arctic natures. The current role of ‘technology’ in Iñupiaq society, which is part of a post-ANCSA era of newfound prosperity, is thus not always seen as an unqualified good and in many ways it has proven to be the very type of ‘distraction’ that ultimately works against the maintenance of Iñupiaq cultural traditions. As such, an increasing reliance on certain kinds of technology represent another aspect of an internalized colonial mentality (Alfred, 2009), which advances ways of being in the world founded on an instrumental view of nature. This not only obscures those traditional perspectives that appreciate a more numinous world, but also those relationships and sense of community that stem from a sense of interconnectedness with all of creation.

5.5 Dividing Culture from Nature: Technology as Distraction

FG-4-4: All the elders, if you look at the old videos [of communal Eskimo dances], there’s no kids running around, nowadays when they have things like that, lot of kids -

FG-4-7: Nowadays, they don’t really pay attention, it’s just like a big playgroup, for the new generation, but then the old generation is trying to have their fun, their holiday fun, nowadays we have a phone, technology.

FG-4-4: Candy crush. (laughter)

Like much of the rest of contemporary American society, the Iñupiat of Wainwright enjoy their smart phones, Xboxes, and cable TV and spend a fair amount of time on social media like Facebook. Within Wainwright, the general consensus seems to be that before the arrival of the Internet, there was much more face-to face socializing within the village (LL-1, 2013). The unique challenge that these forms of entertainment pose to the maintenance of Iñupiaq cultural traditions is the way that they promote individual pursuits over the communal interests that have long supported a sense of shared cultural identity. Like the scenario described above, this may mean that while everyone is physically there at the same cultural event, they are actually absorbed in their own technologies and are not paying attention to each other or the traditional songs and dances that are passed down from generation to generation through these experiences.

For the whaling families of Wainwright, these types of distractions have meant that they have observed a steep reduction in the number of community members that consistently come out to support their whaling efforts, which truly benefit the entirety of the village. Wainwright elders recall a time in the not so distant past when the whole village would work together to help the whalers with arduous tasks like the breaking of a new trail every spring out across the ice to the whaling camps (CE1-5, 2013). Now they feel as if many people had adopted an ‘every man for himself’ type of mentality (CE2-5, 2013). One whaling captain’s wife further explained how this way of thinking has not only increased the work burden that active whaling families must bear but may also prove to be a distinct threat to the maintenance of this tradition:

One of the traditions that I seen, when my father was a whaling captain many years ago, every able-bodied man went down to help in order to get a share. And then nowadays, people, I don’t know if they are lazy or just don’t have ways to get down to the open, to just go down there to go help. They just rather, just sit and get a share, easy. I mean you know that’s the plain truth, that’s the disadvantage... all that hard work that the other men do and then other able-bodied men are out at their homes sitting watching TV and then when it’s time, when they say time to get your share they just pick it up. That’s one of the disadvantages, there’s no able-bodied men that are willing to go down like many years ago. It’s the same people that are dedicated, to do it all, to finish the work. Eventually, my way of thinking even though the whaling captains may want to and the tenured families may want to carry on the tradition, but the way things are, I think eventually the whole whaling, whale hunting will eventually die off (FG-5-3).

One elder similarly suggested that he thought “technology has taken over” life in the village (CE-5, 2013) and a second elder also felt that that were too many distractions and movies nowadays. Even the technology that has made local subsistence hunting practices safer and more productive is understood to have its own drawbacks. As one Wainwright elder explained, “Eskimos used to be very observant prior to TVs. Now people have stopped really looking at the

weather signs. They now depend on the radio when they used to know what kind of weather was coming just by looking at the sky” (CE-2, 2013). Another Wainwright leader suggested that a newfound reliance on iPhones and GPS units served to disconnect people from their own environments. He also made the long-term ramifications of this disconnect quite clear:

They have been turning onto the Fairbanks airport this last week using the iPhone. The thing is that they are dependent, they’re not even going to look and try to find it with their own mind, they’re just going to say that this thing is right no matter what and that’s how some people, they’ve become detached. Detached from reality really, almost sometimes Matrix style... There will be moments if you just go out there, and you are sitting there, if you actually just get into it enough, you can feel the world moving. I myself can attest to that. You sit still long enough, you’ll start sensing movement. And it’s a tune that we’re losing. (LL-1, 2013).

While perhaps not as obviously attributable to the architecture of ANCSA as some of the preceding categories of social change, the problematic relationship that the Iñupiat currently have with technology is inherently related to the fundamental contradiction between treating land like a resource rather than a set of relations. Their integration into the market economy via ANCSA has also endeavored to transform the Iñupiat into the types of contemporary consumers who are always excited by the latest gadget while the dividend payout system enacted by this legislation encourages high dollar ‘spending sprees’. It is true that as part of the adaptive process, the Iñupiat have always been pragmatic in that they are accepting of new tools and technologies that allow them to do things safely and more efficiently. As an example, the widespread use of the nearly iconic ‘Eskimo dog team’ quickly diminished among the Iñupiat once snow machines became accessible to them (Freeman et al., 1998). Yet, the Iñupiat are very aware of the trade-offs involved in these decisions and the value of a reliable dog team, which unlike a snow

machine could guide its owner home even in a blinding snowstorm, is still widely appreciated among Wainwright's elders (CE2-5, 2013).

In general, the guiding idea behind technological change as Native tradition is that the use of new technologies is always informed by the cultural values and worldviews of its people (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Reo & Whyte, 2011). In the case of both the Makah (van Ginkel, 2004) and subsistence deer hunters on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in Wisconsin (Reo & Whyte, 2011) their respective transition from harpoons and bows to high powered rifles were a result of their traditional respect for the animals they hunted and their desire to spare them any unnecessary pain resulting from the non-fatal wounds sometimes inflicted by these less efficient technologies. Wainwright whalers have approached innovations in their whaling technology with the same level of concern for both the overall safety of the task as well as the appropriate treatment of the whale who has offered its life to the hunter. In the particular context of a changing climate, new technologies like front end loaders have saved whalers from having to drag the body of the whale up from the beach over sand and gravel during the fall whaling season. This allows them to continue to treat the animal in the "right way." As one Barrow whaling captain explained, in this instance, "Technology helps us carry on our relationship with the whales. It doesn't hurt the whale or our tradition" (Nageak cited in Sakakibara, p. 1008, 2010).

The problem for the Iñupiat of Wainwright is that in the same way that ANCSA introduced a market economy that is premised on a fundamentally different way of understanding nature than that which is supported by their subsistence way of life, they have been introduced to technologies born of a similar disconnect between culture and nature. As Hugh Brody once suggested, nature for many indigenous peoples is an Eden from which they

have never been exiled, so that all their actions are aimed towards maintaining rather than transcending that connection (cited in Kassam, 2009). For the Iñupiat this has mean that in their understandings of creation, an Elder is as capable of speaking to and calling in a whale (FG-5, 2013) as the whale is able to consciously choose to give its life to the respectful hunter. Yet, as Gregory Cajete (2000) has averred, Western society as a whole has tended to produce technologies that reflect their understandings of the world as the type of ‘dead matter’ that is inherently incapable of carrying the tune of which Wainwright residents speak. Technologies like Xboxes, cable TV, and GPS units thus seem to both reflect this understanding of humanity’s separation from the natural world as well as ultimately increase the distance between those community members who would otherwise participate in the direct, shared experiences that are integral to a subsistence way of life and the transmission of Iñupiaq traditional knowledge. This ultimately erodes those traditional values that placed responsibility to the Tribe over personal enjoyment or individual gain and that understood how an animate nature demanded one’s close attention and respect.

As a people simultaneously both indigenous and modern, the Iñupiat of Wainwright are fundamentally aware that these are the types of contradictions that come from the meeting of Western and Tribal worldviews .The community of Wainwright and its leaders are, in fact, trying to actively find ways to balance these perspectives. As one young father suggested “They [children today] need to know both sides of the culture, our traditions, and the Internet and technology, the outside world and how we live here, up in bush Alaska. Who knows in the future all this land can be all covered with industrial folks coming, you know” (FG-1-1, 2013). One of the additional changes and challenges that persists, however, is the fact that Wainwright’s Tribal Council, which is the very entity that is meant to advocate for Iñupiaq cultural rights and

concerns as the counterpoint to the economic interests actively promoted by its associated corporations, was largely rendered inoperative for a significant period of time in the wake of ANCSA. The divide that ANCSA has created among community members in term of how they prioritize their economic/corporate and cultural/Tribal concerns also strains their abilities to collectively negotiate their futures as indigenous peoples. The legacy of ANCSA in terms of its long-lasting effects on traditional Iñupiaq power structures is therefore the last major category of social change that will be considered in this chapter.

5.6 Diminished Capacities & Divided Communities: Tribal Power in the Wake of ANCSA

Within Alaska, the Village Council (also referred to as the Tribal Council, Traditional Council or Native Village) is a more formalized version of the traditional system of governance that Native peoples utilized prior to contact with the outside world. Wainwright’s Traditional Council is therefore the primary venue through which the federal government “recognizes tribal sovereign powers and the right to certain services from the United States” (UAF Interior, para 1, n.d.). Older Wainwright residents remember a time when they had a strong Tribal Council in the village. Elders describe how the Council hired its own Marshalls who enforced the Tribe’s rules and anyone who got into trouble within the community ultimately had to answer to the Council members. The Council could assess fines for misdeeds like not showing up with the rest of the village to help open up the local coalmine in the fall (CE2-5). Disobedient children also received small fines or were assigned punishments like cleaning up the dog yards in town. This time period is characterized as having strict discipline and people still clearly remember how intimidating it could be to be called before the Council and how “when you got into trouble, you’d sit in front of the Council. 1 chair and all old elders” (FG-6-2, 2013).

When I first visited the village of Wainwright in the summer of 2012, I was, however, told by many people that the Tribal Council was essentially ‘inoperative.’ Later on in the fall of 2013, a focus group participant explained to me how the lack of a functioning Tribal Council was a major issue for the community because “the Wainwright Native Village could be the most powerful organization where they [the oil companies] come to the Native Village of Wainwright, the Tribal government. Now they’re mainly going to the corporation, they’re going to the ASRC, but they’re not using their main key, the one who has the master key to open all doors [to the government], the Native Village of Wainwright” (FG-2-1, 2013).

When I spoke with members of the Wainwright Traditional Council (WTC) about this issue, they agreed that the Tribe had been inactive for ‘a long time’ but that in the past few years they had been reorganizing and getting the WTC up and running once again (LL-3, 2013). One Wainwright leader clarified how he saw the Tribal Council’s dormancy as an unintentional side effect of a post-ANCSA focus on creating the North Slope Borough and the City of Wainwright. He also noted that Wainwright’s Tribal Council was formally reinstated in 1991, but that one of the many problems it encountered early on was that so many of Wainwright’s leaders were involved in multiple organizations and were wearing ‘so many hats’ and had so many different meetings to go to all the time that their energies were simply stretched too thin. The problem of having a relatively small pool of Native individuals prepared to take up these leadership roles during that time period was not, of course, unique to Wainwright. North Slope leaders like prominent Barrow resident Sadie Neakok, in fact, juggled multiple roles throughout the 1960s and 70s including teacher, social worker, and magistrate. In general, this situation is seen as rather common in changing cultures when a vanguard group of Native peoples often begin to acquire the skills necessary for these new settings (Blackman, 1989).

The problem with wearing of multiple hats is, of course, that it can place quite a burden on select individuals. Within Wainwright, it has also set up the situation where Tribal Council members have also simultaneously been Olgoonik Board Members. At one time, the President of Olgoonik's Wainwright operations was, in fact, also serving as the President of the Tribal Council. This has clearly created a conflict of interest at times and has led some to feel as if the Corporation was using those members with dual leadership roles to advance their own commercial interests by appropriating the power that should specifically rest with the Tribe (LL-1, 2013; LL-3, 2013).

As a response to the specific developmental pressures raised by the offshore drilling program, Wainwright leaders have opted to form the Tri-lateral Council. This Council includes representatives from all 3 local governing bodies: the Olgoonik Board of Directors, the Wainwright Traditional Council, and Wainwright's City Council. The informally stated goal of the Tri-lateral is to avoid any 'divide and conquer' strategies that the oil companies might try to use within the village by making sure that each governing entity is receiving the same information. One Tribal leader expressed his qualified support for this fledgling initiative:

Well, I think that it's a good step forward as long as we keep together as a unit. Instead of just trying to do this for the Tribal or do this for the Council or the Corporation, as long as we have one voice instead of being divided, be a unit that will make our concerns known to the outside entities that are interested in oil or whatever that's going to be happening in the future... That is what we expressed to the [Deputy] Secretary of the Interior Hayes, when he came in, when he met with us, that we are not going to speak out as separate entities, but as one voice, the Traditional Council, the City, and the Corporation because it will affect all 3 of them. These organizations are us, as residents of Wainwright. We just hold offices and we are labeled as traditional or city or the corporation and as a Tri-lateral we want to be as one unified voice to express our

concerns to whoever is coming in, for development or oil exploration or whatever it is (LL-4, 2013).

Other Tribal leaders, however, have expressed their concerns regarding some of the internal issues that exist within the Tri-lateral. One of the key problems that was mentioned is similar to the ‘multiple hats’ dilemma in that the power dynamics between the 3 entities has left some feeling that despite their efforts to move forward ‘as a unit’, the corporation has at times taken too much of a lead in this process. This is only natural in a certain sense given that Olgoonik is certainly the most well resourced of all the entities in terms of having both the funds as well as the ample staff needed to facilitate this process. Olgoonik does, however, also stand to make a substantial profit through the corporate contracts it could broker in regards to any offshore development. This has meant they have much more of a vested interest in seeing the drilling program go forward compared to the Tribe or the City who would not garner nearly as many direct benefits (LL-1, LL-2, LL-3, 2013). One Tribal leader who has attempted to critique the practices of the corporation in the past has said that “when you want to try and make a difference, even though you are right, they won’t listen to you” and this has left them feeling like they are being ignored by those who are just “seeing the dollar signs” associated with the potential for corporate profit (LL-1, 2013).

This concern that ‘dollar signs’ are taking precedence over the protection of subsistence is reflected in the efforts of other Tribal organizations in Alaska that have begun to push back against what they see as a problematic redesignation of power to Native corporations. This is especially true whenever these entities are selected to act as the arbiter on issues relating to Native traditional knowledge and subsistence culture. As a specific example, in 2005, when ASRC (the North Slope’s regional corporation) was chosen over ICAS (Iñupiat Community of

the Arctic Slope, the North Slope's regional Tribal organization) to represent the interests of the Iñupiat within the North Slope Science Initiative, which was designed to help assess the effects of oil and gas development scenarios, it was argued that ICAS should have been recognized as the 'superior local agent of Alaska Native culture and knowledge'. As it was further noted "when an Alaskan Native regional corporation is charged to study the effects of petroleum development on Alaska Native culture and subsistence, especially when that corporation itself is a petroleum producer, it is stepping into the shoes of tribes" (Blair, Lovecraft, & Kofinas, 2014, p. 5).

In the context of Wainwright's Tri-lateral such unresolved tensions have led one Tribal leader to suggest that despite outside praise for this organization, its perceived unity could actually work against the interests of their people in the long run. This is largely because it makes it much easier for outside interests to meet with the Tri-lateral and then claim that they have spoken with "the voice" of Wainwright without being fully cognizant of the internal power dynamics and conflicts of interests that persist within this organization (LL-5, 2013). Despite the Tri-lateral's attempts to represent the combined interests of the people of Wainwright (commercial and cultural), it is also important to note that it does not have any real power to make decisions, but can only provide recommendations (LL-1, LL-2, 2013). As one leader ultimately contended:

There are too many points of view on what this Tri-lateral group should be standing for and then we hear of outside entities coming in and they're so impressed with our Tri-lateral group and that we're able to speak with one voice, that's not true. You know we are just being fake and we are just trying to live up to other people's standards or make other people happy rather than truly stand up for what we need to be (LL-5, 2013).

Taken as a whole, the statements of many of Wainwright's Tribal leaders are indicative of the type of power imbalance that ANCSA engendered when traditional management structures

were splintered into Corporate and Tribal interests with very different and often contradictory priorities. Attempts by Wainwright leaders to advocate for the interests of their community with one unified voice that can not be ‘divided and conquered’ by outside interests have been significantly hindered by these internal issues. While it may be convenient to place the blame for this imbalance at the feet of the local Native Corporation, it is important to remember that this is a federally imposed institution that now holds significant financial obligations to its shareholders. The goal therefore is not to diminish the powers of the Native Corporation as it seeks to satisfy the economic needs of its people, but to instead create balance by reinvigorating the sovereign powers of the Tribe so that they are able to effectively represent their community’s cultural rights and concerns.

As of the early Fall of 2013, the only full time staff in the Wainwright Tribal office was one individual who was actually employed by ICAS as a Tribal liaison. ICAS is a regional Alaskan organization comprised of all North Slope Native communities and and its provides various Tribal services to these communities and their Iñupiaq residents (ICAS, n.d.). Due to limited office staff, most of Wainwright’s Tribal services were either contracted out to ICAS or to the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA), which is another regional organization that provides a variety of health and social services. Because of the regional breadth of the services they provide, ICAS, in particular, has been able to fill in the void left for many years in Wainwright by a defunct Tribal government. Wainwright Tribal leaders remain very appreciative of how ICAS was able to assist them when they did not have the local capacity in terms of facilities, monies, or active leadership to support local programs (LL-3, 2013). However, current leaders are also aware of the potential dangers associated with an overreliance on ICAS’ ability to provide Tribal services, which could work against their own desires and abilities to be more

self-sufficient. The goal of their revitalization is therefore not to completely sever ties with an organization like ICAS, which is generally seen as having some ‘weight’ when it comes to advocating for Native subsistence and other Tribal issues. It is, however, recognized that ICAS by its very nature represents regional interests so that a strong Tribal presence at the level of the village will be necessary if Wainwright is to effectively advocate for its own unique perspective and concerns (LL-5, 2013).

