

NEGOTIATED MEANINGS ON THE LANDSCAPE: CULTURE, PERSEVERANCE AND
A SHIFT IN PARADIGMS IN KLAWOCK, ALASKA

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The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of Klawock's Tribal Citizens' relationship to harvesting what is colloquially known as customary and traditional foods and/or native foods. The state and federal governments categorize these culturally specific goods as subsistence foods. An unearthed, 5,360-year-old basket potentially links modern day Klawock Tribal Citizens with their ancestral ties to the region. Throughout this time, families in this region of Southeast Alaska have been participating in a form of indigenous fishery. Despite access to multiple grocery stores and fish canneries, tribal citizens choose to expend their family's efforts to harvest their own sockeye out of the Klawock watershed. Oral history and ethnography and methodologies were employed to record personal relationships with the harvest of these resources while also documenting a context in which these relationships exist.

Klawock Cooperative Association's staff worked alongside the student researcher and participants to analyze the data and produce findings. Engaging in customary and traditional activities rewards participants with intrinsic facets of their identity. Alongside reinforcing identities, these activities teach participants about family dynamics and working as a team, as well as the responsibilities that come with. These responsibilities are formed through the assignment of roles and provide people with purpose. The roles of individuals within their family dynamic parallel their understanding of their place within the larger society. Having a purpose and knowing their place shapes participant's accomplishments in the food system and honors them with feelings of pride. Based on these findings, KCA interprets customary and traditional activities as an epistemology in which increased access and participation provides an upwards trajectory of community health.

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By

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADF&G Alaska Department of Fish and Game

BIA Bureau of Indian Affairs

BBNA Bristol Bay Native Association

BOF Board of Fish

BOG Board of Game

KCA Klawock Cooperative Association

NOAA National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration

POW Prince of Wales

SCA Student Conservation Association

SSP Sustainable Southeast Partnership

TRAYLS Training Rural Alaskan Youth Leaders & Students

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF APPLIED THESIS PROJECT

Introduction

My client for this research project is Klawock Cooperative Association, KCA, one of the Federally Recognized Tribal Governments on Prince of Wales (POW) Island in Southeast Alaska. The island is home to four Tribal Governments: Hydaburg Cooperative Association and Organized Village of Kasaan are Haida affiliated while Craig Tribal Association and Klawock Cooperative Association are Tlingit affiliated. If you were to step foot on the island today, you would be greeted with coastal mountains that have experienced heavy logging, sweeping tides, and intense starry nights. There is hardly any development and the few lights that exist are LEDs creating little to no light pollution. If you started talking to locals, you would learn very quickly about the antagonistic chaos of drug, alcohol and child abuse that has been embedding within the serenity of the landscape. POW is an isolated island. It is connected to other communities by a three-hour ferry ride to the next island over, or, if you have the money, you can take a 30-minute ride on one of those tiny planes that can be converted into a floatplane by adding buoys to the wheels.

During interviews, I asked participants only one question and recorded their answers. “What does harvesting traditional foods mean to you?” This question reflects my research concerns, the relationship between Klawock Tribal Citizens and the participation of customary and traditional food gathering. Why are people choosing to catch their own fish despite the damped subsistence economy? I asked this open-ended question to document relationships between harvesting and social well-being. I wanted to address family dynamics. I wanted individuals to empower other community members who exist in a closed loop system to

understand ways to strengthen social bonds. I wanted to know why people still exhaust themselves harvesting when you can walk into the store and buy anything you need.

Once the interviews were complete and I was finished with the coding, I thought about what types of frameworks would make the strongest argument for KCA to present our findings to policy makers. In honor of this question, I analyzed the project through three frameworks: communities of practice, modes of production, and social capital. These theories are described in more detail in the literature review in chapter two.

Description of Client and Deliverables

It was deep into fall of 2017 in Sitka, Alaska. I am sure of it because it was dark and pouring down rain. A group of us had gathered at a friend's tidal island house for a dinner party, typical of fall time in Southeast Alaska. After the hustle of the summer fishing seasons has ended, people are able to find the time to reconnect with their friends and neighbors to share food and catch stories as well as bounce winter plans off one another. My husband and I were walking with a group of friends back to the cars from a thanksgiving-inspired dinner party.

It is an unrefined walk at night, despite the homeowner's laborious attempts to create a causeway by hauling boulders from various parts of Baranof Island to the stretch of gravel separating the road system to his home. Oftentimes people leave his home in groups to make the balancing act of the bloated walk to the parking lot in the cold rain while carrying left over dishes, a flashlight, and depending on the tide and friend group... either a baby or a dog, a bit more bearable. On this particular night I remember holding emptied ceramic bowls that had held mashed potatoes made with the oil from black cod collars in one hand and my dog in the other while chatting with a woman who worked for the Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP), whose website as of the winter of 2018, states that they are "A diverse network of organizations

and individuals working together to reach cultural, ecological and economic prosperity for our communities and region” (Sustainable Southeast Partnership 2018).

In true small talk fashion, she asked me how school was going - not in a way that made me feel like she stopped listening before I even started answering, which was true of a lot of folks who lacked the ability to hide their boredom or their regret from their glazed over eyes, but in a sincere voice letting me know she was genuinely curious about what was going on in my head. Frustrated, I explained how I needed to find a new client for my master’s thesis project. That my original client had, for lack of a better term, “ghosted” me. I had been working on developing a project with this client for months and starting over was frustrating to say the least. She asked me if I could do the work in Sitka where I was residing to make things easier on me, however, I really wanted to expand my network, so I asked if any of her contacts within SSP might be willing to collaborate. I presented her with my skill set by informing her of the types of projects I have worked on in the past.

Specifically, I told her about my collaborative work between government agencies. My first experience with documenting customary and traditional, or subsistence, use of resources was funded through a partnership between National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA). STA is a federally recognized government with more than 4,000 enrolled Tribal citizens. Fishers must obtain a permit to harvest pacific halibut, and my job was to interview Tribal citizens about their efforts on the water so that NOAA could measure the efficiency of the fishery. Other multi agency projects that I was a part of were “The harvest and use of wild resources in Sitka, Alaska, 2013”, as well as “The subsistence harvest of Pacific herring spawn in Sitka Sound, 2013-2015”. Both of these projects were joint efforts between the

State of Alaska’s Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and STA. These projects were to gain a better understand of how residents in Sitka, Alaska depend on wild resources.

The final project I presented to her was called, “Capturing History and Forging the Future: Alaskan Native Women in Fisheries” which was a project between National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) documenting the experiences of Alaska Native women in Bristol Bay fisheries.

I told her of my desire to continue to work with who the Alaska State and Federal governments define as “subsistence users”. Apparently, one of her coworkers on POW (see Figure 1) was a heavy harvester and there was a chance we shared similar passions. She texted me his email address and the next morning we were in contact. That is how I connected with Quinn Aboudara, my site supervisor.

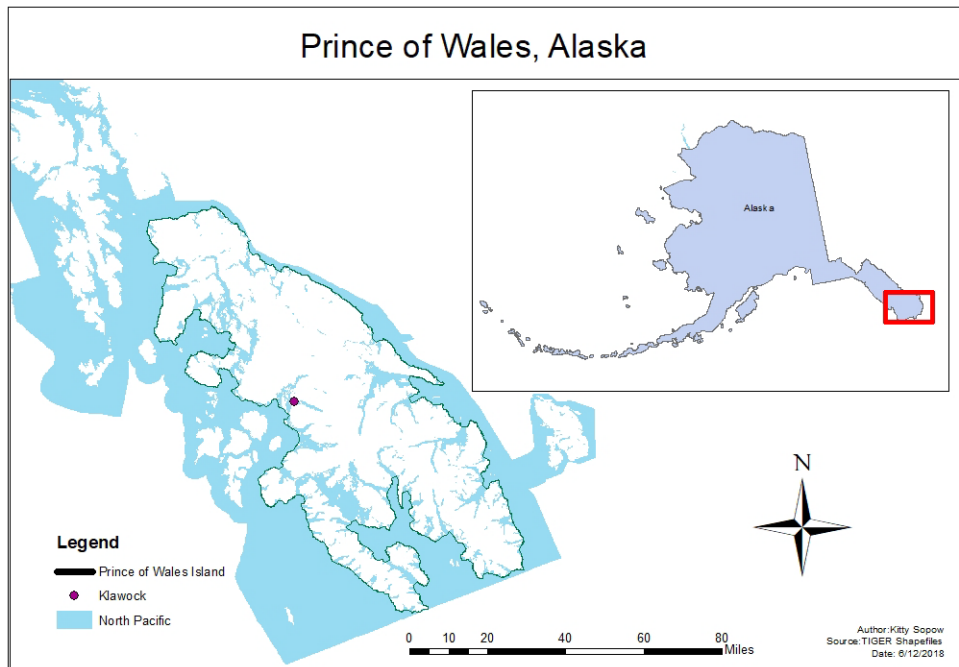


Figure 1: Inset Map of Prince of Wales Island

Quinn works for SSP with funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) who has KCA as a site sponsor. He and his team have been working on a Sockeye Salmon predation

study. KCA is interested in understanding more about the sockeye predators so they teamed up with a few partners to set traps in three salmon spawning creeks in Klawock Lake system. Every day, they pull the traps, make the fish expel their innards and analyze their findings. This is done to better understand what species are eating salmon fry before they have a chance to enter the salt water system. Along with this, Quinn spends time with the Student Conservation Association's (SCA) Training Rural Alaska Youth Leaders & Students (TRAYLS) crew teaching them how to harvest sockeye salmon under the mandated subsistence regulations. This process involved the youth going to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office to obtain a permit, setting the seine as a team, processing the fish and distributing it to the community. Harvesting sockeye and teaching others the ropes runs thick in Quinn's blood line. His father, Jimmy Anderson, a man of Haida and Tlingit descent was renowned for harvesting for community members and taking others out who did not have anyone to teach them how. To add a more holistic dimension to the sockeye research being conducted in the Klawock Lake system, it was decided that I would conduct research on why sockeye was important to KCA and its constituents. I agreed to conduct oral history interviews and analyze them to document what customary and traditional activities means to tribal citizens. The final product would be a video to accompany a written report that will be presented to agencies involved in consultations with KCA. All participants would receive a digital copy of their interview.

When Quinn and I decided to proceed with this collaboration, I started with basic archival research of subsistence catch data released by the United States Forest Service (USFS). I needed to see if the escapement numbers Quinn and I were discussing were as dismal as he made them seem. Escapement is a term used by fisheries scientists that refers to the number of salmon that have made their way back to their freshwater spawning grounds. I read reports

discussing the biology of the spawning streams as well as works linking modern day Tlingits occupants from 6,000 years ago (Ratner et al. 2006). I utilized ARCGIS to create maps (see Figure 2) showing locations between the store and people’s homes and Klawock Lake to visualize as well as quantify how much money it costs in fuel to catch fish versus driving to the store and buying groceries. I read Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), Division of Subsistence reports generated to quantify the amounts of fish harvested from the river and the amounts of fish used by each person in the community. Compared to other areas in which I have worked and researched, there was little data released on how humans are dependent on this resource.

