APPLIED CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN ALASKA: NEW DIRECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

Also, new in health and nutrition studies of Alaska Natives for AJA is a paper *authored by Alaska Natives* (Graves et al., who are not anthropologists). As we move to an expanded post-colonial collaboration in Alaska anthropology, it is hoped that more essays by Alaska Native scholars and researchers will be submitted to AJA. The two papers by Smith et al. on nutrition among rural and urban Alaska Natives were also primarily written by nonanthropologists (co-author Wiedman of Florida International University is an anthropologist and former president of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology); other co-authors of this paper are members of Alaska tribal elders councils. Urban and applied research often involves interdisciplinary and collaborative efforts as is evident in these papers.

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

> The concept of "applied anthropology" dates back to at least 1906, when it was used to announce the establishment of a diploma program at Oxford, while the term "practical anthropology" was used as early as the 1860s by James Hunt, founder of the Anthropological Society of London. (Eddy and Partridge 1987:4)
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> The British were the first to formally recognize the practical value of anthropology and also the first to employ applied anthropologists. . . . E. B. Tylor considered anthropology to be a "policy science" and advocated its use in improving the human condition. . . . Anthropology was first used in

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

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

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

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

> The Utqiagvik Archaeology Project in Barrow (State University of New York, North Slope Borough, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs) was another landmark project. *Research was carried out jointly*, including studies made of human remains recovered at the site. Over the past 15 years, many excavations and field schools have featured close cooperation between Native organizations and the National Park Service (especially its Shared Beringian Heritage Program), University of Alaska, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arctic Studies Center and other agencies and universities. (Crowell 2000, italics added)

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

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

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

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

If one examines the funding sources for most anthropological research in Alaska from the twentieth to the twenty-first centuries it becomes obvious that it was and is not basic research funding organizations, such as the National Science Foundation, that are interested in knowing about indigenous cultures in Alaska but federal, state, or private organizations needing the knowledge to fulfill their missions. Anthropological researchers in Alaska have often extracted from their applied research what seems relevant for the discipline's basic knowledge and published this information. In my experience, many university-based researchers in Alaska, before about 1990, had little awareness that their research originated as applied anthropology (because it was solicited and paid for by some organization needing information—anthropology put to use). It seems as though "applied anthropologist" was a lesser professional identity in Alaska academia. Similar academic pecking order conflicts are found at universities in physics or chemistry departments, in that basic/abstract research is thought to bring more prestige to the researcher (and to the university or department) than applied work and accomplishments (except, perhaps, in the field of medicine, which often views the basic understanding of body organs and functions on a par with research that allows heart transplants, for example, to occur). Alaska might be unique in the U.S. in the way in which anthropologists in university and nonuniversity settings shift regularly and imperceptibly from basic to applied research as it relates to Alaskan indigenous peoples. The applied focus of the essays in this issue is intended to draw attention to that fact, without discouraging basic research. These approaches should not be viewed as being in opposition.[1]

INTRODUCTION TO URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY PAPERS[2]

BACKGROUND

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

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

2. This section derives from a paper that contextualized the presentations in a session co-organized by Kerry Feldman and Raymond Wiest (of the University of Manitoba) for the meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology, 2006, Vancouver, B.C: "The Northern City and Ethnic Complexity: City as Portal, Place and Process."

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

Anthropology "of the city" and "in the city"

Urban anthropology research topics were first distinguished as being either anthropology "in the city" or "of the city." However, there has never been an agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a human settlement as "urban," although the distinguishing factors are usually assumed to be size (population), density (inhabitants per square kilometer), and heterogeneity (cultural and social diversity). The focus on anthropology "of the city" examines the processes of urbanization itself, how cities use space, grow demographically, and are interconnected in social processes and development (which is often a solely quantitative focus, not dependent on participant observation). Anthropology "in the city" reflects the traditional concern of the discipline for understanding, via ethnography and participant observation, how living in a city influences the way people live and conceptualize their lives (as ethnic groups, communities, etc.). In these studies, the concept of "culture" could be used as a critical analytical component, as it had been used traditionally in anthropology to frame the lives of remote tribal peoples. Cities were thought to be differentiated from rural or "isolated" locales by their emphasis on impersonal and functional connections among inhabitants (by secondary social relationships, not primary or kin-based relationships that dominated in rural areas). This distinction had been hypothesized by Durkheim (in France) following the theory of Tönnies (in Germany) regarding *Gemeinschaft* (more communal, intimate groups) vs. *Gesellschaft* (more impersonal, contract-based groups caused by capitalism).

