Subsistence Livelihood, Native Identity and Internal Differentiation in Southeast Alaska

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Abstract: Subsistence resource use in Southeast Alaska has undergone a dramatic shift following the implementation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1971). Ironically, the consequent marginalization of subsistence dependent households and decreasing opportunities for earning a livelihood through traditional food harvests have been accompanied by increased identification of collective Native identity with subsistence practices and their products. This paper argues that to understand these changes, one must examine the role subsistence practices and foods play in village-based internal differentiation. Discussion focusses on (1) the ongoing ecological and social impact of ANCSA in Southeast Native villages, and (2) the manner in which externally imposed "indigenism" can limit ways of being Native even while increasing the need for alternative lifeways.

Keywords: Alaska Natives, subsistence, inequality, ANCSA, politics, Native identity

Résumé : Les modes de subsistance au sud-est de l'Alaska ont subit de profondes transformation après l'entrée en vigueur de la loi de 1971 relative au règlement des revendications des autochtones de l'Alaska (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, ANCSA). L'ironie de la chose, c'est que la marginalisation des ménages dépendant de ces moyens et la diminution des occasions de gagner sa vie grâce à la récolte traditionnelle qui en ont découlé ont été accompagnées d'une hausse du sentiment d'appartenance à la collectivité autochtone et de l'attachement aux modes de subsistance traditionnels ainsi qu'aux produits qui en sont issus. Afin de comprendre ces transformations, le présent article pose comme nécessaire l'analyse du rôle de la nourriture de base et des pratiques relatives à la subsistance dans le phénomène de différentiation au sein des villages. L'argumentation met l'accent sur 1) les conséquences sociales et écologiques toujours tangibles de l'ANCSA dans les villages autochtones du sud-est et sur 2) la façon dont un «indigénisme» imposé de l'extérieur tend à limiter les façons d'être autochtone même s'il augmente le besoin d'accéder à des modes de vie différents.

Mots-clés : autochtones d'Alaska, subsistance, inégalité, ANCSA, politique, identité autochtone

Ethnological interest in small-scale societies has, in recent years, undergone a shift from a past focus on the food getting practices and organizational relations of hunting and foraging groups[1] to a focus on the politics of indigenism.[2] This shift has much to do with the fact that, over last three decades, small-scale societies have been confronted by development forces and incorporated more fully into nation-states all over the globe (Friedman 1998, 1999). In the process, any pretense of self-sufficiency has been shattered and lifeways once based around subsistence production have become critical political elements in claims to identity and property rights within a national and international milieu (Li 2000; Niezen 2000). For anthropologists who work among small-scale hunting and foraging groups, the late 20th century thus marks a watershed in ethnographic research. As Richard Lee has noted, no longer is any contemporary researcher, whether working in the Arctic, the Amazon, Southeast Asia or Africa, free to define the ethnographic situation in purely local terms (Lee 2000), if ever this had been possible (Wilmsen 1989). As a result, anthropology is left with a conundrum: what is the appropriate language in which to frame and discuss the actual lifeways of small groups, once the staple of anthropological theory and method, when past methods and ways of talking seem so hopelessly disjoined from current circumstances?

One indirect result of this shift is a marked disjuncture in the anthropological literature of small-scale hunting and foraging groups, as the contemporary literature on indigenism has made little use of past research and characterizations of native life.[3] In some ways, the neglect of older sources seems justified, given their ahistorical, and, in a global political sense, apolitical, nature (see Roseberry 1989). Yet, against this neglect (and the accompanying implicit and explicit criticism of older ethnography), other contemporary researchers and advocates point out that native people themselves continue to emphasize the central place of subsistence in their mutual relations and

the "sense of place," as Richard Lee (2000) puts it, that these practices and relations create.[4] Something is lost, they tell us, both on the ground and in theory, when local lifeways are subsumed under discussions of larger global historical processes. And so it seems.

What is needed, then, if we are to be true to both the historical political processes and the people involved is some sense of how global political processes and local subsistence practices are intermeshed in the contemporary lifeways of small-scale, ostensibly marginal groups. And even more to the point, we must seek to understand how these two issues are intermeshed not simply in the eyes of those subject to and subject of them, but, in important ways, intermeshed for theoretical purposes as well.

This article focusses on development politics and subsistence production in Southeast Alaska Native villages from this perspective. Importantly, throughout the remainder of the article subsistence is used in its broadest sense—conceived to include not simply the food getting practices of today's village residents but also (and indeed more importantly in almost every way) the relations entailed in and generated by these practices; the emotions and feelings these relations create; and the discourses they enable. My primary purposes are:

(1) To discuss the ongoing impact of the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act* of 1971, or ANCSA,[5] on Native subsistence in Southeast Alaska.
(2) To determine how local, village-based forms of social differentiation and inequality (particularly those surrounding the subsistence practices, relations, and discourses mentioned above) are impacted by the industrial development imposed by ANCSA.

Coming at the end of the termination period and the beginning of a period of renewed recognition of Native sovereignty, ANCSA represented the desires of both of these strategies (Brown 2004). Initially prompted by the discovery of oil under disputed lands on the North Slope, ANCSA settled all outstanding claims in the state by awarding significant portions of land and a large cash settlement to Alaska Natives. Yet this compensation was not made directly to the Native groups advocating for a settlement and claiming disputed lands throughout the state. Rather, ANCSA created "Native corporations" in all primarily Native villages in the state.[6] Native residents of these villages alive at the time of the Act (i.e., born before 1971) were made shareholders in these corporations. In addition, a "regional" corporation was formed in each of 12 regions of Alaska in order to facilitate the harvest of subsurface resources under the lands awarded to Native corporations by the Act. All Natives living within the region, even those not registered with a village corporation, were issued shares in the regional corporation as well. Regional and village corporations were then allowed to select lands in limited amounts that they would own outright, and were awarded portions of the cash settlement in proportion to their enrolled populations. Village corporations in Southeast Alaska were allowed to select 23 040 acre parcels of land near their own villages, and the regional corporation in the area, Sealaska, was allowed to choose similar size plots neighbouring the selections of the village corporations. Altogether, over 600 000 acres of forest were selected by the regional corporation, Sealaska, and the other ANCSA corporations in the Southeast region.

As discussed below, in the 30 years since the passage of the Act, much attention has been paid to its effects, especially the manner in which ANCSA has affected subsistence practices directly through its legislated removals of traditional hunting and fishing areas. Yet one important result of ANCSA that has received little attention is the role of the Act and the corporations it created in the intensification of specifically local inequalities. In Southeast Alaska these have become increasingly clear as the ecological impact of the Act has emerged after 30 years of sustained clear-cutting in old growth forests. This paper attempts to make clear some of the social effects of the Act. And, insofar as subsistence remains central to Native identity and sense of place, the paper seeks to show how emerging inequalities within Native villages shape the ability of village residents to respond (in action and in voice) to the manipulation of larger-than-local forces in the political economy collectively as Natives, rather than simply as individual Native folks. As will become clear in this discussion, the combined effects of legal penetration and ecological degradation conspire to constrain, in subtle but forceful ways, local ways of "being Native" at a time when alternatives to the current regime are needed most.

