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Renegotiation of Urban Yup'ik Traditions in Anchorage, Alaska

Renégociation de traditions urbaines Yupik dans la ville d'Anchorage, Alaska

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Titre : Renégociation de traditions urbaines Yupik dans la ville d'Anchorage, Alaska

Mots clés : Yupik, Tradition, Alaska, Urbain, Anchorage

Résumé : L'objectif principal de cette thèse est d'étudier les stratégies quotidiennes utilisées par le peuple Yupik (les Yupiit au pluriel), autochtone d'Alaska vivant dans la ville d'Anchorage pour renégocier ou réinterpréter leurs traditions ancestrales. Cette thèse met en lumière la dynamique des modes de vie traditionnels des Yupiit en relation avec les paysages culturels, sociaux et environnementaux urbains, autochtones et allochtones. La ville d'Anchorage, où les principales recherches de terrain de cette thèse ont été menées, est considérée par les peuples autochtones comme « le plus grand village autochtone de l'Alaska ». Elle continue d'attirer les peuples autochtones de différentes régions rurales de l'État d'Alaska pour ses opportunités d'emploi, d'éducation et de soins de santé. Alors que le flux migratoire continu des populations autochtones et allochtones vers Anchorage contribue à la diversité et à la complexité ethnique de cette ville, les autochtones de l'Alaska (dont font partie les Yupiit), restent une minorité à Anchorage. Mes recherches portent sur la migration oscillatoire des zones rurales vers les zones urbaines des Yupiit comme stratégie pour devenir des citoyens urbains, tout en maintenant des liens avec les terres ancestrales et les réseaux familiaux élargis. J'argue que les appartenances religieuses orthodoxe, morave et catholique jouent un rôle important dans la reproduction de la vie villageoise des Yupiit urbains et des autres résidents autochtones de l'Alaska. Dans cette thèse, j'examine comment les Yupiit ont adopté et adapté le christianisme en milieux rural et urbain. J'analyse comment les pratiques traditionnelles de nommage reliées au cycle de vie et de mort transcendent le christianisme et comment la perception Yup'ik de Dieu est renégociée. J'explore de quelle manière les Yupiit urbains façonnent leurs églises pour qu'elles leur assurent une connexion forte pendant les transitions rurales-urbaines. La thèse illustre également le processus de création et de transformation des espaces autochtones laïcs dans la ville. Ma thèse se concentre sur la manière dont l'environnement urbain façonne les rôles genrés traditionnels, l'économie de subsistance et l'organisation sociale des Yupiit. Mon travail révèle comment l'environnement urbain contribue au processus de construction de l'identité collective autochtone d'Alaska. Dans le contexte d'une migration continue des populations rurales vers les villes qui aboutit à une reconceptualisation des espaces urbains en tant qu'extensions ou équivalents des paysages sociaux ruraux, j'examine comment les Yupiit contribuent à la ruralisation de la ville. J'explore comment ils intègrent à la ville, selon leurs propres conditions et quelles stratégies ils utilisent pour façonner les espaces urbains en fonction de leurs besoins et de leurs attentes. En même temps, ma thèse démontre de quelle manière la ville transforme les modes de vie traditionnels des Yupiit, tout en décrivant les défis auxquels ils sont confrontés et auxquels ils répondent, tout en s'adaptant au mode de vie urbain.

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ÉCOLE DOCTORALE
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Title : Renegotiation of Urban Yup'ik Traditions in Anchorage, Alaska

Keywords : Yup'ik, Tradition, Alaska, Urban, Anchorage

Abstract : The main focus of this dissertation is everyday strategies that Alaska Native Yupiit (plural from Yup'ik) living in the city of Anchorage use to renegotiate and reinterpret their ancestral traditions. It highlights the dynamics of traditional Yup'ik lifeways in relation to urban, non-Indigenous and Indigenous cultural, social, and environmental landscapes. The city of Anchorage, where the main fieldwork research has been conducted, is considered by Indigenous peoples to be "the biggest Alaska Native village". It continues to attract Indigenous peoples from different rural regions of the state by employment, education, and health care opportunities. The ongoing migration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations to Anchorage contributes to the city's diversity and ethnic complexity. At the same time, Alaska Natives remain a city's minority. My research focuses on the oscillatory rural-to-urban migration of the Yupiit as a strategy to become urban citizens, while maintaining connections with the ancestral lands and extended family networks. I contend that religious denominations (Orthodox, Moravian and Catholic) play an important role in the reproduction of the village life of urban Yup'ik and other Alaska Native residents. In the dissertation I analyze how the Yupiit have been adopting and adapting to Christianity in both rural and urban settings. I examine how the traditional naming practice related to the life-death cycle transcends Christianity, and how the Yup'ik perception of God is being renegotiated. I explore in what ways urban Yupiit stimulate and shape their churches to remain a vehicle for keeping connected during rural-to-urban transitions. In addition, the dissertation demonstrates a process of creation and transformation of secular Indigenous spaces in the city. It focuses on how the urban environment shapes Yup'ik traditional gender roles, subsistence economyand social organization. Furthermore, it illustrates how the urban environment contributes to the process of the Alaska Indigenous collective identity construction. In the context of rural-to-urban migration Alaska Native people reconceptualizeurban spaces as extensions or equivalents of rural social landscapes. I examine how Yup'ik people contribute to the ruralization of the city. I explore how they internalize Anchorage on their own terms, and what strategies they use to shape urban spaces to fit their needs and expectations. At the same time, my dissertation demonstrates in what ways the city transforms the Yup'ik traditional lifeways,it describes the challenges the Yupiit face and respond to, while adjusting to the urban lifestyle.

RÉSUMÉ SUBSTANTIEL

Cette thèse porte principalement sur les stratégies quotidiennes qu'utilise un peuple autochtone de l'Alaska, les Yupiit (pluriel de Yupi'k) dans la ville d'Anchorage pour renégocier et réinterpréter leurs traditions ancestrales. Elle met en évidence la dynamique des modes de vie traditionnels Yup'ik par rapport aux paysages culturels, sociaux et environnementaux urbains, autochtones et allochtones.La ville d'Anchorage, où ont été menées les principales études de terrain, est considérée par ces peuples comme « le plus grand village autochtone d'Alaska ». La perspective d'y trouver emploi, éducation et soins médicaux continue d'y attirer les populations autochtones de différentes régions rurales de l'État. Alors que le flux migratoire continu des populations autochtones et allochtones vers Anchorage contribue à la diversité et à la complexité ethnique de cette ville, les autochtones de l'Alaska (dont font partie les Yupiit), restent une minorité à Anchorage. Ma thèse illustre la manière dont l'environnement urbain contribue au processus de construction de l'identité collective des autochtones de l'Alaska. Mes recherches portent sur la nature oscillatoire de la migration des Yupiit entre zones rurales et zones urbaines comme stratégie pour devenir des citoyens urbains, tout en maintenant des liens avec les terres ancestrales et les réseaux familiaux élargis. Par les mouvements continus des populations rurales et urbaines entre les villages et Anchorage, les environnements urbains et ruraux deviennent de plus en plus interconnectés et interdépendants. J'examine comment les Yupiit contribuent à la ruralisation de la ville. Je soutiens qu'il y a en parallèle un processus de ruralisation de la ville et un processus d'urbanisation des villages. Les ruraux se rendent régulièrement à Anchorage pour des rendez-vous médicaux, des formations, des conférences, des foires artisanales et d'autres activités. Ils y apportent des aliments, des matières premières et de l'artisanat autochtones pour les partager, les vendre ou les échanger dans leurs réseaux sociaux urbains contre de l'argent et des biens disponibles exclusivement en ville. Je soutiens que les appartenances religieuses (orthodoxe, morave et catholique) jouent un rôle

important dans la reproduction urbaine de la vie de village des Yupiit et d'autres peuples autochtones de l'Alaska. J'analyse comment les Yupiit ont adopté et adapté le christianisme, tant en milieu rural qu'en milieu urbain. Ma thèse montre comment la perception Yupi'k de Dieu est en train d'être renégociée. J'examine comment les pratiques traditionnelles de nommage liées au cycle de vie et de mort transcendent le christianisme, tout en devenant un lien entre les environnements ruraux et urbains. Bien que la pratique traditionnelle de l'adoption soit également en cours de renégociation, elle reste un moyen de resserrer et d'étendre les réseaux sociaux en créant des relations de parenté fictives supplémentaires. Dans le contexte de la migration rurale-urbaine, les autochtones d'Alaska reconceptualisent les espaces urbains comme des extensions ou des équivalents des paysages sociaux ruraux. J'étudie comment ils intériorisent Anchorage selon leurs propres termes et quelles stratégies ils utilisent pour façonner les espaces urbains à leurs besoins et à leurs attentes.J'examine comment les Yupiit urbains stimulent et adaptent leurs églises pour qu'elles restent un moyen de contact pendant les transitions rurales-urbaines. Je soutiens que les églises restent les espaces autochtones les plus permanents à Anchorage, permettant à leurs paroissiens de pratiquer des traditions et des rituels rapportés du village (par exemple, le Selaviq, ou la cérémonie des étoiles du Noël orthodoxe russe). A travers les églises, les Yupiit et d'autres populations autochtones communiquent avec leurs réseaux sociaux ruraux en pratiquant des services et des rituels dans le Centre Médical des Autochtones d'Alaska qui fournit des soins de santé et attire les résidents ruraux autochtones de toutes les régions d'Alaska. J'analyse un processus de création et de transformation d'espaces autochtones laïcs temporaires dans la ville. Ma thèse démontre l'absence d'un espace laïc permanent dont les Yupiit non chrétiens ont besoin et qu'ils aimeraient utiliser régulièrement pour pratiquer des rituels et des activités comme moyen supplémentaire de connexion à leurs réseaux sociaux urbains et ruraux. En même temps, elle met en lumière les transformations des modes de vie Yup'ik traditionnels dans le contexte de l'environnement urbain. Dans ma thèse, je décris et j'analyse les défis auxquels les Yupiit sont confrontés et qu'ils relèvent en s'adaptant au

mode de vie urbain. Je mets l'accent sur la manière dont l'environnement urbain façonne les rôles genrés traditionnels, l'économie de subsistance et l'organisation sociale des Yupiit. Par exemple, la chasse, une activité traditionnellement masculine, est plus réglementée dans les banlieues d'Anchorage et, par conséquent, plus difficile à pratiquer que dans les zones rurales. Dans le même temps, la chasse dans les villages peut également être entravée par des aspects tels que le manque d'argent pour le transport et de motivation à préserver les modes de vie traditionnels. Ainsi, ma thèse met en lumière certaines similarités et différences dans les défis auxquels sont confrontés les Yupiit ruraux et urbains dans le processus de négociation et de renégociation de leurs traditions ancestrales.

Саше, Максу и Кристофу

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation

I first came to visit Alaska in summer 2017. At that moment, I was already enrolled in a PhD program in France. My general interest was Indigenous Orthodoxy in Alaska. Thus, I flew to Kodiak to participate in the Pilgrimage of Saint Herman, the first American Saint, who was one of the first missionaries coming to Alaska and who was known for his efforts in protecting the Alaska Indigenous populations from the employees of the Russian-American Company, in particular, the Sugpiaqs from Kodiak. I was kindly invited to stay at the dormitory of the Saint Herman Seminary situated near the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Cathedral that has the holy relics of Saint Herman. During the pilgrimage I met a significant number of hierarchs from the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), Alaskan priests, pilgrims coming from Russia and from some parts of Alaska. Many of them were Alaska Natives, originally stemming from the rural areas but permanently living in the Alaskan largest city – Anchorage. I met Father Thomas Tikhonoff-Andrew, a Yup'ik priest serving at the Russian Orthodox church in Kenai at the time. After the pilgrimage I returned to Anchorage where I attended services in all the three urban, Russian Orthodox parishes. Despite the summer break season, at Saint Innocent Cathedral and at Saint Tikhon of Moscow Orthodox Church I met many Indigenous parishioners; in Saint Alexis parish I met Father Jonah Andrew, a Yup'ik priest, and his family. When I went to Fairbanks, I visited the local Orthodox parish and became acquainted with its Yup'ik priest, Father Andrew Wassillie. I noticed, on the one hand, an important presence of Indigenous peoples in Anchorage, and a significant number of Yup'ik priests

in the Diocese of Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska, on the other. In Anchorage, I have also heard a very popular phrase by Alaska Natives for the first but definitely not for the last time that “Anchorage is the biggest Native village in Alaska". This phrase drew my attention to the question of the ongoing Alaska Native rural-to-urban migration and the consequent negotiation of the village lifestyle in a new, urban setting that often occurs in the urban church. I was also interested in why so many Alaska Natives attend the urban Russian Orthodox church and in whether it helps them in the process of adjustment to the city. This discovery motivated me to start searching for an answer to the question why Anchorage is called a Native village despite being an ethnically diverse city and why the urban Orthodox church serves as a gathering place of such a diverse Indigenous population with a significant number of the Yup’ik clergy. Next year I had a possibility to come back and to stay in Anchorage with my family for two years. Thus, selecting Anchorage as my fieldwork site was dictated by personal reasons but also by the potential that I learned about by professional advice and by my trip to Alaska the previous year. In 2017, I met Dr. Medeia Csoba DeHass, a former Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the Alaska Native Studies Program at the University of Alaska Anchorage, who recommended me to examine the dynamics of the Alaska Native village lifeways in relation to urban, non-Indigenous cultural, social, and environmental landscapes.

The Yupiit and the City of Anchorage

Anchorage is a dynamic and ethnically complex city, located on the south-central Alaskan coast, on the traditional lands of the Dena’ina Indigenous Peoples. It is the largest city in the state (291,247 people) with half of the Alaska’s residents living in the city (U.S. Census Bureau Website 2022[1]). The oil industry, federal funding, military bases and growing tourism attract newcomers, but

1 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census redistricting.html. Last accessed January 18th , 2024.

the unstable oil sector and uneven job growth result in a constant population flow to and from the city (U.S. Census Bureau Website 2022).

The city is ethnically and racially diverse including White, Alaska Native and American Indian Asian, Black, Pacific Islander and other inhabitants (U.S. Census Bureau Website 2022). Anchorage is an Alaskan city with the highest concentration of diverse Alaskan Indigenous populations in the state, with the growing rural-to-urban Indigenous migration. Rural Alaska Native peoples are drawn by better employment, education and medical care opportunities and by the presence of the close and extended family members in the city representing the overall, relatively recent urbanization trend among the Indigenous peoples in the Arctic (Csonka & Schweitzer 2004; Kim, 2020).

Yup'ik (in plural Yupiit) derives from the noun *yuk* meaning "person, human being" and the postbase *-pik* meaning "genuine or real or authentic". "Originally the form Yup'ik was used in the northern area…while the form Yupiaq was used in the southern area.., while certain places such as



Figure 1. Map of the Yup'ik region (picture credit CC BY-SA 4.0)

(Chevak, Nunivak, Egegik) had other forms (Cup'ik, Cup'ig, Tarupiaq), but the form Yup'ik is now used as a common term (though not replacing Cup'ik and Cup'ig)" (Yugtun Dictionary Website[2] n.d.).

The Central Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo language spoken in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and in the Bristol Bay region in the Southwestern Alaska is a part of the Eskimo-Aleut family of languages (Jacobson 1995, p.vii). In contrast to the other Indigenous languages, the Yup'ik language remains spoken by approximately 10,000 people, being the most widely spoken Indigenous language in Alaska (Alaska Native Language Center Website[3] n.d.).

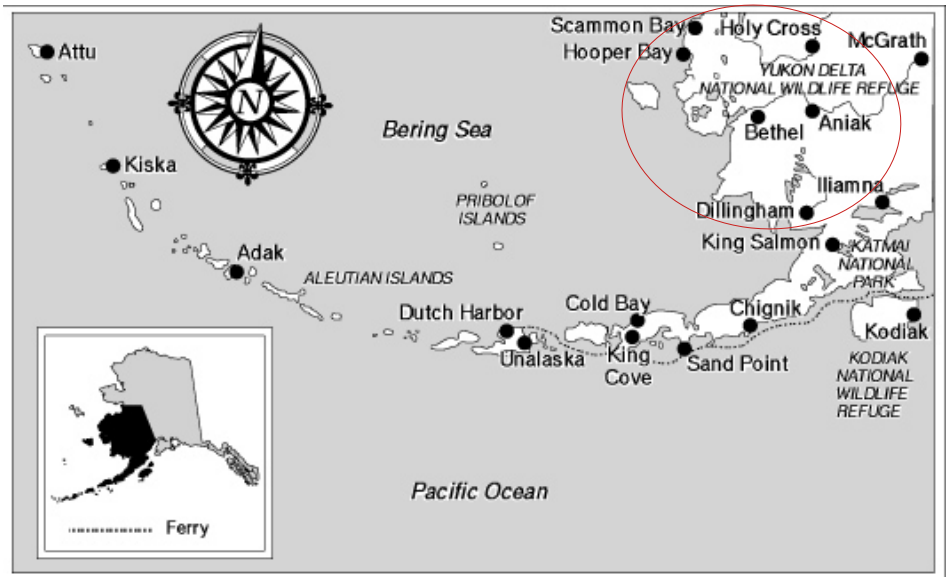


Figure 2. Map of Southwest Alaska with some Yup'ik villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Bristol Bay regions
Cited and retrieved from https://www.alaskateacher.org/five_regions_of_alaska.php

For thousands of years the Yupiit have been living on the territory of Southwest Alaska. Despite the severe climate of the region, it remains one of the richest environments of the Far North

2 https://www.yugtun.com/Yup'ik,Yupiaq Last accessed January 28th, 2024.
3 https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/languages-move/centralakyupik.php. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

in the abundance of subsistence resources such as seals, walrus, and beluga whales, saltwater and freshwater fish, mussels, clams, ducks and geese, moose, caribou and beaver, greens and berries. At the same time due to the absence of “commercially valuable resources" such as bowhead whales, sea otters and gold, the non-Indigenous peoples became interested in the region relatively late (Fienup-Riordan 2020, p. xviiii-p.xxi). Today, the subsistence practices remain vital for sustaining the local economy in the region (Halas & Neufeld 2018; VanStone 1967).

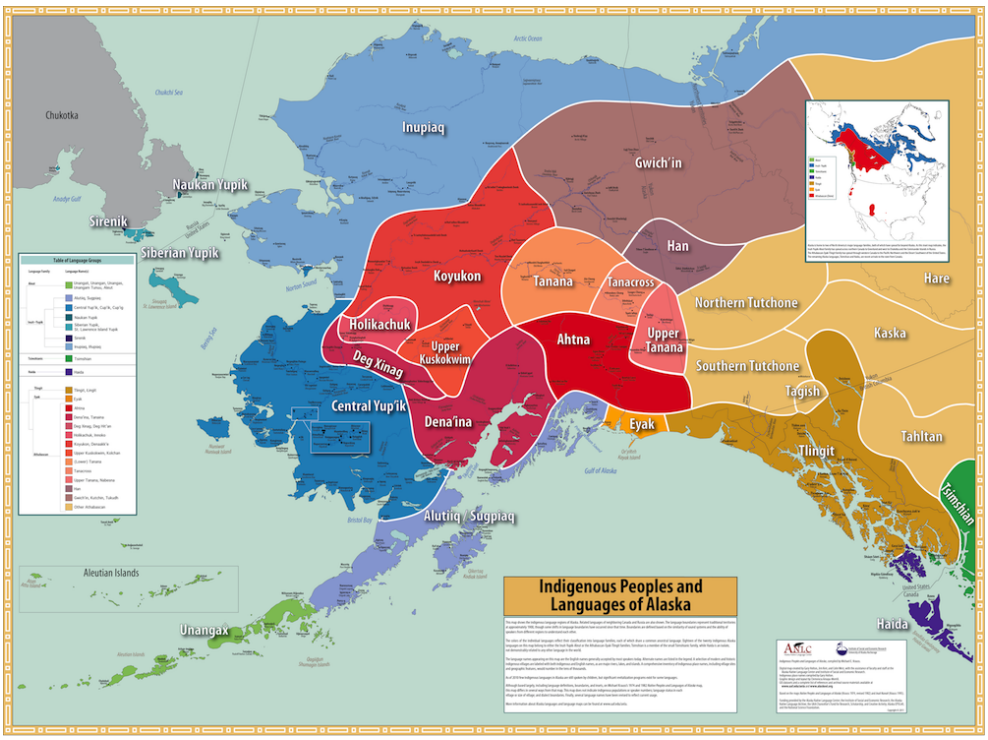


Figure 3. Map of Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska
Cited and Retrieved from https://www.uaf.edu/anla/collections/map/

As for the year 2015, the Yup’ik population remained the largest Indigenous one in Alaska (32 721 people) and in the city of Anchorage (4 652 people) (U.S. Census Bureau Website 2022). The urban Yup’ik and other Indigenous populations remain a minority in the city representing only 7.94 % of the city population (U.S. Census Bureau Website 2022). It is important to mention that the urban Indigenous inhabitants are scattered across the city, thus, I never lived among Indigenous community members, but rather I followed them in their movements across the city to be in their

proximity on a regular basis, joining public Indigenous meetings first, but gradually being invited to close and extended family meetings.

When I came back to Anchorage in 2018 to conduct my fieldwork, I observed the Yupiit being present in many if not in all Indigenous spaces in the city: worshiping at the churches; gathering, dancing, praying at the Alaska Native Medical Center; selling their crafts at different venues; teaching and learning the Yup'ik language at the University of Alaska Anchorage. While having my baby boy, I decided to start learning about Indigenous spaces and meeting Indigenous peoples by attending Indigenous public events. Initially interested in Indigenous Orthodoxy in Alaska, I started to attend services of the Saint Alexis parish that was considered "a village parish" with a Yup'ik priest. I also had a possibility to sign for the Yup'ik language, Yup'ik dance and other Indigenous classes of the Native Studies Program at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Gradually, my focus narrowed down to doing my ethnographic fieldwork in collaboration with the Yup'ik population, reproducing their village lifestyles in different urban spaces while being exposed to the Indigenous and non-Indigenous diversity of the city. I planned to spend two years in the field, however, the Covid-19 pandemic interfered with my plans, so that my family and I stayed in Anchorage for four years. More details on how the pandemic impacted my fieldwork can be found in the next section.

Fieldwork, Positionality, Methodology

Staying in Anchorage with my family had an important impact on the nature of my fieldwork, in particular, having a baby in 2018, while initiating and developing relationships with the urban Yupiit. I was told by the Indigenous instructors to bring the baby to the Yup'ik language class and

to some other Indigenous classes at the university, as habitually all the generations are present at Indigenous gatherings. Walking, standing and sitting in the churches with the baby also drew the attention of the Indigenous females to both of us. Without the baby I would not have been considered as an adult mother and it would have been more difficult for me to build relationships with Indigenous women. Consequently, two-thirds of my collaborators were female adults.

Having been born and raised in Russia, and baptized Russian Orthodox at the end of the Soviet Union era allowed me not to feel a complete stranger in the Russian Orthodox parishes in Anchorage. It did not protect me from some mistakes either that I made because of my superficial knowledge of the Church etiquette and liturgy that were rarely taught in Russia during my childhood and early adulthood years. Besides, the local, Indigenous traditions, such as Starring or Selaviq were new to me. Thus, my position in the church was "delicate" because I was an "insider… based on my religious background" and "an outsider as a non-Native" person (Csoba DeHass 2009, p.13). I was often invited to help by singing in the choir which allowed me to attend the church at unusual times, to observe the relationship of the clergy and the laity from a different perspective and to gain a better understanding of the order of the worship services.

I also collaborated with several Moravian ministries and with a Catholic Native Ministry; in those cases my position was different. However, I was not a complete outsider either, as many Alaska Natives are of Russian descent and many Moravian and Catholic Yupiit have Russian Orthodox relatives. For instance, when I was introduced to the Anchorage Moravian Church members, they tried to establish connections by asking what part of Russia I come from, as they consider the Indigenous peoples of Siberia as their relatives. In addition, I participated in various secular gatherings, for instance, in Yup'ik dance practices where I was a complete outsider.

While attending the courses of the Native Studies Program and Indigenous events and gatherings at the university with the Indigenous instructors and many Indigenous students, while attending religious services and speaking with church leaders and parishioners, I observed the existence of various Yup'ik and other Indigenous social networks often consisting of the extended family members that shape the created Indigenous spaces in the city. I noticed how the Yupiit often tried to position me within the structure of their network connections by asking me where I come from and by often speaking about their Siberian relatives in relation to my own ethnic identity. Thus, I decided to examine in what ways the Yupiit create urban Indigenous spaces by strengthening and maintaining their social networks both in the city and in the village.

As Chossière et al. (2021) note, the topic of "over-research" of minorities and Indigenous communities remains "rarely discussed" in the French academia in contrast to the English-speaking one (p.5). Consequently, as a Russian-French PhD student coming to conduct an ethnographic fieldwork with Alaska Natives, I had little knowledge on and I experienced the challenges related to the question of the research fatigue that Indigenous communities around the world experience (Chossière et al. 2021, Smith 2008).

As many researchers still do, I came to Anchorage from another country (France) to conduct my fieldwork "with the goal of producing my own representation of local experience" (Goldstein 2002, p. 508). As discussed in my article "Challenges in Combining Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge in the Arctic", ethical training for social scientists is not a requirement in all institutions worldwide (Lauter 2023). In 2018 I came to Alaska as a French PhD student without any ethical training and without a clear understanding of what potential Indigenous collaborators expect from social scientists in the United States. In addition, I had no funding for compensating Indigenous

partners for sharing their knowledge and spending their time on interviews necessary for building "equitable research practices" (ARCUS 2022; Ellam Yua et al. 2022).

Acknowledging my lack of ethical training and reviews required by law in the United States, I asked a local Institutional Review Board (IRB) to review my dissertation research proposal. As I had no affiliation with the local university, my request was denied. Despite this constraint as well as the overall challenges IRBs experience in the United States, such as a "conflict of guidelines" (Ghooi 2014, p.61), I completed the IRB online training. I used the available guidelines to create a consent form necessary for conducting interviews in the United States available in the annex of this dissertation. In addition, I spent a significant amount of time to learn from both the Indigenous communities and the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous academia about how to conduct the research in "collaboration [that] helps to gain equality between researcher and 'researched' from its traditional top-down approach" (Lavrillier 2013, p. 107).

One of the first steps to advance in this endeavor was to understand why it was much easier to receive a permission on the part of the Indigenous partners to conduct participant observation during religious and secular community events than to persuade them to participate in semi-structured interviews (Lauter 2023). As the authors of the article "I Spent the First Year Drinking Tea: Exploring Canadian University Researchers' Perspectives on Community-Based Participatory Research Involving Indigenous Peoples", I had to invest a significant amount of time into building relationships of trust with the Yup'ik community members due to the scatteredness and busyness of the Indigenous populations living in the city (Castleden et al. 2012; Lauter 2023). The majority of my collaborators were Yupiit that migrated from the rural areas to the city, however, I also interviewed several Indigenous collaborators originally stemming from other regions and belonging

to different tribes but closely connected to the urban Yup'ik social networks, and one non-Indigenous collaborator - a wife of a Yup'ik priest.

While continuing to attend various Indigenous events in the city, I started to communicate with the Indigenous collaborators asking them about any reasons to avoid being interviewed. I also consulted the corresponding literature (Lauter 2023). The reasons that I learned about as a result of this investigation are the following: distrust based on the past unethical behavior of researchers, on their belonging to Western institutions associated with colonialism and on the nature of short-term relationships between Indigenous collaborators and Western researchers; on lack of sharing the research results with the Indigenous partners; on fear of misinterpretation of the collected data; on confidentiality issues; on different approaches to the concept of expertise. Many Elders in Indigenous communities respect the value of and practice humbleness; they do not consider themselves to be experts. Thus, they might be too skeptical to share their knowledge with Western 'experts' (Lauter 2023, p. 70).

Despite the ethical trainings and committees organized in institutions in the United States and in some other countries, researchers commit errors in initiating and developing their relationships with their Indigenous partners related to a lack of cultural sensitivity (Lauter 2023). Besides, insufficient funding and short-term projects do not allow some researchers to successfully develop relationships with their Indigenous partners, contributing to the status quo (Lauter 2023). In addition, the Indigenous collaborators in Alaska are overwhelmed with the amount of projects that researchers and other stakeholders strive to conduct with their help (Kawagley 1997, Lauter 2023). Some of the Indigenous leaders still have to struggle with the stigma that their knowledge representation is considered non-scientific (Lavrillier & Gabyshev 2018, p. 3).

During my fieldwork, I heard from some of my collaborators that they do not always receive any feedback on the researchers' part and that the study results have never been shared with them. At the same time, sharing remains one of the key practices in the Yup'ik and other Alaska Native communities, both in the rural and in the urban areas, as I am going to examine in Chapter VII. Besides, the insufficient dissemination of research results is connected with the lack of recognition of Indigenous intellectual property (Augusta Reimer as cited in Lauter 2023; Lavrillier & Gabyshev 2017), as the Indigenous collaborators' have no authority over the knowledge shared with the researchers.

Fear of misinterpretation is another reason for the distrust on the part of the Indigenous collaborators (Lauter 2023). Misinterpretation of data remains one of the issues of anthropological knowledge production (De Koning et al. 2019). This issue can partially be resolved by "sharing the results back before publishing" with the Indigenous collaborators for a review (Lauter 2023, p. 68). Two Yup'ik collaborators reviewed some parts of this dissertation, and I will share the dissertation with my collaborators that expressed their interest in reading it, in case it is successfully defended and published.

Confidentiality challenges refer back to the question of the produced knowledge dissemination, as some of my collaborators were reluctant to participate in interviews even under the condition of remaining anonymous, because other community members could recognize them by the manner they share their knowledge and perspectives (Lauter 2023, p.69). For this dissertation and for further publications I decided to filter the data, while constantly thinking about my Indigenous partners as about potential readers of my work (Lauter 2023). While Indigenous sovereignty and confidentiality must be respected by researchers (Kawerak, Inc. Website[4] 2018), I would like to point out that to draw the line between being able to respect the Indigenous guidelines

4 https://kawerak.org/natural-resources/social-science/. Last accessed 26th , 2024.

and protocols and providing a thorough anthropological analysis remains a difficult task that requires a constant re-evaluation and discussion with collaborators. Hence, I am providing my analysis at this stage of my research based on the data collected during my four-year fieldwork as well as on the feedback I received from two of my Indigenous collaborators on some parts of this dissertation. Nevertheless, I am open to clean it up for future publications in case I receive any comment from the Indigenous readers and collaborators.

Building long-term relationships with the Indigenous collaborators is indispensable for the development of trust; it is a time-consuming process (Ellam Yua et al. 2022). Many researchers experience time and budget constraints and collaborate with the Indigenous partners for short periods of time which does not contribute to the development of trustful relationships and to the researchers' good reputation, as Indigenous partners may not be interested in investing into short-term collaborations (Augusta Reimer[5], personal communication, 2019; Lauter 2023). Due to the pandemic, I extended my fieldwork to four years. This allowed me to develop friendships with some of the partners despite not living within the Indigenous communities. I also conducted around half of the interviews by the year 2022 which was my last year of fieldwork, due to the long-term investment into the relationships with the Indigenous partners.

Differences in Western and Indigenous approaches towards the concept of expertise might be one of the reasons I was more willingly allowed to conduct participant observation rather than semi-structured interviews. Lifetime learning is one of the Yup'ik key values (Fienup-Riordan as cited in Lauter 2023). Learning by observation and by watching is a part of the Yup'ik educational style, as I discuss in Chapter VII. Researchers strive to complete their research goals and to become 'experts' in their field, while life-time experience is needed to become an Elder in an Indigenous community (Lauter 2023). Indigenous Elders are supposed to humbly transfer the accumulated

5 In her seventies

knowledge from their ancestors to the younger generations. Thus, the Western knowledge of expertise might be skeptically viewed by the Indigenous Elders, while the value of humility might prevent them from considering themselves as experts on a topic, and, consequently, from sharing knowledge with Western researchers (Lauter 2023). Consequently, my collaborators exposed me to learning (participant observation) situations rather than answering my questions during semi-structured interviews.

Speaking about the methodology implemented, prolonged engagement was one of the methods that I used to validate my findings during four years in the field (Lauter 2023). “Prolonged engagement is the process by which the researcher engages in the target context/culture for a period of time that is sufficient to ensure a broad understanding of the culture, test for misinformation or misinterpretations, and build trust with members of the culture” (Varjas et al. 2005, p. 248). I started my investigation by going to Alaska for three weeks in August 2017. I settled down in the city of Anchorage and became a mother in 2018 with a plan to finish my fieldwork in 2020. While the extension of my fieldwork until 2022 was caused by the Covid-19 pandemic that limited possibilities of the participant observations between 2020 and 2022, it allowed me to conduct more semi-structured interviews over the telephone and over Zoom, as some of the collaborators had extra time for interviews, while staying at home. Some participant observations were also conducted over Zoom, for instance, with the Moravian churches and ministries that gathered online. In 2022 I moved to El Paso, Texas to start my job of an Assistant Professor of Instruction in anthropology. I have been writing my dissertation since 2023.

As I discuss in Chapter IV, there is a lack of permanent, secular Indigenous spaces in Anchorage, while attending churches allow for regular meetings with the Indigenous social networks. Consequently, I spent more time and collected more data from the religious institutions.

However, as I knew that not all the urban Yupiit go to churches, I decided to expand my research to secular spaces. In addition to attending the more permanent, religious spaces, I regularly followed and observed the Yupiit and other Alaska Natives moving and creating non-religious, less permanent spaces in the city.

To summarize, my four-year fieldwork may be characterized as a series of participant observations with the total of thirty-three semi-structured, conducted interviews that my collaborators kindly agreed on for a moderate compensation.

Theoretical Framework

As I discuss in the next chapter, urban anthropologists focused on the opposition 'rural-urban' until the 1960s, when they started to look at the concept in terms of a continuum. For instance, Abu-Lughod (1961) conducted her fieldwork in Cairo, Egypt and categorized migrants from the rural areas into two main groups: the younger generation migrating to the city for education that was ready to assimilate; the other category of migrants who tried to reproduce the village lifestyle in the city. She emphasized the agency of this second category that consisted in shaping the city culture according to their needs, while adjusting to the city lifestyle. Abu-Lughod considered migrants as active actors who shape the city culture, while at the same time adjusting to it. Despite the fact that this approach of interconnectedness between the village and the city has been developing ever since, the opposition 'rural-urban' has not yet completely disappeared from the debates on urban anthropology. In her review of "Theorizing the City: Recent Research in Urban Anthropology" by Pardo & Prato, Toulson (2015) questions whether the city is "distinctive" enough to be considered as an independent research field (p. 31).

The Indigenous rural-to-urban migration in North America and in the Arctic has been described by numerous scholars not as a process leading to the loss of culture but rather an extension of the village lifestyles to the city, including the extension of kinship ties and social networks (Clifford 2020, Csonka & Schweitzer 2004; Fienup-Riordan 2000b, Voorhees 2010). Indigenous peoples, migrating to the city, claim and create Indigenous spaces by shaping the urban landscapes in accordance with their own needs (Carli 2012). In this dissertation I apply the concept of "ruralization of the city" to examine the traditional practices that the Yup'ik people migrating to the city of Anchorage transplant by creating Indigenous spaces and by maintaining ties with the social networks in the village (Krause 2013). I contend that the oscillatory nature of the Yup'ik migration to the city and back to the village contributes to the process, as the Yupiit depend on both rural and urban social networks that they strengthen on a regular basis, while at the same time adjusting their lifestyles to the urban setting.

Feldman (2009) addressed the need of carrying more ethnographic research in ethnically complex Alaska urban areas, defining the urban Alaskan research "as nearly absent" (p. 6). Since 2009 more researchers have focused on the city, including the research on the migration to and life of the Indigenous populations in the city (Kim 2020; Senungetuk 2017; Voorhees 2010). Nevertheless, the research concentrated on the rural areas remains prevailing. Thus, this dissertation aims at filling in the gaps in the research on how urbanization and migration to the city shape the Indigenous social networks and traditional activities that serve as a vehicle of reproducing the village lifestyles. In addition, this study examines how the urban Indigenous people shape the urban landscape on their part.

Defining Research Terms and Glossary

In this section I am going to elaborate on the main terms that I use in this dissertation. I would like to start with defining 'traditions'. Some Yupiit in the city of Anchorage that I met referred to their "traditions, traditional values, traditional knowledge" in their discourse. In the past, Western researchers often contrasted 'tradition' and 'modernity' (Evans-Pritchard 1940, Lévi-Strauss 1963, Whorf 1956). As Graburn (2008) contended, "tradition is usually seen as the opposite to modernity, yet it is much loved by modernity. Traditions are continually being created, not in some past time immemorial, but during modernity. Even these new, historically created phenomena are often quickly assumed to be age-old or timeless, because people want them to be so and because the customs become invested with authority that is difficult to challenge" (p.6). In the situation of a constant change, for instance, due to rural-to-urban migration, the Yupiit regularly renegotiate their identity and what it means to be Yup'ik in the urban setting being exposed to the urban Indigenous and non-Indigenous diversity on a daily basis.

The Yup'ik tribes united in the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) were among the tribes and tribal organizations that signed a letter to the Council of Environmental Quality and to the Office of Science and Technology Policy in which the term of "traditional knowledge" was defined: [Kawerak] "uses the term Traditional Knowledge as a specific subset of that Indigenous Knowledge pertaining specifically to expert knowledge that is long-term, intergenerational, and which is adaptive but also rooted in deep history" (Kawerak Inc. Website[6] 2022). Thus, the Indigenous populations view their traditional knowledge as connecting the past

6 https://kawerak.org/natural-resources/social-science/. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.

with the present, but also as something that adapts to the contemporary lifestyle. In the section “The Future is Traditional” of their book *Nunakun-gguq Ciutengqertut. They Say They Have Ears Through the Ground*, Fienup-Riordan et al. (2020) referred to the Yup’ik Elders’ efforts to share the *ircenrraat* (instructions) with the younger generation because “holding onto one’s traditions" from the past by communicating them in the present helps “shape the future” (p. 378).

As DeHass (2014) put it, “traditions govern and are associated with norms, and norms are the boundaries to which a group is able to define their own understandings and responses to an event” (p.74). Thus, the reinvented and renegotiated traditions provide continuity of the past with the present and even with the future by strengthening the Indigenous self-determination. Similarly, as Lavrillier (2005) argued, some Indigenous populations in Siberia developed the movement of “return to tradition” as it allowed them to acquire a certain degree of autonomy (p.4). Thus, the contemporary rituals of the Evenks that Lavrillier studied “oscillate between traditions, adaptation and reinvention” (Lavrillier 2005., p.6). Csonka & Schweitzer (2004) in a discussion of what “return to traditions" means, argued that this is a complex process of “an active re-creation of culture and symbols” that function in different ways depending on “current contexts” (p.50). Thus, I define urban traditions as the traditional knowledge and practices that the migrating Yupiit bring from the village to the city and that they share, use and renegotiate to reproduce the village lifestyle. This process helps them shape the city according to their own needs. At the same time the Yupiit renegotiate these traditions in order to adapt to the urban lifestyle. As for the terms ‘negotiation’ and ‘renegotiation’, I use the term ‘negotiation’ referring to the strategies the Yupiit have used to reinvent their traditions as a response to the colonization and Christianization. I propose the term “renegotiation” in relation to the process of shaping the traditions brought by the Yupiit from the village to the city and being used by them to adjust to it.

I call most of my collaborators Yupiit (plural from Yup'ik) because they define themselves as being Yupiit, even though they can be of mixed origin and they may or may not speak the Yup'ik language. I also use the term collaborators – Yup'ik and Indigenous – in relation to the people who shared their knowledge and perspectives with me by allowing me to learn through participating in their activities and practices, by answering my questions and by participating in my interviews. I support Lassiter's (2022) definition of "collaborative ethnography" as "an approach to ethnography that deliberately and explicitly emphasizes collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it - from project conceptualization, to fieldwork, and, especially, through the writing process. Collaborative ethnography invites commentary from our consultants and seeks to make that commentary overtly part of the ethnographic text as it develops" (p.16). Only several collaborators reviewed some of the parts of this dissertation due to a lack of time. Nevertheless, many of my collaborators allowed me to learn by watching, by observing, by asking informal questions and by receiving explanations, not by simply sharing their knowledge via semi-structured interviews.

Lastly, when I refer to the Alaska communities and individuals, I use the terms Indigenous and Alaska Native as synonyms. Mossolova (2020) used the term Indigenous in relation to the communities of the North, while referring to Alaskan communities as to Native Alaskans, arguing along with Csoba DeHass (2009) that the term "Alaska Native" is used by the communities themselves (p. 149). While the urban Yup'ik and other communities define themselves as Alaska Natives referring to their collective Alaska Native identity, the term Indigenous is also commonly used in the urban context, for instance, by the Indigenous scholars and students but also by many community members participating in different gatherings, for instance, dedicated to the Indigenous Peoples Day or to the Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women Day.

Figure 4. Glossary

Aaniq	A Yup'ik ceremony that introduced the Bladder Festival
Agayuyaraq	Yup'ik Annual Masked Dances
Alaska Natives	Indigenous Peoples of Alaska
Angalguk	Yup'ik shaman
(Alaskan) Athabascans	Alaska Natives of the Athabasckan-speaking ethnolinguistic group living in the interior of Alaska
Ayuq	Labrador tea
Collaborators	Alaska Native Peoples who shared their knowledge and perspectives with me by allowing me to learn through participating in their activities and practices, by answering my questions and by participating in my interviews
Elriq	Yup'ik Feast of the Dead
Eyak	Alaska Native Peoples, original inhabitants of the Copper River Delta and of the territory near the town of Cordova
(Alaskan) Haida	Alaska Native Peoples living in Southeast Alaska
Indigenous	Alaska Natives
Inupiaq	Alaska Native Peoples living in Northwest Alaska
Kelek	Or Itruka'ar: Yup'ik Inviting-In Feast
Kevgiq	Yup'ik Messenger Feast
Kolyadi	Carpatho-Russian folk carols introduced in Alaska together with the Starring celebration in the 19th century
Matushka	Wife of an Orthodox priest
Mukluks	Traditional Yup'ik boots
Petugtaq	Yup'ik Asking Festival
Nakaciuq	Yup'ik Bladder Festival
Neqlernaq	Brant goose

Qaariitaaq	Yup’ik Festival (participants with painted faces or masks would go to households asking for food)
Qanruyutet	Instructions or teachings that Yup’ik Elders pass down
Qaspeq	Men’s, ceremonial, community house
Sugpiaq	Alaska Native inhabitants of the southern-central coast of Alaska
(Alaskan) Tlingit	Alaska Native inhabitants of Southeast Alaska
Tribe	An Indigenous society in Alaska; there are 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska
Tsimshian	Alaska Native Peoples living in Southeast Alaska
Uluaq	Yup’ik knife
Unangan	Or Aleuts: Indigenous peoples of the Aleutian Islands; plural from Unangax̂ (Unangas in plural in the western dialect and Unangan in plural) in the eastern dialect
White	Or Caucasian, a racial classification of people of mostly European ancestry
Yuraq	Yup’ik dancing

Overview of Chapters

In this dissertation I focus on everyday strategies Yup’ik Indigenous people living in urban areas of Alaska use to preserve, negotiate, and reinterpret their traditional practices and to reproduce the village lifestyle contributing to the ruralization of the city. The first chapter touches upon the questions of theoretical frameworks around the topic of urban anthropology. In this chapter I will discuss the historical development of urban anthropology field, and the debates that this development brought about, also elaborating on the theories of the rural-to-urban migration, and on the question of identity. As the Yupiit define themselves as Alaska Natives, being a part of the Alaska Native collective identity, negotiating and strategically using it in the city to shape urban

spaces and to create their own, Alaska Native spaces, the topic of the collective identity will also be discussed. In addition, in this chapter I will examine the existing ethnographies about the Yupiit and their neighbors – Inupiat, and, lastly, the urban ethnographies conducted in the city of Anchorage in collaboration with the Yup'ik and Inupiaq populations.

In Chapter II I will elaborate on the Yup'ik social organization and worldviews by complementing the Yup'ik narrative with the description of the first ethnographic accounts of the Western explorers. The impact of colonization on the Yup'ik social organization will also be examined. I will analyze the development of the Indigenous political institutions and the roles they play in the negotiation of the Yup'ik and Alaska Native identity today.

Chapter III will be dedicated to the Christianization of the Yupiit by three Christian denominations: Russian Orthodox, Moravian and Catholic. It will focus on the interactions of the Yupiit with each of them and the strategical choices made by the Yupiit in the process of adaptation to Christianity and in the process of creation of Indigenous Christianity both in the village and in the city.

Chapter IV will be on the study of the city of Anchorage that is considered as the largest village in Alaska by Alaska Native peoples. I will elaborate on the historical and current development of the city and on the urban Indigenous collective identity being shaped by a constant migration flow of the Indigenous populations from different Alaskan regions. My focus will also be on what ways the Yupiit contribute to ruralizing the city by the creation of urban Indigenous spaces and by reproducing the village lifestyle, while being shaped by the urban diversity in return.

In Chapter V, I will elaborate on how the Yupiit recreate and support the urban religious denominations that emerged and expanded with the increasing migration of the Indigenous populations to the city. I will examine in what ways the religious denominations serve as a vehicle to recreate the village lifestyle. The strategies the Yupiit and other Indigenous populations use to embrace the religious and ethnic diversity in the city of Anchorage will also be analyzed.

Chapter VI will be dedicated to the impact of the oscillatory nature of migration on the Yupiit living between the city and the village: in this chapter I will analyze its impact on the Yup'ik subsistence activities, on sharing practices, on the role of Native food in the negotiation of the Yup'ik identity in the city, on current naming and adoption practices that help the Yupiit in maintaining the ties between the village and the city, while contributing to the ruralization of the city and to the urbanization of the village.

Finally, in this Chapter VII, I will concentrate on how the Yupiit create and renegotiate Indigenous spaces in the city, while maintaining the ties within the urban Indigenous communities as well as social networks with the rural communities. I will demonstrate this by the examples of their participation in the regular Yup'ik dancing practices and traditional healing workshops and sessions, of teaching and learning the Yup'ik language, of creating the crafts in the urban setting.

CHAPTER I: STATE OF THE ART

Urban Anthropology: A Retrospective and Today

Urban anthropology is a relatively young field of research with a curious history of development within the framework of social and cultural anthropology. While research in urban settings attracted sociologists' attention starting from the early 20th century, anthropologists began to pay closer attention to the field much later, relying on the theoretical heritage of urban studies set by the sociology researchers in the field. Until today some researchers seem to struggle with distinguishing between urban anthropology and sociology, returning to the question of why urban anthropology has long been under-analyzed and under-theorized, while the definition of urban anthropology continues to be at the core of academic dispute (Low 1996; Pardo & Prato 2012; Toulson 2015). I support the argumentation that goes towards the problem of the field under-theorizing, so that a review of the urban anthropological history is necessary, in order to examine what kind of theoretical and methodological challenges urban anthropologists experience, while cities continue to grow unprecedentedly, requiring more anthropologists to focus their research on urban settings. I will start with a discussion of a historical overview of urban anthropology. I will then focus on the question of similarities and differences of urban anthropology and urban sociology. I will examine the concepts of urban, urbanization and urbanism. I will then concentrate

on one of the central research topics of urban anthropologists: rural-to-urban migration. Finally, I will elaborate on the concepts of identity, ethnicity and tradition.

Historical Overview of Urban Anthropology

Urban anthropology was born out of the sociologist heritage of the Chicago School of Urban Ecology under the leadership of Robert Ezra Park, a sociologist, who, recruited to the Department of Sociology of the University of Chicago in 1914, brought the idea elaborated by the German sociological tradition that " the city [that] was a force in world history, capable of shaping and releasing human nature in new ways" (Hannerz 1980). Thus, choosing ethnography as their main method of study, Park and his scholar group were interested in cities as ecological systems with their "natural areas", ethnic enclaves and slums, for exploring social interaction. These areas were in constant development and in competition with each other. Geographically based exploration with an aim to understand differences in the development of city areas was supported by his colleague Burgess and others, while cultural process, land and population were seen as a part of the city institution. Louis Wirth, another Chicago School representative, influenced the theoretical stance of the sociological but also of the early anthropological research with his *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938). He saw the city as an institution with a social organization characterized by its size, density and the heterogeneity of its inhabitants, bringing him back to the German sociological tradition of the 19th century.

Influenced by Tönnies' and Wirth's work, Robert Redfield (1947) carried out his research in the village of Tepoztlan and later on the Yucatan peninsula, focusing on folk societies and

theorizing ‘a folk-urban continuum’. He opposed urban life and folk society, by attracting anthropologists’ attention to the question of how folk societies transform, while in contact with the urban setting. Redfield’s work stimulated U.S. anthropologists to focus their research on rural-to-urban migration with a concentration on city neighborhoods from the 1930s to the 1950s, the trend that continued up until the 1960s. In accordance with the anthropological tradition to study “exotic others”, they focused on migration dynamics, focusing on minorities, choosing the “particularistic” approach that did not imply studying the city as a whole (Jones & Rogers 2016; Toulson 2016). In the 1930s, British anthropologists became interested in the urbanization of African countries, when the Rhodes Livingstone Institute started to conduct field research on the process of social transformation. In the 1940s, Max Gluckman became a Chair of the Social Anthropology Department at the University of Manchester and formed the Manchester School that concentrated their research on both rural and urban areas, with the main focus on how migration impacted the rural villages. The Manchester School studied migration as a process, characterized by ‘detribalization’ or detachment from an ethnic identity (Gluckman 1945, p.13). Despite the fact that they discussed the city’s complexity, the Manchester school’s interest in case studies and situational analysis contributed to the development of a network theory (Pardo & Prato 2013), based on the ways in which social relationships are linked to each other, an approach that remains an important tool for urban research in a more elaborate form today.

In France, the sociologist and anthropologist Georges Balandier created the *Centre d’études africaines* in 1957. Two years earlier he published two theses, one on a comparative historical sociology of colonialism and anti-colonialism, the other, titled, *Sociologie des Brazzavilles Noires*, dedicated to the urban Africa. In the latter he analyzed rural migration, religious and political organization, conflicts and tensions; he used innovative methodological approaches including biographies and psychological tests. Balandier contributed significantly to anthropology by opening

a large field of studies concentrating on dynamic social and cultural changes, questions of power and politics and studying new domains such as urbanization, religious and political protest movements, in contrast to structural anthropology that was predominant in France at the time. In his book *Afrique Ambiguë* (1957) from the *Terre Humaine* collection, Balandier further developed the narrative ethnography approach introduced by Jean Malaurie in 1955 with *Les Derniers Rois de Thulé i*n the collection and by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques*. Nevertheless, as far as urban anthropology is concerned, it developed in France at a much slower pace for several reasons. One of them was that the urbanization of Africa under the French influence did not occur at the same rhythm as compared to the British one. The other reason was that most French anthropologists preferred to focus on rural areas, while the preeminent structuralist perspective centered rather on isolated communities. Thus, these factors contributed to decreasing interest of French anthropologists in urban African settings.

As for other countries, in the 1960s, urban anthropological research expanded due to the worldwide increase of migration to cities, giving rise to studies related to poverty, cultural adaptation, ethnic minorities, network relations (Abu-Lughod, 1961; Lewis, 1960; Liebow, 1967). However, anthropological research, in general, continued to traditionally focus on smaller communities, neglecting their connection to the wider city processes, thus, "the city [remaining] the locus rather than the focus" of research, as Hannerz (1980) put it. Overall, working in urban areas did not result in important theoretical and methodological shifts but it was mostly a reflection of those methods that have already existed. However, starting from the 1970s and through the 1980s, there was a shift in urban anthropology towards an interest in "urban community studies" (Jones & Rogers, 2016), with the works of scholars such as Keith Hart (1973), Thomas Belmonte (2005), who included into their studies broader political and economic perspectives. It is also important to mention Leeds' work (1979) on the city as the point of articulation between supralocal and local

linkages as well as his model of the flow of goods, cash, labor and services between the rural and the urban, that are still being used in urban analysis.

The most important shift in the urban anthropological study occurred with the development of political economy research by authors such as Hannerz (1980) and Holston (1989) that resulted in further ethnographies examining how urban experiences are influenced by structural forces, for instance, the one by Philippe Bourgois in *Search of Respect* (1993), an account of the Puerto Rican crack cocaine dealers in Spanish Harlem, describing how rapid economic change can create structural inequalities.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, many urban anthropologists have been working in the field of political ecology (Rademacher 2015), examining and theorizing spatiality, debating "the complex nature of embodied, gendered, or inscribed spaces" (Augé 2002; 2009; Low 2003), urban circulation (Sopranzetti as cited in Low 2019), environmental injustice and gentrification and sustainability (Checker & Fischer as cited in Low 2019). Urban ethnographers analyze how migration to the city shapes people's life in the face of discrimination, political and environmental injustice. One of the main current debates remains the one about researching the city or in the city that is closely connected to debates about the theoretical and methodological independence of urban anthropology from urban sociology which is going to be discussed in the next section.

Urban Anthropology versus Urban Sociology

Analyzing Pardo and Prato's *Anthropology in the City* (2012), Toulson (2015) examined the history of neglect of the urban by the anthropological field. According to Toulson, the urban was traditionally seen as the prerogative of sociology, while anthropology was focused on the "exotic" Other. The British early functionalist theoretical traditions followed the notion of organic analogy and saw society as a body, thus experiencing difficulties in theorizing complex urban spaces. In the United States, there was "little space for the urban in Boas' s cultural anthropology with a focus on a particular subject" (Toulson 2015). This tendency to focus on smaller rural and urban areas continues to persist among anthropologists, despite the increasing interest in growing city populations.