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

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

"Culture" as a problematic organizing frame in urban anthropology

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

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

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

Urban-based studies, in my view, played a major role in identifying the problems of the anthropological believed-in myth about essentialized culture(s), but it took time for even traditionally influenced urban anthropologists to become aware of the mythical quality of their urban ethnographies. In my own dissertation research on urban squatter settlements in the Philippines (Feldman 1973), local "culture" was not a focus or a term used in my study. My dissertation advisor, Robert A. Hackenberg, specifically advised me to ignore cultural phenomena and focus on social, economic, political, and demographic factors to explain why these settlements were located where they were throughout Davao City (pop. 400,000) and how they represented not slums but Third World efforts at "suburbanization" and hope for a better life amidst extraordinary poverty. That is, one could not explain squatter settlement formation in Davao City by examining the various symbols, rituals, or myths held by the diverse ethnic groups, including tribal peoples, that flooded the city after WW II, seeking "land for the landless" as promised by national politicians. I recall thinking, and writing to myself in my field journal, "How is this research I am doing 'anthropology'?" As I examined the history of squatter settlements in the Philippines, I became aware that these urban islands of squalor and crime were the results of regional, national, and international factors flowing from U.S. "colonialism" (Feldman 1979). That is, urban lives lived locally in Southeast Asia could only be explained through a global lens, making local "culture" in itself an ineffectual tool for explaining the socioeconomically dependent nature of the local lives I examined.

URBAN-FOCUSED ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN ALASKA

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

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

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

Urban-focused anthropological studies are nearly absent in Alaska, a notable omission given that over ninety languages from around the world are now spoken in Anchorage homes and many of them elsewhere in Alaska's few but significant towns and cities and at least a fourth of all Alaska Natives "reside" in Anchorage (return and cyclic migration is common, making Anchorage and contributing rural areas an "extended field" for observation). Since 1990, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that an astounding 12.5% of Alaska's *population growth* was due to *foreign immigration*, most of the people moving to Anchorage. Within twenty-five years, Alaska is "projected to have the highest foreign migration from Asia and the eleventh highest migration from Latin America in the United States" (Bronen 2003:5). I wonder about the accuracy of these projections, but the trends are clear. What is missing are ethnographic and applied studies in and regarding urban Alaska that reflect the "global village" and transnational living processes underway.[5]

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

One might not think of Alaska as a destination for immigrants or political refugees[7] from Southeast Asia, South

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

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

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

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

PERSONAL ANECDOTES: MULTICULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF ANCHORAGE

Some personal anecdotal experiences reveal the ethnic complexity that has developed in Alaska. Recently I met a man in Anchorage from Ethiopia who, after twelve years of driving taxicabs in Anchorage, was instructing a younger Ethiopian man in how to engage in this time-honored profession among low-income immigrants for gaining a foothold in an urban place. The older man had a graduate degree from Russia and spoke perfect British English, as did his younger understudy. Another taxi driver from the Macedonia region of Greece told me that, after *twenty years* of living in Anchorage where he has raised his family, when he recently took his children to a family reunion in Greece a physician there advised him to immediately take his ill children back to Alaska. The physician told the man that his children's "thick blood," due to residing all of their lives in a colder climate, was causing them life-threatening problems in the 106° F Macedonian heat. A Laotian-Cambodian man told me that for twenty years he has lived in Anchorage, raising his children there, with only one teenager now remaining at home in Anchorage to complete a college degree. He distributed over $10,000 in gifts to his family members in Southeast Asia recently when he and his wife (who is Laotian-Thai) visited "home" relatives during the prior year, buying motors for washing machines, clothes, and any item they noticed as needed among their relatives, some of whom had over a dozen children to support. His goal is to retire and live half the year in Southeast Asia and the other half in Anchorage. His will be an interesting seasonal commute, to say the least. Finally, while vacationing in Mexico, I learned that the second largest source of income for Mexico, after tourism, is money sent from immigrants to the U.S.—an estimated $20 billion annually (see Corcoran 2007). These anecdotes hint at the extraordinary richness of the meaning of the phrase "global village" as it is experienced in Anchorage and elsewhere in Alaska.

URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY IN ALASKA: TRADITIONAL ACCULTURATION STUDIES OF ALASKA NATIVES

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

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

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

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

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

There have been only two MA theses in anthropology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks focused on urban populations, both on "Eskimo" migrants' adjustments to living in Fairbanks (e.g., Daniello 1993; White 1981). Tierney[10] (1991, 2006) conducted ethnographic dissertation research from 1988–1991 on homeless "skid row" populations in Anchorage comprised largely of Alaska Natives, highlighting the differential impact of homelessness on Alaska Native women (who experienced more discrimination and sexual harassment). Sprott (1994) examined Alaska Natives of mixed ancestry living in Anchorage and whether assimilation was occurring among them. Hamilton and Seyfrit (1994) noted the significant disparities in the greater number of Alaska Native females migrating from rural to urban settings in Alaska, and the possible impacts this could have in terms of individual and "bush" Alaska community survival. The Smith et al. essay in this volume comparatively examines the dietary needs and related behaviors, including social networks, of urban and rural Alaska Native elderly. Rural Alaska Native elderly evidenced higher intakes of Native foods, stronger food sharing networks, and higher family activity scores than did urban Native elders in Anchorage. These findings are not unexpected, but these studies provide a quantitative database for addressing these issues.

