STYLES AND STRATEGIES OF LEADERSHIP DURING THE ALASKAN NATIVE LAND CLAIMS MOVEMENT: 1959-71[1]

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Abstract: Following statehood, Alaskan native peoples were involved in a political struggle to define and maintain land rights in the face of massive developmental schemes and actual projects. At the beginning of Alaska statehood, local, rural, grass-roots native movements emerged. These were later replaced by a unified, highly disciplined, and sophisticated lobbying effort by a small core of élite natives operating through the Alaska Federation of Natives. This movement was remarkable because of the skills of its leaders in identifying and managing important political, economic, and normative pressure points, and in establishing useful networks of political alliance in the complex American political culture of interest group activities. Although now controversial, the resulting federal legislation in the form of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 was the most innovative approach to native land claims for its time.

Résumé: La formation de l'Alaska en État amena les peuples autochtones à s'impliquer dans l'arène politique afin d'identifier et de conserver leurs droits territoriaux face à la menace de plans massifs de développement et de projets concrets. Des mouvements populaires naquirent au début. Ils furent plus tard remplacés par un effort de lobbying hautement discipliné et perfectionné, dirigé par un petit noyau d'élites opérant dans « l'Alaska Federation of Natives ». Ce mouvement est remarquable par le savoir-faire employé par ses chefs de file dans l'identification et le contrôle de centres névralgiques de natures politique, économique et normative ainsi que dans la création de réseaux utiles d'alliances politiques au sein d'une culture politique américaine très complexe axée sur l'activité des groupes d'intérêt. Le « Native Claims Settlement Act » de 1971, législation fédérale, en fut le résultat: et bien qu'il fut plutôt controversée, il représentait pour l'époque l'approche la plus innovatrice qui fût développée relativement aux revendications territoriales autochtones.

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Background

The 1960s saw the advent of what Nancy Lurie (1968) termed the American Indian "Renascence." This rebirth was, in part, stimulated by the threats of oppressive government policy, such as the Termination Acts, which would have damaged American Indian community life by forcing reservations to dissolve and assimilate into the American mainstream. Passivity, passive resistance or accommodation, previous methods of dealing with government policies by Indian leaders, were no longer appropriate. A new leadership emerged to more actively assert Indian demands for economic development and cultural and political autonomy. That leadership was better educated and more experienced in dealing with American society through military service, travel and urban migration than previous generations had been. Many of these new leaders also had an identity of Pan-Indianness, wherein they sensed a common predicament of cultural crisis, in spite of separate tribal origins, and felt that they should unite politically. That alliance was formalized in the revitalization of the National Congress of American Indians (N.C.A.I.), as a formal political interest group to lobby for political and cultural autonomy.

At the same time, it should be pointed out that American Indian society was very pluralistic in its renascence, especially when one considers the tribal diversity upon which it was based. The assertive, but essentially moderate lobbying stance of the N.C.A.I., was disdained as being too accommodative by such radical groups as the American Indian Movement. Moreover, the renascence was not just political. Many Indians participated in it through such activities as revived or intensified pow-wows, sun-dances, spirit dances, through alternative education systems, through the revival of traditional medicines and through highly innovative developments in music and the graphic arts.

These developments were occurring in the "Lower 48" states, notably the western areas of the continental United States of America. A parallel, but essentially separate set of occurrences happened in the largely ignored new state of Alaska. Alaska had been reluctantly purchased by the United States in 1867, and although it had strategic defense and some minor commercial value, it was largely viewed as a burden on the federal treasury and experienced a long period of territorial colonialism before it was accepted into the union as a state. But with the coming of statehood, its tremendous economic potential in timber, fishing, minerals, and most notably oil and gas, was soon recognized. The state government and local entrepreneurial and outside corporate interests promoted the exploitation of that potential as soon as possible. But before that could be done, the issues of land ownership in the former territory had to be resolved.

The native people of Alaska were vitally threatened by these developments. If their rights were not established, they ultimately could suffer

greater disintegration than Indians in the "Lower 48" because very few had reservations. On the other hand, because of the advantage of historical hindsight, and because there had been very little previous legislation, there was the potential for a more satisfactory solution to native issues of political, economic and cultural autonomy in Alaska.