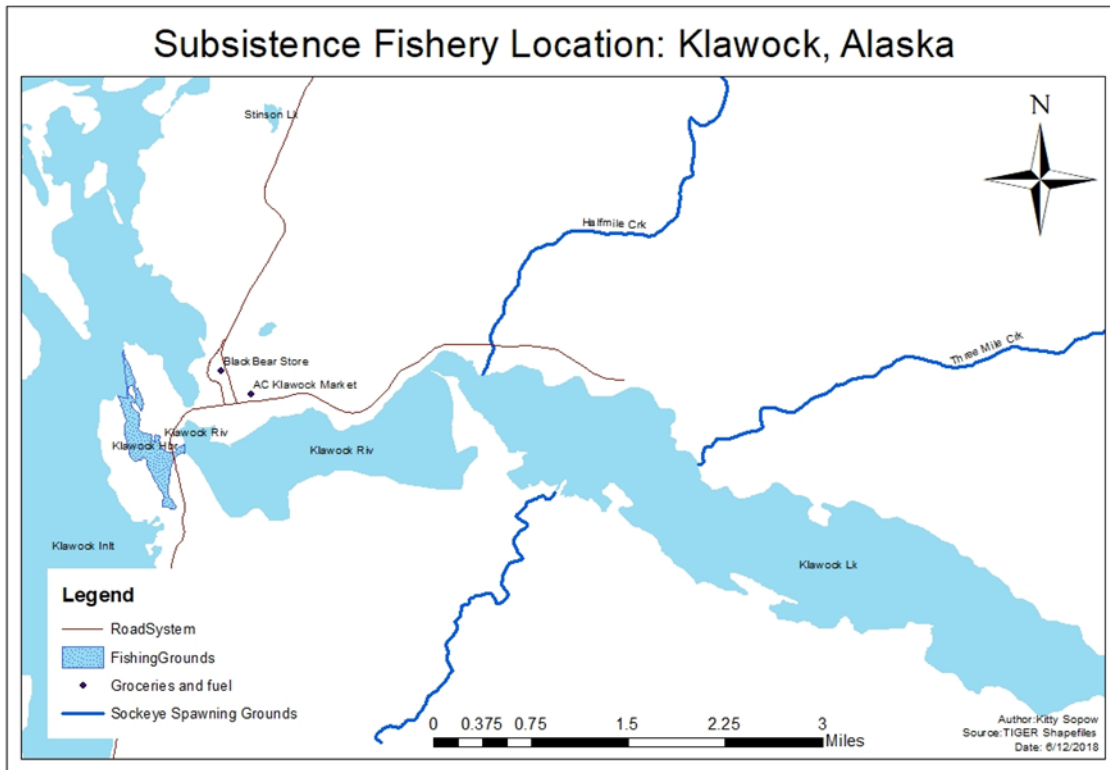


Figure 2: Klawock Map with Spawning and Fishing Grounds

In order for KCA to find their deliverable useful, I wanted to reach out to potential partners and discuss how the tool could be used to advocate for themselves in a political atmosphere. I called an old colleague, a cultural anthropologist who works for the ADF&G

Division of Subsistence. I wanted to get a better understanding of how the state designs their projects before Quinn and I designed ours. She explained to me that the state employees really want to do more qualitative work but those projects rarely get funded due to their high cost. Projects relating to mining, oil, and development get funded and sometimes community wellbeing or social indicator projects get funded.

While I recognize Quinn as my site supervisor, his site sponsor, KCA, was my client. Since 1935 KCA has been servicing tribal members in a number of different capacities. At the time of this field work, KCA provided social, political and economic services such as environmental research on subsistence use lands, road and bridge improvement projects, maintained a heavily utilized food distribution program as well as operating a smoke shop selling tobacco products and pull tabs. Despite their small pool of resources, KCA has been able to maintain their sovereignty and provide services to their residents. Although the departments in KCA have distinct visions, they all share one thing in common: protect access to subsistence foods.

One of the most coveted subsistence foods in Klawock, according to KCA, is the sockeye salmon. “Klawock is here, because the sockeye are here.” ADF&G conducted a project in 2006 on the Traditional Ecological Knowledge regarding the prized species. The compiled interviews report on human’s history with the Klawock watershed. “The Klawock watershed has a long history of human occupation beginning with the first Tlingit settlers who crossed the ridge from Harris River and descended down to Klawock Lake and followed an old animal trail along the Klawock River according to oral history (Ratner et al. 2006, 4). A number of archeological sites in and along the lake have been recorded and analyzed. A wood stake weir trap (Figure 3) at the end of the lake, an abandoned village site and shell middens have been radio carbon dated to 750

years ago (Langdon 2001). Construction of a hatchery uncovered a shell midden with charcoal and bone fragments dating to 6,500 years ago (Ratner et al. 2006).



Figure 3: Klawock Watershed Wood Stake Weir

One of the participants in the project description of his family's story on how Klawock was settled is transcribed below.

Sunnahae, (an area on the island near where KCA is located today), was a summer fishing place for the Tlingits. We used to come here and we used to have summer camps around here. And we'd do our fishing... It was here that the Gunax.adis split from the other clans and found Klawock... They said they found it and it was plentiful. They looked as far as you could see. There's fish and stuff to eat everywhere and we had that Klawock river that's just loaded with sockeye. We said, Alright, we're going to stay here. There's war, that's why we had to leave, and the brothers said, you know what? We're going to go our own way, and, so we did, to avoid conflict. and that's how we ended up traveling, down here.

Like this participant states, the Klawock river was loaded with sockeye. Locals told me over and over again how when they were younger, they remember so many fish, they would get their state mandated limit in one day, where now, people have to spend sometimes weeks out on the water to harvest enough fish to feed their families and other community members. Herein lies the problem; the sockeye numbers are dwindling due to a number of perceived factors such as commercial fishing, climate change, parasites, the timber industry and overharvest by local users (Ratner et al. 2006).

Thus, KCA was interested in the following research question: In what way are Klawock Tribal Citizens invested in this resource and why? Concerned citizens have noticed less and less

youth participating in customary and traditional gathering. They are asking, “Will our youth still be Tlingit if they can’t harvest? How will our kids identify if they can’t harvest due to loss of knowledge or lack of viable stocks?”

Proposed Deliverables

The first time Quinn and I really got into the details of the deliverables was over a skype call. His roommate is a marriage and family therapist who incorporates harvest activities in his treatment plans. We discussed the various formal and informal fishing habits on the island. Quinn shared with me his relationship to sockeye and taught me about the change in access to harvest numbers in his lifetime. His roommate, Edward, shared with me about his families’ stressors in regard to food acquisition and how that plays out in family dynamics.

I asked Quinn if he had any ideas on what kind of end project KCA would find most useful. His first reaction was for me to create a survey to measure two variables against each other. Edward mentioned how it would be useful to the island to design a quality of life survey that would measure people’s access to choice harvest species to mental and physical health, and yet not recreate something that has already been done. I thought this would be a highly useful tool to the community as well, however, I had reservations about it. I told them about and the issues I saw with creating an out of context survey and how another organization I worked for got around those issues. This way, the structure of the interviews would be in the hands of the participants and they can interpret the research however they see fit.

Quinn said we should do a voices of salmon project where a twenty to thirty-minute documentary is made regarding the impact of losing subsistence foods. We decided we would do the oral histories first and, in the future, after school project is complete, they could do a follow up survey to validate any claims as they acknowledged this could be a lifelong project.

We talked about the shorts and how we could make a series of documentaries on harvesting different species. They would include audio and video footage of harvesting as well as transcriptions of the films. The hope was that there would be different lengths of films that could be shared on different social media platforms to reach larger audiences with different levels of attention spans. We decided that the deliverables would be oral history/interview transcripts focused on subsistence and a short film highlighting the findings from the overall project.

The first time I showed Quinn the footage it was a rough eight-minute version with no soundtrack. Simply, a set of shots that tell the story the village: how and why residents are invested in harvesting. The staff at KCA expressed their enthusiasm for it. They could guess who was talked because of how closely knit everyone is here. My perception was that they appreciated the film because all the voices were familiar to them. Ideally, these interviews and the report that was created will be used to spark action from community members.

This project ended up being an advocacy project for Klawock's Alaska Native community. The interviews are similar to the testimonies the state and federal governments request for their annual meetings. Proposals are sent to the policy makers and individuals and agencies are invited to provide testimonials in response to these proposals. When people testify, or provide written comment, their experiences are preserved for later use. The preservation methods are often written hard copy or audio recordings. The applied dimension that KCA is experimenting with is recording their constituents' relationships to the resource and then analyzing these stories as a group. The testimonials from tribal citizens have been analyzed and created into a report, supplying resource managers with a tool to understand how these practices are embedded into the lives of their constituents.

Ideally, this information will be turned into a peer-reviewed journal article in which can be presented to policy makers as recognized western knowledge. This tool is useful and available to be used by anyone writing a grant for the community. It has the potential to be utilized by future researchers by analyzing it in conjunction with public health data. It may also be advantageous to our Social Services department while our social worker fights to keep native families in the home.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section I review previous literature that analyzes localized resource extraction as a kin-based mode of production. I consider the scholarship which discusses studies focused on TEK, communities of practice, and peripheral learning through a lens of identity formation. I synthesized bodies of literature, including studies which contextualized the effects of the global market economy on indigenous economies, particularly in Alaska as well as discussing articles detailing the policy formation of Alaskan subsistence laws and their effects on social networks, social capital and food systems.

Communities of Practice

Etienne Wenger writes about communities of practice, or shared histories of learning. “A community of practice is a matter of sustaining enough mutual engagement in pursuing an enterprise together to share in significant learning” (Wenger 1999). He describes practice as a process for humans to experience their world while also finding meaning. These meanings are how we experience our everyday lives. Meanings themselves are created through a process called “negotiated meaning” which involves participation as well as reification (Wenger 1999:52). Negotiated meanings are what occurs when humans practice the same behaviors over time while adding new experiences to their shared histories (Wenger 1999). For example, at my field site a family may pick berries every year, so every year they renegotiate what berry picking means to them. The renegotiation of meaning is a continuous interaction that occurs amongst users.