In order to accomplish this objective, the Tribe will necessarily have to improve its own internal organizational infrastructure. The prior breakdown of knowledgeable leadership has meant that potentially valuable information was not always passed down within Wainwright’s Tribal government. It is therefore necessary to now pursue the training needed to educate both current Council members as well as any new personnel. The Tribal office itself is also somewhat of an issue as it exists in a state of semi-disrepair with pervasive plumbing and heating issues. The building was once the location of the village’s jailhouse run by the North Slope Borough’s Office of Public Safety whose faded decal on the front door is the only signage for the building. Such an edifice ultimately does little to convey a sense of Tribal pride and power to either Wainwright’s Native residents or its visitors.

In terms of the WTC reclaiming their Tribal powers, the funding needed to improve their organizational and physical infrastructure is a sticking point due to the simple fact that there was no one really working to secure the federal monies for things like updating Tribal facilities, maintaining a core office staff, or administering community enrichment or aid programs, for which they might otherwise have been eligible (LL-1, 2013). Some of these issues were recently addressed within the WTC’s own Administration for Native Americans’ Social and Economic Development Strategies (ANA-SEDS) grant, which was awarded in the fall of 2013. In this

grant, the need for more education and training for Council Members and future employees was highlighted as a key issue. As a result, many Council members are actively pursuing training and education opportunities in order to inform themselves of the rights and powers available to them as a result of their nation-to-nation relationship with the federal government. In this way, they ultimately hope to have a ‘strong voice’ as a Tribal people (LL-2; LL-5, 2013).

The diminished nature of the WTC’s current capacities should, however, call into question the legitimacy of the Tribal consultation process as the sole means through which the federal governments has thus far met its fiduciary responsibilities to North Slope villages like Wainwright. This is especially true given that many of these communities will be increasingly faced with a significant suite of environmental and social challenges that are the product of the much larger forces of global climatic change. With the Tribe’s very limited resources it becomes difficult to see how such consultation processes can constitute fair and just decision-making. Communities like Wainwright cannot hope to match the authority and revenues of either the federal government, which has been clear in its commitment to the offshore drilling program, or the relevant multinational corporations that have deep investments in these activities.

The WTC’s long-standing dormancy has ultimately impacted their ability to forcefully articulate their cultural perspectives and concerns within the larger conversations regarding the future of development in the Alaskan Arctic. It is therefore important to acknowledge how the Tribal Council’s current positioning is in many ways a product of the cultural impositions that ANCSA enacted when it created the Native Corporation. Cronin and Ostergren (2007) have raised a similar issue in the context of the inequitable power dynamics among lower 48 tribes and government agencies. Here they note how the participatory capacities of many

contemporary Tribes are quite limited as a result of colonial processes of land expropriation and political marginalization. The limited resources and governing capacities that often persist at the Tribal level thus make it difficult for Native peoples to strongly represent their interests and concerns, which is true even in those instances where they have ostensibly been extended the opportunity to take on more responsibilities in order to better determine the course of their own development (Johnson, 2008).

The fact that the WTC is now undergoing a critical phase of revitalization is largely due to the efforts of a few motivated individuals within their community who are seeking to address important issues like their limited budget and staff, lack of familiarity with the full suite of their Tribal rights and powers, and grossly outdated facilities. In the context of a warming climate, they are not alone in facing these obstacles as many Native communities must now contend with the disruptive legacies of colonial marginalization and assimilation if they are to successfully negotiate the new realities of a changing Arctic (Cameron, 2012). Ultimately, it is important that the federal government recognize that they also bear a responsibility towards remedying the issues that villages like Wainwright face after a sustained history of colonial dispossession. Such problems must be addressed if these communities are to operate in today's channels of bureaucracy with any real measure of authority to determine their own futures. If equitable representation in the decision-making process is understood to be a key intervention into a long history of environmental racism within the United States (Faber, 1998; Schlosberg, 2007), then justice for the people of Wainwright is contingent upon a proactive restoration of their Tribal capacities that should be pursued at all levels of government from the local to the national.

The issue of equitable representation within the offshore drilling program's decision-making process also has a very localized component as Wainwright's leaders worry that their community members do not necessarily appreciate the extreme importance of the decisions now being made. All the Tribal leaders that I interviewed, in fact, insisted that they wished their community members would not leave all the responsibility to them to make these difficult choices when so many people would be impacted by development in so many different ways (LL1-5, 2013). Some felt that the traditional belief that it is unwise to have too rigid a plan for the future, which was a result of the unpredictable nature of Arctic environments, was used as an excuse used by some community members who wanted to avoid grappling with the issues that will affect their futures (LL-3, 2013).

When Wainwright residents, on the other hand, were asked about how satisfied they were with the current level of village input in the decisions now being made regarding offshore development there seemed to be a relatively uniform response. A typical example would be:

I think the Trilateral Committee is doing a good job, you know, keeping in touch with the industrial guys, the oil industry guys, what they plan on doing before they even try to do anything, out on the land. It's just that I just haven't been going to any of their committee meetings, but I hear from some of the committee members saying that they plan to do this, and they plan not to do that. I think they're doing a good job keeping in contact. (FG-1-1, 2013)

Local leaders are very concerned by this type of attitude in which people do not make an effort to attend the community meetings that are held for their benefit and instead are willing to assume that their leaders must be "doing a good job." It is generally felt that residents who might be focused on the potential for increased shareholder dividend checks "want the money, but then they don't want to deal with all the problems" (LL-1, 2013). As was previously demonstrated in

this chapter, the dividend check system and new technologies that have emerged on the North Slope in the wake of ANCSA have worked to demotivate and disconnect community members. The lack of engagement by Wainwright residents in the decision-making processes that affect them seems to further suggest that this type of complacency has also become an issue within the local governance process. Yet, local leaders remain hopeful that village residents will eventually understand that when it comes to regional development projects like the offshore drilling program, the US government does not necessarily hold the maintenance of Iñupiaq culture as its top priority. Local residents therefore need to recognize that it is ultimately up to them to care about it and protect it.

As one leader, in particular, suggested, the federal government has used the legal agreements brokered under ANCSA as well as the monies generated by its corporate structure to try and diminish local opposition to those large-scale development projects that are deemed to be in the nation's 'best interest' (LL-3, 2013). Such comments suggest a certain level of awareness of the ideas expressed by the likes of both Bryant and Bailey (1997) as well as Lake and Disch (1992). Here the state is understood to be tasked with the goal of acting in the 'name of the national interest', which represents a dual mandate to both promote economic growth while also protecting the environment (and those whose lifeways most directly depend on it.) In reality, however, the state appears to be focused on promoting those activities that allow it to maintain an air of legitimacy while it actively promotes the interests of capital.

As this chapter has worked to illustrate, the passage of ANCSA and its long-term effects on Iñupiaq society can be productively understood as the forms of ideological and structural assimilation that have long led to the 'indirect exploitation' of indigenous peoples. Whether intentionally or not, ANCSA has diminished the abilities of Wainwright's Tribal Council to

wield their sovereign powers. Such a loss can make it much more difficult to articulate both their claims on their ancestral territories as well as their own desires as a contemporary people. ANCSA has also made the basic material well-being of the Iñupiat contingent upon the demands of a market that demands infinite economic growth fueled by ongoing cycles of resource exploitation. This has ultimately created a significant divide within the community of Wainwright regarding the appropriate ranking of their economic vs. cultural concerns. Throughout this process, those worldviews that suggest that there are, in fact, alternative paths towards the Iñupiat's own development have been increasingly displaced. ANCSA's ongoing imposition of Western ways of thinking and being must therefore be fully understood if decision-making processes in the Alaskan Arctic are ever to justly contend with those colonial processes of cultural disruption that have led to the indirect exploitation of the Iñupiat.

ANCSA's imposed transition from a 'subsistence economy' to a 'market economy' complete with dividend checks, corporate powers and new technologies has attempted to fundamentally reorder Iñupiaq relations with their lands and with each other. Yet, the culture of the Iñupiat persists because of their ability as Native peoples to continually adapt to shifting environmental and social circumstances. In the realities of a post-ANCSA era, there is both an 'Aboriginal' Arctic of ongoing tradition as well as an 'Industrial' Arctic where economic growth and modern technological capabilities have raised both new possibilities as well as challenges (Zellen, 2008). As these worlds become increasingly intertwined, the Iñupiat of Wainwright envision the fundamental challenge that lies ahead as finding a way to bring these perspectives into balance by "learning to live in both worlds."

5.7 Conclusion: Learning to Live in Both Worlds

We have to learn our values, we have to learn who we are, because money is going to change people and leaders. Money is too easy to change us and if we are going to go and

get all these certifications and just never mind our hunting and stuff and just go on vacations and just go party, whatever, that's going to damage us from the inside out, because that's going to bring in more drugs and alcohol, more stuff, more dependency that we can't even be responsible enough to keep an office open from 8:30 to 5:00. It's just as important as it is to become certified to work a job 9 to 5, we need to push that same importance of teaching our traditional ways of hunting, not, "Oh, I got an Uzi and I am going to go kill 20 *tuttu* [caribou] or get 10 walrus heads", or whatever. You know, without really teaching the values and what they mean in order to learn to live, than how could you live something that you don't even know?... We have to balance, we have to know how to balance. (LL-5, 2013).

"Learn to live in both worlds" became a common theme when I asked Wainwright residents and leaders what they thought their community should be doing right now in order to negotiate the changes to come without compromising the core values of their culture. This is an ongoing challenge for the Iñupiat who have often weathered the processes of forced acculturation. Iñupiaq leaders like William Hensley has described how people in the past have tended to fetishize the more unique aspects of their culture, like their shamans and facial tattoos, without coming to a more comprehensive understanding of their traditional lifeways and contemporary struggles. As Hensley insists, an important part of the story of the Iñupiat that is often overlooked in such romanticized accounts is "the fact that wrenching changes had befallen us and we were working hard to adjust our lifestyles and values to those of the immigrants" (2009, p. 8)

The Iñupiat of Alaska's North Slope are now faced with a new era of great impending change, which is largely not of their own making. The romantic yet uniformed ideal of the 'Ecologically Noble' Eskimo may unnecessarily constrain their abilities to evolve and adapt to these challenges. To overlook the lingering legacies of ANCSA and to otherwise assume that all

Iñupiat can and should act to defend the Far North against any and all industrial incursions is to both ignore as well as to ultimately perpetuate the deeply unjust processes of colonial thought and structures of power that have always sought to order the Native “Other.” The actualities of a warming Arctic instead insist that we engage with the complex realities of Alaskan Native existence today in order to support the abilities of the Iñupiat of Wainwright to find ways to maintain the delicate balance that will allow them ‘to live in both worlds.’

In the end, it is important to recognize that change and adaptation are some of the most authentic aspects of Iñupiaq culture. While Richard Nelson once ominously foretold the demise of a subsistence way of life for the Iñupiat where their traditional knowledge and perspectives would be “lost forever in the icy graves of the old men” (1969, p. 387), this has not come to pass. In a retraction printed many years later, Nelson (1982) himself admitted that despite the multitude of assimilatory processes that the Iñupiat have endured, subsistence remains an integral and vital part of their culture. Many Iñupiat have also retained an understanding of nature that is both informed by as well supports this way of life in which it is possible to feel the movement of an animate world if one ‘sits still long enough.’ The next chapter elucidates the culturally unique conceptualizations of nature that have continued to support the subsistence practices of the Iñupiat, which are ever-evolving yet always deeply informed by their cultural values and traditions.

Ultimately, if environmental justice in a changing Arctic is ever to be achieved, the epistemological assumptions and cultural values of a dominant Western culture cannot be allowed to be the sole arbiter of the decision-making processes that will shape the territories and futures of its indigenous peoples (Stevenson, 2004). As ANCSA activist Etok Edwardsen has insisted:

America can no longer be permitted to dictate that everyone should be alike and believe in the same things. It should no longer attempt to force the mainstream American way of life on people who are perfectly content to remain true to their culture. This is not to imply that the Alaska Native is not adaptive. What it does mean is that the Native must decide what he wants maintained in his culture. (Gallagher, 2001, p. 159).

The hope therefore exists that "instead of competing with one another, or having one dominate the other" (McGregor, 2009, p. 94), the two systems of Western and Iñupiaq knowledge can work together in order to both mutually enrich one other as well as equally inform the decision-making processes now shaping the trajectory of future development in the Arctic. Those worldviews and cultural values that give Iñupiaq traditional knowledge its true meaning and power are thus explored in the next chapter as a key means of addressing the ongoing procedural marginalization of the Iñupiat within an offshore drilling program largely premised on a distinctly Western way of understanding nature.

CHAPTER 6

PROCEDURAL INJUSTICE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE IN THE ALASKAN ARCTIC: AN EXPLORATION OF IÑUPIAQ CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF NATURE

6.1 Introduction

Environmental justice theorists like David Schlosberg and Linda Robyn have argued that the misrecognition of indigenous perspectives and lifeways has often led to the procedural marginalization of Native peoples within the decision-making processes that profoundly affect their lives and lands. The limited and often token levels of participation that Native communities have been afforded in these processes have, in turn, contributed to systemic acts of environmental injustice that are seen as potentially genocidal in their effects. A possible remedy to this type of injustice thus requires a willingness to move beyond narrow definitions of scientific expertise to meaningfully engage with cultural difference and other forms of knowledge, which include the alternate conceptualizations of nature that deeply inform these ways of knowing (Robyn, 2002; Schlosberg, 2007).

Native scholars concerned with the treatment of indigenous traditional knowledge and its translation by Western scientists and decision-makers particularly stress this last point. They insist that a piecemeal or superficial engagement with their knowledge systems often only serves to promote the mistranslations that both hinder equitable and effective cross-cultural communications as well as lead to ongoing the effacement of their worldviews (McGregor, 2004a; Simpson, 2004). To be properly understood, indigenous traditional knowledge must therefore be apprehended in the cultural context in which it originated (McPherson & Rabb,

2011; Stevenson, 2004) and where the primary emphasis is often on using this knowledge to maintain proper balance with a world in which humanity is understood to be “an integral part of nature” (Freeman et al, 1998, p. 13). To otherwise ignore the cultural matrices that give traditional knowledge its true meaning and power, is, as Viola Cordova (2007) has forcefully contended, nothing more than a more ‘peaceful’ means of exterminating the Native Other.

Many critical geographers have expressed a similar concern regarding how certain hegemonic conceptualizations of nature are often wielded by the most dominant members of society in order to reshape our physical and social environments to best suit their own interests (Braun & Castree, 2001) Such a ‘politics of nature’ thus suggests that indigenous conceptualizations of nature that are not predicated on the ‘Great Divide’ are an important area of inquiry when it comes to finding ways to resist the power of these dominant ideologies. A respect for and ultimate acceptance of these alternate ways of knowing and being in this world are critical when it comes to supporting the abilities of indigenous people to uphold their Tribal sovereignty, which includes their inherent right to maintain their traditional relationships with their lands (Blaikie, 2001; Ranco & Suagee, 2007) By providing the critical context necessary for a deeper exploration of Native knowledge systems, such alternate understandings of nature can promote the types of culturally inclusive decision-making processes that EJ, Native and geographic scholars all agree are necessary for the production of environmentally sustainable and socially just futures.

In this chapter, I will show how a peculiarly Western understanding of nature as ontologically distinct from the realm of culture holds the ongoing potential to foment environmental injustice in the particular context of Alaska’s Far North. In the past, many resource management and development scenarios premised on the perspectives of those who

‘live the farthest from nature’ have been unable to meaningfully engage with those alternative understandings regarding right relations with the natural world that are held by many Arctic peoples and this has often generated intercultural conflicts and mistrust. The culturally unique ways that the Iñupiat of Wainwright know and relate to the natural world are therefore explored here as the type of understandings that must be considered within Arctic decision-making processes that otherwise have the potential to misrecognize Iñupiaq traditional knowledge and values and ultimately perpetuate these larger forces of injustice.

The first section of this chapter therefore begins with an assessment of the decision-making processes that are now part of the proposed offshore drilling program. This section draws on Wainwright interview data and supporting theoretical texts to situate the profound frustration expressed by many North Slope residents regarding these procedures within a larger body of work that illustrates how the concerns and perspectives of Native peoples are often marginalized by a superficial level of inclusion in the larger processes that affect them. Taken as a whole, these perspectives help to expose the empty nature of the rhetoric of cultural inclusion that has been espoused by the federal government within the offshore drilling program under the guise of the Tribal Consultation process. This section also sets the stage for further analysis in which an Arctic politics of nature is examined in terms of its abilities to both generate as well as legitimate such unjust forms of participation and representation within the drilling program and its decision-making processes.

The second section of this chapter then introduces the general perspectives of Wainwright interview participants regarding their traditional knowledge as it is informed by their relationships to the natural world. This includes both an understanding of appropriate behavior towards the subsistence animals they hunt, which is acquired through direct experience, as well

as their awareness of how their traditional knowledge is often perceived by outside authorities. This section also illuminates how culturally competing visions of nature, which were first revealed by the 1977 moratorium on bowhead whaling (considered in Chapter 4), continue to hold the potential to cause similar intercultural conflicts and miscommunications within the specific context of the offshore drilling program.