This essay will describe the development of a pan-native political movement in Alaska, centered around the issue of land claims. The movement was very rapid and intensive during the 1960s and achieved many of its goals through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA). The remainder of the paper will describe the motivating forces toward political organization, the process of organization and federation among diverse groupings, and more importantly, the styles, strategies and attributes of native leadership. The political outcome of the movement will also be analyzed through a discussion of the land claims legislation. This movement has been described in a number of other papers (cf. Burch, Jr. 1979; Ervin 1973, 1976, 1980, 1981; Lantis 1973) and in several books (cf. Arnold 1976; Berry 1975), but this particular article pays more attention to the strategies and styles of leadership.

Motivations For Political Organization

Before statehood in 1959, Alaskan natives were left largely undisturbed in their subsistence activities, at least as compared to Indians in the "Lower 48." There were very few clear-cut cases of native ownership of land, an ironic case being the Canadian immigrant group of Tsimshians who had successfully negotiated for the Metlakatla reservation on Annette Island at the turn of the century. However, most other Alaskans lacked land title, since about 98 percent of the land was under federal jurisdiction, some of it specifically allocated for defense facilities and wildlife preserves. Alaskan natives were widely separated, isolated and ethnically very diverse, probably more diverse than in any other American region, with the possible exception of the American Southwest. There are five broad ethnic or cultural area groupings within Alaska: the Inupiat of the north slope coastal region; the Yupik of the western coastal and riverine region; the Aleut of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska Peninsula, the Déné of the Interior region and the Northwest Coastal Indians (Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian) of the Alaskan panhandle.

In spite of this diversity, there were a number of common experiences that would contribute to a pan-nativism in the 1960s. Some of these were: the often devastating experiences of boom-bust economies, such as the fur trade and gold rushes; the experience of epidemic diseases; the attempts to direct acculturation through Euro-American religious and educational institutions; the disruption of native subsistence economies through the introduction

of Western technology and the depletion of some wildlife species; the cyclical migration to cities, such as Fairbanks and Anchorage; the conflicts of economic interest with white migrants over issues such as fishing rights; and the introduction of external governmental agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, whose officals frequently came to manage much of the social and economic affairs of native villagers.

The most important common denominator was a mutual participation in what Abrahamson (1968) called the "dual-economy." Alaska can be divided into three socio-economic regions. The panhandle or southeastern region has a Euro-American majority, but with a significant native minority, and is oriented towards timbering and commercial salmon fishing. "Railbelt Alaska," focused on the cities of Anchorage and Fairbanks, has a very large Euro-American population, but with significant native communities and has been oriented towards the mineral, defense and service industries. Westward Alaska consists of an overwhelming majority of native people living in isolated villages in the northern and western areas far from developed commercial and transportation services. Living costs are very high and per capita incomes are very low.

In this region, and in the more isolated communities of the other two regions, native people have had to clearly and undisputedly rely on the local land and its resources for survival (cf. Abrahamson 1968; Buckley 1957; Federal Field Committee 1968; Klein 1966). Subsistence derived food made up as much as 90 percent of the diet in some places. Subsistence provided one dimension of the dual economy, but native people also participated in a seasonally regulated wage economy through cyclical migration to canneries and construction sites, and participation in fire fighting, and in some cases, commercial fishing. This was done because of a growing desire for consumer goods, but mainly to maintain the small-scale technological base for the subsistence economy.

Around the time of statehood, a series of external threats and proposals for economic development transformed native Alaskan isolation and resulted in political interest group formation and a land claims movement. These threats included: a proposal to flood 9,000,000 acres in the upper region of the Yukon River and a plan to detonate a nuclear underground blast equivalent to 2,400,000 tons of T.N.T. near the village of Point Hope. Also, shortly after statehood, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, now with reduced responsibilities, began to arrest natives throughout the state for hunting ducks out of season, creating a grass-roots outrage.

Most serious of all, the state government was beginning to select 103,000,000 acres which were to be transformed from the federal domain. Earliest among the selections were the rich oil-bearing lands of the Prudhoe Bay region of the North Slope. In 1963, the state attempted to select an area

near the Déné village of Minto for a proposed tourist hunting area. Included in the selection were part of the village itself, its burial site and surrounding duck-breeding areas. With the assistance of attorneys and a recently formed Déné association, the villagers gained an injunction from a federal court. Several years later, the federal Secretary of the Interior imposed a general freeze on further state selections based on sections of the Organic Act of 1884 and the Alaskan Statehood Act of 1958, which both stipulated that native subsistence was not to be disturbed and that some future legislation would have to provide native title to some land. This land freeze was to provide pivotal legal leverage towards an ultimate settlement of the issue.