Some communities of practice exist over centuries (Wenger 1999:51). Building on this concept, I argue that in Klawock, Tribal citizens have made up a community of practice since

time immemorial. Harvesting is an epistemology: it is through harvesting that individuals explore their identities, learn about their families and how to work as a team. Participation in these activities rewards individuals with a sense of purpose and pride. Additionally, and relatedly, in order to be an efficient harvester, one must have an intimate knowledge of their surroundings. The body of this traditional ecological knowledge represents the thousands of years of direct contact humans had with their environment (Berkes 2017). Welding together “communities of practice” and TEK scholarship, my argument from the KCA case is that this knowledge grows larger and stronger as members of a social network or community of practice harvest together, as well as affecting individuals’ sense of identity, family, and community.

Induction into the network begins in the womb of the mother while she engages in her family’s harvest. The newborn baby is held by a member of the community while he or she watches aunts, uncles, and cousins work together to provide for themselves and others, until the baby is an adult, with grandchild of his or her own. This is what Lave and Wenger refer to as “peripheral learning”: learning something while not specifically taught; learning without realizing that you are learning (Lave and Wenger 1991). The knowledge that is shared between generations continues to grow as individuals react to various stimuli in the environment, causing families and individuals to renegotiate what it means to harvest. It is this knowledge that transcends the global market economy. Despite having access to grocery stores with a variety of meat, poultry, fish, fruits and vegetables, families are continuing the tradition of harvesting food together. Access to these activities are crucial for community health. When one cannot engage in the ways of knowing, one cannot sustain its body of knowledge, therefore *it cannot sustain the community* (Hunn 1999).

Modes of Production

In classic Marxist thought, modes of production deals with humans producing what they need to survive. It consists of a means of production, which could include tools, skill sets, or knowledge needed to produce something. In Klawock's case, Traditional Ecological Knowledge is a means of production, as well as a key aspect of how human labor and how it is organized. Marx' writings (to simplify) discuss the relationships within this system: the relationship between those who own the means of production and those who do not, and how these systems are in a constant state of evolution as they reshape themselves towards fullest productive capacity (Marx 1926).

Noman Chance, Molly Lee, Rauna Kuokkanen, Arthur Mason and Robert Wolfe write about the transformation from indigenous economies to market economies in rural Alaska (Chance 1987, Lee 2002, Kuokkanen 2011, Wolfe 1998). These sources offer insight on how the market economy has impacted tribal citizens and how this transformation of the means of production continues to alter the landscape in Klawock, Alaska. Hidden in the transformation of Klawock's modes of production exists social and political conflicts expressed in the realities of tribal citizens.

Wolfe's article, "Subsistence Economies in Rural Alaska" analyzes wild food harvests as a socioeconomic system. Here, the word subsistence is referencing the Alaska state legal term for members in the subsistence user group on the landscape. ANCSA legislature coined the term subsistence for rural Alaskans. Prior to this language, Alaska native customary and traditional activities were a way of life. Wolfe reminds readers that in Alaska, "rural" is not just a demographic pattern. A rural community is partially classified by how much wild food is harvested, consumed, and shared by residents. Alongside harvest levels, a rural socioeconomic

system depends on kinship groups who ritually gather together during subsistence times. When these families come together and work as a team, they are able to preserve enough food, to later be used in a barter and trade system (Wolfe 1998).

Such practices persist, albeit with significantly changed articulations in the face of major policy and economy shifts in Alaska over the past half-century. Chance (1987) details economic development in Alaska and how that development has shaped subsistence policy and analysis. His analysis sheds light on the shift of control of harvest activities from the indigenous user groups who coexist on the landscape to government managers living and working primarily in urban centers or rural hubs (Chance 1987).

In her cleverly titled article, “The Cooler Ring: Urban Alaska Native Women and the Subsistence Debate,” Molly Lee provides a detailed account of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and its aftermath of subsistence policy formation in Alaska, simultaneously weaving ethnographic details of traveling between urban and rural Alaska with coolers of food, or gifts. When the federal government implements decisions that negatively impact subsistence economies in Alaska, such as ANCSA, it also weakens the ability for subsistence users to engage with their forms of traditional ecological knowledge (Hunn 1999). It is traditional ecological knowledge that constitutes the productive forces who govern customary and traditional activities.

The subsequent “subsistence policies” of Alaska negatively impacted access to customary and traditional activities which in turn interfered with indigenous modes of production and the social structures that have been built around these networks of exchange, such as identity formation and social bonding. The transactions that occurred in and out of the red and white Colman cooler are similar to the famous Kula Ring in which social bonds were maintained

through a system of exchange networks, Native foods in one direction, Western foods in another (Lee 2002).

Kuokkanen (2011) explores the means in which indigenous identities are negotiated through the recognition of subsistence economies which can be downplayed or worse, dismissed, by those who network and partner with Tribal organizations and have also internalized the market economy approach. Indigenous economic systems need be at the center of the table while discussing sustainable systems of indigenous self-governance (Kuokkanen 2011).

Mason (2002) describes class clashes that occur when the economy of an area makes the shift from a kin-based mode of production into a global market economy. The hardships manifested themselves as a handful of people from Alaska Native communities gained monopoly power over natural resource development. This pitted Native leaders and non-leaders against each other in a fight for land use.

These articles are important to subsistence discourse. This thesis specifically builds on this body of literature, as my work exemplifies modes of production shifts in Alaska. Klawock has shifted from clan or kin-based systems of land management and indigenous mode of production to a market economy with Native corporation alongside state and federal government managed landscapes. The shift in economy and management systems have resulted in decreased access to traditional gathering locations and an increased access to wage labor. Despite the shift in dominant modes of production, however, Klawock's tribal citizens are still choosing to participate in indigenous economies.

In agreement with Kuokkaken and Lee about the role customary and traditional activities plays in social solidarity and group indigenous identity, Klawock's Tribal citizen's identities and wellbeing are accessed through customary and traditional harvesting; participation in these

activities results in stronger senses of identity and tighter social bonds. I would also, more specifically, suggest that it is the continuation of customary and traditional activities allows us to see how social bonding and identity formation are *embedded* in the landscapes in Klawock Alaska.

Social Capital

The next sources describe how social capital interacts with food systems embedded within indigenous economies. In this section, I discuss Bourdieu's social capital, Mauss' theories of gift exchanges in relation to social bonds and power as well as an article that specifically details how sharing food is tied in with social capital.

Bourdieu's social capital exists at the individual level. One earns social capital from others through forging positive reciprocal relationships with individuals in a social network (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). These relationships transform themselves into status (Bourdieu 1986). The more relations one can engage in the more status one has the potential of earning.

One can apply such a lens to indigenous economies, as did Natcher (2015), who explores Indigenous food systems through the lens of social capital. He argues that for some, social capital is earned through observing moral codes while participating in traditional food harvesting. His article mentions different ways all people, not just social elites, earn social capital by way of sharing.

The social capital of sharing, in turn, raises the issue of social entanglements of gift-giving, a long-cherished topic within anthropology. Mauss classically analyzed how gift exchanges are related to social bonds and power. His writings teach us that in a gift economy, the original owner of an object embeds his or her identity into the object in the process of the gift exchange. The giver gains status by giving a gift and the recipient offers a gift in return at a later

date so as to not lose status by not being able to expend energy into multiple relationships. Engaging in this type of transaction bonds the two parties together until the debt is paid and the relationship's power dynamic regains balance thus creating a reciprocal relationship between the giver and the receiver (Mauss 1967).

This paradigm of gift economies has continued to be utilized by later ethnographers. For example, David Sutton and Peter Wogan (2010) coauthored a piece in *Popular Anthropology Magazine* titled, "Seinfeld, Potluck Dinners and Problematic Gifts." Their article tells us that while we watched *Seinfeld*, we were shown examples of Mauss' gift exchange theory. The episodes were funny because the creators, Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David focused on a human trend that exists cross culturally (Mauss 1967). Everyone has their own story of when they experienced the Maussian consequences of receiving an unwanted initiation from someone in our social network. A reminder that there are indeed rules to accepting a gift (Mauss 1967).

Conclusion

The articles listed above describe how relationships are affected through exchange networks. While the *Seinfeld* article offers comedic relief, they discuss how the rules of exchange are that you must keep exchanging (Mauss 1967). Sherry (1987) describes the structural approaches anthropologists tend to favor while analyzing these invitations to partner. Sherry discusses the weight of gifts and how they prescribe a person's role in society. The perfect gift represents the weight of the role the recipient plays in your life. The gifts themselves show one person how they are viewed by the other. A major theme in looking at these articles is how the action of offering someone a gift is more important than the gift itself.

Klawock's reciprocal exchange networks consists of families who have been offering harvestable resources to each other since time immemorial. Drawing both on concepts of social

capital and food, and the Maussian paradigm of gift economies, I argue that social networks in Klawock, Alaska are strengthened by obtaining and sharing food. When hunters or fishermen gift a portion of their catch to others, their personal identity as a provider is confirmed by others when they accept the food. The status of provider can transcend the essence of the individual into a community level. In some cases, when the original hunter or fisher can no longer provide food for his or her social network, the family will continue to provide for those families so as not to lose their “provider” status and prescribed social capital that follows suit. The continuation of this type of exchange shows us how traditional ways of being offer social benefits that offer participants sources of pride. When communities engage in their traditional ways of knowing, the relationships and their communal knowledge grow larger (Wenger 1999) which offer more access to customary and traditional activities and the subsequent social benefits.

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT DESIGN

What is the relationship between Klawock Tribal Citizens and the participation of customary and traditional food gathering? Why are people choosing to catch their own fish despite the damped subsistence economy? Citizens have to fish harder and longer to catch their family's salmon. Their memories are reminders of years when enough fish could be caught in one day. Despite the increased effort, people are willing to harvest their own food rather than buy it from one of the grocery stores in town – for what reasons?

Due to its in-context documentation methodology, oral histories and ethnography have been beneficial in studying place-based lives. Klawock Tribal Citizens are no exception as they explore their realities through their connections to the surrounding landscape. This research is ground-breaking in Klawock. There have been no projects documenting these relationships and if there have been, they existed prior to the current staff at KCA. This is one of the reasons ethnography was so valuable, beyond simply being a common method of anthropologists. Ethnographic fieldwork can be especially useful in early stages of broader research agendas such as this. It can help researchers tease out potential questions as they familiarize themselves with their field location potential partners and explore trends and complexities which deserve further elucidation by later research.

During fieldwork, in-depth oral histories were collected and form an important core to my project. This was preferred as a research method for a number of reasons. For example, a survey methodology would not have been appropriate for this stage of the project as it would likely impose outsider categories: at this time, I am unable to create a survey that accurately presents the complexity of relationships between Klawock's Tribal citizens and their resources

because neither myself nor my family comes from Klawock. Because I had never been to POW, let alone Klawock, I knew I could not work by myself to do this project. I knew I wanted to do a project that was as much bottom up data collection as possible. In partnering with the community to document oral histories, we were able to create a foundation for future projects that started with and was guided by Native voices, rather than simply replicating colonial modes of research. Any information shared with myself and KCA, tells a story of what happened to each individual and what it was like to experience it.