The final sections of this chapter therefore focus on the four interrelated yet distinct themes that have emerged in my analysis of Iñupiaq conceptualizations of nature. The 10 photo-elicitation interviews I conducted serve as the primary source of data for this section. I also draw on focus group discussions and my interviews with community elders and leaders for supporting data since the Iñupiat of Wainwright, like many indigenous peoples, do not draw a firm distinction between culture and nature and subsequently do not compartmentalize their knowledge into one distinct category or another. Interviews conversations that were not necessarily focused on ideas about ‘nature’ and its various meaning therefore often produced valuable insights as a result of the holistic way in which the Iñupiat live as members of a community that encompasses not just their village but the entirety of creation.

Within Wainwright, my research suggests that nature is often related to according to the following four concepts: it is the source of ‘Eskimo Soul Food’, it supports relationships that are based on ‘Shared Food, Knowledge, and Identities’, it is seen as ‘Unpredictable, Cannot be Controlled’, and is often understood as a ‘Love for the Land.’ The first two interrelated themes help highlight the importance of cultural difference to the Iñupiat by fleshing out the extremely significant role that their subsistence way of life plays in the shaping and maintenance of their collective identities as Arctic peoples. While Iñupiaq subsistence ultimately represents a complex set of beliefs and practices that encompasses a broad range of concerns from the cultural to the

material, it has often been misrecognized by Western decision-makers due to the epistemological authority that they attribute to the nature-culture divide. This has made it very difficult for non-Natives to look beyond this separation in order to truly apprehend the integrated nature of the Iñupiat's physical and spiritual lives. Taken together these themes suggest that within Native Alaska, subsistence foods and the traditional lifeways that support them are so essential to a group's collective sense of identity as indigenous peoples that any threat to these food sources represents a significant risk to the emotional and physical well-being of the entire community (Dombrowski, 2007).

In evaluating the just or unjust nature of the offshore drilling program it is therefore important to not only consider those impacts on their subsistence way of life that are directly measurable (such as its effects on the health or numbers of important subsistence species), but also its less tangible ramifications. As an example, it is important to consider what an inability to hunt the bowhead whale would mean to a people who have long defined themselves as the 'hunters of the bowhead whale.' As discussed in Chapter 2, EJ scholar Schlosberg (2007) has used the EPA's determination of what constitutes a safe level of dioxin within certain fish populations in order to illustrate how the misrecognition of cultural difference can lead to an underestimation of the physical risks to Native peoples that are associated with these decisions. In this same vein, the first two conceptual categories of nature explored in this chapter highlight how cultural misrecognition can also severely underestimate the social, cultural, and spiritual risks that large scale development projects like the offshore development program represent to indigenous peoples like the Iñupiat.

The third and fourth conceptual themes highlight how a form of cultural misrecognition that is inattentive to those 'matrices' that inform different knowledge systems has led to the types

of miscommunications that have increasingly marginalized the Iñupiat from the decision-making processes that affect them. Here we find that the Iñupiat of Wainwright's long engagement with and careful observation of mercurial Arctic environments has taught them that nature is 'Unpredictable, Cannot be Controlled'. Yet, these perspectives have been fundamentally ignored by oil companies like Shell who has expressed an unmeasured confidence in its abilities to control Arctic natures. The fact that an Iñupiaq understanding of nature is also fundamentally intertwined with 'A Love for the Land', which supports their sense of belonging as a people, has also been overlooked by those Western decision-makers and scientists who are intent on opening up new areas to resource exploitation. This is largely due to the fact that outside authorities cannot grasp the full significance of such a relationship because it is premised on a relational rather than purely instrumental view of nature.

To unintentionally misconstrue or willfully overlook both the sense of cautious respect as well deep interconnection that the Iñupiat hold towards their environments can lead to the types of miscommunications that hinder productive cross-cultural dialogue. The chimerical nature of such an engagement with cultural difference also makes it challenging for the Iñupiat to clearly articulate their own understandings of what constitutes the type of appropriate development that would support rather than undermine the foundations of their culture. The four conceptual categories of nature detailed in this chapter can therefore be productively understood as both the source as well as a potential remedy to those unjust forms of procedural marginalization that have constrained the Iñupiat's abilities to strongly advocate for their own self-determined lives.

6.2 Iñupiaq Engagement in the Decision-making Process

The North Slope Native leaders of Resisting Environmental Destruction on Indigenous Lands (REDOIL), a non-profit social and environmental justice organization, have framed their

resistance to the offshore drilling program around the idea that it represents an unacceptable risk to their subsistence practices, which are seen as integral to their identity and culture. Such development is therefore in direct violation of their fundamental rights guaranteed under international human rights law, which insists that as indigenous peoples they are entitled to pursue their own way of life (REDOIL, 2012). Within the United States, the federal doctrine of trust means that the U.S. government does have the fiduciary responsibility to protect Tribal interests and lifeways (Wilkins & Lomawaima, 2001). This responsibility has often been ignored and as a result there is a long history in this nation of ‘underutilized’ Native lands becoming ‘national sacrifice areas’ in the name of economic progress (Grinde & Johansen, 1995). In an attempt to begin to rectify this situation, former President Clinton pledged during his time in office that any executive action concerning the lands and natural resources of Native peoples in America would not be undertaken without prior consultation with the relevant Tribal authorities (Anaya, 2004).

In the context of the offshore drilling program, Tribal consultation has thus far been carried out in the form of non-binding comment periods open to the general public. There has also been a host of informational meetings with village leaders and community members held in North Slope villages by federal authorities from relevant agencies like the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which oversees the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) through which any future pipeline for offshore oil would likely pass (and within which Wainwright is embedded). Many meetings have also been hosted by industry representatives from Shell Oil, ConocoPhillips, and Statoil, which are the three companies that most actively pursued offshore drilling in the Alaskan Arctic during the 2012-2017 leasing period. In a 2013 review of Shell’s activities, which was largely prompted by

the significant nature of its technical difficulties during its inaugural drilling season, the U.S. Department of the Interior ultimately claimed that the company had “coordinated well with Alaska Native communities and subsistence hunters” (US Department of the Interior, 2013). This statement was mainly in reference to the local Communication Centers Shell had established, which worked to coordinate its exploratory activities with local hunters so as not to come into conflict with their customary hunting patterns.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that an ability to coordinate specific activities does not necessarily mean that either the federal government or companies like Shell have made it possible for local communities to meaningfully participate in the larger decisions now being made. Here it is critical to remember that the offshore drilling is slated to occur far enough offshore to be in federal waters where the Iñupiat have no real power to contest these processes. In general, Shell at least superficially performed its duties by holding a number of meetings in North Slope villages like Wainwright to inform the community and local Tribal leaders of their operational plans. However, as one Wainwright leader noted, it is hard to determine how committed companies like Shell really are to these processes, which are meant to facilitate community and cultural inclusion. They explained:

Half of me wants to say that they [the oil companies] make an effort at the meetings...they seem really concerned because you know it's their job to take in all the information and I feel they're making an effort...[But] a lot of the concerns I hear are the same concerns that never get addressed and you know that just makes me wonder, Who is really listening? Are they just here to say they came and show expenses for airlines and food and door prizes, or whatever? So that's the other part of me that says that they are just here covering their bases, taking care of their 'social responsibility'. (LL-5, 2013)

When asked about how well they thought Shell had done in communicating with residents and responding to their concerns at these meetings, another Wainwright leader responded, “They

gave us Carhartt jackets and hats. If you call that communicating” (LL-2, 2013). In the context of a focus group discussion I conducted in Wainwright in the late fall of 2013, community members also expressed their mutual frustration with all of these meetings, where people from ‘out of town’ would come using ‘big words’ that they could not understand. Much like the residents of Shishmaref who have begun to feel alienated by the bureaucracy surrounding the possible relocation of their village (Marino, 2012), the people of Wainwright have often felt like they were being asked the same kinds of questions over and over again, but that they never saw anything really change in their village (FG-3, 2013). As a third village leader explained, “we’re important when we are having the meetings, but then it is hard to know what they are really thinking. You wonder if they forget you once they’ve gone back...you can say your piece... [But] you don’t see what you said really make a difference” (LL-1, 2013).

These comments are supported by the critiques of other North Slope residents who have become disillusioned by these processes. Iñupiaq activist Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak has complained that during federal government hearings, she often felt that the concerns of her people were not given meaningful consideration and that authorities did not appear to possess a genuine willingness to try and truly protect their traditional way of life. Others like the former President of the Native Village of Point Hope, Caroline Cannon, felt like they were not full participants in these decision-making processes. Cannon contends that she and her fellow community members were ultimately mentally overwhelmed by official procedures where “we have to repeat ourselves over and over again, both to the same audiences that don’t seem to hear or respect what we are saying, and to the constantly shifting audiences that come to our community to talk about oil and gas industrial development” (Thompson, Ahtuanguaruak, Cannon, & Kingik, 2013, p. 326).

The federal government is, of course, meant to protect the rights and interests of indigenous peoples throughout this process. Yet, as one Wainwright leader stated “We have a relationship with the federal government, but the government does not understand us and they say that we are a federally recognized tribe, but they don’t listen to us, they just want it their way, not what we want” (LL-4, 2013). ANCSA activist Etok Edwardsen was similarly critical of the federal government during the meetings first held back in the late 1960s around the possibility of developing the Prudhoe Bay oil fields. At a hearing held in Washington DC regarding the possibility of building the Trans-Alaska Pipeline system, he argued that the Eskimo were a ‘forgotten people.’ This was largely because Edwardsen felt that the Secretary of the Interior, who was meant to protect their rights as Tribal peoples, had never properly consulted the Iñupiat. While these meetings therefore purportedly gave the Iñupiat an official venue to publicly voice their concerns, Edwardsen ultimately dismissed them as a ‘mental façade.’ He explained that rather than act on its duties to protect the interests of Native Tribes, the federal government used the illusion of these inclusive spaces to absolve itself of its obligations by suggesting, “We had a public forum, therefore we are innocent now” (Gallagher, 2001, p. 23).

Several factors appear to be at play here that would help explain the sense of frustration and lack of representation currently felt by many Iñupiat within the offshore drilling program. They may also help clarify why “concrete evidence of sensitivity on the part of government agents and corporate representatives to Iñupiat concerns still remain to be seen” (Kassam, 2009, p. 219) As scholars like Paul Nadasdy (2005a) and Deborah McGregor (2004b) have noted, many indigenous peoples find that in order to ‘participate’ in these types of decisions they must often take on new ways of thinking and acting that align with the dominant understandings of non-Native bureaucrats. An acceptance of these parameters may lead to the conversion of one’s

cultural matrix, which represents the possible extinguishment of these indigenous modalities. Conversely, to resist these processes is to risk but a token level of inclusion in those very mechanisms supposedly designed to elicit local input. An outright rejection of these processes is also challenging when Tribal peoples like the Iñupiat are also dealing with decades of other assimilatory pressures (detailed in the preceding chapter) that have limited their abilities to resist the ‘false choice’ of either supporting big development projects or continuing to experience debilitating levels of poverty in their communities.

In addition, due to its trust relation with US tribes, the federal government is itself meant to mediate in these processes in order to ensure that the rights and interests of this nation’s indigenous peoples are well represented. However, a narrative of national ‘progress’ premised on infinite economic growth and technological advancement has long worked to frame Native peoples as impediments to such an inevitable march forward. As Lake and Disch (1992) have suggested, it thus becomes almost unavoidable that in its dual mandate to both promote economic growth as well as protect the environment (and the people whose livelihoods and identities are inextricably linked to their environments), the federal government has, over time, instead focused its efforts on promoting the interests of capital. State neutrality in the context of balancing the demands of international oil companies, which purchase leases that constitute the second largest source of government funding after income taxes (Reiss, 2012), against the rights and concerns of indigenous peoples like the Iñupiat can therefore easily become a mere ‘façade.’ In the end, the offshore drilling program begins to resemble the type of resource colonialism where “the prior ownership rights and interests of the aboriginal inhabitants” (Bodley cited in Gedicks, 1993, p. 13) are ignored by the state as it continues to promote a national agenda that

prioritizes a form of economic growth that both necessitates as well as rationalizes the development of the ‘underused’ resources of Native peoples (Cronon, 2003).

Native law scholars David Wilkins and Tsianina Lomawaima (2001) have argued that if the federal government is to ever uphold its promise to support the sovereignty of Tribal peoples, then indigenous perspectives must achieve their ‘rightful place’ in the federal policy-making process. This next section illustrates how Arctic peoples like the Iñupiat of Wainwright “see, interact, and relate with the world with different sociocultural premises “ (Kassam, 2009, p. 64) in which the binaries of cultural and nature are more or less irrelevant. Within the Circumpolar North there has been a longstanding inability to meaningfully engage with the traditional knowledge of the Inuit (which includes the Iñupiat) as it is informed by their culturally specific understandings of nature. The Iñupiat of Wainwright are now discovering how a lack of engagement with these perspectives, which act a key interpretative framework to their knowledge system, is hindering their abilities to effectively exert control over their own environments. Such difficulties suggest that it is time for these perspectives to take their ‘rightful place’ in the federal decision-making processes now guiding development in Arctic Alaska.

6.3 Iñupiaq Traditional Knowledge: The Importance of Right Relations & Direct Experience

The intercultural conflict that arose around the International Whaling Commission’s 1977 ban on all bowhead whaling was largely the a result of a nature-culture divide that privileged the findings of a handful of Western scientific ‘experts’ over the much more intimate understandings of the bowhead’s behaviors which were held by many Iñupiaq hunters. As Paul Nadasdy (2005a) has clearly argued, a belief in the superiority of Western knowledge systems has often meant that indigenous peoples who did not hold the same Eurocentric attitudes towards wildlife and who

did not present their findings in the technical language of government have found it difficult for their knowledge to be deemed legitimate and worthy of acting upon. This is, of course, especially true when it cannot be corroborated by the findings of Western scientists.

Much like the case of the Makah (Sepez, 2002), which was considered in Chapter 2, non-Native environmentalists also tried to paint Iñupiaq whaling practices as morally offensive because they understood the whales to be such highly intelligent creatures. Yet, in both instances the sentient nature of the whales was well respected by those who hunted them. The Iñupiat have long believed that it is the whale itself that decides to freely give the gift of its life to the respectful hunter. Unlike their urbanized counterparts who have sought to qualify or even terminate their aboriginal whaling rights, the Iñupiat do not see an inherent conflict between the emotional connection and aesthetic appreciation they have for the whale and the great utilitarian value they also place on this creature as a key source of historic and ongoing sustenance (Freeman et al., 1998; Sepez, 2002).

Those clashing worldviews that were first revealed as a result of the 1977 whaling moratorium ultimately established intercultural relationships that have had lasting repercussions on Alaska's North Slope. When Greenpeace made a tour of North Slope villages in May of 2014, seeking local buy-in in regards to their ongoing efforts to see the offshore drilling program terminated, they were not well-received by most Wainwright residents. As it was later explained to me by several people who had attended either the Tribal or community meeting hosted by Greenpeace representatives, this local reaction was born of a lingering feeling of distrust towards those organizations that had previously supported the ban, which made no accommodations for aboriginal subsistence whaling. There was also a sense that Greenpeace's representatives did not seem to fully understand the ongoing importance of the oil industry to

the region. They therefore seemed to have all too easily assumed that they would find ready allies in the Iñupiat, which was likely based on the misconception that as indigenous peoples all Natives in Alaska would automatically resist such development.

Wainwright residents have also occasionally found themselves in conflict with visiting scientists due to culturally competing visions of what constitutes appropriate behavior when interacting with other species. Like the whalers discussed above, the Iñupiat of Wainwright's fundamental relationship to nature is one of respect for their environment and the animals they hunt, who are understood to have their own ways of knowing. Wainwright hunters consistently contend that it is only through appropriate conduct, which involves never taking more than you need or can handle, that one can attempt to ensure that the animals will return each year to their traditional hunting grounds (FG-1-1, CE-4, LL-4, 2013). One elder in Wainwright was very vocal with his displeasure at what he saw as the mistreatment of animals at the hands of many wildlife biologists. He often spoke about this at the community meetings held with oil industry representatives and visiting scientists and this same issue also came up in my interview with him. Here he expressed how upset he was with Fish and Game employees working on the North Slope who tagged or radio collared animals and 'disturbed' them. He explained:

Our Iñupiaq, our ancestors when I was growing up, I was told by the old people, never, never fool around with animal. Never disturb the animal when they're mating or whatever they do. That's our culture and today when I look at the Fish & Game, they want to know every animal, like whale, they attack them. Our ancestors told us not to disturb the animal, let them be. And even the fish. Fish & Game get the *tittaaliq*, burbot, and cut it up and put in a radio. The Eskimos, our ancestors, told us not to do that. Never disturb the animal. You know we don't have to know where the animals go, let them be, let them do what they want to do. (CE-2, 2013)

This statement reflects the respect for the ‘other-than-human personhood’ possessed by all of creation that is held by many Native societies, which has created similar tensions in other natural resource management scenarios (Nadasdy, 2011; McPherson & Rabb, 2011). It also clearly represents a frustrated attempt by an elder, who is widely respected within his own community for his knowledge and experiences, to express his own understandings of how the animals with whom they have long shared the same social space should be treated. These tensions are indicative of how the workings of a bureaucracy founded on a socially constructed divide between nature and culture can make it exceedingly difficult to articulate those alternative perspectives that question the legitimacy of the status quo (Perry & Robyn, 2005).

Despite the assimilatory pressures they have experienced in the last few decades, including most notably their integration into the market economy via ANCSA, many of the Iñupiat of Wainwright still do not recognize nature as a distinct entity that is open to their manipulations. In fact, when asked about his relationship with nature as an Iñupiaq, one Wainwright man explained, “To tell you the truth, nature don't really mean a thing to me. I mean nature means that we're here and we've got to do what we have to do to survive” (PE-9, 2013). Another young hunter also responded to my question about how he related to nature with a slight laugh and the simple statement, “I consider myself a part of nature, while we live in this world” (PE-6, 2013), (see **Figures 6.1** and **6.2** for additional descriptions of nature.)