In what follows, descriptions of subsistence practices and the distribution of subsistence resources comes from two sources. The first was my own fieldwork, carried out between 1993 and 1996. During that time I spent 13 months in Southeast Alaska, primarily in Hydaburg, Kake, and Hoonah, although I also spent limited time in Craig, Klawock, Wrangell and Ketchikan. These were areas of some of the most intense ANCSA-inspired timber harvesting. This time included research during the summer, fall and winter. For four months in Hydaburg and two months in Hoonah, I lived in the households of heavy subsistence users (including one winter month), and participated directly in subsistence harvests, including beach seining, hook fishing, beach collecting, berry

collecting, seal hunting and deer hunting, with some activity happening on an almost daily basis. In Hydaburg I conducted a survey of smokehouses for the entire village in the summer of 1995. Smokehouse contents and origins were surveyed by me and a field assistant from the village, Algie Frisby, to ascertain what people were catching and keeping, what they were sharing, and with whom they partnered or exchanged. In Kake I attended the "Culture Camp" project, which taught young people about subsistence practices as well as other things, in the summers of 1995 and 1996. In addition to direct participation in subsistence activities and the Hydaburg survey, through the first six months of my time in Alaska my main focus was on subsistence practices; I conducted interviews with more than 20 subsistence-using households and hunters-fishermen. These interviews focussed directly on subsistence practices and the politics of attaining a subsistence livelihood. Most of these interviews were informal, and were conducted with those who I label "heavy users" in this paper, but several were with more moderate and light users. I also attended several village-wide, "potlatch" type gatherings in Kake, Hydaburg, and Hoonah, referred to locally as "give-aways" or "payoff parties." This participation, along with the subsistence interviews, forms much of the basis of the discussion of village level politics later in the paper.

The second source of data on subsistence practices, resource harvests and sharing levels used in this article are the published reports by Alaska Fish and Game Subsistence Division, which on the whole are excellent, and which match closely my own more limited and impressionistic experiences of Native subsistence hunting, gathering and fishing in the region. My two criticisms or exceptions, raised in more detail later in this article, are that these reports seem to me, given my experience in Hydaburg, Kake and Hoonah, to systematically under-represent harvest levels among the most heavy subsistence users (i.e., those most dependent on subsistence resources for day-to-day livelihoods whose harvest levels often exceeded legal limits); and that the data on sharing often fail to mention the large political-cultural ceremonies discussed below. The importance of these omissions for understanding the current transformation of subsistence livelihoods in the region is discussed in detail below.

Subsistence Practices

As indicated above, the main focus of this paper is the social repercussions of a gradual, still-dawning shift in the subsistence relations and practices of Alaska Natives in Southeast Alaska. This shift emerged in the early and mid-1990s following the large-scale clear-cutting of old-growth forests near Southeast Native villages in the preceding five to ten years. In what follows, the ethnographic baseline for the descriptions of subsistence practices is the period between the mid-1960s (the collapse of the commercial cannery industry throughout the region) and the late 1980s (when the effects of clear-cut timber harvests and the distribution of ANCSA corporate proceeds began the dramatic transformation of most villages). It should be noted, however, that many of these same practices continue today, and many reflect continuities with practices from earlier in the 20th century or before (Goldschmidt and Haas 1999). As will be argued later, what has changed most recently is not so much the practices or resources involved, but rather their political context and symbolic value, and the long and even short term viability of the households involved in their harvest and consumption.

During the nearly three decades of the 1960s through the early 1990s, subsistence practices of Alaska Natives were very diverse, in part a reflection of the richness of local ecosystems, and more so of residents' deep historical familiarity with and dependency on local resources (Thornton 1999; Goldschmidt and Haas 1999; Hunn et al 2003).[7] George and Bosworth (1988) list at least 14 principal resources used by Angoon residents during this time; Ellanna and Sherrod (1987) list 23 resources used regularly by Klawock Natives (despite lumping many non-animal uses under "plants"); and Gmelch and Gmelch (1985) list 14 deep-water species, eight kinds of hunted animals (lumping all waterfowl together), 15 inter-tidal resources, ten kinds of berries, and hosts of other plant resources used for medicine, craft and food preparation that were regularly pursued by Sitka Natives. Other reports for neighbouring communities throughout the region confirm the claims for breadth of use in this research.[8]

The main categories of resources used by Southeast village residents were fish and marine invertebrates (crabs and shellfish), deer and other land mammals (including bear and moose), and plant resources (including many kinds of berries and regular use of several seaweeds). Harvest levels of heavy users included several hundred pounds annually in each of these categories. By far the most widely harvested resources both in terms of pounds harvested and time spent in collection were fish (and in particular salmon) and deer. The harvest seasons of these two resources complement one another, as salmon in Southeast Alaska were and are available in large numbers generally only in the summer and fall, when they return to local streams to spawn. Deer were most accessible in the winter when they must retreat from the higher elevations because of weather, and thus when they can be

hunted from the water or, more recently, from logging roads. Both resources were generally pursued by small groups—discussed in more detail below—who shared the expenses of the hunting or fishing effort.

Both salmon and deer were pursued primarily by men. Women participated significantly, generally, in the processing of salmon (discussed below), less so for deer. And both deer and salmon were pursued with contemporary technology—pickup trucks and high-powered rifles were used to hunt deer; gasoline-powered skiffs and synthetic mesh nets or "seines" were used to fish for salmon.

In addition, almost all subsistence-using households (generally over half of the households in any village) collected berries and seaweed. These activities were performed by family groups rather than with subsistence partners, and were often organized by women rather than men, though both men and women usually participated. Berries were "jarred" or frozen for use throughout the year, while seaweed was considered always available. Seaweed was sometimes eaten alone, but more often cooked with boiled rice, to which it adds flavor and considerable nutrition. Berries were eaten alone or in cakes, and occasionally in "Eskimo ice cream" (in local parlance), i.e., stored in refrigerated seal grease and eaten as such. Other frequently used resources included seals, which were caught in the winter when they returned to the Southeast region in large numbers. Seals were hunted with high-powered rifles from open, gas-powered boats. In addition to the use of meat and blubber, seal skins were cured and sold to offset some of the cost of subsistence equipment and supplies.

Numerous other resources were pursued as well, including waterfowl and their eggs, moose and bear, mollusks and other marine invertebrates, and other species of fish, such as trout and halibut. A brief summary of statistics, in table form, drawn from research in 1984 in the village of Angoon (with a population of about six hundred, almost 80% of whom are Alaska Natives) will serve to finish this general profile of resource use and local participation.

From this data, it is clear that among heavy users, individuals devoted considerable time and effort, and reaped considerable reward (totaling hundreds of pounds of harvested resources among heavy users) from subsistence production.[9]

In addition, as will be discussed in more detail below, the data presented by George and Bosworth (1988) also make clear the extent to which these resources were redistributed throughout the community. In fact, the household basis of their survey may actually miss some critical elements of redistribution that were less important for the amounts involved than they were for the relations they indicated and made possible—that is, the traditional, "Indian foods" given to individuals and extended families for distribution at village-wide celebrations and ceremonies. In this case, virtually the entire village partakes in the harvest of a few individuals, not as households (and so, not revealed in the survey data, I suspect), but rather, as village residents and more importantly, as Native village residents.

TABLE 1
Resource Use for Angoon in 1984 (abridged from Geroge and Bosworth 1988:55-56)

Resource	Percent Using[a]	Mean Harvest (lbs)[b]	Receiveing[c]
King salmon	36.8%	83.7	15.8%
Chum salmon	26.3%	168.6	2.6%
Humpback salmon	21.1%	80.5	7.9%
Sockeye salmon	21.1%	262.5	10.5%
Coho salmon	39.5%	154.3	13.2%
Cutthroat trout	15.8%	18.3	7.9%
Dolly varden (trout)	28.9%	17.5	5.3%
Herring	36.8%	32.2	7.9%
Herring eggs	15.8%	193.3	10.5%
Halibut	81.6%	139.8	26.3%
Pacific cod	21.1%	26.4	7.9%
Sablefish	13.2%	69.6	10.5%
Red snapper	26.3%	34.5	13.2%
Heart cockles	52.6%	8.6	26.3%
Clams	71.1%	7.8	23.7%
Dungeness crab	23.7%	32.3	31.6%
Black gumboot	63.2%	19.0	15.8%
Octopus	21.1%	45.0	5.3%
Black seaweed	21.1%	106.0	34.2%
Harbor seal	15.8%	450.0	23.7%
Deer	60.5%	396.7	44.7%
Ducks	7.9%	26.3	7.9%
Berries	63.2%	17.7	23.7%
Plants	13.2%	1.8	5.3%
Wood	73.7%	N/a	N/a

[a] Number of households actively pursuing named resource as a percentage of all households in Angoon.
[b] Total pounds harvested per household actively pursuing named resource.
[c] Percentage of non-pursuing households to receive named resource.