Having addressed my general methodology (ethnographic and oral history), I will now detail several specific data collection activities within these broader umbrella concepts.

Data Collection

Archival and Networking

After learning a bit more of the specifics of the region, I flew to Anchorage, Alaska to attend a two-day Federal Subsistence Board of Game meeting. A participant from a previous research project had a training in Anchorage at the same time and offered to share her hotel room with me. The project in which we met was interviewing Alaska Native female fishers and their experiences with climate change. Her connection to harvestable resources is strong and her mother inspired me to pursue this specific project, so it was a great start to the study. It was also advantageous that she was an elected member of her Tribal Council. She introduced me to the leadership in her network and when she exhausted her contact list, left the Board of Game meeting and went back to her conference.

From there I networked with anthropologists and wildlife biologists of BIA, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, as well as members of the Regional Advisory Committees scattered all over the state who represent subsistence users in

different areas. I told them KCA and I were doing this process and I was coming to check out the political system.

The chairman of the Federal Subsistence Board is also the Tribal Director of Natural Resources as well as the mayor of Hydaburg, which is on the southern end of the Island. I was able to chat with residents of POW as well as witness the Island's residents participate in policy regarding their subsistence resources, specifically the relationship between humans, wolves and deer.

Observant Participation

Rather than participant observation, I found that being an observant participant allowed me greater access to community members. Observant participation offers the field worker a behind the scenes view to specific encounters (Moeran 2007). When using this methodology, I maintained my role as researcher while participating in a number of familiar and unfamiliar activities.

One important aspect of observant participation, which in many ways was informally occurring before the research had fully began, was meeting with policy makers for Klawock Tribe. Quinn was an amazing resource. He got our project approved before I even got to the Island. Once I arrived, I made a formal introduction of myself and the project to the nine elected members of Klawock's Tribal Council. There were two persons to be heard, myself and another Southeast gal working for the "Stand for Salmon" campaign. They asked many specific questions. The president asked me about rights to the research and the possibilities of publishing. I explained that KCA will have ownership and if the research was to be published it would be published under KCA's name.

As another example of the role observant participation played in my project, one of the

Tribal Council members strongly desired to participate in the project. She gave me one of the greatest surprises of my time on the island. She allowed me to interview her while she cleaned fish with her daughter and her granddaughter. I was able to watch her family's dynamic, how she maintained the lead on the processing line. Her interview was amazing, as at some points she would interject some sort of correction to her daughter's processing methods and continue back to her story telling without skipping a beat. This example illustrates why observant participation was such an important method of data collection in addition to oral histories.

When I first sat down to write about this experience, I was writing about how I did not participate in their family's line. I was like a grown infant, standing there on my own two feet. An able-bodied adult, but my role in the peripheral learning process was of that of the infant, simply watching. I did not project my actions on their family while now that I think about it, it wouldn't have killed me to pick up a bleach bucket and take up the role of an unpracticed kid. Instead, I stood by and played with the granddaughter as she ran circles around the tables where her mother and grandmother were working. She danced to the 80's rock station while I listened to her grandmother tell me about her relationship with Sockeye salmon.

Participant Observation

I just celebrated the one-year anniversary of my arrival to the island. In August, after 2 months of being on the island I went back to Sitka, packed my belongings and relocated to the island full time. In the past year I have engaged in participant observation through my investment in relationships with locals, families, friends. I participated in a totem pole raising dedicated to veterans. I handed out Halloween candy and ate Thanksgiving dinner with new friends. I got a job. I hosted a community night celebrating what everyone loves about Klawock. I went fishing, gathered seaweed. Cried at funerals and babysat kids. I was invited to an adoption ceremony and

joined an artist's network devoted to healing. Participant observation offered people in the community a chance to see how I interact with their families and friends. Building trust in this way offers an opportunity to produce more authentic relationships. These relationships grew stronger between myself and the other person the more we shared our knowledge and resources. These symbiotic relationships are crucial for a successful oral history project.

As one example of the significance of participant observation, I participated in one "processing line" during the project. The TRAYLS crews had just caught their first set and were cleaning them at the dock. I was there speaking with the captain about how the kids did and how their attitudes changed on the boat once they participated in their first harvest. There were so many fish that needed to be cleaned and distributed to the community that I picked up a spoon and started cleaning the blood lines. This was one of the final steps before offering a cleaned fish to a friend or family member. Participants mentioned in their stories that cleaning out the blood and guts was one of the worse jobs, but I enjoyed it. I was able to sit with the kids and listen to them talk about their harvest while getting to experience putting up fish for the community.

Informal Interviews

I had never before been to POW. All I really knew about the island was that people said it was tough there, (i.e. difficult to get accepted). As such, I knew I had to take building trusting relationships really seriously. Gaining the trust of people in Klawock was crucial to the success of this project. My plan was to be there and volunteer in the community for a few weeks before pulling out my recorder and attempting to record oral histories. I always introduced myself and the project at the same time and then met with people a few times before conducting interview. This way, participants were able to get to know me as a person before they got to know me as a researcher. The more a prospective participant knew me, the better chance I had at getting an in-

depth interview. We would eventually exchange contact information and schedule a time for the oral history interview.

Oral History Interview

Oral history is a specific type of interview process that was coined in the 1940s to describe a memory recall project at Columbia University. Historian Allan Nevins created the term to celebrate the importance of recording “knowledge and experience of participants” (George, Stratford 2000:140). Oral histories are a bit different from oral traditions. *Lingít* is an oral language. For thousands of years this language was spoken without ever being written down (Dauenhauer, Dauenhauer 2002). The collective stories shared and passed on at formal gatherings such as potlaches or informal gatherings around a fire are oral traditions. The main difference is that an oral tradition is communal, owned by multiple members in a community while oral history is one person’s experience of a facet of life while.

I recorded a total of 26 interviews using a Zoom microphone purchased from Amazon before the start of the project. It uses double AA batteries and stores data on a SD card. Not unlike those used in digital cameras. UNT’s IRB only approved participants enrolled in Klawock Tribe so anyone who was enrolled in a different tribe was ineligible to be analyzed as a group under UNT’s affiliation. While those participants wanted to be part of the larger project, I could only compare histories of those tribal citizens enrolled in KCA. Of the 13 remaining participants, all participants identify as Alaska Native. Everyone was over 18 years old and I used a snowball sampling to expand my network.

The interviews took place between July and August. All were in person and everyone agreed to being voice recorded. The shortest recorded interview was only five minutes long. He told me he was not interested in being recorded any longer and we switched to notes only. The

longest interview was 3 hours. I only asked, “What does subsistence mean to you?” People answered by offering details about their family dynamic and their role in their harvesting group, highlighting their favorite harvest stories, or strongest memories. Basso (1996) claims these memories are important to recognize as they continue to shape our identity. The memories tell us “who we are by showing us where we have been” (Basso 1996:4).

I started transcribing the interviews while I was still in the field and finished when I returned home. These interviews were extremely valuable to the outcome of this project. Having deep experiences recorded from individuals allowed myself and KCA staff to gain a sincerer understanding of the importance of traditional harvest activities and how these related to other facets of everyday life.

Analysis

My evenings were reserved for transcriptions. At the end of each day I downloaded all my recordings onto my laptop. Each interview was transcribed with Microsoft Word. I experimented with different software programs to expedite the process, however each one seemed to require more work to learn the software than using what was familiar to me. I downloaded and transcribed the audio files. As I worked through the participants’ stories I started recognizing patterns, however, it was important to me to wait until all the interviews were transcribed before I started analyzing so that I would not settle on themes that were only in the first few stories and then look for these themes in subsequent interviews.

I read through each story multiple times as I edited in effort to capture each participant’s unique intonations and personalities. My coding process might best be described as immersive – the recordings played all day. I had them in the background while I was cooking dinner, while I was getting ready for the day, and when I was writing my field notes. It was extremely important

to me to familiarize myself with each person's reflections so that I knew them all in and out. By the time I was ready to start coding, I read and listened to each interview no less than three times.

Coding was next. I used Microsoft Excel to organize this stage of the analysis. I copied the interviews into column A and typed out themes in column B. The codes started out relatively generic at the beginning, but as I combed through the interviews, I started seeing how individuals operationalize concepts like respect and gratitude differently. After the first round of coding I had 47 codes. KCA staff helped organize and combine some and refigure others. It took approximately three iterations of coding to have a solid list of 29 themes that encompass the vast array of relationships Klawock Tribal Citizens form with their environment.

Throughout this process I worked with my site supervisor and the tribal administrator to discuss what I was finding. Sometimes Quinn and I met for coffee and we discussed themes and previous research conducted on our topic. Sometimes it was more formal, meeting with the Tribal Administrator to fill him in on what we were finding. Each time we met, we spoke for hours on the topic, suggesting to me that KCA was still heavily interested in the research and had a strong desire, as well as enjoyed being part of the analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DELIVERABLES

I think only my husband could understand how nervous I was as I waited to board the ferry from Sitka to Ketchikan. He is one of the few who knows that if you see my car in the McDonalds drive through it means only a few things, nervous being at the top of the list. I know I was really nervous because I could not enjoy the comfort of my last McDonalds grilled chicken sandwich before island hopping to my final destination, POW Alaska. I committed the grave sin of wasting food as I took one bite before throwing the entire meal away, my favorite guilty pleasure completely lost on me. While I could not eat, I was able to enjoy the twenty-four-hour economy cruise on the Alaska Marine Highway system as I calmly waited through multiple ports of call before switching to the smaller, Interisland Ferry that would take me, my 1998 Ford Ranger, and way more things that I actually used to the field site, Klawock, Alaska. The last stretch of the journey was the three-hour ride to the eastern side of the island.

During the journey, I conversed with the other passengers. Now that I am more familiar with the island's demographics, I realized people were interested in getting to know me because it is not often there is an unknown face on the ferry. People seemed genuinely interested in the project and everyone had stories to share about fishing with their dads and uncles or processing with their families. This filled me with confidence as I thought, "this isn't so bad."

When the ferry docked at 6:30 in the evening, I made the forty-five-minute drive across the island, through the clear-cut scenic byway into Klawock. When you pull up to Klawock, you drive past the "mall": a strip of stores on the highway that host the post office, a tiny two room store front whose hours are open as staff is available. There are a few other businesses including a coffee shop, hair salon, liquor store as well as the grocery store. Drive a few more hundred

yards and you drive past Bayview, the location of the first permanent houses built in the city and where most people live today. There are a few houses sprinkled outside the hill. There is a subdivision behind the mall, and a few houses here and there. Just past all the 355 homes is the historic Klawock Lake, the traditional fishing spot for locals since time immemorial (Figure 4).