As the elder’s above statement also suggests, most Wainwright residents are aware that the scientists and federal and corporate decision-makers that visit their community do not generally share their same beliefs about the natural world and humanity’s rightful place in it. As one Wainwright resident elaborated on the distinction between his perspectives and those of outside authorities, he noted, “Other people probably don't really pay attention to nature. Other

people out there, because they go to the stores [to get their food]... Nature to them is the weather, the weather on the Weather Channel, you know? That's their nature. When it snows and rains. That's their nature. Our nature and their nature is different" (PE-7, 2013).



Figure 6.1: “Caribou Grazing”

PE-6

“This is nature right here. These animals are eating, walking around and it’s life. And it’s in our nature to hunt these animals” (PE-6, 2013).

A nature mediated through the distancing lens of new technologies by a people whose material needs are not directly drawn from their environments is therefore seen by Wainwright residents to represent a marked contrast from a nature that is otherwise understood as immediate, unavoidable, and demanding of one’s close attention and respect. Environmental anthropologist Richard Nelson (1969) has further noted how an Iñupiaq ability to discern the most minute changes in their environment is a product of their intimate understandings of the laws of the land. Such understandings are drawn from an immersion in their environments as fully engaged actors

where the time necessarily dedicated to the subsistence hunt out in harsh elements often means that survival rather than comfort is the main goal. It is only through careful observations made over long periods of time that the Iñupiat were able to amass a store of knowledge, which made it possible for them to not only persist but to actually flourish in the Far North's highly changeable environments.



Figure 6.2: I think this is Nature...

PE-5

“I think this is nature, the whales and the seagulls, everything has a purpose. When we catch something, everybody is sharing and everybody is eating, even the animals are eating, and nothing goes to waste” (PE-5, 2013).

The problems associated with transmitting the type of knowledge, which is garnered from direct experience, to decision-makers who are not likely to also follow a subsistence way of life, but instead primarily relate to nature “as weather on the Weather Channel” are two-fold. The experiential nature of this knowledge makes it hard to accurately convey it to federal authority

and outside business interests who make only brief visits to their community and who also tend to prioritize written forms of knowledge. Villagers thus understand that putting things in ‘black and white’ is “how the government likes it. If you don’t have it in black and white, it’s nothing” (FG-2-1, 2013). One resident clearly expressed his concerns that this preference meant that federal authorities, who may have read a few official documents, often assumed that they understood the community of Wainwright and Iñupiat traditional knowledge much better than they really did :

the federal government should listen to the local people, believe the local people, trust the local people, and face the fact that the local people of Wainwright know more than they do, because we live up here, we know what’s going on, they don’t. They think they do just because they see it on paper and that’s not right, that’s not good. They have to come up here and see it and believe us and learn from us and most of us will be more than willing to work with them (FG-2-2-2, 2013).

Such comments are indicative of what Wainwright residents consider to be the only truly effective means of gaining knowledge and understanding. Hunters in Wainwright explain that they themselves acquired their knowledge by going out on their land with their elders where they observed the wildlife and the hunting process first hand and where the emphasis was always on ‘learning by doing’ (FG-1-1, 2013). For people interested in truly understanding the cultural significance of subsistence to the Iñupiat one must be willing to “come here and go out there [on the land] and experience it for themselves how we live our life, and what it really means to us” (PE-5, 2013). For the Iñupiat there is simply no substitute for direct experience as the path towards legitimate knowledge.

Another related issue, however, is that even if decision-makers and industry representatives are willing to spend more time in the village to have these experiences, they might not always be

comfortable with the bloody realities of a subsistence lifestyle. So while Wainwright residents recognize that people should ideally come to the village to experience this way of life as a way of truly comprehending it, such firsthand knowledge is also understood to be potentially problematic. Such difficulties speak again to the cultural differences engendered by a socially constructed divide between culture and nature that has distanced much of Western society from the ‘life-through-death reality’ that is so integral to a subsistence way of life. This tension has been captured by one Wainwright resident in the context of a recent communal beluga whale hunt:

I think when they see it, to believe it, I think they get a little squeamish, they don’t want to see that... When Wainwright caught all those belugas, those barges were right there and they came in and were taking pictures and asking questions, we didn’t want them to see us like that, when they ask us questions or can we buy it from you? No, we’re not going to sell you any ocean mammals, it’s against the law. We’ll give them a piece, but not sell it to them. The way they react to something like that, they see a whole herd of beluga, and then they see a whole town of Eskimos going to kill the whole herd, we shouldn’t feel funny for them seeing it, it’s like cattle, just like their cattle. (FG-4-1, 2013)

It is also important to point out that some residents of Wainwright do not fully grasp how unique their subsistence way of life is and how it is often not a shared experience with many of the decision-makers who have the power to affect how development in or near their village will unfold. In a photo-elicitation interview with one very active subsistence hunter, he was asked whether or not he thought that an oil company employee coming into Wainwright might have different ideas about nature or conflicting perceptions or values regarding the land. He responded “If they have a subsistence lifestyle where they’re from, I am sure they know what it means” (PE-8, 2013). Additionally, in a focus group discussion where we were talking about how it

might be possible to improve communication between Wainwright residents and representatives from the federal government and the oil companies, it first needed to be clarified whether or not these decision-makers also led a subsistence lifestyle ‘down there’ (FG-4, 2013).

The fact that outside environmentalists were disturbed by the Iñupiaq whale hunt and that Iñupiaq elders are frustrated with what they see as the mistreatment of local animals at the hands of Western scientists, suggests that a lack of understanding between two cultures can potentially go both ways. In the context of the offshore drilling program, which represents the further collision of two distinct worldviews, it becomes even more critical to consider the culturally unique conceptualizations of nature held by the Iñupiat. This type of data can be used to help non-Native decision-makers develop a better grasp of the cultural context that informs and supports Iñupiaq traditional knowledge and values. This, of course, must be done with realization that direct experience is the best but not always the most feasible way to gain this type of knowledge so that written forms of information should always be explored in conversation with the residents and elders “who own and live that knowledge” (Simpson, 2004, p. 376).

A clear desire among Wainwright leaders to try and address breakdowns in the transmission of their traditional knowledge from elders to youth means that this type of information can also allow the Tribe to document their traditional perspectives so that they can continue to share them with future generations. An understanding of how their conceptualizations of nature differ from those commonly held by dominant members of society can also help them learn how to strategically communicate their rights and concerns in order to be able to exert more control over their own environments. As Wainwright’s residents become more aware of how their viewpoints and positioning compare and contrast with outside interests,

they can better position themselves within their negotiations with those state, federal and corporate entities with whom they will have to increasingly interact in the years to come.

The next section of this chapter thus serves to elucidate some of the common themes that came out of my conversations with the residents of Wainwright regarding what nature meant to them ‘as an Iñupiaq.’ The first two themes are interrelated as they both directly relate to the types of concepts that indigenous peoples insist are an important element of understanding Native subsistence as a highly complex notion encompassing economic, social, cultural, and spiritual concerns (Kuokkanen, 2011). Given that the offshore drilling program fundamentally threatens the Iñupiat’s subsistence way of life, it is very important not to ‘misrecognize’ what is truly at stake here. This is necessary in order to begin to intervene in those cycles of oppression in which a colonial form of progress has often served to wipe out ‘extraordinary possibilities’ (Césaire, 2000) and where North Slope missionaries were so intent on saving the Iñupiat that they were unaware of all that they were destroying in the process (Gallagher, 2001).

Historically, a fundamental lack of appreciation for the full importance of Native subsistence to the cultural lives of Alaska’s indigenous peoples led not only to ANCSA’s extinguishment of such rights, but also to the relatively weak restoration of these rights based on rurality under the provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998; Huhndorf & Huhndorf, 2011). For those who ‘go to the store to get their food’, an understanding of nature as the ‘Source of Eskimo Soul Food’ that supports a web of relations that are primarily about ‘Shared Food, Knowledge, and Identities’ therefore helps supports a more nuanced conceptualization of a subsistence way of life and its vital importance to the ongoing health and well-being of

communities like Wainwright. Environmentally just forms of development must ultimately recognize and, perhaps more importantly, promote the full conceptual spectrum that is Native subsistence in which the material and cultural needs and concerns of the Iñupiat are inextricably linked.

6.4 Nature is: Source of Eskimo Soul Food

The City of Wainwright's newly established Comprehensive Plan states that because of competing cultural perspectives, definitions of subsistence commonly used within Alaska tend to focus on subsistence as the "use of natural resources for physical needs" (North Slope Borough, 'Wainwright Comp', 2014, p. 70) so that they generally overlook the important spiritual and cultural elements of this way of life. The State of Alaska's definition of 'subsistence uses' can therefore be seen as a prime example of how the nature-culture divide has worked to limit understandings of this alternative way of knowing and being in this world. Here subsistence uses are defined as:

"...the noncommercial, customary and traditional uses of wild, renewable resources by a resident domiciled in a rural area of the state for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, or transportation, for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of nonedible by-products of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption, and for the customary trade, barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption" (cited in North Slope Borough, 'Wainwright Comp', 2014, p. 71).

In contrast, one of the themes that emerged out of the photo-elicitation interview process is that for the Iñupiat of Wainwright, 'nature' is not merely seen as the location of 'wild, renewable resources' but rather the source of 'Eskimo Soul Food' (PE-5, 2013). Eskimo soul food is a term used by an interview participant that I subsequently heard in casual conversations throughout the village. Much like the 'First Foods' enjoyed by Tribes in the lower 48, Iñupiaq

traditional foods can be understood as representing “not only sustenance, but also a source of pure spirituality and mental health” (Vickery & Hunter, 2014, p. 7-8). As Anishinaabe activist Winona LaDuke has stressed, “food itself is medicine- not only for the body but also for the soul and for the spiritual connection to history, ancestors and the land” (cited in Adamson, 2011, p. 213).

The central role that ‘First Foods’ are known to play in the maintenance of Tribal identities has, in fact, meant that a sovereign ‘right to food’ has been increasingly framed as an issue of environmental justice by many scholars working with Tribal peoples within the US (Adamson, 2011). Within Alaska, however, Natives peoples like the Iñupiat lack the political recourse to protect their aboriginal subsistence rights because they were expressly extinguished under ANCSA. This is especially true when it comes to any activity on the Outer Continental Shelf, which is deemed to be beyond the ‘territorial reach’ of even ANILCA’s weak protections (Getches, Wilkinson, & Williams, 1998). Alaskan Native subsistence thus embodies the very type of cultural difference this is so critical to the maintenance of their traditional lifeways, yet a continued inability on the part of Western decision-makers to recognize it as a core cultural concept has left it exceedingly vulnerable within the Iñupiat’s current framework of rights.

For the Inuit, in general, their meat-heavy diet is often proudly proffered as an example of one of the many ways they have learned to live in balance with an Arctic environment that offers little else. Iñupiaq traditional foods are understood to be important to their health and they are also seen as the physical embodiment of their deep connection to the land. Recent scientific studies have confirmed that whale meat and other Eskimo foods (see **Figure 6.3** and **Figure 6.4**) actually have more nutritional value than store-bought products like the chicken and beef that must be imported from afar into Native North Slope villages. As it turns out, marine mammal

fats are actually low in saturated fats and whale *maktak* in particular is a rich source of vitamins A and C, thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin (Freeman et al., 1998).



Figure 6.3: “*Niqipiaq*” [food, specifically meat]
Beluga, bearded seal and walrus meat shown here.

PE-10

In Wainwright, I have heard people express their preference for their traditional foods based both on its higher nutritional quality as well as their own acquired taste for it. As one hunter explained:

I would prefer caribou and maktak over the store bought food, because most of the time, I don't know. I just grew up on Eskimo food and I like the way it tastes. Nowadays, the store bought food, they're putting in all kinds of different of chemicals in there, mixing it up, or something like that. Store bought food is good, but I don't know, I just prefer caribous or whatever we hunt, that kind of food, it taste better, I like it. (PE-5, 2013)



Figure 6.4: “Harvesting them and letting them freeze”

PE-8

“Picture of real good meat, real soft, fat, and going to feed a few families” (PE-8, 2013).

There is also a commonly expressed belief that traditional Eskimo food not only satisfies the hunger longer, but that its high fat content also helps keep a person’s body warm while out in extreme weather conditions. Both of these traits are, of course, prized by local hunters who often count on their traditional foods to fuel them throughout the long hours dedicated to their subsistence pursuits. In the context of the proposed offshore drilling program, it is perhaps no surprise that there is certain level of dissatisfaction with what is perceived to be an ongoing imposition of other ways of being by federal authorities. Such ‘outsiders’ are seen as once again misrecognizing the significance of Iñupiaq subsistence practices, which have been developed over millennia in response to the conditions found within their environments.

As one older Wainwright resident explained his frustration:

They are trying to tell us how to live, how to live our lives and this is not right. I know they wouldn't like it, if I went down there and told them, "Hey, this is the way you should live, I want you to live like this and these are your limitations", and that's not right, they wouldn't like it if I went down there and told them that. Now they've been trying to tell us how to live our lives up here and they don't even know that the foods we eat up here keeps us warm in the wintertime, the *quaq* [frozen meat], the blubber from the whale, *uqsruq*, oil from the seal, bearded seal, *ugruk* meat, the healthy ones, those foods when we eat them in the cold winter, after we eat them and we go out, it keeps the body warm, just like antifreeze and we don't get hungry very easily like when we eat white people food, store bought foods. (FG-2-2, 2013)

Much like the Wainwright schoolteacher who came to question the idea that the reforms she was meant to impose represented an improvement on how things had long been done in the area, the above statement equally interrogates the justice of imposing one way of being over another. While Cordova (2007) goes so far as to suggest such impositions are merely a more 'peaceful' means of exterminating the Native Other, being told "how to live our lives up here" is, at the very least, seen as an unwarranted intrusion of epistemological authority. This intervention is especially unwelcome given such a lack of any first-hand knowledge of their lived realities, which might otherwise help to provide at least some level of legitimacy to these acts.

In addition to the health benefits attributed to a diet of locally caught, unprocessed meats, the Iñupiat also clearly have an emotional and spiritual connection with those foods that have been enjoyed by their ancestors for generations. The eating of Eskimo food, which people in Wainwright also casually refer to as 'good mood food', represents a continuity of tradition that connects them to their ancestors in ways that come to define them as a cultural people (Freeman et al., 1998). In Wainwright, I once had a group of grandmothers proudly discuss how many of

their grandchildren were emulating their traditional eating practices because they showed a strong preference for Eskimo food over store bought food (FG-3, 2013). North Slope researchers Cuomo, Eisner, and Hinkel (2008) have similarly noted that when children enjoy eating Native foods “this is celebrated as an expression of their Iñupiaq identities” (p. 13). Fresh maktak, in particular, is so symbolic of Iñupiaq culture and identity (Sakakibara, 2010) that when it was announced over the VHF in Wainwright that the first fall whale of 2013 had been struck after a disappointing spring hunting season without a single bowhead landed, one bystander responded by exclaiming, “*Aarigaa!* [Good, that’s good, wonderful], Tonight we eat like real Eskimos!”

That the offshore drilling program represents a threat to the Iñupiat’s ability to “eat like real Eskimos”, goes a long way in highlighting how such a loss of access to this food would represent a critical diminishment of the type of cultural difference that defines them as a people. For one Wainwright resident who participated in a photo-elicitation interview, a picture of Wainwright’s first fall whale could be simply entitled ‘Eskimo Soul Food’. When asked to further describe his personal feelings about the landing of the whale he replied:

I was just really happy, I was like, maktak, yes, because everybody else around the villages they were catching whales and having maktak, and Wainwright didn't have nothing, and when they caught a whale, I was so happy, I was like, yes, we have food, we have food, Eskimo soul food... food for everybody. (PE-5, 2013)

This remark also hints at another important theme that arose in my conversations with the Iñupiat of Wainwright regarding their conceptualizations of nature- the core cultural value of sharing as embodied by the corporeal gift of the whale that truly provides ‘food for everybody.’

6.5 Nature is: About Shared Food, Knowledge and Identity

For many Iñupiat, the great importance they place on Native foods is not just about the personal satisfaction derived from the individual consumption of these foods, but also how

success in subsistence hunting is achieved by social cohesion and reinforces social cohesion (Balicki cited in Kassam, 2009, p. 67). The sharing of food is a basic ethic for the Iñupiat (Freeman et al., 1998) and Wainwright elders, who hold a particularly esteemed position in Iñupiaq society, are often given choice parts of whatever animal has been caught as a sign of respect. Widows with no one to hunt for them are also often provided a portion of the catch. Every young hunter is taught the importance of sharing through a traditional custom that insists that if they hope for continued hunting success in the future, they must give their first catch away to elders and family members without keeping any for themselves (FG-3, 2013).

When a whale, in particular, is landed, it is eventually shared with the entire village at communal feasts held throughout the year. Such events include the *nigipkai* that is held by each crew just after they finish successfully butchering their whale so that everyone in the village can have a small taste of the fresh catch. *Apugauti* is another meal hosted by each successful whaling crew, which is held just after the season is over and they are putting up their boats (*apugauti* literally means to “hit the land”) (Kishigami, 2013). For this event, community members are generally served a meal that features *mikigaq*, a prized delicacy of raw whale meat and *maktak* mixed with the blood of the whale and carefully fermented. *Nalukataq*, which is also known as the Blanket Toss, is then held in the summer as the final celebration of a successful whaling season. For each day of *Nalukataq*, a successful whaling crew (or a team of crews working together) prepares another meal for the village and shares of the whale are given out to every household to take home with them. Shares of the whale are also handed out at communal Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations (Ahmaogak, n.d.; FG-5, 2013).