Interest Group Formation and Alliance

During this crisis period in the late 1960s, native Alaskan political interest groups rapidly formed. Previous to 1962, there had been only one such grouping, the Alaska Native Brotherhood (A.N.B.), which had been formed among the Tlingit and Haida of the panhandle region during the early part of the century as an attempt to deal with acculturation pressures and the erosion of fishing rights. This group had been fairly successful in defending aboriginal rights, promoting traditions and in electing a few natives to the territorial legislature (cf. Drucker 1958). The A.N.B. had attempted, unsuccessfully, to expand into other regions during the territorial period, and during the 1960s tried to become the principal native organization. Its proselytizing moves were resisted, primarily for cultural reasons. Other natives, such as Inuit and Déné did not conform well to the relatively authoritarian and formalistic approaches of the Tlingit and Haida leaders. However, Tlingit and Haida people played prominent roles in the ultimate establishment of the Alaska Federation of Natives, because of their organizational abilities and because they had previous experience in land litigation through the Tongass National Forest case which had been before the U.S. Indian Land Claims Commission.

By 1967, there were 15 new regional, village and city organizations representing Aleut, Inupiat, Yupik and Déné people (see Table 1). Among the more prominent were the Cook Inlet Native Association, the Arctic Slope Native Association, the Tanana Chiefs and the previously formed Alaska Native Brotherhood. Some groupings, such as the Tanana Chiefs (Déné) and the Village Council President's Association (Yupik), could be perceived as representing all of their regions' residents; whereas others such as the Cook Inlet Native Association (Anchorage) and the Fairbanks Native Association represented paid memberships of relatively affluent urban natives with largely middle-class occupations. Most of these organizations had their own lawyers and the regional and village associations filed separate land protests and settlement proposals with the federal Bureau of Land Management. Another very important development was the establishment of a statewide,

Table 1
Regional Associations of the Alaska Federation of Natives, 1969

Association	Ethnic Group	Region	Formed
Alaska Native Brotherhood	Tlingit & Haida, mainly	Southeastern Alaska, mainly	1912
Alaska Peninsula Assoc.	Aleut	Alaska Peninsula	1967
Aleut League	Aleut	Aleutian Islands & Pribiloff Islands	1967
Arctic Native Brotherhood	Eskimo	Nome & the Seward Peninsula	1966 (Reactivated)
Arctic Slope Native Assoc.	Eskimo	North Slope	1966, replaces "Inupiut Paitot"
Bristol Bay Native Assoc.	Eskimo, Aleut	Bristol Bay	1967
Cook Inlet Native Assoc.	Mixed	Anchorage Region	1967
Copper River Indian Assoc.	Ahtna Indian (Déné)	Copper River Area	
Chugach Native Assoc.	Mixed	Prince William Sound	1966
Fairbanks Native Assoc.	Mixed	Fairbanks	1961
Kenaitz Indian Assoc.	Kenai (Déné)	Kenai Peninsula	
Kodiak Area Native Assoc.	Eskimo and Aleut	Kodiak Island, mainly	
Kuskokwim Valley Native Assoc.	Eskimo	Bethel Region	1966
Native Village of Tyonek	Moquawkie Indian (Déné)	Tyonek Reservation	
Northwest Alaska Native Assoc.	Eskimo	Kotzebue to Point Hope	1966
Tanana Chiefs' Conference	Déné	Interior Alaska, Yukon & Tanana Valleys	1962
Village Council Presidents' Assoc.	Eskimo	Lower Yukon & Kuskokwim Valleys	1962

but independent native newspaper in 1962, the *Tundra Times,* located in Fairbanks (now in Anchorage), which was very important in maintaining communication among natives.

By 1966, various congressmen and officials of the Department of the Interior were proposing land settlements that were grossly unjust from the native point of view. To meet this challenge and to provide a united approach, native leaders, primarily from Anchorage, proposed the federation of existing organizations. Conventions were held in 1966 and 1967, and, in spite of some acrimonious debates arising from regional or ethnic rivalries, the Alaska Federation of Natives (A.F.N.) was formed with the goal of seeking a land claims settlement from Congress. The A.F.N. established its headquarters in Anchorage, and soon thereafter acquired the legal services of Ramsey Clark and Arthur Goldberg, who had served in prominent positions in the Kennedy Administration, although their hiring was bitterly opposed by the regional lawyers who, in turn, were dismissed. By 1969, after further debate, the A.F.N. had established its land claims position: a cash settlement of $500,000,000 for native lands already taken or about to be taken, clear title to 40,000,000 acres (to be divided on village and regional bases), and 2 percent, in perpetuity, of all state and federal mineral royalties, as a continuing compensation.