Subsistence Harvest Relations

This last point raises what is perhaps the most overlooked element of subsistence production during the period: the relations it entailed and produced—relations which now, for the most part, bear a complex relationship with the local manifestations of social relations generated by the regional political economy and ANCSA. This point is discussed in more detail below, but first it is necessary to sketch out the sorts of relations entailed in and empowered by subsistence practices that ANCSA acted upon.

Among those subsistence relations already indicated above were "partners" and the informal subsistence-gath-

ering party. Partnerships were maintained by nearly all heavy subsistence users. They were frequently long-term relationships through which partners shared the expense of subsistence harvests by contributing complementary pieces of equipment, and by co-ordinating harvest labour. Partnerships were not necessarily warm relationships, but they were necessary for effective and efficient harvests, and were frequently maintained over long periods of time. Many tasks, like salmon fishing, required several persons (minimally two, but most often three in the case of hand-seining) if they were to be done at the scale necessary for large, multiple household consumption. Beyond this, familiarity between partners made for increased efficiency, as co-ordination of activities (even beyond individual fishing expertise and knowledge) usually led to larger harvests. Deer hunting could be done individually, but most hunters chose to hunt with partners, sharing out the expense (of the boat or truck used) and gaining some insurance against a later unsuccessful hunt—as anyone along for the day received some share of what was obtained, even though a deer was assumed by all to belong to the person who shot it.

Because most subsistence hunting and fishing was done by men, most of those entering into partnerships were men. Women (almost invariably the wives of those doing the hunting or fishing) participated in the processing of resources—the gutting, cutting, drying and smoking of fish; the butchering of deer; the preparation of seal meat and fat—which took place after the harvest. Partners generally did not process fish or other resources together, and there was no extension of partnering relations to the wives of even long-term partners.

Relations between women did structure some harvests, however. In particular, berry picking and other plant harvests were often initiated by women, and involved groups linked by relations among women. Thus a woman may have co-ordinated a trip to the berrying grounds with her friends or close female kin. Men usually accompanied their wives on these trips, as did children of both sexes (which is not necessarily the case for hunting and fishing), and all participated in the harvest. Part of the purpose of bringing such a large party together, I was told, was safety—bears are likely to flee an area where there is a large group and, conversely, will potentially attack a small group or a person working alone. Yet the subsistence party, as one might call it, lacked the collectiveness of those tasks pursued by partners, especially fishing. Berry harvests were kept separately even during collection, with each household harvesting its own stores, rather than lumping the entire harvest and dividing the total into shares as was done in fishing.

Some subsistence resources were gathered by single individuals, such as mollusks and other inter-tidal resources (cockles, clams, gumboots and seaweed, in the table above). Yet these were shared fairly widely, usually along "family" lines—meaning extended bilateral kindreds (see Dombrowski 2001). The term "family" is used here with some technical specificity and so requires explanation, for it figures significantly in the discussion of inequality that follows. "Family" was actually used in two ways by Southeast Natives: to refer to nuclear families (which I will call households in the remainder of the paper), and to refer to large, fluid, ego-centred groups of bilateral and affinal kin. In this latter sense, "families" were political assemblages that took advantage of loose definitions of kinship to link a number of usually economically diverse households. There were four or five or more such families in every Southeast Native village, and almost every household in a village considered itself a member of one or another such family. It is in this sense that the term "family" will be used in the following discussion.

Ordinarily, families were constructed through and for a patronage system. Families pooled votes and, in so doing, assured family leaders of important positions in any one of several village bureaucracies (regional tribal government, local tribal government, town government and board directorships in the local or regional ANCSA corporations). Leadership positions could then be used to produce jobs for family members, and most marginal members of village families supported family leaders with the hope of landing a regular salaried position for a member of their household, or with the hope of some other act of patronage that came from being part of a "powerful family." Of course there were never enough spoils to satisfy all of those involved, and individuals and households on the margins of family politics were just as likely to be left out of the reward system in any meaningful way. This led to some fluidity in family composition as disaffected households sought a better deal in another family. But that did not change the family-form itself. Like prototypical Nuer clans, individual families were most visible when in pursuit of a goal (e.g., an elected position) and individual families could come and go quite quickly, while the political form or organizing principle of the family form itself remained intact. As such, family-based social relations were, structurally, the set of local relations most closely tied to the dynamics of the larger economy.

The contrast with subsistence relations is significant. For while families played a role in the sharing of subsistence resources generally, a man's partners were seldom drawn from within his current family. One likely reason for

this is that heavy subsistence users were so because they were among the most marginal members of any village (or, conversely, they were among the most marginal because of their continued dependence on subsistence, which works out to mean the same thing in practice), and were thus among those most dependent on subsistence foods for their day-to-day survival. Indeed, among heavy users, even short-term shortages or complications meant dramatic changes in their ability to remain housed and fed within the village.

Partnerships drawn from within a single family worked against consistency in several ways. Family lines usually cut across economic lines—as the need for votes encouraged family leaders to cast their political net as widely as possible. Thus choosing a partner from within a family meant either crossing lines of economic difference, or choosing among those with whom one was competing for jobs and patronage. For a straightforward set of reasons, neither strategy worked well. For partnerships to be effective, both partners must be equally committed to subsistence tasks. A man's partner must be available to go hunting or fishing when the weather and season permit. The opportunity costs of days-missed fishing or berrying were enormous, for these, like many resources, were available only briefly. Differing obligations between partners impeded flexibility and co-ordination, and choosing a partner across economic divisions meant, inevitably, choosing someone whose availability and commitment to subsistence tasks for basic survival differed markedly from one's own. For this reason, no heavy subsistence user could afford a partner who was regularly employed; and no regularly employed, part-time subsistence user could meet the co-operative needs of a heavy user.

Conversely, by choosing a partner on a similar economic level within a family, one would be choosing as a partner someone with whom one was normally competing for patronage from family leaders—patronage that includes part-time cash employment, which all heavy users depended on to continue to pursue subsistence (see below). For this reason, partnerships within a family that match individuals from a single economic stratum were seldom any more long-lasting than those that crossed strata. As a result, most lasting subsistence partnerships were made between marginal members of separate families within the same village.

Relations Related to Processing and Exchange

Beyond partnerships and subsistence parties, other relations were directly involved in the processing of subsistence foods and other locally produced use-values as well. In villages like Hydaburg, where the prime resource processing sites within the village (smokehouses and areas along the beachfront) tended to be held by older residents, many of these residents exchanged use of processing equipment (like a smokehouse) and their own labour for a share of the final product. In these cases, elderly men and women would rise frequently in the night to tend the fire and at other times would assist in the cutting and re-cutting of salmon, and perhaps even help in the canning or jarring of fish. In return they received several cases of salmon, or some well-dried "hard-smoke" for their own use.

As above, spouses were frequent participants in subsistence processing tasks as well. Indeed, smoking and canning salmon usually involved far more labour than the actual harvest. After collecting berries, these must be frozen or jarred (a process like canning that involves sealing and boiling at high temperatures for extended periods). Seal fat must be rendered (by boiling and skimming) and herring and salmon eggs smoked or boiled. Where job opportunities for women arose, this could conflict with spousal participation in subsistence production, often complicating the ability of even the most dedicated user to continue in a subsistence livelihood, despite a willingness to do so.

Yet beyond the relations entailed in the actual harvest and processing of resources, there were other relations as well that subsistence fostered or allowed. Harvesting households invariably shared some of what they produced, sometimes with expectations of exchange (such as when people gave gifts of deer meat or herring roe to a well known seal hunter, fully expecting to receive some seal oil or "seal grease" the following winter). Exchange relations like these resulted from specialization among users, or, as in the last example, people's unwillingness or inability to participate in a particularly difficult harvest—few people regularly hunted seals because of the dangers involved, even in villages where seal meat was a popular food. In all of these cases, whether gifting reflected a desire for the products of other people's subsistence work or a desire for recognition and the continuation of friendly social relations, exchange of subsistence items created an obvious sort of village-wide interdependency.