The definition of urban anthropology continues to be at the core of academic dispute (Prato & Pardo, 2013). The most important point of discussion concerns the choice of urban anthropologists to conduct research either *of the city* or *in the city*. Some scholars define the city as a specific social institution insisting on its proper dynamics, while others concentrate on carrying out research in smaller urban areas. In 1977, Basham and Degroot made an assumption that urban anthropology was "peripheral to the discipline as a whole". Urban anthropology was seen by Shack as "the sociology of the 1940s revisited" (Shack as cited in Hannerz 1980). Decades later, urban anthropology still seems to remain a minor specialization in the discipline of anthropology with its theoretical and methodological challenges, in comparison to anthropology of religion, economic

anthropology and other fields. While anthropological research touches upon topics and issues within an urbanized context, urbanization is usually a focus of sociological, geographical or political science research (Antweiler 2018). At the same time, “with half of humanity already living in towns and cities, growing to two thirds in the next fifty years, it is undeniable that their research in urban settings is increasingly topical and needed as western and non-western society is quickly becoming urban or mega-urban” (Pardo & Prato 2012). What are the reasons for urban anthropology to still play such a modest role in the discipline, while research on urban populations in urban settings is becoming more and more indispensable to carry out? Is it the neglect of the urban by the discipline that delayed its development? Or does the challenge lie in the fact that urban anthropology still struggles to distinguish itself from the urban sociological tradition set by the Chicago School between the 1920s and 1940s?

Indeed, as Ulf Hannerz (1980) pointed out, the holistic approach to analyzing the city was developed by the Chicago School of Sociology rather than by the field of anthropology. However, as Jones & Rodgers (2016) indicated, this could be explained to a certain extent by the fact that the boundaries between the two disciplines were previously blurred, while both shared several key foundational intellectual figures such as Immanuel Kant, Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. They also pointed out the often overlooked fact that until 1929 the Chicago Department of Sociology held the name of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, while emphasizing the clear influence of Alfred Radcliffe-Brown’s structural functionalism on Park’s ecological perspective. In addition, Park and his colleagues borrowed from anthropology the ethnographic method of conducting research, involving participant observation. However, what Jones & Rodgers reproached to urban anthropologists is that, at some point, they took a “particularistic” approach by focusing on the neighborhood studies, as sociologists continued to develop a holistic approach to the study of the city, while concentrating on marginal communities to understand the cutting edge of the city life (p.

9). Analyzing today's developing holistic approach to studying the city by urban anthropologists, they came to the same conclusion, as Shack in 1972, that today's urban anthropologists have been recently revisiting the holistic approach to the study of the city originally developed by the Chicago School of Sociology from which they deviated in the 1960s. They see the future of urban anthropology to consist in offering new theoretical approaches to anthropologists and urbanism-related research to social sciences, in general, by conducting comparative research of the cities (Jones & Rodgers 2016). At the same time, in contrast to this view, a question asked by Toulson (2015) of how to study urbanism in cities from a comparative perspective while taking into consideration their distinctiveness remains open. In the next section, I would like to focus on the urbanism concept, to continue the discussion on today's urban anthropology debates.

Urban, Urbanism and Urbanization

Even though it would probably be fair to attribute the first collaborative academic effort to understand urban phenomena to the Chicago School during the 1920s and 1930s, sociological theoretical influences that their members encountered need to be addressed first, as fairly suggested by Pardo & Prato (2013). Before addressing those, I would like to point out that even though "the urban" and "the city" have been used as synonyms in the early sociological tradition in contrast to "the rural", there is a distinction between a city, a town and city suburbs, that are all considered as a part of the urban setting.

The early theorizations of the nature of urban life were concerned with the question of the dichotomy of rural and urban, drawn from, among others, the sociological classical work of Tönnies

(1887) who distinguished *Gemeinschaft* (community), that refers to traditional rural communities characterized by integration and collectivity, in contrast to *Gesellschaft* (society), that is associated with urban contractual social relations and individualization. Similarly, Durkheim (1897) in his work *Le Suicide* argued that, in general, suicides occurred more frequently in big cities than in towns and in villages, and that suicides were closely related to urban civilization, contributing further to the development of the rural and urban dichotomy concept. Both Simmel (2002 [1903]) and Spengler (1962) emphasized the intellectualistic character of the city in contrast to the country setting.

Influenced by these sociological trends, Park (1915) attributed the intellectual development to the mobility of a population, while connecting the radical change of the material conditions with the concentration of the populations in the city. He saw the city or the urban as "a mosaic of little worlds which touch but do not interpenetrate" (p. 608). Park assumed that the city is a sum of the habits and customs of the people who inhabit it, thus, the city "possesses a moral as well as a physical organization [that] interact to modify one another" (p. 578). The group of scholars under his leadership concentrated on studying these "little worlds", in particular, dynamic marginal populations and minorities in order to understand the broader dynamics of the city as an organism, using the ethnographic method of research.

In his turn, Wirth in his *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938) worked further on defining the city "as a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of heterogeneous individuals", whose interaction produces instability and insecurity. Thus, according to Wirth, cities should be compared according to their size, density and the heterogeneity of their populations, since the larger the city is, the more specific characteristics of urbanism can be seen. The main goal of the sociologist is to find specific forms of social action and organization that appear in large settings with a high degree

of density and of heterogeneity. Hence Wirth pleased in favor of a more holistic approach at analyzing different kinds of urbanism in order to acquire "a perspective for the comprehension of the salient problems not only of urban civilization but of contemporary society as a whole" (Wirth 1940). Influenced by Max Weber and other sociologists of the 19th century, he connected higher density and larger number of population with impersonality, creating the social void and underlining the transitory character of the urban-social relationship. Impersonality and indifference that characterize the division of labor in an urban setting, result in increased competition, mutual exploitation and depersonalization (Wirth 1938). He also followed the idea of Durkheim stating that mental suicides and mental breakdown are the consequence of urbanism as a way of life. What was appealing about Wirth's formulation of urbanism, is his accent on social relations, in contrast to ecological thinking which dominated the Chicago sociologists (Hannerz 1980). However, one of the main criticisms of his theory is that Wirth saw the city as a closed system with a one-way influence, reshaping its population. Another criticism concerned his view of the city as an ideal with a very large, very dense and very heterogeneous population is the question of how dense, large and heterogeneous a community should be in order for it to be defined as urban (Hannerz 1980, p.255). Oscar Lewis (1970) argued that the variables of size, density and heterogeneity are not pivotal for determining social life:

> "There are many intervening variables. Social life is not a mass phenomenon. It occurs for the most part in small groups, within the family, within households, within neighborhoods, within the church, formal and informal groups, and so on. Any generalizations about the nature of social life in the city must be based on careful studies of these smaller universes rather than a priori statements about the city as a whole" (Lewis 1970, p.60).

Lewis based his criticisms on the results of his fieldwork in the neighborhood of Mexico City, discovering that extended family ties did not weaken in the urban setting, thus, it did not lead to impersonality and anomie. Hannerz (1980) further argued that urbanism cannot be considered as a fixed combination of characteristics, with the exception of the division of labor that stands in a special relationship to the size and density of the city.

Redfield and Singer in their article "The Cultural Role of Cities" (1954), while studying the cultural role of particular cities in relation to their local hinterlands of towns and villages, distinguished 'orthogenetic' and 'heterogenetic' ideal type cities. The transformation of cities is directly connected with civilization. The first ones are "religious and intellectual centers for the learning, authority and perhaps doctrine that transform the implicit 'little traditions' of the local non-urban cultures into an explicit and systematic 'great tradition'" (p.55). The second type of cities is characterized by creation of original modes of thought that may be above or in conflict with old cultures and civilizations. There are, thus, two patterns of urbanization: primary and secondary. Primary urbanization transforms a pre-civilized folk society into a peasant society and correlated urban center. Traditions of the folk society dominate civilization, even though it may sometimes face occasional intrusions of other cultures. If intrusions of foreign people and cultures are intense and rapid, an indigenous civilization may be destroyed by de-urbanization or it may be transformed into a mix with other civilizations, which leads to the secondary pattern of urbanization that involves a partial urbanization of the indigenous civilization. It produces a new form of urban life in conflict with ancient traditions as well as new social types in both the rural and urban settings (Redfield & Singer 1954). Further, Gutkind's Marxist perspective (1983) defined an urban setting not in relation to its density but rather to specific social relations that differentiates it from a rural one. Speaking about the social structure of the city, Hannerz (1980) argued that urbanism may allow notable transformations of city dwellers, but they do not merely adapt: they create and

combine roles in different ways. He defines an urban setting as a “collection of individuals who exist as social beings primarily through their roles” (p.249). The social structure of the city is defined by the relationships by which urbanites are linked to each other through various components of their role repertoires (Hannerz 1980). Despite numerous possibilities of differentiation, he categorizes several urban existence modes: encapsulation, segregativity, integrativity, and solitude. While encapsulated urbanites limit the use of city opportunities, individuals engaged in segregativity have several separated segments in their network. An integrative urbanites’ network is spread without a particular concentration in a domain. Solitude may be a temporary state of city newcomers and it can be characterized by “few personal disclosures in [their] relationships (Hannerz 1980, p. 254). Hannerz also suggested that roles should be collected in the domains of household and kinship, neighborhood, recreation and traffic, the latter two partially corresponding to Wirth’s idea of impersonality, being a characteristic of the urban. Different types of cities define how differentiated the kinds of roles are. Citing the British travel writer and essayist Jonathan Raban and his book *Soft City,* Hannerz underlines the plastic nature of the urban, that is shaped by identities of its inhabitants and that, in its turn, shapes them, while they resist the identities being imposed upon the urban. In regard to the modes of urban existence identified by Hannerz, most of my informants follow both the "intergrativity” and “the segregativity” mode of urban life, depending on, among other factors, job positions they hold. They rely on their kinship and extended family ties for living in the city. Hence they share the same network of people they communicate with. They may, however, separate their job-related network from the extended family network, tending towards “the segregativity” mode of life. The churches and Indigenous community gatherings, my informants attend in the city, following their village traditions, play an important role in maintaining the “integrativity” mode of life, as, often, their main extended family network is located within the churches and community spaces they attend. Therefore, they heavily rely on these organizations for managing their networks that are still closely

connected to villages. The next section will touch upon this question of rural to urban migration from the urban anthropological point of view.

Rural-Urban Migration

Sociologists and thinkers of the late 19th and early 20th century such as Tönnies, Simmel and Spengler contrasted rural to urban creating the theoretical framework for the rural and urban dichotomy, emphasizing the collective nature of the former and individualism and impersonality being the characteristic of the latter. The Chicago school went further, with Park (1915) stating that the city life results in a "break of family ties" and in its substitution with vocational interests. Max Weber (1921) argued that the city's increase in number of inhabitants changes social relationships, creating a lack of "personal mutual acquaintance". Although Wirth (1938) saw rural-folk and urban-industrial societies as two poles or ideal types, he suggested that finding an abrupt and discontinuous variation between urban and rural types of personality should not be expected. However, he agreed with Park and Weber in that the bonds of kinship, of neighborliness, of extended families living together for generations in a rural environment weaken under the influence of the city density and heterogeneity, while the individual realizes that they start to become effective only if they join and act through organized groups. In such a way, the process of depersonalization as adjustment of individuals to the needs of the average person starts in the city (Wirth 1938). Robert Redfield's (1947) concept of 'a folk-urban continuum' also opposed urban society and folk society as two ideal types but, at the same time, the author underlined its differences rather than its dichotomy. According to Redfield, a folk society is characterized by isolation, a strong sense of solidarity, with strong kinship ties, while the role of cities is to transform the traditional culture (p.9). While he concluded that urbanites were communal as was the folk

society, thus, the latter also could be considered as part of civilization. However, he did not further develop an anthropological theory of city life, focusing mostly on peasant society (Jones & Rodgers 2016).

The concept of folk-urban continuum was criticized in the most adverse manner by Oscar Lewis in his book *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied* (1951) that was a result of his fieldwork in Tepoztlan that Lewis revisited after Redfield. Lewis argued that Redfield concentrated entirely on the city being the only transformative force of the rural, not taking into consideration other factors, while generalizing the urban to the point that all the cities were considered as if they were identical. Despite the criticism, Redfield's work resulted in the increase of interest in the migration dynamics among anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s. Abu-Lughod (1962) challenged the impact of Redfield's 'rural-to-urban continuum' concept on the sociological and anthropological fields, by noting that supplementing the rural-urban dichotomy by the continuum did not seem to result in radical theoretical and methodological changes. With her study of village migrants living in Cairo, Abu-Lughod reproached the previous research for focusing on the migrant adjustment to the city, as if it were a one-way process, excluding mutual impact and assimilation (Abu-Lughod 1962). She categorized the Cairo migrants into two main types, the first consisting of mainly younger generation drawn to the city by education possibilities, who were ready to assimilate to the city life, the other consisting of the migrants who decided to leave the villages because they lacked resources. The latter category tended to build a duplicate of their traditional culture within the city, while organizing social institutions with the main goal of "protecting migrants from the city anomie" (Abu-Lughod 1962). Abu-Lughod considered migrants as active actors who shape the city culture, while adjusting to it. Thus, she argued against the rural-urban dichotomy that Park had reintroduced based on the theoretical perspective of his predecessors. However, even though since the 1960s researchers have started to study the interconnection of the country and the city, speaking about 'urban villages', 'urbanization' of villages and 'ruralization' of cities, the focus on the

opposition ‘rural-urban’ does not seem to completely dissolve from debates in the field, in regard to question of whether urban anthropology should focus on research of the city versus research in the city (Krause 2013).

For instance, Toulson (2015), while discussing Pardo and Prato’s *Anthropology in the City* book (2012), where they argue that the focus on the city is needed to understand the complex social worlds, asked whether the city was so distinctive from the village that it deserved to be an entirely different research site with its own methodology and theoretical background. Instead, she argued that urbanism should be studied as a process, as “a character in the story, not the story itself”. Collaborating with the Yup’ik population living in the city and suburbs of Anchorage, I realized that despite the influence of specific features of the city on cultural meanings derived from urban Indigenous relationships, the opposition of the rural to the urban is incorrect. As Peters and Andersen (2013) conclude on the chapters of the contributors to their edition, urban Indigenous communities are distinctive in maintaining the continuity between the urban and the rural, by retaining the connection to non-urban spaces, non-urban kin and communities. Following Sahlins, the editors argue that urban populations may or may not return to the rural villages, some of them continuing to engage in oscillatory migration from and back to the city, while others are not leaving the city any more. However, the source of Indigenous identities and social networks is still concentrated in the village (Peters & Andersen 2013, p.7). Joining the argument, I will address later in this dissertation how the urban Yup’ik population creates and shapes the urban spaces and what strategies they use to reproduce village life in the urban environment in order to resist the city anomie and to maintain the connection with the village that serves to preserve their Indigenous identity. Thus, further discussion on the identity and ethnicity as a form of group identity is indispensable in this regard.

Identity and Ethnicity

Since the beginning of the discussion on the definition of identity in the early 20s century, it has been at the core of debates in the field of social sciences, resulting in the identification of a "crisis of identity" by Claude Lévi-Strauss who supervised the interdisciplinary seminar at the Collège de France in 1974-1975. Remaining within the framework of structuralist theory, he aimed at formulating a concept of identity constituted by an objectively situated otherness, while situating himself against the constructivist perspective becoming "a fashion" at the time (Rossé 2016). Concluding the seminar, Lévi-Strauss (1977) described identity as something "purely theoretical", as "a kind of a virtual center point that does not really exist [that] we have to refer to, in order to explain some particular things" (p. 332). Lévi-Strauss highlighted the fragmentary character of the identity concept, that contains a multitude of elements to reconstruct for every particular culture, thus, identifying the problematic nature of the identity concept for anthropology and other social science disciplines (Ibid.).

Since the 1960s, the terms "ethnicity" or "ethnic identity" emerge to become a central point of debates in sociocultural anthropology, in particular with the publications of "The Integrative Revolution" by Clifford Geertz (1963) and of "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" by Fredrick Barth (1969). In the end of the 1980s, the notion of collective identity was added to discussion, at first, in the field of sociology, introduced by Alberto Melucci in 1989 in regard to social movements. Later collective identity became related to migration in the sociological and anthropological debate. While identity is individual, collective identity consists of identity meanings shared by a group,

ethnicity being its aspect, that is a feeling of belonging to "a 'We'-group that shares the same historical and cultural heritage and traditions (Antweiler 2015). Clifford Geertz in *The Integrative Revolution* (1963) describes personal identity as "collectively ratified", "not fluid", "shapeless" and "infinitely various", while underlining the vitality of primordial sentiments driven by political modernization that lead to cultural difference intensification. Fredrick Barth in "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" (1969), however, argued that not the cultural content but boundaries predetermine ethnicity. These two publications resulted in a still ongoing debate in anthropology between primordial and situational or constructivist approaches to the concept of ethnicity. The primordial approach emphasizes the continuity of historical cultural traits as a motive of a group attachment to their ethnic identity that is not negotiable.

For primordialists, ethnicity and ethnic groups are part of a fundamental social order. However, the main critique of this approach is that it fails to explain at what moment and why ethnicity was invoked (Spear 2003). In contrast, Barth and his followers argue that boundaries between collectives and not shared cultural traits are determinants of ethnic group organization (Barth 1969). Thus, rather the boundary between 'Us' and 'Them' than specific cultural traits needs to be addressed. Barth insisted on fluidity and dynamics of boundaries and membership, while taking into consideration "ethnic labels" that are likely to endure, even if a movement across boundaries or sharing of an identity with more than one group may happen (p.40). Underlining the active role of individuals in an ethnic group, Barth further argued that they choose specific cultural elements or ethnic markers which they consider as significant for the group ethnic identity. Despite the attractiveness of the constructivist theory to anthropologists interested in questions of ethnicity, mostly for the idea of dynamic and interconnected ethnic groups, it has also endured critique. First, not every individual is able to designate their identity (Munasinghe 2018). Second, the constructivist approach does not explain the universal nature of ethnicity (Berreby 2005). Third, the

majority perceive ethnicity as primordial (Van den Berghe 1987). Fourth, the role of kinship continues to be important for ethnic group organization (Anderson 1991). Analyzing both approaches, Spear (2003) argues that ethnicity and tradition are deeply embedded into people's consciousness, as reminders of who they are and how they should behave. At the same time, he also considers them as discourses that are continually reinterpreted as "regulated improvisations" in the context of broader socio-economic changes (p. 26). Thus, research should be focused on studying the dynamics of ethnic groups and their traditions in the process of their reinterpretation and renegotiation according to their needs.

In this dissertation I analyze the urban Yup'ik traditional practices in their dynamics, in particular, in which ways they are being negotiated in the urban context, and what specific traits of ethnicity can be recognized in the context of the oscillatory rural-to-urban migration and of urban solidarity. The discussion of collective identity dynamics are of interest for my work in regard to the question of how the urban Yupiit are exposed to the Indigenous diversity in the city and how they strategically use the collective Alaska Native identity to shape spaces in the city according to their own needs.

Yup'ik and Other Northern Indigenous Ethnographies

General knowledge on the Yup'ik Indigenous Peoples during their first encounters with Europeans is based on historical records of travelers coming to Alaska starting from the beginning of the 19th century. First contacts between the Yup'ik population and employees of the Russian-American Company occurred between 1818 and 1830, when its succeeding administrators

encouraged inland explorations in Alaska. In 1818 the construction of Alexandrovskiy Redoubt (Fort Alexander) at the mouth of the Nushagak river was ordered. It led to further interior explorations by Korsakovskiy, Vasilev, Lukin, Kolmakov, as well as to coastal investigations by Yetolin and Khromchenko. After the foundation of Mikhailovskiy Redoubt (Fort Saint Michael) at the mouth of the Yukon River in 1833, Glazunov and Malakhov carried out the Yukon explorations. The translation and editing of Petr Korsakovskiy's (1818) and Ivan Vasilev's (1829) travel journals by David Kraus and James VanStone (1988) made primary sources, containing ethnographic materials on the earliest contacts with the Yup'ik population, available to the public. In comparison to Vasilev's journals, Korsakovskiy's travel journals contained a more detailed ethnographic account of the Aglegmiut or Aglurmiut later identified as the "coastal inhabitants of Bristol Bay" (Pratt 2013). His accounts include labor division, mortuary practices and subsistence patterns (VanStone 1988).

However, one of the most detailed ethnographic sources that still represent a genuine interest for social scientists is Lieutenant Lavrentiy Alexeyevich Zagoskin's work resulting from his exploration of interior Alaska in the years 1842-44. Wendell H. Oswalt, who carried out research among the Yup'ik of the Kuskokwim River, stated (1963) that Zagoskin's descriptions of the Kuskokwim peoples are still relevant. Zagoskin's ethnographic data that concern the Yup'ik population occupying the Kuskokwim River and the shores of Bristol Bay is important, as it was gathered at a time when their traditional beliefs and ways of life did not yet undergo any radical changes. Ethnographic research on the Yukon River in the 1930s and 1940s, implemented by Oswalt and DeLaguna, also confirmed the accuracy of Zagoskin's ethnographic data (VanStone as cited in Michael 1956). He described traditional daily life, trapping techniques, the fur trade with Russians, the subsistence cycles, house construction, sewing techniques etc (Zagoskin 1956). Despite the evolutionist and ethnocentric bias present in his descriptions, Zagoskin notes and

detailed descriptions are accurate; for instance, his remarks on the egalitarian nature of the Yup'ik social organization, with mutual communal help and respect to the Elders. He described the daily routine in the *qasgiq*, the men's communal and ceremonial winter house, relationship to namesakes, shamans' healing rituals, dancing, drumming and gift-giving on the occasion of the Feast of the Dead (Zagoskin 1956). Zagoskin noted that it was indispensable to collect the data, as he had seen the beginning of the traditional Indigenous culture's shift and change under the influence of Christianity (Ibid.). Zagoskin's ethnographic data that concern the Yup'ik population occupying the Kuskokwim River and the shores of Bristol Bay remain an important source for social scientists, as it was gathered at a time when Indigenous traditional beliefs and ways of life had not yet undergone any radical changes.

Another valuable ethnographic source on the Yup'ik population is the record provided by the journals of Iakov Georgevich Netsvetov, the first Russian Orthodox priest of Russian and Unangaŷ (Aleut) origin, working on bringing Christianity to Indigenous peoples of Northwestern Alaska and of interior Alaska, along the Yukon-Kuskokwim River drainage in the years 1845-1863 (Black in Netsvetov 1984a). Being a Russian Orthodox priest, he certainly did not approve of Yup'ik traditional practices. However, Netsvetov (together with other Russian Orthodox priests in Alaska) was instructed by Bishop Veniaminov to tolerate and to learn about local customs (Veniaminov 1899). Thus, Netsvetov's detailed descriptions of the Feast of the Dead in and outside the *qasgiq*, of feeding and of gift-giving ceremonies during his sojourns in Ikogmiut (Russian Mission) are of equal interest to social scientists as Zagoskin's, as they demonstrate the Yup'ik ways of life at the moment of the first encounters with Russians and Russian Orthodoxy.

In 1871-1872, Alphonse Louis Pinart, a French philologist, ethnographer, and collector explored, among other Alaskan areas, the Kuskokwim and Bristol Bay (Torres 2002). The catalog

of his materials contains few ethnographic data, including some data on shamanic dancing and the *qasgeq.* Therefore, Guma (2014) suggests his account should be supported by other ethnohistorical data that add complementary details to his descriptions. Nevertheless, social scientists, Margaret Lantis, whose contribution into the study of the Yup'ik population we will discuss further, partially based her research on rituals among the Yup'ik peoples on his ethnographic accounts, as at the moment of his journey in 1871-1872, the Yup'ik culture was not yet considerably affected by the colonization, as the sale of Alaska by Russia to the United States had only recently occurred. Hence few Americans were on this territory.

The next major ethnohistorical source is the work of Edward William Nelson, a naturalist and ethnologist, who arrived in the Norton Sound area in 1877 and stayed in Saint Michael most of the time until 1881, even though he carried out some trips to the Kuskokwim and Yup'ik areas as well, observing and documenting some ethnographic material, for instance, on the Feast of the Dead at Razbinsky. All of his materials were published in *The Eskimo about Bering Strait* in 1899. His ethnographic materials include detailed descriptions of the men's ceremonial house, dances, masks, ceremonies that continue to be appreciated by social scientists (Fienup-Riordan, 1990; Guma, 2014). However, according to Oswalt, the general ethnographic information on different "Eskimo" cultures described by Nelson complicates its distinction as different "tribes" (Oswalt 1972). Also, Guma (2014) fairly suggested that Nelson's material should be approached cautiously as he sometimes used other observers' data, for instance, in case of the "Inviting-In Feast" description, that Nelson had never observed but had decided to include into his account (Nelson 1900). Nevertheless, Nelson's ethnographic materials remain a valuable source, as they provide rich information and details on the Yup'ik ways of life at the time after the sale of Alaska by Russia to the United States.

Right after Nelson's stay in Saint Michael, Johan Adrian Jacobsen, a German ethnographer working at the Königliches Museum in Berlin, came to Saint Michael in 1882 to continue his journey along the western Alaskan coast that he later published under the title *Capitain Jacobsens Reise an der Nordwestküste Amerikas 1881-1883, zum Zwecke Ethnologischer Sammlungen und Erkundigungen nebst Beschreibung persönlicher Erlebnisse*. In this work, Jacobsen described, among others, the social organization of men's ceremonial house, the Bladder Festival and the Feast of the Dead, bringing to Germany Yup'ik masks that would later be visited by some Yup'ik Elders, resulting in the book *Ciuliata Akluit / Things of Our Ancestors: Yup'ik Elders Explore the Jacobsen Collection at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin*. As Guma (2014) argued, Jacobsen's ethnographic materials are not often cited by anthropologists. However, they are valuable in contrasting and complementing the more cited ethnographic sources on the Yup'ik ways of life that remained relatively unchanged until the end of the nineteenth century.

Another interesting ethnographic source is the account of John and Edith Kilbuck, a Moravian missionary couple that arrived in the Kuskokwim River region in 1885. Some of their diaries from the years 1885-1921 were published by Ann Fienup-Riordan (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988) in *The Yup'ik Eskimos: as Described in the Travel Journals and Ethnographic Accounts of John and Edith Kilbuck Who Served with the Alaska Mission of the Moravian church, 1886-1900*. These accounts contain the missionaries' perceptions of Yup'ik families, they describe gender roles in the Yup'ik social organization, as well as some festive events defined as "masquerades" that included singing and drumming (Guma 2014; Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988). Their accounts also contain descriptions of the Bladder Festival that they defined as "eckrushka" in the Russian manner, as "igrushka", and also as "potlatch" (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988). At first, the Kilbucks considered it as a harmless activity, however, later, when they realized that some of them were religious rituals, they started to strongly discourage and to prohibit the celebrations, substituting them with Moravian Christian

celebrations (Oswalt 1990). Although the Festival descriptions were not detailed, they supported and validated the already existing accounts on the Festival.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the social organization of the Yup'ik peoples underwent dramatic changes with the outsiders bringing a flu epidemic among other deceases. Knud Johan Victor Rasmussen was a leading explorer and ethnographer who devoted his entire life to studying the Inuit societies during this time of change (Guma 2014; Oswalt 1990). The results of his studies were published in *Across Arctic America: Narrative of the Fifth Thule Expedition* (1927), which included the detailed description of the Feast of the Dead in a *qasgeq* in Igniktok, where he observed and participated in the dancing, food and gift sharing during several days, while comparing it to the feasts of the Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples he had studied before. He also observed and described the Bladder Festival nearby Atnuk. Rasmussen also documented the spread of diseases among the Inuit population at the time of his expeditions.

Edward S. Curtis' work published under the title *The North American Indians* demonstrated, among others, societies from the South and North-West of Alaska that he visited at the beginning of the 20th century. Although Curtis was a photographer, he also gathered ethnographic descriptions. In regard with the Yup'ik, Curtis visited the Nunivak Island in 1927, where he collected descriptions of qasgiq, the men's ceremonial house, of the Messenger Feast, of the Bladder Festival (Guma 2014). Although Curtis' ethnographic descriptions were rather an addition to the detailed collection of valuable images that reflected Indigenous cultures of North America, it provided an additional source of comparison for future researchers that conducted fieldwork in the same area (Fienup-Riordan and Himmelheber 2000).

Hans Himmelheber, a German anthropologist, undertook a 10-month fieldwork among the Yup'ik of the Nunivak Island in 1936 and in 1937. He decided to carry out a study of Indigenous people of North America comparable to his previous ethnographic work in Africa. His work with the Yup'ik of tehe Nunivak Island resulted in three books: *Eskimokünstler: Ergebnisse einer Reise in Alaska* (Himmelheber 1938) that contained his observations on Yup'ik carving and painting techniques; *Der Gefrorene Pfad: Mythen, Märchen und Legenden der Eskimo* that (Himmelheber 1951) included myths and legends; and *Ethnographische Notiz von den Nunivak Eskimo* (Himmelheber 1980) that presented his ethnographic notes. All three of them were translated into English (Fienup-Riordan 2000b). In the third volume, Himmelheber referred to ethnographic sources of Rasmussen, Curtis and Lantis previously published. Himmelheber highlighted the importance of Lantis' thorough description and interpretation of Nunivak festivals by pointing out that he had directly observed and participated in the festivals in contrast to the above mentioned authors (Himmelheber 1980). In addition to the festival descriptions similar to those of the authors, Himmelheber emphasized the role of women in dances and ceremonies (Guma 2014). His direct and detailed observations of the Bladder Festival, *qasgiq* construction and shamans' rituals complement the previous researchers' perspectives.

Margaret Lantis, an American anthropologist, conducted her fieldwork on Nunivak Island between 1939 and 1940. Her research resulted in a book publication under the title *The Social Culture of the Nunivak Eskimo* in which she examined social organization, ceremonialism and mythology of the Nunivak Island Yup'ik. She focused on the description of the Bladder Feast, referring to it as both a ceremonial and a legend (Lantis 1946). The author also described the Messenger Feast and the role masks played in this festival in contrast to the Bladder Festival. Lantis elaborated on different types of songs and their roles in ceremonies, rituals and everyday life (Ibid.). As Fienup-Riordan (2000) fairly noticed, Lantis, as a woman, did not have access to many activities

and ceremonies in the *qasgiq*. However, she could observe women's activities in a more detailed way as compared to Himmelheber who conducted research there three years earlier (Guma 2014). Thus, both anthropologists complemented each others' research contributing to a better understanding of gender roles in the social organization of the Nunivak Island Yup'ik.

Wendell Oswalt, an American anthropologist, published a book titled *Napaskiak: An Alaskan Eskimo Community* in 1963, that was a result of his one-year ethnographic fieldwork in the Yup'ik community. Together with James VanStone, Oswalt was one of the first anthropologists to conduct archaeological research in the Yup'ik region (Litecky 2011). While James VanStone concentrated his research in the Nushagak river area, Oswalt focused on the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta region. Both researchers published ethnohistorical work, combining ethnographic research with historical records and archaeological data. One of the most prominent books on Oswalt's ethnohistorical research of the Yukon-Kuskokwim area was published in 1990 under the title *Bashful No Longer: An Alaskan Eskimo Ethnohistory, 1778–1988*. It combined the data of Russian-American Company records with oral accounts collected by the author between 1953 and 1979, and with information resulted from archaeological excavations in the area (Oswalt 1990). The author emphasized his effort to include the Yup'ik perspective into the study, as compared to previous ethnographies written from a Western standpoint, although he recognized the limits in which oral histories could help reconstruct the historical cultural change. Oswalt highlighted the importance of a geographical factor for an ethnohistorical study of a cultural change, in particular, of a degree to which outsiders were able to access a researched community that underwent the change; he emphasized how outsider goals were equally important for an ethnohistorical analysis (Oswalt 1990). Thus, Oswalt organized his ethnohistorical work around the geographical factor, while incorporating ethnographic, historical and archaeological research methods.

In the same manner, James VanStone stated that a reconstruction of cultural change in regions required a combination of research methods from different disciplines, such as history and ethnography, but also archaeology, that he considered as an “extension of historical research” (VanStone 1967). Elaborating on the ethnohistorical method, VanStone argued that a “baseline of aboriginal culture” of a specific geographic area must be reconstructed, while its change needs to be examined chronologically (Litecky 2011). VanStone contended that such a baseline allows for a better interpretation of contemporary Yup’ik cultures, as compared to a classic ethnography that lacks the historical context, while almost no contemporary knowledge holders are capable to reconstruct before-contact lifestyles of societies based on oral histories (VanStone in Akerman et al. 1973). As Wendell Oswalt, he recognized the drawbacks of using one particular discipline and its methods for understanding cultural change. He drew on archival data in combination with his archaeological and ethnographic research to examine the historical change in the Nushagak river region.

Ann Fienup-Riordan, an American cultural anthropologist continued to incorporate the ethnohistorical approach for her study the Nelson Island and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Yup’ik at the end of the 1970s. Since then she has become one of the most known scholars who combines classical ethnographic methods with ethnohistory in her research in collaboration with the Yup’ik population. In her book *Eskimo Essays: Yup'ik Lives and How We See Them* published in 1991, Fienup-Riordan addresses the issues of Yup’ik representation in the Western world, while discussing cultural revival, change and continuity. In this book, the author argued that the relative unattractiveness of the Yup’ik area to commerce due to few natural resources resulted in a relative isolation of the area from Westerners (Fienup-Riordan 1991). This allowed for a better retention of the Yup’ik culture and traditional beliefs, as compared to other Indigenous cultures of Alaska, while using strategies to adapt to the ongoing change. The author published another book in the year 2000

under the title *Hunting Tradition in a Changing World* that she referred to as a continuation of a discussion started in *Eskimo Essays* on the cultural change and continuity in the context of globalization, describing the Yup'ik interactions with Christianity, past and present, rural-urban migration, and current adoption practices (Fienup-Riordan 2000). The author's work with oral history resulted in the book Boundaries and Passages: Rule and Ritual in Yup'ik Eskimo Oral Tradition published in 1994 for which she worked with Elders to examine the Yup'ik cosmology. Fienup-Riordan described the Bladder Feast, the Messenger Feast and the Feast for the Dead, while focusing on naming practices and human-animal relationships of the Nelson Islanders (Fienup-Riordan, 1994. Since this time, Fienup-Riordan has been working with the Calista Elders Council in helping to document Yup'ik traditional knowledge. The books that she has edited, namely *Ciulirnerunak Yuuyaqunak/Do Not Live Without an Elder: The Subsistence Way of Life in Southwest Alaska* (2016), *Yuuyaraq / The Yup'ik Way of Being* (2018), contain oral histories of Yup'ik Knowledge Bearers in Yup'ik and in English.

Chase Hensel, an American cultural anthropologist, published a book in 1996 under the title *Telling Our Selves: Ethnicity and Discourse in Southwestern Alaska,* in which he analyzed and compared how the Yup'ik and non-Yup'ik populations of Bethel, located in the Yup'ik region, recreate and negotiate ethnicity through strategic discourse about subsistence. Subsistence activities for Bethel residents are considered and examined by Hensel as markers of ethnic identities and social boundaries (Hensel 1996). Hensel also analyzed how gender and ethnic identities are negotiated through subsistence practices.

Since the 1990s, Indigenous scholars have been joining the scientific discussion on Yup'ik culture change, although their number remains limited. Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, a Yup'ik anthropologist and educator, defended his PhD dissertation "A Yupiaq World: Implications for

Cultural, Educational, and Technological Adaptation in a Contemporary World in 1993 and published a book A Yupiaq Worldview. A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit" in 1995 that focused on the "intersection" of Yup'ik and Western worldviews on examples of the fieldwork carried out in Yup'ik villages of Akiak, Akiachak, and Tuluksak. In his further research, Kawagley continued to elaborate on representations and interrelations of contrasting knowledge systems. He was one of Indigenous scholars who attributed Indigenous culture change solely to Western interference as compared to Western anthropologists who at the same time, saw Indigenous actors as more active negotiators, using different strategies to adapt to the changing environment (Fienup-Riordan 2000b, Litecky 2011). Kawagley further contributed to the development of research on Indigenous knowledge from Indigenous perspectives.

Another Yup'ik anthropologist, Theresa Arevgaq John, conducted her ethnographic research to analyze how Yup'ik dance evolved over time and in what roles it has played in the social organization. She coauthored a book with James Barker and Ann Fienup-Riordan under the title *Yupiit Yuraryarait. Yup'ik Ways of Dancing* (2010), in which the Yup'ik dance types and their relation and roles were explained by widely using the voices of Yup'ik dancers.

Jordan Lewis, a psychologist of Alaska Native descent, conducted research on successful aging as viewed by Alaska Native Elders in Bristol Bay, Alaska. Lewis (2011) argued that Alaska Native Elders see aging holistically, in contrast to the Western perspectives; in collaboration with Yup'ik Native Elders, he examined different criteria that define how a successful Alaska Native Eldership can be achieved. Together with other authors, Lewis (2018) also analyzed in what ways the role of Yup'ik grandparents, who are "primary caregivers" of their grandchildren, changed over time in rural areas, illustrating their importance in today's Yup'ik social organization. Lewis' PhD student, Steffi Marotzke Kim (2020) continued research and defended her PhD on successful aging

in the urban context, after conducting her ethnographic fieldwork among Alaska Native Elders, including the Yupiit residing in the city of Anchorage. Anchorage. She analyzes how being a successful Elder is seen in the context of rural-to-urban migration and in what ways the urban successful aging process is similar and different in comparison to the rural one. This last research example is one of the latest urban ethnographies conducted in collaboration with the urban Alaska Native populations. I will elaborate on the history of other urban ethnographies conducted in Alaska Bering Strait among the Alaska Native population, mostly, in collaboration with the urban Yup'ik and Inupiaq populations. Before this, however, I would like to list the most known ethnographies of the Yup'ik neighboring population – the Inupiat – that are being called Inuit and represented by the Inuit Circumpolar Council along with the Central Yup'ik and other Northern populations (Inuit Circumpolar Council Website[7] 2024).

The region was reached by Europeans much earlier than the Western and Southwestern regions of Alaska. Semen Dezhnev and Fedot Alexeev were probably the first explorers to reach the Bering Strait in 1648 (Bockstoce 1977). Otto von Kotzebue is considered to be the first European to reach the Inupiaq region in 1816 and to write one of the first ethnographic descriptions of the population (Burch 2006). Frederick William Beechey was the captain of an expedition of the English Navy that was organized for 1825 and 1826 with the main purpose of supporting John Franklin's expedition with material goods. Even though his observations were general in character, including descriptions of clothing, population, crafts, Beechey was the first explorer to write ethnographic notes about Wales, the largest village of northern Alaska (Ray 1975).

Edward Willian Nelson already mentioned above collected information on populations in the Norton Sound and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, while being employed as weather observer in Saint Michael between 1877 and 1881. His ethnographic descriptions were later used, among

7 https://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/. Last accessed January 22nd, 2024.

others, by Burch, an anthropologist, to reconstruct the Inupiaq cultural change in the 19th century (Burch 2006).

Taking place in Point Barrow between 1881 and 1883, the International Polar Expedition of interdisciplinary researchers resulted in a monograph by John Murdoch under the title *Ethnological Results of the Point Barrow Expedition* dated 1892. The research was concentrated on meteorological, geological, zoological observations as well as on the descriptions of Native ways of life. Patrick Henry Ray was the expedition's director whose ethnographic description of the Inupiat was also included in the monograph. John Murdoch and Edward Nelson were both naturalists not trained in ethnology and ethnography, but Murdoch's study was focused on artifacts, while Nelson's is largely dedicated to his observations.

Charles C. Lucier, a biologist, was invited to join an archaeological team on the Seward Peninsula between 1950 and 1952; since then he has been conducting fieldwork in the Inupiaq region (Kotzebue Sound and Norton Sound) collecting ethnographic accounts on traditional Inupiaq knowledge, mythology and recording songs and dances (University of Alaska Anchorage[8] Website n.d.). Some of his unpublished fieldwork papers were used by Ernest Burch for his work on the Inupiaq cultural change reconstruction.

James W. VanStone conducted his fieldwork not only in the Yup'ik region. He also worked at Point Hope between 1955 and 1956 that he published as a book under the title *Point Hope: An Eskimo Village in Transition.* He examined the cultural change and continuity, for instance, subsistence patterns and the combination of subsistence and money economies to come to the conclusion that the basic subsistence traditions remained the same during the precontact times, despite the use of new tools and equipment, while being combined with money economy (VanStone

8 https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-0165/ Last accessed January 24th, 2024.

1960). As for the analysis of the current social structure, the researcher argued that in terms of local leadership, it continued to depend on successful hunting and whaling, although, as compared with other villages, the role of the local village council became important. VanStone attributed the totally accepted Christianization and the success of the Episcopal Church to the elimination of traditional rituals that emphasized the importance of community interdependence (VanStone 1960).

Dorothy Jean Ray conducted her ethnographic work in the Bering Strait region during about twenty years, starting in the 1950s, with the field sessions for analyzing the ivory carving art. The work continued in 1961 in Kobuk on the Inupiaq subsistence patterns and, further in Nome for the Inupiaq political organization, in Unalakleet and in Saint Michael for tribal relations, and in Unalit for genealogical research (Ray 1975). The researcher later incorporated all this fieldwork into a reconstruction of the cultural change in the Bering Strait area of Alaska in her book *The Eskimos of Bering Strait, 1650-1898* in 1975, using it as a supplement to the archival research conducted. She described chronologically Russian sources about Alaska through Siberian Yup'ik and Chukchi, European exploration, American penetration (Ray 1975). Here the interviews conducted supported the data from archival sources.

Ernest S. Burch, Jr. wrote three significant volumes as a result of his ethnographic and archival work: *The Inupiaq Eskimo Nations of Northwest Alaska* (1998), in which he described the nations that inhabited the region, its environment and populations movement; *Alliance and Conflict: The World System of the Inupiaq Eskimos* (2005), in which external relations between the nations were examined; and *Social Life in Northwest Alaska. The Structure of Inupiaq Eskimo Nations* (2006). In this one, Burch uses the concept of Inupiaq "nations" which he considers to be the most accurate translation of the word nunaqatigiich that he heard from his collaborators, a concept that Ericka Hill considers to be "controversial" (p. xvii).

Burch argues that there were eleven Inupiaq nations with their own “social boundaries and territorial borders”, while also applying the concept of nations to the Yup’ik, Siberian Yup’ik and Athabascan regions (p.5). To reconstruct and to describe cultural change, Burch used a method of combination of archival sources, in particular, explorers’ reports from the 19th century and oral accounts of knowledge bearers whom Burch called “Native historians" and whose traditional knowledge had been passed down by their ancestors (Burch 2006, p.11). Burch called his research method “historical ethnography” (Hill 2013). Along with early Inupiaq oral accounts that he borrowed from ethnographers of the early 20th century, such as Stefansson and Rasmussen, he used work of ethnographers who carried out their research later, for instance, unpublished fieldwork notes of Charles Lucier from Buckland and Kotzebue and his own fieldwork from Kivalna, Kotzebue and other northern Alaska areas between 1960 and 1999 (Burch 2006).

Urban Ethnographies in Alaska

Csonka and Schweitzer (2004) consider Yup’ik and Inupiaq urban modern populations in Anchorage as relatively well-studied, as compared to other cities in the Arctic, referring to such authors as Nancy Fogel-Chance, Molly Lee and Fienup-Riordan who conducted their ethnographic research in the 1990s and 2000s, emphasizing the resilience of the cultures traveling between rural and urban areas in Alaska. This research differed from the one conducted earlier: in 1975 Patrick James Dubbs wrote a doctoral dissertation based on his ethnographic work carried out among the urban Inupiaq and Yup’ik population in Anchorage between 1968 and 1970, stating that they mostly failed to adjust to city life. Dubbs (1975) used the theoretical framework by Mitchell,

Epstein and other researchers focused on urban adaptation to examine structural and perceptual, success and pressure adaptation patterns and to discover that women who had at least a high school level of education and experience living outside Alaska were more successful in adapting to the Alaskan urban environment than others. However, the author concluded that the overall majority of the Inupiaq and Yup'ik migrants were not able to successfully adapt to the urban environment that dramatically differed from the village way of life (Dubbs 1975). In the 1970s, Chuck Hines together with a group of students conducted ethnographic work on urban Alaska Native Elders and their needs. It was discovered in this study that one-third of them were born in Anchorage from mixed marriages of Alaska Native women with Caucasian males, and that they had different needs, as compared to non-Native elderly, resulting from closer family bonds and alternative dietary habits (Feldman 2009).

Nancy Fogel-Chance (1993) was one of the first researchers in Alaska who disagreed with the assumption that rural-urban migration of Alaska Natives results in complete assimilation and alienation from Native cultural values and lifestyles. On the example of twenty-five Inupiaq women residing in Anchorage, Fogel-Chance demonstrated how rural-urban migrants are capable of balancing between two cultures, being able to adjust to urban economies without losing ties with their cultural values and traditions (Voorhees 2010). Fogel-Chance (1993) analyzed different strategies employed by the Inupiaq women to adjust and to integrate their culture into the city life, for instance, maintaining the ties through the creation and the operating of so-called "sharing networks" (p.101). Subsistence food and natural materials through hunting and gathering are exchanged between villages and cities, playing a significant role in maintaining cultural continuity and in respecting Native traditional values in the city. Fogel-Chance confirmed that the existence of cultural discontinuity created by the urban lifestyle added a supplementary level of complexity to the women's motivation to find a balance between two worlds, while naming the elements

indispensable for achieving the equilibrium (Fogel-Chance 1993). Her research demonstrates how flexible and resilient Native female migrants can remain, while adjusting to city life. At the same time, while discussing Fogel-Chance's ethnographic work and results, Voorhees (2010) pointed out that this relative "cosmobility" of the North Slope Inupiaq women is directly tied to the social networks that exchange Native foods (p.69). Thus, the role of rural places in maintaining the urban Native cultural continuity through subsistence food remains crucial.

Hamilton and Seyfrit (1994) discussed Alaska Native female out-migration to the city, examining how it impacted the village. They listed several reasons for the more significant female rural-urban migration: rural activities more favorable for males, marriage between Native females and non-Native males, higher rate of college education among Native females. The authors concluded that the Alaska Native women out-migration negatively impacted the gender balance of villages.

Along with these authors, Sprott (1994) found negative impacts of urban life on Alaska Natives by conducting ethnographic work in Anchorage among Alaska Native parents. This research initially focused on urban Alaska Native parents and their parenting practices in the urban environment. However, the focus was naturally redirected to the question of ethnicity, as the parents constantly spoke about the ethnicity issue. The author examined the current and historical impact of blood on Alaska Native ethnicity in the urban context through the framework of the straight-line theory of assimilation and through the concept of a three-dimensional ethnic identity (culture, ethnic group membership, and symbolism); she challenged the straight-line assimilation hypothesis of intermarriage and Native language loss as factors of graduate eradication of the Alaska Native ethnicity. The results of her ethnographic work indicated that intermarriage did not contribute to the loss of Native ethnic identity among the Alaska Native mixed-blood population (Sprott 1994).

Molly Lee (2002) conducted her research among Yup'ik women residing in Anchorage to come to the conclusion that the exchange of limited and highly expensive industrial food and subsistence food between rural and urban areas is indispensable for maintaining the "ties that bind these [urban Native] women to the land" (p.4). In Lee's article "The Cooler Ring: Urban Alaska Native Women and the Subsistence Debate" (2002), the cooler that the author's Yup'ik female friend transported on her travels to rural communities helps to strengthen the connection to the ancestral lands, while living in the city. However, Lee attributed the success to maintain the Yup'ik identity through access to Native foods to Yup'ik gender roles: as Yup'ik men's traditional subsistence activity was hunting, their traditional knowledge and skills continue to be more place-oriented, as compared to Yup'ik women, who can gather and process food independently of a location (Lee 2002). Thus, even if some Native women demonstrate a more resilient urban lifestyle, as compared to Native men, it becomes vulnerable, if it is not supported by the more location-oriented and inflexible, rural lifestyle of Native men (Voorhees 2010). Lee continued reinforcing the same argument on the connection and interdependence of Yup'ik gender roles in the context of rural-urban migration in her article "How Will I Sew my Baskets?: Women Vendors, Market Art, and Incipient Political Activism in Anchorage, Alaska" (2003), in which she discussed in what ways institutions such as the Alaska Native Federation art bazaar enable urban Native women to strengthen their ties to the traditional lands and to the subsistence activities that provide them with materials necessary for their craft production.

Ann Fienup-Riordan (2000) supported the argument about the cultural viability of migrating Yup'ik in her book *Hunting Tradition in a Changing World. Yupik Lives in Alaska Today*. "Yup'ik communities are not disintegrating, their lifeblood gradually seeping away. Many can be seen as actually expanding and recreating themselves in unprecedented ways until today, when they are as strong and vital as at any time in their 2,500-year history […] Yup'ik men and women may be

anywhere in the world and still not live outside the Yup'ik community in the larger sense" (p. 153). Fienup-Riordan suggested seeing the Yup'ik community not only in relation to its traditional lands but also to their extended family relations and sharing networks (Fienup-Riordan 2000). Thus, the Yup'ik migration from ancestral lands does not result in weakening the connection, as the extended kinship relations in urban areas and sharing subsistence food through the urban extended family networks allows to uphold cultural continuity and traditional values.

Fienup-Riordan also argued that another strategy to strengthen ties with the rural community is the Yup'ik naming practice. When a Yup'ik baby is born in an urban environment, they are often given the name of a person deceased in the village. This way, the newborn becomes a namesake of a deceased relative or of a family friend reincarnating some traits of the deceased. This process results in the creation of a new bond between the newborn, the deceased and their respective families, connecting the urban with the rural (Fienup-Riordan 2000).

Heidi Aklaseaq Senungetuk (2017) examined how a dance group consisting of the urban Inupiaq peoples has created a Native space in the city of Anchorage. She demonstrated the ways the group members use to contest their Indigenous space in the city to reassure the use of traditional dance practices as a way to decolonize the city. She developed the concept of "movable *qazgi*" or men's ceremonial house that, adjusting to the mobility of the city, moves across the city of Anchorage performing for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.

Despite the above cited resources, some of them dealing with research solely in collaboration with the urban Yup'ik and Inupiaq Native population, urban research in Alaska has been "nearly absent", according to Feldman's review of Alaskan urban anthropological literature sources (2009), who addressed the need of carrying out more ethnographic work in ethnically complex Alaskan

urban areas with “at least a fourth of all Alaska Natives” living in Anchorage, where around “ninety languages from around the world” are being spoken (p.6). Since 2009, there has been more research focusing on the Indigenous peoples living in the city, as described above, but research with an emphasis on the rural Indigenous peoples still prevails.

Conclusion

In this chapter I examined the emergence and development of the urban anthropology field and the current debates about its similarities with and differences from sociology. I focused on the concepts of urban, urbanism and urbanization in the context of applying different approaches to the study of a city. I briefly elaborated on the concept of ethnicity and identity, in particular, of the collective identity that is indispensable for examining the Yupiit living in the city, as they identify as Alaska Natives, thus, as a part of the collective Alaska Native identity. I reviewed literature on the rural-to-urban migration and its relevance to the ongoing discussion of the Alaska Native migration to the city that can be characterized as oscillatory, as they circulate back and forth between the village and the city maintaining the social networks, contributing to the ruralization of the city. I also elaborated on the existing ethnographies on the Yup’ik populations and complemented them with some ethnographies on their neighbors – the Inupiat. I examined the ethnographies conducted in the Alaskan urban setting. Having provided this overview, I can now turn to the analysis of the Yup’ik worldviews and social organization to demonstrate later in the dissertation how they negotiate those in the urban environment.

CHAPTER II: YUP'IK SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND WORLDVIEWS

In this chapter I would like to elaborate on the Yup'ik social organization by applying a decolonizing perspective, in other words, by not simply chronologically describing the Western ethnographic accounts at the moment of the first encounters between the Europeans and the Yupiit but by analyzing it through the Indigenous perspective and narratives. I will speak about the Yup'ik Indigenous values and in what ways the accounts might illustrate their worldviews. In the article "Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues", Julie Cruikshank (1994) discussed the ways of Indigenous history reconstructions and the debates of who should be given a voice in this process. Phyllis Morrow (1984) chose to leave the data gathered by a Yup'ik researcher, Elsie Mather, "stand on its own", respecting the Indigenous way to let "readers draw their own conclusions" out of it without attempting to theorize it (p.139). She also pointed out that the early accounts by the non-Indigenous settlers and travelers are "fragmented and often confusing" (p.113). In the article "The Daily Journal of Reverend Father Juvenal" Lydia Black (1981) pointed out at how cautious ethnohistorians should be in relying on such early accounts, by claiming how easily Hubert Howe Bancroft, an American historian and ethnologist (as well as other historians) accepted the fabricated version of Father Juvenal's journals by his helper, Ivan Petrov.

Thus, where possible, I will prioritize the Yup'ik Indigenous voices by, at the same time, completing them with the historical accounts by some Western explorers, addressing the "challenge

for historians and anthropologists… to demonstrate how all social constructions, including our own, factor into social processes we are trying to understand, and how they connect generations, times, and places" (Cruikshank 1994, p. 418). Most of my collaborators have not yet achieved the status of an Elder. Thus, I will provide Yup'ik Elders' perspectives from other sources, while completing them with some of my collaborators' comments. I will elaborate on how the colonization process impacted the Yupiit, including the boarding school experiences. I will briefly examine the important roles that Indigenous political institutions have been playing in the Alaska Native and Yup'ik identity construction to demonstrate how they shape today's Yup'ik society.

Yup'ik Traditional Society and Yup'ik Values

When I came to Anchorage to conduct my fieldwork and visited several Indigenous scholars, I saw posters with the Indigenous values on their office walls. As a Yup'ik teacher's courtesy, I was allowed to take a picture of the Yup'ik value poster displayed in one of the classrooms at the Yup'ik Immersion Program in Anchorage. According to Oscar Angayuqaq Kawagley (a Yup'ik scholar) (2009), many of the values are a part of Alaska Native common worldviews, or of the "principles" that enable them to explain the world around them such as "living in harmony with the world around them" which requires "a sense of responsibility" towards the community and the environment (pp. 225-226).

To be more specific about Yup'ik cultural values, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (2023) displayed the following Yup'ik value list: "love for children, respect for others, sharing, humility, hard work, spirituality, cooperation, family roles, knowledge of family tree, knowledge of language, hunter success, domestic skills, avoid conflict, humor, respect for nature, respect for

land". "They say these values have been passed down since time immemorial and not taught just once but time and time again. They are not to be forgotten but passed down, and it has reached us today" (James Gump from Hooper Bay 2009, p. 451).