The Leadership, its Attributes and Strategies

Except for some early activities, such as community protests over the state's land selections and the unpopular enforcement of game laws in the early 1960s, the land claims drive was not a grass-roots movement and probably involved less than 500 out of a potential 50,000 native people. In fact, the leadership came more significantly from an urban élite than it did from the villages of westward Alaska, and the land claims activities were largely conducted in the urban centres of Anchorage, Juneau, and Washington, D.C.

Leadership can be divided into three levels. A core élite of six participants who held executive or board positions with the A.F.N. provided the most persistent momentum in the formulation of policy and in the design and implementation of lobbying strategies. Emil Notti, an electrical engineer, and Don Wright, a former union official and construction contractor, both residents of Anchorage and of Déné ancestry, served terms as presidents of the A.F.N. Flore Lekanof, an Aleut, and John Borbridge, Jr., a Tlingit, were both high school teachers with master's degrees who served prominently on the board of the A.F.N. Eben Hopson, an Inuk from Barrow, was a former state senator and captain in the National Guard who served on the board. Finally, Willie Hensley, a young Inuk state senator from Kotzebue was a very prominent member of the élite. Hensley was a full-time politician who had received his high school and university education in the "Lower 48." With the excep-

tion of Hopson, all of them were in their thirties or forties, and resided in urban centres. Most were of mixed native ancestry and four had university educations.

There was a second echelon of leadership that is harder to define and shifted in membership over the five most intensive years of land claims activities. It consisted of from two to three hundred people. It included people who served in less prominent roles as A.F.N. board members, representing their regional associations, people who were on the executive and boards of regional associations or served as politicians in the state legislature or as advisors and employees of various state and federal social service, economic and health task forces to combat rural poverty. Like the core élite or first level there were some members of the second level who lived in Alaskan cities, but more of them came from rural native Alaska. However, few of them were full-time trappers, hunters or fishermen; most tended to have steady employment or to run their own businesses such as small stores or bush pilot services. This level of leadership was most prominent in middle-sized villages or towns such as Bethel, Barrow, Nome Kotzebue and Sitka. Broadly speaking, this category would include the several hundred people who attended A.F.N. annual conventions.

With this level, a number of people stood out at various times as vigorous spokesmen for their regions. These included State Senator Ray Christiansen and State Legislator Moses Pauken, both from the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, Joseph Upicksoun and Charley Edwardsen, Jr. of the Arctic Slope Native Association and Alfred Ketzler, John Sackett and Ralph Perdue from the Interior Déné region. From time to time they made important contributions, such as the pivotal role played by Alfred Ketzler when he led the protests against the Ramparts Dam proposal and state selection of native lands in the interior, leading to the land freeze of 1966 which benefited all of the native groups.

Another spokesman was Charlie Edwardsen, Jr. who served as a catalyst in 1966 for the establishment of regional associations (Berry 1975:44). Edwardsen, Jr. was also notable for his more militant approach to the issue, which served as a reminder of the potential for discontent, with, for instance, his threat of blowing up the proposed Alaska pipeline (ibid.:153).

The third level of leadership was that found in small villages of from 100 to 500 people. Broadly speaking, it consisted of village council presidents, village council executives and more traditional leaders. These leaders were more frequently hunters, trappers and fishermen, although a few were small scale entrepreneurs. They tended to be more closely linked in proximity and attitudes to the rural four-fifths majority of Alaskan natives. According to some people in the first two levels, village leadership was often disappointing to them. They complained that it was difficult to maintain the land

claims movement because these leaders were ill-informed on proper steps toward litigation and establishing land protests, as well as about techniques of local government. There were a few notable exceptions to this supposed lack of activity and political acumen. For example, Richard Frank of Minto and Andrew Isaac of Tanacross, local grass-roots leaders in the Interior, led the initial fights against state selections of their village lands that contributed to the gaining of the land freeze.