As one can see from Table 1 above, many people shared food, particularly resources like deer and seal meat that were difficult to store, in effect pooling labour and redistributing harvests. The webs of relations created by these exchanges were thus broad, sometimes blanketing an entire village. Some sharing was clearly "interested,"

as in those cases where gifting followed family lines and was designed to curry favour with powerful members of extended kin groups, with the hope of receiving or repaying other sorts of (often financial) favours. Other gifting was almost entirely altruistic, as when a successful hunter donated a large seal to a village elders' centre, knowing that it would be appreciated but not repaid in anything more concrete than good will and local reputation.

Exchanges such as these have been noted as critical to village sustainability.[10] Since the early 1990s, the role of subsistence in sustaining Southeast communities has diminished as other sources of household and village-wide income have grown in importance. At the same time, subsistence production has become more economically precarious and, indeed, increasingly physically dangerous. While subsistence now has less to do with community sustainability in a raw material sense than at any time ever before, it perhaps figures more significantly in the sustainability of those households dependent on subsistence resources than at any time in the last 50 years. And, in part due to issues unrelated to either of these, it has come to loom large in sustaining certain kinds of local political power. This is discussed in greater detail below.

Exchange Relations

In addition to all of the relations formed through subsistence work and exchange, there remained other relations that, though not formed directly by or for subsistence hunting, fishing, gathering, or processing of subsistence foods, were nevertheless influenced and enhanced by these practices, especially among those most dependent on subsistence for day-to-day living. The most basic of these was the households of subsistence users themselves. This point is often overlooked by those who focus overtly on the role of subsistence in local identity discourse (for example Berger 1985; Thornton 1999; Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1994; though see Hunn et al. 2003). Among many of the heaviest users I encountered, subsistence was not simply a "lifestyle." It was, primarily, a livelihood. For them, it is clear that subsistence harvests allowed households to remain in the village without participating fully in the formal economy, and to do so during times when that economy would normally force them to leave. In this way, marginal households remained part of the extended kin groups (families) that exist there, and participated in the community as a whole—its ceremonies and traditions, village and church groups, basketball rivalries, friendships of various intensity and all of those born-of-continuous-familiarity relations that go with living in a small town. Such relations need not be idealized to be counted as significant in people's sense of self and sense of well-being. And their loss was felt by everyone who left the village (as most marginal members do, it seems, at one point or another). As it was explained to me by one village resident who had left and returned: "Down south [meaning in the continental U.S.], we are just plain old Indians." Insofar as subsistence production and livelihood allowed individuals and marginal households to stay in the village and even to simply remain intact, subsistence production was invariably tied to all those relations that get glossed as local community and close friends, regardless of their tenor, none of which existed outside of being in the place itself.

In related form, by allowing marginal individuals to stay in the village, subsistence production allowed for a personal sense of belonging that is hard to explain clearly but which is, nonetheless, a powerful motivating force in Native communities. In this way, subsistence helped provide people with a sense of uniqueness and participation in a community which, though it is subject to ideological and political manipulation, nevertheless provided an important sense of belonging. This "spiritual" side of local relations is seldom discussed, even by identity theorists, but it features prominently in village residents' own discussions of their lives (see Blackman 1982:17; Eastman and Edwards 1991; Organized Village of Kake 1989). Subsistence contributed to these feelings in the same way that it contributed to the friendships and feelings of community discussed above, that is, by allowing people to remain in the place where such feelings could and did take place.

Identity

Yet beyond the many relations created in and around subsistence practices, by the early 1980s, issues of identity began to figure strongly in public depictions of the desire for subsistence resources in Southeast Alaska.[11] In Southeast Alaska, however, this was especially true among light users and those who did not necessarily engage in the harvest of subsistence resources at all—often as much as half the population of in Southeast Alaska Native villages (see Table 1). Not coincidentally, the latter category (non-producers) usually included those most central to village political and economic organization, and thus the leaders of most families. Yet elite members of all Native villages derived prestige from being able to provide "Indian foods" at any of the social gatherings that they sponsored. And such gatherings were actually quite common, especially in the summer months (generally the peak of the subsistence harvests), and included "pay-off parties" (where another family, or even one "side" of a village[12] is rewarded for help in the funeral arrangements of a deceased rela-

tive, a process akin to the historical Tlingit potlatch (see Kan 1989)) and "giveaways" intended to mark some important social event (fundraisers for the local Native dancing group; celebrations of local accomplishments such as college graduation parties or engagements; or political parties, as when a local sponsor threw a party to introduce a favoured candidate). Events of this scale were often held in the school gymnasium and included virtually the entire village population. On these occasions, individuals known for their hunting, fishing and gathering were recruited (often informally, usually along family and extended-kin lines) to obtain and process specialty foods for distribution at the party. Those who did were always formally acknowledged, and good hunters received much local prestige from their participation as providers of traditional subsistence foods in these events.

In turn, on these occasions subsistence foods were used by elite members of the community to forge relations across economic and political lines, both within the village and beyond. This was certainly the case when locally powerful village residents used an event simultaneously to broaden a family network, and to direct that network toward some specific goal (i.e., the election of a favoured candidate to the state assembly, local ANCSA board of directors, or school superintendent position—often the subtext of any number of seemingly social or celebratory events). In this way, extensive family connections were assembled that allowed family leaders to bridge village–region or village–state boundaries and place themselves in a nodal position in local and larger (regional, state or federal) patronage networks. From the perspective of those attending such an event, inclusion in the celebrations and the common consumption of traditional foods encouraged more marginal members of the village to consider themselves part of the family of such a leader and thus, at least potentially, recipients of the sorts of patronage created. In dialectical fashion, this sort of optimism provided the leader with the social support necessary for greater participation in larger-than-local (usually regional or statewide) politics—his means of acquiring the sorts of resources such as jobs, contacts and positions that were the source of his local power.

Native identity played a critical role in this process, and subsistence foods a critical role in the performance of Native identity. For what allowed powerful family members to occupy such a nodal position in a family or even village-wide hierarchy was the perceived (as well as the actual) separation between the village and the larger political economy of the region. By reinforcing the idea that villages were, first and foremost, "Indian" villages, local leaders named and created a political bloc whose perceived collective interests outweighed any competing sense of local differentiation in needs and desires. Likewise, villages seen from the outside as essentially "closed" encouraged outside (regional, state or federal) leaders to work through local intermediaries, furthering the isolation of non-elites in the villages. The manifest distance between local and larger—visible in the costumes, foods, limited-but-symbolically-significant Native language use—discouraged both outside interests and village residents from attempting to bridge the perceived gaps that separated the local from the larger. Local leaders who thus could effectively mobilize the key tokens of identity became both the intermediaries between the local and the larger, and simultaneously the presumed protectors of the local itself. On such occasions, "Indian foods" (as they are sometimes called) allowed Native identity to overwhelm even obvious and well-known village-based social differentiation in residents' perception of their individual lot, intensifying the apparent distance between the village and its regional, state and federal surroundings while simultaneously strengthening people's sense of collective belonging and community—all the while submerging the actual differences in power, wealth, access or political objective that separate those who oversaw the distribution of these special foods and those who supplied them. Subsistence thus played a crucial role (especially in the absence of other powerful signifiers) in making these events into "Native" functions, a role which was often enhanced by the presence of the local Native dance group. In this way, subsistence foods were fundamental to the reproduction of a specifically local form of power, one that was, for the most part, unconnected with the sorts of relations actually used to obtain and process subsistence foods.