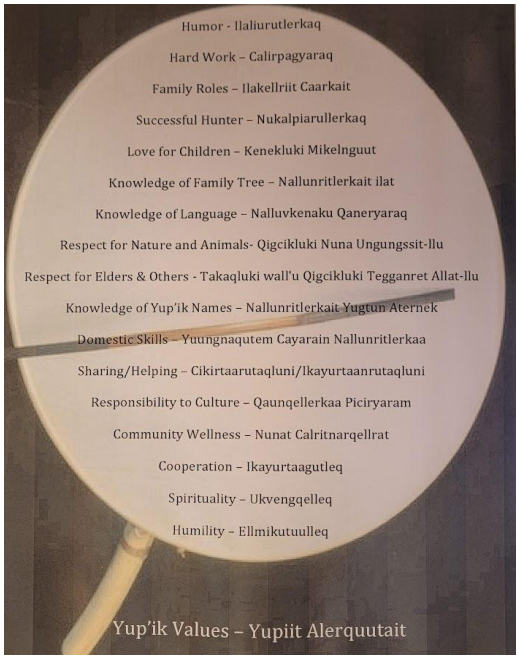


Figure 5. Teaching materials and instructions displays in the Yup'ik Immersion Classrooms, May 2022 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

These values are embedded in the *qanruyutet* (instructions or teachings) that Elders have passed down from generations to generations "through discourse and the collective analysis of case studies" (Lavrillier & Gabyshev 2017, p. 16). Despite some slight regional differences, these *qanruyutet* are alike for all the Yupiit, according to the Yup'ik Elders (Fienup-Riordan 2020, p.xxvi). Consequently, the values indicated above serve as an illustration of and a guide to understand Yup'ik society, in general. I am going to analyze each of the values, their interconnection and their integration into the Yup'ik worldviews.

Respect for others, for nature and for land are three values listed. Respect for others includes "a respect for the wisdom of the Elders" (Kawagley 1995, p.19). Elders are "advisors" who share and pass down their knowledge to the younger generations. "A person who is able to talk about what he experienced as he lived, using what he learned… then a person is known as an advisor. He has become a speaker… (Peter Gilila, an Elder from Akiak, 2018, p.226). John Phillip, another Yup'ik Elder from Kongiganak called Elders "instructors" and "teachers" referring to them as the ones who pass down *qanruyutet* (instructions or teachings) that "[govern] all aspects of a human being's life" that are parts of *yuuyaraq* or "the way of being a human being" (Phillip 2018, p. 222; Harold Napoleon 2005). These instructions passed down by the Elders determine the proper behavior and respect towards various kin group members, non-humans and spirits.

Love for children is the first value on the list. "They say since we love him, from the beginning, the things that a child needs to know that are suitable for their age, we must tell them to do things, we must instruct them about things that are appropriate for them, because we love him… *Qanruyutet* [instructions] are a way of showing love. If I didn't love you, I wouldn't admonish you" (Lucy Spark, an Elder from Anchorage 2018, pp. 195-196).

Sharing is another value that I am going to discuss later, but I would like to briefly mention it here as closely connected to the value of loving children. In the Yup'ik perspective, to love children is to share the ancestors' knowledge with them to prepare them for adult life. Children of different age have constantly been a part of many Indigenous religious and secular gatherings that I attended in the city of Anchorage. Becoming a mother for the second time in Anchorage, I was allowed and even encouraged to bring my baby son to the Yup'ik language and other classes with the Indigenous instructors at the University of Anchorage Alaska as well as to various Indigenous gatherings in the

city. Constant learning by instruction and by observation has been embedded into the daily life of the Yup'ik children growing in the village starting from an early age:

> "You are involved at all times: when I was a baby it was watching, being there, it was sitting there. There was always a job for you to do (Quentin Simeon[9], personal communication, 2019).

Hence, according to the Yup'ik worldview, all the family members, including even younger children, should be involved in the work for the family and community survival. The traditional division of labor was well defined in the sense that men were hunters and main subsistence food providers, learning their skills from their male close and extended family members and Elders in the *qasgiq* (men's ceremonial house) starting at the age of five; women fished, gathered eggs, plants and berries, processed the subsisted food and cared for their families and community members (Kawagley 1995, p. 20; Lantis 1946). Young, unmarried men had to follow abstinence rules in order to be come successful hunters, for instance: "they say when he touches a female, he brings down his ability to hunt in the future" (John Phillip 2018, p. 154). As for young females, when they had their first menstruation, it marked a very important shift in their lives in becoming a woman. They became so powerful in their ability to negatively impact men's success in hunting by frightening animals away that they were supposed to follow strict rules and to become "invisible" to the spirits and the animals: "so for five days, the person would sit and not be visible" (Albertina Dull from Nightmute 2018, p. 302; Fienup-Riordan 1994, p. 163; Nelson 1900, p.291). This important event marked a new stage in a young woman's life when she was ready to marry. By marrying, a husband and a wife became equal members in one team (Fienup-Riordan 1994), as they were instructed to mutually support each other to become successful in their roles:

9 In his forties

> "...They say a man may not be a *nukalpiaq* [successful hunter], but if he acquires a wife who makes an effort at doing things, they say if she works on his few catches with care, she will lift that one up, she will raise him up… They say that [woman] raised him up so that he would hunt successfully. It's the same for both a woman and man" (John Phillip 2018, p. 174).

The kinship system was Iroquois, thus, the marriage between two siblings and parallel cousins (also considered as such) was prohibited (Lantis 1984; VanStone 1984). Cross-cousins were given separate terms and were allowed to marry. The preference was on the village endogamy but in case of smaller settlements, men might search for wives in other communities (VanStone 1984, p.233). In the Nunivak Island, a marriage "of any people in uncle-niece or aunt-nephew relationship" was also forbidden (Lantis 1984, p. 218).

Respect to nature and to land has been expressed through taking care of and not wasting any part of an animal (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower[10] from Anchorage, personal communication, 2022). Animals in the Arctic are considered as "essential partners" and their respect is indispensable (Laugrand & Lévesque 2017, p. 19). A hunter had to observe taboos and to conduct rituals to ensure a respectful relationship between him and an animal in order to ensure a future success in hunting. The Yupiit were nomadic but the rich resource availability allowed them to remain "within a relatively fixed range" (Fienup-Riordan 2000c, p. 249). The nuclear families spent winters in the extended family households in villages; they left for their fishing/family camps to fish and to trap during spring and fall (p.11). One of the examples of a ritual that aimed at honoring sea animals to

10 In her thirties

ensure their return and willingness to give themselves to the hunter during the next subsistence season was the annual Bladder festival that occurred in December. Margaret Lantis (1947) summarized Edward William Nelson's account of the Bladder Feast at Saint Michael, that he observed during his ethnological trip to the region between 1877 and 1881, in the following way:

> "Each hunter brought out the inflated bladders of all the seals, walruses, whales, and polar bears that they had killed during the year, painted them, and hung them up in the kashim [*qasgiq*]. Stalks of wild parsnips (celery?), which has been ceremonially gathered and dried just previously, were burnt to purify the bladders and the men themselves, who were nude. This was done in a scene of wild running about and shouting… On the fourth day of the ceremony proper, i.e. from the time when the bladders were first brought into the kashim [*qasgiq*], they were taken to a hole in the ice, deflated, and put back in the sea. One the way home, everyone (not just the hunters) jumped through or rushed into a fire to fumigate himself in the smoke. In the kashim [*qasgiq*] the men took a sweat bath during which the boys had a race and the men made a circuit of the room four times. They finished the festival with trials of strengths such as swinging themselves up to the smoke hole by means of rope" (Lantis 1947, p. 54).

As described in detail in Chapter III, the Moravian and Catholic missionaries arriving in the Yup'ik lands in the 1880s, disapproved of and contributed to the eradication of the Bladder Feast as well as of other ceremonial feasts (Kilbuck 1988). Nevertheless, being respectful to the land and the animals remains an important value for the Yupiit who continue to depend (economically and culturally) on the subsistence, especially, in the rural areas:

> "When you grow up in that environment, it's obvious how ill prepared humans are to be in this environment. In the Western perspective we are the custodians. In our culture it's the opposite. We are subject to the will of the land. We are allowed to live one the land, it gives us permission. The whole scenario is flipped" (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2019).

Sharing has been and remains one of the most important principles for the Yup'ik community which is being practiced in both the rural and urban areas. "They realized the value of sharing when they understand that to have little or nothing is to treasure everything, and it fit very nicely into their ecological mindset" (Kawagley 1995, p.19). The success of a hunter is connected directly to being generous to the community: "Those people, let me talk about [sharing] as I understand it. You know, when those people and their children began subsisting from the ocean down there, they would always share, they would always share [their catch] with people. It was to encourage them [to catch]" (Albertina Dull, a Yup'ik Elder 2018 p. 372). Lavrentiy Zagoskin, that explored the Yup'ik region in 1842-1844, wrote:

> "Unlettered people pride themselves on their hospitality… There are no poor among them: the wealthy use their possessions for the common good. After a successful transaction that brings them profit, their one ambition is to expend all they have collected in a celebration to honor the dead" (Zagoskin 1967, p. 106).

Food and goods distribution with the community members is a means of reassuring a future success in hunting (Stanley Anthony, a Yup'ik Elder, 2018, p. 376). I am going to describe later in this dissertation in what ways Native food and goods distribution as well as other services and rules of reciprocity remain an expectation and connect the Yup'ik religious and social networks in the rural and the urban areas.

Lavrentiy Zagoskin noticed that the Yup'ik people in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta were hard-working:

> "The Yukon and Kuskokwim people should not be called lazy by nature or careless just because they do not trouble a great deal about the future. On the contrary, we could see that where the work is necessary the native possesses to a high degree both perseverance and patience" (Zagoskin 1967, p.222).

The value of hard work has been directly linked to the idea of responsibility to the community for its survival:

> "You are not working for yourself, everything for the family, you don't really have that sense of 'for me, for me, for me', this is for everybody. If we don't do this work, we are going to starve in the winter. It gave you a concept of time of understanding like what we are doing now is for the winter. That concept of always getting ready… all of this is in the process of getting ready for something else" (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2019).

This value of hard work and of the responsibility to your community resonates with another value listed: the value of cooperation. As Kawagley (2006) argued, the cooperation between humans and nature is indispensable for the Yupiit to lead a balanced lifestyle (p. 19). The cooperation between the community members is also important in order to survive in the harsh climate, "mak[ing] sure that the community is healthy, we have to be proactive members of the community, making time, making commitment" (Theresa John[11], personal communication, 2020). Kawagley (2005) also noted that "individualism" and "ambition for power" were not suitable for survival, thus, stimulating the maintenance of egalitarianism with the Yup'ik society (p.19).

> "The Alaskan Eskimo, so far as I observed, have no recognized chiefs except such as gain a certain influence over their fellow-villagers through superior shrewdness, wisdom, age, wealth or shamanism. The old men are listened to with respect, and there are usually one or more in this village, and there are usually one or more in each village who by their extended acquaintance with the traditions, customs, and rites are connected with the festivals, as well as being possessed of an unusual degree of common sense, are deferred to and act as chief of advisers of the community" (Nelson 1900, p. 304).

The knowledge of family tree or the knowledge of one's kinship networks has been and remains an important part for the Yupiit, as many of them continue to call their relatives by their kinship names in the city. "Using a *tuqluun* [kinship name] is a way of showing respect", respect being another important value described above (Joe Asuluk from Toksook Bay, 2018 p. 238). "And therefore, when [the Yupiit] are using the [Western] kinship system, they are losing the level of respect for certain people they are supposed to. Because they are not educated…" (Theresa John,

11 In her seventies

personal communication, 2020). Knowing the kinship names of the relatives allows the Yupiit to follow the rules in maintaining different types of relationships with their kin: “those relationships describe the type of interaction we can have with each other” (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020). I observed interactions between several Yup’ik teasing cousins who teased each other, while practicing the Yup’ik dancing in Anchorage and trying to outperform each other. “Teasing cousins is a very deep, important kinship relationship passed on from many generations, it’s a relationship between cross-cousins they maintain through their kinship tree” (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020). “In the village it is still the same but so many of us have moved within our group; [teasing] comes up once in a while, not all the time. Things started changing too fast, I got to see the change coming, but I have seen my age group still teasing each other, mostly, the cross-cousins” (Carrie Paton[12], personal communication, 2020). Thus, knowing one’s kin and using the kinship names is a sign of respect but also a type of knowledge necessary to navigate between the rules of certain behaviors and interaction with particular kin groups.

As described in the above example of the Yup’ik cross-cousins’ teasing, humor plays an important role within Yup’ik society. Humor may perform different functions: it serves as a means of “social control” in teasing songs that were performed to publicly express the disapproval of certain behaviors by using the tactic of indirect teasing to avoid a direct conflict (which is also listed as a value in the Yup’ik society) (Albertina Dull 2018, p. 400; Johnston 1989, p. 427). Another teaching aspect of humor and a value is in “not tak[ing] oneself too seriously, [being capable] to laugh with others at oneself” to manifest “tolerance” and “humility” (Kawagley 1995, p. 22). Today, the Yupiit use humor in their Yup’ik dance practices, in organizing Native Humor Nights in Anchorage to create new, safe Indigenous spaces, as they consider laughter as a medicine.

12 In her sixties

To return to the importance of humility within Yup'ik society, it can be illustrated by another example: Matushka Olga Nikolai, a Yup'ik Orthodox priest's wife whose glorification has recently been approved by the Orthodox Church of America (Orthodox Church of America Website[13] 2023). Matushka Olga lived in Kwethluk, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta region; she was a priest's wife and a community midwife whose remarkable humility is considered as both a desirable trait for the Orthodox but also for Yup'ik society. Knowledge of language is a value that has been probably singled out in recent times, as the colonization, Christianization and assimilation efforts, especially the boarding school experience of the Yup'ik children, contributed to the loss of their mother-tongue by a significant number of the Yupiit. Many Yup'ik children were forcibly sent to boarding schools where they were physically punished for speaking their languages (Charles 2005, p. 107). Consequently, today English is the first language for many Yup'ik peoples: "all the tribal corporate office has to speak English when they do their jobs in terms of computer use, writing letters, the kind of work they do. When they go home the TV is never off, it is in English, the only time they have no English, when they are in the steam bath and when they eat" (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020). Nevertheless, the Yup'ik language remains the most widely spoken Indigenous language in Alaska being taught in the only Indigenous Yup'ik Immersion Program and at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School, being the first language for the children in 17 of 68 Yup'ik villages (Alaska Native Language Center Website[14] n.d.).

13 https://www.oca.org/fs/proclamation-glorification-righteous-matushka-olga. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.
14 https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/languages-move/centralakyupik.php. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

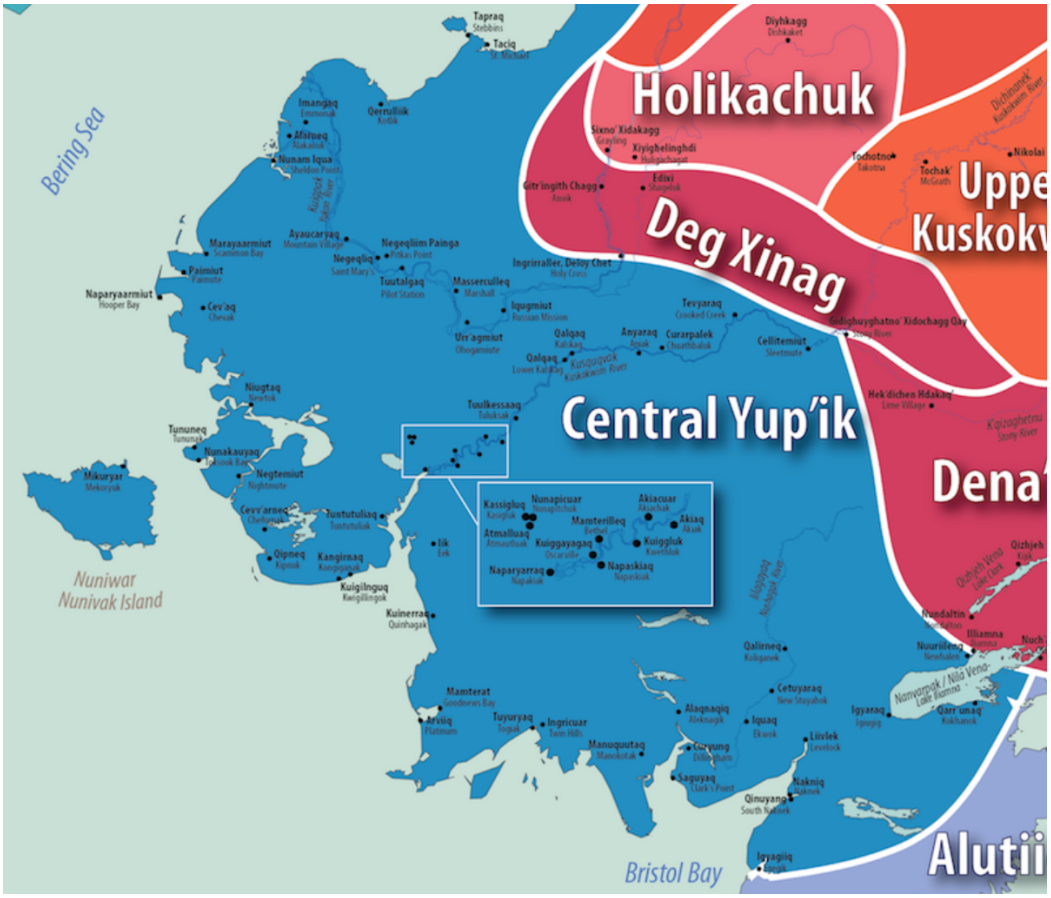


Figure 6. A Fragment of the Map of Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska with the Yup'ik villages Cited and Retrieved from https://www.uaf.edu/anla/collections/map/

During my fieldwork, I heard many times about the struggles of the urban Yupiit who do not speak the Yup'ik language; the ones that have a possibility of learning it argue that it serves as healing.

Another value listed is spirituality that Kawagley (1995) has called "a dynamic sense of sacredness" (p.23). The Yupiit believe that everything had a spirit that was immortal in contrast to physical bodies (Napoleon 2005, p.7). Hunters and game processors follow strict rules to show their respect to the animals, so that their souls may return in new physical bodies to give themselves to the hunters again: "they say an animal gives itself to someone who will take care of it" (Mark John

& John Phillip 2018, p.350). Spirits of the deceased humans are believed to be reproduced by the ritual of naming newborns and sick people after them, as the namesakes acquired some essence of the deceased (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020). Striving to maintain harmony and balance with the surrounding spiritual world, the Yupiit had an elaborated system of rituals and ceremonies that allowed them to negotiate their relationships with it as well as with the Ellam Yua, "the Spirit of the Universe" (Kawagley 2006, p.23).

> "Ellam Yua/Tangrumanrilnguum gave life to the Yupiit, or 'the real people of the land,' as well as to all the animals that live on the land and in the water. He was the creator who made everything. We did not say God but we said Ellam Yua, the spirit of the universe who is everywhere. Even if we think that we are alone we are not. He is aware of us, and He is watching us" (Ayunerak 2014, p.4).

The men's ceremonial house (*qasgig*) was central to the religious and social and political life of the Yup'ik communities organized in bilateral extended family households, consisting of several nuclear families living together (Fienup-Riordan 2000b; VanStone 1984, p. 233). In small, winter villages of the Nunivak Island with only one *qasgiq* the men were "affinal and consanguineal relatives of its leader", while in larger villages with several *qasgi* their leaders were competitors (Lantis 1984, p. 217). Dances and ceremonies were held there, but men and boys also lived, slept, ate, took their steam baths and prepared for hunting. It was also a place where knowledge was shared and passed down by the Elders to the younger generation. Women brought food to their husbands and participated in the ceremonial activities, but they lived separately in smaller sod houses with girls and smaller children. Shamans were called to cure the sick, to predict weather, to

help with ensuring successful hunting; they sang and danced, they created songs and carved masks (Lantis 1945, p. 85).

Speaking about the main annual ceremonies as manifestations of Yup'ik spirituality, they included *Petugtaq, Qaariitaaq, Aaniq, Nakaciuq, Elriq, Kevgiq, and Kelek*. *Petugtaq* was "an exchange of gifts between the men and the women of a single village" that occurred mostly in the fall and winter time (Morrow 1984 p. 115). Nelson (1900) called it the Asking Festival during which women and men exchanged gifts (pp. 359-361). Some items were tied to a stick that was put in the *qasgiq* to represent the items that were asked (McCollough 1988, p.118). Fienup-Riordan (1994) argued that the main idea behind this feast was cross-cousin teasing and competition relationship (p. 349). Many exchanges occurred between cross-cousins of opposite sex, they might also include sexual interaction (Fienup-Riordan 1994, McCollough 1988, Nelson 1900).

There were regional differences in distinguishing and/or combining *Qaariitaaq, Aaniq* or *Qengarpak,* but all three preceded *Nakaciuq* or the Bladder Festival (Morrow 1984). During *Qaariitaaq,* men brought children with bowls (boys or children of both sexes depending on a region) to village houses where they were given food; in some areas, children were disguised (Morrow 1984, p.119). This ceremony was a reversal of habitual daily life, as men entered women's housing asking for food instead of the latter bringing it to them into the *qasgiq;* the children being the namesakes of the deceased brought the community to the spirits of seals the subsequent Bladder Festival was organized around (Fienup-Riordan 1994, p. 272). *Qengarpak* was a ceremony occurring between *Qaariitaaq and Aaniq* when older boys (painted and disguised with false noses) went from house to house accompanied by younger children claiming to be their "children" and behaving "unruly" also reversing the habitual rules of disciplined and humble behavior (Morrow 1984, p. 119). *Aaniq* was a ceremony that served as an introduction to the Bladder Festival, during

which two men that were called ‘mothers’ and that were wearing gut-skin parkas went to the village houses to return the bowls they used during the year to receive new bowls filled with *akutaq* (“Eskimo ice-cream” or a mixture of fresh berries, greens and/or fish) from the women that they brought into the *qasgiq* (Fienup-Riordan 1994, p. 275). The bowls were incorporated into the Bladder Festival celebration, as “on Nelson Island… it was reported that the points of hunting weapons, or wooden replicas of them, were hung in the *qasgi* [plural of qasgeq] so that the yua’s [spirit] (commonly known as *inua’s*, in the literature) of the seals which resided in the bladders until their return to the sea, could hunt for food in the bowls" (Morrow 1984, p. 121).

The Bladder Festival (or *Nakaciuq*) took place in December. The central idea behind this ceremony was showing respect to the immortal spirits of the subsisted animals, in particular, of the seals that concentrated in their bladders inflated and preserved in order for the animals to return and to give themselves to the hunters again next year. As a rule, the Bladder Festival lasted for five days during which the men took sweat baths in and women brought *akutaq* to the *qasgiq.* They all danced and the men put the bladders containing the seal souls under the ice for them to be reborn next year (Fienup-Riordan 1990; Morrow 1984; Nelson 1900 pp. 379-382). This way the Yupiit connected with the spiritual world to show respect to the animals and to negotiate a successful subsistence season.

The *Elriq*, or the Great Feast of the Dead, as Nelson (1900) called it, occurred once in five years, although smaller memorial feasts were held annually. The main purpose of the feast was to feed and honor the deceased with clothes and gifts through their namesakes (Morrow 1984). As discussed earlier in this chapter, to the Yupiit, the spirits of the deceased humans are immortal; they were reproduced by the naming of newborns after the deceased, the latter ones acquiring some of their traits. The Yupiit sang, danced, attracted the spirits of the deceased to the *qasgiq* in order to

feed them and to clothe them through feeding and presenting clothes and gifts to their namesakes (Nelson 1900, pp. 365-378). The elaborated ceremony ensured the human connection with the spirits of the deceased and their reproduction through honoring their namesakes. It also served to maintain the fictive kinship created by the process of naming between the family of the deceased and their namesakes. I am going to elaborate on the naming practices as well as on the practices of honoring the deceased that have survived in the Yup'ik society despite the eradication of *Elriq* by the missionaries that arrived in Yup'ik region by the end of the nineteenth century. The practice of feeding and gifting the deceased continues to exist through the Yup'ik Orthodox celebration of Starring in the rural and urban areas (Anonymous 5[15], personal communication, 2020). I also observed and participated in the feeding and gift-distribution to honor recently departed members of the Anchorage Moravian Church.

Kevgiq, or the Messenger Feast, was held either after the Bladder Festival or in summer (Morrow 1984, p. 134). One village invited another to the celebration to distribute gifts through children:

> "When finally when they had the Messenger Feast, they'd send a messenger to a village… When they were going to have the Messenger Feast in that village, the men first gathered in the qasgi. The people of a village [that they were planning to invite] who they knew, the number one [child] is the one whose name is mentioned [when they request items from the guest village], the first born child. [The name of their first born child] is what people [the parents] are referred to as, their name. That is the name that they used when they [requested items from someone to give during the dance festival]. If they knew that person, [they requested] bread, or glasses,

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> or a writing implement that you use. The people of a village send a messenger to a village [to invite them to a Messenger Feast]. Also, when people had the Messenger Feast back in those days, they knew those men in that [village] and always requested items that they could use for them. [They requested items from] every single one of them, everything from boats down to the smallest things [including] shovels, their clothes or tools, tents, requesting all sorts of things from the people of a village, their opponents. Those two [villages] were opponents" (John Phillip 2018, pp. 389-390).

Thus, the two villages acted as opponents reciprocating a distribution of the requested goods. Morrow (1984) argued that this ceremony served a purpose of “strengthening” connections between villages, while revealing a family’s status to the public (p. 135). At the same time, John Phillip (2018) has stated that community members maintained solidarity in helping each other in gathering necessary gifts that were planned to be distributed to the other village (p. 390).

Beyond strengthening the connections, the Messenger Feast fulfilled a function of social control. According to the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (2023), one of the Yup’ik values was conflict avoidance. As the Yup’ik etiquette rules excluded direct confrontation, the Messenger Feast was a means to shame the offender publicly but indirectly “through a song”:

> “Years ago, when people used to steal things, they would reveal what they had done. You know how people used to get embarrassed… They would do what they call *kingulluggluku* [they would ridicule and recount a person’s misdeeds through a song… See, I actually know many old songs I can sing!

> Those two are the only ones they ridicule in their songs [two male cross-cousins] would do that [to one another], what they call *kingulluggluku* [they would ridicule and recount their misdeeds through song]" (Albertina Dull from Nightmute 2018, pp. 400-401).

Hence (teasing) cross-cousins were predominantly the ones who teased each other publicly through a song to disapprove of incorrect behavior in an indirect way, thus resolving a conflict situation, while re-establishing the community's norms and values.

The Messenger Feast was gradually eradicated by the missionaries together with the other Yup'ik ceremonial feasts. Today, some of the Yupiit return to celebrating their children's first catch or other accomplishments. In Chapter VII, I am going to elaborate on a Yup'ik dance celebration organized in the urban setting by a Cup'ik dance instructor at the University of Alaska Anchorage. However, I would like to point out that some rituals of the Messenger Feast have been incorporated into today's celebrations, for instance, the gift distribution order at the University celebration that mirrored some of the elements of the Messenger Feast:

> "When they had all been given [goods] starting with the elders, they gradually went down [from oldest to youngest], handing out those things. [They gave them] the gifts they had presented during the dance, things they put in the *qasgi*, gathering them there…" (John Phillip 2018, p. 400).

For Valerie Tony[16] (2022), the teasing and competitive relationship of the cross-cousins has been expressed through the efforts to outperform each other in dancing (personal communication). McCollough (1988) has noticed that the change in these rival relationships occurring during the

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times when the Messenger Feast had not yet been discontinued by the missionaries' efforts was expressed in competitive out-performance efforts of the Yup'ik Russian Orthodox and Moravian converts (p. 124).

Kelek, Itruka'ar or the Inviting-In Feast marked the final stage of the annual ceremonial celebrations (Morrow 1984, p. 136). Drebert, a Moravian missionary, who served in the Yup'ik region from 1912 to 1954, described the ceremony as follows:

> "The mask dance was held in the early spring, preceding the seal hunting season. The masks were prepared especially for the occasion, each one representing the spirit of some animal. While the men wearing the masks dance and others drum and sing in accompaniment, the spirits are called and invited to the feast and presented with various things to eat. Each mask had eyes indicating that the spirits could see, and they knew everything that was going on. So the people had to treat them with respect and bring them this yearly sacrifice, to assure themselves of a successful hunting search" (Drebert 1959, pp. 68-69).

The Yup'ik shamans (either female or male) were the ones who helped to connect the human and spirit worlds. Their role was, therefore, central in conducting the ceremony that consisted in crossing the boundaries between those worlds (Fienup-Riordan 1994, pp. 304-305). "The shamans make masks representing the faces of their supernatural or semi human familiars by whose aid they claim to work their will. The object of these faces is to propitiate and do honor to the animals or being represented by them… The masks are burnt at the conclusion of the ceremonies..." (Nelson 1900, p. 359). Edward William Hawkes, an American anthropologist, conducted observations of the

feast during his fieldwork in Saint Michael and wrote that "... when the actor puts in the mask he is supposed to become imbued with the spirit of the being represented" (Hawkes 1913, p. 17). Thus, the masks provided the visibility of the spirits represented by them that were invited to eat and to see that they were treated with respect. This way, the success in the next hunting season was ensured by inviting and honoring the spirits of the animals that had previously given themselves to the hunters. The Yup'ik relationships with the spirits surrounding them can thus be characterized by a series of rules, taboos and rituals that emphasize the care for and respect towards the supernatural. This way, the Yupiit maintained balance in their interactions with the spirits in order to ensure success in subsequent subsistence seasons. During the ceremonial celebrations, they also showed respect to the community members, for instance, by distributing food and gifts to the elders before the younger generations, or by criticizing the improper behavior indirectly through a song, usually danced by teasing cousins to avoid a direct confrontation.

These are the Yup'ik values based on the *qanruyutet* (instructions or teachings) that, according to the Yupiit, have been passed down from generations to generations. Ann Fienup-Riordan (2020) claims that today's focus on traditional values is a manifestation of "ethnonationalism" and of "political activism" by Indigenous people, in general, and by the Yupiit, in particular, that serves as a means of "revival" and of "vindication" (p. 379). The set of the Yup'ik values displayed in one of the classrooms at the Yup'ik Immersion Program in Anchorage is one of the examples of how Yup'ik children living in the city learn about their ancestors' worldviews today that have been ignored and/or considered inferior for over a century. The colonization and Christianization contributed to the creation of a generational gap between Yup'ik Elders and youth disrupting the process of the knowledge transfer. In order to analyze how and why the Yup'ik social and religious networks negotiate their traditions in the city today and how they perceive the cultural

change themselves, I will briefly examine the Yup'ik discourse on the effects of colonization and Christianization, while completing it with the historical accounts of the settlers.

Colonization and Missionaries on the Yup'ik Lands

I would like to start this section by citing the book by Harold Napoleon, Yup'ik writer from Hooper Bay (2005), *Yuuyaraq: The Way of the Human Being.* Napoleon worked on it during the imprisonment for the death of his son caused by an alcohol intoxication. In this book, Napoleon analyzed in what ways the encounters with the settlers and, in particular, the epidemics that hit the Yup'ik and other Indigenous regions in Alaska resulted in post-traumatic disorders, cultural loss, and, as a consequence, alcoholism. The Yup'ik and other Indigenous populations tend to analyze colonization, the cultural and language loss as the main reasons for today's issues existing in the Indigenous communities, such as alcoholism, substance abuse and violence (Burnette et al. 2018). "Our people have always done that… They have always told stories of the past to understand where they were at today" (Lehrman 1991, p. 32).

Thus, Harold Napoleon (2005) attributed the most radical change in Yup'ik society to the so-called "Great Death" or to *"yuut tuqurpallratni"* ("when a great many died") (p.10). The 1900 influenza or "Great Death" was not the only disease that contributed to a significant number of deaths in the Yup'ik region. Lavrentiy Zagoskin, a Russian explorer of Alaska in 1842-1844, noted in his description of the annual Feast for the Dead in Agakhkhlyak, near Saint Michael that "smallpox had depopulated the area" (p.123). Tuberculosis probably spread across the region by Russians starting in the Kuskokwim River area in the 1840s becoming "the most common disease

among the Alaska Natives", whose detrimental impact remained significant until the 1970s (Oswalt 1990, pp. 143-148). Napoleon (2005) described the transformations that occurred with the introduction of the diseases as follows:

> "The people grew desperate, the *angalquk* [shamans] along with them. Then the death started , with people wailing morning, noon, and night… Even the medicine men [shamans] grew ill and died in despair with their people, and with them died a great part of Yuuyaraq, the ancient spirit world of the Eskimo" (Napoleon 2005, p.11).

In the Nushagak region, the influenza epidemic of the years 1918-1919 also resulted in numerous deaths among the Yupiit: the report of Moravians settled in Bethel revealed that 200 Yup'ik and white people died in the area during this time (VanStone 1967, p. 103). Yakov Netsvetov, serving as an Orthodox priest in Ikogmiut (today's Russian Mission) between 1844 and 1863 provided them with medicine, while shamans, the traditional helpers in curing diseases, failed to help. Thus, the Yupiit returned to Netsvetov, as the medicine proved to be more powerful in conquering the diseases than shamans were (Netsvetov 1984, p. 191). The same situation occurred earlier with the Tlingit in the Southeast, when approximately 40-50 percent of the Tlingit population died in Sitka in 1836 because of the smallpox epidemic. The Tlingit became interested in the Russian Orthodox church and the Russian-American Company (RAC), when the latter provided them with vaccination demonstrating their power in parallel with the failure of the local shamans to heal the sick (Kan 1996, p. 620). , "out of the suffering, confusion, desperation, heartbreak, and trauma was born a new generation of Yup'ik people… They were born into shock… Their medicines and their medicine men and women had proven useless. Everything they had believed in had failed" (Napoleon 2005, p. 11).

The exploration (and thus, the first contacts and exposures to new diseases) of Southwestern Alaska started in 1818 and 1819 by Petr Korsakovskiy under the guidance of the Russian-American Company who explored the area to the north of Bristol Bay in search of new fur trade opportunities and who founded the Alexandrovskiy Redoubt that led to the development of trade relationships with the Yupiit living in the surrounding areas (VanStone 1984a, pp. 150-151). In 1832, the Kolmakovskiy Redoubt was established on the Kuskokwim River. In 1833, Mikhailovskiy Redoubt was founded to open the Yukon for exploration. Lavrentiy Zagoskin explored the Yukon between 1842 and 1844.

As for the Christianization process, I am going to elaborate on the cultural changes that the Russian Orthodox Church, the Moravian and the Catholic missionaries produced among the Yup'ik population in the next chapter. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the contact of the Yupiit with the explorers and traders, and, consequently, with the missionaries occurred somewhat later as compared with the Northern Alaska and later as compared with the Unangan, the Sugpiaqs and the Tlingit.

Il'ia Petelin and Yakov Netsvetov were the first two Russian Orthodox missionaries in the Yup'ik region. The latter was an Unangax̂-Russian priest who founded the Russian Mission in 1844 and contributed to a growing number of Yup'ik converts through learning the Yup'ik language and extensive evangelical work by traveling to remote areas (Black 2004). Although the Russian Orthodox priests did not approve of the ceremonial celebrations and shamanism, they tolerated them. After the sale of Alaska by Russia to the United States in 1867, Orthodoxy survived through the efforts of the Indigenous clergy and laymen (Kan 1984). For approximately twenty years after the sale, there was no radical change in the Yup'ik lifestyle.

In 1885, the Moravian missionaries established a station at Bethel, on the Kuskokwim River (Hamilton 1890). John Kilbuck, one of the first Moravian missionaries in the Yup'ik region was Native American and, similarly to the Russian Orthodox, learned the Yup'ik language to evangelize and to proselytize in the vernacular (Kilbuck 1988). In contrast, Kilbuck and other Moravian missionaries contributed to the eradication of the traditional ceremonies and of shamanism, as other Moravians did in the Canadian Arctic, associating them evil (Oosten et al. 2006). The Jesuits that set up a mission on Nelson Island in 1888 after the Moravians and the Russian Orthodox also contributed to the elimination of traditional practices. As mentioned by VanStone in 1984, these three major denominations still continue to be supported by the majority of the Yupiit, having their churches in the urban areas today that serve as vehicles for reproducing the village lifestyle.

Despite the eradication of the traditional practices, predominantly, by Moravians and Catholics, the Moravian and Russian Orthodox tradition of using the vernacular in the missionary work resulted in a better retention of the Yup'ik language that remains the first language for children at some Yup'ik villages and the second in number of speakers in the United States after the Navajo language (Alaska Native Language Center Website[17] n.d.; Fienup-Riordan 2020; Krauss 1980; Williams 2009).

The Moravians were an exception of a Protestant mission that supported bilingualism. Sheldon Jackson, the general agent of education in Alaska, appointed in 1885, considered Christianization and 'civilizing' the Indigenous peoples in Alaska as the only possible way for them to become equal to the Americans through the substitution of the Indigenous languages by the English language (Lauter 2019). This way, "Alaska became a battleground between these conflicting visions of education" (Dauenhauer 1997, p.12). Some of my collaborators and former boarding school students confirmed that the Indigenous children were morally harassed and

17 https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/languages-move/centralakyupik.php. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

physically punished for speaking their first languages. Father Michael Oleksa (2007) cited his Yup'ik wife's school experience while elaborating on the prohibition of the Indigenous languages at school: "I later asked my Yup'ik wife when she remembers learning anything at school, and she replied that by fourth grade she had begun to understand enough English to actually benefit instructionally. But for the first three years, she was just struggling to make sense of what these strange people were trying to say" (p. 56).

While Jackson aimed at the eradication of the Indigenous languages in favor of the assimilation and of the exclusive use of the English language, he was a proponent of establishing local schools, in contrast to the Indian office whose policy of sending the Indigenous children to boarding schools was detrimental to many of them (Lauter 2019, p. 14). In the 1920s, the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs opened three boarding schools in Alaska but between 1947 and 1966 the only (newly open) boarding school – Mt. Edgecumbe – operated there; if it was full, children were sent to boarding schools outside Alaska; the other option for the Indigenous students were the Alaskan schools operated by churches (Hirshberg 2008). Often the Yup'ik children were separated from their parents and communities and forcibly sent to boarding schools. This meant that they did not have any exposure to their language and culture for months. Some of them experienced physical and sexual abuse (Hirshberg 2008). "Many of Alaska's foremost leaders survived and succeeded in the Boarding School experience but for every prominent and productive graduate, there are many more depressed, disillusioned, damaged and demoralized survivors…" (Bates & Oleksa 2007, p. xxix).

In the mid-1970s, the situation changed because, on the one hand, Rural Education Attendance Area schools and school districts were developed in rural Alaska, and, on the other hand, through a lawsuit it became possible to establish local high schools in almost all communities

in Alaska (Charles 2009). However, it created additional challenges, especially for the Yup'ik adolescent students who returned to their communities that they had lost their connections to, but also for the teachers coming to the rural areas and trying to teach without knowing the culture (Charles 2009, Hirshberg 2005). The generational gap that Harold Napoleon (2005) elaborated on became more evident, as the children lost their language which hindered their communication with the Elders whose traditional knowledge could not be shared with them any longer. They felt strangers in their own families and they lacked communication with their Indigenous peers from the boarding schools they used to attend (Charles 2009).

The change related to the boarding schools and to the transitioning to the local schools resulted in the gradual abandonment of the family camps:

> "But the teachers began insisting that we stay in the village in spring, so the kids could attend school. We didn't see the point. Spring camp was always a wonderful time of renewal and rebirth. They made such a fuss about it, though, that we left the younger kids with older relatives and went to spring camp without them. When that proved too stressful, we gave up spring camp back about 1955" (Anonymous in Bates & Oleksa 2007, p. 62).

In parallel to the development of the local schools, there were boarding schools that continued to exist for the Indigenous students in Alaska contributing to the development of friendships between different Indigenous community members (Hirshberg 2005). Two other examples of the Indigenous population shift, mixture and concentration in the Yup'ik region are also worth paying attention to: the creation and the development of the commercial salmon fishing industry in the Bristol Bay region after 1880 and the abandonment of small settlements in the 1950s. The first

brought a significant number of outsiders to the region, including other Alaska Natives and the Yupiit from other areas, influencing the changes in the population and in the subsistence patterns throughout the whole Yup'ik region (VanStone 1984, p. 155). The second aimed at abandoning smaller settlements of five to thirty people and at concentrating them in fifty-six permanent villages with the population ranging from two hundred to one thousand and two hundred people (Fienup-Riordan et al. 2020, p. xxi).

The boarding school experience that the Indigenous students from different regions were exposed to, population shifts, blood quantum requirements by the Bureau of Indian Affairs contributed to various contacts and to intermarriages among the representatives of different Indigenous populations, and consequently, to the representation of a collective Alaska Native identity. In the next section, I would like to examine how the creation of such political institutions as Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) and Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act (ANCSA) have been participating in this formation as well as in the maintenance of the Yup'ik identity.

Roles of Political Institutions in the Identity Construction (AFN, ANCSA)

In 1959, Alaska became the forty-ninth state of the United States. On the one hand, from the time of the purchase of Alaska by the United States, the rights of Alaska Natives to their ancestral lands were legally recognized. On the other hand, by 1959, the majority of the Alaskan lands was claimed by the federal government. There was no clarity on what lands belonged to Alaska Natives until the 1900's when Alaska Natives gradually started to claim some portion of the state lands. The

growing demand for oil discovered in North Slope brought up questions of the land ownership in Alaska (Alaska Native Education n.d.).

In 1966, approximately four hundred Alaska Native Peoples from seventeen Native organizations gathered for three days to discuss Alaska Native land rights. This meeting resulted in the establishment of the Alaska Federation of Natives, a non-profit, statewide organization whose initial, main purpose was to ensure a fair land settlement. "The year 1966 marked a turning point for the Native people in that this was the first time in history we had a unified effort to promote an equitable land settlement, and organized to change public policy that was adverse to us" (William Iggiagruk Hensley 2009, p. 198). Within four years after the AFN creation, ANCSA was signed into law (Alaska Federation of Natives Website[18] 2023). The land settlement was enabled by "the Native solidarity movement [that] led to a stronger identity for Native people" (Maria Shaa Tláa Williams 2009, pp. 215-216).

In the first years after the ANCSA signature, AFN helped in the implementation of ANCSA and in the establishment of the Native corporations but today it remains an important organization in the Indigenous political activism by "address[ing] and protect[ing] Native interests at the state and federal levels" by "press[ing] the land claims and solicit[ing] government program funds" (Maria Shaa Tláa Williams 2009, pp. 215-216). The AFN Convention is the largest Indigenous gathering held annually each fall in Anchorage or in Fairbanks; it brings together "thousands of official delegates and participants from membership organizations across the state" that lead discussions on possibilities and challenges and vote for or against resolutions (Alaska Federation of Natives Website 2023).

18 https://www.nativefederation.org/about-afn/. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

The AFN Convention is preceded by the annual Elders and Youth Conference that is organized by a non-profit organization – First Alaskans Institute that organizes cultural workshops in which the Indigenous Elders pass down their knowledge to the younger generation. Quyana Alaska is the dance festival that gathers various Indigenous dance groups and spectators for two evenings by the end of the Convention to manifest Indigenous self-determination through dancing that has been eradicated but reawakened. The AFN Convention Art Fair is organized during the convention and unites Indigenous artists from various Alaskan regions. It is "an economic venue" as even some of the artists with no social media or other virtual presence making their living by selling arts come to participate (Lee 2003, p. 590; Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022). In addition, it serves as an opportunity to create and maintain bonds with the village through bartering the raw materials needed for the art creation with hunters and other artists. For the artists, it is also a space for political activism and self-determination (Lee 2003). I visited the Convention in 2018 and in 2019 to see many urban Indigenous participants, artists and dancers who exchanged hugs and conversations, negotiated deals and bartered. The Convention cuts across the boundaries of the event itself, as there are events in the city as well as lots of private meetings of the extended family members living in the city and coming to the city from the villages as participants.

The AFN Convention is one of the manifestations of the collective Alaska Native identity that expanded due to the ANCSA implementation. According to the federal law requirement, thirteen Alaska Native Corporations were established to help the Alaska Natives born before the settlement on December 18th, 1971, with the land and monetary distribution (Green & Lopez 2013, p.6). Over two hundred created village corporations also received lands and monetary benefits. To receive a shareholder status, one had to be at least one-quarter Native. The impact of the ANCSA implementation remains controversial, according to both Alaska Native people and researchers.

Some argue that the government benefited from finding solutions to land claims too fast and without taking such aspects of the Indigenous ways of life as subsistence into consideration, while creating a business model contradictory to the Alaska Native identity, considering ANCSA as "ideological invasion on Alaska Native life and land" (Poehlein 2018, p.13; Tuck 2014, p. 249). As Andrew Guy, a Vice President/General Counsel of Calista Corporation (1996) put it:

> "...I've heard other people say that ANCSA is a sleeping giant. The corporate world: in mainstream Western society, you have these competitors, competing, going for business, driving the other people out of business, that kind of stuff. And I think that the Native corporations, including the village corporations, got into that mode, which is totally contradictory to our culture" (Andrew Guy 1996, p.165).

Others think that ANCSA is not solely a business model but that it helps the Indigenous peoples of Alaska to preserve their cultures (Geistauts & Lind 2014, p. 237). I am going to discuss in the subsequent chapters in what ways Native Corporations help maintain the Indigenous arts, education and religious denominations in the city which leads to sustaining Yup'ik and other Indigenous social and religious networks between the village and the city as well as to reproducing some aspects of the village lifestyle.

Nine years after the signature of ANCSA, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was adopted. It addressed the subsistence rights on federal lands for all the subsistence users including Natives and non-Natives. Although being beneficial for the Alaska Native peoples in the sense that they can subsist despite their ANCSA land holdings, ANILCA did not recognize the same right at sea; it also prohibited subsistence activities at National Parks or

Refuges (DeHass 2014, p. 31). Thus, the subsistence debates continue today. They require the Native solidarity, the strengthening of the collective Alaska Native identity in the efforts to solve the created challenges. The Yupiit today actively participate in these debates.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed Yup'ik social organization and worldviews through the Yup'ik values that summarize the *qanruyutet* or the instructions that were traditionally shared by the Elders. These instructions reflected the Yup'ik worldview and social organization. I found the Yup'ik values displayed in the educational institutions in Anchorage, as they are also being strategically used today, especially in teaching the younger generations that are encouraged to follow the instructions that contribute to their well-being and to self-determination. One of the Yup'ik most important values is spirituality that explains their relationship with the spirits around them (in particular, with the spirits of the animals that decide to give themselves to the hunter), as well as the whole ceremonial cycle that was disrupted mostly by the Moravian and Catholic missionaries that settled on the Yup'ik lands towards the end of the nineteenth century. Some Yup'ik people attribute the disruption of Yup'ik lifestyles and the cultural loss to the diseases that were introduced by the traders, explorers and missionaries, especially the influenza epidemic of the year 1900, as not only a significant part of the Yup'ik population was wiped out but it also resulted in the loss of confidence in shamans and in traditional cultural and healing practices. In parallel, the vaccinations that were provided by the missionaries strengthened their power in the eyes of the Yupiit. The knowledge of language became an important value to focus on by the younger generation, as the Yup'ik language was lost by many speakers being taught to assimilate and to use only English in the missionary schools, but also in the boarding schools where many were sent

forcibly. The Native solidarity that started to emerge in the middle of the 20th century led to political activism and to the creation of the collective Alaska Native identity that helped in the settlement of the ANCSA whose impact remains controversial for the Yupiit and other Indigenous populations today.

CHAPTER III: THE YUPIIT AND CHRISTIANITY: PAST AND PRESENT

This chapter focuses on historical and current interactions of the Yupiit and three distinct Christian denominations, examining theological and strategical similarities and differences in missionary strategies, the degree of their openness to the Yup'ik traditional worldviews, and the choices of the Yupiit to adopt and to adapt to each particular approach, while analyzing to what degree all of them contributed to the development of Indigenous Christianity.

The Yup'ik Orthodoxy

Russian Orthodox Beliefs and Practices

The Orthodox Church considers itself as a traditional church that maintains continuity with the ancestral knowledge of the "oral teachings of Christ" (Ware 1997). This emphasis on the tradition might have an appeal on the part of the Indigenous populations whose traditional, ancestral knowledge has been passed on from generation to generation. The Orthodox Church recognizes the same seven sacraments as the Roman Catholic Church: Baptism, Chrismation, the Eucharist,

Confession, Holy Orders, Marriage and the Anointing of the Sick. They occupy the most important place in Orthodox worship. Not all of them are equally important, Baptism and the Eucharist holding a special place among all the other sacraments. Besides the sacraments, there are other sacramental rites and "minor blessings" that have a sacramental character (Ware 1997, p. 275). Thus, the sacraments play the most important part in the Orthodox liturgy. Orthodox liturgies are much lengthier than the Catholic ones, as they comprise additional rites that the Catholic Church does not have. One of the distinct features in the Orthodox liturgy is the focus on the cosmic and mystical dimension (Bulgakov 1988, p. 292). In contrast to a Protestant service, the Orthodox liturgy makes appeal not only to the human, but to the whole created universe that surrounds humans. The numerous rituals performed during the liturgy allow one to experience God and the surrounding universe in a spiritual and intuitive way. This mystical character of the Orthodox liturgy, the rich visual imagery (icons) representing the Saints and Scripture events and the appeal to passing down the traditional teachings of Christ might be perceived by the Yup'ik as similar to the Yup'ik ceremonialism and system of thought which could facilitate the process of conversion and adaptation. I am going to examine in detail how these distinct characteristics of Orthodoxy as well as of the Russian Orthodox missionary strategies in Alaska, in general, and in the Yup'ik region, in particular, contributed to the interaction of the Orthodox priest and the Yup'ik population and impacted the choices the Yup'ik made in adaptation to the Orthodox faith.

Russian Mission in Alaska

The question of interactions of Indigenous spirituality and of Russian Orthodox Christianity in Alaska has been actively discussed by historians, ethnohistorians and anthropologists for over thirty years (Black 1984b, 1999, 2004; Kan 1988, 2014; Luehrmann 2008; Oleksa 1992; Pierce 1978, 1990; Vinkovetsky 2015; Znamenski 1999, 2003). Znamenski (1999) and Vinkovetsky (2015) both have listed and described different scientific perspectives with regards to the discussion. The first group of researchers, mostly with the Soviet Union historical background, such as Okun and Florovsky, considered Alaskan missionarization as entirely equal to colonization, while underscoring the negative impact of missionaries on the Indigenous population of Alaska. The second group of scholars, defined by Vinkovetsky as "romanticized revisionists" (Black, Mousalimas, Oleksa) argued that tolerance by the Orthodox missionaries of Indigenous traditional beliefs contributed to the peaceful acceptance of the Orthodox faith. Znamenski (1999) claims that the third group tended to analyze interactions between missionaries and Indigenous populations as an intercultural dialogue, while focusing on the ways the local Indigenous populations chose to reinterpret and to adapt to the Russian Orthodox Christianity. Znamenski used the "ethnicity as strategy" concept to examine the interaction strategies the Alaskan Indigenous populations adapted to negotiate their worldviews and beliefs (Znamenski 1999, p.8). The Yup'ik have been and still remain active negotiators who have decided (and continue to do so) which elements of a new religious Otherness to adopt to their worldviews and spirituality, while facing religious and cultural changes. Orthodox Yup'ik have been making their own decisions in accepting or rejecting particular aspects of the Russian Orthodoxy, depending on different factors that include the general

missionary strategies of the Russian Orthodox mission and particular methods used by the missionary priests.

Speaking about particularities of the Russian Orthodox missionary tradition in general, Alaska was the first place on the continent where Orthodoxy was introduced, as very small numbers of Orthodox Christians immigrated to other parts until the 1890s (Black 2004; Stokoe & Kishkovsky 1994). One of the Russian colonizers' goals was to convert Indigenous populations into obedient citizens of the Russian Empire, both culturally and politically (Vinkovetsky 2015, p.152). A very important characteristic of the Russian missionaries' strategies in the christianization of the Alaska Indigenous populations was a historically close collaboration with and the material support by the State. The hierarchical structure of the Mission comprised the Bishop, instructed by the Holy Synod and the Russian government (until 1867), and the parishes supervised by the clergy, individually assigned to the parishes under the Bishop's supervision. The relationship between Russian Orthodox missionaries in Alaska and the State has been illustrated by Barbara Smith (1984) in *Inventory. The Alaskan Russian Church Archive,* where she elaborated on the secular nature of the Alaskan priests' papers considering them as agents of both the Church and the State (p.4).

Russian Orthodoxy was first introduced to the Unangan. Russian lay *promyshlenniki,* or entrepreneurs, often of mixed Russian-Siberian Indigenous descent, came to Alaska and started to baptize them in the middle of the 19th century. As the Russian Orthodox Church allows baptisms by laity in the absence of a clergy, Orthodoxy was brought to Alaska by laymen. The official missionarization of Alaska began later, when the first missionaries arrived upon request of the Russian-American Company (RAC), among them Father Herman, who won respect among the Sugpiaq people, by defending them from RAC mistreatment. Despite the dependence of the Alaskan missionaries on the State and, later, on the RAC, some of the Russian Orthodox

missionaries protected Indigenous populations from the Company employees. They sent reports back to Russia. Thus, the relationships between the missionaries and RAC employees became tense (Smith & Barnett 1990). Defending the Indigenous populations allowed the missionaries to build relationships of trust that facilitated the subsequent adoption of the Orthodox faith. As for the missionary strategies in Alaska, they were similar to what had already been implemented by Saints Cyrillus and Methodious in Moravia and, many centuries later, Siberia. One of the distinct features was using the local vernacular to spread the word of God (DeHass 2009, Henkelman & Vitt 1985, Oleksa 1992). Thus, the Russian Orthodox missionaries significantly relied on the necessity of understanding the local worldviews and learning local languages. Not all the Orthodox missionaries in Alaska equally implemented the approach (DeHass 2009; Henkelman & Vitt 1985; Oleksa 1992). However, the overall trend was to rely on learning local traditions and languages, as a means of inculturation, a term that was introduced much later by the Roman Catholics, expressing the requirement of the missionaries to become sensitive to the local cultures (Robinaud 2017). Thus, the growing expertise of some of the Russian Orthodox missionaries in Alaska in both the local languages and cultures facilitated the process of conversion among the Alaska Natives. A good illustration of the strategy is the example of Father Ivan Veniaminov's missionary work. He was the first missionary priest in Alaska to learn the Unangam Tunuu (Aleut) and Tlingit languages, in order to create the Unangax̂ orthography. Later, when Veniaminov became the Metropolitan of Moscow, in the *Instructions* that he addressed to Hieromonk Theophil in the Nushagak parish in the Yup'ik region, he elaborated on his vision of how missionary activities had to be conducted: Theophil was expected to adjust the fasting and church attendance rules to the local climate, diet and customs; the missionary had to baptize Indigenous populations by their free will without any present distribution; the missionary was requested to learn the Yup'ik language and customs (Veniaminov 1899, pp. 564-574). In this list of instructions, Veniaminov summarized both the traditional Russian Orthodox missionary vision as well as his own missionary experience, including

knowledge of the Yup'ik Indigenous peoples acquired during several trips to the region. Not all the missionaries managed to follow and to implement the inculturation methods in their missionary work, but Veniaminov's influence on the overall missionary strategies in Alaska was significant.