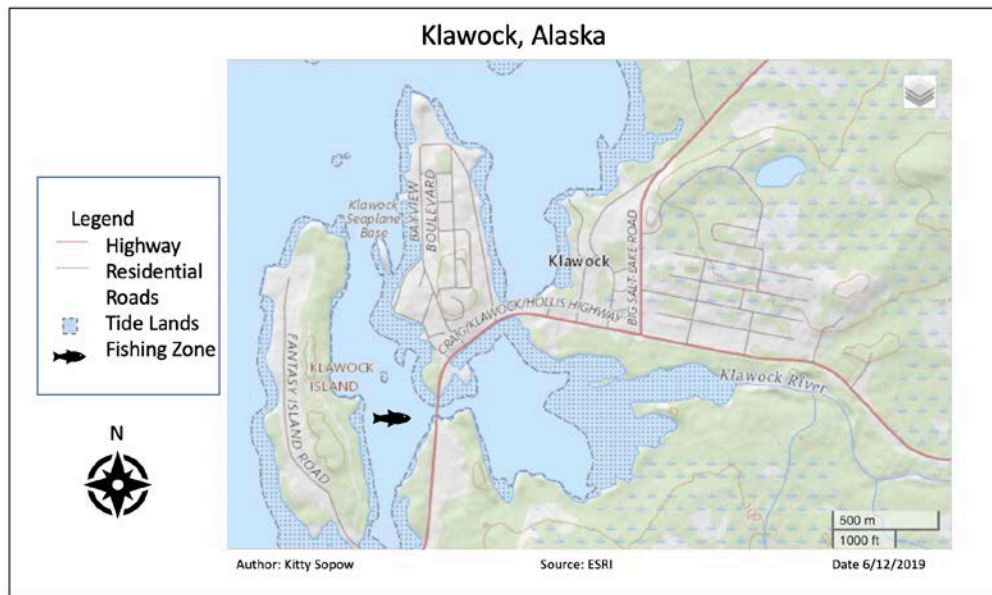


Figure 4: Klawock City Map

As part of my job as planner for the City of Klawock and KCA, I hired a statistician to compile an economic snapshot for our residents. In it, she compared Klawock’s demographics to those of the broader Island and with the regional statistics of Southeast Alaska. There are 4,100 people living on our island, which is the third largest in the United States. It represents 10% of the Southeast region as a whole. There are twelve communities on the island connected with 2,000 miles of road (Schijvens 2019).

There were 777 people living in Klawock in 2018. This is a 7% decline from 833 people in 2017. This dip is typical of the southeast region. Prince of Wales Island reported a loss of 59 people which is only about 1% of the population. Southeast as a region is experiencing a negative shift in population. The median age in Klawock (42.5) is slightly higher than the

median age on the island (41). Both of these medians are much higher than Alaska’s median age as a whole state, which is 35 years. The number of Klawock residents between the ages of 65-79 increased by 29% in the last five years. Residents are getting older and younger people are not moving to Klawock (Schijvens 2019). In contrast to the regional demographics reporting 25% Alaska Native, Klawock’s residents are primarily Alaska Native individuals at 45%, 42% of individuals identify as white, 8% identify as biracial and 5% identify as other (see Figure 5, American Fact Finder, 2019).

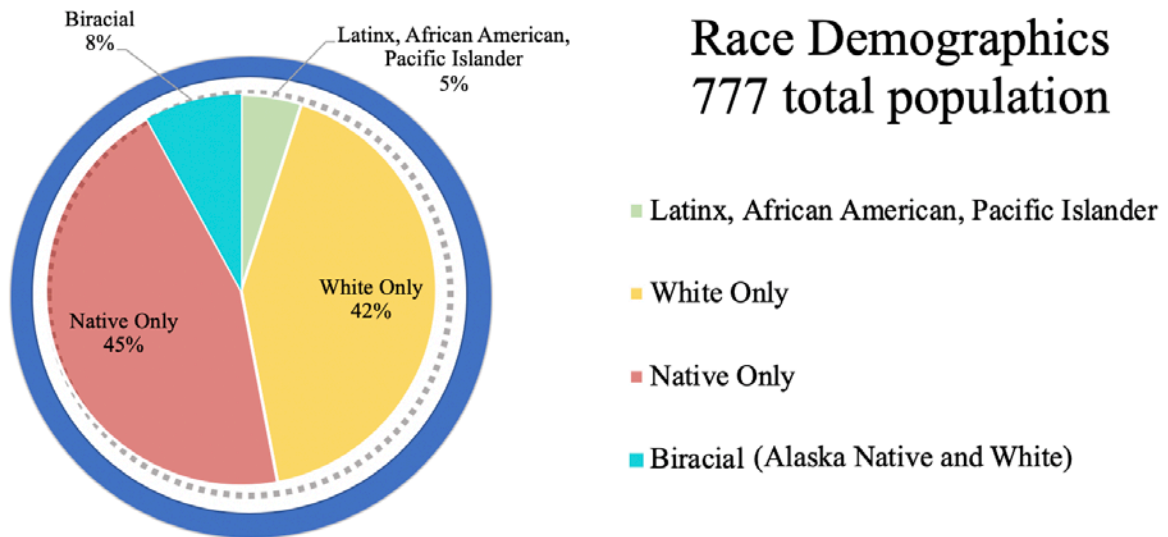


Figure 5: Race Demographics Pie Chart

Employment opportunities in Klawock exist in the public and private sectors as seen in Figure 6. There are 97 unemployment claimants. It is difficult to get an accurate depiction of employment opportunities due to the nature of seasonal work in Southeast (Schijvens 2019). Business owners reported the top benefits to operating their business on Prince of Wales were their overall quality of life, recreational opportunities, cultural opportunities and access to natural resources. The biggest barriers to operating a business on the island included, cost of freight, overall cost of business, followed by cost of transportation of people (to and from the island).

Despite these barriers, only 27% of business owners on the island reported concern for their economic outlook their business or industry for the next year (Schijvens 2019).

Klawock's Employment Rate by Industry

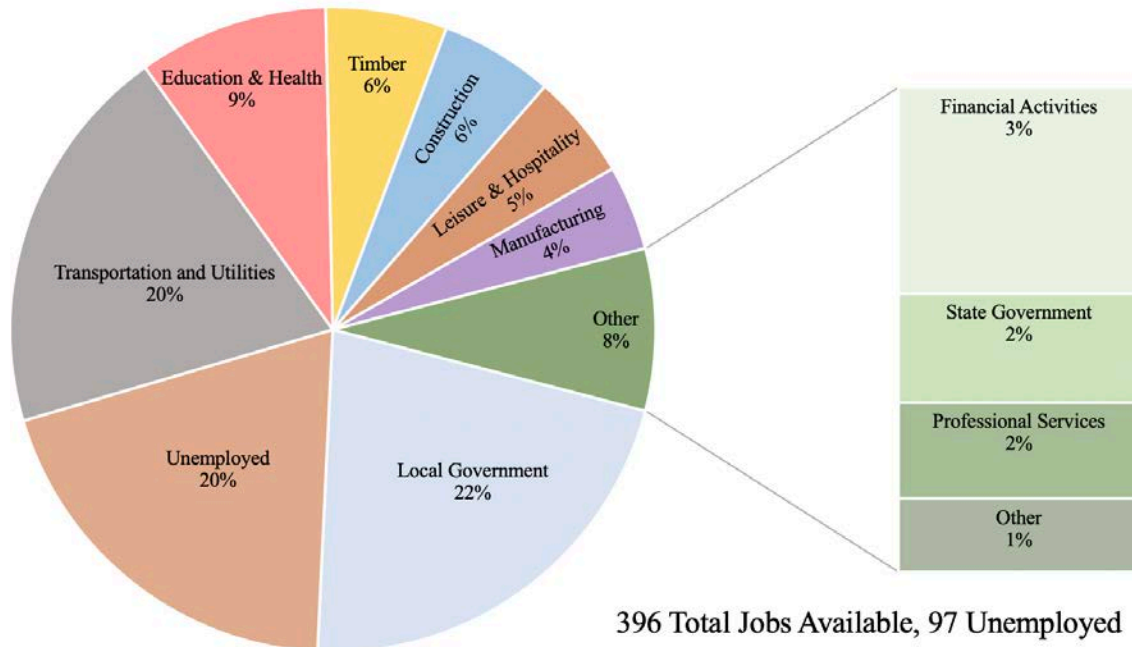


Figure 6: Employment Rates by Industry

Poverty rates in Klawock offer an interesting snapshot when compared to Southeast as a whole (see Figure 7). Klawock's poverty rate is 24% while Southeast is reported at 9%. When we dive into these statistics, we learn that 33% of Klawock kids live in poverty while only 14% of Southeast kids live in poverty. Millennials experience hardship in Klawock as well. Their rate of poverty is 57% while the region's rate is only 12%. Breaking up the poverty rates by race reveal drastically different findings for Klawock in comparison to the region. In Southeast Alaska, 6% of whites live below the poverty level while in Klawock, 28% of whites live below the poverty level. This is in stark contrast to the regional statistics. When we at Klawock residents who identity as Alaskan Native, 19% live below the poverty levels while in the region, 22% of Alaska Native individuals live below poverty levels.