The networks through which subsistence foods are shared are so extensive that in the village of Wainwright only 1.3% of the households surveyed in 2009 said that they never

received food through sharing (UAF sharing project, 2013). As impressive as this is, it should also be noted that the sharing of traditional foods often extends beyond the village to the rest of the North Slope and even down to relatives in cities like Fairbanks and Anchorage. One young Wainwright hunter described how just a few years ago many North Slope communities got together to help out the village of Anaktuvuk Pass because residents there were unable to catch any caribou. People from villages like Wainwright went out hunting for them and the North Slope Borough then shipped the meat out to them by plane (PE-6, 2013). The sharing of subsistence foods thus contributes not only to a sense of belonging within individual communities, but also nurtures a much wider sense of collective identity among all Iñupiat as Native peoples. One Wainwright mother further described the bond that this sharing creates:

Cause whaling, you know, when one catches a whale, the whole community comes together to help. People outside in the world, they don't know nothing about that, you go to Anchorage and you have a neighbor or you're out of town, nobody brings you stuff to eat, Native food... cause it's like, there's no nothing, you don't know your neighbor, but here we know everybody in the whoole town, everybody knows everybody, one community of 600 know each other ... it's that bond we have, you know, us Natives. (FG-6-2, 2013)

Another young hunter similarly echoed her comments:

I mean, hunters, you know, we're good people. We help each other out, our communities, every community. When our community catches a whale or belugas, they make sure they give, make sure the households, every household has their share. Not just Wainwright, all the other villages, Barrow, Point Lay, Atkasuk, Kaktovik. And the whole communities come together to help with that, you ain't going to see that nowhere else like Fairbanks, Anchorage, or no other cities, you know? It's like around here it's the whole community. (PE-7, 2013)



Figure 6.5: “Community”

PE-6

“We work as a community to get things done, and help each other out... This is what we eat, what we grew up on” (PE-6, 2013).

It is also important to note, that sharing in the context of a subsistence lifestyle is not just about the actual distribution of the food. It also involves a common reliance on one another when it comes to taking on the time-consuming and at times rather dangerous tasks of hunting, preparing, and properly storing one’s catch. During the photo-elicitation process, one Wainwright youth selected a photo he entitled “Getting Together and Helping Each Other” (see **Figure 6.6**) as the very first photo that captured what nature meant to him as an Iñupiaq. He explained “Because when we need help, people are there to help us, if we can’t do things on our own” (PE-1, 2013).



Figure 6.6: “Getting Together and Helping Each Other”

PE-1

A critical element of the subsistence process therefore also involves the transmission of the knowledge of how one can safely and productively pursue various hunting activities. For a group of young Wainwright grandmothers, this meant showing their children and grandchildren where their favorite *aqpik* [salmonberry] picking patches were located out on the open tundra before they eventually became too unwell to travel. As one woman explained “They [the berries] will always be there. Show them [her grandchildren] where to go and they will always know where it is as they get older” (FG-3-2, 2013). For one experienced hunter who was also a proud grandfather, he largely thought about nature in terms of everything he needed to teach his grandchildren about hunting. He described how for the Iñupiat such hands-on training starts at a very young age. He gave the title “My Grandson and his First Beluga” (see **Figure 6.7**) to the very first picture he selected, explaining:

I was very happy when he got his first beluga, it made me proud, it made me see myself when my father taught me, and to see it, and to share with my grandson, and now he knows how. ...I want to teach my grandson to learn the things I learned from my father. It's one of our traditions to teach our young ones how to hunt, so they can survive. When we're gone, we won't have to worry about them, trying to learn how to hunt when they know how to hunt already...[It's about] showing our children, my grandchildren the knowledge I have in hunting, so that they will have that knowledge to share with their children and survive. (PE-3, 2013)



Figure 6.7: “My Grandson and His First Beluga”

PE-3

Taken together these first two themes suggest that for the Iñupiat of Wainwright, nature supports a subsistence way of life that largely defines them as a people through the ‘soul foods’ they eat and share and the knowledge and physical and mental support they provide one another when it comes time to hunt and process their foods. They operate in a world where the hunter is acutely attuned to his environment as one predator among many others and ‘real Eskimos’ all

share in the bounty of the whale by eating fresh maktak. The communal way of life and sense of identity that these activities support could never be replaced by simply ‘going to the store’ like other people (who think differently about nature) do to get their food. It is these differences that are so integral to culture yet are so misrecognized by current decision-making processes that they consider the offshore drilling program to represent an acceptable risk to Iñupiaq lifeways.

Within an environmental justice framework that seeks to meaningfully engage with cultural difference, the fact that these differences cannot themselves be narrowly defined in terms of some static, ‘point of contact’ moment is profoundly problematic. Iñupiaq traditional knowledge is embedded in their subsistence way of life in which cultural practices and values are passed on and at times reconfigured through the shared experiences of community members (Ingold, 2000). In the end, the ever-evolving nature of this knowledge and these relationships is one of the greatest sources of the ongoing cultural cohesion of the Iñupiat of Wainwright. It is also, however, one of the Iñupiat’s greatest communicative challenges when it comes to advancing understandings of subsistence that convey the full depths of its meanings and importance to outside decision-makers who prefer their information to be neatly presented in ‘black and white.’

These first two themes, which highlight how nature is the source of Eskimo soul food that also supports a web of relations based on shared food, knowledge, and identities, begin the imperfect translational process of establishing an understanding of subsistence that is more reflective of how the Iñupiat of Wainwright understand their own relations to nature and to each other, yet is still legible to federal authorities and outside interests. The next two themes further illuminate why it is so critical to try and accurately convey Iñupiaq conceptualizations of nature within the offshore drilling program whose very premise is heavily influenced by a uniquely

Western way of apprehending nature. Here it is possible to begin to see how the Iñupiat's conceptualization of nature as 'Unpredictable, Cannot be Controlled' has not been well considered within an offshore drilling program that assures technical mastery over these same environments. An Iñupiaq understanding of nature that is fundamentally about 'A Love for the Land' is also explored as a way of relating to the natural world that has neither been well understood nor respected by the federal decision-makers who originally created the National Petroleum Reserve- Alaska in which Wainwright is embedded and who are now seeking to pursue offshore drilling in the Chukchi Sea. This theme thus serves to highlight how critically important it is to engage with Iñupiaq conceptualizations of nature in order to protect and uphold Iñupiaq subsistence rights and sovereignty in a decision-making framework that has otherwise worked to obscure these alternative perspectives.

6.6 Nature is: Unpredictable, Cannot be Controlled

The importance that many elders place on passing on their knowledge of how to live in harsh Arctic environment also hints at another theme that emerged in Iñupiaq conceptualizations of 'nature' - it is unpredictable and ultimately cannot be controlled. In the context of a Wainwright focus group discussion, one middle-aged father and hunter commented on how developing an appreciation for the unpredictability of Arctic seas is one of the key safety lessons that he wants to impress upon his children. He explained "I am going to make sure that they [his children] are able to survive out there [out hunting], if they get stranded in a storm. They should always be prepared for the worst, even if it's a good day" (FG-1-1, 2013). Or as one photo-participant simply stated "nature is dangerous at some points, all the winds and everything, the destruction it causes" (PE-6, 2013).

Iñupiaq politician Willie Hensley once wrote that his ancestors existed in a world where “they were always engaged in *iñuuniaq*, the serious business of staying alive. Survival was our primary concern” (2009, p. 7). Many of the tales shared by Wainwright’s elders and active whalers and hunters similarly stress the idea that survival is still one of their fundamental concerns given the unpredictable nature of their environment. One elder in particular shared many stories from his youth in which there were quite a few close calls as well as a few heartbreaking fatalities.

In one example he was in a whaling boat that got stuck on a whale and began to flood. The entire crew would have been lost except for the quick thinking of the harpooner who grabbed the whale’s flipper and was able to push the boat back off the whale before it was completely swamped. He also shared the sad story of losing his friend in a drowning accident on a lovely summer day when they were coming home from hunting *tuttu* [caribou] upriver and a rogue wave took their skin boat from behind and caused it to capsize. This occurred not long after they had gotten on the water so that he recalled joking with his friend while they were cutting up the *tuttu* and getting ready to go, only to lose him a short while later. The stark juxtaposition between this scene of laughter among young friends and the somber trip home he described with his friend’s body covered in canvas and his ‘own tears falling off’, (CE-1, 2013) serves to capture just how changeable the Arctic environment can be and it drives the point home that even the most well-prepared and experienced hunters can find themselves in perilous situations.

Wainwright residents therefore stress the idea that their ancestors were able to survive in the Far North because they followed the ‘natural law’ and that their continued survival in this region still depends on their abiding “the laws of the land we have to live by...the laws of the

ocean and the land” (FG-2-4, 2013). An understanding of these natural laws was also seen a key lesson that outside oil companies must develop if they are to both operate safely in the Arctic as well as communicate effectively with Arctic peoples. As one Wainwright resident explained “they have to learn to abide by our natural laws that have been with us since our ancestors came to the North” (FG-2-4, 2013).

In the face of the environmental and subsistence concerns raised by both North Slope hunters as well as various international environmental organizations, Shell Oil largely rationalized its drilling plan in the Chukchi based on the idea that it could easily control unpredictable Arctic natures through its use of the best technology currently available. Men like Pete Slaiby, the head of Shell’s Arctic ventures, confidently insisted that their technology would allow them to handle anything that came up in the Arctic (Reiss, 2012). The people of Wainwright, however, exhibited a fair amount of concern when it came to Shell’s assurances regarding its abilities to exert technological control over a changeable Arctic nature. Such sentiment was clearly expressed by one woman who described her anxiety:

Well, with Shell, that’s our ocean, you know, it’s first time having an oil drill out there, it’s pretty scary for me anyway because the animals and the whales, the walruses, nothing is ever bulletproof in anything. Something could go wrong, even though they say, “Oh, it’s 100% bulletproof.” No, I doubt it. Something will eventually go wrong because like with our water system, we just got new water system, running water, flush toilet, everything. Since we had that, we’ve been having problems, like, nothing is ever bulletproof... And what scares me the most is when they are drilling out there and now that my [relative] is a whaling captain and he loves to go hunt whales and hunt *ugruks* [bearded seals] and *natchiqs* [ringed seals], ‘cause our parents and our other elders that are surviving there they live on those and they crave for those, that’s the scariest part because, even though they say, “Oh, it’s going to be good”, it’s just scary to think about it. (FG-6-4, 2013)

Or as the same father who planned on teaching his children about preparedness said about Shell:

If they do come and explore for oil on the ocean...if they ever did get a spill out there, I'm not sure if they'll be able to even clean it up because this ocean here in the Chukchi Sea and the Beaufort Sea is unpredictable, weather can change in just an instant. It can be calm and all of a sudden, it's a storm. Could be ice free and in an instant it could all be jagged ice. (FG-1-1, 2013)

As one former Shell executive has astutely noted, "In Shell's culture, technology is who you are, how you get things done. When Shell has a PR problem often the root is that they try to explain technology associated with it and the audience doesn't care about that. They care about something else... Shell has a bad habit of misreading the audience and thinking, Look you're smart, I'm smart, let me explain this to you and then you'll think the way I do. But not everybody values technology the way Shell does" (Reiss, 2012, p. 202). Such assurances of technical mastery did, in fact, appear to actually exacerbate rather than assuage the concerns of Wainwright residents. For local peoples who believe in following rather than trying to transcend the 'natural laws', absolute control over nature is neither desired nor even considered to be a reasonable goal, especially since their long engagement with and careful observation of mercurial Arctic environments has taught them nothing is "100% bulletproof."

The fundamental communicative disjuncture here is clearly a Western preoccupation with technology as a means of exerting increasing control over an external nature as compared to an Iñupiaq understanding of the world in which the illusion of control is perhaps the most dangerous form of folly. Yet, technology has itself played such a historically important role in affirming the superiority of Western civilizations by allowing for the mastery of nature and the subsequent accumulation of material wealth (Harris, 2004) that it possesses an almost unquestioned value in most development scenarios. Given the rather significant nature of the

technological setbacks that Shell experienced in its initial forays into the Arctic drilling theatre, which included the crushing of the *Arctic Challenger's* containment dome during its deployment test, multiple air quality permit violations issued by the EPA, and two separate accidents involving each of their drill rigs, the trepidation of the Iñupiat does not, however, appear to be unfounded. The difference for the Iñupiat is that while they certainly appreciate technology when it makes certain tasks easier and safer to accomplish, they firmly believe that an ability to operate safely in Arctic environments is predicated on an adherence to the natural laws that no technology can ever truly transcend. For them, a concern for their 'survival' rather than a desire to exert any sense of dominance, is the primary attitude with which they approach all interactions with their environments.

International oil companies wishing to operate in the Arctic would therefore do well to consider the Iñupiat's understanding of the appropriate role that technology should play in any engagement with Arctic natures. In their ongoing communications with Native North Slope communities, it is important for them to appreciate that the Iñupiat, much like Cajete's and Ingold's earlier assertions regarding the use of technology in indigenous societies, seek an ongoing connection with rather than alienation from the land. Here it is understood that "the Eskimo is part of the land; the land is part of the Eskimo. There can be no separation, no amputation. For at the root of every Eskimo thought, at the center of his being, there is one overwhelming thing. The land" (Gallagher, 2001, p. 28). Put very simply, such a deep and engaged attachment to their surroundings has been described by one Wainwright resident as an abiding 'love for the land.'

6.7 Nature is: A Love for the Land

In many ways the offshore drilling program represents a fundamental clash of worldviews in which the Alaskan Arctic is alternately understood as either Iñupiaq homeland or Final Frontier ripe for resource exploitation. Several Arctic researchers have suggested that the idea of the Far North as a desolate ‘terra nullius’ has often been erroneously advanced as part of the political process surrounding the opening of these areas for resource extraction (Kassam, 2009; Reiss, 2012). The Arctic as empty wasteland has therefore emerged many times in the American imagination as a rationalization that suggests that the general public should see these lands “as a dumping ground, to do with as they please” (O’Neill, 2007, p. 79). As an example, this language was used back in the late 1950s in order to try and promote an extremely ill-advised plan, known as Project Chariot, which would have created a deepwater harbor near the North Slope Village of Point Hope using several thermonuclear bombs that would trigger a blast 160 times bigger than Hiroshima. Proponents of the project necessarily downplayed the extreme risks that it would have presented to the Iñupiat whose traditional hunting grounds would have been thoroughly contaminated as a result of this experiment (O’Neill, 2007). As recently as the early 2000s, this idea reappeared amidst the Congressional hearings regarding the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) for oil exploration. Here these ‘ugly’ lands were deemed worthy for exploitation because they were nothing more than ‘a flat white nothingness’ (Banerjee, 2013).

On the North Slope, the creation of the NPR-A is an exemplar of how Eurocentric notions of land ownership have been used to reinforce an idea of a barren nothingness that stands in direct opposition to how the Iñupiat themselves understand their relationships to their territories. As discussed in the earlier background chapter, many lands near Wainwright were

selected for inclusion into the NPR-A (originally the Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4) based on the government's belief that these lands were free of 'private ownership interest' (Gallagher, 2001). Yet, as one older Wainwright resident explained, local families had regularly traveled from the coast all the way into the interior by the Brooks Range for many generations and they often had seasonal camps set up throughout this region with either temporary dwellings like tents or even sod homes (LL-4, 2013).

Much like the early English settlers who took a lack of visible signs of improvement on the land as reason enough for the expropriations of Indian lands for their own uses (Cronon, 2003), the US government did not recognize the claims made by local Iñupiat on this territory. Instead, they continued to draw upon John Locke's theory of property, which had justified English colonial expansion in the Americas by equating ownership (and its suite of rights) with the transformation of land through labor as reflected principally in enclosure and cultivation (Arneil, 1996). As geographer Cole Harris (2004) has further shown, this way of thinking posited Native peoples as savages who unlike their civilized counterparts did not 'know how to use land properly.' The dearth of permanent structures to be found within much of Iñupiaq traditional territory thus served as the moral justification for its contemporary dispossession based on persistent, hierarchical notions of civilization vs. savagery and their attendant land uses (Harris, 2004).

This is despite the fact that for many indigenous peoples, 'ownership' of the land is more often expressed as a deep love and sense of attachment to a place that through their regular travels often becomes an intimately familiar landscape invested with the memories and stories of its people (Basso, 1996). In the course of my photo-elicitation interviews with Wainwright residents, I quickly came to learn that even a seemingly straightforward picture of an ice cellar or

a photo of Thomas Point (which sits just south of the village,) often contains the story of a family working together to maintain the cellar by chipping away the excess ice or fond memories of a particularly successful hunting trip that resulted in two boat loads of ducks on the way home (PE-2, 2013). The Iñupiat of Wainwright can, in fact, tell a tale about nearly every twist and turn in their nearby rivers and can discern the slightest landmarks in the barely undulating terrain that surrounds their village. The existence of this intimate knowledge would be a much more culturally appropriate way of establishing ‘prior ownership rights’ in that it is reflective of an Iñupiaq sense of belonging to rather than ‘owning’ the land. Yet, colonial powers have long rejected those stories that populated indigenous landscapes with the long-standing occupancy of their people in favor of more ‘legible’ forms of knowledge like numbers of acres under cultivation or permanent structures built (Harris, 2004). As Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson further explains, indigenous claims of occupation and ‘ownership’ of territory have routinely been effaced because “their own voices were imperceptible, or unknowable, or unimportant, or were sieved through analytics that interpreted their aspirations in ways that were not their own” (2007, p.70). The creation of the NPR-A therefore exemplifies the ways that the dispossession of indigenous lands is often justified through the privileging of Western conceptualizations of the land. In this case, it allowed the federal government to advance an idea of the Iñupiat’s ancestral territories as a ‘terra nullius’ in ways that drastically curtailed access to their own lands, which would now be locked up as ‘petroleum reserves’ in the name of the national interest.