For related reasons, subsistence production took a central place in discourses of regional Native identity as well, though the means and occasions of its mobilization were quite different. Thomas Berger, in his influential *Village Journey* (1985), made subsistence virtually synonymous with Native identity throughout Alaska. And Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer argued that subsistence practices (like other elements of individual life in Southeast villages) were intimately caught up with Tlingit collective self-understanding (1994:xv-xvi; see also Hunn et al. 2003). Others, including Thornton (1999), have demonstrated the role that research on subsistence practices played in securing the land claims of Southeast Natives in the U.S. Court of Claims, and in the eventual statewide settlement (ANCSA), further heightening the importance of the very idea of subsistence to those most active in regional land and sovereignty claims. Studies like that by Goldschmidt and Haas (1999) were used by Native advo-

cates to demonstrate continuing use and occupancy based on past and contemporary reports of subsistence practices in areas around Native villages.

ANCSA also contributed significantly to the escalation of this discourse, and perhaps inadvertently helped place subsistence politics at the centre of local–larger differences, by officially extinguishing Native hunting and fishing rights on the lands taken by the state and federal governments under the Act. The Alaska Federation of Natives, the original statewide Native voice in ANCSA negotiations, advocated against this portion of the Act and was able to draw support from throughout the state in the effort to have it overturned. This work, and more like it throughout Alaska, eventually resulted in the creation of the *Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act* (ANILCA)[13] which restored Native and rural subsistence rights, and made them a priority over sport and recreation uses of Federal lands. To this day ANILCA is seen by many Natives as a political accomplishment on a par with the original ANCSA settlement. In Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Native Subsistence Commission was formed in 1990 to continue to advocate for Native subsistence rights, and it has become one of the more visible regional advocacy groups in the state (see Price 1990).

The Local and the Larger

Importantly, many of the relations discussed above occurred outside of the larger-than-local political economy, in which the region had been immersed for nearly a century (Dombrowski 1995). This is a subtle point that figures significantly in the discussion below and deserves careful consideration.

First, by claiming that some subsistence relations stood outside formal political relations, I do not mean to imply that subsistence users were not dependent on the larger economy. Without exception, all were. Minimally, all users had to have access to cash income (either their own or that of a spouse) for gas, bullets, equipment and so on. More than this, even the most autonomous subsistence user lived in a house with electricity and heating costs, and the majority had children and spouses who required clothes and basic necessities, all of which required some access to cash income. Some subsistence products were sold (sea otter skins could fetch upwards of $1000 or more), though these were rare. As a result, even the most autonomous subsistence user had to take on cash employment, on a temporary or intermittent basis, and nearly all counted on the income of a spouse.

Yet despite this, and despite what will be said below about the manner in which lives of subsistence users reflect the changes of the larger economy, many subsistence relations were shaped by an internal dynamic that was largely independent of larger political economic dynamics. That is, issues such as tribal membership, ANCSA corporation shareholder status, and even questions of the ownership of surrounding forests and waters, all had little influence on the nature of the relations discussed above—what it meant, and what was expected, for example, of a "partner," or between suppliers of game foods and those who received them.

In short, many subsistence relations were formed largely independently of external dynamics, and drew their significance and indeed their nature from specifically local ideas and meanings. This last point is critical because it is equally clear that subsistence users on the whole were greatly affected by changes in outside political economic dynamics. By way of example, while partnering was a practice that was largely independent of ANCSA shareholder status, the issue of who had the opportunity to enter into a partnership was significantly influenced by such factors as the ANCSA-shareholder status of those involved.

Critically, then, while partnering was governed by a set of values and ideas that were independent of ANCSA, no one was free to live according to these values alone. And the relations that sprang from such ideas and values—partnering, co-operation and responsibility within households, intra-community links of sharing and exchange, and even recognition across economic divisions within a village—all reflected and were inflected with the shifting dynamics of the surrounding political economy by virtue of the fact that those individuals and groups that form these relations were inextricably involved in the wider political economy. In this way, subsistence represents an incomplete alternative to the current political economy; one whose internal dynamics exist apart from issues such as ANCSA but whose overall shape was constantly influenced and buffeted by these same outside forces through the very people who sought out subsistence as an alternative.

This point is central to the argument that follows. For, as indicated in the introduction, by the early 1990s ANCSA and the political economy it inspired had undermined the ability of individuals and households to enter into or maintain subsistence relations by endangering the viability of the resources themselves, and undermining the sustainability of subsistence relations by intensifying the stakes of local inequality. Yet, as above, all of this had taken place amid a growing identification of Native lifeways with subsistence resource use. In this way, ANCSA has undermined subsistence while simultaneously elevating the importance of the alternative discourse that

subsistence makes possible. Put another way, by defining in particularly narrow terms the nature and possibility of Native identity and participation in the larger political economy within Alaska, ANCSA has both undermined subsistence as a livelihood (ecologically and socially) and, conversely and simultaneously, increased the need among more marginal village residents for an alternative set of relationships (like those involved in subsistence production and exchange) with which they might confront or counter the social and ecological dynamics that ANCSA has put in place. In this way, subsistence users in every village are now caught between the Scylla of decreasing resources and the Charybdis of intensifying village inequality—both of which have the effect of pushing them into more intense dependence on disappearing subsistence resources and increasingly unreproduceable social relations. This issue is explored in more detail below.

The *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*

The *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act* has figured prominently in the manner in which village level inequalities have affected subsistence relations and subsistence practitioners. Two provisions in the original ANCSA legislation sought to ensure that lands would be selected by ANCSA corporations on the basis of their development potential (in the Southeast Region of Alaska this meant old growth timber), and to ensure that the resources they contained would indeed be developed. The first was that the corporations were formed as "for-profit" ventures, meaning that they were expected to produce income for their shareholders. From the beginning this provision caused tension between shareholders living in the village in which their corporation functioned and held land, and those who, for one reason or another, lived outside of the village or the region.[14] In these cases, the demands of non-resident shareholders for dividends conflicted with the desire of village residents for sustainable sorts of development. In every case, the non-resident shareholders won (see Dombrowski 2002).

The second provision meant to ensure resource development was that, though the original legislation made no provision for the inclusion of Natives born after 1971 (the so-called "new Natives"), it did stipulate that the original shares issued in the corporation would become available for public sale to non-Natives after 20 years (i.e., in 1991). The resulting understanding by Natives at the time was that if they or their children were to get anything from ANCSA, they would have to do so quickly.[15]

These two issues, together with the general expectation that ANCSA would produce a major change in village life, prompted all Southeast ANCSA corporations to select lands on the basis of their potential timber value, and to begin to harvest this timber as soon as it became feasible. The slow process of selection and conveyance, however, meant that many ANCSA corporations did not receive the majority of their lands until 1979 or 1980, or for some even later. By this time, many had dispersed as "dividends" monies gained in the initial cash settlement—mainly in response to shareholder demands for some sign of corporate activity and accountability.

Because of this, lack of funds hampered the initial development prospects of many Southeast village corporations, forcing them to either borrow the money necessary to start logging, or to subcontract the logging to an outside firm. In either case, this shrunk the potential for profit, causing the hasty harvest of much timber, or the sale "on the stump" of many village corporation holdings. The latter resulted in the near complete clear-cutting of most ANCSA land in Southeast Alaska by the late 1980s and early 1990s.

This last point takes us back to issues raised above: the impact of ANCSA on subsistence work, and by implication on certain village social relations. This impact has been profound, and, not surprisingly, unevenly distributed among today's village residents. Most directly, ANCSA has undermined subsistence practices through the ecological devastation caused by the clear-cutting of old growth forests, significantly affecting the livelihoods of subsistence users and their households. Less directly, but perhaps more importantly, ANCSA harvests have also undermined the sustainability of many other village social relations—many, that is, even beyond those involved directly in subsistence harvests and processing.