There was a potential for more progressive village leaders to emerge and move comfortably from the village to the other levels of leadership. These were people with high school education, who had some external military and work experience, but who lived in villages and participated in the dual economy. During my fieldwork, I became well-acquainted with one such person. I first met him when he was visiting Fairbanks, where he was attempting to establish contacts with supermarkets for his village's salmon, which had previously been used only for subsistence. He was also there to get a Skidoo franchise and apply for a loan to start a small fur garment industry in his village. He was a Yupik from a village near the Bering Sea, in his late twenties, who had received his high school education at a regional Catholic high school, had served in the U.S. Army in California, and had done some traveling. I later visited him and found his economic interests to be quite diversified. He trapped and fished, managed a small confectionery, operated a Skidoo franchise, and was planning the fur garment industry. He served as treasurer on the village council and seemed to be popular among his co-villagers. In spite of his entrepreneurial aptitudes, he lived a lifestyle that was barely distinguishable from the rest of the villagers; he was fluent in Yupik and knowledgeable about traditional beliefs and customs. In the city, he was very effective in dealing with Euro-Americans. Although at one time he had considered moving to Anchorage, he decided to remain in his village. He was later elected to the state legislature representing his district in the Lower Yukon.

Another aspect of native leadership needs special mention, and that is the pivotal role played by the *Tundra Times.* This newspaper was established in Fairbanks in 1962, initially through an endowment from a wealthy New England philanthropist. Two goals of the newspaper were very evident: to support native pride and to shape political awareness. Many articles reported native achievement in areas of education, athletics and the arts. As well, there were essays reviewing native culture, traditions and beliefs along with village and regional news. Notably it criticized federal and state policy which was detrimental to native interests. For example, it exposed a policy of forced relocation and the denial of self-government among Aleut employees in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's fur-sealing operations in the Pribilof Islands (*Tundra Times,* November 23, 1964), resulting in a change in policy. It fre-

quently provided editorials stressing the importance of native political involvement, frequently criticized the positions of state and federal politicians, and interviewed politicians before elections, although it never endorsed particular candidates. Fundamentally, the *Tundra Times* played a most significant role in portraying the development of the land claims issue and keeping its readership informed. The *Tundra Times* was largely supportive of the A.F.N.'s land claims policy, but it remained independent, and from time to time criticized certain stands of the federation.

It would be very difficult to imagine a successful land claims movement without the *Tundra Times,* given the vast distances in Alaska and the difficulties in establishing a communications network among the isolated leadership. The late Howard Rock, an Inuk artist from Point Hope, who had previously resided in Seattle and Fairbanks, was the editor of the newspaper during the land claims struggle. Mr. Rock had no previous journalistic experience, but in a very short time he was able to elevate the weekly to a very high level of professionalism. In a sense, Howard Rock's contribution, although separate, would rank him as parallel to the first level of leadership, that of the core élite.

Returning to the first two levels of leadership, there is an interesting dimension in the formation of pan-nativism among individuals who had been drawn from diverse and sometimes antagonistic ethnic groupings. Previously, there had been only a few high schools in rural Alaska. Most natives seeking secondary education had to attend Bureau of Indian Affairs residential schools in the panhandle region, or in Washington or Oklahoma, or a few private religious schools. Many of the leaders from the first two leadership tiers met each other at such schools. The camaraderie of the school situation, sometimes reinforced by their allegedly authoritarian structures, fostered a sense of Alaskan nativeness. Through talking about their home villages, they came to discover that the problems of health, poverty, subsistence, cultural erosion and dealings with Euro-Americans were very similar. The interaction also broke down barriers of ethnic and racial hostility. One Inuk from Barrow admitted to having been prejudiced against Indians until his education at the Wrangell Institute, where he met many Indians who made him realize that they were getting a "raw deal," even in contrast to the Inuit.

During the 1960s, the federal government had established a broad policy of a "War on Poverty." Programs were established in Alaska to promote small co-operative business, educational upgrading, employment training, rural electrification and health improvement. Native people who had been trained at the residential high schools were frequently called upon to be local administrators or consultants to these programs. Their previous sense of Alaskan nativeness and their networks were reinforced through the frequent policy meetings of these programs. This same momentum was reinforced and

carried over into the land claims movement.

The most significant attribute of the first two levels of native leadership was their capacity to use sophisticated techniques of political lobbying. In contrast to Canada, the American political culture and institutional framework have always stressed the importance of citizen interest groups for the design of legislation (cf. Ervin 1981). Although there are abuses and dangers involved in lobbying, there are more opportunities for minority groups to circumvent rigid bureaucracies and opposing special interest groups, or at least reduce some of the negative consequences of legislation. Such activities require an astute knowledge of whom to influence, whom to form alliances with, and what legal, political and normative tactics to use.