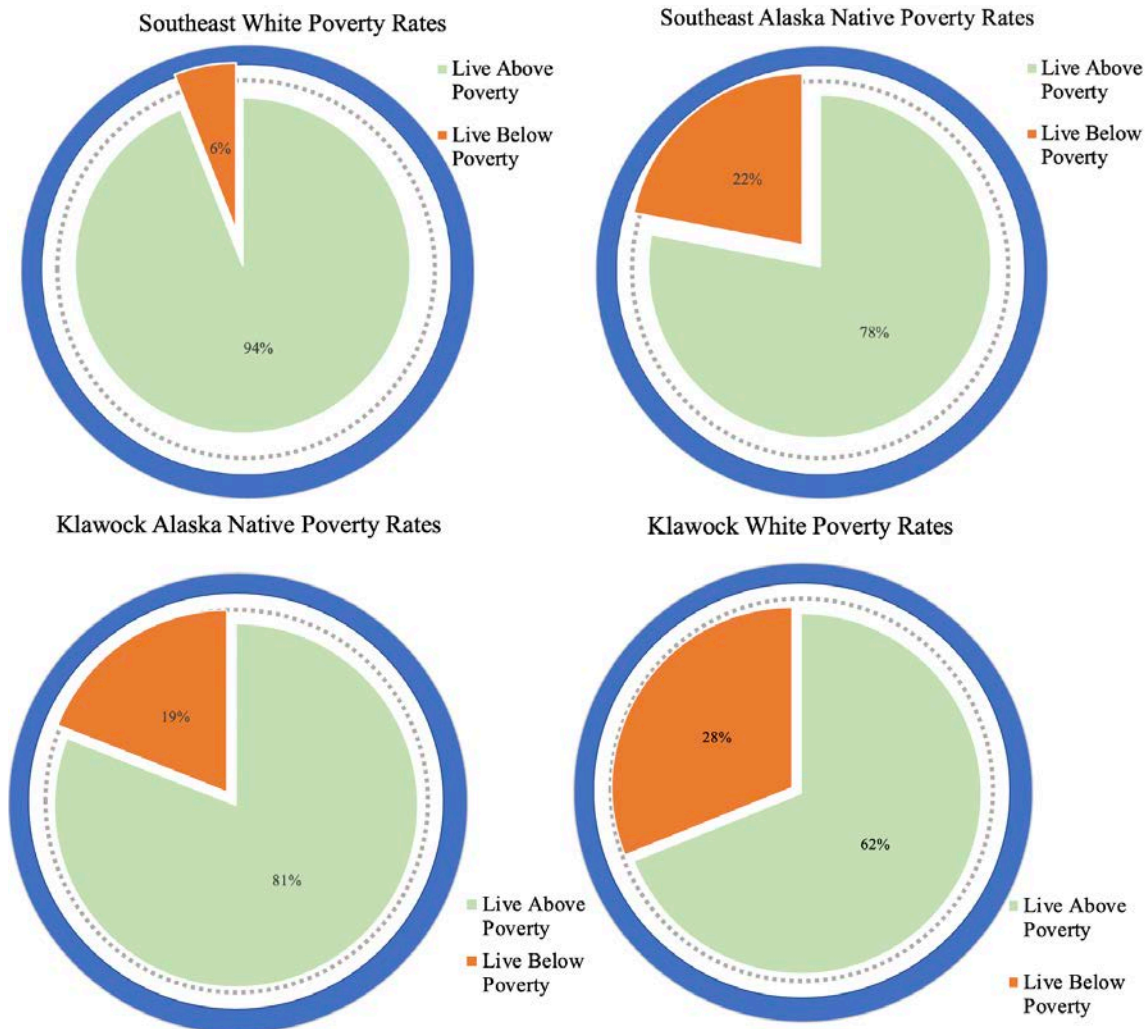


Figure 7: Local Versus Regional Poverty Rates

At 355 total residential units, Klawock’s rental vacancy rate is 5.5% (Schijvens 2019), leaving me to commute to and from the next town over, Craig, to meet my needs. I called Quinn as soon as I pulled into town. He and his partner picked me up and took me out for a few drinks as we got to know each other. He told me about his family and his experience fishing with the community. Everyone who walked in the bar came up to Quinn and shook his hand and made a little small talk. Halfway through our conversation I realized I was conducting my first informal interview. As Quinn and I sat there, he enjoying his Jameson, me enjoying my Patron, his roommate and his girlfriend walked in and joined us, coworkers came in and joined us,

colleagues of his came in and joined us, I realized just how tightly knit the social networks on the island really were.

Historical Context

Prior to statehood and the establishment of the current governing body, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), the federal government had jurisdiction over resource extraction. The federal government had mismanaged Alaskan's salmon stocks. In 1949, in an attempt to redirect their extraction procedures, the Alaskan Territorial Legislature created the Alaska Territorial Fishery Service. Once Alaska was voted into becoming the 49th state, the Territorial legislature formed Alaska ADF&G which gained full legal authority over Alaska's fish and game populations in 1960 (ADF&G website, 2017). ADF&G's mission statement was comprised of three goals:

- (1) supervise and control the department and may employ division heads, enforcement agents, and the technical, clerical and other assistants necessary for the general administration of the department; (2) manage, protect, maintain, improve, and extend the fish, game and aquatic plant resources of the state in the interests of the economy and general well-being of the state; and (3) have necessary power to accomplish the foregoing including, but not limited to, the power to delegate authority to subordinate officers and employees of the department. (ADF&G website, 2017)

While parts one and three of this mission statement refer to business as usual routines, part 2 of this mission statement clearly that ADF&G's responsibility is to manage the fisheries for the neoliberal interest of the economy and well-being of the state. The state has turned entire species into "sites of commodification", and further, it has become a privatized extraction. (Thornton, Hebert 2015).

When Alaska officially became a state there were huge swaths of land that were either uninhabited or managed by indigenous groups. After it was inducted into the Union, the Federal government needed to designate the State of Alaska land to manage as well as determine how to

include Indigenous inhabited land into the conversation. The state and federal governments needed specific boundaries in place in order to deconflict land management between the three entities. This land allocation ignored the effects that renegotiating boundaries would have on indigenous nations residing in the state. Their land's future was in the hands of policy makers interested in the bottom line for the state and federal government. The western approach of using land for financial gain were in conflict with indigenous knowledge of using land for societal benefits. As policy makers hashed out the land management from a western perspective in order to maximize profit, little to no thought was given to the ripple effect these policies would have on the indigenous population.

There was no real rush to officiate any land claims in the early days of statehood, at least until oil was discovered on the north slope of Alaska in 1968, and it was deemed necessary to build a pipeline from the Prudhoe Bay oil fields down to the Gulf of Alaska (Beier, 2008). Construction of this pipeline meant that the government needed to expedite the land claims settlement in order to lay out the pipeline route and start the extraction process (Thornton 1998).

Rather than be forcefully relocated to reservations, Alaskan Indigenous groups agreed to the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). ANCSA's policy allocated \$962.5 million dollars, as well as forty-four million acres of land, to 12 regional and village Native Corporations.

Tribal Resolution 10-06 details Klawock Cooperative Association's experience as a Tribal entity during the time of ANCSA. ANCSA's structure forced Indigenous populations to select the land most valuable to them. Indigenous leaders selected land that was most valuable for living a good life in which meaning was derived from harvesting customary and traditional species. The tragic oversight of misaligned values caused the Indigenous population to turn the

land that sustained life for thousands of years into a corporate asset. The village corporation now had a fiduciary responsibility under western law to profit from a sacred resource. The contradiction of projecting a sustainable resource by placing it under the jurisdiction of an entity whose sole purpose is profitability, i.e. corporation, proved to be the biggest pitfall in the questionable ANCSA model. The only activity deemed profitable at that time in southeast was logging and logging practices in 1971 were not based on a sustainable model, i.e. clear cuts (Sanders, 2016).

Alaskan Indigenous groups' access to their ancestral hunting and fishing harvesting activities were negatively impacted (Arnold 2008, US DOI 1993, Flanders 1989). The new law took over management of their resources, creating a new government regulated group called "subsistence user" to describe the users who traditionally harvested fish and game prior to the land claims act. Although written into the policy was an agreement that the government would protect subsistence rights, in the rush to pass ANCSA, politicians failed to define subsistence rights. This policy gap left much to be interpreted. Who are "subsistence users"? What are subsistence rights? What rights do subsistence users have? Under what circumstances do these rights exist?

These gaps were concerning to both Alaskan politicians and residents. The federal law, ANCSA, eliminated aboriginal hunting and fishing rights yet the state government still needed to protect the unidentified subsistence users. To mediate this, the State created Alaska State Subsistence Preference Law in 1978. This law gave subsistence users preference to the harvestable resources over other user groups like commercial or sport (Arnold 2008), yet subsistence users were still not legally defined. So, in 1980, the federal government passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in which, Title VIII defined

subsistence users as Alaskan rural residents. While these primarily consist of Alaska Native individuals, (Arnold 2008) within the realm of rural residents there exists a legal dichotomy between Native and non-Native subsistence users which I will expand on later in this chapter.

The state deemed Title VIII unconstitutional because it “Did not provide for equal access of resources to all Alaskans, as required by the state constitution” (Tananachiefs.org). This division created what is called dual management, that is, the state follows their set of rules on their land, that is, all Alaskan residents can harvest under the subsistence guidelines and the federal government enforces a rural priority for subsistence users on their land (Tananachiefs.org).

Now, there are one set of regulations for hunting, fishing and gathering on state owned lands and another set of regulations for federal lands. ANILCA created a divide not only between Native and non-Native subsistence users, but also between federal and state land managers. The federal government utilized its power to create this divide and in effect weakened the amount of force behind Native epistemologies. No longer do aboriginal rights exist; in its place is a division of rural and urban Alaskans.

Subsistence Discourse

In his 1998 publication, “Alaska Native Subsistence, a Matter of Cultural Survival,” Thomas Thornton analyzed discourse defining subsistence users. ANILCA made a distinction between the Native and non-Native subsistence user. The law groups users based on reasons one might participate in these activities such as, physical exercise, economics, and family traditions. These are reasons why anyone might want to harvest a species under these regulations. The legal distinctions between Native and non-Native users is that an Alaska Native person harvests customary and traditional foods through a cultural dimension; harvesting is essential to Native

cultural existence. For the non-Native user, harvesting food is essential to a social existence. The federal government does acknowledge that Native and non-Native users harvest for different reasons, but a major issue that Thornton talks about is how the laws use one or two words to differentiate between the reasons why people might participate in a harvest. These one or two-word distinctions between users makes the user groups seem quite similar, as often times untrained ears do not realize the difference between a culture and a society. The law separates these two groups with one or two words which is an insult to the vast complexities of difference that exist between the two user groups.

Thornton's analysis of subsistence discourse accurately depicts the different connotations of subsistence within both user groups. To many Alaska Natives, subsistence cannot be separated from "culture, identity and self-determination," therefore, subsistence is a right to cultural existence and to the non-Native, subsistence is a right for social existence. This discourse sets the stage to separate subsistence users into two categories without specifically alienating Alaskan Natives, or non-Natives or allowing different harvest strategies based on ethnicity (Thornton 1998).

Often, in my experience when discussing subsistence with non-native individuals in Alaska who are not yet familiar with the subsistence language, they are under the impression that subsistence is reserved only for Alaska Natives. Sometimes, non-native folks will ask me if there is subsistence preference because "They are poor" ("they", meaning, Alaska Natives). This is because there exists a connotation of poverty residing around the word "subsistence". When you type in subsistence in Google, it says it is "the action or fact maintaining or supporting oneself at a minimum level", suggesting that subsistence is utilized to keep oneself barely alive (even if this

popular connotation is very different from the anthropological definition). This ideology of subsistence-as-poverty has further divided the subsistence community.

Contrasting with the poverty connotation, in aboriginal times, Tlingits would show their wealth by giving away, or sharing, their “subsistence”-caught foods. It is, and was in fact, a sign of status in the community (Arnold 2008). ADF&G Division of Subsistence quantified the cost of subsistence activities and reported in their 2013 technical paper that when they compared household income and subsistence users, “The top 25% ranked Sitka households harvested nearly 85% of the harvest” (Sill 2013, 110). The 2013 community comprehensive survey asked respondents why household harvest has changed and received cost prohibitive answers such as, working more or cost of fuel. The report states, “additional research would be warranted to better understand any changes in harvesting patterns” (Sill, 2013, 110). Their data falsifies the subsistence-as-welfare stereotype as it is not in fact, a poor person’s activity. Although the stereotype is proven to be false - subsistence users are indeed not poverty-stricken individuals - the ideology of subsistence as-welfare still circulates. Some Alaska Native individuals are rebranding their terminology to, “way of life”, or “customary and traditional use”. In some places of the state, POW included, “subsistence” is considered a derogatory word to describe the customary and traditional activities that underlie entire ways of being.