The ecological implications of clear-cutting large segments of old growth temperate rainforest in the Pacific Northwest are by now fairly well known.[16] Most ecologists agree that it will take more than 100 years to restore these areas to their pre-1980s condition. In the meantime, logged areas do not provide nearly the potential for subsistence harvests that unlogged areas do (Van Horne 1983; Yeo and Peek 1992), and areas that have been clear-cut are generally known to local hunters and fishermen as barren.[17]

The situation is intensified by the legal status of the lands involved. ANCSA corporation forest lands are, by law, privately held, and thus not subject to a host of recent laws aimed at ameliorating the environmental effects of industrial logging in U.S. National Forests. Stream buffers—the practice of leaving un-logged the trees on either side of a stream—that are mandated under various federal harvest policies are unenforceable on village-corporation or Sealaska lands, for such laws apply mainly to

public lands.[18] And while many ANCSA corporations do make some efforts to leave stream buffers, the economic incentive to do so, particularly for companies harvesting timber far from their own village (but perhaps near to someone else's) is minimal. In tours of several village corporation clear cuts, I seldom saw stream buffers more than 20 or 40 feet, despite ANILCA requirements of 50-100 foot buffers on private lands, and despite conservationist requests for buffers of up to 300 feet. Such minimal buffering practices are scarcely an improvement on total clearcutting, as narrow buffers are quickly knocked down by harsh winter winds.[19] Yet the effect of wind-fallen timber in these narrow buffers is actually small compared to the effects of the roads built to access timberlands throughout the region. Gravel logging roads now spiderweb the areas around most Native villages, often amounting to hundreds of miles of road on any particular island. These are used by hunters, and have been a boon to deer hunting in some ways. But their effects on the streams they cross are marked. Logging roads are sources of silt for the streams that run by them or under them, and silt can greatly affect the carrying capacity of the streams involved.

The problems of clear-cutting do not end with road cuts, however. When clear-cut forests grow back, they raise another set of ecological problems. Normally, regrown areas sprout so many new saplings that they become, in effect, impassable. This is true not just for humans, but for deer, bear, moose and other forest creatures for whom the thick undergrowth is an impenetrable barrier. Without exaggeration, one can say that clear cuts become impassable for even mid-sized woodland creatures for at least the first 50 years of their regrowth.[20]

Conservation efforts to leave unharvested segments of land—to encourage habitat maintenance—are also troubled by harvest patterns encouraged by ANCSA and its subsequent amendments. For while village corporations may be willing to leave unlogged their less profitable areas (usually in exchange for nearby lots with better harvest potential), the cutting of large portions of neighbouring land means that these become, in effect, forest islands, unable to sustain subsistence resource harvest levels that their combined island-wide size might indicate (Alaback 1982; Alaback and Juday 1989). In addition, many ANCSA corporation holdings border on one another. When thus combined, ANCSA holdings greatly intensify this effect, creating clear-cuts and isolated patches of forest that resemble an archipelago of small treed plots stretched over tens of miles.

The situation is difficult for village residents throughout the region, primarily because ANCSA required village corporations to choose land from the area surrounding their homes. The regional corporation, Sealaska, was also required to choose lots for timber harvesting that were nearby or abutting village parcels, further intensifying the effects of village selections. Taken together, this means that, in addition to the area already cleared for town use, almost 50 000 acres (or roughly 80 square miles) of nearby forest has been clearcut around most villages, and so remains, in practical terms, permanently unusable for subsistence purposes. Yet in addition to this, villages located in areas deemed inappropriate for harvest by the framers of ANCSA (often because they were located in areas already designated for other uses—national wilderness areas or national parks, for example) were allowed to choose parcels far from their own villages (Dombrowski 2001). Most of these village corporations chose land on Prince of Wales Island or its smaller neighbouring islands in the southern end of the Alaska panhandle, where potential commercial harvests were the largest. This area is already home to four Native villages, and thus four village corporations. When the land selected by these four corporations is combined with those parcels owned by villages located in areas deemed off limits by ANCSA, and combined with the adjoining areas selected by the regional corporation Sealaska, the result is that over 275 000 acres (roughly 460 square miles) of traditional subsistence land has been slated for harvest in the vicinity of Hydaburg, Klawock, Kasaan and Craig. Together with the timber allotments granted to the large non-Native timber producers in the same area, the consequences are dramatic, especially for residents who are most dependent on a subsistence livelihood.

Some of the implications of this process are not immediately visible, but are, in the end, critical to understanding the impact of ecological devastation on those involved. One such result of the clearing of such large stretches of land immediately around villages is that indiviudals dependent on fish and deer harvest for household livelihood now must go further, at greater risk of accident and of encountering Fish and Game enforcement, to find foods formerly locally available. This increases the likelihood of equipment failures and the costs of those failures. It also increases the danger involved in many subsistence practices, where small boat travel over long distances increases the risks of weather and mishap. Likewise, in a region where subsistence regulations virtually require heavy users to break the law if they are to actually pursue subsistence foods as a livelihood (Dombrowski 2001), long trips to diminishing areas radically increase the chances of being caught fishing or hunting illegally. Almost every heavy subsistence user I met had had some recent

encounter with Fish and Game officials, and most recognized this as an immediate threat to their livelihood—as even suspicion of illegal fishing can be cause for the confiscation of equipment and harvest, pending a hearing. Cash fines and loss of equipment also present special and immediate problems to those without regular cash income who depend on hunting and fishing equipment for even short-term survival. It is no exaggeration to say that the loss of hunting and fishing equipment for even a short time can cause significant hardship for heavy users, often requiring that they depend more heavily on partners, or forcing them to leave the village to look for employment in the formal economy.

Decreasing harvest areas also means that hunters and fishermen face greater competition in the areas to which they now must go, as hunters from other villages and an increasing number of tourists react to problems of reduced habitat throughout the region. Indeed tourist competition has only begun to affect the situation. And as more and more Natives turn to "guiding"—the local term for serving as a hunting or fishing guide—as a replacement for lost employment in the villages, the number of tourists hunting and fishing in these areas is likely to increase considerably. In fact, many Native villages and several tribal organizations have advocated tourism as a way to replace livelihoods lost to the decline of commercial fishing and logging, despite the pressure created by increased hunting and fishing on subsistence-based households. The effects of this, like other village based development projects, are unevenly distributed among current village residents.

From this brief description, it is not difficult to see the ways in which habitat loss for subsistence resources directly impacts the relations involved in subsistence harvests, and those that stem from the consumption and trade in subsistence foods. Individuals who lose equipment to fines or confiscation risk losing partners as they are unable to fulfil reciprocal obligations. Those who leave the village in pursuit of even short-term cash employment leave behind partners whose ability to remain in the village is now compromised by the lack of a knowledgeable, dependable partner. Subsistence-based households face decreased harvests because of decreasing resources or the loss of efficiency when working with a new partner, and higher costs associated with more distant travel for subsistence resources, which together strain already limited cash incomes. For those hunters, gatherers, and fishers pushed out of their own villages but unwilling or unable to pursue wage-based cash employment outside of a small town, relatives in other villages can provide the opportunity for relocation to new subsistence areas. But such strategies further strain resources in those areas, intensifying the loss of sustainable subsistence resources there as well.

In all of these ways, the loss of a subsistence livelihood due to habitat loss creates a ripple effect. First the household, then the partners, and eventually an entire village can be affected by these processes. Village schools, funded by the state on a per capita basis, lose funding when households are forced to relocate away from the village, causing further losses (and further relocations) in what is normally considered "safe" employment in the school or other public sector jobs. Village stores are dependent on village residents for income, such that losses in local population can threaten the viability of ancillary businesses in any village. In the past, region-wide economic declines in Southeast Alaska forced the abandonment of virtually every non-Native village (see Dombrowski 1995; Price 1990). What allowed many Native villages to survive this process (and the end of the cannery era in Southeast Alaska in general) was the willingness of some Native village residents to pursue a subsistence livelihood. As this livelihood is slowly but definitively diminished, Native villages face the renewed prospect of the earlier fate of their non-Native neighbours.