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

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

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

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

UNDERSTANDING ANCHORAGE TODAY: DEMOGRAPHY, CULTURES AND SOCIAL ISSUES

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

> The number of Anchorage residents born outside the 50 states grew 60% in the 1990s, up from 13,000 to nearly 21,000. The foreign-born share of the population increased from 7% to 10%. Many of these residents—especially the long-term residents—are U.S. citizens.
>
> International immigration in the past decade is shown by growth in the number of Permanent Fund dividend applications from Anchorage residents who are not citizens—up 14% between 1995 and 2000 and up 10% from 2000 to 2004. Arrivals in Anchorage in the late 1990s were younger, less well-educated, and less likely to come with families; they also had lower incomes than those who came a decade earlier. Lower education levels among many immigrants, compared with U.S. citizens, have also been reported nationwide.
>
> People from throughout the world arrived in the late 1990s, but more were from Samoa and other Pacific Islands than any place else, followed by the Philippines and Mexico. There was significant immigration from Korea and other Asian countries as well. (Goldsmith et al. 2005:9)

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

However, more recent and refined census data (Table 2) provided by the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2007) demonstrates that if Alaska Natives/Native Americans who are also white (8,979) are added to the total of Alaska Natives/Native Americans in Anchorage, 28,839 individuals or *10.3% of Anchorage is comprised of Alaska Natives/Native Americans*. Black or African Americans account for 6.9% (17,642, or 25,287 if enumerating Black/African Americans of mixed ethnicity). Nearly seven percent (6.7% or 17,293) of Anchorage is "Asian." And finally, Pacific Islanders (1.2% or 3,087) are broken out from the prior census "Asian" populations. Filipinos comprise 48.7% of the Asian population. The Hispanic population has risen to 21,996 (7.9%), with more than half of this group from Mexico. It seems that only 65.9% (184,356) of Anchorage's "white" population is "white only." These are astounding numbers and percentages. In ignoring these figures, anthropologists seem tied to McLuhan's notion from the 1960s of perceiving the present through a "rear-view mirror." That is, imagining a present Alaska social reality based on how anthropologists imagine the past of Alaska Native peoples, not perceiving the present reality of even Alaska Native peoples.

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

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

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

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

Source: Municipality of Anchorage 2004

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Anchorage School District 2005

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

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

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

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

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

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

Absent in the anthropological awareness in Alaska is interest in members of the ninety-plus ethnic and language groups now residing in Anchorage and elsewhere in Alaska, some present since the early 1900s. The "Diversity Index" developed by *USA Today* revealed a 50% diversity index for Anchorage, similar to the 49% index for the U.S. as a whole, meaning that the chances of meeting someone from a nonwhite background was fifty-fifty in Anchorage (Goldsmith and Frazier 2001). The way that study framed the ethnic composition of Anchorage quickly identifies the significance of the numbers involved. For example, although Anchorage contained 41% of the total state population, 69% of all African Americans in Alaska resided in Anchorage as did 58% of all Asian and Pacific Islanders and about 20% of all Alaska Natives. Whereas an explosive number of Euro-Americans have moved to less crowded and less expensive living 96 km north of Anchorage in the Mat-Su Valley, comparatively fewer ethnic minorities have made that relocation: "the Matanuska Susitna Borough has 10% of the state population, but only 2% of Black, 2% of the Asian and Pacific Islander, and 4% of the Native American population" (Goldsmith and Frazier 2001). The study notes that whereas the ethnic minorities of the Anchorage population were 24%, they comprised at that time 38% of the K–12 enrollment in the ASD;[14] as noted above, minorities currently comprise 51% of this student population.

ETHNIC COMPLEXITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES: ANCHORAGE

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

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

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

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

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

SEXUAL ASSAULT, ANCHORAGE: 2000–2001

There were 539 victims of sexual assault in Anchorage in 2000–2001, which is a higher per capita rate than of the U.S. as a whole. Were ethnic minorities primarily the assault victims, 95% of whom were women? Table 5 below reveals that Native women were nearly 7.6 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women from other groups (Rosay and Langworthy 2003:5).

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

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

Source: Rosay and Langworthy 2003.

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

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

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

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

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

NONCITIZEN IMMIGRANTS AND ANCHORAGE ARRESTS

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

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

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

IMMIGRATION, NATURALIZATION, AND TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS

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

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

"ALIENS" AND ASYLUM

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

ALASKA RANKING FOR MINORITY GROUPS: THE STATE CONTEXT

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

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

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

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

16. See Alaska Justice Forum: http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/forum/20/1spring2003/a_immigration.html.

17. U.S. Census Bureau 2006.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is hoped that this issue of AJA will inspire new generations of anthropologists to study "cultures" in Alaska as they actually are: Contested ways of life and of meaning, lacking essences, impacted by urban-capitalistic processes, and now subject to global influences of commerce and migration experienced locally.

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