Another important element of the Iñupiat’s contemporary relationships with their land is the idea that being ‘out on the land’ and away from the confines of the village is a place where many Wainwright hunters say they find a sense of peace. It is a place where it possible to follow in the footsteps of one’s ancestors by providing for one’s family and where it is possible to leave

behind much of the mental confusion associated with modern life in the village. Many Iñupiat view hunting as a way of making oneself a better person so that when people return from camp, they often feel as if they are “ready to come back and deal with the whole world” (Cuomo, Eisner, and Hinkel, 2008). When one photo-elicitation participant was asked what he was thinking about when he looked at a picture of him and his brother *pilaking* [butchering] a caribou, he replied, “I don't know, just happy” with a laugh and when asked why he was happy he further explained, “Catching food for my family, providing food, meat. Plus it's away from everybody else, all the drama and stuff people have around here. It's really quiet, and peaceful” (PE-5, 2013). Another photo-participant selected a photo of his family's hunting cabin (see **Figure 6.8**), which is located up the Kuk River. He described it as a place that he likes to go that has a ‘great view’ and is also ‘quiet, real quiet’ (PE-1, 2013).



Figure 6.8: “It’s A Great View Up Here And It’s Quiet, Real Quiet”

PE-1

The hunt itself should also be understood as something that the Iñupiat find inherently enjoyable. A quick glance at the Facebook page of any contemporary Wainwright whaler come late winter confirms the fact that the arduous task of spring whaling is an eagerly anticipated event. For subsistence hunters, these types of trips have always represented “a good time, a challenge...whereas it is necessary to procure resources for sustenance, pleasure is part of the extraction experience” (Jorgenson, 1990, p. 78).

This is an important point to make given the exchange that occurred at a community meeting held in Wainwright on November 7, 2013. At the time, Dr. Stephan Braund presented the results of a recent study he had conducted, which was funded by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) (Braund, 2013). The study was designed to establish a baseline understanding of the offshore subsistence practices of hunters in Wainwright and Point Lay, the two closest communities to Shell’s exploration activities, in order to develop mitigation strategies that would help lessen the effects of any future oil and gas development on marine subsistence uses in the Chukchi Sea. Active hunters from each community had been supplied with GPS units and the hunting tracks they ultimately produced served to provide a better understanding of the full range and extent of their offshore subsistence activities.

When it came time to discuss the maps that featured all the routes that Wainwright hunters had taken out on the ocean, Braund mentioned that some of his colleagues were skeptical of those tracks that went furthest out into the ocean that did not show any recorded kills (hunters were asked to mark kill sites with their GPS). These skeptical scientists dismissed these routes as evidence of ‘mere joyriding’ on the part of local hunters. Whalers present at the meeting assured Braund that no one in their community would risk the safety of their boat crew by going so far out into open waters just for the ‘fun of it’. They would also never burn their expensive fuel so

unnecessarily. They further explained that a few hunters may have simply forgotten to mark their kills in the excitement of the action and that many hunting trips just naturally end up as ‘scouting trips’ because there is never any guarantee that the right kind of game or hunting scenario will present itself. Or as one Wainwright hunter described it to me, “We don’t make an appointment or schedule a time for them [the animals] to come, they come when they want to come (PE-3, 2013).

By suggesting that ‘pleasure’ trips were something completely different than ‘resource extraction’ trips, Braund’s colleagues exhibited a fundamental misunderstanding of the one of the key ways the Iñupiat engage with their environment. For the Iñupiat, happiness is often derived from the hard work and experience of being out on the land that is all part of the process of obtaining food for their families. Labor as such is therefore an inseparable part of life itself (Jorgenson, 1990; Ingold, 2000). In the end, such a potential misunderstanding sets up a dangerous precedent that could work to diminish an accurate representation of the full extent of the offshore territory utilized by the Iñupiat in favor of a much smaller zone that they could legitimately claim as their established hunting grounds. The fact that this research data is designed to help BOEM eventually establish deferral areas in the Chukchi Sea ideally highlights the importance of avoiding these types of misinterpretations that have worked in the past (i.e. the creation of the NPR-A) to diminish the territories and rights of the Iñupiat of Wainwright.

For the Iñupiat of Wainwright, a love for the land is, in fact, deeply interwoven into their subsistence pursuits and it is a feeling that encourages them to maintain these practices. A sense of abiding connection acts as a key motivating force when it comes to the labor intensive and time-consuming tasks that mark a subsistence way of life. In the end:

[It’s] just the love of the land...With nature, you’ve just got to love nature, I mean, just the love of it, the love of being out there and doing things, getting the food that you need

to sustain for the whole winter. All of these, with the fish, the whales, the berries, the beluga...all of it all together, it's just the love of it, and you have it in your heart to really want to do it...you've got to have it in your heart from start to finish without letting it get spoiled or anything. You need to make sure that you put it away so that you'll have it for later. (PE-10, 2013)



Figure 6.9: “Migration” [with herd of caribou on the horizon]

PE-8

“[I’m] grateful that I learned how to live off the land...not too many people got the opportunity to hunt like this, just a few people. Sometimes the animals come to us and we don’t have to go very far to get them. Wainwright is a real good place for hunting” (PE-8).

6.8 Conclusion: “The Sea is Our Garden”

Overall, the Iñupiat find it difficult to relate to the idea of nature as a distinct entity completely separate from their own being. Their understandings of nature cannot be parsed out from their own sense of what it means to simply be alive in this world and this perspective ultimately supports a feeling of communal belonging that encompasses all of creation. Through the food they share and the knowledge and support they provide one another during the arduous

tasks of hunting and preparing for the long winter, they constantly reinforce a sense of belonging to the land that is a source of both individual satisfaction as well as communal cohesion. An intimacy with their lands that in many ways defines them as a people also means, however that they have learned to never take their abilities to operate safely in Arctic environments for granted. As many experienced hunters know, to do so is to invite almost certain disaster.

For the most part, Wainwright residents recognize that when it comes to explaining their way of life, people who come from communities or families that ‘depend on nature’, “can understand. They already know, versus other people that don’t depend on nature” (PE-7, 2013). Within many resource management scenarios in Alaska it is clear, however, that Native peoples are not often invited to participate in a bureaucratic framework built by those that ‘depend on nature’ so that their perspectives have often been marginalized in ways that have created intercultural conflict and distrust. When these ‘ethnobiological paradigms’ (Sepez, 2002) collide, it is generally the viewpoints of Western scientists and decision-makers that ultimately inform the regulations and rules that are produced. This makes it very difficult for Natives peoples to exert their sovereign right to act towards their environments in ways that are consistent with their own understandings of the world.

The challenge the Iñupiat face today is to try and convey the deep importance and meaning of their subsistence way of a life to a Western culture whose environmental management scenarios are predicated on an understanding of nature as an external ‘resource’ to be owned and controlled. This perspective stands in such stark contrast to a people who sees themselves as existing in a partnership with the rest of creation and where nature is “all around everybody, no matter where they are” (PE-8, 2013). Within the offshore drilling program the challenge of this task is further exacerbated by the fact that the federal government has thus far

carried out its fiduciary responsibilities to the Tribes through the implementation of a decision-making process that closely resembles Edwardsen's mental façade.

The Iñupiat have therefore worked to convey the extreme importance of their subsistence lifestyles by likening the sea to "their garden", which would likely be irreparably impacted by any offshore oil spill (Demer, 'Iñupiat Tribal', 2012; Joling, 2009; Medred, 2012; Vercammen & Patterson, 2012). The best example of the use of this terminology within Wainwright came in a spontaneous exchange during the course of a focus group discussion with seven relatively young men who were either mildly or extremely active hunters:

FG-4-4: Well like that one guy in Barrow who said our ocean and our land is our garden, huh?

FG-4: Yeah. [multiple voices]

FG-4-1: Yeah, it is our garden.

Interviewer: Yeah, I had heard people when I was here last summer, they used that a lot, so that is a term that is familiar to you guys, the sea is our garden?

FG-4: Yeah. [multiple voices]

I: And what does that mean to you, when someone says that?

FG-4-7: That we're hunters

FG-4-1: This is where we get our food, you can't destroy it, you can't pollute it, you can't harm it in any way, it's just like us going down to the lower 48 somewhere wanting some sort of precious mineral from the land -

FG-4-4: On their garden.

FG-4-1: - yeah, on their garden, and we go and destroy or contaminate or -

FG-4-7: Pollute.

FG-4-1: - pollute their garden.

FG-4-4: all their plants, just go -

FG-4-7: And then what would they do?

FG-4-1: This is our garden and we don't want no contaminants, no pollution, they already even have studies of the seals that are getting sick with the fur falling off -

FG-4-4: Yeah, polar bears.

FG-4-3: Food chain is going to go down if there is an oil spill in the ocean, right?

FG-4-1: And we eat those animals.

FG-4-7: We are made of it.

Such attempts at cross-cultural communication are certainly not uncommon among indigenous peoples and the Penan people of Malaysia have, in fact, employed a similar expression in their own resource conflicts. The Penan have fought for many years to protect their

ancestral forests from the advancements of international logging companies. As a part of this struggle, they have tried to express the vital importance of these forests to their culture by describing them to outsiders as their ‘office’ or ‘supermarket.’ Anthropologist Pete Brosius has since suggested that the use of such expressions as the ‘forest is our supermarket’ was the Penan’s attempt “to speak across difference, to familiarize themselves, to frame their arguments in ways they hope that will be recognizable to outsiders” (2006, p. 283).

The danger, of course, is that by deploying the idea of a garden to try and convey the importance of their subsistence way of life, the Iñupiat have essentially been forced, like many Native peoples, to express their worldviews through the lens of a foreign ‘matrix’ that can never accurately reflect their understandings of humanity’s rightful role in the world (Cordova, 2007). As it has been eloquently written, Iñupiaq subsistence is a complex concept that:

includes the pleasure that people derive from subsistence pursuits and from being out in the country. It includes the respect and reverence that people hold toward the land and the animals. It includes the understanding people have of the deeper connections between themselves as a people, the land and the sea, and the resources. The people know that these connections sustain not only their bodies but also their cultural and personal essences, giving them identity and meaning in their lives as persons and as a people. It is to these resources, and their relations to them, that villagers...assign significant meanings. (Jorgenson, 1990, p. 97)

The phrase “the sea is our garden” is therefore an earnest but necessarily imperfect attempt on the part of the Iñupiat to find ways to begin communicating their way of life across the gulfs of cultural difference they now face in the context of the offshore drilling program and its decision-making processes. It can only be hoped that this gesture is rightly understood as but an overture to future conversations in which both the Iñupiat as well as outside authorities and business interests all *equally* strive to fully comprehend and engage with the matrices that inform

one another's worldviews. Up until now, the Iñupiat of Wainwright have largely felt that when they have tried to share their traditional knowledge and values with visiting scientists, "we tell them, but they don't believe us" (CE-2, 2013). For many people living in the village of Wainwright, the path towards more equitable decision-making processes in the Far North thus seems quite clear. To conclude with the wise words of one village resident:

They have to work with us and they shouldn't make assumptions as to how things are, "maybe this is the way it is"- they shouldn't say that. They have to be direct and learn from our elders and believe them. And starting from there we could make decisions along with them. (FG-2-2, 2013).



Figure 6.10: "Beluga Season- Our Elders"

PE-10

"These are the guys we learn from" (PE-10, 2013)

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR A CHANGING ARCTIC AND ITS ORIGINAL PEOPLES

7.1 Introduction: Environmental Injustice and the Offshore Drilling Program

Situating an Arctic politics of nature, which has privileged Western knowledge systems and conceptualizations of the natural world over the Iñupiat's traditional knowledge and perspectives, within an environmental justice framework helps to reveal the indirect exploitation and procedural marginalization of the Iñupiat within the offshore drilling program. Such insights are important given that the federal government's rhetoric of Tribal consultation and concern for cultural inclusivity would otherwise suggest that such development scenarios are proceeding with the full consent and participation of the region's original peoples. While many environmental organizations would conversely have the American public believe that there is widespread Native resistance to this program, the truth of the matter actually lies somewhere in between these two perspectives. The reality is that many Iñupiaq individuals and communities have professed both their qualified support for these types of extraction activities as well their profound frustration with their decision-making processes.

In this project, I have explored the sources of both an Iñupiaq support for the offshore drilling program as well as their ongoing sense of disillusionment with its promise of cultural inclusion. The seemingly contradictory nature of these two perspectives is representative of the complex balancing act that the Iñupiat have been compelled to perform as a people simultaneously both modern and indigenous who dwell in an Arctic that is both their ancestral

homeland as well as the nation's 'final frontier' now made ripe for a new round of resource exploitation. The Iñupiat's abilities to strongly advocate for their own complex interests and concerns have been constrained by the 'positional superiority' accorded to Western ways of knowing (Said, 1994). This way of thinking has historically supported those 'well-meaning' acts of assimilation like the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, which has unsettled traditional Tribal governance structures, created new political and economic vulnerabilities, and attempted to displace the very values and worldviews that have long served as a guide to the Iñupiat's attempts to embrace such change while still maintaining their identities as a cultural people. An understanding of these processes makes it much easier to comprehend why many Iñupiaq leaders and residents have expressed their support for the offshore drilling program. In these instances, the need for regional economic growth and the creation of more employment opportunities is considered to be so significant that it outweighs the potential risks that such development ultimately represents to their subsistence way of life, which must itself be maintained through significant cash inputs.

The opening up of the Prudhoe Bay oil reserves, which was one of the prime motivations behind ANCSA's settlement, has meant that many North Slope residents see oil as having "been on balance a good thing for the entire region" (Medred, 'Shell gets OK', 2012). Regional extraction activities have worked over time to bring them many basic services that they had long been lacking like schools, health clinics, power plants, water and sewer facilities, adequate housing and roads (Hensley, 2009). Yet, the volume of oil flowing out of Prudhoe Bay is now in rapid decline and North Slope Native Corporations are attempting to use their powers to attract new sources of revenue to the region. Such monies are needed to both continue to fund the many services that the Borough provides as well maintain the shareholder dividend payouts that are an

important source of income for many Iñupiaq families. The fact that the offshore drilling program has divided many Iñupiaq communities and families in terms of either their support or their resistance to this project is indicative of their contemporary struggles as indigenous peoples who have weathered decades of forced cultural assimilation. In the context of a changing Arctic, the ultimate challenge for the Iñupiat is to continue to find ways to meet the economic needs of their communities without compromising the subsistence lifeways and cultural values that are so integral to their identities. Yet, the seemingly dichotomous nature of these concerns has only been further exacerbated by post-ANCSA structures of powers, which have tended to divide Iñupiaq communities into Tribal vs. corporate interests.

ANCSA's extinguishment of all aboriginal rights to subsistence has also left the Iñupiat with very little standing to legally argue for their way of life. Their participation in the Tribal consultation process is one of the only means currently available to them by which they can voice their concerns. Both those Iñupiaq communities who have chosen to resist the offshore development as well as those who have decided that they would at least like to be able to help shape its management decisions and outcomes must necessarily attempt to participate in these forums. That both parties have often felt equally alienated from these processes suggests that the patterns of ideological domination that informed federal legislation like ANCSA still persist. This is especially true in the context of natural resource development scenarios like the offshore drilling program, which are fundamentally premised on EuroAmerican ideas of an external nature open to human manipulation and control. Such ways of thinking have a tendency to leave little discursive space to engage with those forms of indigenous knowledge that are based on understandings of the world characterized by interconnectedness, reciprocity and mutual respect. This has left many Iñupiaq residents frustrated with the multiple rounds of community meetings

they have attended on this issue. While many appreciate the time taken and expenses accrued by those federal officials and relevant oil company representatives who have visited their villages, they have often felt as if these efforts ultimately produced very few results.

Despite the promise of consultation and corporate social responsibility held out by the federal government and oil companies like Shell, Wainwright residents did not feel as if their perspectives had any real influence within the offshore drilling planning and decision-making process. Project findings thus indicate that it is unlikely that existing processes are enough to ensure that a changing Arctic and the many development scenarios it might spawn will be managed in an environmentally just manner. As long as the knowledge of Western scientists and bureaucrats remains the benchmark by which all other knowledge systems are judged (Bates, 2007), such processes will continue to promote only the mere façade of engagement with the traditional perspectives and subsistence concerns of the North Slope's Iñupiat. The task that remains is to create those collaborative spaces where indigenous epistemologies and viewpoints are valued as viable alternatives to the status quo (Mallon, 2012) such that they are able to stand on their own as a legitimate means of informing managerial action (Nadasdy, 2005a).

The marginalization of the Iñupiat within these processes is also a result of their standing as a Tribal people. Like many indigenous peoples who have weathered the disruptive forces of colonialism, the Iñupiat are often operating within these channels of bureaucracy at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to the economic resources and political powers at their disposal. This leaves them particularly vulnerable to those acts of resource colonialism that legitimize the exploitation of their lands as a part of a larger narrative of national progress that, in the particular case of oil development, also draws on the trope of domestic energy security (Labban, 2011).

The levels of poverty and lack of easy access to basic goods and services that are currently experienced throughout the North Slope comprise their own injustice, especially when one considers how much national revenue has been generated over the years by exploiting the oil deposits found on the ancestral lands of the Iñupiat. As alluded to earlier in this chapter, ‘consent under severe economic pressure’ (Vickery & Hunter, 2014) also generally typifies the Iñupiat’s stance regarding the offshore drilling program. Such forms of ‘indirect exploitation’ must necessarily be recognized as a common means by which marginalized communities have been coerced into accepting the ‘business as usual’ scenarios that have threatened the health and well-being of their environments and communities (Bullard, 1992; Honor the Earth, 2012; Vickery & Hunter, 2014). This means that interventions aimed at addressing the chronic rural poverty that has left many Iñupiat highly reliant on the commercial successes of their Native Corporations are a particularly important component of environmental justice in the Alaskan Arctic.