Critically, habitat loss has a less immediate negative impact on the ideological side of subsistence. That is, where "Indian foods" serve a mainly symbolic or ideological function—as when they are featured at large gatherings which they serve to mark as a specifically "Native" function—the increased expense or decreased availability of these resources can diminish the amounts of those foods, but not their symbolic value. In fact, shortages may even serve to heighten the ideological power of these foods. For once "Indian" foods come to be seen as icons of Native lifeways, any threat to their viability becomes, by extension, a threat to the community they mark. In this way Native foods and the subsistence practices that produce them become a sign not just of the community, but of its potential dissolution, and hence the need for greater solidarity—even across the economic lines that separate those who supply the food from those who sponsor the events at which they are consumed.

As such, these foods also help mask the extent to which local forms of inequality are now produced locally, as ANCSA has increasingly become the engine driving the intensification of local inequality and the greatest threat to local habitat. And while these ceremonies can be a source of considerable recognition and even limited local fame for those who produce the special foods involved, it seems to make little difference in the economic viability of the households of those so recognized. I was

often told that the hunters and fishermen I knew well (i.e., those most heavily dependent on a subsistence livelihood and thus those most knowledgeable and reliable in their subsistence harvests) were like "real old time Indians." If such a reputation somehow compensated them for the loss of livelihood that ANCSA and its shareholders (many of whom are neighbours and are attending these same events, indeed perhaps even sponsoring them) bring about, then there might be some rough compensation in the personal and collective identities thereby created. But this is seldom the case, and most of the time, individuals held on a pedestal in this way fare no better than other marginal members of their communities in their attempts to remain in the village amid the destruction of their livelihood.

Discussion

This last point takes us back to the issues raised above: the extent to which ANCSA has both intensified the need for alternative discourses about indigenism (especially on the part of those on the margin) while simultaneously undermining the possibility of those alternatives through the resource development it entails. As noted above, ANCSA has undermined subsistence as a livelihood in several very different ways. The most obvious of these is the widespread ecological destruction encouraged (perhaps mandated) by the Act, effects felt first and mainly by those for whom subsistence practices remain fundamentally a form of livelihood. In addition, far-reaching changes in the village economy (some caused by ANCSA, some just exacerbated by it) have destabilized village populations, making it increasingly difficult for individuals pursuing a subsistence livelihood to maintain the critical subsistence work relationships that make this livelihood possible (i.e., partners and exchange relations, but also households and other village-wide ties).

Less directly, but perhaps more importantly, because ANCSA has proceeded through the limited and qualified (but nonetheless significant) recognition of Native claims, it has placed issues of Native culture at the centre of the ongoing transformation of the local economy. One immediate result of this (as above, a result exacerbated by language in ANCSA eliminating Native subsistence rights on state and federal land, including most of Southeast Alaska) has been a dramatic increase in the symbolic importance of subsistence in Native identity. Subsistence use and consumption, more than any other local practice, has come to be seen by village residents as iconic with Nativism in the region. Anything that imperils or even affects subsistence is seen as something that directly affects not just Native people, but their ability to live and reproduce their Nativeness.

One might expect that such a situation would help those most dependent on subsistence by safeguarding their livelihood. Yet the increase in the symbolic value of subsistence practices to local notions of Nativeness has, in fact, accompanied a significant undermining of the role these practices play in sustaining those households most dependent on the products of subsistence work for their livelihood, and has shifted the discourse on subsistence to questions of lifestyle rather than livelihood. The nature of ANCSA-based development complicates this situation, for much of the ecological and social disruption in the lives of subsistence users has been caused by Natives themselves, acting through village corporations and the regional corporation, Sealaska. This encourages people to separate the practical from the symbolic elements of subsistence practices. For while ANCSA corporations do much to endanger the practical results of subsistence practices, they do nothing to prevent subsistence practices themselves. In fact, it is just the opposite. ANCSA corporate politics have become a significant social process in most villages, intensifying issues like sponsorship and patronage discussed above and consequently, raising the symbolic importance of subsistence practices and products. As ANCSA corporations draw on Native claims for their origin and expansion, and beyond this, as they incorporate conventional Native iconography in their logos and self-representations, Nativeness itself has become, more than ever, a critical factor in local political processes.

Thus, as above, one result of ANCSA-based development is the need for an alternative set of distinctly Native relations capable of answering the sorts of social and personal divisions created by the transformations wrought by ANCSA—some sense that there exists a viable alternative to the sorts of social and political processes that participation in ANCSA involves—on the part of those most marginal to the current political and cultural project. Subsistence seems, ironically, to provide such an alternative. Yet the ecological and social devastation caused by ANCSA seems to militate against the sustainability of subsistence as such a possibility, in ecological terms anyway. And thus, ironically, it is those most directly involved in a subsistence livelihood that seem increasingly pushed to reject subsistence as an icon for Nativeness, in order to assert its place in the simple material reproduction of their households and persons (see also Benda-Beckman 1997). Elsewhere I have argued that this may, in fact, have much to do with a recent wave of Evangelical and Pentecostal conversions in the region, which seems to have taken place primarily among the most marginal (and hence most likely to be involved in a subsistence livelihood) members of these same communities (Dombrowski

2001). Other alternatives are available, of course, and it is by no means clear that a rejection of the politics of Nativeness is likely or desirable among this group or any other group in the village. What becomes clear, however, is that the current political strategy of placing subsistence at the centre of a Native identity that is heavily tied to an external (and essentially resource-extractive) political economy, may well produce a situation where "subsistence" practices continue well after the last of those who use these practices for actual subsistence (i.e., those for whom hunting, fishing, and gathering are more livelihood than lifestyle) are gone.

One corollary of the preceding discussion is that state-sponsored, state-supported forms of indigenism like ANCSA—forms of development based around the granting of limited, narrowly conceived "autonomy" to Native peoples' in recognition of their claims to significant resources—intensify local inequalities, and in so doing, make it increasingly difficult for more marginal members of the community to remain in their communities even as marginal participants. Yet more is at stake than simply the lives, livelihoods, and lifeways of marginal members of these communities. By intensifying local inequality and driving marginal members from these communities, development via ANCSA threatens the viability of the entire community in question, for marginal individuals and households remain critical to many contemporary village-wide institutions like schools and stores. It seems clear that the current ideological resistance to external manipulation that places high symbolic value on "subsistence" as an emblem of Native group identity masks the fact that the subsistence practices forming the basis for an alternative lifeway are being undermined, in part by members of the community being symbolically constituted. In this way, I argue, such strategies can do little to reverse the changes that ANCSA-inspired "development" implies.

Returning to the starting point of this paper, it is clear that in Alaska, as elsewhere, local lifeways remain highly valued among anthropology's conventional subject groups, that is, small scale hunting, gathering and foraging groups who make at least part of their household living and attain part of their collective sustainability though these practices. But it is equally clear that today's politics, including especially state-sponsored indigenism, sets these practices in dramatic relief against what are often, ironically, seemingly identical practices in the past. The main contention of this paper is that the dynamics of the current processes of local group transformation are made most clear when we examine them in the context of local-level inequalities. In so doing, the links with, and disconnections from, past lifeways; the emotional resonance of ongoing subsistence practices; and finally the intense stakes of contemporary livelihood, all become much more clear—more clear as individual phenomena, and more clear in their multiple interrelations. Despite this, local forms and processes of differentiation remain too seldom noted by anthropologists working among people(s) dependent on a subsistence livelihood.[21] Perhaps this is because groups outside Southeast Alaska remain less differentiated than Southeast Alaska Natives, but I doubt it. More often, I suspect, the differential distribution of the costs of social reproduction are simply ignored by anthropology, to the detriment of those in the community who pay the highest price. Perhaps worse, marginal households are too frequently ethnographically "disappeared" by anthropologists—as when individuals and households that are forced by economic circumstances to leave the villages in which we work, as economic failure usually requires, consequently disappear from our accounts. Now outside our traditional village-bound purview, they are outside of anthropological attention or concern (Dombrowski 2004). In this way, anthropologists working in Native communities across the north continue to write about village "sustainability" while the Native populations of nearby non-Native cities continue to grow with disaffected and essentially "unsustained" individuals and households. This should tell us something about the limits of our current methods and the pitfalls of misplaced research boundaries that still reflect little of the political reality in which most residents are embedded. The material covered here suggests that both a wider and somewhat different approach to sustainability, one rooted in a much more open discussion of village level political economic differentiation, is required.