Other researchers who focus their work on Alaskan harvesters agree that subsistence is an integral part of the Alaska Native experience (Hunn 1999 Thornton, 1997, 1998, 2015, Berger 1985). Access to harvestable resources varies across the state, as do people’s relationship with themselves and the land on which they harvest. In this way, the meaning of traditional food gathering is different in different parts of the state. (Hunn, 1999). This is why localized research, documenting the meaning of the harvest activities is important to communities.

One wonders if it is possible to even define what the Eurocentric government calls subsistence as such? It is indeed a culture as people who participate in this system make sense of their world through these activities. Participation in these activities help shape individuals' concepts of identity and family structure. Working alongside family members for hours at a time leads to the development of teamwork skills as well as giving individuals a purpose and instilling a sense of pride in one's work. The themes listed above were the predominate findings that summarize what customary and traditional activities mean to Klawock's Tribal citizens.

Findings

Identity

Standing on the line with the crew gave a shock to my system as I realized I had little to no practice standing and looking down at something for hours. This muscle memory had not been developed in my body and gave me a bit of trouble trying to work comfortably. Participants told me how hard it was on your body but until you stand there with cold hands and a sore neck and back you do not realize how part of the learning process is learning how to take care of your body in order to stand in one position.

One of the kids who had experience setting seines every summer was standing and working with ease and I struggled to keep the blood in my hands flowing and my lower back from seizing up. At the time I thought it was what happens as you move out of your teen age years but now, looking back, I realize the body learns and relearns these poses every year. The body holds this knowledge and way of being. It is an embodied knowledge that becomes part of one's identity and part of the harvest.

A person's identity is formed by a group of characteristics or attributes, often described as dignity, pride or honor, in an individual that are expressed through his or her self-respect

(Fearon, 1999). I asked each participant the same question, “What does traditional food gathering mean to you?” Having this open platform to think about and divulge their own relationship with these activities created a space in which everyone could personalize their response. All participants shared how being a part of their family’s traditions was a process that shaped their understanding of themselves as individuals as well as their role in familiar and community settings.

People spoke as if their harvest experiences could not be separated from how they view themselves or of their experience of living on the island. One participant stated during his interview, “It’s just kinda the norm around here to go hunting, you know. It’s not like you’re anybody special if you go hunting. It’s kinda what you do.” Hunting has been embedded into his life in such a way that he does not question it. According to this participant, you live on POW, you either hunt, or know a hunter.

Another participant reminisced, “It’s our family history. Uh, as far back as I can remember watching my mom, my dad, my aunties, my uncles, my older family work.” The harvest activities that took place in this participant’s story begin with him being held as an infant. Learning the various processes from the peripheral as he was passed around between family members until he was old enough to doing chores designated for youth like using a bleach bucket to clean up camp. Their experiences unique, however both statements contain undertones of how customary and traditional behaviors are a part of their very being.

These activities play a critical role in a process determining the ways that young people are provided Traditional Ecological Knowledge, which is important for survival, and for the formation of meaning, identity, and cultural connection (Rasmus, Stacey et al. 2014). Lee (2002) takes a gendered look at how individuals experience their identities. She writes, “Women can

relate to their past by participating in the processing of harvestable goods, while men's identities depend on their ability as hunters, which required intimate knowledge of an ecosystem (Lee 2002:6)".

Social Network - Families and Teamwork

I went out on the boat and filmed a group set a seine. In order to touch any of the fish or the gear while on the boat each person interested in participating in the sockeye harvest season needs to obtain a permit from ADFG. It is free, however, I declined obtaining the permit so I would not skew the numbers at the end of year data analysis when researchers measure the efficiency of the fishery. My permit would add a person to the list of those people who went fishing but did not bring any fish home. Therefore, anytime I was out on the boat, I observed the interactions of those on the boat, but did not actively participate in the fishing activities. I watched how a crew can work silently together, everyone knowing exactly what they need to do to catch those fish. At one point, the person pulling in the lead line saw the plunger could not reach the bucket to purse the seine. No words were exchanged as he handed a long hook to her so she could extend her reach. Silently, they worked together as a team while they participated in a customary and traditional activity.

Below is the section of a transcript of one of the interviews where the participant shares how he has imbedded his family in his meanings of customary and traditional practices.

I grew up always with family social settings and we were always together, we always worked together...ever since I could remember we had a skiff and I had three older brothers, and the dog, we, we'd leave the dog but the dog would swim after us and on our way back, he'd be way out there, and we'd have to grab him and go pick him up. He was a big black lab. He was awesome. Fight the bears for us...And I was, cleaning the fish, packing 'em up. Just giving it to the women. And there'd be like, bunch of families that, our family that came together for the summer so there would be the house packed full of people from Ketchikan, they'd come over too. They still do. As long as I could remember we'd all come together, whoop it out, get cases and cases stacked up.

Subsistence activities are integral to the life of families and communities, an aspect of their identity and continuity expressed in subsistence work (Hunn, 1999). In Klawock, harvesting with family and friends teaches you how to work on a team. Not everyone can be a captain, but whether or not you are bleaching tables or running the smoke house, each person contributed to a system in which at the end of the season, you could see the fruits of your labor. No matter the job, everyone on the team reached the same end goal. Food was put up for later use and the meanings of the harvest were renegotiated to include new pieces of knowledge shared within the group.

I witnessed Quinn and his family putting up fish in their smoke house. I spent a weekend at his mom's ocean front home, looking over a bay while he and his sister and mom divided up tasks. Quinn and one of his friends went out and harvest alder, stripped the bark and prepared the wood for smoking while his sister organized the brine and the hanging in the smoke house. Their mother's friends showed up to help and to celebrate the kids putting up the fish without their dad. In the past, it had always been their father running the smoke house but since his passing it has been the kids.

While the fish are in the smoker, you have to stay up and check on the fish to ensure they do not go sour. To keep a steady amount of energy, I watched family members work and nap, work and nap, a little cat nap on the porch, a quick nap inside on a chair. I also witnessed intimate family moments, the mother tearing up as she told her kids how proud their dad would have been. The sister telling me how none of the kids realized how much they knew until they had to do it themselves. This was first hand evidence to support peripheral learning among Tlingit youth (Lave, Wenger 1991).

I had the opportunity to meet with a woman while she, her daughter, and her

granddaughter put up sockeye they had just received from a neighbor. We spent about an hour together. I watched her and her family work together while she told me her experiences of processing salmon with her family, wishing she could be out on the boat with the boys. Because I was not participating in the fish processing line, I was able to chat with the family members who stopped by to say hello. I was able to watch and listen to these exchanges, watching as trades were discussed before the fish was even finished being put up.

Customary and traditional practices do not solely exist during the procurement and processing of a desired species, C&T practices span family dinners, as described in interviews. When one tastes food, it triggers memories and forges meanings between one's self and memories procured. The way memories get embedded in our food and later come to life is a lens to study "selfhood and subjectivity...group identity and collective memory (Korsmeyer and Sutton, 2011:474)". Another participant divulged in her intergenerational experiences.

We had, countless days that were unbroken to just have, good family conversations and I think that's what kept all of us on such a good path in life. Is being able to have, that family time and make that connection with each other. And not just our immediate family but, aunts, uncles, cousins, and, friends that joined us.

One woman who was with her girls talked about how her father was able to bring people together by having an open-door policy at dinner time.

He would always make, huge, Native food dinners. I mean, the table would be full of food that he would be cooking all day long. And people would come in and out and you know, they looked forward to coming to our house to eat his food and, you know. It was so huge and he and I, I think were the best of friends when he died.

This woman's memories of her father, as well as her guest's memories of her father are embedded in the huge Native foods her family shared with the community. The realities of sharing meals with people meant that her father had relationships with the people in the community that would join them for dinner. These relationships required a balancing act of

power dynamics between the host and his guests. They looked forward to coming to his house because it meant they would get to form more memories. These memories embedded in a “Huge native dinners” offers individuals an opportunity to eat meals as a family and re-establish their identities as Alaskan Natives. Every time families engage in activities that are uniquely “Native” their relationship to their cultural identity strengths, which in turn strengthens their social networks that exist because of their native identities.

Roles/Purpose

Food systems contribute to conversations by, “contributing to one’s sense of role and responsibility within the community, and by strengthening social networks and kinship ties through gifts, sharing and exchange (Loring 2009:471). Participating in food systems like those of customary and traditional practices offers a sense of purpose to Klawock’s Tribal Citizens. As older family members deem them ready, youth earned more responsibility and blossomed into their assigned roles. Over time they would move into more challenging roles, eventually earning the spot of captain, or lead on the processing line. These idolized positions do not last, however, as individuals age, their physical ability to be their family leaders wane. An elder’s statement sums this up quite well as he said “I just don’t get to run the seine anymore. Let it out. Mitch is learning how now. And he does pretty good too.” This participant still goes in the boat, however his time as captain has ended and his family chose a new leader to let the seine out. He acknowledges that while his time in charge has waned, he continues to contribute to the family’s body of traditional ecological knowledge by training his replacements. He told me, “Moved here when I was 14. And my uncle taught me everything. Now I pass it on to my great nephews. Cuz that’s what were supposed to do. So when were too old they’ll take over”. Families are trained to always be training their replacements. His role is to share his knowledge with the younger

generation to offer them a sense of purpose: to take care of his family when he walks into the woods.

These roles are the foundations to Tlingit TEK. The responsibility these jobs place on individuals offer them a sense a purpose. Kids and adults alike depend on these assignments to provide intention to one's routine. In time they learn their position within a family context and in larger community settings. Individuals live their lives, think about existence, and act out their social positions through their family's harvesting operations.

I went to Klawock Lake with Quinn and his field crew to see what the sockeye predation study looked like. One of his crew members ended up being the captain of the seine team later in the summer. I spent a few days out on the water as I watched this man take on his leadership role in controlling the boat and deciding when to set the seine in order to catch sockeye while his crew worked the gear to ensure a successful harvest. Men's harvesting's roles exist in a larger societal context. In Klawock, Alaska Native females are the highest earning demographic after white males. Traditionally, a man's expertise in harvesting strategies was a measure of wealth. Due to the reduced access to customary and traditional harvesting, Alaska Native men have less opportunities to practice this knowledge and earn the social benefits that come with it. Wexler (2006) agrees that harvesting strategies are important for men. Having access to harvestable foods offer men an opportunity to contribute to their family and to contribute to the larger society.