The colonial programs and policies like ANCSA that sought to assimilate the Iñupiat not only contributed to the limited nature of their current economic resources at the village and Tribal level, but have also constrained their capacities to advocate for their own self-determined futures as a sovereign people. The issue of Tribal power must therefore also be proactively addressed. An active Tribal Council could help tackle community issues associated with rural poverty by attracting other forms of funding (particularly federal funds that are already earmarked for Native communities) that are not immediately tied to pending development scenarios. But perhaps most importantly, it would also serve as the appropriate counterbalance to the powers of their Native Corporations, so that both the economic as well as the cultural needs and interests of their people are well-represented.

Despite being subjected to decades of assimilatory pressures, Iñupiaq traditional values and practices have endured. While they may have evolved along the way, they continue to foster a way of life where subsistence ‘soul foods’ and networks of sharing foster a communal sense of belonging to each other and to the land. As post-colonial scholar Neil Lazarus has noted, it is the systematic operation of power that has historically worked to obliterate those “modes of life, forms of culture, and ways of thinking” (2011, p. 141) that define indigenous cultures so that they become nothing more than the stereotypical ‘Other’ open to further domination and control (Perry & Robyn, 2005). Contemporary environmental justice theory has come a long way in supporting the idea that rather than working to obscure such cultural difference, it must be engaged with as a means of avoiding the very types of procedural marginalization and indirect exploitation that have been considered here. The unique histories, political standing, and needs of contemporary Native communities does suggest, however, that EJ theorists may need to expand their understandings of what constitutes just treatment even further, in order to better grapple with the extreme importance that most indigenous cultures place on the maintenance of their cultural differences.

7.2 Environmental Justice Theory and the ‘Problem of Difference’ in Native America

Environmental justice as currently defined by the EPA “is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies... It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work” (2015). This definition largely reflects the roots of EJ theory and activism within the United States where the genesis of

much of the movement came from the struggles of the many African American and Latino communities who were unequally burdened by environmental ‘bads’ like the highly polluting industries (often referred to as LULUs- locally unwanted land uses) that were sited near their homes (Edwards, 1995). The development of the environmental justice movement was therefore heavily influenced by the civil rights movement and this meant that many early EJ proponents argued for the equal distribution of environmental goods and bads in ways that closely mirrored those demands for racial equality that insisted that each person should be treated equally under the law regardless of the color of their skin (Edwards, 1995; Tsosie, 2007). As environmental justice theory continued to develop, its theorists began to expand the scope of their interest beyond a singular focus on distributive injustice. This included an interest in procedural justice, which was concerned with equity within the institutional processes of the state (Schlosberg, 2007). This shift is reflected in the EPA’s current understandings of environmental justice in that it recognizes that issues like the ability to actively participate in the decision-making process are important components of environmental justice. Yet, the rhetoric of equal protection and access under the law still clearly persists in ways that are very problematic for indigenous peoples.

As Ranco and Suagee (2007) have pointed out, most Native communities do not seek to be treated in such a ‘color blind’ manner. This is because Native peoples understand their rights to be a derivative of “a political relationship...based on domestic sovereignty...[that] is not race-based (Becenti-Pigman, 2011). In recognition of their standing as a sovereign people, the concept of ‘measured separatism’ supports an indigenous right to retain their cultural differences rather than be completely assimilated into the dominant society. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples further affirms the right of all peoples to be different and to be respected as such and it recognizes the right of indigenous peoples “to maintain and

strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions” (2008, p. 5). As Ranco and Suagee (2007) argue, the ‘problem of difference’ remains a key issue for Native peoples within the US because they are enmeshed within a legal system that generally equates justice with the ability to treat everyone as if they are exactly the same. Lumbee legal scholar Robert Williams (2005) has further shown how legal attempts to act in a ‘color blind’ manner towards Native Americans have historically just been ‘color clueless’ in that they have merely allowed many deep-seated prejudices and patterns of injustice to remain unexamined.

In recent years, scholars like Robyn (2002), Ishiyama (2003), Schlosberg (2007), and Whyte (2011) have begun to specifically consider the unique colonial histories and present-day realities of indigenous peoples and the environmental issues that their communities often face. The idea of recognitional justice as advanced by Schlosberg (2007), in particular, has worked to highlight how justice, when it comes to indigenous peoples, is not usually served merely by having a seat at the proverbial decision-making table. For many indigenous peoples, their participation in these processes is limited to what Iñupiat activist Edwardsen once described as merely the ‘mental façade’ of inclusion. These situations suggest that there must be a willingness on the part of all parties to actively engage with cultural difference in order to avoid the very types of procedural marginalization that have characterized the Iñupiat’s participation within the Arctic offshore drilling program. As this project has shown, an inability to engage with the culturally unique ways that the Iñupiat know and relate to the natural world has led to intercultural miscommunications surrounding key concepts like the appropriate role of technology in mercurial Arctic natures and Native understandings of belonging to rather than necessarily owning the land, which clash with Western understandings of property ownership and the work/play divide. It has also led to an increasing sense of alienation on the part of many

Iñupiat residents who have attempted to contribute to these processes by expressing both the deep importance of their subsistence way of life as well as the knowledge they possess as a people who have dwelled in this region for millennia. Such issues have only been compounded by a regional history, as particularly evidenced by the BIA educational system and the enduring legacies of ANCSA, which has similarly sought to erase cultural difference by assimilating the Iñupiat into the Western world and its knowledge systems.

The recognition of cultural difference is clearly an important step towards assuring that all perspectives are equitably represented within the larger decision-making processes that affect indigenous peoples. As Results Chapters 5 and 6 detail, contending with cultural difference can help both explain as well as highlight potential points of intervention in the acts of procedural injustice and indirect exploitation that the Iñupiat have experienced. What the results of this project further indicate, however, is that engaging with cultural difference should not be understood as merely a means to gain just ends. For Native peoples like the Iñupiat, an ability to maintain their cultural differences in order to pursue their unique lifeways is fundamental to the ongoing cohesiveness of their collective identities. Maintaining contemporary cultural difference is seen as a necessary antidote to the decades of federal policy that were informed by the foundational notion that “the culture of the Indian should be eradicated, and he should be grateful to be conquered” (Mohawk, 2000, p. 138). To achieve environmental justice, the mere façade of cultural sensitivity and federal concern for the welfare of indigenous peoples cannot persist as the dominant way in which the future of places like the Alaskan Arctic are to be ultimately decided. If a decision-making process leads, or is likely to lead, to the diminishment of cultural difference it should be apprehended as an unjust act that no amount of ‘good intentions’ or superficial inclusion should excuse.

For the Iñupiat and the many Native peoples in America who have weathered the same assimilatory processes, environmental justice cannot be achieved without a clear commitment to not only engage with but also preserve and support those dynamic bodies of knowledge that represent other ways of knowing and relating to the natural world than those advanced by dominant Western society. Indigenous worldviews that do not recognize the west's socially constructed divide between culture and nature also represent the type of cultural difference that may offer an alternatives to the types of 'progress' and development that have up until now compromised the health of both Arctic as well as global natures. Collapsing or at the very least displacing this divide is therefore highlighted here as playing a key role in both the project of decolonization as well as the quest for climate justice in a changing Arctic.

7.3 Culture and Nature in a Changing Arctic: Towards Decolonization and Climate Justice

Native scholar Gregory Cajete (2000) once wrote that the modern world needs to shed the 'dysfunctional cosmology' that now informs its actions in order to find a new story. He explained that many of the environmental issues that contemporary society now faces are a product of a Western desire to control an externalized nature. This means that ever increasing levels of technological mastery will not, in the end, solve our problems. Models for this type of new story can therefore be found in the guiding myths of interconnectedness that have informed most indigenous societies throughout time. The common moral to be found in all these tales is the idea that as humans we are but one co-creator among many and this means that we have a responsibility to consider the effects of our actions on the dynamic flow of life that encompasses all of creation. Critical geographer Bruce Braun (2002) has similarly averred that the divide that Western society has constructed between culture and nature has precluded our ability to think about how we can be responsible citizens of our complex, socioecological worlds. As Cajete and

Braun both argue, recognizing that the culture-nature divide is but one way of making sense of the world is a critical first step when it comes to both tackling our current environmental issues as well as envisioning an environmentally just and sustainable future for our global society.

Project results further suggest that displacing the culture-nature divide from its current hegemonic supremacy would both aid in the process of decolonization in the Alaskan Arctic as well as promote climate justice in this region. Wainwright residents have certainly struggled with the increasingly difficult task of maintaining community cohesion in the face of new technologies that often isolate people from their neighbors while also distancing them from nature. They have had to adapt to a new economic system that conceives of their land as an economic asset to be managed for maximum profit, which stands in stark contrast to their traditional values. The corporate dividend structure, in particular, has made their lands vulnerable to exploitation while simultaneously corroding the customary value placed on hard work, sharing and cooperation. Yet, when people in Wainwright talk about the time they do spend hunting and gathering outside the confines of the village, they describe it in terms of a sense of gratitude and an ongoing love and feeling of connection with the land. Here it is still possible to reinforce or forge new relations and patterns of reciprocity with one's hunting partners and the people with whom the catch is shared. Time spent out on the land represents a moment of peace where one can get away from all the 'drama.' Such drama can itself be partly understood as the product of the colonial 'confusion' that both Hensley (2009) and Edwardsen (Gallagher, 2001) eloquently described in terms of a sense of inadequacy and self-loathing that was instilled in their people as they were set adrift in a post-ANCSA 'sea of cultural change.'

A way of knowing and relating to the natural world that is still found among residents in Wainwright, which is not based on the divide between culture and the nature, represents a critical

corrective to the forms of internalized oppression generated by a multigenerational and multifaceted process of dispossession and assimilation that has created “a disconnection from land, culture, and community” (Alfred cited in Cornassel, 2012, p. 16). Iñupiaq leaders like Hensley (2009) clearly see their traditional knowledge and the cultural values of their ancestors as playing an important role in their abilities to work through the type of ‘disconnection’ that ANCSA’s imposition of new economies and Western bureaucracies represents. Wainwright’s Tribal and community leaders also recognize the worth of these perspectives as they seek to not only communicate their traditional knowledge to outside authorities, but also perhaps even more importantly ensure that it is passed down to future generations. ‘Learning our values’ is understood to be important because “ how could you live something that you don’t even know?...We have to learn how to balance...[in order to avoid the things]...that damage us from the inside out” (LL-5, 2013).

While Mohawk scholar Alfred (2009) has strongly argued against those forms of development that further contribute to the erosion of Tribal values and lifeways, he has similarly insisted that mainstream society would do well to also recognize how such development also inevitably threatens the health and well-being of their communities and environments. Western society’s instrumental view of nature as an external set of resources to be exploited for humanity’s material benefit (Harvey 1996) can, in fact, be seen as rationalizing the ongoing cycles of extraction and consumption that have led to contemporary climatic change and its many associated environmental issues. However, as Philip Loring has noted (2013), current climate mitigation and adaptation strategies have generally avoided any attempt to intervene in those large-scale extraction processes that are understood to represent mere ‘business as usual’. Rather than trying to mitigate climate change by rejecting environmentally unsustainable forms

of development, most policies have instead chosen an ‘adaptation only’ focus (Loring, 2013). Such policies tend to suggest that we as a global society are powerless to stop those processes that have compromised the health of our environments and that we must resign ourselves to merely addressing the ongoing symptoms of climatic change without ever attempting to tackle the root cause.

While Shell Oil’s withdrawal from the offshore drilling theatre has been touted as a victory by many environmental groups like Greenpeace and the Alaska Wilderness League (Alaska Wilderness, 2015; Glaser, 2015), it is important to note that Shell cited issues with economic feasibility and an uncertain regulatory environment as the main grounds for its actions. The fundamental mindset that engendered Banerjee’s ‘Arctic paradox’ (2013), in which global extraction activities have led to rising temperatures in the Arctic that have made this region vulnerable to further industrial incursions, remains firmly intact. The federal government has taken care to profess a desire to both ensure cultural inclusion within the offshore drilling decision-making process as well as act as a world leader in addressing climate change (Ryan, 2015). Yet, it is still very difficult to envision a form of development in the Arctic that is informed by a willingness to place limits on our actions if the risk that such activity poses to the health of these environments (and the people that directly rely upon them) is simply deemed to be too great.

Ideally, Shell Oil’s experiences within the Arctic offshore drilling arena will have at least taught them (and all those companies that may one day try to follow them North) that their attitude of technological prowess and mastery may not be the most appropriate way to approach these types of endeavors. If they were to instead model their behavior based on the Iñupiat’s longstanding ability to operate safely and successfully in these mercurial environments, they

would soon learn that a sense of respect for their own limitations may be of much more value to them. For the Inupiat of today's Arctic, 'the serious business of staying alive' (Hensley, 3009) remains as much of a priority for them as it was for their ancestors and it continues to deeply inform their interactions with the natural world and with one another. The costly snafus that marred Shell's explorations in the Chukchi Sea suggest that they would do well to consider how an understanding of nature as a dynamic flow of life means that they can not and therefore should not seek to bring such a powerful and mutable force entirely under their control.

In the end, Arctic peoples must be able to participate in the larger decision-making processes that affect their futures in ways that acknowledge "their authority to protect and promote their ways of life" (ICC, c. 2004). This process will necessarily entail a 'new story' in which much of the Western world must reevaluate the socially constructed nature-culture divide. While such constructs may have served Western society well in the past in terms of facilitating its increasing mastery over nature, it has ultimately both fueled a particular form of resource-intensive economic development that has spawned many of the daunting environmental issues we face today as well as continually rationalized the expropriation and degradation of indigenous lands as an unfortunate yet necessary byproduct of such economic growth.

The ongoing imposition of Western bureaucratic structures and processes founded on the nature-culture divide has also promoted a form of internalized oppression in which it becomes increasingly difficult for indigenous peoples to envision alternative courses of action that are in better accord with their own values. As pioneering EJ scholar Robert Bullard (1992) once explained, many marginalized communities have been historically vulnerable to the 'business as usual' development scenarios with which they were presented because it was hard for them to envision any other viable alternatives. Yet, there are other ways of being in this world that

fundamentally reject the idea that the status quo necessarily entails such high environmental and social costs. The question remains as to whether we are finally ready as a global society to reexamine our own understandings of the world and humanity's rightful place in it, in order to collectively craft a future for a changing Arctic that both reflects the traditional values as well as engages with the contemporary realities of its original peoples.

That the Iñupiat of Wainwright are shareholders in a corporate system that often exploits their environments to ensure a commercial profit, but who still often retain a love for the land and a sense of respect and connection with the natural world is indicative of another major lesson learned throughout the course of this project. Here it is understood that in the same way that we must collapse the binary of culture and nature in order to envision more environmentally just and sustainable futures, we must also move beyond the stereotypes of civilization vs. savagery and modernity vs. indigeneity that are born of this same divide. For many Iñupiat, a warming Arctic represents an increasing collision between two worlds- "the outside world and how we live here" (FG-1-1, 2013) and it is an ability to continue to balance these two worlds that they understand as one of the greatest challenges they now face. Recognizing and supporting the dynamic nature of indigenous knowledge and identities becomes a critical component of any project that seeks to support environmental justice and Native self-determination in a changing Arctic.

7.4 Contemporary Iñupiaq Identities: Learning to Live in Both Worlds

Shell's withdrawal from the Arctic represents the likely end of the offshore drilling program, at least in the short term. It also leaves the Iñupiat of Wainwright in the same economic straits that first made the drilling program appealing to their community despite the profound importance most individuals place on their subsistence way of life. The hard reality thus remains that when faced with a similar jobs vs. the environment dilemma in the future, the Iñupiat may

chose to exercise their rights to self-determination in ways that do not conform to the aspirations of ecological nobility that much of Western society still hold for the world's indigenous peoples.

Expecting the Iñupiat to conform to such unrealistic standards actually only serves to perpetuate the deeply unjust processes of colonial thought and structures of power that have always sought to extend authority over the Native 'Other.' Rather than focusing on how the Iñupiat 'should act' as Native peoples (Krech, 1999), it is much more productive to consider how the legacies of colonial histories continue to inform contemporary indigenous issues and identities (Ishiyama, 2003). In the case of the North Slope, decades of governmental programs and policies, which have sought to integrate the Iñupiat "into a non-Native world" (Brewster, 2004), have clearly altered their political, economic, and cultural realities in ways that have largely set the terms of their contemporary citizenship. Through a better understanding of all the ways that the Tribal powers and traditional worldviews of the Iñupiat of Wainwright have been altered or diminished it ideally becomes possible to begin to envision interventions into those processes that have left them vulnerable to the 'false choices' (Honor the Earth, 2012) with which Native peoples have been perpetually presented.

By the same taken, it is important to celebrate Iñupiaq cultural resiliency and to continue to support their abilities to adapt to such impositions. Rather than essentialized indigenous identities, it is the dynamic and complex nature of their knowledge systems and cultures that should be highlighted and explored. This is particularly true in the context of a changing Arctic in that it presents not only the possibility of new industrial incursions in this region but also a set of shifting environmental conditions, which represent a profound challenge to the maintenance of Native subsistence lifeways. One of the most disconcerting findings of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment's (ACIA) 2004 Report is the fact that many Arctic peoples have begun to

question the ongoing accuracy of their traditional knowledge. While their knowledge systems have long served them as guide on how to operate safely in their environments, the rapidity and magnitude of climatic change in this region has challenged their abilities to correctly read environmental conditions and reliably predict changing weather patterns (Ford et al., 2006; Reiss, 2012). Such a growing disconnect has caused many peoples to begin to feel as if they are “strangers in their own land” (ACIA, 2004, p. 94).