One of the central strategic points Veniaminov reinforced was the creation of Indigenous clergy that coincided with the development of the C*reole* class in Russian America. The term appeared sometime between 1816 and 1821 derived from the Spanish *criollo* signifying the status that applied exclusively to Alaskans of mixed Russian and Alaska Native descent, who were considered Russian citizens with the privilege of the exemption from taxes and military service (Black 2004). The bilingual and bi-cultural *Creole* clergy significantly contributed to the adoption of the Orthodox religious Otherness by customizing the religious messages to the local environments. Together with the Indigenous parishioners, the Native clergy reassured the Church survival after Alaska's sale to the United States and the Russian Revolution in 1917. The RAC dependency on the local populations for resources, Veniaminov's decision to grow and to rely on the Indigenous clergy for spreading the Orthodoxy over the vast Alaskan territories, the lack of clergy and the emphasis on the gradual conversion by learning to experience the mystical nature of the Russian Orthodox liturgical sacraments were the main reasons that allowed the Indigenous populations to adopt Christianity without giving up the main traditional beliefs and practices. Thus, when the Moravian missionary John Henry Kilbuck arrived in Alaska at the end of the 19th century, he found the Yupiit being familiar with some aspects of Christianity but still practicing their traditional ceremonial activities (Kilbuck 1988).

As with the later process of inculturation within the Roman Catholic Church in Alaska, the process of interaction between the Russian Orthodox missionaries and the Indigenous tribes contributed to the adoption of Orthodoxy by the Indigenous populations, to the adaptation of the

missionaries to the local customs and to the indigenization of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska, when the elements of the local system of thought penetrated and modified the Church, enabling the development of a distinct Indigenous Orthodoxy. Csoba DeHass (2009) has argued that indigenization was enabled by becoming "accessible", by providing Indigenous Orthodox leaders "access to power and authority" (p.23). In order to compensate for the lack of clergy on the vast territories, the missionaries were instructed to grow a body of Indigenous lay caretakers from the village chiefs or Elders, choir leaders, members of sisterhoods and brotherhoods and readers. They were (and still continue to be) in charge of maintaining the village churches, of traveling long distances under harsh climate conditions to serve as clergy interpreters, of conducting marriages and baptisms in the absence of priests, especially in places visited once or twice a year (p. 23). Delegating duties resulted in providing the local Indigenous Orthodox with responsibility and relative autonomy that contributed to the development of a local Orthodox tradition in several areas of Alaska, including the Yup'ik region.

After the sale of Alaska to the United States and the Russian Revolution, the Russian Orthodox Church became marginal in contrast to Protestant denominations that followed aggressive strategies of civilizing and evangelizing the Alaskan Indigenous populations. There Russian Orthodox converts significantly increased in numbers after the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, as a response to the aggressive assimilation policies of the government. To become Orthodox meant to become Christian, thus, enabling the Indigenous peoples to leverage their status within the dominant society, while allowing for a space to protect certain Indigenous traditions and languages within the framework of the relatively tolerant Russian Orthodox missionary tradition (Kan 1985). The autonomy in the care for the local parishes, the similar concept of the generational, traditional knowledge transmission in both the Indigenous and the Russian Orthodox systems of thought might be one of the main reasons for the gradual creation of the traditional Indigenous

Orthodoxy concept. The ability to be locally independent enabled the Indigenous Orthodoxy to survive in Alaska after the Revolution in Russia in 1917 that resulted in the complete loss of funding.

Receiving the autocephaly, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) started to strengthen its position by canonizing the first American Saint, Saint Herman of Alaska, in 1970. The canonization brought OCA to Kodiak, Alaska, where Herman served as a missionary, so that OCA turned its attention to the origins of Orthodoxy on the continent as well as to the issues of the Alaskan Diocese. Gradually, the Alaskan Orthodox heritage was reinforced by canonizing four other Alaskan Saints.

Alaskan Orthodox Saints and Icons

The visual imagery plays a key role in the Orthodox communal liturgical tradition. Naturally, the use of the icons to transmit the Christian message to Indigenous populations has also been a part of the Russian Orthodox missionary strategy. The canonization of Alaskan Saints has contributed to the reinforcement of the Indigenous Alaskan identity in the Church, especially in case of the Indigenous Saints. Saint Herman defended the Sugpiaqs from mistreatment and abuse of RAC employees. He taught them the Orthodox virtues by the example of his ascetic and endurant lifestyle and communicated the message on the Christian model of behavior underlying the importance of humbleness that is one of the traditional values of the Yup’ik population. Herman was a monk and thus also considered "an Elder" who associated Orthodox and Indigenous systems of thought with spiritual wisdom (Ware 1997, p. 39). Herman’s canonization reinforced the role

models common for both Orthodox and Indigenous worldviews, simultaneously reminding the Indigenous Christians of his advocacy against the mistreatment of the Indigenous population by the Russian-American company employees. He was canonized during the rise of the self-identification trend among the Alaskan Indigenous populations, thus, becoming a symbol of the Indigenous Orthodox advocacy against mistreatment and assimilation policies.

Saint Juvenaly was the second Alaskan missionary to be canonized together with his unknown Native Companion. Juvenaly was a hieromonk among the first missionaries in Alaska. He was killed by the Yupiit in the Quingahak area at the end of the 18th century. Saint Juvenaly and his Native Companion became a local symbol of Christian martyrdom.

Saint Innocent Ivan Veniaminov was the third Alaskan Saint to be canonized. He was well-known for the creation of the first Unangax̂ orthography in Alaska and for becoming the first Bishop in the Americas. Due to his vision, Native Orthodox clergy and laity leaderships were established and developed in Alaska. The devotion of the *Creole* priests and of the Indigenous lay leaders was one of the main factors for the survival of Orthodoxy in Alaska. His canonization underlined the historical Orthodox missionary traditions to tolerate the Indigenous cultures and to transmit the message of God in the vernacular.

Three of the Alaska Saints described above were Russian missionaries. The other two were Indigenous Alaskans: Saint Peter the Aleut and Saint Iakov (Jacob) Netsvetov. Peter the Aleut was a Sugpiaq from Kodiak, canonized as a Russian Orthodox martyr, after he had been tortured and murdered by the Jesuits in California for refusing to accept the Catholic faith (Orthodox Church of America Website[19]). Netsvetov was the last canonized Alaskan *Creole* missionary. He was the first

19 https://www.oca.org/fs/st-jacob-of-alaska. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.
https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2014/09/24/102713-martyr-peter-the-aleut. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.

Indigenous person to be ordained a priest who built the missions in Atka and on the Yukon River. Being Veniaminov's disciple, Netsvetov implemented his missionary vision by translating the Bible into the Atkan dialect and liturgical materials into Yup'ik during his missionary years in the Yup'ik region.

Icons of the five Saints can be found in parishes throughout Alaska. As Robinaud (2017) argued, the transmission of the Christian message through the religious, visual art is a characteristic of the Catholic missionary tradition. The same can be said about Orthodoxy, although, in addition, the Orthodox icons play an indispensable role in the daily communal and individual rituals both in the domestic and ecclesiastical environments.



Figure 7. A picture of the icon of the Alaska Saints
at the Synaxis of the Saints of Alaska chapel, Kodiak, 2017
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

As mentioned above, the Roman Catholics started to radically change their missionary strategies after the Vatican Council II by gradually incorporating Indigenous ceremonial objects into the liturgy in the 1970s, while the first and the only Indigenous Catholic Saint Kateri

Tekakwitha was canonized only in 2012. Thus, her icons have only recently appeared inside the Catholic Church, representing both the success of the inculturation strategies and the openness of the Church to the Indigenous cultures of the continent (Robinaud 2017). The Orthodox Church in Alaska canonized Peter the Aleut, the first Indigenous Saint, in 1970, thus introducing his icons into the daily, personal and communal life of the Indigenous people forty years earlier. At the same time, no Indigenous objects are included in the liturgical life of the Church.



Figure 8. A print of Saint Iakov Netsvetov at Saint Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, Alaska, 2019
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)



Figure 9. A Peter the Aleut Icon at Saint Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, Alaska, 2019
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

On the icon (Figure 7) Netsvetov's and Peter the Aleut's physical characteristics do not differ from the other Saints. However, Netsvetov's color of skin on the icon (Figure 8) reveals his Indigenous heritage. As for Peter the Aleut (Figure 9), in addition to the color of skin, his heritage is also emphasized with the traditional Indigenous clothes he is dressed in. It also emphasizes the idea of a possibility for all Orthodox to become Saints, regardless of their status within the ecclesiastical institution hierarchy.

While the Roman Catholics introduced the Indigenous traditional, ceremonial objects to emphasize the similarities between both systems of thought in view of facilitating the adoption of religious Otherness by the Indigenous peoples of Alaska, in general, and by the Yupiit, in particular, the Orthodox of Alaska focused on the inclusion of the Indigenous Saints into the liturgical life of the Church. Mousalimas (1992) noticed that this strategy also served to draw similarities between traditional and Orthodox sacred objects. He argued that the traditional Yup'ik masks and Orthodox icons both serve as instruments to connect to "the sacred cosmos" (Mousalimas 1992, p.133). Indeed, both Orthodox icons and Yup'ik masks "revealed the mysteries of the spiritual world" in artistic form (Bulgakov 1988). However, Mousalimas emphasized a partial similarity of both on a theoretical level. Their functionality differed, as the masks were worn by shamans during the religious ceremonies in contrast to the Orthodox icons. Nevertheless, the symbolic similarity between masks and icons was supposed to facilitate the integration of the religious Other by the Yupiit:

> The mask festival has supplied terms by which the natives speak of the Greek Church and its services among themselves. When they saw the Russian priests in embroidered robes performing the complicated offices of the church it was believed that they were

> witnessing the white man's method of celebrating a mask festival similar to their own (Nelson 1900, pp. 421-422).

Later on, when the Alaskan Indigenous populations integrated Orthodoxy into their traditional worldview system, canonization of Indigenous Saints by OCA reinforced the missionary effort, while emphasizing the idea of the indigenization of Orthodoxy. Icons, depicting the Indigenous Saints, underlined the connection of the Indigenous Orthodox to the "divine grace" through their veneration (Mousalimas 2003, p. 135), while encouraging the Indigenous Orthodox to follow the ideal that was represented by the Saints and the examples of their godly lifestyles. It is also important to mention that, as for today, all the Alaskan canonized Saints are males, highlighting the dominance of the male gender in the liturgical life of the Church. One of the Indigenous Saints is of the Unangaŷ heritage, while the other is Sugpiaq, a fact that illustrates the historical success of the missionary efforts among these Indigenous populations. The active phase of Alaska Saints' canonization started in 1970 with Saint Herman and ended with Saint Iakov Netsvetov in 1994. Olga Michael, a Yup'ik priest's wife from Kwethluk, has been considered for glorification by the Orthodox Church of Alaska. Her story is indicative of both the recent growth of the Yup'ik Orthodoxy (Smith in Barnett and Smith 1990) and the gender role division within the Yup'ik traditional and Orthodox system of thought. I will start with a brief history of the Christianization of the Yup'ik region by the Russian Orthodox Church to illustrate Olga Michael's story in the context of Yup'ik Orthodoxy development.

The Spreading of Russian Orthodoxy in the Yup'ik Region and its Adoption by the Yupiit

RAC started to show interest in the Yup'ik area at the beginning of the 19th century, when quantities of fur-bearing animals started to decline on the habitual territories. Three redoubts were found by RAC explorers between Norton Sound and Bristol Bay: Alexandrovskiy, on the Nushagak River (in 1818), Kolmakovskiy on the Kuskokwim River (1832) and Mikhailovskiy (1833) in the Norton Sound area.

Ivan Veniaminov visited Alexandrovskiy Redoubt in 1829 and baptized Yup'ik people on the occasion. He returned to the Nushagak River area three years later accompanied by the RAC general manager Ferdinand Wrangell who ordered the construction of a chapel after the visit. Later, becoming the Bishop of the new Diocese of Kamchatka, the Kurils and the Aleutians, Veniaminov confirmed his interest in the region by the decision to establish a mission at Alexandrovskiy Redoubt in 1841 (VanStone 1967).

The intervention of the Orthodox missionaries did not radically disrupt the Yup'ik social organization structure. At first, without any other community location available for liturgical services, the Yupiit invited Orthodox missionaries to preach in the men's ceremonial houses (Netsvetov 1984, p. 26). While some of the Yupiit expressed curiosity towards the Orthodox missionaries teachings, shamans and Elders were the ones to oppose them:

> We heard that what you said, but none of us wants to be baptized. Perhaps our children might believe you and become Christians in due time. We cannot abandon what our ancestors bequeathed to us and forget what they taught us (McCollough 1988, p. 95).

Il'ia Petelin, Veniaminov's son-in-law, was the first priest sent to serve in the region. He seemed to make progress in his missionary efforts, as Church membership considerably increased (Kan 1988). As for the Kuskokwim River Yupiit, the Nushagak missionaries baptized them on their trips to the region, but their interaction with Russian Orthodoxy was much less intensive as compared to the Nushagak River area. Soon the missionary Yakov Netsvetov arrived to become the first priest at Ikogmiut (today's Russian Mission). The bilingual, Unangax̂-Russian *Creole* priest had a substantial 20-year missionary experience on the Aleutian, the Commander and the Kuril Islands. The success of his efforts in Russian Mission was at least partly attributed to his ability to learn the Yup'ik language and to communicate the word of God in the vernacular (Black 2004), but the dedication of other *Creols*, in particular the Bel'kovs to building, traveling and interpreting for the priest also played a key role in growing the mission (Easley 2017).

Netsvetov's and other Russian Orthodox missionary journals reflect his missionary work in the region and provide ethnographic observations of the Yup'ik lifestyle during the period of a deeper Russian penetration into the region. For instance, they throw light on the skepticism Orthodox missionaries were confronted with: as diseases have been traditionally considered as a result of incorrect behavior, some Yupiit attributed the epidemics in the Yukon River area to the arrival of Orthodox missionaries. However, Netsvetov provided them with medicine, while shamans failed to help the Yupiit to heal. Thus, they returned to Netsvetov, as the medicine proved to be

more powerful in conquering the diseases than shamans were (Netsvetov 1984, p. 191). Hence the ability of the Russian Orthodox missionaries to treat diseases illustrated to the Yupiit their sources of power in contrast to the shamans.

The sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 contributed to the severe shortage of Russian Orthodox priests, impacting the Yup'ik region. Nevertheless, the Nushagak parish continued to grow due to the efforts of the *Creole* clergy. The Nushagak parish became one of the largest Orthodox parishes in Alaska containing 2,400 Yup'ik Orthodox, hindering an establishment of a Moravian mission in contrast to the Yukon parish that was less successful but did not cease to exist (Kan 1984). Thus, Veniaminov's strategy to grow a body of Indigenous clerics and to laicize Orthodoxy by attributing responsibilities to Orthodox laymen that was from the beginning dictated by the problem of vast missionary territories and scarcity of priests, paid off after the sale of Alaska to the United States and after the Russian revolution.

The mission in the Yukon and in the Nushagak areas has been launched by *Creole* priests, starting with Iakov Netsvetov. Some of his successors continued to accomplish Veniaminov's vision necessitating cultural sensitivity, using the vernacular, translating materials into the Yup'ik language, while developing laymen parish leaderships. Being isolated geographically and developing with little supervision of the Bishop and the Russian Church after the sale of Alaska, the Orthodoxy in the Yup'ik area remained quite intact for a long period of time. This isolation might possibly be one of the reasons for the development of an Orthodox tradition with the integration of the Yup'ik traditional rituals called Starring or Selaviq.

Starring (Selaviq)

As Fienup-Riordan (1990) fairly pointed out, anyone who has ever lived in the Yup'ik region, is aware of the Russian Orthodox tradition of celebrating the birth of Christ that is called Starring, Selaviq or Slavie. Selaviq derives from the Russian word "славить" meaning "to glorify" in English. The celebration starts on January 7, on Russian Orthodox Christmas according to the Russian Orthodox (Julian) Calendar (Inouye, 1987). The star, usually with the icon of the Nativity at the center, symbolizes the star of Bethlehem. Large, rotating fabricated stars are blessed at the Church at the end of the Christmas service to be carried door-to-door to sing the church hymns and *kolyadi.*



Figure 10. A star ready to be blessed at Saint Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, January 7th 2022
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Kolyadi are Carpatho-Russian folk carols, that were introduced along with the Starring tradition in the Russian Mission by Father Zaharii Bel'kov in 1878, while the Ukrainian priest Father Korchinsky further spread the tradition at the beginning of the 20th century (Fienup-Riordan 1990). The Starring is still celebrated in some parts of Ukraine, with meals being served at the table for the alive and for the deceased who are invited to join for supper (Fienup-Riordan 1990). Besides the Yup'ik region, starring was also introduced in other Alaskan regions, thus, regional differences as to its celebration exist. Selaviq is the Yup'ik name for Starring. In Yup'ik villages it may differ in number and the order of hymns and *kolyadi* sung, but usually, at least the troparion, kontakion, sections from the canon, a kolyada and "Many Years" are included into the singing (Oleksa 1992). The first house the star comes to, is usually the house of the priest (Diane Chris[20], personal communication, 2022). The celebration in each house starts with the singing that is followed by a sermon and food and gift distributions. And it may continue up to two weeks. Since its spread in the Yup'ik region, Selaviq has gradually turned into the major celebration of the year with participation of the whole village community, including other denomination members.

Although Russian Orthodox missionaries were tolerant to some of Yup'ik traditional beliefs, especially to those that did not contradict the Christian faith, they did not approve of the traditional ceremonial celebrations (Netsvetov 1980). Fienup-Riordan (1990), while describing the Selaviq celebration in Kasigluk in 1989, pointed out that the villagers remembered the Russian Orthodox priests who encouraged the Starring celebration from the 1930s in parallel with discouraging the traditional winter ceremonial celebrations. They hoped that the Yupiit would incorporate Selaviq by including some of the Yup'ik elements into the celebration (p. 98). I am going to describe and analyze in detail how the tradition of Selaviq developed in the urban setting further in the dissertation, but the analysis of my observations and the interviews with collaborators permits to agree with Fienup-Riordan in that striking parallels exist between the celebration of Selaviq and the

20 In her fifties

traditional winter ceremonial celebrations (Fienup-Riordan 1990). Thus, the Yup'ik did not simply renounce them, but they adopted the celebration of Selaviq by incorporating the traditional elements and rituals of the Feast of the Dead and of the Bladder Festival. Fienup-Riordan has described the following similarities between Selaviq and traditional winter celebrations: the space in villages was traditionally divided between a ceremonial men's house and women's houses. There used to be a division between men's and women's spaces in the Russian Orthodox Church as well as in houses where Selaviq was celebrated. Ritual circuits were equally important for the Selaviq and traditional celebrations. During the Bladder Festival's final ritual, the bladders of killed seals believed to contain their soul were put into the ice hole. The end of the Christmas time is marked by the celebration of Epiphany with gathering around the ice hole; the invitation of the spirits of the deceased to the community and their feeding through namesakes during the Feast of the Dead and the Ukrainian Starring tradition to invite the deceased to join the supper were also similar (pp. 113-117). The results of my analysis of the Selaviq celebration in Anchorage have demonstrated a strong similarity between the traditional celebration of the Feast of the Dead with today's celebration of Selaviq, where feasting is directly attributed to the invitation and feeding of the deceased in the houses where the star travels to. The celebration of Selaviq in the urban setting will be examined in detail in another chapter. However, this basic description of the feast shows how creatively the Yup'ik transformed the Starring into a new Yup'ik Orthodox tradition, serving as a marker of the new Yup'ik Orthodox identity. Another example of the successful development of the Yup'ik Orthodoxy is the recent glorification of Matushka Olga Michel, a Yup'ik Orthodox.

Yup'ik Orthodox Matushka Olga Michael, "A Mom to Many"

The analysis of the Yup'ik Orthodoxy evolvement dynamics would be incomplete without elaborating on female roles in the Orthodox Church of Alaska as compared to traditional Yup'ik society. As the newly ordained Orthodox priests start to be addressed as Fathers in Alaska and in the Lower 48, their wives acquire the honorary title of *matushki* derived from the Russian obsolete word "Moms" that signifies respect and affection. While the main responsibility of the clergy and readers is the liturgical life of the Church, the *matushki*'s main role is the care for the priest's family and for the parish (Oleksa 1992). Orthodox priests are the liturgical leaders, while their wives are ideally the leaders among the female parishioners involving them in the Church life as caretakers (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). Females are excluded from approaching the Sanctuary in the Orthodox Church. This Orthodox tradition stems from the Old Testament for reasons of ritual impurity (Oleksa 1992, p.200). Similarly, menstruating women were prohibited from participation in ceremonies in the pre-contact Yup'ik society (Fienup-Riordan 1990). In addition, the similar spatial separation existed between Yup'ik males and females, as the male adults and boys' residency was in the men's ceremonial house, while females and younger children lived in separate nearby dwellings. Yup'ik women similarly cared for the families and community. In contrast, they were allowed to enter the men's house.

Oleksa (1992) noted that the Yupiit tended to reinforce the similarities between traditional and Orthodox systems of thought (p. 200). The ideal role model of the Yup'ik Orthodox *matushki* involved both the Orthodox vision of female roles within the Christian tradition and the Yup'ik

traditional attitude towards role division. This assumption can be illustrated by the story of Matushka Olga Michael from the village of Kwethluk, the first Indigenous Orthodox in the United States to be chosen for glorification by the Orthodox Church of America.

At the beginning of my stay in Anchorage and my communication with the urban Yup'ik population, I saw different icons of (Matushka) Olga Michael in the Orthodox churches, bookstores and Yup'ik houses. An Orthodox friend gave me a Matushka Olga icon as a present on my namesday. I later discovered that since the end of the 1990s Olga Michael had been considered for canonization, although the Covid-19 pandemic delayed further steps in this direction (Tatiana Andrew[21], personal communication 2022).

In her thesis about Matushka Olga, Olga Skinner, her granddaughter, pointed out that Orthodox icons are rather "written" than "painted", as they "communicate the Word of God" (Skinner 2009). The "written" icons of Matushka Olga I discovered depicted her as a midwife dressed in a traditional Yup'ik *qaspeq*, knitting (Figure 11) or carrying a bowl of water and a towel (Figure 12) . On the icon in Figure 11, Matushka Olga is knitting. Her dedication and service to the community, being a part of both Yup'ik traditional and Orthodox female gender roles, are communicated through her knitting activity. Her Indigenous heritage is underlined by the dark skin color. Matushka Olga was known for her regular supplies of clothes to her family, to the parishioners and to other Orthodox communities, as well as to the Moravian orphanage house built near the village of Kwethluk.

21 In her forties

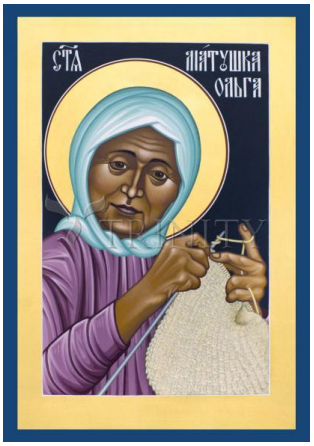


Figure 11. Icon of Matushka Olga
Cited and Retrieved from https://www.trinitystores.com/artwork/matushka-olga-michael



Figure 12. An icon of Matushka Olga given to me as a present for my namesday, July 2021
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

On the other side of the icons, a prayer to Matushka Olga describes an instance of her appearance after her death to an abused and a wounded woman. Matushka Olga is considered as the healer and protector of the abused and broken in Alaska, the state, that experience the highest rates of physical and sexual abuse. Olga Michael played numerous key roles in the community of Kwethluk, one of them was midwifery. She also served the community as a healer who used her

traditional knowledge of plants for the activities related to curing and birth-giving. Traditionally, the medicine men or shamans were in charge of curing diseases. After her death in 1979, Olga Michael started to appear in visions, dreams and during the celebration of Selaviq to people from different States that contributed to the decision to consider her for canonization. There was also an instance of healing by the soil from her grave described by one of my collaborators. Thus, the appreciation of her healing abilities went beyond her life span (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2022).

Olga (Olinka) Arrsamquq Michael was born in 1916 in the village of Kwethluk, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Arrsamquq was her Yup'ik name. She was also called "Olinka", which is an affectionate Russian form of the name Olga. Through an arranged marriage (typical of the traditional Yup'ik culture until the 1970s), she became the wife of Nicolai Michael, who first became an Orthodox Church reader, then a student at the Saint Herman Seminary, and finally priest in the village of Kwethluk. Throughout her life, Matushka Olga fulfilled different roles in the community, combining a strong faith in Russian Orthodoxy with traditional beliefs and healing practices. Her granddaughter Olga Skinner (2009) illustrated Matushka Olga's use of traditional practices as a Yup'ik traditional healer: she helped a woman to heal from headaches by asking a teenage girl, having particular strengths in her first year of menstruation, to thread her hair through a needle and to pass the needle and hair through the woman's skin behind the temples (p.42). This is one of the examples of how traditional beliefs continued to co-exist with the integrated Orthodox Otherness.

Matushka Olga was a midwife and a childcare provider, thus acquiring her nickname "Mom to many". She was also called Matushka, a "Mom" in Russian, as the Orthodox priest's wife. Her motherly care for the parish and the community in both Yup'ik traditional and Orthodox female

roles built her reputation as a strong female Yup'ik Orthodox leader. Community's respect for Matushka Olga has remained strong among both Orthodox and non-Orthodox community members. For instance, an urban Yup'ik Moravian pastor from Kwethluk, who carries her Yup'ik name, is still being called "Mom" by his village community members (Anonymous 5, personal communication 2020). Several children and adults from the same village were named after Matushka Olga, thus acquiring some of her traits and her nickname "Mom".

As an Orthodox priest's wife, Matushka Olga prepared for and traveled to regional conferences with her husband, passing down her knowledge and experience to younger *matushki*, while maintaining a strong leadership role among her village sisterhood. She also set an example for caring for the whole diocesan community, by sending self-sewn clothes and crafts to the clergy families and to parishes to raise funds.

> That was one of the things we were taught at the Seminary, that, as a *matushka* you need to lead the women and be a role model to get the women involved to help care of the Church (Diane Chris, personal communication 2022).

The sisterhood under Matushka Olga's leadership worked in collaboration with the Moravian orphanage for providing it with food and self-made clothes (Oleksa 1992). Being a skilled crafts-maker, Olga created *mukluks (*traditional Yup'ik boots), *qasperet,* beaded goods, toys, *yaaruins* (Yup'ik story knives) and *uluat* (Yup'ik female knives), while sewing and sending priest vestments to other parishes (Skinner 2009). Olga Michael maintained a strong Yup'ik identity, fulfilling the female gender role of care for the nuclear family. Furthermore, she cared for pregnant and birth-

giving women, as a midwife, and for the whole community, as a traditional healer, while combining the traditional female role fulfillment with the dedication to her duties as an Orthodox *matushka*.

After her death, the Church started to receive stories of her appearance in people's visions and dreams both in Alaska and in the Lower 48 (Wigglesworth 2008). Her canonization as the first female and Yup'ik Orthodox Saint in the United States might allow for strengthening the Orthodox ideal model of *matushki*, in general, and of Alaska Indigenous *matushki,* in particular. Matuska Olga's legacy reinforces the message on the similarities of the traditional Yup'ik and Orthodox gender role divisions in today's life of the Church. Furthermore, for today's Indigenous and non-Indigenous Christians, Matushka Olga has been a "human" who recently passed away, while being recognized by the Church for her dedication and ability to heal (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2022). Many people who are born in Kwethluk and live both in the village and in urban areas, remain connected to Matushka Olga through carrying her Yup'ik name. Besides, one of her daughters serves the community of Napaskiak as a *matushka,* reminding the Yup'ik Orthodox community about Matushka Olga's legacy as both Yup'ik and Orthodox. The memory of Matushka Olga's dedication to the community coincides with traditional Yup'ik values on how to remain "a real person", meaning hard work and care for the entire community. The canonization of Matushka Olga's life would thus emphasize the success of the Russian Orthodox mission in integrating Yup'ik traditional values into the life of the Church. The story of Matushka Olga, being a healer of the abused and broken also throws light on the necessity of healing the Yup'ik Orthodox community from the physical and sexual abuse currently existing in the rural Alaska.

Russian and Yup'ik Orthodoxy in Alaska Today

Russian Orthodoxy in Alaska developed its own traditions that did not exist in Russia. Some Orthodox parishioners in Anchorage prefer to define Russian Orthodoxy in Alaska as "Alaskan Orthodoxy". At the same time, an overall historical bond still exists between Russian Orthodox and Alaskan Orthodox Churches (Anonymous 7[22], personal communication, 2021). Despite the change of the name from Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America to Orthodox Church in America (OCA) in 1966, the parishioners of the Diocese in Alaska, being a part of OCA, continue to identify themselves as Russian Orthodox, stressing the heritage of the Russian Orthodox tradition brought to Alaska by RAC and missionaries (Stokoe & Kishkovsky 1994). As for the urban Orthodox Yupiit, they continue to celebrate Selaviq, the most significant Orthodox event for the Yup'ik villagers, enhancing its connection to the Slavic tradition.

Also, the Diocese of Alaska distinguishes itself by remaining the only OCA Diocese to follow the Julian calender (with the exception of Juneau) (Anonymous 7, personal communication 2022), celebrating holidays at a later time than the other Dioceses. Christmas is celebrated by the Diocese two weeks later as compared to the Gregorian calendar followers. OCA made the decision to follow the new "revised" Gregorian calendar in 1982 (Koestel 2012). Consequently, a conversation started among diocesan members in Alaska about the possibility to switch to the new calendar. For instance, Fienup-Riordan (1990) mentioned conversations about the change in the Yup'ik region and potential impacts that this decision would have on the village celebration of Selaviq. Despite several potential advantages of using the new calendar, such as the common celebration with family

22 In their twenties

members belonging to other denominations, the change never occurred. The Diocese's parishes resisted the reform, maintaining the tradition of their Elders' calendar as a means to connect to their ancestors (Anonymous 7, personal communication 2022). Since the Patriarchate of Moscow and all Russia traditionally uses the same calendar, the Diocese of Alaska continues to maintain the historical connection with the Russian Orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, today's Diocese of Alaska does not differ structurally from any other OCA Diocese. It is currently governed by Bishop Alexis of Sitka and Alaska, a voting member of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) that is partially recognized as autocephalous around the world. Although the official language of the OCA parishes is English, services in the parishes of the Diocese of Alaska are held in English, Slavonic and Alaskan Indigenous languages.

The Diocese consists of 9 Deaneries (districts) and 81 "active altars" in Alaska. It is governed by Bishop Alexis assisted by the Diocesan Assembly and the Diocesan Council (Orthodox Church of America Website[23]; Anonymous 7, personal communication 2022). Guided by the Bishop, it mainly acts as an executive and consultative body, implementing decisions of the Diocesan Assembly on issues of parishes and diocesan institutions (Diocese of the Midwest Website 2024[24]). The Diocesan Assembly comprises all the active priests (26) and two delegates from each parish (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2022). It meets once or twice a year to vote on the budget drafted by the Council, to elicit the Diocesan Council members, to report on respective geographical areas and to elect a Bishop (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2022). The current diocesan Chancellor is Yup'ik. He serves as a "bridge" between the clergy (the majority of which is Yup'ik) and the Bishop. The clergy comprises deans, rectors and parish priests who supervise parish

23 https://www.oca.org/dioceses/diocese-of-alaska. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.
24 https://domoca.org/diocesancouncil/. Last accessed January 21st 2024.

councils, sisterhoods and brotherhoods (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2022). The active participation of laity in the parish life was reinforced by Bishop Tikhon in 1905, as he hoped to find a collaborative solution to the issues appearing as a result of the administrative control of immigrant parishes (Stokoe & Kishkovsky 1994, p. 38). The development of lay leadership was one of the strategic tools that helped the Church to survive after the loss of support from Russia in 1917.

The Unangaŝ Orthodox tradition reinforced by the *Creole* clergy, including Father Iakov Netsvetov, weakened in the villages following the displacement of the Unangan during World War II, increasing restrictions on subsistence and commercial fisheries (Reedy-Maschner 2001), while the Yup'ik Orthodox tradition took its turn to become the strongest one in Alaska (Anonymous 7, personal communication 2022). As a result, today approximately eighty percent of the Diocesan priests are Yup'ik, including the current Chancellor, the intermediary between the priests and the Bishop.

Today, the village parishes of the Yup'ik region belong to the Bethel/Kuskokwim Deanery, Russian Mission/Yukon Deanery and Bristol Bay Deanery. The Orthodox Church recognizes seven sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation, the Holy Eucharist, or Communion, Confession, Marriage, Ordination, Holy Unction, or Anointing of the sick. All of them are performed in any Yup'ik parish village by a Yup'ik priest exactly the same way, as in any other Orthodox church in another part of the world. However, there are local Orthodox traditions that may vary not only at regional, but also local level, for instance, the celebration of Starring, or Selaviq (DeHass 2009; Fienup-Riordan 1990). The number of priests currently remaining scarce in Alaska, many village parishes cannot afford to have a permanent priest. The clergy depending on the size of their parish are assigned multiple parishes. Thus, visiting priests occasionally travel either from other rural or urban areas to serve in parishes. In this case, the trips are financed by the village (by parishioners and/or village

corporations), thus, often priests come for the main annual holidays, Christmas or Easter. Music locally written and sung in the Yup'ik language traditionally remains an indispensable part of the liturgy in Yup'ik villages. Parishes are mostly sustained by communities, although fundraising for a particular project is difficult to organize in rural areas. Paid jobs are scarce in villages, thus, tithing may be problematic (Anonymous 7, personal communication 2021). However, if any goods are needed, they are usually provided to the church for free (Carl 2015). Some objects of the Church such as icon frames, altar tables, vestments and paintings may be made and provided by the community (Oleksa 1992). Building of new church buildings is also funded by communities and by Native corporations. Some Native corporations have funds in their annual budget for their parishes, but, usually it concerns those Native corporations in which the Orthodox Church is the only denomination. Thus, Calista and Bristol Bay Native Corporation having Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant shareholders participate much less in Orthodox parish funding, as compared to other corporations with exclusively Orthodox shareholders. Orthodox parishes may also be supported by the fishing industry (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). As for the Diocese itself, it is financed by the lands that remained Church property after the sale of Alaska to the United States:

> In the transition from the sale of Alaska, the Diocese has lands, we have much land, Church land, however, we sold some. Land that is leased out, helps to finance some of the Diocese, Bishop's salary and expenses. The (leased) land is owned and managed by the Diocese (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

In case of any specific need, such as food or clothes for the clergy or parishioners, requests for donations through the Orthodox Care Network of Alaska can be shared through the Diocese website

(Diocese of Sitka and Alaska Website[25]). Parishes with no permanent priests remain viable through the care of parish leaders, often village Chiefs or Elders, whose descendants are likely to take over their roles or start a career in the priesthood. The village parish funding capacity in the Yup'ik and other regions declines with the outmigration of the younger generation to bigger villages (e.g. Bethel) and urban centers, as it leads to supporting "hub" parishes instead (Diane Chris, personal communication 2022). There is also an overall decline in the number of seminarians and priests in the Deaneries of the Diocese. Nevertheless, the majority of seminarians coming to study at the Saint Herman Seminary in Kodiak are Yup'ik. The Yup'ik vernacular is offered as a part of the curriculum (Saint Herman Seminary Website[26]). The current active Yup'ik priests often stem from the same areas where the family tradition of serving in the Church either as lay leaders or ordained priests is strong: "usually, the students are from Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Napaskiak… and the Yukon too, Russian Mission, Pilot Station; I think it's just the family and the faith" (Diane Chris, personal communication 2022). Thus, the Yup'ik priests are often related to each other through their extended kinship or family ties through marriages, creating an extended kinship network within the Orthodox Church throughout Alaska, including Anchorage. This network also goes beyond the framework of the Diocese, extending to the kinship ties with the members of other denominations. Consequently, during my fieldwork in the city of Anchorage, I also collaborated with the Yup'ik Moravians. Thus, I am going to elaborate on the historical and current dynamics of the interaction between the Moravian missionaries and the Yup'ik population.

25 https://odosa.org/orthodox-care-network. Last accessed, January 21st 2024.
26 https://www.sthermanseminary.org/news_211005_1. Last accessed January 25th, 2024.

The Yup'ik Moravians

Yup'ik and the Moravian Initial Interactions

Sixteen years after the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, the so-called Comity Plan meeting was held by Sheldon Jackson, the future general agent of education in Alaska, together with several Protestant denomination representatives in order to divide the Alaska territory into several zones of missionary influence (Lauter 2019). The denominations started to establish their missions with the financial support of "the federal and territorial government" that provided "not only funding but also land to build missions and mission schools" "in direct violation of the law that separates church and state" (Williams 2009, p. 154). Sheldon Jackson asked the Moravian Church to set up a mission in Alaska among the Yup'ik population. The first Moravian missionaries sent to Alaska founded a station on the Kuskokwim River called Bethel in 1885 (Hamilton 1890). As Williams (2009) stated, each Protestant denomination differed in their methods of spreading the Word of God among the Alaskan Indigenous peoples, in particular, in their attitude towards the Indigenous vernacular and traditional ceremonies, thus, impacting a retention or a loss of languages and cultures in various missionary areas (p. 155). I am going to examine the specific missionary strategies, stemming from the Moravian beliefs, practices and policies, the responses they generated among the Yup'ik population, and their impact on the Yup'ik social organization.

To start with, when the first two Moravian missionaries William Weinland and John Henry Kilbuck arrived in the Kuskokwim area to set up a mission, the Christian message was not

completely new to the Yupiit, as the Russian Orthodox Church had introduced the main Christian concepts to them that had been adopted. The Moravian missionary Ferdinand Drebert noted that "[the commandments] was something they could understand. That had been emphasized by the Russian priests, who were the first to give them the word of God" (Drebert 1959, p. 59). Commandments were considered similar, but still some concepts, as the end of the world, were different, as discussed later. While the missionaries were learning the vernacular in order to become fluent enough to explain the Christian concepts and to translate materials, they used Orthodox songs that had already been translated into Yup'ik (Oswalt 1990). Later in this chapter, I am going to elaborate on the complex relationships between the Moravian and Russian Orthodox Missions in the Yup'ik area. However, it is important to mention here that the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in the region before and upon the arrival of the Moravians played its role for the future success of the Moravian mission, as the Yupiit had already been in the process of the appropriation of Christianity.

The set-up and organization of the Mission implemented by Weinland and Kilbick were under the control of the Brethensdorf in Saxony, Germany (very closely to the original congregation in Herrnhut) according to the principles of the Moravian Church, while practical issues were under the responsibility of the Provincial Elders' Conference of the American Moravian Church (Hamilton 1890).

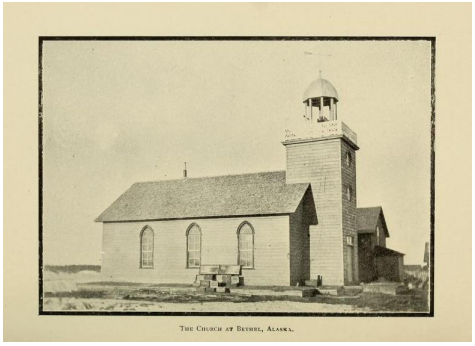


Figure 13. The Moravian Church in Bethel, Alaska, 1905
Cited and Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofsoc02soci/mode/2up?view=theater

The US government funded the schools, while the majority of the funds for the mission came from private contributions by Moravian Church members and friends (Hamilton 1890).

Similarly to the Russian Orthodox missionaries, Moravians were interested in the culture of the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic (Borm et al. 2021). From the very beginning, one of the most important goals of the missionaries was to learn the vernacular in order to use it as an instrument to disseminate the Word of God. In 1887, two years after the missionary arrival, Kilbuck wrote: “I find my greatest hindrance to be my ignorance of their language” (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988). Six years later Kilbuck was already fluent enough to train other Moravian missionaries. “I do not doubt that she [Miss Mack] will soon be able to say almost anything in common conversation. I talk native to her at times and get her to form her answers to me in native” (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988., p.289). The importance of becoming proficient in the Yup’ik Indigenous language was possibly the missionary’s personal conviction, as Kilbuck was Indigenous himself. Most important for understanding the missionary strategies was, however, the Moravian missionary focus on learning native languages to deliver the Christian message in the vernacular. Despite the rivalry between the Moravian and the Orthodox Church missionaries in Alaska, they all implemented the same strategy of using the local language as a tool for Christianization that stemmed from Cyrillus and Methodius, the Greek Orthodox monks who christianized the Moravian region inhabitants in today’s Czech Republic in the ninth century (Henkelman & Vitt 1985). Thus, both Churches’ strategies had their roots in the same missionary tradition initiated by Cyrillus and Methodius in Europe. In addition, as the Bible is the only authority as to the will of God for Moravians, it is essential for all Church members to have direct access to the Bible. The aim was therefore to have the Bible translated into the vernacular. This resulted in the future retention of the Yup’ik language in some Yup’ik villages nowadays, the Yup’ik language remaining the strongest one as compared to the other Alaska Native Indigenous languages.

Kilbuck, the Moravian missionary in Alaska and his wife Edith learned the language, they also worked on improving the language proficiency of other missionaries, so that the Mission made significant efforts in publishing materials in Yup'ik at the beginning of the twentieth century, culminating in 1956 with the translation of the New Testament by Rev. Ferdinand Drebert. The Moravian missionary strategy deviated from the general assimilation policy that was aimed at the elimination of the Indigenous languages:

> At the time I was criticized for teaching them to read and write in Eskimo, because they would soon all be able to read the English Bible. Now, forty years later, I have also been criticized for completing the New Testament Translation, because they should learn the English Bible. But while they have schools now in nearly every village, there are still many who cannot read English, especially the older folks (Drebert 1959, p. 59).

The Moravian and Russian Orthodox missionary tradition of delivering the Christian message in the vernacular contributed to a better retention of the Yup'ik language at least in some villages in Alaska, remaining the most spoken Indigenous language in the state today (Alaska Native Language Center, Krauss 1980, Williams 2009). It was not the case in regard to the Yup'ik traditional ceremonies.

The Orthodox missionaries were not radical in their effort to eliminate the Yup'ik winter ceremonialism, as they chose to convert the Alaskan Indigenous populations gradually (Fienup-Riordan 1991, p.136). The Moravians considered this strategy as ineffective, as it did not imply a change in lifestyle. For instance, Kilbuck (1892) wrote in this regard that "the practice of the

Russian Church has been such a loose one, that there never was any difference between the baptized and the unbaptized, so far as change of life was concerned, so that very erroneous ideas were entertained by the people about the law of the Gospel" (p. 19). For the Moravians, a radical change in the Yup'ik lifestyle was a prerequisite for conversion, for understanding the Scriptures and for leading a godly life.

When the Moravians arrived to set up their mission, they did not immediately discover the Yup'ik religious ceremonialism. For instance, Edith Kilbuck, the missionary wife, participated in gift exchanges between the sexes in 1887 called *Petugtaq*, considering them as "an amusement without any superstition" (Kilbuck 1988, p. 470). However, once Kilbuck realized that the Yup'ik traditional ceremonies were religious and that they were a hindrance to the missionary's goals and efforts, he aimed at their eradication. In 1890, he reported that "for the first time in the history of the Kuskokwim people, the masquerade did not take place in our village, Quiechlochamute, Bro. Hooker's village put away their masks, by burning them, and with some exceptions declared for Christ. These people were long ago baptized by the Greek Church authorities, but were never converted before" (Kilbuck 1988, p. 174). While aiming at the suppression of the religious ceremonies, Moravians allowed some of the festivals to be held as community gatherings. According to Mueller (1927), the Yup'ik religious ceremonies were considered "demoralizing", while participants were supposed to be excluded from the Church (p. 12). Rev. Ferdinand Drebert described the change that resulted from the politics of suppression as follows: "all these heathen dances and festivals disappeared, as well as the superstitions connected with them. They continued to hold their potlaches, however, since this festival was a purely social affair, without religious significance" (Drebert 1959, p. 69). Despite the missionaries' efforts to suppress the religious ceremonies, they continued to be held in different areas until the 1920s, while being either gradually

substituted by Christian festivities (Oswalt 1990), or transformed into social gatherings, as described above by Drebert.

In their conversion efforts, the Moravian missionaries faced confrontation from different directions, including the Russian Orthodox missionaries. As for the Yup'ik community, the shamans and the Elders were the traditional leaders who were the ones to oppose radical change in the social organization that started to occur with the conversion to Christianity by the Moravians. As traditionally shamans were religious educators and healers, Moravians entered into competition with shamans. Kilbuck reported that when he began setting up the mission, the missionaries "openly attacked the shamans, and made a determined effort to discredit them before the people. Here is where [they] differed from the Greek Church – the priest did not approve of shamaning, but he was so weak on this point – that the people said that they could be good Greeks and still practice shamanism" (Kilbuck 1988, p. 72). Fienup-Riordan (1991) characterized the Russian Orthodox missionary approach as stepwise whose main purpose was "drawing people to the sacramental life of the church" (p. 136). This approach allowed the Yupiit to adopt Christian concepts without giving up their traditional beliefs and ceremonial activities. Kilbuck wrote in his journals in 1888-1889 that "down the river the people are willing to accept the Word, but are unwilling to give up their old ways" (Kilbuck 1988, p.172). The Moravians were more ambitious in their effort to suppress the shamanistic practices than the Russian Orthodox, which resulted in a stronger confrontation between them and the shamans.

While describing the "conflict", Reverend Drebert (1959) noticed that the Yupiit continued to rely on the help of the shamans as "medicine men" in secret, while some shamans hid their activities by pretending to be willing to convert to Christianity (p. 41-42). Thus, even if the Yupiit recognized new sources of power in that the Moravians had medicine that helped against new diseases, they did

not refuse the help of the traditional healers. On the one hand, the encounter of the Yupiit with traders and missionaries undermined the power of shamans, when they failed to provide remedies for new diseases introduced into the region, while the missionaries had medical background and medicine at their disposal. Henkelmann and Vitt (1985) cite one of the Yup'ik converts who explained the role of the medicine that predetermined the choice of the Yupiit to adopt the Moravian version of Christianity:

> "When these teachers first came, they did not command our attention by what they preached, but when they gave us medicine, and said that this or that ailment would be cured, we looked on to see if what they said was true. And because their medicines proved to be just what they said they were, we learned to believe that what they preached was equally true" (Henkelmann & Vitt 1985, p. 147).

On the other hand, when the medicine was not available or effective, people turned back to the power of shamans (Drebert 1959). This 'infidelity' demonstrated to the missionaries that the Yup'ik converts did not completely abandon their traditional beliefs and practices. Some Moravian missionaries received a basic medical education. They also were equipped with medicine that helped the Yupiit to cure new diseases. In such a way, the missionaries managed to persuade the community that Christianity was compelling to them. Nevertheless, as Fienup-Riordan (1991) observed, conversion did not mean a "rejection" of traditional ways (p. 209). It was the adoption of new powerful ways to the already existing system of traditional beliefs. However, when the missionaries did not manage to satisfy the needs of the Yup'ik community in terms of remedies, the Yupiit occasionally continued to seek help from the shamans. McCollough (1988) mentions that some of her Yup'ik collaborators rebaptized in the Russian Orthodox Church, and back in the

Moravian Church, in an attempt to heal (p.65). Thus, the Moravian missionaries started to recognize a clear need of a missionary doctor. The first Moravian physician, Dr. Joseph Roming was sent to the Mission in 1896.

As the Moravians lacked missionaries to bring Christianity to the population of the vast Yup'ik region, they initiated a program for Native helpers who were trained to become preachers and representatives of the Church in Yup'ik villages in 1889 (Oswalt 1990). Within the changing social organization of the Yup'ik community, the Russian Orthodox offered positions of leadership to local laymen leaders. In contrast to them, the Moravians decided to train Yup'ik Native helpers for sending them to other villages, away from their kin. Native helpers received no compensation but they acquired a position of leadership in the community: they were intermediaries between missionaries and villages, preaching, discouraging traditional religious ceremonies, encouraging Yup'ik parents to send their children to school and reporting to missionaries (Rules and Regulations of the Moravian Mission 1927, p. 14). Some of the Yup'ik helpers, such as Helper Neck, who invented a Yup'ik writing system, helped the missionaries with translations. McCollough (1988) learned from her fieldwork collaborators in Tuntutuliak that some shamans converted to Christianity in order to regain a position of power and to become helpers (p. 97-98). Most of the Native helpers were, however, of younger generation (McCollough 1988).

With the opposition of some of the Elders and shamans, the development of the Native helper program led to generational conflicts. For example, Edith Kilbuck (1988) described a division between an old shaman and his son who became an assistant helper to Brother Lomuck in 1894:

> His own son joyfully embraced the religion of Jesus Christ already
> last winter and used to reprove his father for his hardness of heart.

> In consequence his father cast him off and pronounced a curse upon him. He and his family went to live in another village… Brother Lomuck and our church members there were so persecuted by thisold Shaman and his followers, so hindered in their spiritual growth, that we advised them to move off a little distance…" (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988, p. 277).

Father and son were eventually reconciled and the shaman even converted before his death. His conversion played an important role in convincing the other villagers to become Christians, according to Edith Kilbuck, as he had a position of leadership in the village. She wrote:

> "The conversion of the wicked old shaman, who died a happy and peaceful death, has done more to strengthen the faith of the undecided and wavering ones, than many a sermon could have done. The people wonder for they say 'he was an old man, set in his ways, and in our eyes immovable'. Nearly the whole of his village have since come forward and professed a sincere desire to be such as he was at his death" (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988, p. 300).

Despite the shaman's conversion and its influence on the community members, two villages split and the relations between them remained strained. In an effort to reconcile them and to encourage the relocation of the whole community to the new settlement, John Kilbuck asked the helpers to gather both villages for common Sunday services (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988). Thus, the change in the social order resulted in the development of generational clashes within the Yup'ik community. During pre-contact times, leadership roles were attributed to the Elders who educated

the young men in the *qasgiq*, and to the shamans who were healers and religious educators. While the shamans became the direct rivals, Elders were also opposed to changes in the lifestyle that the Moravians encouraged:

> "The Shamans here are more determined and I do not see that we are making much impression on the older men. Most of them are quite indifferent, and declare that they are too old to change and love their old ways too much to give them up for a new teaching. The younger men listen to the Gospel message more readily and many of them are now following its teaching as well as they can" (Kilbuck 1890, p. 24).

The Moravians understood that they could find support among the younger generation, for whom new ways and new leadership roles, offered within the changing social organization, were compelling. Hence, eventually, the leadership roles were starting to shift towards missionaries and the younger generation of Native helpers. Furthermore, the Moravians invested considerable efforts in building schools not only for educating Yup'ik children, according to the Moravian tradition, but also for indirectly influencing their parents. Doctor Joseph Romig, he Moravian missionary and physician, argued (1899) that "if we have children, the parents are easy to influence, and the children are likely to remain permanently ours" (p. 17).

The shift in leadership roles and pressure to change lifestyles radically caused an additional split within the communities. Oswalt (1990) and Fienup-Riordan (1991) have both analyzed the event that was described by Kilbuck in his report in 1890: the murder of the Native helper Hooker in Kwethluk. In Kilbuck's report of the same year, he announced the first complete abandonment of

the traditional religious ceremonies in Kwethluk that was under the supervision of Helper Hooker (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988, p.174). On the following pages he described the consequences of this radical change: the conflict between Hooker's half-brother, Mountain Boy, who was described as a village's leader, the Kwethluk villagers, Helper Hooker and Kilbuck. Kilbuck also mentioned that this year several people, as Brother Hooker, suffered from "temporary insanity" (p.174). After the death of his only son, Helper Hooker became ill, so that Kilbuck was required to come to the village to cure him. Once Kilbuck arrived in Kwethluk, he felt hostility on the part of the villagers. At night, the villagers unexpectedly insisted on him leaving, taking his possessions outside, "by the order of the Mountain Boy" (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988, p. 175). He was then pursued by the villagers led by the Mountain Boy who called Kilbuck "a Crow" while proclaiming himself "God" and "crossing himself" (Fienup-Riordan 1991, p. 151). Upon arriving home, Kilbuck learned that Brother Hooker was torn by dogs by the order of the Mountain Boy after taking a steam bath with other villagers (Kilbuck 1988, p. 176). While Oswalt (1990) saw Hooker's death as an attempt to eradicate Christianity in the village, Fienup-Riordan (1991) proceeded further with her analysis, considering Hooker's murder as a "creative" attempt to reestablish the balance in the community after the poor subsistence season and the 'insanity epidemics', that were in the communities' eyes a consequence of abandoning the traditional religious ceremonies for the first time that year (p. 155). The attempt involved the "martyrdom of Christ" represented by Hooker's murder on Good Saturday, the day before Easter, while it also contained an element of Kelek, a traditional ceremony carried out at this time of the year, where a shaman's death and rebirth were performed to ensure a successful subsistence season to follow (Fienup-Riordan 1991). Thus, the death of Hooker illustrated how the Yupiit tried to deal with the village crisis that was a result of the recent suppression of traditional ceremonialism, by using both some new means related to Christianity and the traditional ways to resolve it. I am going to elaborate on some of the aspects of the Moravian

beliefs the Yupiit chose to adopt based on similarities between the two systems of thought, and how they dealt with the ones that were incompatible.