Pride

It was getting late, however, the sun was still up as it was the week of the solstice. "We never get no deer." That's what a man said to me outside the bar as he was smoking a camel, the cigarette resting casually in hand while he recounted a story by what people on the island refer to

as a super harvester. That is, a person who is able keep up the demand set by island residents. I had been on the island for just a few hours. After sitting at the Board of Game meeting earlier in the year, the realities of limited resources started to become much more real.

Harvesting traditional resources requires tapping into one's TEK, gained through the intergenerational passing of knowledge. It is this knowledge that establishes meaning with in harvesting practices. Refusing these practices means you are harvesting disrespectfully. Being a good hunter implies the traditional rules were followed. The proper rituals following the act itself were preformed, thanking the animal for its life. The food was shared, offering social capital and status, thus bringing pride and respect to one's family (Lee 2002).

While the lingering effects of colonialism resulted in a loss of linguistic knowledge, knowledge of the landscape, is a basic necessity for survival. Having the knowledge to survive here was a skill valued by westerners coming to Alaska. TEK was crucial for colonialists to survive in Southeast so it was important for this knowledge to be reproduced. Harvesting activities are one of the few distinctly native enterprises that earned respect from the euro-centric culture (Lee 2002).

Let us think back to the grandmother I mentioned earlier who was processing fish with her daughter and granddaughter. She told me a story about her mother, who is the official matriarch of the family. She said,

Yeah, so, my mom is gonna be 89 in February. And, it's... it's really difficult to get her not to do anything. She's got osteoporosis and, lifting for her could be dangerous. She's already had multiple stress fractures in her back, and um, nothing stops her. But, this year, my older brother, my oldest brother who's alive, um. He and I did out first batch of fish and she never touched it. And, then the second batch of fish she helped us jar it. Um, but she didn't do a whole lot. And then at the end, she like, gave us her blessing. She said, "Good job kids", you know. And, and they would say that every year anyway, but, I think just, that, um, she could see, we can do this on our own. You know, we've been

doing it our whole entire lives, with Mom and Dad and the whole entire family has just done it together.

This woman's mother, whose body slowly prevented her from the physical aspect of processing, offered her kids praise, passing the torch, letting them know, they were in charge.

Seeing her kids carry on her family's tradition means that as a parent, she produced youth that grew up participating in this distinctly native process, despite dwindling resources. The continuation of customary and traditional activities implies built in social benefits that do not exist outside of indigenous modes of production.

A younger participant shared his story about when he thought he brought shame to his family. "Back in the day with my first deer. He told me the gun was on, so I believed him...And when I shoot it and it just starts running, and I'm just like, I messed up. I let, I let everybody down. But, then we snagged it". He had internalized as a young kid that if he did not successfully bring meat home he would let his family down. He knew if he wanted to make his family proud, he could not give up on that deer. He had to continue his hunt to bring his family pride. This pride can be interpreted as a type of social capital or status (Cheng, Tracy, Henrich 2010). These skills mean that one's family can manage multiple reciprocal relationships, required to maintain social wealth in the community.

Identity, family, teamwork, purpose and pride were the top reasons why Klawock's tribal citizens continue to participate in a subsistence mode of production despite the introduction to the capitalist market. While the state and federal government use the word subsistence to discuss customary and traditional activities, Alaska Natives across the state choose to perform their way of life that existed prior to ANCSA and ANILCA. Before these laws, there were no words to describe the activities required to live in Southeast Alaska. Traditional forms of harvesting

constitute an epistemology unique to Alaska Native culture. It is through these activities that residents in Klawock have come to know and understand their ways of being.

Removing access to these activities impedes harvesting strategies. The ebb and flow of the yearly bounty social networks and their benefits embedded. A bad year can play out in the down turn of the community's wellbeing. Because engaging in these activities leads to an increase of social capital, these activities empower and inspire individuals to participate in the indigenous modes of production as their debt is paid in their reciprocal relationships. Repaying these debts puts more food and gifts into society which in turn, increases exposure to these traditional activities. When there is a healthy amount of access to a resource, families can engage in their traditional forms of harvesting and positively affect their feedback as seen in Figure 8.

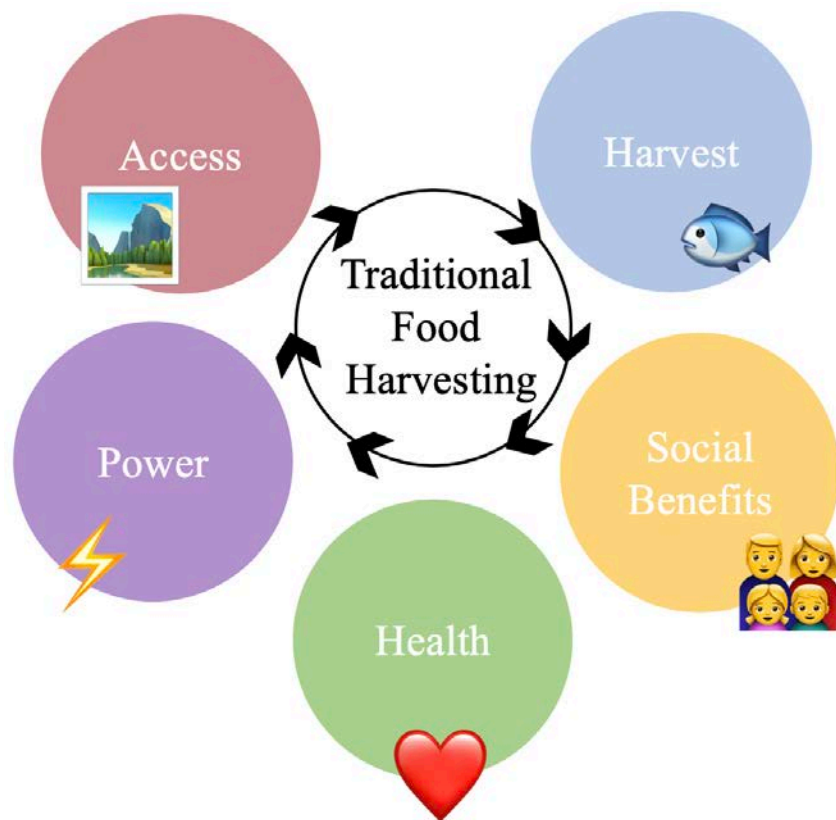


Figure 8: Closed Loop Diagram

Deliverables

These oral histories are similar to the testimonials the state requests at their Board of Fish and Board of Game meetings. Those testimonies are typed up and put into a binder to be left on a bookshelf in an ADF&G storage closet that is home to a multitude of binders with similar TEK. The difference in this project is that the testimonials from tribal citizens have been analyzed and created into a report, supplying KCA council and staff to use as evidence as needed. Now they can present resource managers with a tool to understand how these practices are embedded into the lives of their constituents. The video consists of B-roll with participant's voices narrating their relationship to these activities. I clipped segments from the interviews that correspond with the resulting themes.

Ideally, this information will be turned into a peer-reviewed journal article in which can be presented to BOF and BOG as recognized western knowledge. This can be a tool used for many departments in the tribe. Perhaps it will be advantages to our Social Services department while our social worker fights to keep native families in the home. Applied anthropology makes the uses of this tool endless.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

I have been invested in subsistence research since I moved to Southeast Alaska in 2012. During these seven years I gained employment with various entities that allowed me to work with subsistence users as well as work with land parcels that have been traditionally used as harvest locations for Tlingit clans. Due to my undergraduate degree in anthropology, I already had a basis for understanding theoretical concepts used to analyze human cultural activities. In fact, it was this early training that allowed me to have a better understanding of why harvesting resources was crucial to cultural survival. I applied to multiple jobs in areas of Alaska in which I could see myself living. These positions never came to fruition because I was competing with people with master's degrees for these choice locations. There was not much for me to work with just a bachelor's and I knew I needed to earn a higher level of education to be more marketable in my chosen field.

University of North Texas accepted me. Early on in the program we learned about anthropological frameworks that are used to analyze aspects of human culture. A big component to this research was learning about the importance of context, and how anthropologists write about their experience of the truth. Everyone has their own lens in which they experience their reality. In class we learn how research designed in the eye of the researcher has the risk of being out of context. Often, projects are designed by people who do not actually belong to a specific segment of the population participating in the studied behavior.

This notion of in context and out of context became part of my own toolkit when I received an internship created by a partnership of two entities, one was Tribal government and one was Federal government. The federal anthropologists assigned to this project introduced me

to the world of oral history. My classes taught me the importance of field notes, and how to use theory. This internship was crucial in getting me down into the buggy tundra where theories about research don't always work out as crisp and clean as designed. UNT prepared me in a way that made me incredibly competent in my field so that I was ready to hit the ground running while the internship described above prepared me to go into a community in which I had never been and start forming relationships. These two experiences offered me a sense of confidence I didn't know I had. One that required me to leave my island, to fly hundreds of miles away to listen to new friends tell me about the intimate details of their lives in regard to harvesting.

Anthropology added a holistic lens to KCA's Natural Resources Department. Their research is focused on sockeye because their constituents have depended on this resource for thousands of years. Applied anthropology offered pragmatic problem solving to KCA's Tribal Council and staff. Seeing how the sockeye have been depleted since the state overhauled clan's traditional management strategies, KCA administration knew they needed to bring a new approach to the table.

I think the biggest thing I learned about throughout this project had nothing to do with the findings of the research. Instead, the unintended consequences of me being on the island and talking with folks sparked much more concern than I bargained for. It must sound insane, narcissistic, and vapid, but I had a serious problem with men falling in love with me. Had I not attended a sexual assault in the field session and the 2017 SfAA conference in Philadelphia I would have chalked this up as a fluke. However, during the interactive session, women in the room shared their stories of violence they encountered in the field. Out of all the women who spoke up about their research, only one of the women did not work in Alaska. I realized, this is

not going to be a one-time thing. It is something that I need to plan for every time I design a research project anywhere, let alone in Alaska.

We are taught to be open to new experiences, say yes to invitations to dinner and events. Mostly they explained that they have never experienced being listened to. The feeling that they experienced while they were talking to me was contagious and they did not want to let that feeling go. I encourage UNT staff to discuss the importance of having a safety plan when they enter the field, perhaps even putting it in their thesis proposal. If not adding to the thesis proposal, require more readings from those researchers who wrecked social havoc on a male dominated community. I really think that personal safety in the field is a topic that needs to be addressed in curriculum. As we all know, anthropology developed as a male dominated field so perhaps the conversations of personal safety and sexual health were not as important. The conversations of sexual assault were perhaps not spoken of in the past. The #metoo movement has opened up a space where people are starting to talk about these experiences in the work place.

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