The first broad tactic utilized by the A.F.N. and its regional associations was the use of the courts. Injunctions were sought and won in federal courts against state land selections. The untested legal precedents of the Organic Act of 1884 and the Statehood Act of 1958 were reinforced by these actions, and, as was mentioned, the Secretary of the Interior imposed the pivotally important land freeze in 1966. At the same time, most of the regional associations and some villages filed land protests with the federal Bureau of Land Management, that, in effect, claimed all of Alaska by aboriginal right. Shortly after its formation, the A.F.N. proposed that the litigation of such protests be handled by the U.S. Court of Claims, a process that would have been tortuous to all parties involved (based on the previous experience of a 30-year claim by Tlingits and Haidas presented before the U.S. Indian Claims Commission). However, the mere threat of such a process jolted state officials and other political and economic interests to seek a political resolution since, otherwise, the booming economic development of Alaska would have been brought to a halt.

Another pressure tactic was to remind non-native politicians of the swing-vote potential of Alaskan natives. According to Rogers (1971), Alaskan natives numbered 51,528 out of a total population of 302,173 in 1970, or one-sixth of the population. Furthermore, Rogers (ibid.) contended that the large transient population did not tend to vote very much and estimated that the actual voting potential was around 29 percent. However, he neglected to consider that the Alaskan native population was very young and that approximately 60 percent of them could not vote, so that the potential really might have been between 20 and 25 percent. Yet, at the same time, the youthful native population clearly represented a future potential, and native leaders were opposed to birth control programs, which were viewed as politically oppressive.

Harrison (1970) demonstrated that the number of voting natives had increased significantly, a 69 percent increase between 1955 and 1968. Although several native leaders had run in electoral primaries for statewide

office (U.S. senator and congressman, state governor, or lieutenant governor), none had been successful. More success was evidenced in elections to the state senate and legislature, the senate containing 20 seats and the legislature containing 40 seats. The urban centres, with Euro-American majorities dominated, with Anchorage, for instance, electing seven senators and fourteen legislators. However, by 1970, there were two native senators and five native legislators, representing all of the native-dominated districts except for one, whereas during the 1950s and early 1960s there were only two or three natives in the legislature or senate.

More significantly, natives were beginning to show their swing-vote potential in elections for statewide office. The majority of natives tended to vote Democrat, but the 1966 election resulted in the election of a Republican governor and a congressman by narrow margins, aided very significantly by Republican shifts among Aleut and Déné voters. One of the results of this demonstration and reminder of political potential was that neither the Alaskan congressional delegation of two senators and one congressman, nor statewide officials such as the governor, could ignore or completely oppose native positions. The Republican candidate for governor, Walter Hickel, was the first to campaign in the rural native villages, and the Democratic incumbent congressman in 1966 lost his seat because he made the mistake of completely opposing the notion of a land claims settlement. Instead, such politicians had to work towards compromises leading to a political solution, especially because of the already imposed land freeze. Also, the native leadership did not completely identify with or seek the aid of one party. In the case of the six members of the core participating élite, four were Democrats and two were Republicans. This bipartisan approach was also useful in dealing with key members of the U.S. Congress, representing both parties.

Yet another lobbying approach was normative, through the use of public opinion forums. During the 1960s, growing numbers of Americans were becoming more sympathetic to minority group aspirations. Although not the primary focus of land claims lobbying, speeches were made to groups such as churches and chambers of commerce. Press releases, pamphlets, and television appearances stressed the poverty of Alaskan natives, the disruptive effects of oil exploration and the ultimate justice of a land claims settlement. On the whole, these presentations were confident, articulate and well researched, but essentially moderate. Spokesmen would frequently preface their speeches with statements of their loyalty to the American system (sometimes citing their military service), then appeal to reputed American values of land ownership, self-determinacy and fair play and point out that they were using legal precedents in their quest for a just settlement. Here is an example of such an approach in a speech to the Alaska Chamber of Commerce:

> Your support for the Native Land claims should be forthcoming because we came before the Congress by right and because it is not only the claims issue that is upon trial but the willingness of the institutions which will be called upon to do justice will also be tried. For not to do justice would cost all of us, eventually. We must maintain our good faith and trust in one another. Justice for all will securely bind us together just as surely as injustice and indifference would disrupt our relations. This occasion should mark the meaningful beginning of a dialogue between the business community and the Alaskan Natives. We are all Alaskans. We share the same aspirations, goals and ambitions – a better Alaska. We invite you to join us in our struggle for justice. Let us resolve to avoid the temptation to try to assign total responsibility to the Federal Government. Justice is our joint problem and the Alaska Native Land Rights is a unique opportunity to meaningfully work together. (Borbridge, Jr. 1969)

Interestingly, and at first blush paradoxically, they made more use of these public relations appeals in the "Lower 48" states than in Alaska itself. The rationale was that Alaska's lone congressman and two U.S. senators would make very little difference in the ultimate congressional votes on land claims settlement bills and they wanted to encourage write-in campaigns, especially from the Pacific Northwest and the Eastern Seaboard, to influence key congressmen.