Moravian Heritage and its Adoption by the Yupiit

The Moravians, or the Unitas Fratrum (from Latin “Unity of Brethren") are Christocentric, as a Protestant denomination. Thus, they emphasize the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who, in contrast to the Pope in the Catholic Church, is considered the Head of the Church. Experiencing a relationship with Jesus Christ is an individual matter for Moravians, but this relationship is the most important one that unites people in a goal to attain salvation. In contrast to the Orthodox Church, the Moravian Church recognizes only two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion. The Scripture has the highest authority that reveals the truth, thus, “the language of the Scripture, of experience and of feeling” prevails over the Christian theology and dogmas (Fienup-Riordan 1991. p. 191). The emphasis on the experiential nature of the Church is a part of the Moravian heritage, as the Church developed in the eighteenth century under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760) in Germany who sought to create a pietist and ecumenical religious fellowship. The influence of pietism on the Moravians resulted in the development of a “heart religion” that placed emphasis on “godly living” in unity rather than on relying on doctrines (Weinlick & Frank 1996, p. 103). However, it did not mean that the Moravians completely rejected the doctrines, they rather focused on seeking for a personal, experiential connection with Jesus Christ. The idea of the individual relationship with God was foreign to Yupiit who used to connect to the spirit world as a community and who emphasized the importance of social being versus individual interests. At the same time, the Moravians stressed the idea of building a unified fellowship that might be easier for the Yupiit to relate to. The Moravians developed a tradition of

daily home-reading of the Bible among the fellowship community members that led to the creation of annual Daily Texts chosen from the Bible in Herrnhut, Germany, then translated and used by the Moravians around the world (Moravian Daily Texts 2021). The traditional, communal simplicity of worship and readings from the Bible that the Moravians practiced were compelling to the Yupiit. Furthermore, the central role that singing played in the Moravian communities were familiar to the Yupiit whose ceremonial life was organized around composing songs, singing and drumming (Borm 2015, p. 231). They might also find the Moravian daily community gatherings and readings similar to the Elders' community teachings in the *qasgiq.*

The most similar concepts were possibly the Christian commandments and the Yup'ik *qanruyutet* (instructions). Hamilton (1890) characterized the nature of Moravian communities as "ethico-religious" (p.193). The Yupiit could relate to the moral focus of the Moravians, as they had their own "code of ethics" or *qanruyutet* (instructions) that were regularly disseminated by the Elders to the younger generation in the *qasgiq*, the men's ceremonial house. Reverend Ferdinand Drebert (1959) argued that this "code of ethics" as well as the earlier teachings of the Russian missionaries allowed the Yupiit to familiarize themselves with the concept of Christian commandments (Drebert 1959, p. 59). He went further in stating that the Christian "commandments were the same as theirs, except that they [the Yupiit] had not known anything of a Sabbath to be kept holy and as a day of rest", and that the Elders regularly informed the missionaries that their teachings were not new to them (Drebert 1959., p. 60). However, Oswalt (1990) noted that the rule set by the Moravian missionaries not to subsist on Saturdays meant a radical change of lifestyle for the Yupiit, as women were not allowed to process game and fish on Sundays, thus, the subsistence seasons started to be regularly interrupted. Fienup-Riordan (1991) listed another compatibility based on the focus on the ethical behavior in both systems of thought: attention to a careful use of

thoughts, actions and resources (pp. 115-117). Such apparent similarities, however, overshadowed deeper differences.

For instance, baptism and the subsequent relationship with Jesus Christ are indispensable steps for salvation for Moravians. Although the Yup'ik concept of rebirth through good deeds is somewhat similar to the idea of resurrection, it implies a physical rebirth on earth, while the Christian concept only implies eternal life in heaven. Reverend Ferdinand Drebert (1959) listed this major incompatibility in his description of *Elgiq*, or the Feast of the Dead :

> "The spirits of the departed were treated with great respect and the whole affair was a solemn ceremony… The window on top was removed to give the spirits a chance to come in. The spirits were believed to be in our midst, though invisible. In some cases, they were visible and present, incarnated as it were, in those who were named after them... The belief in the transmigration of the soul was there, but rather vague. At the feast the spirits were presented with some food … This is sufficient to show how their belief in the future life and in the spirits of the departed did not agree with our Christian concept of the hereafter. So we urged them to discontinue this custom" (Drebert 1959, p. 68).

According to the Yup'ik worldview, the deceased are reborn on earth, at least, in part, through their namesakes, who inherit some of their traits through being named after them. As this idea did not correspond to the Christian concept of eternal life in heaven, that-is-to-say of non-return to the earth, the Moravians aimed at eradicating the celebration of *Elgiq* (the Feast of the Dead) and the

belief in physical rebirth on earth. Although they eventually succeeded in the suppression of the ceremony itself, naming children after the deceased relatives and special relationships between namesakes continue to be practiced among the Orthodox, Moravian, Catholic as well as non-Christian Yupiit today. Thus, the idea of at least partial reincarnation (acquiring some behavior and/or language) continues to co-exist with the adopted Christian concept of heavenly eternal life. The Orthodox Yupiit celebrate Selaviq or Starring that includes the elements of the Feast of the Dead, such as feeding the deceased with Native food, distribution of clothes and other household items to the namesakes. In villages as well as in urban areas the Moravian Yupiit participate in the Orthodox celebration of Selaviq. Michael Oleksa (1992) argued that the presence of these traditional elements in the Selaviq celebration encouraged the Yupiit of the other denominations to participate (p. 192). As for the Moravian Yupiit, although they do not have a celebration similar to Selaviq, memorial services incorporate feeding and distribution of clothes and of household items.

McCollough (1988) also analyzed the concept of the end of the world and its incompatibility with the Yup'ik beliefs by citing her collaborators, who were Yup'ik Elders in Tuntutuliak, to demonstrate the fear that its introduction resulted in:

> "… talked about the End of the World and Repent Ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is Nigh. Those are the ones I never forgot because I used to get scared. They talked as if it was going to end now and it was scary" (McCarr as cited in McCollough 1988, p.62).

The concept of the end of the world, along with the concept of salvation were also new in a sense that they were directed into the future, while the main concern of the Yupiit was to maintain the balance between the human and the spirit worlds in the present. Despite the major differences in

both systems of thought, the interaction between the Moravians and the Yupiit resulted in the development of a Yup'ik governed, independent Moravian Province in 1985 (Henkelman & Vitt 1985).

Alaska Moravian Province Today

Alaska Moravian Province today is one of twenty-four provinces spread over four continents with more than a million of Church members, with Herrnhut, Germany remaining its historical "spiritual home" (The Moravian Church 2022). The Moravian Church, thus, remains a global church, despite its relatively small size. A Unity Synod that consists of 3 delegates from each province gathers every seven years to work on legislation, while a Unity Board, composed of members from provincial boards, is in charge of executing the decisions of the Unity Synod (The Moravian Church 2022).

In the Moravian Church, both female and male members can equally serve as clergy: as deacons, presbyters or bishops. It also accepts members of all social and ethnic backgrounds (Unitas Fratrum Website[27] 2024). An absence of a predominant national church points to the global nature of the Moravian congregation.

In the 1980s, the Moravian Church in Alaska first gained financial independence. In 1983, the first Yup'ik Bishop Jacob Nelson was elected (Schwanke 1994), leading to the emerging of the independent Indigenous Moravian Church or the Alaska Moravian Province. It has been operating as an Indigenous-led church ever since. As for today, there are twenty-four Alaskan congregations

27 http://unitasfratrum.org/about-unitas-fratrum/the-ground-of-the-unity. Last accessed January 24th, 2024.

under the Alaska Moravian Province, including the First Moravian Church of Anchorage (Alaska Moravian Church, n.d.). While the First Moravian Church of Anchorage remains the only Anchorage congregation under the Alaska Moravian Province, there are several ministries with Moravian heritage in the city of Anchorage. I collaborated with two of them: The United International Moravian Ministry (formerly United Alaska Moravian Ministry) and Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry (formerly Anchorage Moravian Fellowship). They were both founded by the leaders of the former Anchorage Moravian Church of the Alaska Moravian Province. However, today they are independent from Alaska Moravian Province and the worldwide Moravian Unity. Nevertheless, they both remain Yup'ik-led Ministries. When I started my fieldwork in Anchorage, I was at first confused by the fact that there are several independent Moravian Ministries in this urban setting. I will elaborate on the dynamics of continuity and change of the Yup'ik Moravian traditions in relation to the urban setting in the following chapter.

As for the structure of a Moravian Church in Alaska, it includes a pastor, Elders, Trustees and other church members. The Boards of Elders and Trustees are elected by the Church members. Pastors are chairmen of the Boards. Elders are in charge of the "spiritual oversight" of the congregation. For instance, they assure speakers for services. The budget and secular questions, such as building maintenance, are under the control of the Trustees (Bishop Nicholson[28], personal communication, 2022). Elders, trustees and church members are all in charge of the church, especially in the pastor's absence. Nowadays, village pastors earn their living by working for village corporations, for the State of Alaska, or as carpenters. The church schedule remains the same for both urban and village churches: following the Moravian texts, celebrating the Advent, Christmas, and Easter, and observing 40 days of Lent (Bishop Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). Thus, despite the recent split of the Alaska Moravian Province and of several independent

28 In his seventies

Indigenous Moravian Ministries, they all continue to follow the traditional Church schedule and to maintain the Yup'ik Moravian identity both in the rural and urban settings.

The Yup'ik Catholics

During my four-year stay in Anchorage (Alaska) I collaborated with the Orthodox, Moravian, Catholic and non-Christian Yupiit. However, as far as my research at the urban ecclesiastical institutions is concerned, I worked mostly with the Moravian and Orthodox Yupiit, as the schedules of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches often overlapped. Nevertheless, I collaborated with the Catholic Native Ministry in the city of Anchorage, mostly for comparative purposes. I am going to analyze the history of the Yup'ik-Catholic interactions and their continuity and dynamics in relation to today's Native Ministry in the urban setting.

The Yup'ik-Catholic Interactions

Jesuits were the first ones among the Roman Catholics to set up a mission in Alaska in 1887. Nuns from several orders joined the fathers in the subsequent years. The Jesuits still remain the most active force in spreading Catholicism in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta, in particular, and in northern Alaska (Astruc 2012). Joseph Treca started the evangelization in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area by founding a mission on Nelson Island in 1889 (New Catholic Encyclopedia 2009). Five years later, Saint Joseph's mission was founded at Akulurak, later transformed into Saint Mary's, a

boarding school that accepted students from villages throughout the region (New Catholic Encyclopedia 2009, p.18).

As the Moravians, the Roman Catholic missionaries noticed that the Yup'ik had a code of ethics expressed in *qanruyutet* (instructions), similar to the Ten Commandments. Later, with the radical changes within the Roman Catholic Church after the Vatican II Council (1962-1965), the priests and Yup'ik deacons started to pay closer attention to these similarities to build on them in order to incorporate traditional ceremonial elements into the Catholic liturgy. While setting up a Catholic mission, the Jesuits also learned about the local shamans and at first considered them as medicine men, or healers, without taking into consideration their role in performing religious ceremonies:

> "Although without a very definite form of government, they have a code of unwritten laws and customs and yield obedience to their chiefs and doctors, both of whom too frequently maintain their sway by astuteness and trickery… These doctors are amusing fellows, whose chief medicines are noise and mummery " (Treca 1968, p. 170).

As in case with the Moravian missionaries, at first, Jesuits did not consider Yup'ik ceremonialism as threatening their evangelization efforts:

> "But what is a grushka? It is a feast celebrated by the Indians in honor of their deceased kinsmen… While I feel that my experience with these Indians is not sufficient to warrant me in speaking

> authoritatively on their customs, still, from what I have learned, I am under the impression that some of their ceremonies are simple pastimes rather than superstitions" (Treca 1968, p.171).

In the course of time, however, they realized that Yup'ik religious ceremonialism was an obstacle to evangelization. Similarly to the Moravians, the Jesuits aimed at the suppression of the ceremonies and assimilation of the Yup'ik population. Father Astruc (2012) noticed that in the 1950s, when he started working in Alaska, "even [among] people like Fr. [John] Fox and others who spoke the language, the attitude of the non-Native people was that Native people really had to be assimilated" (p. 325). The assimilation strategies might be one of the reasons for the Roman Catholic missionaries not to develop "a strong literacy movement" in Alaska (Krauss 1980, p.20), despite many Jesuit priests becoming proficient in the Yup'ik language and even developing writing systems.

The Jesuits arrived to set up a mission at the end of the 1880s, after the Moravians and the Russian Orthodox. Despite their prejudiced approach to both denominational 'rivals', they recognized that the Yupiit had already been aware of Christian teachings through their interaction with the Russian Orthodox missionaries.

> "Through their slight intercourse with the Russians, these poor people have obtained some glimmerings of religious truth. They recognize one God, whom they call "Agaion"… A few who have been baptized by the Russian priest, wear a little cross around their necks but their knowledge of religion is as hazy as that of the others" (Treca 1968, p. 172).

Thus, as was the case with the Moravians, the Russian Orthodox Church facilitated success in the evangelization and suppression of Yupiit religious ceremonialism by the Jesuits. The Vatican II Council led to radical changes in the missionary strategies in Alaska in the 1950s and 1960s, starting with the development of parishes under Native leadership (Dorais & Saladin d'Anglure 1988). In the following decades, the Roman Catholics began to develop inculturation strategies. The relatively new concept of 'inculturation', preceded by the anthropological term 'acculturation' was introduced and defined at the 32nd General Assembly of the Jesuit order in 1972 by the Superior-General of the Jesuit order, Father Pedro Arrupe:

> "Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation), but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about 'a new creation'" (Arrupe 2024).

Thus, inculturation strategies support the openness and sensitivity of Christianity to other cultures. To analyze inculturation strategies is to examine the interaction between different cultures: a culture that Christianity interacts with, and a culture of those who spread the Christian message. The Roman Catholic missionaries in Alaska started to apply their inculturation strategies by investing into the Yup'ik deacon program under the leadership of Father Astruc between 1973 and 1996 (Fienup-Riordan 2012). In this respect, the Roman Catholics lagged behind the Russian Orthodox missionaries with their Native, *Creole*, bilingual and bi-cultural clergy developed at the early stage of their mission set-up. The same can be said about the Moravians who started to work

on building the community of Native helpers sent to communities to serve as intermediaries in the interaction between the missionary pastors and the Yupiit.

Fienup-Riordan (2000) has described the inculturation approach of the Roman Catholic Church in Alaska as the integration of traditional ceremonial elements into the modern Catholic liturgy by focusing on the commonalities over the differences between both religious systems (p. 313). To illustrate the argument, Fienup-Riordan cites William Tyson, a Yup'ik Catholic deacon, also known as a Yup'ik dance leader in the city of Anchorage, explaining how he applies the inculturation approach:

> "When I preach, I tell them the old way and then Christianity, where they are the same… Like Christianity there's life hereafter. And my people say, 'If you lead a good life you get back to a happy ground where you never want anything' … And these people say if you're good to go to heaven" (Fienup-Riordan 2000, p. 134).

In such a way, incorporation of the traditional naming practice (naming newborns after their deceased relatives) with sprinkling of water into the baptism practice, wearing *qasperet* (traditional clothing), using *ayuq* (Labrador tea) to purify the Church instead of the traditional Church incense, the comparison of the Scripture readings to traditional storytelling, the comparison of abstaining from certain food and activities before hunting with the lent abstinence were added to the Yup'ik Catholic liturgy in Alaska during the 1980s-1990s (Fienup-Riordan 2012, pp. 331-332). The focus on similarities allowed the Yup'ik deacons to build further bridges between two different systems of thought. One of the most important results of the inculturation approach among the Yupiit was the dancing revival that was initiated by Father Astruc, while he was the superior of Saint Mary's

Mission Boarding School between 1964 and 1970. Father Astruc (2012) described his initiative to approve the dancing in 1967 as follows:

> "It took a while before they began practicing for the potlatch. About a year later, the potlatch took place. It was a liberating experience because it was the beginning of a tradition that now is taking place every year" (Astruc 2012, p.97).

The incorporation of Yup'ik traditional rituals was not unanimously approved. Before the Vatican II Council and the decision of Father Astruc to re-introduce the Yup'ik dancing, the Jesuits and the nuns who settled down in the region considered the Yup'ik ceremonialism ungodly. Thus, they aimed at the condemnation and at the suppression of the traditional rituals and beliefs, and they were a success:

> "Okay. The priests and the nuns were saying that everything that we did was evil because… it came from the devil… And the teachers say, 'You cannot listen to your parents because they give you wrong direction. You have to listen to us. And that's where after [my generation] children start drifting away from their parents'" (Tyson 2000, p. 144).

Generational gaps and shame were the results of this suppression strategy led by the clergy and nuns in church and at school. Some Yupiit started to perceive the traditional ways as ungodly and shameful, thus, the process of incorporation of traditional rituals into the liturgy contradicted what they had been told before. Possibly, they also resisted the idea of the syncretism between two

systems of thought encouraged by the Catholic Church as a result of the inculturation strategy (Robinaud 2017). Despite unanimous opinions about the dancing revival, Father Astruc, other priests and Yup'ik deacons, started to dance themselves, introducing Yup'ik dancing into the Church building.

The inculturation approach helped to revive Yup'ik traditional rituals in their new form. As Fienup-Riordan (2000) observed it, the traditional practices have a connection with the past, but they express today's meanings with a projection into the future (p. 138). Contemporary Yup'ik dancing is mostly "social as opposed to spiritual" (McIntyre 1996, p. 362). During my fieldwork I regularly heard the word 'fun' with regard to contemporary Yup'ik dancing. Thus, despite its revival, the spiritual component was lost. As Harold Napoleon (1996) put it:

> "I think, it's the entertainment, the entertainment dancing, you see a lot of that… That's one value of dancing. There's another value of dancing that has yet to make a return and that is the spiritual value of dancing; that is a form of prayer…a form of it does… I think we need that" (Napoleon 1996 p. 439).

Although at least a part of the original meaning of dancing was suppressed, for the younger generation, revived Yup'ik dancing, in form of an entertainment, remains "a connection" to their ancestors, a means serving to identify as Yup'ik (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2019). Harold Napoleon (1996) continued his explanation of why the incorporation of Yup'ik dancing is important for Yup'ik Christians, in general:

> "They should be dancing in the churches, they should… They should be our songs, and our instruments with our own voices so that it means something to us. Because although we might be Christians, that doesn't make us an englishman or an Irishman. I am still Yup'ik and I should approach my God in my language. I think that needs to be reinstalled, not just in the churches" (Napoleon 1996, p. 441).

The Russian Orthodox and the Moravians, through their focus on spreading the word of God in the vernacular, may have contributed to a better retention of the Yup'ik language than the Roman Catholics. In contrast, both Churches did not encourage the reintroduction of Yup'ik dancing. The renewal of traditional practiced as initiated by the Roman Catholic Church have no doubt furthered the development of Yup'ik self-identification, in both secular and religious settings, despite the disagreements about the degree to which they could and should be incorporated into the Church. These disagreements, as Fienup-Riordan (2000) has fairly pointed out, remain a part of the continuous interaction between two systems of thought. They are part of a creative process to search for new meanings to maintain cultural continuity between the past and present.

With the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the building of a Native hospital in Anchorage, migration of the Native population to the fast-growing city intensified, thus, several Sisters of Saint Ann and Yup'ik deacons moved to the city. They founded a Native Ministry in the city in the 1970s. I am going to elaborate on the historical and contemporary development of the Native Ministry in Anchorage, on how the inculturation approach and Yup'ik Christianity has been changing in an urban setting.

Catholic Native Ministry in an Urban Setting

The Catholic Native Ministry started around the Anchorage Medical Center that opened in Anchorage in 1953 mostly as a tuberculosis hospital, as a response to a massive epidemic in the rural areas of Alaska (Alaska Native Medical Center Website[29] 2024). Catholic sisters started to visit hospital patients coming or medevaced from rural areas but also Indigenous homes in Anchorage (Sister Frances Vista, D.C.[30], personal communication, 2022). In 1979, Archbishop Francis Hurley started a conversation between the Alaska Archdiocese and Catholic Native leaders in order to understand the needs of the Native population, migrating to the urban setting (Evans-Dinneen & Gerling 2016). A year later, within the framework of the inculturation approach, Archbishop Hurley hired Sister Kevin Marie Flynn from Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth "to provide a support system enabling the Natives to become more visible in leadership in their parishes" (p. 170). He also worked on establishing a Mass for Indigenous patients at the hospital in Anchorage (Sister Frances Vista, D.C., personal communication, 2022). At the end of the 1990s, Sister Dana came to Anchorage to work on the development of the Native Ministry at the hospital. Archbishop Schwietz established the Catholic Native Ministry in Anchorage in 2009. Sister Frances Vista, D.C. (Daughters of Charity) came to Alaska to serve as the Native Ministry leader between 2011 and 2013. During these years, she worked on building the Native Ministry leadership, so that it could continue to function until her next stint in 2019. In 2012, most of the Ministry members went to Rome for the canonization of Saint Kateri, a Mohawk virgin. This trip encouraged them to become more active leaders in the Ministry (Sister Frances Vista, D.C., personal communication, 2022).

29 https://anmc.org/history/. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.
30 In her sixties

Today's Native Ministry consists of members of mixed Indigenous ancestry, including Yupiit, Inupiat and Athabaskan. The Yup'ik members are the most active ones. The Ministry continues working on training their Native leadership in activities related to worship, evangelization, justice issues and cultural preservation to support the Catholic Indigenous community in Anchorage and nearby areas through weekly Kateri Circle Meetings in Anchorage and in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough; Sunday Mass at the Alaska Native Medical Center (before the Covid-19 outbreak); monthly third Saturday Native Mass at Saint Anthony Parish in Anchorage; yearly events, such as Feast of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha; yearly Religious Education Congress and the Tekakwitha Conference (Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau Website[31] 2023). The Ministry is funded by the Black and Indian Mission (Sister Frances Vista, D.C., personal communication, 2022). Despite the numerous activities mentioned above, the main focus of the Ministry remain the Anchorage Native Medical hospital patients coming from the village. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, six Native ministers used to bring the Eucharist to the sick at the hospital, while Sunday Native Mass used to host between 80-150 people, including the patients and their visiting families. However, even with loosening some of the restrictions related to the pandemic, the hospital visits remain very limited, so that approximately 20 leaders continue to offer prayers over the phone (Sister Frances Vista, D.C., personal communication, 2022). The Saint Anthony Catholic Church in Anchorage offers Filipino, Samoan and Native Saturday Masses to their ethnically diverse parishioners within the framework of the Roman Catholic inculturation strategy in the urban setting of Alaska. Saturday Native Mass is celebrated in Saint Anthony Parish on the 3rd Saturday every month by 12 Indigenous leaders; it used to welcome approximately 30 members before the pandemic, and today, it is being offered as a substitute to Sunday Mass at the Native hospital. However, the hospital patients have difficulties finding transportation to come to the Parish (Sister Frances Vista, D.C., personal communication, 2022). Thus, the accessibility to Native services remains limited.

31 https://aoaj.org/office-of-native-ministries. Last accessed January 21st , 2024.

The Native Mass is an hour-long service that is led by the Native Ministry. The members, wearing the traditional *qasperet* or hooded overshirts, “as their ethnic representation” sit on the left from the altar by the piano. Sister Frances wears her *qaspeq* for the Native Mass, “in respect to the Native people” (Sister Frances Vista, D.C., personal communication, 2022).



Figure 14. Qasperet sewn by Sew Yupik’s Nikki Corbett.
Cited and Retrieved from https://ouralaskanschools.edublogs.org/2022/11/22/qaspeq

The priest leading the Native Mass may sometimes wear a *qaspeq* (a hooded overshirt). In such a way, the nun and the priest, not being Native, adapt to a Native Catholic liturgy. Although the Yup’ik as well as the Inupiaq women and men traditionally wear *qasperet*, today they are also popular among other Indigenous tribes as well as the non-Indigenous population in Alaska. The practice of wearing *qasperet* as a Yup’ik and Indigenous identity marker inside the Catholic Church originally stems from the rural areas in the Yup’ik region. However, the tradition ‘migrated’ to Anchorage together with the Yup’ik and other Indigenous Catholic population and probably with the Sisters who started to adapt to the Native cultures in the Yup’ik region and used the same inculturation approach in the urban setting.

The “Ceremonial Drum Cross”, or four different Alaskan Indigenous drums attached to a cross, are always displayed on the right side of the altar during Native Masses at the Saint Anthony Catholic Church in Anchorage. They are another example of Church adaptation to the Native cultures of Alaska in the context of their simultaneous presence in an urban environment.



Figure 15. The Ceremonial Drum Cross drawing by Teddy Mayac,
Graphics Courtesy by Sister Franes Vista D.C.



Figure 16. The Ceremonial Drum Cross displayed near the altar
during a Native Mass at the Saint Anthony Catholic Church, Anchorage, May 2022
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

The Native Ministry leader, Sister Frances Vista, D.C. provided me with the description of the Ceremonial Drum Cross created by Teddy Mayac, a King Island Inupiaq. According to the description, the topmost drum represents and honors the Athabascan Indian Nations, as the city of Anchorage and the Archdiocese are located on their traditional lands. The bottommost drum represents the Unangax̂ drum. The Yup'ik and the Inupiaq drums are situated on each side of the horizontal segment of the cross. The six eagle feathers hanging on the cross are described as traditionally used for purification. They represent the Athabascan, Inupiat, Yupiit, the Eyak, the Tlingit, Haida, the Tsimshian and Unangax̂ Tribes. The sixth wand honors the Indigenous kinship from Alaska to the lower 48 Indian Nations. The Ceremonial Drum Cross thus unites and represents all the Indigenous tribes of the United States in the Catholic Church, emphasizing the identity of each tribe but also Alaska Native identity and Indigenous identity in the United States honored by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic Church emphasizes the similarity between the traditional and the Catholic purification rites using different examples. At the Saint Anthony Catholic Church, the use of incense for purification is replaced by smudging sage on special occasions, as it is replaced by Labrador tea in the Yup'ik region (Fienup-Riordan 2000b) and by sweet grass in Canada (Robinaud 2017).

The altar in the Saint Anthony Church is covered with an Athapascan-beaded cloth during the Native Mass. A dream catcher is attached to the ceiling in order to honor the traditions of non-Alaskan Indigenous communities.



Figure 17. A dream catcher hung on the ceiling
during a Native Mass at the Saint Anthony Catholic Church, Anchorage, May 2022
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Here again the message of openness to cultures goes beyond the incorporation of the local traditions, it connects all the Indigenous populations in the United States and emphasizes the adaptation to the cultures and inclusion of their traditional practices into the liturgy. Readings and prayers are carried out by the Native Ministry members, some of the songs are sung in the Yup'ik language. Drumming is used instead of the altar bells before the communion. Thus, despite the four Alaskan Indigenous drums representing four Alaskan tribes on the cross, the Yup'ik drum is used as a musical substitute to altar bells to signify the presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

The Yup'ik song "Atamta" which is a translation of "Our Father" that is "signed" by a Yup'ik Ministry leader, who wears gloves instead of Yup'ik dance fans, as it was done in the past, in order not to damage the fragile balance between the spirit and the human worlds with fingernails. The song was written by David Chanar, a Yup'ik song-writer. Although "Atamta " is rather "signed"

than danced, the Yup'ik dancing may occur in the Parish building, for instance, as a part of a Memorial service (Marie Meade[32], personal communication, 2022).

Two Kateri Circles in Anchorage (20 members) and in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (6 members) are registered and affiliated with the Tekakwitha Conference, that is "an international Catholic/religious 501(c)(3) organization" that promotes the evangelization across the Indigenous Catholic communities in North America devoted to "the intercession and virtuous & holy life of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha", the Indigenous Catholic Saint representing Indigenous Catholic ideals (Tekakwitha Conference Website[33]). The Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Borough Kateri Circles follow the expectations of the Tekakwitha Conference. The weekly Kateri Circle at the Saint Anthony Catholic Church comprises Indigenous and some non-Indigenous female members, although the majority of the participants remain Indigenous. The Kateri Circle at Saint Anthony Parish starts with praying the Rosary and ends with prayers to Saint Kateri, followed by a lunch in the Parish basement area, including Native food. Sharing of Native food is a traditional activity practiced by various Indigenous populations in Alaska that is a part of the Roman Catholic Church routine in Alaska. Native food sharing is also a common practice in the Moravian and Russian Orthodox Churches in the urban environments.

One of the other important activities of the Catholic Native Ministry includes their membership and active participation in Anchorage Faith and Action Congregations Together (AFACT) and Valley Interfaith Action (VIA), some of the ministry members serving on the Board. AFACT is a grassroots organization that includes numerous Christian congregations that work together on addressing local issues such social injustice, climate change, racism and ensuring that low-income persons participate in the decision-making within the Municipality of Anchorage

32 In her seveties
33 https://tekconf.org/kateri-circles. Last accessed January 24th, 2024.

(Anchorage Faith and Action Congregations Together Website[34] 2020). For instance, in February 2016, the Catholic Native Ministry held a public meeting to address the substance abuse problem that significantly impacts the urban and rural Indigenous population, in particular, by the lack of detoxification facilities in the city of Anchorage. Thus, despite the main focus of the Ministry on serving the spiritual needs of the Catholic Indigenous hospital patients coming to the city from rural areas, it engages its local leaders to participate in the advocacy strategies to protect interests of the urban Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

Today, the Roman Catholic Church in Alaska continues to incorporate traditional Yup’ik elements into the liturgy both in the rural and urban areas. The Native deacons in the rural areas build their inculturation approach on the similarities between the Yup’ik traditional and the Catholics systems of thought. In Anchorage, the Native Ministry serves in the hospital where both rural and the urban Yup’ik and other Indigenous citizens receive medical support. In the city, in particular, in the Saint Anthony Catholic Church, the core of the Native Ministry is of Yup’ik heritage, with Yup'ik songs, dancing elements, the Yup'ik language and traditional drums being incorporated into the liturgy.

However, the use of other Alaskan and non-Alaskan Indigenous elements emphasizes the Church’s openness towards all the Indigenous cultures of the United States. The revival of dancing initiated by the Roman Catholics in the Yup’ik region spread to the urban areas as well, when some Yup’ik Catholic deacons, such as William Tyson, migrated to and created a dance group in Anchorage. As for the use of the Yup’ik language, despite the fact that some Roman Catholic missionaries became fluent in the language and even developed writing systems, spreading the word of God in the vernacular was not a priority, in contrast to the Moravians and the Russian Orthodox. I would like to compare the strategies and the relationships of all the three missions set up in the

34 https://www.anchoragefact.org/about. Last accessed January 20th, 2024

Yup’ik region in detail in order to better understand to what degree their interactions have impacted the Yup’ik social organization.

Three Churches in a Dialogue

The arrival of the Moravian and of the Roman Catholic missionaries in Alaska marked a new controversial phase in the life of the Yupiit, as they were witnesses and participants of the rivalry between the Missions and the already established Russian Orthodox Church that competed to win Yup’ik souls.

The Moravians were the first to arrive in the Yup’ik region after the Comity Plan meeting and the division of the Alaskan territories into different Protestant missionary areas. As the Russian Orthodox Church had already been present in the region, the arrival of the Moravians led to tensions between the missionaries from both denominations. In his report, Vasilii Shishkin (1889) complained about a Moravian missionary who insisted on his Russian Orthodox school students to attend Moravian services despite their verbal agreement. In his turn, Kilbuck (1891) reports that the Russian Orthodox missionaries tried to persuade the newly Yup’ik Moravian converts to return to the Russian Orthodox Church by using the same arguments as the other competitors, the shamans, did:

> “The Greek priest has been telling this people that their trouble of last Spring came upon them because they had left the true, that is, his Church. By thus using some of the very same arguments of the

> ‘shamans’ has skillfully led them into supporting him so far as dissuading the people from coming to us. The people, however, still come to us, but we must carefully lead them into the truth” (Kilbuck 1891 p. 23).

The Moravians were better equipped with medicine than the Russian Orthodox, but, as both provided the Yupiit with treatment against new diseases, they both were recognized for the new power they had to cure diseases. Thus, according to McCollough’s fieldwork data (1988), some of the Yupiit rebaptized in both Churches several times, hoping to find a remedy in both (p. 23).

The tensions between the missionaries were not solely related to the competition in winning Yup’ik souls. The substantial theological differences between the Moravians and the Russia Orthodox contributed to the complexity of relations between the two missions. Orthodox Church’s emphasis on the communal, sacramental experience of the liturgy contradicted the focus on the individual relationship between a Moravian and Jesus Christ. Edith Kilbuck described this theological disparity in her diaries, comparing the Russian Orthodox ceremonialism to the Yup’ik one. Her observations were correct, as the richness in the ceremonialism might probably be a point of similarity that facilitated the adoption of Orthodoxy by the Yupiit.

> “Since the Greek Orthodox have been saying so much because we do not worship the Cross as they do, John studied up the subject the past week and used that as a subject in the English and native sermon. It is impossible to tell you all that Greeks say and do. They are worshipers of the cross rather than worshipers of Christ. In sickness a cross is dipped in water and the water is given to the

> patient to drink. They wear them on the neck. The whole amounts to the same as the native superstitions (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988, p. 319).

The Russian Orthodox missionaries' relative tolerance towards Yup'ik shamanism and religious ceremonies that were discovered by the Moravians in the Yup'ik region was the opposite of what they planned to implement (Kilbuck & Kilbuck 1988, p. 72). For the Moravian missionaries it was indispensable for the Yupiit to suppress their own traditional religious practices in order to become true Christians.

> "But the practice of the Russian Church has been such a loose one, that there never was any difference between the baptized and the unbaptized, so far as change of life was concerned, so that very erroneous ideas were entertained by the people about the law of the Gospel" (Kilbuck 1892, p. 23).

The Roman Catholic Church was much closer to the Russian Orthodox Church on the theological level as they also have the same seven sacraments and focus on the visual imagery. However, they still criticized the Orthodox for their ambiguous "mystical approach", while the Russian Orthodox reproached the Roman Catholic for their excessive rationality (Ware 1997, p. 314). Thus, the Russian Orthodox emphasis on the mystical nature of the sacraments was also criticized by the Jesuits who arrived in the region after the Moravians.

> "The conduct of the Russian priest when he visits these good people is in marked contrast to ours, for he gathers as many as possible,

> both adults and children, and administers the sacrament with no preliminary instruction – a very easy way, surely, but!" (Treca 1968, p. 169).

Despite the critiques, Reverend Ferdinand Drebert, a Moravian pastor, recognized that by the time the Moravians arrived in the Yup'ik region, the Yupiit were familiar with Christianity, for instance, that they knew about the commandments that were similar to their own "code of ethics", as mentioned above (Drebert 1959, p.59). Thus, the familiarity of the Yupiit with the Christian concepts enabled by the Russian Orthodox Church facilitated the future success of the Moravian mission in the Yup'ik region.

In the course of time, however, the tensions and conflicts over affiliation and denominational differences eased. McCollough (1988) cited one of the Elders in Tuntutuliak who argued:

> "Once everyone knew the Bible we learned that no church was higher or better than another and that we all have the same God… Long ago we had one faith and now once again we have one faith. You may call it Orthodox or Moravian, but it's still the same, like long ago" (McCollough 1988, p. 102).

Today, several denominations may be simultaneously present in a Yup'ik village. A mixed, interdenominational marriage is a usual matter. Interdenominational families celebrate Christmas on December 25th and on January 7th, according to the Gregorian and to the Julian calendars. The Orthodox Starring or Selaviq is celebrated by the whole village. In the city of Anchorage, Selaviq is celebrated at the houses of the Saint Innocent Cathedral parishioners with participation of Yup'ik

Moravians, but also in some Moravian houses. It is celebrated according to the village tradition of one of the Yup'ik priests. The Russian Orthodox, in their turn, attend the Native Musicale, a major musical event, usually taking place in February or in March, connecting the Indigenous Protestants from rural and urban Alaska. Among Yup'ik traditional practices that transcend the denominational boundaries is the Yup'ik naming practice. As discussed above, the Yupiit continue to name their children after their deceased relatives or friends, independently of their religious affiliation. Thus, the namesakes acquire some "behavior and language" of the deceased (Marie Meade, personal communication, 2024). The relatives of the deceased offer them presents during the Russian Orthodox Selaviq and at Moravian Christmas (McCollough 1988., p. 103). Hence, the Yup'ik traditional naming practice transcends religious affiliation.

Conclusion

The history of the interactions between the Yupiit and three Christian denominations demonstrates the creativity of the former to adopt and to adapt to each system of thought. As the Russian Orthodox Church did not radically eliminate the Yup'ik ceremonies, while introducing their own elaborated ceremonialism, the Yupiit started to accept and to add Orthodox elements to their own set of beliefs and practices. Some parts of the traditional ceremonialism transformed into the celebration of Selaviq, while the canonization of the Indigenous Saints contributed to the development of the Alaskan Indigenous Orthodoxy. The efforts of the Church in the development of the Native clergy and of local laity leadership impacted the social organization of the Yupiit. Although the Moravians and the Russian Orthodox had the same priority to communicate the Word

of God in the vernacular, which contributed to a better retention of the Yup'ik language at least in some villages, the Moravians saw a radical change of life, including the suppression of the traditional ceremonies, as an indispensable step to become true Christians. Although the Russian Orthodox helped the Yupiit to familiarize with Christian concepts, the Moravian personal relationship with Jesus Christ was in contrast with the communal and mystical experience of the Russian Orthodox sacramental liturgy. While adopting the new concept, the Yupiit chose to focus on the idea of individual responsibility of community well-being. The development of the body of Native helpers in villages also contributed to the development of a new leadership within the Yup'ik social organization. This change created intergenerational conflicts, as the Elders and the shamans opposed it. The Roman Catholics arrived in the region after the Moravians. Despite the efforts of some Roman Catholic missionaries to become fluent in the Yup'ik language, that led to the creation of writing systems, they did not manage to develop a strong literacy movement. However, after the Vatican II Council, they contributed to the revival of Yup'ik dancing, that, however, lacked the traditional spiritual component. All the three denomonations contributed to the development of a distinct Yup'ik Christianity, with a strong Yup'ik leadership that continues to exist in both rural and urban areas. The three missions have entertained complex, competitive relations improving in the course of time. Some traditional practices, for instance, the practice of naming after the deceased continue to exist independently from the religious affiliation.

CHAPTER IV: YUPIIT IN THE CITY OF ANCHORAGE

Anchorage is a constantly moving and dynamic city, located on the south-central Alaskan coast, on the traditional lands of the Dena'ina Indigenous Peoples, in the biggest state of the United States. Alaska Indigenous people from both rural and urban areas consider this city as "the largest Indigenous village in Alaska" (Nicholson 2018). Throughout this chapter, by merging ethnographic data with bibliographical sources, the question of whether and how the Yup'ik migrant population fits into the city environment will be discussed. Why does the city of Anchorage serve as an attraction point of migration for rural Alaska Indigenous populations, in general, and for the Yup'ik people, in particular? Why is the city of Anchorage considered as "the largest Indigenous village of Alaska"? In what ways do the Yupiit appropriate the city, and how do they produce and transmit collective identity, while negotiating the traditions brought from the village?

First, I will examine the specific characteristics of "the largest Indigenous village" that continues to attract the Yup'ik and other Indigenous populations, by looking at its historical and current development. Second, I will discuss the Indigenous diversity of the city and in what ways the Yupiit participate in the creation of urban Indigenous space, and, third, I will elaborate on the question of an Alaska Indigenous identity as a part of the Yup'ik collective identity.

Anchorage, "the Biggest Native Village" in Alaska

Growing out of a railroad construction camp in 1914, Anchorage was incorporated as a city in 1920. Since World War II, when military bases were constructed in the area, and Dena'ina lands appropriated without any compensation or recognition (Langdon & Leggett, 2009), Anchorage has grown into the most populous city in Alaska. The discovery of oil in the 1970s resulted in its unprecedented growth, as construction jobs attracted workforce from other Alaskan areas, from the "Lower 48" and from abroad, with oil companies' headquarters being located in the city. In this period, Anchorage experienced an explosion of economic and cultural growth, continuing to develop as a point of attraction for migration ever since, despite complexities and challenges resulting from the city's growing cultural diversity and large differences in age and income (Boisclair, 2008; Goldsmith et al., 2005).

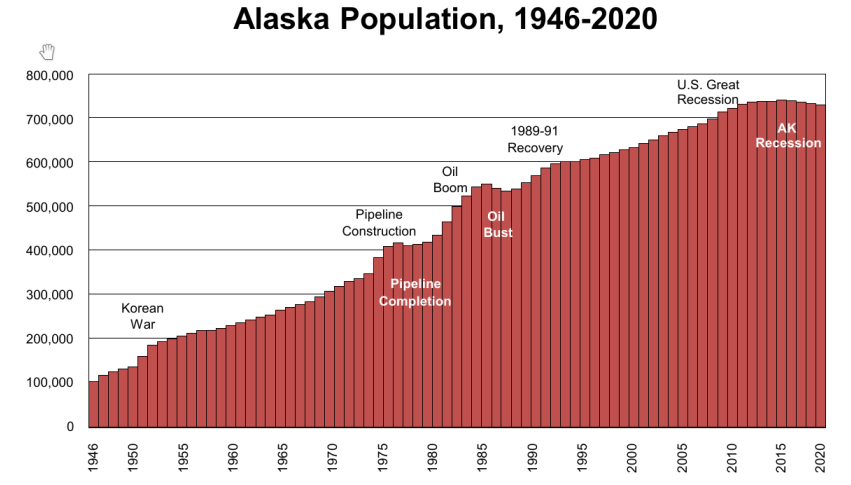


Figure 18. Alaska Population, Cited and Retrieved from https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/estimates/data/TotalPopGraph.pdf

Today, approximately one half of Alaska's population (291,247 people) resides in Anchorage (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Website[35] n.d.). As for the year 2000, Anchorage offered half of all job positions statewide. Military bases, development in the oil industry, federal financing and the growing tourism sector continue to attract workforce to the city. At the same time, the population of Anchorage is going up and down, depending on job growth and instabilities of the oil sector and federal spending (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Website n.d.), thus creating a constant transient flow of migration to and out of the city.

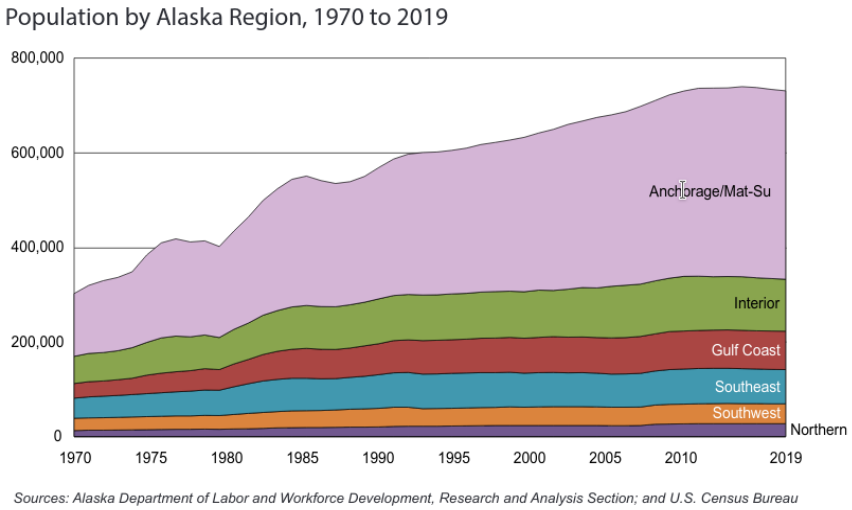


Figure 19. Population by Alaska Region, Cited and Retrieved from https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/popestpub.html

Ethnic diversity in the city is rich, including white, Alaska Native and American Indian, Asian, Black, Pacific Islander and other populations (U.S. Census Bureau Website[36] 2022). The oil industry and two university campuses attract specialists from other states and from abroad, being part of the further development of an increasingly complex city in terms of social organization.

35 https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/census-data/redistrict?value%5B0%5D=4620. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.
36 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census redistricting.html. Last accessed January 18th , 2024.

Anchorage School District, offering Dual Language Immersion programs in seven schools teaching in Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Yup'ik is an illustration of the rich ethnic diversity of the city (Anchorage School District Website[37] 2022).

2020 Census Data For Redistricting

Population by Race Alone

Area	Total	White	AI/AN	Black	Asian	Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races
Anchorage municipality	291,247	164,446	23,661	14,576	27,646	10,001	10,115	40,802

Figure 20. 2020 Census Data for Redistricting, Cited and Retrieved from Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Website, March 2023
https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/census-data/redistrict?value%5B0%5D=4620

Alaska Indigenous people are the second largest minority in Anchorage, whose cultural representation serves as one of the main tourist attraction points for the city. However, they represent only 7.94 % (or 14.77 % of mixed heritage) of the city population (U.S. Census Bureau Website[38]).



Figure 21. Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage, December 2021
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

37 https://www.asdk12.org/Page/5409. Last accessed January 21st, 2024.
38 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census redistricting.html. Last accessed January 18th , 2024.

Anchorage has the highest concentration of diverse Alaskan Indigenous populations in the state (Yup'ik, Inupiaq, Sugpiaq, Alaska Athabascan, Unangaŷ, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian). Rural-to-urban migration continues to grow, as more Indigenous villagers come to the city for better employment, education, medical care or joining their families (Kim, 2020). As one of my collaborators put it, "[the urban Indigenous population] is growing, you see our representation more and more". At the same time, urban Indigenous people in Alaska continue to experience high unemployment, high rates of poverty, and lower than average city income (Goldsmith et al., 2005). Migrating Indigenous females are more successful in finding job positions and settling down in the city than Indigenous males (Ibid.). One of the explanations for this trend may be the subsistence opportunities impacting Alaska Native men's migration behavior, as they migrate back to rural areas to engage in the subsistence economy (Huskey et al., 2004). Despite challenges encountered in urban areas, the city of Anchorage continues to attract Alaskan Indigenous populations, even though the increase of the Indigenous peoples (around two percent) over the past ten years might appear insignificant (Department of Labor and Workforce Development, n.d.).

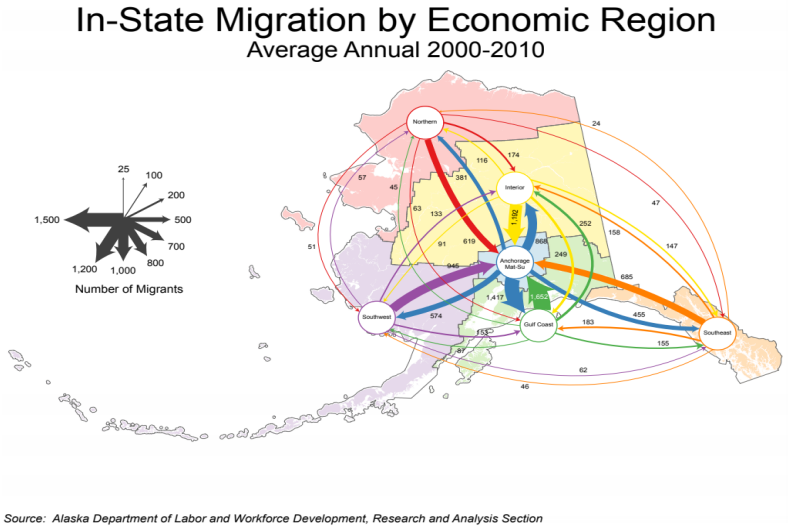


Figure 22. In-State Migration by Economic Region, Cited and Retrieved from https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/popestpub.html

The rural-to-urban migration has been described by numerous scholars not as a process of cultural loss but as an extension of the rural cultural identity (Clifford 2020, Fienup-Riordan 2000b, Voorhees 2010). The Indigenous populations migrate to Anchorage to create Indigenous urban spaces and to continue their cultural activities in the city, thereby contributing to the highest concentration of the diverse Alaskan Indigenous activities in Anchorage.



Figure 23. The statue of Raven the Creator by John Hoover, 1998, displayed at the entrance of the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, Alaska. Alaska Native Heritage Center embraces all the Alaskan Indigenous cultures and serves as a tourist attraction, Anchorage, Alaska, May 2022
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

As for the year 2015, the Yup'ik population remained the largest Indigenous one in Alaska (32 721 people or 37 562 for Yupiit of mixed racial identity). In Anchorage, they also constitute the largest Indigenous group (4 652 people), while being the second largest group after the Inupiat if mixed racial identity is taken into account (U.S. Census Bureau Website[39] 2022). Consequently, the

39 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census redistricting.html. Last accessed January 18th , 2024.

largest Yup'ik community in Alaska lives in Anchorage. Before examining the strategies the Yupiit use to extend their cultural practices to the city and to participate in the creation of urban Indigenous spaces, I would like to elaborate on the question of Indigenous urban diversity and of the common urban Indigenous identity.

The Yupiit and Urban Indigenous Diversity

The establishment of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) thanks to the initiative of Alaska Federation of Natives resulted in the issue of the Indigenous land title in 1971. ANCSA is an illustration of the unique process of Alaska Indigenous identity construction, when the collective identity of diverse Alaska Indigenous groups was strengthened and emphasized with the aim of fighting for the traditional Alaskan lands. ANCSA resulted in the creation of Native corporations owned by Alaska Native shareholders. Several corporations with headquarters in the city of Anchorage are owned by diverse Alaska Indigenous shareholders, contributing to the maintenance of the common Alaska Indigenous 'sense of we', providing job positions for Indigenous people, while investing in cultural heritage preservation of particular Alaskan Indigenous groups.

With the ongoing process of the common Alaska Indigenous identity construction in the city, the following question arises: is Indigenous urban diversity detrimental, or does it contribute to maintaining traditional Indigenous group identities, and, in particular, the Yup'ik one? Some studies argue that "significant diversity of aboriginal cultures may create barriers to social cohesion,

community development and cultural retention; [and it may] limit opportunities for institutional and political development" (Norris & Jantzen 2003). This argument does not apply to the Alaskan Indigenous urban diversity, as different Alaskan Indigenous tribe members participated in the creation of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). AFN is "the largest statewide Native organization" that was formed by the common efforts of diverse Alaska Indigenous tribes to preserve their land rights with today's mission "to enhance and promote the cultural, economic and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community" while "fostering and encouraging preservation of Alaska Native cultures" (Alaska Federation of Natives Website[40], 2024; Gwynn, 2010). The mutual efforts of AFN led to the establishment of ANCSA. Thus, the collective identity of the Alaska Indigenous communities has been maintained as a means to protect the common economic and political interests, while preserving the uniqueness of each Indigenous culture. As Gwynn (2010) has pointed out, the creation of the ANCSA regional corporations resulted in two different means of how Indigenous peoples identify themselves - both belonging to a particular region, village and kin and to remaining Alaska Native. Migration to the urban setting in contrast to leading a relatively ethnically homogeneous Alaskan rural village lifestyle in the city of Anchorage with the highest concentration of the Alaska Indigenous group members in the state. However, rural and urban Alaska Indigenous populations are connected by this common Alaska Indigenous collective identity through the AFN and ANCSA establishment.

Studies conducted in Canada have revealed that urban Aboriginal people experience a similar feeling of attachment to other urban Aboriginal groups in the city of their residence, as they did to those from their own cultural group (Peters, 2007). In a similar way, rural and urban Alaska Indigenous peoples experience a sense of belonging to both their tribes and regions and to the entire Alaska Indigenous community. However, one of the challenges the urban Indigenous population faces in Anchorage is the lack of a common Native community space, "of a non-profit *qasgiq*", or

40 https://www.nativefederation.org/about-afn/. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

men's house, that they can share for conducting traditional ceremonies and *potlucks* (gatherings where everyone shares a dish) (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 2021). For instance, Anchorage Native Community was launched in 2019 out of a need to unify Anchorage Indigenous people "to combat all the issues [they] all face as people in Alaska's biggest village" (Anchorage Native Community Council's Facebook Page n.d.), with a purpose to find and to share a common Indigenous community space, available for free to all the urban Alaska Indigenous groups.

The ongoing process of broadening Alaska Native identity in the city can be illustrated by the current twenty percent increase in the Indigenous population settled in Anchorage that identifies themselves as belonging to "two or more races", in the period between 2010 to 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau Website[41] 2022). Already in the year 2000, Indigenous people in Alaskan urban places were six times more likely to be of mixed racial identity as compared to those in rural areas (Goldsmith et al., 2004). Sprott (1994) found in her research study that for Indigenous people of mixed "heritage" in Anchorage "Native heritage seemed to take priority although selected ancestors of other ethnic groups in their families were also valued" (p.320). However, Sprott's research mostly included the collaborators who lived in villages during their childhood or were born there, therefore excluding those not born or raised on their ancestors' lands.

The majority of my collaborators were also born and/or raised in Yup'ik villages. Only around one-fifth of them consider themselves to be of mixed heritage, but approximately one-third of them have children or/and grandchildren born in either intermarriages with diverse Alaskan Indigenous populations or in marriages with other non-Indigenous populations. Thus, even if the topic of mixed heritage identification is less relevant to this particular study, more research is needed in this regard in the context of urban Indigenous tradition negotiation. For instance, Nancy Lucero (2013) conducted research on generational differences in the negotiation of Native identity

41 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census redistricting.htm

among urban American Indians, and her research results show that it was more challenging for generations not born or raised in reservations to develop an American Indian identity. She also cited some researchers (Thornton 1997) who argued that urbanization negatively impacts American Indian cultural identity, as Indigenous diversity leads to "detribalization", melding values and practices from various Indigenous groups. This argument is relevant to the urban Alaska Indigenous population, in general, and to the urban Yupiit, in particular, in the sense that living in urban spaces as an Indigenous minority might naturally contribute to the development of an Indigenous convergence. Nevertheless, the Yup'ik and other Alaska Indigenous people, I have been in collaboration with, tend to identify with both a particular Indigenous population and as "Alaska Native" people. For instance, I noticed during my participation and observations of Indigenous communities' events or church services, that a newcomer was often asked where they come from and who their family is in order to establish connections by looking for possible kinship ties in the pool of the collective Alaska Indigenous identity.

Defining themselves as "Alaska Natives" living among the other ethnic communities in the city of Anchorage, the urban Yup'ik and other Indigenous peoples continue to maintain their tribal identity. Thus, belonging to a particular tribe is not in contradiction with being a part of the broader Alaska Native community. Furthermore, "including a broad Alaska Native designation enlarges and solidifies the group to which one belongs, [as]… a city context allows for expansion of 'Us' while allowing for a continuation of traditional identification systems" (Gwynn 2010, p. 9). At the same time, in her dissertation, Gwynn, citing Vera Starbard, also argued that ethnic identification of those urban Alaska Indigenous people, that were born after the establishment of ANCSA in 1971, depended rather on acceptance into and by the Indigenous community than on their heritage or particular tribe belonging, as they strongly identified themselves as Alaska Natives, while in contact with the Indigenous community in Anchorage (Gwynn 2010). Although it is true that most of my

Yup'ik collaborators were born before the foundation of ANCSA the younger Indigenous generation representatives I spoke with or listened to tended to identify themselves with particular tribes, even if confronted with the issues related to having few ties with their ancestral lands or to mixed heritage due to their parents' intermarriage with non-Indigenous or other Indigenous populations, resulting from attending boarding schools and living in urban areas.