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Notes

1 See, for example: Bailey 1991, Damas 1972, Dowling 1968, Lee 1979 and Lee and Devore 1968.

2 See, for example: Beckett 1996, Bryant 1996, Gray 1995, Karlsson 2001, Lee 2000, Maybury-Lewis 1997, Muehlebach 2001 and Murphy 2001.

3 There are exceptions, as when the politics of land claims draw on older works that detailed land use practices and indigenous property systems to help legitimate current claims (Thornton 1999). Yet even here, the supposition is often that older research merits legal consideration because it represents pre-contact conditions. While useful in some ways, the supposition of timeless continuity is increasingly difficult to maintain and thus represents a problem—one that often winds up placing "natives" and "scientists" on different sides. This is tragic and wrongheaded in the extreme, for it misses the most critical point: that the conflict between "natives" and "scientists" stems from a rather arbitrary legal notion that says that for natives to have property rights these must have been held since time immemorial. No other legal entity is so quickly or easily extinguished as aboriginal title, it seems, such that history and culture become deeply political issues for native people(s) in ways they are not for others.

4 This is particularly true in Southeast Alaska, but is also a global phenomenon: see Berger 1985, Briggs 1997, Churchill 1996, Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1994, Dorais 1997, Gossen 1998, Hope and Thornton 2001, Nyman and Leer 1993, Organized Village of Kake 1989, Price 1990, Searles 2001 and 2002, and Smith 1999.

5 ANCSA, 85 stat. 689, 1971.

6 See Dombrowski 2002 and Brown 2004, for a detailed discussion of the recent policy moves surrounding the issue of land access and shareholder status in Southeast Alaska.

7 By drawing the periodization of subsistence practices so narrowly (1960s to late 1980s) I do not mean to imply a complete discontinuity with the past. All of these same resources were used in the past. What changed was the relations involved—not so much the social relations used to produce subsistence foods but rather the social relations they marked in their distribution. Along related lines, it is worth mentioning here that it is well known that Southeast Alaska Native peoples were historically stratified and have a long tradition of differential access to political power and to material resources. But as I have argued elsewhere (Dombrowski 1995, 2001, 2002), and as this article makes clear, contemporary political-economic differentiation is not a reflection of this history but rather reflects a complete reorganization (or actually several) of the politics of social stratification and inequality in Southeast villages. This should not be surprising. Political-economic inequality is not a "culture trait," after all, but the product of discrete processes of interconnection to material and outside resources, and the accumulation of surplus value in the villages themselves, all of which have played a significant and evolving role in Southeast Alaska since the 1880s.

8 Cohen 1989, Mills and Firman 1986, Firman and Bosworth 1990, and Schroeder and Kookesh 1990.

9 It should be noted that all of the data in Table 1 are aggregate figures, obtained by researchers working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, an organization better known to village residents for its enforcement of hunting and fishing regulations than for its research. As noted above, my suspicion, grounded in conversations with heavy subsistence users from other villages, is that such figures represent a significant under-reporting in the size of harvests by heavy users and those most dependent on subsistence resources for resources which carry strict and frequently enforced limits. Thus, no household in George and Bosworth's (1988) sample reported harvesting more than 12 deer (the legal limit for a two adult household). Deer hunters in other villages reported to me that, in large subsistence-dependent households, they may take as many as 30 or 40 deer each year, well above the legal limit, and I suspect, well above what they would be willing to reveal to state Fish and Game researchers.

10 Community sustainability is dealt with at several points in the paper, but as is clear from my description, it is equally true of Southeast Alaska (Ellana and Sherrod 1987), as across much of the north (Searles 2002; Usher et al. 2003; Duhaime et al. 2004), that until recently, subsistence harvests and intra-community sharing were critical to community sustainability. Yet from what follows in this paper, it should also be clear that, in Southeast Alaska, the situation is somewhat different from the Polar and Sub-Arctic regions. When examined as one factor among others (including wage labour, industrial development, and state federal employment) by the mid-1990s the subsistence contribution to community sustainability in Southeast Alaska was shrinking while, ironically, its symbolic value was rapidly eclipsing all of these others in local political discourse. For those involved, subsistence was becoming much more risky and much more difficult, and was increasingly undertaken in a significant way by only the more marginal members of the community. Elsewhere in the north, where wage employment, industrial development, and bureaucratization are less significant, subsistence production often varies according to household composition (Usher et al. 2003). In Southeast Alaska, it seemed to me to vary according to household income.

11 As elsewhere; see Duhaime et al 2004, Briggs 1997, Searles 2001 and 2002, and Feinup-Riordan et al. 2000.

12 The issue of "sides" or moieties in Southeast Alaska is complicated. Historical accounts speak of exogamous moieties designated as ravens and wolves (de Laguna 1972), composed of exogamous, property holding clans (which in turn were composed of housegroups). Clans crosscut villages or "quans," and so did moieties. Moieties ceased to function as exogamous units in the early part of this century, and

clans lost most of their corporateness at the same time (Dombrowski 1995), though in fact many clan-owned resource areas were remembered much longer (Goldschmidt and Haas 1999).

13 ANILCA, 94 stat. 2371.

14 The original Act allowed individuals of Native descent to register with any village and regional corporation on the basis of their current residence, past residence, or the residence of ancestors, just as long as they registered with only one village and one regional corporation. From the beginning this caused trouble, as high levels of mobility meant that very quickly a significant portion of the shareholders in any village corporation lived outside of the village itself.

15 This provision was eventually overturned, but not before the majority of the village corporations had either cut or contracted to cut their entire holdings.

16 For Southeast Alaska and nearby areas in particular see Sigman 1985, Schoen et al. 1984, and Chen et al. 1993 for the effects of road building and deforestation on deer populations; and Schwan et al 1985, Salo and Cundy 1987, Larson et al. 2004, and Brosofske et al. 1997, for the effects of road building and deforestation on stream ecology.

17 The reasons for this are clear. See Bartholow 2000 , Beschta et al. 1987, Hewlett and Fortson 1982; though see Mellina et al. 2005 for some questions about this.

18 For a review of the politics of timber harvesting in Southeast Alaska see Durbin 1999, Knapp 1992, Salazar and Cubbage 1990, Shoaf 1999, Skinner 1997, and Dombrowski 2002.

19 Narrow stream buffers located in clear cuts are subject to being knocked down by winter winds, for the trees left standing grew originally in the shelter of the surrounding forest and many are unable to withstand winters once exposed on their own (Budd et al. 1987). Ironically, once blown over, they expose the streams they were guarding to heavy silting with soil washed from their own disturbed footprint. This effect is potentially quite large when a whole section of buffer is knocked over.

20 Thinning the over-thick regrowth is possible, but it is very expensive, and it has been undertaken by only a few ANCSA corporations (in these cases this is not for subsistence reasons, but because it allows a more profitable, more immediate re-harvest of the area than if left to its crowded natural regrowth phase). Reports from hunters indicate that even thinned forests are likely to remain unusable for subsistence hunting for several decades (see also Van Horne 1983; Doer and Sandburg 1986; Yeo and Peek 1992). Estimates around the Hoonah project are that the regrowth of clear-cut areas have reduced the deer population to one third its pre-logging levels (Schroeder and Kookesh 1990:194) for the foreseeable future.

21 One very interesting exception is Collings' (2005) article on the differential distribution of social costs among Inuit in the Canadian north.

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