One of the most powerful tactics was to ally the A.F.N. with a network of individuals and interest groups that tended to support each other in "liberal" causes, many of which were head-quartered in the "Lower 48" states. These included such groups as the American Association of Indian Affairs, the National Congress of American Indians, the United Auto Workers, the United Presbyterian Church, the National Council of Churches, the Ford Foundation and individuals such as Senators Edward Kennedy and William Proxmire. These groups provided a variety of services such as key introductions, endorsements, financial aid, Washington D.C. office space and sometimes direct influence on Congress. One of the most helpful was the New York-based American Association of Indian Affairs. This Euro-American support group, assisted financially in the early formation of some of the regional native associations, provided many introductions and arranged for the hiring of the two prestigious lawyers, Clark and Goldberg, to advise on the lobbying procedure.

Given the way such networks of political alliance operate, it is quite likely that natives might be requested to reciprocate at later times by voting for or endorsing certain political candidates, or by coming to the aid of certain unions, say through actions like boycotts. This network of liberal alliance was very powerful in the 1960s and was engaged in activities with poor Blacks in the south, with Hispanics, migrant workers, poor whites in Appalachia and with urban union workers. Its power was based on the ability

to muster the return of favours from groups and individuals that it had previously supported. There was a danger in such an alliance that "authentic" native positions might be watered down through the apparent need for compromises, especially as influenced by the brokerage roles of their allies.

Another lobbying technique was the direct influencing of key members of the U.S. Congress, most especially the members of the Senate and House Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs who were responsible for drafting legislation on land claims, as well as relevant members of the executive branch such as the Secretary of the Interior. Members of the core leadership élite, their lawyers and sometimes the complete board of the A.F.N. "walked the halls of Congress," talking with congressmen and senators in their offices and presenting testimonies before the Senate and House Committees on Insular Affairs. Those committees also flew to Alaska and held meetings in Anchorage, Juneau, Fairbanks and some of the larger settlements in native Alaska, such as Barrow. At those latter meetings, testimony was provided by members of the second level of leadership and some, but not many, village leaders and villagers.

Of course, testimony was also presented by groups and individuals in opposition. Special interest groups such as the Alaska Loggers' Association and the Alaska Sportsmen's Council opposed native ownership of land, contending that natives would prevent mineral exploration, logging and sports hunting and fishing. Opposition was found in other quarters. Two major newspapers, the *Anchorage Daily Times* and the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner,* almost weekly presented editorials opposing land settlements, claiming that natives were not entitled to any special rights to the land in comparison with other Alaskan citizens, and that native ownership of lands would halt the economic development of Alaska. Judging from letters to the editor, and many conversations that I had with non-natives, the opposition was considerable. The A.F.N. might have considered placing more effort into educating the general Alaskan public, but its efforts were already extended in lobbying activities and attempting to educate the native population. Also, the state government itself provided very direct opposition from time to time, especially the administration in 1969, that objected to proposals that it contribute 2 percent of its mineral revenues, in perpetuity, and that natives be given forty million acres.

The most significant leverage towards a settlement was the result of a strange alliance of convenience between the A.F.N. and the interests of oil companies operating on the North Slope. The background to this alliance is well described by Mary Berry (1975) in her discussion of the politics associated with the Alaska Pipeline.

During Walter Hickel's congressional confirmation hearings as President Nixon's potential Secretary of the Interior, the A.F.N. skillfully forced

him to extend the land freeze and to agree not to modify that freeze for roads or pipelines without congressional hearing (Berry 1975:61). The oil companies (Atlantic Ritchfield, Humble Oil and British Petroleum among others), who had formed a consortium to build the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (T.A.P.S.), ran into great difficulty in gaining approval for construction because of extreme opposition from conservation groups and because the land claims created a major impediment (ibid.:122).