My observations in Anchorage also showed that,although all the urban Indigenous spaces I conducted my research in were created and used to support the diverse Indigenous community members in the city and almost all these spaces always included diverse Indigenous populations, Indigenous groups were quite identifiable by sitting and eating in the same areas or dancing in the same groups. Although it is more likely for an urban Indigenous person to be able to participate in a multi-ethnic event in Anchorage than in a village, very often Indigenous people participate in them either accompanied by their kin or as a part of their ethnic group, thus acknowledging their particular group heritage and their broader Alaska Indigenous identity at the same time. Even if melding between the Alaska Indigenous tribes continues to occur, creating urban, common Indigenous spaces does not lead to dissolving each distinct group identity, but created opportunities to unite for political and economical reasons as well as to develop a sense of belonging to the same 'sense of we', based on similar values and traditional practices. Common urban Indigenous spaces also provide the Indigenous people of mixed heritage with more flexibility to embrace several Indigenous identities and to explore different Indigenous cultures in the urban areas in contrast to more homogeneous Indigenous spaces in the village.

As for a brief description of some urban Indigenous spaces in Anchorage, there are several places that serve to represent the broader Alaska Indigenous community. For instance, Alaska Native Corporations, organized as a result of the creation of ANCSA, having some of their

headquarters in the city and being one of the largest urban providers of job opportunities for Alaska Indigenous people, can be considered as Indigenous spaces. The Yup'ik shareholders are mostly represented by Calista and Bristol Bay Native Corporations both headquartered in Anchorage. Alaska Native Corporations helped with fundraising for building the Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) in 1999 which is a non-profit organization and a statewide Alaska Indigenous culture center. Although the entry and use of ANHC areas are not always available for free, they offer classes, workshops and internships free of charge to Indigenous adults and youth. It also hosts events organized by Native corporations, urban Indigenous dance practices and Indigenous artists selling their crafts to tourists on a weekly basis and during Indigenous arts bazaars. ANHC also hosts yearly free-to-attend events such as Indigenous People's Day and the Alaska Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women event, book presentations and funeral potlucks (Alaska Native Heritage Center Website[42] 2024). Since spring 2022, after a long break related to the Covid-19 pandemic, ANHC has started to offer its space to two Yup'ik dance groups, Yurapik Drummers and Dancers and Acilquq, for weekly dancing practices. At the same time, ANHC presents permanent collections and models of traditional village sites for non-Indigenous urban dwellers and tourists.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, a "non-profit tribal health organization" located in Anchorage, provides health services to Indigenous people from both rural and urban areas, including medical services at the Alaska Native Medical Center, (ANMC) as well as wellness programs, disease research and prevention, rural provider training and rural water sanitation system construction (The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Website[43] 2024).

42 https://www.alaskanative.net/cultural-programming/. Last accessed January 21st, 2024.
43 https://www.anthc.org/who-we-are/overview/. Last Accessed January 24th, 2024.



Figure 24. The qasgiq, or Yup'ik men's house model built on the territory of ANHC, May 2022
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Alaska Native Medical Center offered their space for Indigenous dance groups' weekly practices, religious services, Indigenous community conferences and gatherings. Indigenous people systematically come to ANMC from rural areas for medical appointments. ANMC is an urban Indigenous space where the constant oscillatory flow between the rural and the urban environments can be observed. Those who live in the city of Anchorage, visit their extended family members and friends from rural areas. Both Indigenous patients and their visitors may attend dance practices and religious (Moravian and Catholic) services.



Figure 25. The meeting area for urban Indigenous dance groups and religious events, ANMC, February, 2021
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

It contributes to the strengthening of tribal ties between both the Indigenous peoples living in urban and rural environments, as well as those ones who live in Anchorage and their extended family members and friends from rural areas, while emphasizing their belonging to the collective Alaska Indigenous identity, as diverse Indigenous rural and urban populations have appointments, dance and pray together in the same area. Two urban Yup'ik dance groups used to have dance practices in the main hospital building, attracting both patients and visitors to participate. Moravian and Catholic Yupiit used to attend hospital services, while the Yup'ik Orthodox priest worked there as a chaplain.

Southcentral Foundation, an Indigenous-owned, nonprofit healthcare organization, serves approximately 65,000 Alaska Indigenous and American Indian people living in Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Borough and 55 rural villages (Southcentral Foundation site, 2021). It offers wellness programs to Elders, Indigenous adults and the youth, including traditional healing practices, dancing, subsistence and craft activities for Elders. The Foundation also permits the use of its spaces for conducting Alaska Indigenous public religious and secular events. For instance, Russian Orthodox Starring is led by the hospital chaplain and a Russian Orthodox priest, according to the tradition of his village, and the Native Humor Night event is led predominantly by Yup'ik comedians.

University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific University also contribute to maintaining Indigenous spaces in the city for Indigenous students and other participants at the Native Student Services and in the Cama-i Room on campus, while hosting various Indigenous public events throughout the year. Indigenous people in the city create Indigenous spaces with the help of the organizations mentioned above. However, certain regulations limit conducting Indigenous traditional ceremonies, for instance, smudging in urban public spaces. There is therefore a need for

a permanent, secular Indigenous space in the city. For instance, although the University of Alaska Anchorage provides a Yup'ik dance group with a room to practice *yuraq*, or Yup'ik dancing, it requires the group to include other university students to dancing practices upon request, while the Yup'ik first dance ceremony is impossible to conduct there or at ANMC, as it may take several days and nights (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2021). Nevertheless, the Native Studies Department of the university has recently launched a project of creating an Indigenous, permanently available space (Alaska Native Studies Department, Facebook page, January 13th, 2023), responding to a growing need expressed by the Anchorage Native community as well as by some of my collaborators (Augusta Reimer, 2022; Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, 2022).

Anchorage Native churches also create public Indigenous spaces. The Saint Innocent Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sitka and Alaska annually hosts the Starring celebration, or, Selaviq which is a mixture of Russian Orthodox and Yup'ik traditional practices. The Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry and Anchorage Moravian Church have regular potlucks that include sharing of Native food and goods. The Saint Anthony Catholic Church hosted Yup'ik dancing and potlucks before the Covid-19 pandemic as a part of memorial services of their Yup'ik parishioners (Anonymous 9[44], personal communication, 2023). Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship hosts annual Native Musicals where the urban Indigenous people sing in groups and meet their extended families and friends from villages on the occasion of the Fur Rondy winter festival. Rehearsals for the Musicale involve Native food consumption and exchange. The Musicale includes parka competitions and Native art bazaars, while the Indigenous participants wear *qasperet*, traditional Yup'ik and Inupiaq clothing that has become popular among the Alaska Indigenous and even non-Indigenous populations.

44 In their seventies

The Place of the Yupiit in Urban Space

Which place do the Yup'ik occupy in the urban, diverse, Alaska Indigenous and predominantly non-Indigenous environment? To begin with, the Yupiit are the largest Indigenous population both in size and the number of native speakers (Alaska Native Language Center Website[45] n.d.). Consequently, the Yup'ik urban community is the largest one among Indigenous communities in Anchorage, with the Yup'ik language Immersion Program being the first and, currently, the only Indigenous language program launched in Anchorage at the College Gate Elementary school in 2018. The Yup'ik language immersion program is also the first Indigenous one created at an urban school in the United States (Anchorage School District Website[46] 2022). During my participation in the immersion program daily activities, I discovered that the language of nstruction is Yup'ik half of their daily school time, whereas the Yup'ik teachers speak exclusively Yup'ik with their students. The urban Yup'ik children, born and raised in Anchorage, lack connection to their ancestral lands. It might undermine their ability to understand the meaning of some place-connected Yup'ik language terms. At the same time, they have a possibility to learn Yup'ik at the elementary school, while their cousins, living in small Yup'ik villages, might not have Yup'ik at school. Thus, today's migration of the Yupiit to the urban areas does not necessarily equal the loss of the Yup'ik language skills. The Anchorage School District allows the Yupiit teachers to create Yup'ik spaces at schools, where children have an additional opportunity to learn Yup'ik dancing, values and traditional activities in the Yup'ik language. At the same time, they are more

45 https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/languages-move/centralakyupik.php. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.
46 https://www.asdk12.org/Page/5409. Last accessed January 21st, 2024.

exposed to urban diversity, as they share these spaces with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous students enrolled in the same program. The Yup'ik language is also taught at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School in the city. The University of Alaska Anchorage offers Yup'ik language classes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. However, a limited number of the urban Yup'ik people have access to these language courses. I am going to elaborate on the topic of Yup'ik education in an urban environment in the upcoming chapters.

Diverse Indigenous dance groups meet and perform throughout Anchorage, and these groups represent diverse and not exclusively Indigenous populations. However, the two main dance groups (Yurapik Drummers and Dancers, as well as Acilquq) are organized by Yup'ik dance leaders and perform mostly Yup'ik songs. Both groups used to practice at the circular lobby of the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) on a weekly basis before the Covid-19 pandemic. The lobby is the main meeting point of the rural-urban, extended, Yup'ik families, as Indigenous patients from all over Alaska come to ANMC for medical appointments and hospitalizations. Thus, a Yup'ik group dance practice involves and unties Indigenous participants and spectators from the whole state. In addition to practices in ANMC, Yurapik Drummers and Dancers also used to practice in a University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) building before the pandemic. They were not exposed to the public audience at UAA, enjoying more private dancing than Acilquq. During the pandemic, Acilquq moved their dancing activities outdoors in the spring and summer time, practicing in parks, shaping a public space to become Indigenous for the time of practice.

When the pandemic-related restrictions weakened, the Alaska Native Heritage Center allowed both Acilquq and Yurapik Drummers and Dancers to practice once a week at the same time but in different buildings. Acilquq started to practice on stage, while Yurapik Drummers and Dancers had the permission to dance inside the qasgiq model built on the territory of the Alaska Native Heritage

Center. Heidi Aklaseaq Senungetuk, an Inupiaq scholar and dancer, has elaborated (2017) on the concepts of a "home *qazgi*" or a "pop-up *qazgi*" referring to the mobility of Indigenous dancing groups that circulate across the city of Anchorage to practice, perform and create temporary Indigenous spaces in different city areas (p. 238). This mobility is partially a result of the lack of permanent Indigenous spaces in the city that is an issue for Indigenous communities (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 2022), but, also of the intensive rhythm of city life, as the dance groups constantly perform on different occasions in different parts of the city. Moreover, as Burch argued (2006), the Inupiat considered every place, where they worked and had conversations, a *qargi,* or the men's house (p. 106). Similarly, for the Yupiit, "you can have dance practices everywhere" (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2022). Thus, the *qasgiq* mobility is shaped directly by the city that enables Indigenous spaces for its Indigenous inhabitants. This mobility contributed to Acilquq's adaptation to the restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Speaking further about the mobility of the Yup'ik populations in Anchorage, urban Moravian churches also move across the city to create their predominantly Yup'ik spaces. I argue that the churches in Anchorage play an important role in the reproduction of Yup'ik village life with traditional Yup'ik activities. It is therefore important to examine how the Church contributes to the creation of Indigenous spaces. Before the pandemic, the Yup'ik Moravian leaders conducted services and singspirations at the lobby and in other rooms of the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC). The First Moravian Church of Anchorage, a part of the Alaska Province of the Moravian Church, might be the least mobile one, as it continues to conduct services in the same building of the First Covenant Church. As for the Anchorage Moravian Church, a member church under the United International Moravian Ministry Group, it moved several times between 2018 and 2022, while I was conducting my fieldwork in collaboration with the church members. It rented several different Protestant church locations across the city temporarily. The church leaders and members

organized potlucks after regular and memorial services, sharing Native food and, occasionally, distributing goods. It also had a chaplain who came for patients' visits at ANMC.

The Covid-19 pandemic contributed to the church's mobility increase, as the leaders mastered their skills in conducting services online. As a result, Bishop Nicholson, the leader of the Anchorage Moravian Church started to conduct Bible Studies online from his office in Anchorage and from Dillingham, during the commercial fishing season. He also switched to a hybrid form of transmitting the word of God, encouraging offline gatherings but continuing to stream services online. The Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry, also consisting mostly of Yup'ik members, as well as the Gospel Music Ministry, met at ANMC before the pandemic, but then started convening meeting weekly on Zoom. As the church members often are connected by kinship relationships, they may meet for services in public areas, but they also create private Indigenous spaces, gathering, singing, sharing Native food, subsisting and steam-bathing together. The pandemic resulted in the creation of additional, online Indigenous spaces. In the case of the Moravian churches in Anchorage, because of their more direct and individual relationship with Jesus Christ, mobility is not an obstacle, as, if needed, the Church may also "pop-up" at a physical location or virtually.



Figure 26. The beginning of the Starring Celebration before the star visit to patients, ANMC, January 2019
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

The Russian Orthodox, urban Yupiit are less flexible in this respect, as the emphasis on the sacramental character does not allow to conduct services outside the Church. Nevertheless, the Starring celebration brings the Yup'ik Orthodox star to ANMC that visits the Indigenous patents.

Speaking further about main annual events in which Yup'ik participation contributes to the creation of Indigenous space in the city, several Yup'ik singing groups participate in the Native Musicale yearly. Native Musicale is an annual festival organized by Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship that occurs in late February or in early March during Anchorage's Annual Fur Rendezvous winter festival. This event draws Protestant Indigenous singing groups from across Alaska and from the city each night from Monday through Friday (Perea 2021). "Parka Parade" and selling and buying Indigenous crafts is also a part of the Native Musicale. I participated in the event in collaboration with the Native Outreach Ministry. Carrie Paton, the leader of the Ministry and of the singing group, Yugtun Aturtet, organizes annual singing practices at her house before the Musicale that include Native food sharing. Often the urban Yup'ik close and extended family members practice and perform at the Musicale, playing an important role in this annual meeting of the rural and urban. Many of the Yup'ik participants arrive to the Musicale after participating at or attending the Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market, another annual event occurring during the Anchorage Annual Fur Rendezvous winter festival that serves as one more platform of meeting of the village with the city. Yup'ik artists coming from Anchorage, Yukon Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay



Figure 27. Yup'ik dancing fans sold at the Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market by a Nunivak Island artist, March 2022 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

and other Yup’ik areas sell their crafts and trade materials with other artists and visitors, who are often relatives.

Several Indigenous events in Anchorage are also organized for Indigenous youth. For instance, Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) has been collaborating with Indigenous communities and organizations across the state to organize the Native Youth Olympic (NYO) Games (NYO Website[47], n.d.). The youth from the rural and urban Yup’ik communities travel to the city to compete in the games. Yup’ik urban entertainers and dance groups help to facilitate the event, while some urban Yup’ik adults attend it to meet their rural extended families and friends, as I observed on the first day of NYO 2022.

The month of October is rich in urban Indigenous events that transform the city into a number of Indigenous spaces that serve as points of attraction for the rural and urban Indigenous peoples. The Indigenous People’s Day observed on the second Monday of October in the United States is usually celebrated at the University of Alaska Anchorage and at the Alaska Pacific University with Indigenous dances, potlucks and discussions. Yup’ik leaders, dancers and artists always participate in this event. The Indigenous Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Annual Convention, including the First Alaskans Institute’s Elders & Youth Conference, is another example of the annual, urban events happening in October.



Figure 28. Yup’ik drums made by the Indigenous youth at a workshop
at the First Alaskans Institute’s Elders & Youth Conference, October, 2018
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

47 https://nyogames.com/about-nyo/. Last accessed January 23rd , 2024.

AFN is “the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska... with 209 federally recognized tribes, 185 village corporations, 10 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums” being its members that “contract and compact to run federal and state programs” (Alaska Federation of Natives Website[48] 2021). The annual AFN Convention is the main platform for “addressing critical issues of public policy and government” (Ibid.).

In addition, the Convention allows the Yupiit as well as other Indigenous participants to create Indigenous spaces in public areas and to reinforce connections with the villages, where delegates, artists and other participant meet, exchange and trade. Its craft fairs serve as a means of “adjusting to city life while maintaining their connection to their home villages and to the land and animals from which they obtain the raw materials for craft production” (Lee 2003, p. 584). For two evenings during the Convention, the Quyana dance event draws Yup’ik and other Indigenous dance groups and audiences from across the state. Thus, the transmission of Yup’ik traditional knowledge through dancing, singing and speaking occurs in Alaska Indigenous public places. The Yup’ik dancing class is also occasionally offered to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Urban Yup’ik people are not an exception to the same trend of Indigenous people being scattered across Anchorage. Depending on their financial situation, Yup’ik and other Alaska Indigenous populations live and create Indigenous private spaces in different parts of the city, in rented or owned apartments, trailers or houses. The Alaska Indigenous minority does not occupy any particular neighborhood in the city but it is dispersed among the non-Indigenous majority and other urban minorities’ housings. Some of my Yup’ik informants live in suburbs around Anchorage that allow them to find an intermediate place between the city and the village and sometimes to avoid the stress connected to living in a bigger city (Anonymous 5, personal communication, 2020).

48 https://www.nativefederation.org/about-afn/. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

In neighbor towns as well as in the city, there is a growing amount of Yup'ik housings that can be recognized by containing drying fish racks and private steam baths. The steam bath (or *maqivik* in the Yup'ik language) developed from fire baths that men enjoyed in communal houses, as a variation of the Russian *banya.* Steam houses were introduced in southwestern Alaska by Russian settlers in the 19th century the traditions of banyas in which water is poured over rocks to produce wet heat (Fienup-Riordan 2000). As in the village (Hensel 1996), *maqivik* preserves the function of a social institution and of an "identity marker", where invited Yup'ik and non-Yup'ik women, men, and families gather to enjoy the heat and socialize, predominantly, separated by gender. For Hensel, today's *maqivik* is a "replacement for the men's house" that involves both "hospitality and a test for endurance and cross-cousin joking" (p. 124). I disagree with Hensel that it is a predominantly "male space", as Yup'ik women married to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men have their steam baths built in both the village and the city. They regularly organize and invite their relatives and friends for steam baths both in the rural and in the urban areas. In the city and in the village I was invited to take steam baths with my female collaborators.



Figure 29. Maqivik in the Bristol Bay area
Cited and Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6j5fCdsRqIg

Maqivik was characterized by some of my female collaborators as a place that allows to "cleanse both physiologically and mentally", as it serves as a Yup'ik Indigenous space that may provide relief from stress and grief. Thus, the urban steam bath (as its analogue in the village) is a Yup'ik space that evolved from being a traditionally Yup'ik male social gathering place to being equally important for both genders, however, playing gender-specific roles beyond body cleansing. For Yup'ik women, it is a secure place that allows for a psychological relief, where they can share their stories with each other, as they do in the village. In rural areas, however, a steam bath still serves as a physiological necessity, as there are water outages that result in impossibilities to use modern bathrooms. In the urban environment, *maqivik* mainly performs its social function, allowing for the reproduction of village life and for the creation of secure Indigenous space. Not everyone, however, can afford building steam baths in the urban setting. Thus, alternatively, some Yup'ik females enjoy steam baths in urban athletic clubs. However, this space is public and therefore cannot be used as a secure place to "cleanse mentally" by sharing stories and intimate information.

The Extension of the Yup'ik Kin from the Village to the City

Most of the urban Yup'ik population I collaborated with have both their close and extended family members living in Anchorage. Not only do they remain connected with their family network in the urban areas, but village and urban Yup'ik family members keep strong ties through the oscillatory migration dynamics and seasonal, back-and-forth travel related to subsistence, commercial fishing, medical appointments, political and other activities. While the attachment to the ancestral lands remains a vital part of Yup'ik identity, the Yupiit continue to identify as the community members through "kinship and exchange relationships" (Fienup-Riordan 2000b, p.152).

Thus, to remain Yup’ik does not only mean to stay connected with Yup'ik lands, but also to maintain the extended family relationships both in the city and in the village. Lucy Spark, Joe Asuluk and Mark John (2018) have explained the importance of knowing Yup’ik kinship terms and relatives, even if they live far away (pp. 238-244). For instance, Mark John summarizes the importance of it as follows:

> “And even if our relative had moved to another village, or if we ourselves moved away from our relatives to another village, if we know we are related to them through the kinship system, we can turn to them in times of need, even if they live far away. Strong family ties strengthened the kinship naming system” (Mark John 2018, p. 244).

Thus, traditionally, the Yupiit were taught kinship terms and certain norms of behavior towards all the relatives no matter where they live. Consequently, those Yupiit who were taught to learn about their close and distant relatives in the village, are aware of their extended family members living in the city (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020). They continue to maintain traditional relationships with their close and extended family members. For instance, Yup’ik women continue to treat their sisters’ children as their own (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020). The sisters’ children often grow up together. They are called parallel cousins. However, the younger generation does not always know whom they are related to, thus, they may transgress the traditional norms and rules of behavior related to kinship relationships and date or marry their kin against the traditional norms (Stanley Anthony 2018, p. 236; Theresa John, personal communication, 2020). Nevertheless, most of my urban Yup’ik collaborators have at least some knowledge of the kinship terms and the norms connected to them. Often, when I was introduced to a Yup’ik person by their relative, I was given a kinship term this person was

associated with, as a reference. When I was introduced to a Yup'ik community, the members immediately tried to reconnect with me by looking for our possible ties through the Siberian Yupiit or Russians living on the other side of the Bering Strait. Thus, knowing one's kin remains a means of connection in the urban environment.

Another means of connection both to the Yup'ik homeland and to the Yup'ik relatives are the subsistence activities and the exchange of Native food. Speaking about the role of Native food in the Yup'ik community, Frank Andrew (2005) argued that "food helps to create family bonds", while "those who are continually ungrateful and stingy break family bonds" (p. 93). Food sharing is a natural activity for the Yupiit that helps to solidify the Yup'ik traditional values and kinship bonds. In the village access to some goods is possible today not only through the village store but also through online orders and shipments from Amazon. Nevertheless, fresh vegetables and poultry remain a luxury. Thus, there is a systematic exchange of food between the village and the city. Such goods as turkey or vegetables are exchanged for seal oil or other subsistence products that lack in the city (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2021).

The urban Yupiit who can afford to return to the village and to their fish camps in summer, subsist on their ancestral lands, often together with their kin, sharing fish, wild animals, berries and plants with their close and extended family both in the village and in the city. The extended family scattered across the village and the city participate in the process of subsistence and commercial fishing in different ways. For instance, the Yupiit in the village or in the city who have paid jobs and are not able to take enough time off for subsistence, may finance the hunters by paying for gas and spare parts (Mark John, 2018, p. 244). In return, they receive a share of the subsisted and processed food.

In her study of the political debate on subsistence and its impact on urban Yup'ik women, Molly Lee (2002) argued that their identity remained viable through a constant exchange with Native food sharing networks and through the possibility to return to their homeland to subsist, to process fish and game and to gather raw materials for their crafts. However, Lee also analyzed how gender roles predetermine the success of cultural mobility to the urban setting. "The urban woman's continuity with the past is asserted every time she flenses a seal on the laundry-room floor , or strips up a pot of basket dye on the kitchen stove" (Lee 2002, p.6). Thus, according to Lee, Yup'ik women's identity and traditional gender roles embedded into processing of food are relatively easily transferred to the urban areas, whereas Yup'ik men as hunters are more dependable on local, specific, place-based knowledge (Lee 2002). This is probably one of the reasons why Indigenous men experience higher rates of unemployment in the city and return back to the village more often (Goldsmith et al., 2005). Thus, Yup'ik male identity is likely to be less flexible in transitioning into the urban lifestyle.

Also, Voorhees (2010) fairly noted that despite the successful "portability of worldviews and practices" of Yup'ik women, they remain dependable on the close ties to the homeland (p.70). Accordingly, Fienup-Riordan (2000) has observed that "Yup'ik community members are painfully aware of the problems and contradiction of continuing to live off the land when this comes with a price tag that only those with a steady cash income can afford" (p.165). Not every Yup'ik living in the city can afford returning home regularly. Thus, the "viability" of the Yup'ik urban identity might be dependable on the financial ability to travel to the homeland (Voorhees 2010, p. 70). Nevertheless, some of my collaborators, who experience financial or health constraints and who are, thus, unable to return to the village on a regular basis, actively hunt, fish and gather berries in areas surrounding Anchorage. As more and more extended family members have been migrating to the city, they join each other for subsisting locally, which allows them to share and exchange Native

food with the families and other community members, thus, showing responsibility to their communities. Although the Yup'ik male hunters cannot fully apply the local traditional knowledge of the ancestral lands to the new environment, they might eventually adjust to it. Fishing, hunting, berry-picking skills can be used everywhere to survive (Jeffrey Kowchee[49], personal communication, 2022; Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). However, hunting activities are restricted in the areas close to Anchorage. Jeffrey Kowchee, an Inupiaq hunter and my collaborator, indicated that he was able to hunt moose in Ninilchik (around 300 kilometers from Anchorage) in summer 2021 only because his brother-in-law is a part of the local Native Corporation who owns the land. As for other subsistence activities, the Yup'ik extended family members go camping and fishing in Kenai and Homer and berry-picking in Eureka, the Arctic Valley, Talkeetna, and other places, where everyone has their 'secret spots' (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). I accompanied the Yup'ik female kin for fishing and berry-picking in Kenai, Eureka and Talkeetna and participated in the fish processing which is often a common kin activity in the city that re-creates the activities performed in the village. Fienup-Riordan (2000) argued in her book *Hunting Tradition in the Changing World* that "common language and blood relation rather than place of residence are the recognized criteria of membership in the larger Yup'ik community" (p.167). More than twenty years later, the kinship ties remain vital in reinforcing the collective Yup'ik identity in the urban setting, as the urban, Yup'ik extended family members are involved in the common, traditional activities, such as subsistence, processing, distributing and exchanging food.

In addition to subsisting together, the churches draw the extended family networks together, enabling them to gather for in-person and online services, singspirations, Native Musicale, celebrations and festivities. Also, the Yupiit gather for steam baths at homes and in athletic clubs, they attend the Alaska Federation of Natives convention and the Native Arts and Crafts bazaars

49 In his forties

together. The urban, extended family members and dancers also drum and dance together on a weekly basis. However, as the Yupiit are scattered across the city, their ability to re-create village life by performing traditional activities and creating the urban spaces together is restricted by transportation, as not everyone has a means of transportation enabling them to move across Anchorage. Accordingly, the Anchorage Moravian church and some other urban churches used to offer free rides to their Yup'ik and other parishioners, otherwise, without a car they are likely to become isolated in the city of Anchorage. At the same time, free rides that gather the Yup'ik kinship at the church are also a common practice in some Yup'ik villages, for instance, in the village of Manokotak, when the weather conditions are unfavorable and the distances considerable.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding high unemployment and high poverty rates, the urban Alaska Indigenous population, in general, and the urban Yupiit population, in particular, continue to grow. The urban Yup'ik population is the largest among the Indigenous populations in the city. The Yup'ik extended family members continue to maintain ties in the urban environment, although the younger generation is less knowledgeable about the kinship terms and relationships, as well as the responsibilities that these relationships dictate. The Yup'ik identity does not dissolve within the urban setting, as the Yupiit extend their traditional practices to the urban environment by shaping the city, according to their needs. Anchorage, "the largest Indigenous village in Alaska", exposes the Yupiit to the rich Alaska Indigenous diversity. As there is no permanent Yup'ik Indigenous space in the city, the Yupiit often create and share Indigenous spaces together with other Indigenous populations, so that village life continues to exist in the city (Bonnie Gregory[50], personal

50 In her fifties

communication, 2020).

More research is needed on the growing category of the Yupiit of mixed racial heritage stemming from intermarriages and boarding school experience. The contemporary Yupiit may identify as both belonging to one or more tribes and to a broader Alaska Native community. My research mostly concerns the Yupiit who identify as belonging only to one tribe and to a broader Alaska Native community. ANCSA and AFN contribute to the development of a broader Alaska Native identity in parallel with a unique tribal identity for both rural and urban Indigenous populations. Rural-to-urban migration does not translate into dissolving the Yup'ik identity in favor of the urban Alaska Indigenous identity. It contributes to the development of the complex, collective Yup'ik identity, that includes belonging to a particular tribe and to the broader urban Indigenous community.

Maintaining ties with the kinship and with the ancestral lands is necessary to sustain the sense of belonging to the Yup'ik community. Subsistence on the homeland, Native food distribution and exchange play a crucial role in strengthening the bond between the homeland and the rural and urban extended family. The Yupiit continue to circulate between the rural and urban areas, as they regularly return to the homeland for commercial fishing, subsistence and family visits. The affordability of the means to travel inside and outside the city of Anchorage and to the homeland is indispensable for maintaining the vitality of traditional practices. Hunting, fishing and berry-picking nearby the city of Anchorage might partially serve as a compensation for the inability to travel to and subsist on the ancestral lands. However, restrictions related to the land ownership limit subsistence possibilities in those areas.

The Yup'ik rural population also travels to the city for medical appointments, political,

religious and sportive events. These trips result in the strengthening of family ties, and in the distribution and exchange of Native food against other goods that are too expensive or impossible to get in the village. The Alaska Federation of Natives convention and Native Musicale are examples of annual Indigenous events that connect the rural to the urban. The Alaska Native Medical Center is the main Indigenous space where the rural and urban extended families meet, not only during visits, but also during Yup'ik dancing and Yup'ik church meetings. Churches remain one of the most permanent spaces for sharing Native food on the occasion of celebrations and memorial services, and, in general, for the strengthening of extended family bonds. Despite the flexibility and mobility of Yup'ik and other Indigenous public spaces in the city, and the existence of Yup'ik private spaces that reproduce the village lifestyle to a certain degree, there is a need for permanent, secular Indigenous spaces in the city.

CHAPTER V: THE YUPIIT AND THEIR RELIGIOUS STRATEGIES IN THE CITY

Beside being an ethnically diverse city, Anchorage is rich in religious communities that represent different religious denominations, with Christianity being “the predominant religion in Anchorage and throughout Alaska" (Boisclair 2008). I was told by an Orthodox priest and by a Moravian bishop that some migrating community members originally exposed to fewer Christian denominations in the village, engage in “the church hopping”, as they experience the religious diversity in the city. One of my collaborators described the process of his spiritual development in the city in the following way:

> “In Anchorage, when I first moved to Anchorage, I was ready for spiritual growth, I looked into the Lutheran church, Baptist church a couple of more times. [The] Lutheran [church] seemed a little rigid to me, [in the] Baptist, [there was] too much singing, from there I was like there are more religions then just Christianity. I met a rabbi, and a Muslim, and I was like, wow, this is really cool. I was looking at the multitude of different religions. God is in all of these religions, nobody owns God, that was really cool to have this epiphany, but I struggled as Christian Alaska Native and scientific” (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2020).

Although some of the Indigenous peoples may try to integrate new religious communities in Anchorage, many of them remain within the same religious denominations they used to be a part of in the villages that may serve as Indigenous spaces where they reproduce the village lifestyle often in collaboration with their extended family members. The Orthodox, Moravian and Catholic Yupiit attend the corresponding urban churches. I am going to discuss in this chapter in what ways the Yupiit living in the city of Anchorage stimulate their churches to remain a vehicle for keeping connected during and after rural-to-urban, oscillatory migration. I will also examine in what ways the religious practices they bring with them from the rural areas undergo changes or remain the same.

Urban Yup'ik Orthodox

To start with, the urban Yup'ik Orthodox attend the churches of the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska. The Diocese is a part of a self-governing church, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). Although OCA is historically connected with the Russian Orthodox missionaries and the Christianization of Alaska, it has also undergone dynamic changes, including the impact of "ethnic parishes" formed by the immigrants coming to the Lower 48 in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Orthodox Church in America Website[51] 2024; Stokoe & Kishkovsky 1995). Over the last twenty years, OCA has included two hundred twenty new "non-ethnic" parishes, while the majority of its parishes uses exclusively the English language in worship (Orthodox Church in America Website 2024). The Diocese of Sitka and Alaska remains unique in following the Julian calendar and in using Old Slavonic and Indigenous languages in worship to maintain the continuity with the

51 https://www.oca.org/history-archives/oca-history-intro. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.

Indigenous Orthodox traditions (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2022). However, its parishes also include and support immigrants for whom "religion is one of the important identity markers that helps them preserve individual self-awareness and cohesion in a group" (Williams 1988). In Alaska, especially, in Anchorage, Orthodox churches welcome Indigenous and non-Indigenous, immigrant parishioners and new converts who contribute to the interplay between immigration and migration processes, and cultural negotiation.

The Anchorage Deanery includes twelve parishes (Diocese of Sitka and Alaska Website[52], n.d.). Three parishes were operating in Anchorage before the Covid-19 pandemic: Saint Innocent Cathedral, Saint Tikhon of Moscow Orthodox Church and Saint Alexis parish. The latter did not have a permanent church building, so that the priest was allowed to conduct services on weekends at the building of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA). All three churches have different 'social profiles' appealing to different kinds of the Orthodox urban and rural (visiting) residents. Saint Tikhon of Moscow Church was founded in 2003. As the church members are predominantly non-Indigenous, I focused my observations on Saint Alexis parish and later on Saint Innocent Cathedral.

Saint Alexis parish was founded in 2002. With approximately 40 adult members and a Yup'ik priest (Very Reverend Father Jonah Andrew), Saint Alexis parish was considered as a "village church" in contrast to the larger Saint Innocent Cathedral. The parish was "predominantly Native" (Anthony Lekanof[53], personal communication, 2022); thus, the services were held not only in English but also in Unangam Tunuu (Aleut), Yup'ik and Slavonic. The 'pop-up' services were conducted on weekends at the APIA. APIA is a "federally recognized tribal organization" and a "non-profit corporation of the Aleut people in Alaska" (Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

52 https://odosa.org/orthodox-care-network. Last accessed, January 21st 2024.
53 In his twenties

Website[54] n.d.). The urban "Aleut" or Unangax̂ Orthodox, originally stemming from the Pribilof Islands, have been playing an important role in maintaining the Orthodox heritage in the city (Jekel 2018). For instance, [they] brought the beautiful Slavonic singing tradition [to Anchorage] from their home villages with the choir led by Iliodor Philemonof (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2022). Philemonof was Unangax̂, originally from Saint George island, a "graduate of the Saint Tikhon Seminary in South Canaan, PA" and an Unangam Tunuu teacher and translator at APIA (Alaska Daily News as cited in Jekel, 2018, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association n.d.). The APIA has been among the Native corporations to participate in the funding of the Diocese parishes (Jekel 2018, p. 128). It also helped the Saint Alexis parish and provided it with a room to conduct services on a weekly basis. As the room was used for other purposes during the week, all the attributes and icons necessary for services and sacramental rituals were kept in a small storage, taken out before and put away after the weekend services. As many rural parish buildings are known for their simple decor, the Saint Alexis parishes' "simplicity" attracted and reminded the urban Indigenous Orthodox of their home villages (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2022).



Figure 30. Saint Alexis Parish, APIA, Anchorage, Alaska, August 2017
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

54 https://www.apiai.org/about/ Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

The Yup’ik priest, the parish’s small size and the small number of parishioners also were the factors contributing to the creation of a “village church” atmosphere. It appealed to a part of the urban Indigenous population by reproducing an Indigenous village atmosphere in the big city, “stand[ing] somewhere between rural and urban…” (Huang 2014).

I started my fieldwork in the Anchorage Deanery in 2019 by attending Saint Alexis parish services, which allowed me to observe and contrast the role of a smaller “village parish” with the much larger Cathedral considered “a parish for all Alaska” in the urban context. At this period of time, the prevailing part of the Saint Alexis parish population regularly attending the services at APIA were Yup’ik. I was invited to sing in the parish choir. Later, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the services of the Saint Alexis were suspended and never resumed in the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association building. Since then, Father Jonah Andrew followed retired Father Peter Chris by taking his role as (Yup’ik) Orthodox chaplain at the Alaska Native Medical Center, while his parishioners gradually transferred to the Cathedral.



Figure 31. Saint Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, Alaska, January 2019
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Saint Innocent Cathedral was founded in 1967 as an Orthodox parish for the urban population as well as Orthodox visitors from rural Alaska and the Lower 48 (St. Innocent Russian Orthodox

Cathedral Website[55] 2023). The missionary priest, Father Nicholas Molodyko-Harris who founded the parish with the assistance of about forty members, had the following vision for its further development: “It will be much more than a local parish. It will be a church that embraces all of Alaska” (Jekel 2018, p. 24). Indeed, since 1967 the parish has expanded into a cathedral with approximately one thousand members, half of them being Indigenous. It has been gradually built with the significant financial help of Native corporations to become “a sort of crossroads to the community… and a constant bustle of people coming and going” (St. Innocent's Russian Orthodox Christian Cathedral 1999). In contrast to the smaller and simpler Saint Alexis parish with its appeal to the Orthodox parishioners as “the village church”, the Cathedral priests and local parishioners have to embrace diversity and “fluctuation”, as rural people continue to circulate back and forth for seasonal jobs, family reasons and medical appointments (Jekel 2018, p. 146). The parish population is diverse, including local parishioners of different backgrounds, including the descendants of the Russian settlers, immigrants and converts. The Orthodox, circulating between the village churches and the city Cathedral, are the representation of the overall, oscillatory migration pattern. The parish itself is also circulating between the city and the village, in a sense that some of the priests who are assigned to the Cathedral, pay regular visits to the rural parishes belonging to the Anchorage Deanery (Jekel 2018).

In 2022, seven priests were assigned and attached to the Cathedral, some of them regularly visiting the rural parishes (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2021). However, villages across Alaska also request and pay for the former Cathedral priests who are officially retired, to come to their parishes for holidays and funerals (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). Thus, there is a constant flow that occurs between the city parish and villages, between the urban and the rural parishioners. The fluctuating nature of the “transitional parish” makes it “difficult to minister as a priest” (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2021), as many parishioners come and go.

55 https://www.sicanc.org/. Last accessed January 26th, 2024.

> ...Coming and going… If some of those people come and go, come to the church, become big helpers, and suddenly you have this loss. Some people do not get involved because they know they are going to leave. Some of them are transients, they are not going to be there for a long period of time. (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

Finally, there is also a circulation of finance between the villages and "the parish for all Alaska". One the one hand, villages and Native corporations support the Cathedral:

> The Diocese does not help with the building. There would be some villages who faithfully tithed. And it's the percentage, it's ten percent, that's what they say. And some villages have a monthly check of 40 dollars, meaning that the parish had 400 dollars. It varies. A lot of time that is the families who have jobs. Some corporations. Some corporations have money in their budget every year for their parish (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

On the other hand, the Deanery also helps the villages in times of need. For instance, according to the Deanery Report of 2014, the Deanary sent food supplies to the village of Tyonek experiencing difficulties due to the nearby wildfires (Diocese of Sitka and Alaska Website[56], n.d.). Being an urban church and embracing diversity, the Cathedral also helps the diverse Anchorage community. For instance, it collects fresh fish from Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishers, and it

56 https://odosa.org/search?query=%202014%20Diocesan%20Assembly%3A%20Deanery%20Reports. Last accessed November 8th, 2021.

collaborates with other urban churches for its distribution, achieving both the Orthodox and Indigenous values of sharing food with the needy.

> "Fish got started, we felt like we get but do not give back, we felt like we were in such a survival mode even before Covid. ... took the youth to the Beans Coffee to help feed, volunteers trying to think how we can give back to the community. The fish thing came up during this time, we did not have the capacity to organize a food bank, but we collect and the Episcopal church come and pick it up for the donation site. We ask people to donate, one of the parishioners, when he gets full, he comes and drops it off. Kind of our way to help" (Matushka Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

The idea of the fish donations also originated from the Parish Council that consists of eight-nine parishioners that meet once a month and collaborate with the parish priest (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2021; Ibid.). The Parish Council has a board of directors and trustees. It is "a voice of parishioners [that are] being elected every couple of years (Anthony Lekanof, personal communication, 2022). The Parish priest and the Council also partner with the Sisterhood. The Cathedral Sisterhood is distinct from other OCA's Sisterhoods in the sense that they have their own budget, being "a quasi organization within the structure" (Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2021).

Very Reverend Daniel Charles, the Dean of Saint Innocent Cathedral in Anchorage is Yup'ik. In addition, he serves as the current Chancellor of the Diocese, representing "a bridge between Bishop and the priests", the majority of whom (approximately 80 %) are Yup'ik

(Anonymous 7, personal communication, 2021). Nevertheless, the tendency of the Yup'ik Orthodox priests to dominate both the rural and the urban Indigenous Orthodox landscapes has been a relatively recent phenomenon. When the non-Indigenous priest Nicholas Molodyko-Harris came to Anchorage to found a Russian Orthodox parish, the largest Indigenous population that prevailed among the parishioners and the church choir were Unangan from the Pribilof Islands, while the assistant priest was Indigenous from the village of Chenega in Prince William Sound (Alaska Daily News as cited in Jekel, 2018). While the parish has been evolving, Iliodor Philemonof, the Unangax̂ choir director, served at the Cathedral from 1968 to 1980 (Jekel 2018), maintaining the Unangax̂ Orthodox singing tradition in the choir.

Diversity in the urban Orthodox Indigenous leadership started to manifest and expand in the 1970s with the first Yup'ik priests' families coming to Anchorage from rural Alaska (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2022). According to Father Nicholas Molodyko-Harris (2018), Father Peter Chris came to Anchorage from the Yup'ik hub, Bethel, as the hospital patients were in need of an Indigenous, and, in particular, of a Yup'ik priest (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

> "Anchorage was and is the hub of Alaska which meant that virtually every Orthodox Native person at some time would have to come to Anchorage for one thing or another, and that was most often for medical care" (Father Nicholas Molodyko-Harris 2018, p.28).

The Yup'ik Orthodox tradition plays a very significant role in the city, with the Yup'ik Dean of the Cathedral, the Yup'ik chaplain at the Native hospital serving the rural and urban patients, and

the Yup'ik priest in charge of the celebration of Starring, one of the most important, annual events for the Indigenous Orthodox.

While the male clergy is mainly in charge of the parish's liturgical life, the female role is to care for the parish (Oleksa 1992). The Sisterhood played a key role in the parish construction. It was active and successful in fundraising for building the parish. "Without the sisterhood, the church wouldn't be where it is today" (Molodyko-Harris 2018, p. 130). Since the parish foundation, the Sisterhood consists of *matushkas* (priests' wives) and female parishioners, many of them being the parish female leaders and the wives of the Indigenous priests or being Indigenous themselves. Altogether, they accomplish their traditional goals of fundraising and caring for the Cathedral (Jekel 2018, p. 130). Some of the parish female leaders are in charge of regular cooking, baking and providing Native food for raising funds, while others clean the parish and sing in the choir.

> "There is nowhere in the Lower 48, there is no coffee hour like ours. During the coffee hour, they may have a donation basket, but it is all free. That's usually what is seen in the church. That is something unique to the Cathedral, that we raise funds to support the church weekly. During Covid we tried to do some modified bake sales, because the house Father Daniel lives in, we purchased that probably six years ago, so we are paying the mortgage on that. The Old Rectory house, the caretaker of the Cathedral lives there, that was the very first parish house nearby the Cathedral, who does a lot of things around the church and keeps an eye on it, but the house needs a lot of repairing. The Sisterhood is really the backbone of the Cathedral for a lot of things, not only for the fundraising, they also do the cleaning, preparing for the holidays, they really are the backbone

of what happens in the Cathedral in that sense" (Matushka Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

Hence, *matushkas* (an affectionate name for 'mother' in Russian) and other female parishioners fulfill the Orthodox female role of caring for their nuclear families and for the church community as a family, that is similar to the traditional gender role of the Yup'ik women caring for the men and children, but also for the Elders and the community, in general. "The Sisterhood is family-oriented (Anthony Lekanof, personal communication, 2022). As Moshe Zorea (1999) argued, while describing the role of the first parish *matushka* Anastasia Molodyko-Harris, who, together with the future Cathedral female leaders set the tone for the Sisterhood: "when Father has been on his journeys, Matushka has truly been 'a little mother' to the church community". "Like I look at Matushka Anastasia, she used to be a strong leader teaching the young women how to do things. Through cooking and tradition, getting them involved… That was one of the things we were taught at the Seminary: as a Matushka you need to lead the women and be a role model to get the women involved to help care for the church" (Matushka Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). The same duties and dedication to a parish community are reflected in the story of Matushka Olga Michael, a Yup'ik priest's wife, who is expected to be canonized by the Orthodox Church of America and who serves as a representation of the female Yup'ik Orthodox gender role expectations.

Today's female church leadership continues to dedicate their free time to care for the parish. In addition, however, the Orthodox female leaders at the Cathedral have an important task of seeking regular, significant fundraising that enables its existence and maintenance. As there is a shift in the traditional gender roles in the Yup'ik and Orthodox societies, the Yup'ik and other Orthodox women may become family providers, fishers and hunters in the village and in the city.

The Sisterhood leaders, in addition to providing for the family at work, ensure the financial stability of the parish. It engages “a group of male volunteers helping them” (Anthony Lekanof, personal communication, 2022) as well as their family members with cleaning, cooking and caring for the church before, during and after services. The occurring shift in gender roles is reflected symbolically in the changing rules inside the church building, where the spatial gender separation among the parishioners is not respected and followed any longer, as it used to be in the Alaskan villages in the past. Nevertheless, the continuity with the original spatial separation of the genders is maintained through the prohibition of women (including the Sisterhood caring for the church) to enter the sanctuary.

The family-orientation and traditional role of “mothers” that the Sisterhood fulfills, contribute to a better adjustment of the rural inhabitants migrating to Anchorage and/or transitioning between the village and the city.

> “The home of Father Nicholas and Matushka Anastasia and their five children is a haven for those encountering the problems of adjusting to city life for the first time when they arrive from villages in the bush” (Jekel 2018 p. xiii).

Migration to the city from the village cannot be fully compared to immigration from another country, especially, in case of the Yupiit and other Indigenous populations, some of them having a possibility to maintain their ties with the kin and with the land by regularly crossing back and forth. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the city, the usual scatteredness of the urban Indigenous inhabitants, the occasional lack of transportation and of Native food require adjustment and effort to “maintain self-identity while simultaneously acquiring community acceptance” (Williams 1988, p.29). In this

sense, “the Anchorage parish was [and remains] a stabilizing presence, especially for young people from rural areas who found themselves “lost” in the city” (Jekel 2018, p. 107). Today, the Cathedral also supports the newly migrating and circulating Indigenous Orthodox in adjusting to the city lifestyle with the Yup’ik priests and *matushkas* serving in the parish that itself becomes a vehicle to maintain ties with the village through reproducing some of the aspects of their village lifestyle in the city.

Despite the active role of the Yup’ik and other Indigenous parishioners, the Cathedral continues to embrace diversity, for instance, in maintaining the singing traditions that different Indigenous and non-Indigenous parishioners have been bringing to the church. But it also provides the homogeneity of the sacramental rituals that remain uniform in both the village and the city in Alaska as well as in all the other cities and villages around the world. At the same time, currently, the Yup’ik clergy and parishioners play an important role in contributing their village traditions to the urban Orthodox ‘melting pot’. Thus, the Yup’ik parishioners also have a possibility to reconnect with the village by attending the Cathedral services on a regular basis. As discussed earlier, Very Reverend Daniel Charles, Dean of Saint Innocent Cathedral in Anchorage and Chancellor of the Diocese is Yup’ik. Until the cancellation of the Orthodox services of Saint Alexis “village church” at APIA, Father Jonah Andrew, originally from the Yup’ik village of Kwethluk, was its priest. His presence at the Native hospital as the Orthodox chaplain contributes to a better adjustment of the hospital patients, especially of those who need to stay there for longer periods of time. The Cathedral includes both the Yup’ik choir members who sing some of the hymns in Yup’ik on a regular basis, and the Yup’ik male and female parishioners who volunteer their time for church maintenance.

All the Cathedral collaborators I interviewed emphasized the kinship bonds between the current Yup'ik priests and the parishioners, although this tendency is also observed among other Indigenous Orthodox being a part of the church. As Anthony Lekanof, an Unangax̂ Orthodox reader (2022) put it, "the church equals the extended family". "Everyone knows everyone in the priest community, all are related" (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2022).

> "It is discovered, you never spoke with this person, but you say my dad is so and so and even before you know they are cousins, right? A lot of them are related, when the family is in the church, they all kind of live that way, they are active when their fathers are old" (Matushka Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

While attending the services at the Cathedral and the Starring celebrations, I also observed regular situations, when the Yup'ik priests greeted their extended family members, the Yup'ik parishioners hugged their cousins coming for a visit, and the Yup'ik extended families sat and ate together at the Sisterhood bake sales in the Cathedral basement after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday and during the Starring celebration in the city. Hence, despite the Cathedral's necessity to embrace the diverse populations with different backgrounds, the Indigenous parishioners have numerous kinship bonds with each other and with the clergy that reconnect them simultaneously with both the Cathedral and thus urban life, as well as the village church and rural lifestyle. Today's Yup'ik youth does not necessarily master the Yup'ik kinship terms and, consequently, they may not always be aware of all the extended family members living in the villages and in Anchorage (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020), while the older parishioners continue to recognize and introduce their relatives to the others by using the appropriate kinship terms. Thus, the kinship relationships

are being expanded into an enlarged Indigenous space that is created in the culturally diverse Cathedral.

In which ways has migration to the city enabled the expansion of the Yup'ik and other Indigenous extended families' social practices? Historically, the Orthodox priests struggled to cover all the villages assigned to them due to the harsh climate conditions and the vast territories to travel through. Thus, the parish leaders who care for the church buildings have often been village chiefs or Elders, who, together with their families, guaranteed the church maintenance and care in priests' absence. They often have had extended families in the neighboring villages who did the same. Their descendants were more likely to embrace Orthodox traditions and to become mew church leaders and priests.

> "I think it's the leaders of you know and may be certain Yupik families are stronger leaders than the others, I think that the Yup'ik people are really humble, they are not very boastful, quiet, they do not put themselves out there" (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

Some of the Yup'ik extended family members who decide to dedicate themselves to the church may study together at the Saint Herman Seminary in Kodiak. They may migrate to the city, thus, finding other relatives in the Church. There exists a flow between the migrating kinship and the Church, as the Cathedral 'travels' to the Yup'ik and other Indigenous extended family members by paying visits to the rural patients of the Alaska Medical Native Center. In 1953, the Anchorage Medical Center of the Alaska Native Service opened in Anchorage. It was built as a response to a tuberculosis epidemic that had hit the villages of rural Alaska (Alaska Native Medical Center[57]

57 https://anmc.org/history/. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

Website 2024). The creation of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, a non-profit tribal health organization in 1998 which supervises the Alaska Native Medical Center today, resulted in the further evolution of the hospital and health services for the Indigenous population, including the Quyana Hospitality Services which facilitate the travel and accommodation of Indigenous patients during their stay in Anchorage (Alaska Native Medical Center Website 2024). The services enable long-term stays in the city, contributing to the development of the oscillatory and semi-permanent migration process. Already in the 1970s, the expansion of the services for the rural inhabitants resulted in the creation of the hospital, one of the largest Indigenous spaces in the city that included a significant number of Indigenous Orthodox patients.

> "I had visited hospitals in Pottstown and Baltimore where we would have maybe one patient in this hospital and another in that, but it was never as it was in Anchorage, where there were often sixty-five to seventy-five Orthodox patients in one hospital at one time" (Father Nicholas Molodyko-Harris 2018, p.24).

Health-related issues have been one of the reasons for the back-and-forth transitions of the rural, Indigenous populations, for short-term, long-term, temporary and permanent stays in the city. Equally, it has contributed to the overall pattern of the oscillatory migration of the Yupiit and other Indigenous populations and to an increased need to maintain social connections with the kinship through the reproduction of traditional village activities, including attendance of the Orthodox Church and participation in the urban Orthodox sacramental celebrations. Saint Innocent parish plays its role in sustaining the connection with the village by paying visits to the hospital patients. Planned and urgent visits of the patients became the routine for Father Nicholas Molodyko-Harris who was the first Orthodox hospital chaplain (Jekel 2018).



Figure 32. A parking lot at the ANMC that demostrates to its visitors the importance of Indigenous traditional values, Anchorage, May 2022
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Consequently, there was a growing need for an Indigenous, and, in particular, for a Yup’ik chaplain at the hospital, as “Elders were scared of the English language in the hospital, so a Yup’ik priest could be more comforting” (Matushka Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). As described above, the continuity between the Native hospital patients and the city is viable due to the tradition of the Yup’ik chaplaincy. For a number of years and before the Covid-19 pandemic, the hospital used to be one of the first Indigenous spaces in the city that hosted the Orthodox Christmas star, traveling from Saint Innocent Cathedral to hospital patients during Selaviq, or Starring, which is the most important annual, Yup'ik Orthodox rural and urban celebrations. I am going to analyze Starring and its role in the extension of the Yup’ik identity to urban spaces before and during the Covid-19 pandemic later in this chapter.

For the time being, though, I would like to briefly discuss in what ways the Orthodox Indigenous spaces developed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To start with, the pandemic transformed Indigenous spaces in the city and partially disrupted the bonds maintained through gathering. The Alaska Native Medical Center was closed for visits, Yup'ik dance practices, celebrations and religious services. The services of the "Orthodox village church" (Saint Alexis parish) were permanently suspended at APIA, while Saint Innocent Cathedral had restrictions on the number of service attendees and choir members. The Cathedral switched to broadcasting its services over Facebook, and confessions over the telephone were offered to parishioners upon request (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2021; Father Thomas Tikhonoff-Andrew[58], personal communication, 2021). The celebration of Starring was also transferred to the exterior of the Cathedral; some private singing and gift distribution were spontaneously organized by the Yup'ik parishioners. Both the Cathedral and private singing during the Starring celebration period were often individually broadcast over cell phones. Hence the service and celebration broadcasting over social media served as a means to uphold continuity. The broadcasting also allowed a broader community to participate, as even some non-Orthodox started to join the services online (Father Thomas Tikhonoff-Andrew, personal communication, 2021). This positive change, however, occurred at the expense of the detrimental impact of the pandemic on sustaining the connections to kin and the homeland through practicing village activities in the city, as the main public Indigenous spaces were unavailable for use.