The extreme importance of supporting Iñupiaq cultural resiliency as they attempt to cope with such profound issues, which are largely not of their own making, means that they cannot be expected to conform to antiquated notions of what constitutes traditional knowledge or practice. The Iñupiat themselves understand that “to not adapt, to not change, is surely to fail” (Sakakibara, 2010). Whether the Iñupiat ultimately respond to climatic change by adapting their whaling practices to changing ice conditions or utilizing new technologies or they add new layers to their knowledge system that better reflect the environmental realities they now face, it is important that these innovations are informed by their own values and not some externally imposed idea of cultural authenticity. As Reo and Whyte (2011) have averred, Native traditions have never been static and change is not the same as invention.

Rejecting notions of static authenticity disavows the idea that any ‘engagement with modernity’ represents a contamination or loss of true Native ‘selfhood’ (van Ginkel, 2004). This allows for the further realization that for all that could be mourned as having been ‘lost’ throughout the Iñupiat’s history of forced assimilation, there is much more that either remains or that has simply transformed as part of the dynamic process of cultural adaption. It now becomes easier to see how Iñupiaq traditional practices and values could be enriched and supported as part of a process advocated by Wainwright leaders in which they seek to embrace and participate in

‘change’ while maintaining the core values of their culture. It will likely take much time and committed effort before it is possible to truly envision an Arctic development scenario founded on the premise that nature represents a set of relations rather than a mere set of resources to be exploited. This does not mean, however, that there are not certain concrete steps that could be taken now that would support the abilities of the North Slope Iñupiat to balance their need for economic growth against the health and integrity of their subsistence lands and lifeways.

In thinking about learning how to thrive in ‘both worlds’, residents of Wainwright have themselves made a number of recommendations for their community to consider in the years to come. These largely revolved around the three interrelated themes of Tribal Power, Rural Poverty, and Cultural Programs. As a category, Tribal Power represents a suite of actions designed to address the multi-faceted nature of the WTC’s diminished capacities in the wake of ANCSA. Rural Poverty seeks to breakdown overarching concerns regarding high local unemployment rates and the ever-rising costs associated with life in village Alaska into smaller, potentially more actionable issues. Cultural Programs is a synthesis of responses from project participants who were asked about the things their community should be doing now in order to ensure that they are able to participate in the changes to come without compromising the core values of their culture. This last category is therefore fundamentally about learning about how to “live in both worlds.” In keeping with the ethos of ‘decolonizing methodologies’, the following project recommendations are directly informed by the insights offered by Wainwright residents in deliberate recognition of their own expertise and abilities to identify and offer solutions to their community’s most pressing issues.

7.5 A Self-determined Future for Wainwright Residents

In his assessment of the negotiations surrounding the offshore drilling program, one Wainwright resident suggested that they were not availing themselves of the “main key, the one who has the master key to open all doors, the Native Village of Wainwright” (FG-2-1, 2013). Project results suggest that this was largely due to the fact that the Tribal power of the Iñupiat was significantly diminished after the passage of ANSCA. Regardless of whether or not ANSCA’s architects foresaw this effect, it is clear that rebuilding Tribal capacities in its wake remains a pressing issue. The federal government recognizes the Tribal/Traditional Council/Native Village as the primary venue through which communities like Wainwright are able to exercise their Tribe’s inherent sovereign rights and power. While the Native Corporations continue to fulfill their own directives to maintain a healthy profit margin for their shareholders, a well-funded and well-educated Council would be able to ensure that the cultural rights and subsistence concerns of its people receive an equally strong consideration.

The Wainwright Traditional Council is experiencing a promising reawakening after many of years of dormancy and a fair amount of progress has been made based on the initiatives of its members. Up until recently, the WTC had simply been too understaffed and its personnel too untrained to pursue the federal monies for which they would have otherwise been eligible. The WTC’s ANA-SEDS grant, to which this project has contributed, represents one of the first major grants that the Tribe has applied for in recent years. Grant monies have provided for a considerable amount of training for all Council members in order to increase the WTC’s own governance capacities. It also funded to the development of a set of cultural protocol documents, which would be presented in the future to companies like Shell Oil as a set of contractually binding obligations to which visiting industries must agree. Such efforts themselves represent

one of the first significant expressions of Tribal sovereignty on the part of Wainwright leaders in many years. As such it reflects one Council member's belief that "we need to become more assertive and aggressive to protect our way of life instead of letting outside entities tell us what to do. We just need to let them know that we are people, that we have our issues here and we have our issues there and they need to learn to listen to us" (LL-4, 2013).

The WTC also has plans to both take over many of the tasks that have previously been handled by ICAS, the North Slope's regional Tribal organization, as well as continue to pursue further funding opportunities. Both actions would support the Tribe's abilities to provide more direct services and programs to Wainwright residents, which would have the additional effect of creating more local jobs, and they would also continue to further the knowledge and capacities of its leaders as they endeavor to become more self-sufficient. The creation of a strong Council that is able to avail itself of the 'master key' is therefore seen as an important act of Tribal resurgence. This would help the community of Wainwright to make balanced and informed decisions regarding their collective futures as a sovereign people. It would also make it much more possible for them to ultimately pursue those forms of development that meet the material needs of their community while also upholding their cultural values and lifeways.

While increased Tribal power is certainly very important, the chronic rural poverty that exists on the North Slope of Alaska must also clearly be addressed if the Iñupiat of Wainwright are ever to be able to advocate for their own interests within a playing field of power that is evenly remotely equitable. Even a powerful Tribal Council when faced with the signs of poverty within their own community may feel forced to make decisions that meet the immediate needs of their people. This is despite the risk such actions may present when it comes to long-term environmental and cultural costs. The highly complex nature of this issue, which ANCSA itself

could not successfully address, clearly means that the comprehensive solution needed to tackle this particular problem is beyond the modest scope of this dissertation.

Wainwright residents and leaders do, however, recognize that high rates of local unemployment and underemployment are a major contributor to their economic vulnerabilities. Offering more education and training opportunities (especially within the village itself), opening up a satellite of Iliasagvik (Barrow's 2 year Tribal college offering vocational and technical education programs) in Wainwright, creating on-the-job training and mentoring programs for youth, and designing summer or short-term internships for high school students with visiting industries were all suggested as partial solutions to this problem (FG-2, 2013; FG-6-3, 2013; LL-4, 2013). Creating regional jobs, especially those that align with traditional Iñupiaq values, continues, however, to present a significant challenge. While Wainwright's own small wind energy project appears to be stalled in the development stage, the possibility of a new green energy industry in the region (as envisioned by the likes of Winona LaDuke as a key alternative to the 'false choices' with which Native peoples are generally presented) remains a distant reality.

For many Wainwright residents, the high and rising cost of living is one of their most pressing concerns. While some people are frustrated with how difficult it is to replace something as simple as a coffee pot for a reasonable price (FG-1-2, 2013), others fundamentally worry about their continued abilities to feed their families (FG-3-1, 2013). This issue is understood to be a product of the ever-burgeoning cost of freight. As one Wainwright resident explained "what is ruining us today is the freight, cause everything is skyrocketing. We have only one airline, before we use to have two and they used to fight over it, but I guess one emerged. Our prices for food is going up, freight is going up, gas is going up" (FG-2-1, 2013). Cargo planes and the

occasional barge are the only means by which to deliver goods to Wainwright. Some residents have questioned whether the federal government has a responsibility to intervene in the high cost of freight through subsidy programs. This is especially true given that a current reliance on the importation of expensive goods is understood to be a reflection of the type of dependency that was created via the federal government's attempts to integrate the Iñupiat into the market economy (FG-2, 2013). Modest runway improvements, which have been included for consideration in Wainwright's recent Comprehensive Plan, represent a potentially promising first step in that they would allow for larger cargo planes to safely land in the village (North Slope Borough, 'Wainwright Comp', 2014). While the ability to carry more cargo at once could lower the associated shipping costs, it might also attract new carriers to the Wainwright market and such competition could also help to further reduce prices. Unfortunately, without the impetus of pursuing these upgrades as a way of accommodating the needs of incoming industries like Shell Oil, it remains to be seen how aggressively such improvements will be pursued in the near future.

The third component that would help support the community of Wainwright's abilities to 'learn to live in both worlds' revolves around creating and funding the types of cultural programs that would ensure that their traditional values and practices are passed on. A common concern among Native communities is that village youth are increasingly interested in mimicking what they see as more popular 'Western' lifestyles so that they are less interested in learning about their own culture (Cameron, 2012; WTC, 2013). Wainwright residents worry, in particular, about the general breakdown of community cohesion that is partly due to the insular nature of many modern technologies like cell phones and Xboxes (FG-2-1, 2013; FG-4, 2013; FG-5-3, 2013). For as much value placed on the idea that their youth must receive the types of technical training

and qualifications mentioned earlier, which would help them to secure employment, there is an equally strong desire to emphasize learning that is focused on how “to subsist on our lands, in the ocean, from the elders” (FG-4, 2013; FG-2-2, 2013).

One of the most important aspects of a traditional education, which was cited as a key issue even without the potential introduction of new industries and cultural influences into the region, was preservation of the Iñupiaq language. As one young *aaka* [grandmother] explained “To me the toughest thing we really need is Iñupiaq, Iñupiaq speaking, there’s a lot that don’t understand and speak it. And they get mad and confused because they can’t speak and understand... We need a stronger Iñupiaq teacher that can really put her or his feet down and say, Let’s really do this!... I am not worried about Shell, well here and there, but I am not worried about the rest. But it’s a must to learn about Iñupiaq [language]” (FG-6-4, 2013). Since daycare and the retention of the Iñupiaq language are both seen as critical needs within Wainwright, the creation of a childcare program that is also focused on language immersion came up in the course of my interviews (especially among members of the sixth focus group, as noted above). This is also an idea that is supported by the Wainwright Comprehensive Plan (North Slope Borough, ‘Wainwright Comp’, 2014).

Other specific community programs could include offering more Culture Camp sessions, which focus on traditional hunting, gathering, camping, and safety skills, that are now generally only held for a couple of days during the summer. Residents also mentioned that knowledgeable hunters and teachers should facilitate the Camp sessions so that kids are actually learning valuable hands-on skills and not just “playing out” as has sometimes happened in the past (FG-4, 2013). By integrating the culture camps into the school curriculum, it might be possible to offer short sessions throughout the year as the subsistence seasons progress and new hunting and

gathering activities are pursued (LL-3, 2013). Wainwright residents would also like to see the Tribe facilitate more general youth-Elder actions in order to teach them “to respect. Respect the land, respect the ocean, respect the animals that we hunt, take care of whatever you harvest, don’t over hunt, just take what you need so that younger generations or the new generations will have the pleasure of hunting too and pass it on, keep continuing our subsistence lifestyle” (LL-4, 2013). Others would also like to see the development of programs that would allow Elders and local artisans to lead workshops where youth can learn how to make traditional crafts and tools or take welding and mechanics classes that would show them how to maintain their own subsistence equipment (FG-2-1, 2013).

In looking towards their collective future as indigenous peoples, Wainwright’s Tribal leaders have clearly expressed their belief that they must help support “residents’ ability to confidently continue in their traditional lifestyle, even with the coming changes” (WTC, 2013, p. 18). The desired goal is to ‘embrace change’ but to do so in a manner that draws upon their traditional knowledge and values as a means of protecting their culture and subsistence lifeways throughout this process. While self-determination as a broad concept can rather poetically be understood as the idea that “all are equally entitled to control their own destinies” (Anaya, 2004, p. 75), it also means that indigenous peoples like the Iñupiat of Wainwright possess the right to pursue their own economic and cultural development (Tsosie, 2007). Supporting the abilities of Wainwright residents to continue to balance the economic and cultural needs of their community is inherently about recognizing and upholding their right to build their own lives and futures so that they reflect their desires and values as indigenous peoples in a rapidly changing Arctic.

7.6 Conclusion: Environmental Justice in A Changing Arctic

As a people both indigenous and modern, the Iñupiat have been forced to negotiate between competing understandings of an Arctic that it is both their ancestral ‘homeland’ as well as a national ‘frontier for resource exploitation.’ These are conceptualizations of the land that represent two very distinct ways of apprehending the natural world (Kassam, 2009). As of now, the Arctic offshore drilling program has only served to exacerbate these tensions by privileging the perspectives of outside authorities and business interests whose entrepreneurial gaze is singularly focused on opening up the Arctic as the final resource frontier. Indigenous scholars and activists, social scientists interested in the idea of nature as a social construct and environmental justice theorists all appear to fundamentally agree that these clashing perspectives must be brought into balance if either environmental sustainability or social justice in the Arctic is ever to be achieved. Furthermore, such a process will require an expansion of popularly held understandings of what constitutes scientific ‘expertise’ in order to also consider other ways of knowing and relating to the natural world (Schlosberg, 2007) as another viable means of informing the overall trajectory of Arctic development.

Shell’s announcement that it would no longer pursue offshore drilling in the Arctic represents a critical moment of pause within what has otherwise often felt like a modern day rush to open up the Far North as the latest and potentially last American frontier. In the time that has been provided before the next big industrial project in the Alaskan Arctic is inevitably conceived, it is important to examine those binary modes of thinking that are based on the culture-nature divide. Such ways of thinking will only serve to uphold the colonial status quo of cultural assimilation and the dispossession and degradation of Native lands. Imagining a future in which an Ancestral and an Industrial Arctic (Zellen, 2008) can peacefully coexist and where

indigenous communities are no longer continually presented with the ‘false choice’ of either resource intensive development or no development at all, will remain nearly impossible if Western society continues to cling to archaic dualities like the culture-nature divide. For it is the complex interface between these two worlds that not only most accurately reflects the realities of contemporary Iñupiaq existence, but which represents the most productive terrain for intercultural debate regarding the ultimate fate of a changing Arctic that is neither absolutely pristine, nor entirely within the grasp of humanity’s technological control. In these interstitial spaces, it is possible to engage with cultural difference in a way that accepts “different incompatible stories”(McPherson & Rabb, 2011) without the felt need to create uniformity of thought through assimilation and obfuscation.

It is also important to recognize how the right to self-determination means that the Iñupiat must be able to exert some measure of control over their own environments in order to make decisions that actually reflect the traditional relations that they have maintained with their ancestral territories for millennia. It is therefore necessary to make room within a larger national narrative that now positions Arctic development as an eagerly anticipated and thus nearly foregone conclusion, in order to legitimately engage with ideas like mutual respect and reciprocity, a love for the land and a sense of connection with one another. In this way, it is possible to begin to work through the discomfort regarding difference that is so deeply ingrained in the US legal system and its ideas of justice. An acceptance of difference that moves beyond overly simplistic dualities makes it possible to envision alternatives where the Arctic is somehow simultaneously ancestral and industrial and its people are both modern as well as indigenous. It is from this place of understanding that the cultural rights and needs of the Iñupiat must necessarily be considered as part of any regional development and planning process.

If the secret of Iñupiaq success in mercurial Arctic environments has traditionally been cultural adaptation and mutual cooperation, then it seems like it is time to create a new/old story for the Arctic that speaks both of flourishing cultures that continue to evolve and the appropriate use of both indigenous as well as Western science and technologies. This would help promote the types of development that support the material and cultural well being of Arctic peoples as well as the health of our global environment. By contesting the colonial politics of nature that have thus far informed development projects like the offshore drilling program in Alaska, it becomes possible to start to bring competing visions for the Arctic into better balance. Once these perspectives are allowed to exist side by side so that no one understanding of the world is allowed to dominate and obscure the other, the work of building an environmentally just and culturally inclusive future for a changing Arctic and its original peoples can, at last, begin.

7.7 Spring Whaling in Wainwright in 2014



Figure 7.1: Returning with Wainwright's Final Spring Whale of 2014 (June 2014)

It is now early June and it is difficult to say whether this milky light belongs to the late evening or early morning as one spring day in the Arctic blends seamlessly into the next. By any account it has been well over a day and half since Wainwright's whaling crews first set out in their boats and their third, and what will turn out to be their final, spring whale of 2014 is slowly being transformed into smaller and smaller shares. It actually proved quite difficult to get this last whale up on the rapidly receding shelf of shorefast ice, but a combination of teamwork, ingenuity, tirelessness and modern equipment eventually got the job done. Now many hours later, there are snow machines and iPhones and Gore-Tex gloves scattered about. People take short breaks and then resume their activities as a comforting cycle of snack-sized chunks of *uunaalik* [fresh, boiled maktak] and familiar joking repeats itself.

In this moment there is a feeling of deep continuity and the cell phones and modern gadgets lying around are but the signs of a dynamic tradition that is healthy enough to respond to and incorporate change. Here there is an abiding connection between past and present that is felt in the timeless presence of the whale, the corporeal gift of its mighty being, its great girth, its pungent aromas, its steaming innards. And it is in the way that it has brought this group of people together, who much like their ancestors before them, work alongside one other in small, task-oriented clusters, in order to help feed their entire community. For now the open water is calm, glassy even, in a white-on-white world where the squawk of migrating birds overhead has been temporarily silenced. For all the uncertainties ensconced in the idea of a 'changing' Arctic, there remains a feeling of resiliency and permanence in this land and its peoples. While these traits should by no means be taken for granted, they do suggest many future possibilities and that ultimately the fate of the Arctic is, as of yet, still unwritten.



Figure 7.2: Spring Whaling in Wainwright in 2015 (May 2015)

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