In the Summer of 1970 the president of the newly reorganized consortium, the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, publicly endorsed the necessity for a just settlement of native land claims, before the pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez could be built. Alyeska lobbyists joined forces with the A.F.N. and a little later the Seafarers' International Union (who felt a stake in the proposed tanker route south from Valdez) did likewise. All three groups coordinated lobbying before the crucial House of Representatives vote on land claims in 1971 (Berry 1975:168, 169, 188). Later, the A.F.N. officially endorsed the Alaska Pipeline, although it did not actively lobby to facilitate it (ibid.:260). Berry suggests:

> Without the presence of the huge Prudhoe Bay oilfield and the industry's anxiety over the Trans Alaska Pipeline, the native claims would never have been settled as they were. The claims were settled promptly and generously because they stood in the way of white man's progress. The need for Prudhoe Bay oil, real or imagined, made the claims a national issue rather than an Alaskan one, and because of this, the natives got better treatment from Congress than they could have expected had their case rested solely on its merits. Had Congress treated the land claims as a purely parochial matter, the Congressmen would have listened primarily to members of the Alaska Congressional delegation, and through them, to the multiplicity of special interests they represented among which the natives were only one voice and a small one at that. (ibid.:247)

The Outcome

A legislative settlement was achieved in 1971, with the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. A cash settlement of $462,500,000 was to be paid over 11 years; native corporations were to receive 2 percent of annual state and federal mineral revenues until $500 million had been collected; and villages and native corporations were to receive title to 40 million acres, with sub-surface rights to 18 million acres. Twelve regional corporations were formed, in which each enrolled resident was to be given 100 shares. Village corporations, affiliated to regional corporations, were to be formed and to receive at least 50 percent of cash grants and sub-surface revenues, although money could be withheld until the village provided suitable plans for projects. More details on the act can be found in French's (1972) paper and Arnold (1976) and Burch, Jr. (1984) provide overviews of its operations.

It is not my intention, and for the moment it is outside my competence, to evaluate the actual effects of the legislation which are currently very controversial and under review. Some of the recent criticisms (cf. Berger 1985) suggest that native Alaskans do not have an adequate land base to maintain the dual economy; that their material conditions have not been significantly improved; that future generations might be disenfranchised as natives; that assets and land might be sold on the free market; and that essential federal services might be terminated in the near future through a misguided notion that natives have been properly compensated and have been provided with enough assets to maintain their own services.

However, given the social and political conditions of the 1960s and early 1970s, the Alaskan native leadership accomplished many things. It rapidly fostered a kind of pan-nativism in a state with extreme ethnic diversities and cultural life-styles. It was able to influence a land claims settlement that was very close to its own position. If it had not maintained such a concerted effort, some sort of settlement would have been imposed on native Alaskans. Some of the early non-native proposals were far less than the ultimate settlement. These included: no compensation at all, 160 acre per capita allotments, cash settlements based in 1867 land values, and oil and gas revenues from off-shore drilling. All of these were quite ridiculous and inadequate for the Alaskan context. The resulting legislation was for its time the most expansive in terms of land and money, and it also provided innovative, mixed formulae of land, cash and continuing revenues, as well as the concept of native regional and village corporations.

Broad difficulties and inequities of this land claims solution can largely be traced to the power of opposing interests in the larger society. However, it should be pointed out that there was probably an inevitable weakness in the structure of the native leadership. The leaders were mainly relatively acculturated, middle class, urban residents, whose attachment to village experience was largely marginal, as sometimes was their actual native ancestry. In the beginning, the land claims movement was more rural and grass-roots in nature, but it shortly became directed almost by necessity, by a small, educated, urban and talented élite, but one that did not have the means to maintain and direct constant communication with its grass-roots, and might have been unconsciously co-opted by its participation in wider non-native alliances and by the necessity of compromising in the context of certain social and political realities.

The Alaska native land claims movement has provided some stimulus and a set of lessons for other contexts of aboriginal rights, most notably in Canada. The basic set of lessons is that it is quite appropriate for indigenous peoples to demand more land, and to hold out for more time so that a careful assessment of native people's needs can be made. The Alaska native political

movement also had influence on more international efforts such as the activities of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference with, for instance, Eben Hopson and Charlie Edwardsen, Jr. among the founding leaders (Peterson 1984).

Note

1. A version of this paper was delivered at the Twelfth Annual Congress of the Canadian Ethnology Society, May 9-12, 1985 at the University of Toronto in Toronto, Canada. Field research was conducted in Alaska during 1967-68 and 1969-70 for a total of 13 months while the author was a graduate student at the University of Illinois.

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