To summarize the role of the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska in general, and of its city churches, in particular, they offer their Indigenous parishioners support in both transitioning between the village and the city and sustaining their identity. Similarly to what Huang (2014) discovered during his ethnographic work in the urban, migrant churches in China, both the continuity and the

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discontinuity with the villages can be observed in the Orthodox parishes in Anchorage. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska offered an alternative for the Indigenous population to attend a simple “village church” at APIA with the Yup’ik priest in charge or the larger, heterogeneous Saint Innocent Cathedral. Although the Cathedral includes parishioners with various backgrounds, the Indigenous population along with the Native corporations has been playing key roles in the parishes’ building and maintenance. Today, the Yup’ik priests play an important role in the urban Orthodox landscape, expanding Orthodox influence to the Alaska Native Medical Center with its rural, Yup’ik and other Indigenous Orthodox patients and visitors. Continuity is maintained through regular church gatherings, celebrations and sharing of different kinds of food, including Native food. The Yup’ik clergy and parishioners are often related. Upholding kinship ties is an indispensable step in the identity reconceptualization and adjustment to city life. The continuous flow of rural patients to the Alaska Native Medical hospital and visits by the Yup'ik chaplain and extended family members contribute to perpetuating the dialogue between the village and the city. Hence, despite being very heterogeneous in nature, the “parish for all Alaska” can also be defined as an Indigenous space where the Yup’ik and other Indigenous Orthodox traditions from the village are being transformed and transmitted beyond geographical boundaries. At the same time, the role of the Church in sustaining the traditional lifestyle, social, and, especially, kinship ties remains limited, as the pace of the urban lifestyle, the scatteredness of the Indigenous population, the restrictions related to transportation, and the necessity to share the space and to negotiate with the diverse Orthodox populations interferes with the possibilities of the Yup’ik and other Indigenous Orthodox populations to exercise practices reconnecting them to their kin and ancestral lands. Having analyzed the role the Yup’ik Orthodox play in the urban, Orthodox landscape, I am going to proceed now to examine the ways and strategies the Yup’ik Moravians use in order to reproduce their village lifestyle in the city of Anchorage.

Urban Yup'ik Moravians

As described in the previous chapters, the Moravians settled in the Yup'ik region at the end of the nineteenth century. By 1985, the Alaska Moravian Province emerged, becoming the first Yup'ik and Indigenous-led church in the United States (Henkelmann & Vitt 1985). With the out-migration of the Yup'ik village population to Anchorage, the urban church was founded by the Alaska Moravian Province in 2001 (Nicholson 2018, p. 34). Since 2001, the Yup'ik Moravian heritage continues to spread across Anchorage.

When I decided to initiate a conversation with a Yup'ik Moravian Church in Anchorage, I was at first confused at different addresses the Moravian churches had. Eventually, I realized that the Moravian Yupiit in the city split into several churches and fellowships. I started to attend the Anchorage Moravian Church (AncMC) that is independent from the Alaska Moravian Province but is also predominantly Yup'ik. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, I have also been collaborating with the Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry (formerly Anchorage Moravian Fellowship) that formed as a result of a split from the AncMC. The First Moravian Church of Anchorage is the one that is a part of the Alaska Moravian Province. The main reasons for the split were different views of the church leaderships on the topic of homosexual clergy and on the use of practices, such as "raising hands, laying of hands on the sick and… anointing oil" in the Church (Nicholson 2018, p. 54). Despite the different perspectives, all three churches share the same Yup'ik Moravian heritage stemming from the Yup'ik region.

The AncMC is a part of the UIMM (United International Moravian Ministry) Group that emerged in 2012 and which includes churches in Alaska, America, Africa and Honduras (United

International Moravian Ministry Pamphlet 2020, United International Moravian Ministry Website[59] 2023). In the Yup'ik region, it covers both the Yukon-Kuskokwim and the Bristol Bay areas, similarly to the Alaska Moravian Province with the First Moravian Church of Anchorage. Thus, in comparison to the other Indigenous churches that expanded from the village to the city, following the direction of Indigenous migration, the AncMC was founded in the city to expand back to the village, to serve as a reminder of the oscillatory nature of the Yup'ik migration. Bishop William Nicholson of the AncMC is the former Yup'ik bishop of the Alaska Moravian Province and former pastor of the church in the city that is a part of the Alaska Moravian Province and which eventually transformed into the First Moravian Church of Anchorage in 2012 (Nicholson 2018).

The number of church members has been fifty to seventy-five over the last three years decreasing from one hundred fifty to one hundred seventy previously (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). The church contains mostly Yup'ik and other Indigenous members (Inupaiq, Athabascan, Tlingit, Unangax̂), but, as the church is situated in Anchorage, and, according to Bishop Nicholson, it is "inclusive" and open to everyone (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022), there are a few non-Indigenous members and visitors attending services and evening singspirations.

59 https://alaskamoravian.com/about/. Last accessed January 27th, 2024.



Figure 33. Anchorage Moravian Church service at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Anchorage, September 2019 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Singspirations are song services "featuring the group singing of hymns conducted especially by revivalistic churches and often followed by a sermon" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary Website[60] n.d.). Thus, the AncMC calls its evening services singspirations underlying its pentecostal or revival feature. Concerning the financing of the church, as it is the case with the urban Russian Orthodox Church, village Native corporations "help with donations" along with the members' "donations, tithing and property lease" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). This fact demonstrates the strong tie with the village that enables the urban church's existence. In its turn, the AncMC expands back into the Yup'ik villages, creating an alternative to the 'traditional Moravian church'.

As a city church and part of the UIMM, AncMC "love[s] networking with other religious groups and pastors… and networking internationally" meaning that speakers from other groups are invited as speakers to church services that take place in larger Protestant church buildings, if needed (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). Thus, if compared to the Yup'ik

60 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/singspiration. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.

Orthodox in the city, the Yup'ik Moravians are also exposed to urban diversity. However, they are predominantly surrounded by other urban Indigenous minorities, while the Yup'ik Orthodox co-exist with a much more significant number of non-Indigenous Orthodox community members. As the AncMC is mainly Yup'ik, the Yup'ik church members enjoy a similar feeling of being the majority in their predominantly Indigenous space in the city, as compared to their past experience in the villages.

Nevertheless, the city also imposes new rules to follow, in particular the necessity to embrace more diversity in the church. In addition, it erases borders within the common religious space of the urban Protestant churches, when speakers from other religious groups participate in the church events, or the Moravian church itself travels across the city to organize special singspirations. Moreover, one of UIMM's foci is Indigenous Peoples in America, adding another layer of heterogeneity to the development of the AncMC.

What are the features that allow to demonstrate that AncMC is a Yup'ik-led, "Moravian heritage church"? Besides 'the intimate relationship with Jesus Christ', as one of the basic Moravian principles, the church has a structure typical for a Moravian church:

> "A typical church has a pastor, Elders for the spiritual oversight of the congregation, trustees for the church budget and the secular [questions]. The schedule is the same around the world: the 2pm [service] is traditional, a Bible School, a Sunday School… We follow the Moravian text, the church maps out yearly, we will celebrate Advent and Christmas, forty days of Lent observance, Easter sunrise on the grave site, and the Lovefeast service" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022).

The AncMC preserves the Moravian church structure stemming from the Yup'ik village churches. Elders and trustees, who are chosen by vote on a regular basis, take care of the church, including when the pastor is absent. Elders also take the responsibility to assure the speakers for the services, while trustees are in charge of the building. During services, pamphlets are handed out describing the church leadership, vision, mission and service order. They also announce the community members (including those from the villages) that need to be prayed for. In contrast to the Russian Orthodox church, where the majority of the urban parishioners arrive before or at the beginning of the service, as the order of the sacramental rituals needs to be observed, the members of the AncMC are more flexible in when they attend or leave an evening singspiration. The singspirations also also allow for flexibility as far as preaching and sharing a story about the Yup'ik life in the city or in the village. Besides story-telling, shared requests for collective prayer in view of healing are not uncommon in the Indigenous, Protestant space inside the city with the dominant non-Indigenous population. The communal sharing of life experience, praying and singing together are ways to reproduce the village lifestyle, at least, to some extent. As an Inupiaq interviewee in Hanson (2015) put it:

> "I think that there's an understanding of the gospel that's real Traditional. I don't know if we'd call it a Native practice, but it's a way of living out the gospel in a way that's very compatible with out culture, you know – caring for the needs of people, reaching out to those who are in grief and offering comfort. In a way that's very Traditional. Sharing in a lot of ways. In that sense, I would say that those practices are still ongoing. Certain things are just real important for Native people and I think that they live them out, you know, or try to" (Hanson 2015, p. 296).

Testimonies may involve topics related to village life, for instance, subsistence (Anonymous 1[61], personal communication, 2019). Dreams and their significance may also be spoken about by the Yupiit Christians both in the Protestant and in the Russian Orthodox Church (Anonymous 1, personal communication, 2019; Nicholson 2018, p. 30) "Yup'ik people very much interpret dreams. I have a Yup'ik trying to withdraw from alcohol, the dreams you hear of. Father talks a lot about people having certain dreams and what that means" (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2018). Similarly to the *qasgiq* that was a space for story-telling, the churches became spaces where rural and urban life experiences, food and gifts are shared.

Once a year, all the members of the church leadership meet together (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). As the Bishop and pastors in the AncMC do not have salaries, the Bishop is absent in summer. He goes back to his ancestral lands for commercial fishing. His summer activity is more typical for the Yup'ik Moravian pastors "in the 70s and 80s", as today the pastors in the villages often "work for village corporations, for the State of Alaska.., or as carpenters" to earn their living (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). Typically for a Moravian church and in contrast to the Russian Orthodox Church, the AncMC has both female and male lay pastors. "The pulpits are open for every gender" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). The female pastors' role does not differ from the male one, and it includes preaching and missionary trips. One of the main differences between the 'traditional' rural Moravian church (Alaska Moravian Province) and the AncMC is that the latter uses some 'Pentecostal' elements that the "traditional" Moravian Church in the Yup'ik region opposes: "raising hands, laying hands on the sick and anointing with oil" (Nicholson 2018). Thus, AncMC offers its members a less conservative version of a church stemming from the Moravian heritage.

61 In their sixties

As the Russian Orthodox Church offered the Yup'ik and other Indigenous parishioners a "village church" alternative in the city before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Big Lake Moravian Church with a Yup'ik pastor may be considered as a reproduction of "a village church" situated in a suburb of the city. Located around an hour away from Anchorage, the services of the Big Lake Moravian Church take place on Saturdays in the Yup'ik pastor's house, accompanied by Native food sharing. The pastor also regularly attends and leads the services in the Anchorage Moravian church on Fridays and Sundays; his family actively participates in the life of the church.



Figure 34. Anchorage Moravian Church (AncMC), photo retrieved from the United Ministry Group & Friends Facebook page with the permission of Bishop William Nicholson, July 2023 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Speaking about potlucks in the AncMC, they play a very important role in the church routine. The devoted members of the church subsist in summer (fishing, moose hunting, berry-picking) in order to cook and to distribute Native food with the Yup'ik and other Indigenous church members later in the year. Native food distribution is an indispensable part of the Yup'ik community life and social organization. The practice of extended to Anchorage in parallel with the migrating

community members. Lack of Native food is one of the difficulties that the urban, Indigenous inhabitants face in the urban setting (Lisa Jenkins[62], personal communication, 2019). AncMC remains one of the few Indigenous, urban spaces where the members and visitors can socialize, while sharing Native food and reproducing the village lifestyle all together.



Figure 35. Native food at one of the AncMC potlucks, Anchorage, October 2021
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Another important occasion that involves food and sometimes gift distribution is a potluck after a memorial service. The Celebrations of Life and funeral services gather the Yup'ik population scattered across the city. I participated in several of them, and especially one memorial service, where some goods were distributed, reminded me of the Selaviq, or Yup'ik Orthodox Starring event. Significant amounts of Native food and gifts were shared among the participants. As described above in this chapter, Selaviq gradually substituted the Yup'ik Bladder Festival and the Feast of the Dead, when the Russian Orthodox missionaries settled in the Yup'ik region. The Yupiit did not passively accept the Russian Orthodox celebration. I contend that they rather included and

62 In her teenage years

appropriated the Russian Orthodox elements into the already existing beliefs and rituals, for instance, into the food and gift distribution that were among the main traditional elements that accompanied the winter celebrations. Although the Moravians did not offer the Yupiit an alternative similar to the Selaviq celebration, the food and gift distribution remain important in the Moravian memorial feasts. Besides, as described above, the urban Yup'ik Moravians are also active participants of the Starring celebrated in the city by their Orthodox, extended family members and friends.

Sharing, in general, is a value that the Yupiit continue to appreciate in their relationships with each other. Sharing is considered as a prerequisite for future success in subsisting. I learned from my conversations with the urban Yupiit that this value is encouraged in the urban setting. The urban Yupiit receive subsistence food shared with them by their rural relatives; they may also exchange Native food in the city, depending on their needs (Bonnie Gregory, personal communication, 2020; Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2021). Thus, the process of Native food sharing has been transmitted to the city, including the church. It serves as another means to connect to the traditional lands (Voorhees 2010).

Native food sharing also exists as the connection between the extended family members within the church. The former AncMC leadership consisted of the kin from the same extended family. There are cousins, aunts and uncles among the church members. The extended family members gather on different occasions, including steam baths, birthday celebrations but also in cases, when a church member needs support. For the Indigenous peoples, life in the urban setting involves both advantages and challenges, including alienation due to the scatteredness across the city. Thus, the city church remains an anchor that attracts both the urban and the visiting rural

Yupiit. The extended family members from the rural areas attend the church on the occasion of their trips to the city, and their testimonies are still relevant to urban Yupiit.

Similarly to the urban Russian Orthodox Church, the AncMC maintains connections with the village through the chaplaincy at the Alaska Native Medical Center. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, Bishop Nicholson "served as a recognized hospital chaplain, went through the ANMC orientation and became a hospital volunteer chaplain"… as "people were coming from villages and asked for help, so [there were] regular visits in the [hospital's] cafeteria, mingling with people, with the family going to the cafeteria together" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). To some extent, the Covid-19 pandemic damaged the ties that were maintained through the hospital visits and contributed to the alienation of the urban Yupiit in the city, as "[since the pandemic, it had been only possible to visit] more seriously ill people" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). But the AncMC also contributed to the transformation of urban Indigenous spaces by starting to broadcast the services and the Bible Studies, enabling even the members, not physically present in Anchorage, to participate. Bishop Nicholson also started to broadcast services from the place of his commercial fishing in summer, thus, exceptionally allowing for the church members to watch the services online during the subsistence and commercial fishing season. Even though the Covid-19 pandemic interfered with the process of the connection maintenance between some of the rural and urban Yup'ik extended family members through meetings at the hospital, the Yup'ik Moravians expanded their virtual space through social media. As discussed in Chapter IV, in comparison to the urban Russian Orthodox church that needs to perform the sacramental rituals in the church building, the AncMC is more mobile, hence, singspirations and Bible Studies can easily be organized online. Despite the loss of some members due to the pandemic, the AncMC

“gained in variety”, as broadcasting allowed for a broader audience to attend the online services (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022).

In 2020, I also started to attend the services of and collaborated with the Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry (formerly Anchorage Moravian Fellowship). This ministry formed in 2017 out of some former members of the AncMC under the name of Hospital Outreach Ministry (Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry Meeting Agenda 2022). The Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) offered their space to the ministry before the Covid-19 pandemic, when the hospital closed in-hospital gatherings (Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry Meeting Agenda 2022). Since 2020, the ministry has been meeting over Zoom. Again, the mobility of the Protestant group enabled it to switch to the online format relatively easily. Switching to the Zoom format for the Sunday meetings during the pandemic opened access to the rural family members to attend them. Thus, the virtual space became a new means of connection for the rural and the urban Yup’ik family members of the ministry.

There are approximately twenty members in the ministry. The majority are Yup’ik females related to each other. Most of the members “have a Moravian background” (Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry Meeting Agenda 2022). The ministry meets every Sunday afternoon, and every evening before Easter. Although in-person meetings have resumed, the Sunday meetings over Zoom continue to be led in turns by the lay pastors of the ministry. Some members occasionally attend other Moravian church services in the city. Guest speakers (both female and male) are sometimes invited to the ministry, for instance, to lead a communion service. The ministry follows and uses for its meetings the Moravian Daily Texts that started to be composed in the 18th century in Germany and that are being printed out and used by the Moravians worldwide (Moravian Daily Texts 2022).

Along with the texts, hymns, sermons, testimonies and prayers are shared during the Sunday meetings. Thus, the ministry maintains a typical Moravian structure. At the meetings, Bible verses may be read out loud in Yup'ik. In the 1950s, Rev. Ferdinand Drebert translated the New Testament into the Yup'ik language (Drebert 1959), which continues to be used by the Yup'ik Moravians in Alaska. The ministry members like to read the translated New Testament verses, when Elders attend the Zoom services. At a certain point, an assigned member starts to gather prayer requests. This is the point where the news on the rural family members either being in the villages or in the Native hospital in Anchorage are shared. Hence, the virtual Indigenous space created during the Sunday meetings becomes both a virtual place of prayer and of connection between the village and the city.

What is unique about this ministry is its project *Yup'igcetun Mumigtat Yuarutet Nanrautet-llu* (which translates as Yu'pik Songs and Praise). Since 2016, Carrie Paton, a ministry leader, has been collaborating with a song editor to translate Yup'ik church hymns and "put [them] onto musical notes" (Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry Meeting Agenda 2022). I am going to discuss the role of the "Cup'ifying and Yup'ifying gospel", its impact on the Alaskan Christian landscape and on self-determination of the Yup'ik Protestants later in this chapter (Perea 2018). Nevertheless, it is important to note here that not only is the ministry an active participant in the Native Musicale (an annual, Indigenous Protestant event in the city), but it supports the project that contributes to the conservation of Yup'ik Protestantism in Alaska.

As some Native Corporations support the Russian Orthodox Cathedral and the AncMC in the city, the Bristol Bay Native Corporation Education Foundation for Cultural Enhancement and Language Retention Program financially helped the ministry with the songbook project (Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry Meeting Agenda, 2022). In its turn, the ministry of a smaller size, that started as a hospital fellowship, continues to support their extended family members and the Native

hospital patients coming from the rural areas. For instance, Christmas is an occasion to distribute around seventy-five to one hundred goodie bags among the urban kin and ANMC Patient Housing patients, coming from villages and having to stay in Anchorage for an extended period of time to resolve health issues; also, Dinner Care Boxes are being distributed for Thanksgiving (Anchorage Moravian Fellowship-Anchorage Native Ministry's Letter 2021). As the regional corporation, representing the Yup'ik and other Indigenous shareholders, supports the Indigenous churches, the ministry gives their support back from the city to the Yup'ik region, contributing to the circulation of goods that accompanies the circulation of the Yup'ik people between the city and the village.

Hence several ministries and churches with the Moravian heritage offer the Yupiit Moravians Indigenous spaces where testimonies, prayers, food and gifts are distributed and exchanged to reproduce the village lifestyle, at least, to a certain degree. The Yupiit Moravians remain the majority inside the AncMC, as they remain the majority in the Yup'ik villages, in contrast to the Yup'ik Orthodox who have to embrace and to negotiate with a more significant diversity in the urban Russian Orthodox Church. Story-telling, Native food and gift distribution remain significant in the church routine, as they do in the village churches. Native corporations play an important role in financing some of the urban churches in their effort to maintain religious and cultural identities in the city of Anchorage, while the ministries and the churches support their extended families, the ANMC patients in the city and Moravain churches in the Yup'ik villages. The ties connecting the urban and rural Moravian kin are maintained through gathering, preaching and praying in the urban Moravian churches and ministries, no matter whether they choose to strictly follow the Yup'ik Moravian traditions or to open to Pentecostal or revival practices. The connection with the rural Yupiit is sustained through the Native hospital chaplaincy, donations and other forms of support by urban Moravians. The Covid-19 pandemic interfered with the tie maintenance through the access limitation of the Native hospital to the general public. At the same time, it allowed the Yup'ik

Moravians to provide access to their rural relatives and other audiences through creating virtual Moravian spaces over Zoom and social media. I have analyzed how, in general, the Yup'ik Orthodox and the Yup'ik Moravians reproduce their village life in the city. Now I would like to examine more precisely in what ways two Christian celebrations – the Orthodox Starring (or Selaviq) and the (Protestant) Native Musicale contribute to this process.

Selaviq and Native Musicale as meeting points of the village and the city

One of the most important meeting points of the rural and urban Yupiit in Anchorage is the annual celebration of the birth of Christ starting on January 7th and called Starring, Selaviq or Slavie. In order to describe the ways in which the tradition of Starring has undergone changes but remained largely the same in the city of Anchorage and how it reconnects the Yup'ik urban population to the village, I would like to start with a short description of its historical and present-day development in Yup'ik rural areas. As briefly outlined in Chapter III, rotating stars carried from house to house represent the star of Bethlehem. The star rotation is accompanied by singing church hymns and *kolyadi*, or Carpatho-Russian folk carols (Fienup-Riordan 1990). The tradition of Starring came to Alaska from Ukraine. Starring was celebrated in Ukraine before its Christianization; although the acceptance of Christianity transformed the tradition, the honoring of ancestors part survived (Chuyko 2014). While the Starring tradition almost disappeared in Russia, honoring the deceased with food is also still being practiced on memorial days and at cemeteries. On Christmas Eve, before the beginning of the three-day caroling, Holy Supper is served in some Ukrainian households with an extra place reserved for the ancestors' souls that are invited to join

their families (Fienup-Riordan 1990, p. 97). I believe that honoring and feeding the deceased was one of the most important aspects that coincided with the Yup'ik winter ceremonial celebrations allowing for a better appropriation of the Starring tradition.

Although it is unknown who exactly brought the Starring tradition to Alaska, some sources demonstrate that it was practiced there already at the end of the nineteenth century. Libby Beaman (1989) described the Starring celebration by the Unangan people in Saint Paul in the 1880s. As for the Yupiit, Fienup-Riordan (1990) claimed that, according to the Elders of Kasigluk, Father Nicolai Epchook and Father Zakhary Guest brought the tradition from Russian Mission where it was also practiced in the 1880s (p. 238). Also, Father Nicolai Epchook, a Russian-Yup'ik creole, studied in the Russian Orthodox seminary at Unalaska. on the Aleutian Islands, before being ordained as a priest (Fienup-Riordan 1990), thus, he might possibly transmit it from the Unangax̂ Orthodox to the Yup'ik region. Starring had therefore been gradually spreading across the Alaskan regions since at least the end of the nineteenth century. Its celebration differs across the regions and even from village to village. For instance, the major difference between the Yukon-Kuskokwim area and the Nushagak area celebrations in the Yup'ik region is the emphasis of the latter on the inter-village visitation rather than on food and gift distribution (Oleksa 2017). The song repertoire may differ in the Yup'ik region by the number and order of church hymns and kolyadi sung (Oleksa 1992). Nevertheless, the basic form remains the same across the region, while Starring continues to be considered the major annual event in Yup'ik villages. As Matushka Diane Chris put it:

> "I would say [the Selaviq tradition in Yupiit villages] is pretty much the same, they may skip a part, they may not have gifts but the singing always comes first, because you are following the star at home. The style of singing is different because the songs are the same; it's just slower, a little bit of

different pronunciation, like in Yukon, some people coming to Bethel from Yukon and trying to correct us for singing wrong. But it's the same song. And just the speed of the song, the tempo might be different, but it's still the same" (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2020).

The blessing of the stars occurs on Orthodox Christmas, celebrated on January 7th according to the Russian Orthodox (Julian) Calendar. Usually, the priest's house is the first one where the star travels to after the Christmas service (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). The celebration may continue up to ten days until Epiphany on January 19th. During the caroling, the star bearers stand with their back to the altar or to the house red corner, facing the congregation and spinning the stars counterclockwise. The church hymns and *kolyadi* are sung in English, Yup'ik, Slavonic and Ukrainian. The ones in Ukrainian and Slavonic are memorized and passed down from generation to generation, as a part of the Yup'ik oral knowledge transmission (Fienup-Riordan 1990, p. 103).

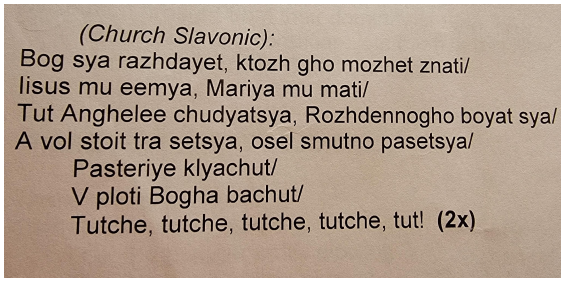


Figure 36. An excerpt from a *kolyadi* in Slavonic written in the Latin alphabet. Only its original phonological meaning is preserved in the kolyadi. Anchorage, January 2022 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

In the Yukon-Kuskokwim area, after the singing and caroling are over, the hosts proceed with the food and gift distribution, starting with the Elders. "The wealth distribution" is a result of months of preparation, both in subsistence and in monetary investment (Fienup-Riordan 1990, p. 106). Starring at one house may take several hours, depending on the scale of the gift and food distribution. "It kind of evolved into a competition, twenty years ago I thought how those people

could afford it, I was amazed how much they gave out" (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). The distribution of the enormous amounts of gifts and food was the base of *Kevgiq*, or the Messenger Feast. "And the items they gave away during the dance festival got larger and larger… foods that they harvested during spring, they'd bring seal pokes, seal pokes filled with walrus meat, different things, seal pokes filled with beluga. They added those [to their gifts] when I watched them" (John Philipp in Fienup-Riordan, 2018, pp. 392; 404). Thus, Selaviq became a substitute for the winter ceremonial celebrations, but some of their basic aspects, for instance, the gift distribution, were not lost.



Figure 37. A star that travels from house to house in Anchorage, January 2020
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

By introducing Selaviq to the Yupiit, the Orthodox priests gradually replaced the celebration of winter ceremonies such as Nakaciuq, or Bladder Festival and Elriq, or the Feast of the Dead with this new Orthodox tradition. Indeed, a certain resemblance of Starring with the above mentioned traditional feasts likely contributed to its easier adoption by the Yupiit. For instance, inviting and honoring the ancestors with food is one of the pre-Christian elements that survived in the Orthodox celebration of Selaviq in Ukraine and was practiced during the Feast of the Dead among the Yupiit.

> "The Aunties always said that during Selaviq the curtains should always be open. And the mirrors [should be] covered. If the curtains are closed, the deceased will cry and go to other places, then to God… People eat [during Selaviq] and think they are full; but they are never full, as the dead are always hungry and they come to the spirit of the living to eat. But even if people have nothing to share, they should open their door, as they can share good words" (Anonymous 5, personal communication, 2020).

I contend that inviting ancestors to share food and gifts was one of the key elements serving in the appropriation of Selaviq by the Yupiit. Oleksa (1992) noticed in his analysis of Selaviq that even the non-Orthodox villagers participate in its celebration. Even though Yup'ik villagers from different Christian denominations join each others' celebrations, Selaviq remains the main annual event that re-unites all the villagers. Some Yup'ik Moravians invite a star and a priest for a celebration in their houses. They do not necessarily sing the hymns and the kolyadi, but I observed that they participate in the distribution of food and gifts:

> "In the village, we have the Russian Orthodox and Moravian [denominations]. We celebrate our Christmas, we celebrate their Christmas, which is Selaviq. I do not know how to sing their stuff, I do not know how it is here, but they have their own singing group. As a Moravian I just stand, I do not know how to sing [the hymns and the kolyadi]. We have one God, I

> can kind of celebrate both" (Anonymous 6[63], personal communication, 2019).

Interestingly, the Yup'ik Moravians do not seem to have a similar feast that involves an elaborate gift-giving ceremony. Nevertheless, as described earlier in this chapter, I observed a similar food and gift distribution after a memorial service at a Moravian church in Anchorage.

> "During the Christmas time, when we have Selavie, the Moravians join, because they grew up with that, it became the activity for the whole village. It has become their tradition, like in Father [Peter Chris'] village. On December 25th there is a Christmas play in the Moravian church, everybody goes to that. So the village celebrates [Protestant] Christmas. The Orthodox may not participate in the services, may be in the play or in the exchange of gifts,
> and on January 7th everyone does the Orthodox [Christmas]" (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

In some Yup'ik areas, Starring continues to reinforce inter-village relationships, as was the case during the Bladder Festival, when the game spirits were invited, and other villages participated in the gift and food distribution. Some researchers suggest that Selaviq is an example of the syncretic mixture of traditional Yup'ik and Orthodox elements that became a new Yup'ik tradition (Fienup-Riordan 1991; Jerabek 2014; Mousalimas 1992; Oleksa 1992). Although the Yupiit gradually abandoned the celebration of their traditional winter ceremonial feasts and accepted Starring as a new, Christian tradition, I argue that, instead of a syncretic mixture, they chose to incorporate the Christian elements, such as singing and caroling, into the already existing set of

63 In their sixties

traditional celebration elements and rituals, although some of them were lost. Honoring the dead was retained in Starring as a pre-Christian element by Ukrainians. It remains a very important aspect in the celebration for the Yupiit, as I could confirm from the interviews with my collaborators and from participating in the church and house-to-house celebrations in Anchorage.

Now I will elaborate on how the tradition of Starring has developed in the city of Anchorage and in what ways it connects the city to the Yup'ik villages. When Father Nicholas and Matushka Anastasia Molodyko-Harris arrived in Anchorage in 1967 to found an Orthodox parish there, a Yup'ik parishioner equipped them with a star he had constructed in a Yup'ik village, so that the star could travel to the Alaska Native Service Hospital, and the city nursing homes and households (Jekel 2018, p. 38). Despite different traditions of Starring developing in Indigenous villages across Alaska, the Yup'ik star was the first one to be used in the urban Starring celebration by the Orthodox priest. Starring offered an opportunity recreate village life both for patients and urban extended families and friends:

> "We would have maybe a hundred people there visiting patients. I would lead them into different rooms, say a prayer over each person, and [we would] sing several carols in the room. So many people were touched by this; there would be tears running down their cheeks of thankfulness that we had remembered them during the Christmas season" (Jekel 2018, p. 38).

Thus, while being the main annual celebration in the village life, Starring started to serve as a tool to maintain the continuity between the rural and the urban and to reproduce village life not only because the village population that migrated to the city, strives to maintain the tradition in the city.

For the rural Yupiit, the Starring celebration is a means to end the old year and begin a new one traditionally, to invite their ancestors for the feast accompanied by the extended family members and friends from the city and village.

Since the appointment of Father Nicholas Molodyko-Harris, there was a significant increase in Yup'ik influence on the Anchorage Deanery in general, and on the elaboration of Starring in the city, in particular. The first Yup'ik priest to come to the city permanently was Father Peter Chris who became chaplain in the hospital and brought the Starring tradition of his native Yup'ik village of Nunapitchuk to the city. His wife, Matushka Diane Chris (2022), explained the reason of their transfer from the Yup'ik rural region to Anchorage as follows:

> "Father Nicholas [Molodyko-Harris] did everything [by himself], they wanted a Native priest in the hospital, they wanted Yup'ik because the Yup'ik language is mostly still alive. Elders were scared of the English language in the hospital, so a Yup'ik priest could be more comforting. More and more Yup'iks are coming to the city (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

Although Father Peter Christ has recently retired, he continues to be the priest in charge of the annual Starring celebration, so that the Starring tradition of the Yup'ik village of Nunapitchuk has been prevailing over the other ones at least for the parishioners of Saint Innocent Cathedral:

> But when [Father Peter] leads it, the tradition of Nunapitchuk is the base, because when you come, you sing first, and them the

> preacher or the priest, whoever preaches, gives the sermon, and then you feast when they are feasting, you pass the gifts, and it's that structure every time (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

Multiple stars travel across the Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna areas after January 7th, representing Indigenous Orthodox from different Alaskan regions (Unangan, Sugpiaqs, Yupiit of the Yukon-Kuskokwim and of the Bristol Bay regions) (Tatiana Andrew, , 2022). Nevertheless, Saint Innocent Cathedral is the largest Orthodox church in Anchorage, so that the Nunapitchuk Starring tradition prevails over the other ones. The Cathedral stars start to travel across Anchorage by visiting Indigenous patients from the rural and urban areas at the Southcentral Foundation and the Alaska Native Medical Center on January 7.

> Here in Anchorage the hospital would be the first place, and then it became such an event in the hospital that they scheduled a big celebration at the Native hospital, they had their dancers and food. They used to have some Native dancers, usually Yup'ik dancers, depending on who was in charge (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

The Starring choir is different from the Cathedral choir. It includes Yup'ik and other Indigenous parishioners. Although the choir members accept and follow the priest's village tradition, it continues to be negotiated, as the Indigenous parishioners also contribute to the process of its adaptation to the diversity in the urban church, by adding their own village singing traditions to the Starring celebration:

> In Anchorage they were accepting his [Father Chris Peter's] tradition at first, because they were respectful, and this is how you do it, but I think, then he was more open to it and he just said, do whatever you want to do, and I think it was helpful. Now Selaviq is a mixture of all the [Indigenous] cultures. They all bring a part of their village here, yes (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022).

Although the celebration duration in the village used to differ for every household (Fienup-Riordan 1990), the dynamic and "more structured" city life had an impact on the urban Starring. "Now because people work, we actually schedule" (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). Every household is given approximately two hours to host the star, the priest, the choir and the public.



Figure 38. Starring at a Yup'ik household in Wasilla, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, January 2020 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

The priest's star travels across Anchorage, but the last couple of days are dedicated to some Indigenous households of the neighboring Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Lay males and females are

not spatially separated in the church and during Starring in the households in Anchorage anymore. However, the Orthodox Church continues to resemble the Yup'ik men's communal house, as the sacramental rituals in the church continue to be performed by men.

Although Native food is less available in the urban setting, urban Yup'ik households distribute it during Starring. "In Anchorage, it's hard for them to get Native food, they do what they have, they try to make it at home, because it's the tradition" (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). Raw, cooked, roasted fish and *akutaq*, *or* "Eskimo ice cream" are served, as it was traditionally done during the winter ceremonial celebrations. Here my collaborator refers to the village as "home" for the Yup'ik and other Indigenous peoples who live in Anchorage. The continuity between the rural and the urban, and the sense of belonging to the ancestral lands despite living in a different place is an important identity marker for the Yupiit, while feasting and gifting according to the "home" tradition serves as a means to maintain the connection. Berries (for the *akutaq*) and fish are harvested not far from the city, or exchanged, or brought from the village. The food is served after the singing and a sermon, followed by the gift distribution. Fienup-Riordan (1990) stated that in the village, gifts may vary from practical to expensive and elaborate. In Anchorage, the households I visited, while following the star, distributed candies and useful items:



Figure 39. Gifts and akutaq I received at a Yup'ik household during the Starring celebration, Wasilla, January 2020 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

The Covid-19 pandemic interfered with the tradition, so that the stars temporarily stopped to travel to the hospital and households. Nevertheless, some temporary solutions were found. The

Cathedral organized an outside church singing, a drive-through food and gift distribution. Community engagement was strong, so that the Cathedral was provided with food and gift donations. Moreover, members from different rural, Indigenous communities organized spontaneous Starring and food sharing outside the church and households, some of them being broadcast through social media, so that "the spirit of celebration did not change" (Anthony Lekanof, personal communication 2022). The outside Starring allowed me to observe different regional celebration styles. I also participated in the singing at an Anchorage cemetery, and an Unangax̂ star with a mixed Unangax̂-Yup'ik singing choir and a Yup'ik priest visited my yard.



Figure 40. Unangax̂ -Yup'ik Starring outside my household, Anchorage, January 2021
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

The rural-urban migration resulted in the creation of new Starring celebration styles in the city, as the Indigenous peoples brought their own traditions from their villages to Anchorage. The celebration of Starring organized by Saint Innocent Cathedral connects the rural and urban Indigenous populations, as they feast together at the Alaska Native Medical Center. Through the annual organization and implementation of Starring, the Orthodox Church plays an important role in the reproduction of village life for Yup'ik urban residents, especially through its celebration based on the tradition of the Yup'ik village of Nunapitchuk. Although the tradition has been

negotiated, taking into consideration the dynamic city lifestyle and other parishioners' traditions, it continues to be the base for the church, hospital and household celebrations by the Cathedral parishioners, the hospital patients and their visitors.

My observations support the contention by Fienup-Riordan (1990), Jerabek (2014), Mousalimas (1992) and Oleksa (1992) that Starring or Selaviq became a new Yup'ik tradition that contains the elements of both their ancestral winter ceremonial and the Ukrainian Orthodox celebrations. The Yupiit creatively appropriated Orthodox elements such as starring, singing of the hymns and carols, and added them to the already existing elements such as food distribution, gifting and inter-village feasting. Honoring the ancestors with food is a pre-Christian element in the Ukrainian Starring celebration that likely facilitated the appropriation. Yup'ik Moravians do not seem to have such an elaborate, annual gift-giving ceremony, as compared to their Orthodox relatives. Nevertheless, many of the urban Yup'ik Moravian residents actively participate in an annual, Protestant festival called Native Musicale that occurs during the Fur Rendezvous winter festival in Anchorage every year. This is another significant meeting point of the village and the city. Together with a Yup'ik singing group, I participated in the Native Musicale; the preparation to the event involved extended family meetings and Native food sharing. I am going to analyze to what degree this festival serves as a means to maintain the continuity with the village.

The Native Musicale is a festival organized annually by the Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship in February and/or March during the Fur Rendezvous winter festival. The latter historically includes sportive competitions such as Open World Championship Sled Dog Races and the Inupiaq Blanket Toss as well as Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market. Many rural Indigenous artists come to Anchorage at this time to sell their crafts during the day at the Market, and to participate in the Native Musicale in the evening. The first Native Musicale was organized in 1967, but it became an elaborated event with the help of InterAct Ministry who established Victory High

School, a boarding school for Unangax̂, Yup'ik, and Inupiaq children in 1959, so that they avoided being sent to Sitka or the Lower 48 boarding schools (InterAct Ministries Website[64] 2024, Perea 2021, p. 126). The boarding school students were encouraged to participate in the Musicale "to share the Christian message" through testimonies, singing and music (InterAct Ministries Website 2024). Since 1974, the Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship (ANNLF) has been in charge of the Musicale organization (Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship Website[65] 2024). Physically located in Anchorage, ANNLF broadcasts its services on Facebook; it is also an active radio and television ministry with outreach to various rural Indigenous communities, including some in the Yukon-Kuskokwim and Bristol Bay areas. Thus, the ministry serves as a means for the rural and urban Yup'ik communities to stay connected during the whole year, while reuniting on the occasion of the Native Musicale.



Figure 41. Native Musicale organized by ANNLF, Anchorage, March 2020
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Today, the Musicale is a meeting platform that is both "a celebration of Christian faith" and "a social event" for "Indigenous believers [who] come from different regions across Alaska and

64 https://interactministries.org/history/. Last accessed January 22nd, 2024.
65 https://www.nativenewlife.org/Musicale.html. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

[who] love music" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). For those unable to attend, there is a possibility to watch the event over social media or to later buy a DVD. The Musicale enables you to "see lots of people you do not see otherwise… it's like a family and friends reunion, high school and college friends" (Anonymous 11[66], personal communication, 2020). It also enables the Indigenous participants to enlarge their network, as the Christian Indigenous community members get to know each other during the event (Anonymous 11, personal communication, 2020). Due to a limited number of educational institutions, many Yupiit students have continued their education in boarding schools and colleges and have made Indigenous friends outside the Yup'ik region. The festival evolved in connection with the Indigenous students from the boarding schools and colleges coming to sing and to play music all together. Today, the festival is "time of touching base with each other" (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2021). The Musicale organizers and participants continue to organize this pan-Protestant, Indigenous space in the city, that enables them to reconnect and to expand their network on the state level. Native corporations participate in funding the festival.

Speaking about the "social gathering" aspect, a 'Parka parade' and an Indigenous pop-up arts market are part of the festival. 'Parka parade' occurs at the beginning of each 3-hour festival night. The parade is a demonstration of traditional Yup'ik and Inupiaq parkas and *qasperet* (hooded overshirts). The Indigenous models present their parkas by sharing information about the parka makers and stories associated with them. For the Yupiit, parkas is a means of connection to the community and to the ancestral lands that "tell a story" of a particular Yup'ik region; it is also "a declaration and expression of [the Yup'ik] will and desire to continue [their] culture (Meade 1990, p. 230). Thus, although the Musicale attracts Indigenous (and some non-Indigenous) Christians from different Alaskan regions, its 'Parka parade' is primarily a manifestation of the Yup'ik and Inupiaq cultural heritage and continuity. Moreover, one of the favorite female and male clothes for

66 In her seventies

the festival are *qasperet*, the traditional Yup'ik overshirts that are and have become not only an identity marker of the Yup'ik, Inupiaq and other Indigenous populations, but also of the non-Indigenous Alaskans. The overall ambiance of the festival with honoring the Elders and with encouraging the youth participants reflects the common values of Alaskan Indigenous communities.

My Yup'ik language teacher invited me to participate in the Native Musicale in 2019. I was invited to sing with *Yugtun Aturtet (Yup'ik Singers* in English*). Yugtun Aturtet* is a singing group that has been performing at the Native Musicale for many years (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022). Its choir director and the teacher's sister, Carrie Paton has as a lifetime dedication to singing and playing Christian music that evolved with moving to the city. She was named after *Yuracista*, a Yup'ik man from Togiak. The name signifies "the one who makes songs" (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022). As the Yupiit believe to inherit some of the traits of the deceased they are named after, the Christian gospel has been playing an important role for Paton since her childhood. Besides, Paton's mother, a Moravian, was an active church member and a distinguished gospel singer. Paton attended college in Anchorage in 1976 where she started to join a weekly fellowship that sang at the Alaska Native Service Hospital. The hospital singing group became popular, and eventually, a Musicale singing group formed and started to participate in the festival (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022). Many of the singing group's members are a part of the Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry (formerly, Anchorage Moravian Fellowship) and a part of the choir director's Yup'ik extended family (sisters, cousins, aunties and uncles). In addition to her dedication as the choir director and the Anchorage Moravian Fellowship leader, Carrie Paton has been working with a song editor to create song books with songs translated into Yup'ik and put on musical notes since 2016 (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022). Under Paton's direction, *Yugtun Aturtet* performed Christian hymns in English and in Yup'ik accompanied by the piano at the Musicale 2020, when I was invited to join the singing group.

The group practiced on a weekly basis for approximately a month before the festival starts. Most of the rehearsals occurred at the choir director's house, but some of them were organized at the other choir participants' houses and in a church building. In all the cases, except for the meeting in the church, the practices were followed by a dinner with Native food shared by hosts and/or brought by the participants. For the performance, all the participants wore the Yup'ik *qasperet*. Some of the choir members performed with other groups (often including their close or extended family members from both the village and the city) on the same or other festival evenings. The festival brochure always includes the names of the participating groups and their current location. Often one singing group contains participants living both in the village and in the city but connected by kinship and friendship bonds. Musicale is a product of the Indigenous rural-urban migration fluidity and dynamics that contributes to the creation of private and public Indigenous spaces in the city. It is also a place of Indigenous networks with the fluid boundaries that are bonded by the extended family ties, but also by the heritage of the boarding schools where Indigenous students from different tribes formed life-lasting friendships. The Musicale serves as the place to strengthen the statewide bonds on an annual basis, including both the urban and rural Indigenous protestants.

The festival is also closely connected to the topic of Inuit music development and self-determination. My collaborators stated that the Indigenous peoples in Alaska, in general, and the Yupiit, in particular, are "very musically inclined" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022; Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022). Inuit musical styles evolved with evangelization. The Moravian pastors discouraged traditional ceremonial celebrations and, consequently, Yup'ik dancing. As a result, the Yupiit, among other Indigenous peoples in Alaska, started to take an active part in the process of "Yup'ifying" the Christian gospel. Perea (2018) lists examples of "Cup'ifying and Yup'ifying gospel" arguing that "the Cup'ik culture made Christianity something of its own" in the process of negotiating Yup'ik and Cup'ik "agency and self-

determination" (p.133). The Indigenous Christian festival parallels Fur Rondy, a predominantly Euro-American, "secular festival of welcoming spring" (Bishop William Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). The process involving the preparation for and performing at the festival serves as a manifestation of Indigenous agency emphasizing the close ties between urban Yupiit and other Indigenous Christians and their homelands, where they used to gather and sing at churches and conferences. In the Yup'ik villages with several religious denominations, the Orthodox and Moravian villagers attend each others' celebrations (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). In parallel, while urban Moravians participate in the local Starring celebrations, the urban Orthodox attend the Musicale. In comparison to Starring, the Musicale does not incorporate such ancient elements as feeding the deceased. Nevertheless, the preparation for and implementation of the large Protestant Indigenous gathering are reminiscent of the traditional winter ceremonial activities, involving large intervillage gatherings, singing and food sharing. With evangelization, the Church became "a central part for gatherings" in the village (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2021). As the Moravians and other protestants are mobile and can organize private meetings outside the church to pray, sing and play music together, Yup'ik Moravians also started to meet in the city, at homes, in the hospital, and during the largest Indigenous Christian annual event, the Musicale. As Starring, the Musicale allows the urban relatives to gather for practicing songs and sharing Native food before the event. In addition, it enables them to connect with the participants from villages.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the dynamics of Yup'ik religious lifeways in relation to urban landscapes. Despite the rich ethical diversity of its urban parishioners, the Russian Orthodox churches in Anchorage are significantly shaped and impacted by the Yup'ik and other Indigenous

Orthodox clergy and parishioners through the transfer of certain Yup’ik traditional ways, such as Native food distribution and the celebration of Starring. The Sisterhood of Saint Innocent Cathedral, containing some Yup’ik and other Indigenous female leaders, plays a crucial role in financing the Cathedral and providing support to transitioning rural Indigenous populations. The Yup’ik Orthodox chaplaincy at the Native hospital additionally connects the rural and urban Yup’ik Orthodox. The dynamics of the city reciprocally shapes the Yup’ik Orthodox, as they experience challenges in maintaining their religious and cultural identity, due to the limited number of Orthodox Indigenous spaces, lack of transportation and Native food, and the necessity to embrace the heterogeneous character of the urban churches. At the same time, extended family ties, especially, between Yup’ik Orthodox clergy and parishioners remain an important tool the Yupiit use to reconceptualize urban spaces as extensions of the rural, religious and social landscapes. The Covid-19 pandemic interfered with the process of maintaining ties between the urban Yup'ik Orthodox, villages and the city. Although Saint Innocent Cathedral switched to broadcasts of its services, the social lifeways of the church, including Native food sharing, extended family members gatherings, the celebration of Starring at the church and in the parishioners’ homes, were disrupted. Access to the Native hospital also became very limited. The practices described above have started again, while Saint Alexis parish, a “village church” with a Yup’ik priest in charge, has not been given access to the APIA building to resume their services. Yup’ik Orthodox continue to stimulate the urban churches to remain a vehicle for keeping connected with their urban extended family members and the villages, with the majority of the clergy and of the Indigenous parishioners being Yup’ik.

As for the urban Yup’ik Moravians, they use some similar strategies to maintain their religious and cultural identity. Subsistence for the church potlucks, Native food distribution and exchange, extended family member gatherings for services, funerals, memorial feasts in the church

and at homes, as well as practicing for the participation in the annual Native Musicale contribute to the creation and maintenance of Protestant, Indigenous spaces in the city. In comparison to the urban Yup'ik Orthodox embracing the urban diversity of Saint Innocent Cathedral, Yup'ik Moravians create predominantly Yup'ik Indigenous spaces in the churches and ministries in Anchorage. The Native hospital also plays an important role for Yup'ik Moravians. The AncMC's chaplain pays visits to rural Yup'ik Moravian patients, meeting the extended family members in the hospital cafeteria, while the Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry started at the hospital, now using its space for singing and assembling Christmas and Thanksgiving goodie bags to distribute to their extended family members and hospital patients. The maintenance of kinship relationships in the city and in the village is a significant strategy for Yup'ik Moravians to keep connected to the village and to preserve their identity. The Covid-19 pandemic also destabilized the connections. However, the mobility of the Moravian churches allowed for a relative flexibility in transitioning to virtual Indigenous space.

CHAPTER VI: LIVING BETWEEN THE VILLAGE AND THE CITY

As described above, many urban Yupiit who have permanently settled in the city of Anchorage continue to call the village their home. In this chapter, I would like to analyze in what ways the oscillatory migration between the village and the city has been impacting subsistence activities of the Yupiit in both areas. I would like to elaborate on the role of sharing and exchange of Native food in the negotiation of the Yup'ik rural-urban family relationships. I will also examine how naming and adoption practices continue to connect the rural and urban Yupiit. Lastly, I will demonstrate how the migration process shapes Yup'ik gender roles.

Urban and Rural Subsistence

To begin with, what is the current definition of 'subsistence' in the Alaskan context? According to the Bureau of Land Management of the U.S. Department of Interior (n.d.), subsistence is defined as "the customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents of wild, renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of nonedible by-products of

fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption; and for the customary trade, barter or sharing for personal or family consumption". At the same time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the U.S. Department of Interior noted (n.d.) that for Indigenous peoples in Alaska, the term does not correctly represent the multifaceted, cultural meanings that they attribute to it. Thus, some of them prefer the term "Our Way of Life". Indeed, subsistence activities are connected to every aspect of the traditional Indigenous lifestyle and social organization. Subsistence connects the Yup'ik people to their ancestral lands and to the community, but it also underlines the importance of food distribution and exchange, and of human-animal relationships. As Fienup-Riordan (1990) put it, "not only do goods cycle, as do the seasons, but human and animal souls likewise are continually in motion… The death of the seal means life to the village. The same people and the same seals have been on this earth from the beginning continually cycling and recycling through life and death. Through this generational cycling, a life-celebrating system is put forward. The coastal Yup'ik Eskimos are not simply surviving on the resources of their environment but are living in a highly structured relationship to them" (pp. 46-47). I am going to elaborate on what subsistence means for both the rural and urban Yup'ik residents today under the subsistence regulation constraints, on what role subsistence activities play in the identity negotiation in the city, and how they reconnect the city with the village.

Despite the changes that the Yupiit have been undergoing as a result of colonization and Christianization, perceptions of such subsistence activities, as hunting, fishing and berry-picking still relate them to the human-animal spiritual relationships. "They also tell us to try to catch birds when they are available. Since they dried those long ago, people didn't waste food back then... They said all animals, even if it's a small one, and even a little insect, they said it has a spirit. It is given a spirit, just like us. And our spirit will not die. Even if our body dies, our spirit will live on" (Nick Andrew 2018, p. 344). Although the Yup'ik Elder referred to non-wasting of food as a practice of

the past, some younger Indigenous peoples consider it as a contemporary one. As Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, the Inupiaq artist stated: "… we rely on our subsistence foods, on ivory, we do not waste any part, we use all of the animal" (personal communication 2022). Thus, the Indigenous value of respect and care for the game that gives itself to a hunter remains important in the discourse about the subsistence as the "Way of Life " and its connection with the Indigenous art creation process.

The same collaborator also elaborated on why the subsistence remains a matter of economic survival for the rural population:

> "With the Mammal Protection Act, with our Alaska Native culture, we have to maintain our subsistence lifestyle we depend on, especially, in my hometown: a gallon of milk is like ten-twelve dollars. It's hard to buy groceries and to survive off of the food there. Whereas, if we embrace our Indigenous culture, we have spring and fall whaling, and that brings off of our food to our community" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022).

Likewise, Yup'ik regions, such as Bristol Bay, known worldwide for commercial fishing, remain significant for traditional subsistence practices including fishing, sea mammal and caribou hunting that are vital for sustaining the local economy (Halas & Neufeld 2018). Subsistence activities in rural Alaska compensate for the scarce "cash-paying jobs", high rates of unemployment and high prices (Goldsmith 2008). Thus, hunting, fishing and berry-picking are indispensable practices in view of the cultural and economic survival of the rural Yupiit.

Despite the vital importance of subsistence for the Indigenous populations in Alaska, one of the most important obstacles for its traditional practice is the system of state and federal regulations. Several laws were introduced since the purchase of Alaska and its statehood establishment to prioritize subsistence “over sport, personal and commercial uses", for rural residents (the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act or ANILCA); since 1992, federal law has been ensuring subsistence on Alaskan federal lands, prioritizing rural citizens, whereas the State of Alaska is in charge of “state and private lands, including ANCSA lands giving no rural priority” (University of Alaska Fairbanks Website[67] n.d.). The Marine Mammal Protection Act ensures the exclusive rights of the Alaskan Indigenous peoples to hunt marine mammals and to use the rests for creation of Native crafts (Marine Mammal Commission Website[68] 2024). However, only those with a “one-quarter [Indigenous] blood quantum” are protected by the Act, and “there is a lot of controversy with that”, explained Britt’Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower (2022). For Britt’Nee, who “[is] not full Native but [who] grew up more Alaska Native than [she] did with [her] Mom’s Hawaiian background”, there is barely enough evidence, according to the Act, that allows her to use the materials for her arts and crafts (Britt’Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022). My collaborator’s case is an illustration of how some Alaskan Indigenous peoples with approximately one-quarter blood quantum who, despite growing up in Indigenous families and practicing the traditional lifestyle in rural and urban areas, hardly qualify for harvesting or using marine mammals. Thus, the Marine Mammal Protection Act does not permit the whole Alaskan population, considering themselves as Indigenous, to practice traditional subsistence activities that might be a core of their identity. Concerning all the other subsistence activities, Alaskan Indigenous peoples are not given any priorities or any special permissions over other Alaskan populations, while the federal and the state authorities often exercise their power and decision-making, not taking into consideration the

67 https://www.uaf.edu/tribal/academics/112/unit-3/tribalhuntingandfishingrightssubsistenceanilca1980.php. Last accessed January 27th, 2024.
68 https://www.mmc.gov/about-the-commission/our-mission/. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.

traditional knowledge and human-animal relationships that continue to structure their lives. As Nick Andrew (2018) put it:

> "Presently, whenever we try to obtain birds and animals during the time they are good eating, our counterparts [Westerners] who regulate them fine us, too, because we are trying to harvest them during the time fish and animals are good to eat. They all have a prime time they are inedible, a person is supposed to eat them, but even the flesh of fish deteriorates during a certain time of year, there is a certain time that their flesh becomes undesirable… Our counterparts don't know the time when things of the wilderness are favorable to eat inside a year, since they don't hunt. And Fish and Wildlife and Fish and Game don't know as well… (Andrew 2018. p.342).

The incompatibility of federal and state authorities' decisions with traditional environmental knowledge result in illegal subsistence practices and protests by the Indigenous populations (Hensel 1996). As Indigenous subsistence rights are still given no priority, the resistance also translates into efforts to debate and participate in the decision-making process of the state and federal regulatory organizations. Subsistence debates continue today, with several Indigenous representatives being on the federal subsistence advisory board; however, the insufficient representation results in their inability to significantly impact "critical" decision-making of the stakeholders, thus, the Indigenous perspectives are not always taken into consideration (Hensel 2010; Sullivan 2021).

So, in what ways and to what extent do the Yupiit participate in subsistence activities? As discussed earlier, the mixed economy model remains the solution for the Yup'ik and other Indigenous families in terms of survival, resilience and well-being (Brinkman et al. 2014; Goldsmith 2008.).

As discussed above, the importance of subsistence for Indigenous peoples goes well beyond economic aspect. As Quentin Simeon (2019) said in a conversation, "the time that we spent snowmachining, hunting, trapping, fishing with a net, that was school, when we were working with the animals and with the land in those areas, that is our learning". Yup'ik children start to participate in subsistence activities at an early age. Quentin did so in Aniak, starting from the age of three (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2019). At the age of seven, packing fish to about ten; once I was about ten, in the boat, harvesting fish, pulling the net. And ten and on, you are doing the men's staff, pulling the net, being at home, packing the fish, whatever it may be, according to your age group" (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2019). Besides the skills related to hunting and fishing, subsistence continues to involve knowledge transmission through story-telling (Active 2010).

> "Those were stories we were taught in the camp on a snow machine trip, on a fishing trip. The place would inspire a story. It was more a fluid sort of experience. In Bethel we heard general stories about the Yup'ik culture in a broad sense, in Aniak it was specific. The stories were incorporated into the land. How we were taught was completely different, where the environment became a part of the teaching situation" (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2020).

The transmission of traditional environmental knowledge through story-telling is closely related to locality in remote areas. Thus, when the subsistence activities decrease, as a result of regulations, of high transportation and energy costs, its impact on story-telling as an educational tool is detrimental. Decrease in subsistence also negatively impacts learning about the Yup'ik, annual subsistence cycle and traditional values such as the importance of care for the close and extended family and for the whole community.

> When I was a kid, once we got into the fishing season in the beginning of June, that's when you started your work basically to make sure your nets were good... getting all the staff prepared. Then the fish camp comes along, and then you spend about two weeks solid in the fish camp until the fish are smelt and all done... You are not working for yourself, everything for the family, you don't really have that sense of 'for me, for me, for me', this is for everybody. If we don't do this work, we are going to starve in the winter. It gave you a concept of time of understanding like what we are doing now is for the winter. That concept of always getting ready… All of this is in the process of getting ready for something else. Even if it's summer time, we are getting the fish ready for the winter… Then you get done with your red and king season, it's time to go berry picking" (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2019).

The traditional value of care for the rural community and for the extended family members transcends the boundaries of the village, when the family members, living in the city, come to the rural areas to subsist for their rural and urban family members (Anonymous 2[69], personal

69 In her sixties

communication, 2020). My collaborator, Carrie Paton, who lives in the city of Anchorage, subsists at her fish camp in Igushik in Bristol Bay annually. The decreasing subsistence needs of her family impact her plans for fishing, and “it’s getting smaller and smaller, because my Mom does not eat a lot of fish any more”, thus, previously, hundred to three hundred fishes per year were the norm. (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020).



Figure 42. *Neqlernaq*, or brant goose shared with an Elder and processed for her meal, Manokotak, September 2020 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

“Growing up my Mom used to put up three hundred fish to feed her family and my father’s dog team” (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020). Today, fifty to sixty fishes per year are sufficient for her family (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020). Sometimes Paton’s close family members fish for the extended family in case they are temporarily unable to fish (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020). Climate change also affects subsistence in some Alaskan villages and fish camps, as is the case with Paton’s fish camp cabin that had to be moved due to erosion of the coast (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020). In compliance with subsistence regulations, the Paton family reports their catch to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game which also controls the allowance of fishing per day, depending on annual escapement goals or “the

number of fish allowed to escape the fishery and spawn" (Carroll 2005). The family also practices berry picking at their fish camp (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020).

The subsistence activities are prioritized over commercial fishing that follows them. Depending on the cash economy, the rural and the urban Yupiit become commercial fishers, often combining their monetary jobs in the villages and in the city with the commercial fishing activities in summer. For instance, this is the case for some of my urban collaborators whose families regularly engage in seasonal, commercial fishing in the Bristol Bay region in summer, while living in the city for the rest of the year (Bishop Nicholson, personal communication, 2022). Bristol Bay is known worldwide for commercial fishing, even though traditional subsistence practices, such as fishing, sea mammal and caribou hunting remain vital for sustaining the local economy of the region (Halas & Neufeld 2018; VanStone 1967). If, for any reason, the Yup'ik and other commercial fishers decide to cease their activity, they may transfer their permits, for instance, to their children who learned to fish with them (Anonymous 2, personal communication, 2020).

For Yup'ik children, growing up in the village and the city, family fish camps remain a source of learning about subsistence activities. They learn both by practicing and by watching, which allows them to practice the subsistence activities in urban areas (Marie Meade, personal communication, 2019; Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2020). The same can be said about Yup'ik language skills children practice, while being in the fish camp. "In villages, kids do not necessarily learn the language, [their language proficiency] depends on the parents" (Anonymous 2, personal communication, 2020). For instance, my collaborator's children do not speak the language fluently. However, they learned some of it "with the family during the fishing seasons" (Anonymous 2, personal communication, 2020). Thus, despite today's decrease of

subsistence activities in rural areas, subsistence remains “an identity marker for the Yupiit ", as it involves the transmission of knowledge, including place-based environmental knowledge, the Yup’ik language and traditional Yup’ik values. High transportation costs and expensive tickets to the villages prevent some of urban Yup’ik families from coming there in summer. Some of the urban Yupiit choose to subsist near the city, while maintaining the relationships with the urban and rural social networks. Now I am going to elaborate on the role subsistence activities play for the Yup’ik urban population and on the ways they reconnect the urban Yupiit to the village.

To start with, the urban Indigenous populations subsist less than rural ones (Goldsmith 2008). Probable reasons for less important subsistence activities are lower food prices and less significant unemployment rates in the city (Ibid.). In other words, the Yupiit with steady jobs have less time and necessity to subsist. It does not mean, however, that the Yupiit do not actively engage in subsistence activities in summer. Urban Yupiit who can afford to travel to the villages, subsist in rural areas, whereas the ones who are less financially stable, remain in the city but go to camp, fish, hunt and pick berries in the surroundings of Anchorage. Fishing, in particular, dip-netting, is one of the most available subsistence activities near the city (Jeffrey Kowchee, personal communication, 2020). One of the most popular fishing spots is situated approximately three hours by car from Anchorage, in Kenai and Kasilof; fishing in the areas necessitates permits, while Indigenous peoples do not have any priority in subsistence activities in these areas.

Some Yupiit hunt for seals in May in the Whittier area, which is situated approximately sixty miles from Anchorage. As for hunting, “the ability to hunt depends directly on land ownership in an area. Whoever owns the land, regulates subsistence. It is easier to hunt on state lands. The main river areas of the Nenana River are not that restricted. If you have a boat, you can hunt a moose” (Jeffrey Kowchee, personal communication, 2020). Thus, it is easier to fish than to hunt close to

urban areas. Known as a successful, rural Inupiaq hunter, Jeffrey Kowchee has difficulties in finding possibilities to hunt nearby the urban areas. For instance, in summer 2022, he was able to hunt moose in Ninilchik (approximately two hundred miles from Anchorage) thanks to his brother-in-law who is “a part of the local Native corporation [that has ownership over the land]; otherwise, Kowchee “is not allowed to hunt” in the area (Jeffrey Kowchee, personal communication, 2020). Thus, access to certain subsistence activities, notably hunting, is restricted to Indigenous shareholders of local Native corporations. At the same time, the high cost of travelling to ancestral homelands and rural subsistence regulations are equally important barriers to susbsistence activties of urban Indigenous hunters.

Nevertheless, paid medical appointments in Anchorage contribute to the food sharing and exchange process between rural and urban extended family members and may at least partially compensate for the absence or limitations of some subsistence activities by urban Indigenous hunters, fishers and berry-pickers. “Covid prevented me from going home but my nephews came to Anchorage for medical appointments and shared moose, bear, and fish. An honor for them to share food with me, and for me, to receive food, as I taught them to hunt” (Jeffrey Kowchee, personal communication, 2020). Thus, the process of continuous oscillatory migration of the extended families allows some of the urban Yupiit and other Indigenous populations to fill in their freezers with the Indigenous food, however, the subsistence limitations in and nearby the urban areas might be detrimental to the Indigenous hunters’ identity, that is challenging to maintain in the city, where the Indigenous populations remain a minority.



Figure 43. A humorous illustration of subsistence regulations, preventing the Yupiit from hunting urban animals Retrieved from the Yup'ik Memes page on Facebook on May 16, 2022 with the permission of the page moderator. Cited and Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063523694538

Whenver Indigenous hunters manage to susist close to the city, they apply their local traditional hunting skills to the new environment. "Traditional knowledge helps to hunt for moose everywhere, it helps to estimate an approximate location of moose, [there is a] basic knowledge of how a moose goes or lives, what they eat in what location, what is the best area to hunt. It helps to respect the size limit by approximate size of antlers and the size of a bull moose" (Jeffrey Kowchee, personal communication, 2020). The same can be said about fishing and fish processing that are considered to be predominantly female tasks. According to my collaborator, Valerie Tony (2020), she applies the subsistence knowledge that she gained in her village to local fishing and to the processing of fish, as "all the fishing, hunting, berry picking skills can be used everywhere to survive". Nevertheless, the fish that Valerie subsists [in Kenai] is considered as "dry", as compared to the fish from her village Alakanuk. Thus, even if Valerie manages to subsist and to process fish from the local areas neighboring the city, she relies on additional salmon supplies from the village (personal communication, 2020).



Figure 44. Fish processing at a Yup'ik household in Anchorage after subsistence in Kenai, Alaska, July 2020
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Indigenous peoples need to embrace diversity in the city, where they often share public spaces as an urban minority. Fishing in the city or in the neighboring areas is also an activity that involves sharing space with non-Indigenous and other Indigenous populations. Fishing in Kenai and other nearby areas often involves camping, thus, close and extended Indigenous family members travel, camp and process their fish together on campsites and back at home in the city. The transmission of knowledge through story-telling related to the ancestral lands is challenging, however, the extended family gatherings, fishing and processing generate subsistence skill transmission and contribute to the sharing of stories about ancestors. For instance, when I participated in fish processing on a campsite with Tony's extended family, including the younger generation, they honored ancestors by acknowledging them and using their *uluaq* (a traditional Yup'ik women's knife for cutting fish), while the ancestors' presence was honored by throwing the meals' leftovers into the fire.

Similarly, berry-picking activities are popular, mostly in July and in August, but also in early fall, among the Yup'ik and other Indigenous populations living in the city. There are almost no regulations in regard to berry-picking in Alaska. The Yupiit therefore have a much easier access to this subsistence activity. The most popular areas are located approximately one or two hours by car from Anchorage: in Big Lake, Arctic Valley, Eureka or near Talkeetna. Everyone has their preferred spots, but some of the Yupiit "let the Elders gather [berries] nearby [Anchorage]", thus, traveling longer distances (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). "We go pick blackberries, cranberries. I go as much as I can and I share with the older people and people unable to pick up by themselves. I think it is still preserved as far as sharing goes. It's mainly women that pick berries" (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020). The berry-picking activities I participated in were practiced mostly with Yup'ik close or extended family members. Although berry-picking remains predominantly a female activity, males also participate. Before starting to pick berries, I observed some Yupiit practicing the ritual of "burying" food into the land in order to "feed [the] ancestors" as well as to ensure "the abundance of the subsistence foods" (Active 2010, Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020). It also involved the observance of the traditional practice to avoid calling animals by their names not to attract their attention. Hence, some Yup'ik traditional practices related to subsistence activities have transcended the boundaries of being solely related to local, rural environments, as they continue to be applied by the urban Yupiit in the areas close to the city.

Colonization, subsistence regulations, expensive transportation have significantly impacted Yup'ik subsistence activities and, thus, their lifeways. The decrease in the subsistence activities resulted in fewer opportunities for the transmission of locally specific knowledge and of values such as care for the extended family members and the community. Transmission had been traditionally implemented by starting with preparation activities and continuing with the processing of game and

fish. Nevertheless, subsistence activities in rural areas remain vital for the Yupiit both in terms of economic and cultural survival, even though many Yupiit have become commercial fishers to earn cash. In urban areas, subsistence plays more of a role in being an identity marker, enabling the Yup'ik extended family members to hunt, to go berry-picking, fish and process the game and the fish together, if there is no possibility to travel to their ancestral lands. Fishing and berry-picking remain more available than hunting, thus, limiting some Yup'ik males in practicing their traditional activity in areas close to the city. After processing, Native food harvested in rural and urban areas ends up in the freezers in order to be consumed and distributed mostly in private, but on certain occasions also in public Indigenous places in the urban areas. In the next section, I am going to elaborate on what role Native food plays in the extension of Yup'ik social practices to the city lifestyle.

Native Food

According to Mintz (1997), "food is never a "purely biological activity… its consumption is always conditioned by meaning" (p.7). For the Yupiit, processing, consuming and sharing food is meaningful in different ways: it remains an important means to strengthen ties with their rural and urban extended family members; it allows for socializing with both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous surroundings. Food distribution serves as a way to "manifest one's responsibility to one's community" (Fienup-Riordan 2000b p.162). Native food distribution channels between the village and the city enable the urban Yupiit to maintain connections with their ancestral lands.

What food is considered ‘Native’ by the Yupiit? Typically, Native food is procured through subsistence activities, such as hunting, fishing and berry- or plant-picking. Salmon, seal, walrus, moose, salmonberries and cranberries are the examples of Yup’ik subsisted food. While the rural Yupiit have access predominantly to the types of Native food specific for their regions, urban Yupiit have wider Indigenous networks in the city that allow them to acquire food subsisted in other Indigenous regions in Alaska. Anchorage is home to different Indigenous populations migrating from various rural places, enabling the exchange of Native food stemming from several Alaskan areas. The circulation of food between rural and urban areas reflects the oscillatory circulation of the rural and urban Indigenous populations. In addition, the urban Yupiit may have access to Native food that is subsisted locally through the subsistence activities described above.

While the Yupiit can experiment with new types of Native food acquired through various Indigenous networks in the city, the typical Yup’ik food and its distribution remain one of the most important means to maintain ties between villages and the city. Eating Native food is considered healthy as opposed to processed, mainstream food culture. Sharing Native food underlines the value of responsibility for the well-being of the community, while trading, selling and buying Native food become accepted and widely practiced activities in the city.

As discussed earlier, Yup’ik food distribution and consumption is a part of Moravian memorial feasts, Catholic Kateri circles and Orthodox Selaviq celebrations both in rural and in urban areas. I would like to elaborate on whether the connections with the urban and rural extended family members, both deceased and living, are strengthened by the Native food sharing and exchange networks.

According to a Yup'ik Elder John Philipp (2018), "they say a bit of food is a way to socialize with a person" (p. 360). Indeed, whenever the Yupiit meet in the village or in the city, they create Indigenous spaces by bringing, sharing and consuming food during private meetings, public church services, Christian song practices and memorial feasts. When I was invited by my urban Yup'ik friend to spend a couple of days in her village, her mother constantly invited me to eat. The table at her house stood near the entrance; it occupied a central place in the house. There was a constant flow of family members and friends coming for short visits who brought food to share, sat at the table, ate, drank coffee and tea, socialized and left. In these cases, the Native food distribution and consumption fulfills its "function of hospitality" (Bodenhorn 2000). Although longer distances, employment obligations and scatteredness in the city of Anchorage do not allow to maintain such a constant flow of daily interactions around a table with shared food, the Yupiit regularly continue to create their Indigenous spaces in the city by gathering, sharing and consuming Native food together.

As Fienup-Riordan (2000) argued, the wealthier the urban Yupiit are, the more Native food they possess. Indeed, the urban Yupiit with a stable income manage to return to their villages during the subsistence seasons in order to fill their urban freezers with fish, game and berries. Consequently, having subsistence food in stock an even richer assortment in stock and more possibilities to share such food with the urban extended family members and the community. At the same time, as described in the section above, local subsistence in the areas nearby Anchorage may serve at least partially as compensation for the ones who cannot afford flying back home, as their subsistence skills acquired in the village allow for hunting, harvesting, fishing and to contribute to the process of the food distribution and exchange in the urban area.

In the city as in the villages, food distribution involves both "reciprocal and non-reciprocal transactions" (Bodenhorn 2000). Food sharing with community members is a non-reciprocal

transaction that allows one to demonstrate one's dedication to the traditional values of providing food for the whole community to ensure a consequent success in hunting. Non-reciprocal sharing of food is closely connected to ensuring the next successful subsistence season, as "[animals] allow themselves to be hunted on condition that their bodies be shared" (Fienup-Riordan 1994). For instance, since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Anchorage Native Community Council has been encouraging urban Indigenous hunters to donate and share subsistence foods with the Indigenous Elders living in the city (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 2022; Anchorage Native Community Council Facebook Page). At the same time, beyond the traditional value of caring for the community, food distribution in the city serves as a means to develop and maintain newly established and already existing relationships within and outside the extended family network. In Mauss's words (2002) in rural and in urban areas, an Alaska Native, in general, and a Yup'ik person, in particular, "gives because one is compelled to do so, because the recipient possesses some kind of right of property over anything that belongs to the donor" (p.17).

The scatteredness of the urban Indigenous populations creates a necessity to work harder on sustaining the existing social networks in the city as compared to the rural kin living in proximity. Thus, non-reciprocal transactions aim at both manifesting the responsibility to the Indigenous community members and stimulating the community members to unite and to create Indigenous spaces.

As Malinowski (2013) argued in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, for the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands to possess meant to share, the Kula exchange system served to maintain relationships with the allies. Similarly, and as in the past, food possession and distribution allow the Yupiit to maintain relationships within their scattered, urban community. During my stay in the city of Anchorage, I received food donations from my Yup'ik friends, including dried fish, berries, fried bread and moose. I was given food mostly by a Yup'ik woman who "adopted" me into her family

as a sister. Some of the food she shared with me had been distributed by her family from the village or by her friends in Anchorage. As such an exchange implies reciprocity between the extended family members and the fictive kin, I shared food in return, thus, engaging in socializing and in nurturing the relationship by the regular and reciprocal process of the food exchange.

The value of sharing foods in the city among extended family memberd, friends and community networks remains closely connected to the expectation of getting more food in return. “These days sometimes, when sharing, sometimes food, our food seems to multiply; even though I had given [food] away, even though we thought we had given them away, we see that they had not run out” (Stanley Anthony, 2018, p.378). Food that the urban Yupiit receive from their villages or subsist in the nearby local areas is circulated and distributed in order to ensure its regular return.

> “[In Anchorage] we all share with each other the food we get from our villages. Some people are stingy. They do not share, so they do not get Native food or any help back. When you share, you get it back” (Christina Waska[70], personal communication, 2020).

As Christina Waska, my collaborator, pointed out, food distribution is not the only means to reciprocate in the Yup’ik community. The community members can and are supposed to offer their “help” in return. As Bodenhorn (2000) put it, “the circulation of food is paralleled by the circulation of many other things: equipment, mutual help, children, political support” (p. 40). If the community members have nothing else to share, they can [even] share good words (Anonymous 5, personal communication, 2020). Thus, distribution of Native food is only one of the ways to ensure a good hunting season and to maintain the relationships in the village as in the city.

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The circulation of Native food starts with subsisting on the ancestral lands; it expands into the city, following the oscillatory migration patterns and motions of the Yup'ik rural and urban inhabitants. As mentioned earlier, urban Yupiit with a stable income tend to possess a richer variety of Native food in their freezers. They can affor to fly to their ancestral lands to subsist for their families and to preserve berries, fish, seal and moose meat in summer for further consumption and redistribution among the urban community members for the rest of the year. The ones who cannot afford flying back to the village rely on their rural social networks coming to the city on the occasion of their medical appointments, conferences and other Indigenous gatherings, bringing subsisted food from the villages for distribution and exchange. The rural Yupiit also use occasions of being in the city to get the products they do not have access to or that are too expensive in the villages. This way, a turkey from Anchorage can be exchanged for seal oil from Togiak (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022), while moose, bear and fish from the rural, Indigenous hunters living in Nome can be traded for bullets from Anchorage to ensure the success of the next subsistence season (Jeffree Kowchee, personal communication, 2022). The food and the goods "migrate" and circulate between Anchorage and the rural areas in parallel with the Indigenous social network members.

Another means to sustain the relationships with the urban community members through sharing Native food is to subsist it locally. Although local subsistence does not necessarily cover all the needs of the Yupiit in terms of Native food, it allows the urban Yupiit to connect to the local lands, while filling up their freezers with fish, game and berries necessary to distribute during the public and private gatherings in order to live up to the traditional values of the Yup'ik communities. Fish or game subsisted in the areas close to the city of Anchorage may not be exactly the same as in the Yup'ik villages in terms of quality. Nevertheless, it allows to maintain the existing social networks and kinship relationships in the city by enriching the capacity to share.

The photo below illustrates the participant observation experience I had, while camping, fishing and processing local salmon with two Yup'ik female relatives and their children near Kenai, a city that is situated approximately two hundred fifty miles southwest of Anchorage.



Figure 45. Salmon processing outside a Yup'ik household, August 2020
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

Fishing salmon in Kenai comprised camping, cooking and fish processing both on the campsite and back home. The extended family members cooked and shared food, using village recipes; they cut salmon with the *uluat* (knives). Using the deceased ancestors' tools in processing the subsisted food was accompanied by sharing stories about them.

Berry-picking with the same collaborators in Eureka and near Talkeetna, both situated approximately 250 kilometers from the city of Anchorage, also involved meeting and distributing food with "the cousins". These activities enabled acquiring additional food to be distributed later among the Yup'ik and other Indigenous community members in its turn. Thus, food sharing during and after local subsistence activities allowed the Yup'ik extended family members that are scattered

across the city to gather, to create Indigenous spaces and to socialize in the ways that are similar to the ones practiced in the village (for instance, by sharing food with and stories about the common ancestors).

Consequently, the food distribution flow resulting from local subsistence activities adds to the circulation of food stemming from the rural areas. The food is distributed further within the urban Yup'ik community to ensure its continuity, network maintenance and its ties with the deceased ancestors and with the living community members. This way, the "displacement" of the urban Yup'ik population from the rural areas does not necessarily result in its "deterritorialization", as the Native food circulation and distribution helps them to maintain ties between "culture and place" (Voorhees 2010, p.69).

Now that I have analyzed the ways in which the Native food contributes to the complex process of sharing with and sustaining social networks, I would like to examine how the urban Yupiit acquire new opportunities for receiving Native food through their newly created networks connecting them with other Alaska Native regions.

Access to the Native food is more limited in the urban setting, especially for financially disadvantaged Yupiit, as they need cash to sustain their ability to subsist in the urban and in the rural areas. The urban religious denominations include the Yup'ik leadership that shares their Native food resources with their church communities, thus contributing to the reproduction of the food distribution and consumption practices existing in the villages. As the urban religious denominations embrace diversity, the channels of Native food distribution expand with various Indigenous church members sharing the subsisted food from different regions:

> "I was a bible teacher for many years and gathered women for bible studies at my home and at my cousin's [in the city]. When you have relationships with these different people from different regions, you start getting *muktuk* [frozen whale skin and blubber], … herring eggs from Sitka. There is a lot of sharing in the culture; I got so much food, my freezer was always full. We love to share. I would get fish, birds, they are very generous and they know I love to meet people and to feed them. Even salmonberries, and blueberries, I have got so much fish and caribou. I have Athabascan, Yup'ik, Inupiaq, friends, and we all love to share. That's embedded, when we conceptualize life, when we come to our senses, it's embedded in our traditions. When we catch our first catch, we have to share it with the Elders. When you catch your first moose, you distribute to the Elders in need. Even my first fish, eggs, my Mom had a big party for me, and shared candies and utensils and other things" (Bonnie Gregory, personal communication, 2020).

As there is a lack of permanent Indigenous public spaces in Anchorage, non-Christian Yupiit living in different places across the city have more limited and less regular access to the public distribution and exchange of Native food. It may be occasionally shared during potlucks organized after the Yup'ik dancing practices. The Native Students Services and the Cama-i Room at the University of Alaska Anchorage as well as the Alaska Pacific University sometimes offer Native food and cultural activities to its Indigenous students and community members. But the religious

denominations remain the only urban, public spaces where Native food is shared non-reciprocally with the community members on a regular basis.

As for the reciprocal distribution between close and extended family members, Native food follows the migration patterns of the Yup'ik people circulating between the village and the city, to return to the rural areas in the form of the goods exchanged in the city of Anchorage, mainiaining ties between migrating relatives and their ancestral lands in doing so. As I have examined above, the urban Yupiit sustain ties with both the living and the deceased through subsistence and Native food sharing. I would like to analyze in detail in what ways the urban Yupiit continue to do so through naming and adoption practices.

Naming

To start with, as Schweitzer & Golovko (1997) argued, Inuit naming practices of the past served as connections between the community members. Naming of a newborn after a deceased person launched the process of a life-long negotiation of natal and fictive kinship relationships (Schweitzer 2000, p.17). I will examine Yup'ik naming practices of the past as well as of the present, discussing to what extent these practices are relevant to the urban setting and analyzing the ways in which deceased and living namesakes and their relations connect the village and the city.

When a Yup'ik individual dies, one or several newborns are named after this individual who is usually an extended family member; the newborns acquire some traits of the deceased person,

assuring the rebirth of and entering into a relationship with the deceased (Fienup-Riordan 1994; Oswalt 1990; Theresa John, personal communication, 2020). Acquiring a new Yup'ik name results in the creation of a set of new fictive kin relationships: between the deceased and their namesake(s); between the namesake(s) and the family of the deceased; between the namesakes of the deceased.

With naming, a deceased person is partly reborn in the individuals named after them who acquire some of the traits of this deceased ancestor. Namesakes are expected to behave in similar ways, thus enabling the continuity of a name through reproduction (Fienup-Riordan 2001). They may inherit good or bad traits of character or types of behavior. Hence reproduction serves to replace "one person for another" instead of contributing to the expansion of the Yup'ik society (Fienup-Riordan 2001, p. 228).

The naming process does not depend on gender. Female newborns can receive a male name, and vice versa (Bodenhorn 1990; Carl 2015, p. 124). For instance, my collaborator shared with me a story of her husband receiving a female Yup'ik name. The deceased female was called "Mom" by the community, since she took motherly care of the whole village. The couple live nearby Anchorage today, but some community members from the village continue to refer to my collaborator's husband as "Mom" (Anonymous 5, personal communication, 2020).

People may acquire several Yup'ik names during their lives. They are called different names by different individuals. Often, the families of the deceased relative a person is named after prefers to refer to the namesake using the name of their relative, as is the case with my collaborator, Carrie Paton (personal communication, 2020). However, some family members may use naming to underline a particular trait of a person that they may inherit from their namesake. For instance, some

of Carrie's cousins call her *Yuracista* (“the one who makes songs”), “because they relate to [her] her love for singing and to [her] directing a choir” (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020).

The Yupiit name newborns after the deceased, and some of their behavioral patterns transfer to the namesakes, creating new fictive kinship ties with the deceased as well as with other community members. However, naming may also occur in case an adult needs healing.

> “...Sometimes when our relative dies, when he knows that person [who died], they say they rename that person after him. Also sometimes when a person is sick, when a child is ill, they say if a person had died, if they give that [one who is sick] that person’s name, if they rename that person to cure him, sometimes that one [they renamed] recovers” (John Philipp, 2018, p. 256).

Through the process of naming, all the namesakes of the deceased person engage in a new, specific relationship:

> “Then those two, I think, you know how some who share a namesake don’t get along too well, those who share a namesake today. I think that [the namesakes] are confused, that they fight over their name because [the namesakes] are confused after they are named after [the same person]” (Theresa Abraham 2018, p. 252).

Similarly, I did not realize at first why one of my Yup’ik friends had a somewhat contradictory relationship with one of her namesakes from the village, while both of them moved to

the city of Anchorage, and they occasionally met each other during some gatherings and events. At some point, my friend told me that she shares the same Yup'ik name with this other person, who teased her back in the village for being another namesake of the same deceased person.

The third relationship a namesake acquires as a result of naming is the one with the family of the deceased. For families of the deceased, especially, for the newly departed ones, this belief in the reincarnation may provide some sort of a consolation in times of grief (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2020). "Then the family of the person we were named after would treat that baby as though it was [the deceased] who had come [back]" (Lucy Sparck, 2018, p.262). After the naming ritual, families of the deceased have an obligation to provide food, clothes and gifts to the namesakes to feed and to comfort their deceased relative through the namesakes (Mauss 2002). This tradition of honoring the deceased is still practiced today, especially, among the Orthodox Yupiit during the Starring celebration with the significant food and gift distribution "to feed and to honor the deceased" (Anonymous 5, personal communication, 2020). Providing the deceased with food may also be occasional and creative. For instance, one of my collaborators accidentally met her mother's namesake in a city restaurant: she insisted on paying for the namesake's food to feed her deceased Mom through this person.

As mentioned earlier, the Moravian Yupiit participate in the Starring celebrations of their Orthodox family and community members. However, they also practice food and gift distributions during Memorial Feasts organized after the death of their dear ones. On a more personal relationship level, I observed the Yup'ik relatives of the deceased congratulating their namesakes on the occasion of their deceased relatives' birthday, sometimes baking cakes to share with them. However, this relationship may imply reciprocal sharing, because namesakes of the deceased may share subsisted food and goods with the families of the deceased.

The process of colonization and of Christianization brought some changes into the naming practice, because the Yup'ik started to receive English and church names. The English names of the deceased often became the official names of the newborns named after them in parallel to their Yup’ik names (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2021). Gradually, the English names became official but they did not eliminate the Yup’ik naming practices and fictive kinship relationships. They became appropriated into the already existing naming and fictive kinship practice. For instance, when my collaborator Carrie Paton introduced me to her singing group that gathered to prepare for the Native Musicale, she jokingly called me “Grandma Olga”, as her grandmother’s English name was Olga, thus simulating a fictive kinship relationship, according to which I might be considered as resembling her grandmother through carrying the same name.

Even though the English names acquired by the Yupiit at birth do not result in extending one’s kinship in the mainstream culture, they may be incorporated into the fictive kinship networks in parallel with Yup’ik names. Hence, naming as a means to enter into a complex network of kinship relationships continues to be relevant and used by the Yupiit in the village. The relationships transcend the geographical borders, as the namesakes of a common deceased relative or community member are spreading across the urban and rural areas, but their Yup’ik name continues to connect them though the relationship launched at the moment they received their name. Colonization and the forced separation of some Yup’ik children from their families by the US government resulted in the loss of some cultural practices, so that not all the Yupiit consider naming as well as other traditional practices important. Nevertheless, Yup’ik names have started to appear in baptismal records, in signatures, on business cards as a manifestation of Yup’ik Indigenous identity in the village and in the city (Hannah, 2008; Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2021).

In the past, the Yupiit avoided using the names of the deceased to address their namesakes (Fienup-Riordan 1990, p. 246). Today, the names are used for introductions to an audience during Indigenous gatherings. In case of referring to the namesakes, natal kinship terms are used (e.g. my brother's namesake, my auntie's namesake). Thus, knowing to trace the natal kinship remains important for some of the rural and urban Yupiit; it goes along with tracing fictive kinship ties. Another contemporary 'innovative' practice consists in naming after alive persons, which "is nice in a way" but "goes against the tradition" (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2021). Despite the changes the Yup'ik naming practice underwent, it remains relevant to the Yup'ik worldview: it continues to connect the fictive kinship members through their relationships with the deceased and with the living by transcending the boundaries between the village and the city. Moreover, especially for the younger generation, it serves as a means to revendicate their Yup'ik identity.

As far as the Orthodox Yupiit are concerned, in addition to their English and Yup'ik names that they might acquire from their deceased relatives or community members, they receive their "church names" at baptism. The baptized Yupiit acquire the names of the Saints they are baptized after. These names relate them to the church (Carl 2015, p. 132), including fictive kinship ties with their godparents that they also acquire through baptism. Interestingly, Yup'ik naming practices transcended intra-religious relationships between Yup'ik community members belonging to different religious denominations which suggests that the Yupiit have not abandoned their ancestral practices. Rather, they have been creative in embracing Christianity by adding its different versions to the existing set of beliefs and practices. In villages, the Yupiit from different religious denominations attend each others' Christmas, Starring and other celebrations (Diane Chris, personal communication, 2022). In the city, the same trend remains: I observed several Moravian families being present at the Starring celebrations in the city households, while several Orthodox Yupiit were present at the Protestant Native Musicale. In addition, I observed one of the Yup'ik Moravians

wishing their Orthodox, deceased relatives' namesake merry Russian Orthodox Christmas. A Yup'ik Moravian pastor carries the Yup'ik name of Russian Orthodox Matushka Olga Nicholai of Kwethluk whose glorification has recently been approved by the Orthodox Church in America (Orthodox Church in America Website[71] 2023). The Yup'ik naming and new kinship relationships it are an essential part of the Yup'ik identity; they unify the Yup'ik peoples in one whole kinship network that connects them cutting across the borders of religious identity.

As for the ritual of Yup'ik naming, I would like to compare in what ways it is practiced in the village and in the city. In both settings it involves water sprinkling on the head. As a participant in the Yup'ik dance practices at the Alaska Native Medical Hospital, I acquired the Yup'ik name *Elluqiin* after a dance group member's deceased mother. An Elder who was naming me sprinkled water on my head and gave me the same bottle to sip from. Fienup-Riordan (2000) described the ritual of naming as "dropping water at the four corners" of the head "but not the head itself", then proclaiming that the deceased bestowed upon the soul of the person being named (p.189). Carl (2015) described her naming ritual in the village of Napaskiak as pouring [half of a teacup] of holy water on her head and giving her to drink the rest of the water (p.137). In the three descriptions, water is an essential component for the naming process, while the location for naming does not seem to play an important role either in the city or in the village. In Carl's case, however, the naming ritual was conducted to help her heal from a disease (Carl 2015). In my case, naming signified my inclusion in the Yup'ik dancing at the hospital. The naming strategies may be different, but the ritual of naming seems to be similar, and the urban setting does not lead to any change in the ritual.

In what ways do the Yup'ik names participate in the process of identity negotiation in an urban setting? In what ways do they connect the village and the city? In contrast to the villages, the

71 https://www.oca.org/fs/proclamation-glorification-righteous-matushka-olga. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.

Yupiit, together with the other Indigenous populations, are a minority in the city. Consequently, the use of Indigenous names is limited to Indigenous spaces in the city, even though, as mentioned earlier, some of the Yupiit and other Indigenous peoples prefer to officialize their children's Indigenous names by including them in their birth certificates and baptismal records. The names are used to manifest Indigenous identity in the city (Hannahs 2013), as the Yupiit, in particular, introduce themselves to each other and to other Indigenous peoples during Indigenous gatherings in the city by explaining the meaning of their Yup'ik names and by giving a brief description of their close family members. Tracing the kinship ties has been an indispensable skill learned during childhood (Therese John, personal communication, 2020). Doing this in the urban area demonstrates one's dedication to ancestral traditions. Naming of the children in the city still remains important (Hannahs 2013). Not all the urban Yup'ik children though receive a Yup'ik name from their families, so that, some of them may be named, in public institutions, for instance, while attending the Yup'ik Immersion program at the College Gate Elementary School (Anonymous 8[72], personal communication, 2022).

As analyzed above, the Yupiit continue to honor their deceased relatives from the village by distributing Native and other kinds of food as well as gifts during the Starring celebrations in the urban households and Orthodox churches among their namesakes living in the city. The Moravian Yupiit may participate in the distribution. They also share food and gifts to feed the deceased during Memorials Feasts. The namesakes, in their turn, may also share food with the families of the deceased, reciprocating the fictive kinship relationship that emerged at the moment of them being named after the deceased from the village. Some of the namesakes may remain in the village, some migrate to the city, across the rural and the urban areas. The teasing relationships of the namesakes can also extend from the village to the city, as in the example of my friend and her namesake described above. Lastly, non-Indigenous outsiders can also acquire Yup'ik names with the purpose

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of their integration into the complex network of fictive kinship relationships (Carl 2015; Fienup-Riordan 2000). As a participant of the urban Yup'ik dance group, I was integrated into it by its several members, which started with teasing me about "my red hair" and thinking about a corresponding Yup'ik nickname and resulted in a naming ceremony performed by an Elder and in giving me a real Yup'ik name. My non-Indigenous children were also given Yup'ik names without the performance of the naming rituals which signified their connection to their new, fictive kin who passed away in the village. Thus, extending one's kinship and circulating within the complex network of natal and fictive kin relationships remains a creative life-long process as well as an important link connecting the living and the dead in the village and in the city. Adoption has also been and continues to be a part of the same process of acquiring new fictive kinship in the Yup'ik community. I would therefor like to examine in what ways it remains important for the urban Yup'iit as a tool to extend and to stimulate their kinship relationships in urban and rural environments.

Adoption

Fienup-Riordan (2001) argued in the chapter she wrote for the book *Stranger to Relatives: the Adoption and Naming of Anthropologists in Native North America* that adoption continues to play an important role within the Yup'ik communities, while "most adoptions today come about not because a child needs a family but because someone wants a child" (p.220). Indeed, adoption remains significant for the Yupiit. However, the examples of Yup'ik adoptions I observed or heard of during my fieldwork in the urban setting demonstrated that the Yup'ik children's need to be adopted equaled if not exceeded the families' need and desire to adopt. I would like to elaborate on today's process of adoption in the Yup'ik society, and on whether the process of continuous,

oscillatory migration of the Yup’ik population back and forth between villages and the city results in any changes in their adoption practice. I will also examine in which ways adoption might help sustains ties between the villages and the city.

To start with, one of the main differences between mainstream American and Yup'ik traditional views on adoption is the fact that the later wish to maintiain ties both with the adoptive and biological families, as Fienup-Riordan argued (2000). For instance, my adopted collaborators often referred to their biological mothers along with their adoptive mothers in their conversations. While they called adoptive mothers just “Moms”, they referred to the other “mothers” as their “biological mothers” underlying their original ties. For instance, my Yup’ik friend and collaborator, Carrie Paton, told me about her younger brother being adopted by their relatives, however, paying regular, daily visits to his “biological Mom” (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020).

> “She ended up giving him to the family that lost their only son and couldn’t conceive. Her husband was my mom’s first cousin. They also adopted another boy, the same situation, both from the first cousins. I saw a lot of that growing up, family members adopting a baby. It is still being practiced today. My cousin’s daughter adopted her baby out to her aunt. A couple of years later, she was unable to get pregnant. Recently, her husband’s sister had a baby and gave the baby to them. It still happens (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2020).

Adoption is being practiced predominantly by Yup’ik relatives (Fienup-Riordan 2000, p. 184). Obligations to share with the family members and with the community seemingly include the distribution of children within the community, to allow as many families as possible to have and

raise children who are going to support them, once they grow up. Perhaps this is why, according to Lantis (1946) , “although there were indeed some children who were unadjusted in their new family situations, most fitted into the new household without difficulties” (p.160). Sharing children with close and extended family members serve to strengthen ties, as adopted children unite biological and adoptive families through circulating between them, on the one hand. On the other, distribution of children is also an act of manifesting responsibility to the community members, as it helps childless families to become parents. In addition, according to Morrow & Pete (1996), the majority of adoptive relatives are Yup’ik grandparents, and that the children need their grandparents’ care more than vice versa. One of my collaborators was indeed adopted by her grandparents who taught her Yup’ik traditional values and dancing. She adopted her granddaughter in turn. She has been passing on the same teachings to her granddaughter who calls her “Mom”. According to Lewis et al. (2018), teaching children the “Yup’ik way of life” is one of the most important goals of grandparents rearing their Yup’ik grandchildren. Indeed, I have heard from several Yup’ik people living in Anchorage that close relationships with Yup’ik grandparents are often an indicator of passing down the traditional knowledge and Yup’ik language to the grandchildren.

Another argument to share children within the extended families was to search for their healing. In other words, a non-reciprocal sharing of a sick baby led to recovery.

> “The other thing I wanted to share, one of the traditional things, if you keep not having a baby, I have heard my mom saying, you adopt out, she gave a baby with seizure to her cousin, the first adopted out baby, so the baby’s health could be restored. Babies are taken out to heal. My cousin had two first, there were health problems, one baby died. She gave her 3rd baby

away to heal - that baby was healthy. Her 4th pregnancy was normal" (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022).

As analyzed above, naming practices are also an extension of kinship ties in the sense that a newborn acquires new fictive kin and some traits of the deceased after they receive their names. Naming newborns and adults after the community deceased members also occurred to seek for a remedy. Thus, sharing children with other community members, no matter whether they are living or deceased, might also result in healing and potential recovery of a sick child.

It is important to examine in what ways Yup'ik cosmology is related to the questions of naming and adoption. As analyzed earlier in this chapter, in the past as in the present, a newborn was/is named after a deceased person (often after a deceased relative) which initiated/initiates their relationship with each other as well as a relationship between the family of the deceased and their namesake. Thus, fictive kinship plays a significant role for the Yupiit; it serves to develop and sustain ties between various groups within the community; it is natural for the Yupiit to have and to maintain ties that are not based on blood or marriage. In this sense, it is also usual for them to remain a part of their biological family after being adopted. The process of christianization extended fictive kinship further, at least, in the case of the Orthodox Yupiit, as they also started to "share" children with their godparents whose educational and nurturing duties and responsibilities towards their godchildren go beyond the religious activities related to the church (Csoba DeHass 2009, pp. 97-98). Thus, for the Yupiit becoming Orthodox, the concept of sharing children with their godparents was not new, as they already shared their biological children with the adoptive families. With the process of migration, I met some Yup'ik Orthodox godparents in Anchorage who have some of their godchildren in the village and others in the city.

The epidemics of the early 20th century wiped out some Yup'ik communities, so that many Yup'ik children became orphans and were sent to orphanages and boarding schools; some Yup'ik children whose parents survived the epidemics were forcibly sent to boarding schools across the country from the communities that did not have primary schools (Hirshberg 2005, p.6; Napoleon 2005). Since the epidemics, many Yup'ik and other Indigenous children have been experiencing adoption and separation from their families and communities resulting in crises reflected in The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) (NICWA Website[73] 2023). Adopted in 1978, ICWA aimed at "protect[ing] the best interests of Indian children and promot[ing] the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families" (Congress House of Representatives Report 1978, p. 2). Despite some progress made in retaining Indigenous children in their extended families and tribes, external adoption of Indigenous children continues to occur more frequently as compared to the adoption cases of non-Indigenous children. Thus, the Yup'ik and other Indigenous children experience adoption that results in severing the ties with their natal families.

At the same time, there are many issues in the Yup'ik villages due to which children may need adoptive parents more than families want a child. According to Pahoe (2018), "in 2016 almost half of the Alaska children in foster care or in 'out of home placements' came from a home with parental or guardian alcohol abuse" (p.3). Alcohol and drug abuse contribute to the adoption crisis in contrast to the ICWA initiatives enacted.

> "I think things have really changed in just one generation, I don't think during my mom's bearing age, [there was] alcohol and drugs but during my childbearing years lots of people were having alcohol, people started

73 https://www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-Understanding-ICWA-Placements-Using-Kinship-Care-Reasearch-Final.pdf. Last accessed January 18th, 2024.

> drinking, many children were drug exposed, babies being born and unwanted; these kids have problems. Adoptive parents are having to deal with it, but they have been prepared, they knew they are mostly aware of a lot of behavioral problems in the villages. Some teachers report behavioral problems with learning disabilities" (Carrie Paton, personal communication, 2022).

Carrie Paton adopted five children. Two out of five were the children of her close and extended family members, so she went through a brief ICWA procedure in those cases. Carrie trusted the families she adopted from. Her adoptive daughter was the biological daughter of her brother.

I would like to go back to the topic of anthropologists' adoptions into the Yup'ik and other Indigenous communities to briefly analyze what duties and rights I acquired once I was adopted by a Yup'ik woman. My Yup'ik friend adopted me "as a sister" during the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women event at the Alaska Native Heritage Center simply by announcing it to me. As Fienup-Riordan (2001) argued, Yup'ik adoption is "an ongoing, creative process and… first and foremost defined as taking responsibility and caring for someone" (p. 241). As we lived far from each other, and my adoptive sister worked in another town, our relationship was sustained mostly through a series of food and gift exchanges. Her duty to care for me extended to the whole family, as she always distributed food and gifts sufficient for all the family members. Thus, by adopting me as a sister, my friend adopted and cared for my whole family by extending her kinship ties, which my family reciprocated. The urban lifestyle and my adoptive sister's job in another town prevented us to exchange food and gifts on a regular basis, however, sharing remained a vehicle for maintaining the fictive kin relationship that was created in accordance with the Inuit's approach to

“continually add onto one's existing relatives” in the course of their lifetime (Bodenhorn 1990, p. 59). Thus, Yup’ik adoption therefore continues to serve as a creative tool to extend their natal and fictive kinship ties that spread to the urban areas and back to the rural areas by people migrating back and forth between the village and the city. Alcohol- and drug-related issues have become important incentives for adoption of Yup’ik children by their extended family members, but these adoptions in the villages by urban family members in combination with the tradition to sustain bonds with the adoptive and natal families may strengthen the bonds and the necessities to travel to the village. In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the subsistence practices, the subsisted food distribution, naming and adoption have been operated in and connecting the village and the city. I would also like to examine in what ways the migration process has impacted the Yup’ik gender roles contributing to a “gender shift” in the urban area (Habeck et al. 2010).

Gender Roles

According to Bodenhorn (1990), hunting is “a sacred act” for the Inuit, meaning that an animal sacrifices itself to a hunter who successfully partners with his wife, both playing equally important roles in the process (p.61). This male-female collaboration has been indispensable for community's survival under harsh climate conditions. In this section, I am going to discuss in what ways cultural changes and the oscillatory migration process have been shaping Yup’ik gender roles that have been centered on maintaining successful subsisiting activtiies.

To begin with, women had to observe and to follow strict rules in caring for and instructing their children which would predetermine their subsequent relationships with animals, starting from their pregnancy and continuing throughout their lives; the rules of raising a boy significantly differed from the rules of raising a girl (Fienup-Riordan 1994). According to an Elder, Frank Andrew (2005), "they say that they take special care when raising a boy because they are hunters. It is said that abstinence rules must be followed when a child is born. When a newborn child is a boy, there are strict rules one must follow when caring for him. One should be careful not to let his saliva and urine touch a man's body. But it is safe to be exposed to [the urine and saliva] of an infant girl, because the time for one to follow strict abstinence rules regarding girls comes later" (p. 151). With her first menstruation, a girl became mature, and she had to follow a strict set of rules not to interfere with the success of subsistence; the parents of a a girl menstruating for the first time shared food among community members (Bonnie Gregory, personal communication, 2020; Fienup-Riordan 1994; Lantis 1946).

In the past, gender separation reflected spatial separation. Men and boys lived in *qasgiq* (the men's house) where they ate, slept, prepared for the subsistence activities, bathed and performed ceremonies; women lived separately with smaller children, but they entered the men's house for bringing food, helping with some preparations for the subsistence activities and for participating in the ceremonies (Lantis 1946, p. 157). Thus, even though women and girls were spatially separated from men and boys most of the time, their presence in the *qasgiq* was not excluded; their participation was necessary for practical as well as ceremonial activities. The same need-driven gender complementarity can also be observed in the skills that the children still learn and apply depending on the circumstances:

> “Ever since I was about seventeen, I have been in the city, so my sisters had these jobs, collecting wood for the smoke house, since there is no boy, it does not matter. You are a girl, you are getting wood too. Since I left, I am gone, they learned. And I learned women’s tasks, cutting fish, that’s primarily women’s job, but I was the only kid. I am not very good at it but I learned how this was my job. My job for cutting fish was primarily thinning and cutting off heads, because it does not take that much skill to do that, as when you are fileting or making strips, that was primarily done by the women in the family mostly because men did other stuff. My sisters mostly do boys’ jobs at home. My stepmom is an amazing fish cutter but she can keep up with the work my dad and sisters do” (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2019).

Thus, acquiring skills of the opposite gender has been need-driven depending on a family’s composition (Hensel 1996). Lisa Jenkins and Quentin Simeon were my collaborators who told me about gaining skills of the opposite gender during their childhood, but both were directed to concentrate on the gender-specific tasks at the age of ten. “In the village I am the sibling that stays inside, doing cooking and cleaning, my other siblings do staff outside. My Dad said [to me] at the age of ten, you are supposed to learn the woman’s stuff” (Lisa Jenkins, personal communication, 2019). Hence, the concentration on the gender-specific tasks occurs at a certain age, while some skills of the opposite sex are being taught and used according to the specific needs of a particular family, in the earlier years to be applied, if needed.

Furthermore, as described in the section above, children may acquire some behavoir of their deceased relatives and community members of the opposite gender through their fictive kinship, as a result of the Yup'ik naming practices. In this way, as Bodenhorn (1990) argued, "personhood is not necessarily tied to gender" (p.68). Besides, the Yup'ik language has no gender-specific personal pronouns in the third-person singular (Jacobson 1995), which might also be an indication of a certain gender fluidity of the Yup'ik culture. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, gender specific activities and restrictions centered on subsistence co-exist with the gender complementarity:

> "They say a man may not be a *nukalpiaq* [successful hunter], but if he acquires a wife who makes an effort at doing things, they say if she works on his few catches with care, she will lift that one up, she will raise him up. He will become good at catching game successfully, he won't lack anymore. They say that [woman] raised him up so that he would hunt successfully. It's the same for both a woman and a man" (John Philipp 2018, p.174).

The focus on complementarity and the ideal of the female care for their husbands, children and community members also reflected the Orthodox values that a part of the Yupiit adopted as a result of the conversion, as described in the previous chapters. Whereas the male Orthodox clergy and laity's main responsibilities include the liturgy and sacraments, *matushkas*' (priests' wives) main role is the care for their parish and community (Oleksa 1992). The sisterhoods often play an indispensable role in helping a parish to "survive" financially by raising funds that allow its continuity (Diane Chris, the wife of a Yup'ik Orthodox priest, personal communication, 2022). The Orthodox spatial separation of women and men in the church parallels the Yup'ik practice of spatial gender separation between the men's house and the surrounding houses inhabited by women. The restrictions related to menstruating women have also existed in the Orthodox church (Kan 1996)

which facilitated the adoption of the “new” religion. The combination of Yup’ik and Orthodox gender expectations from females in terms of hard work, constant support of their husbands, of the community is reflected in the upcoming glorification of Matushka Olga Nicholai, as described in Chapter III. In contrast to gender separation in the Russian Orthodox Church, gender equality in terms of the liturgical life in the Moravian Church has been more of a novelty for the Yupiit, as this denomination allows both female and male leaders to become pastors on equal terms. Nevertheless, when I conducted participant observations in the Anchorage Moravian church in the city, I noticed that Yup’ik female leaders continue to be caretakers that assure the church continuity by, for instance, sharing the subsisted, Native and non-Native food for potlucks. Thus, some of the Yup’ik gender roles continue to coexist with the gender expectations of the church.

Another issue to address is the extent to which Yup'ik gender roles have been shaped by the process of migration and of adoption to the urban lifestyle. In order to find answers, it is important to start examining the trend of a more significant out-migration of Indigenous females in Alaska as compared to men that has been of interest to researchers for a couple of decades. Kleinfield et al. (1981) analyzed the increasingly important role of Inupiaq women in the wage economy. Hamilton and Seyfrit (1994) noted the disproportionate out-migration of Indigenous women in Alaska into the urban areas and its negative impact on the gender imbalance in the villages. Goldsmith et al. (2004) found that by the year 2000, Indigenous women’s employment was more stable than that of men’s; Indigenous female workers were also most likely to go to college and to live in the cities (p.1). In 2006, there were fourteen percent more Indigenous women living in the city than men, and nine percent more Indigenous men living in the villages (Goldsmith 2008). Hensel (1996) explained this trend by such traditional Yup’ik female gender tasks as processing of subsisted food and wage work being “less mutually exclusive” as compared to the traditional male gender roles: “individual men seem to be faced with the choice of having either the choice for subsistence but no money, or the

money but no time" (pp. 118-119). Another important gender role of Yup'ik women that is caring for the community members might transition more easily into the health care jobs being mostly occupied by Native women (Goldsmith 2004).

Speaking more specifically about adaptation to the urban lifestyle, the Yup'ik female roles of processing subsisted food, sewing, and berry-picking are more transferable to the urban setting and less related to local environmental knowledge that the Yup'ik male hunters bear (Lee 2003). Even though the basic elements of local traditional knowledge help in adaptation to the subsistence areas nearby the city, the hunting regulations in those areas significantly limit opportunities of Indigenous males to subsist (Jeffrey Kowchee, personal communication, 2022). Consequently, "the urban women's continuity with the past is asserted every time she flenses a seal on the laundry room floor or stirs up a pot of basket dye on the kitchen stove" (Lee 2002, p. 7), whereas hunting remains limited for urban Yup'ik men. Therefore, the Yup'ik men might have fewer opportunities to reproduce the village lifestyle through practicing their gender-specific tasks in the city, while their hunter identity is less likely compatible with the service jobs offered on the urban job market. These challenges also concern Yup'ik male youth coming to the city for their studies. As Lisa Jenkins (2022), my collaborator and a Yup'ik freshman at the University of Alaska Anchorage, explained: "Being away from home is hard, especially for the guys cause some of them from the last semester [came back to the villages], cause they missed a lot of hunting. Most of them went back, they are not really here this semester. They were freshmen, it was hard" (Personal Communication).

Despite the challenges related to possibilities of combining wage labor and subsistence activities in the city for the Yup'ik and other Indigenous males, I met Yup'ik families who manage to successfully hunt moose, fish salmon and pick berries all together not far away from the urban

areas, without returning to subsist on the ancestral lands in summer. The urban, male Yup'ik hunters travel to Whittier located approximately sixty miles from Anchorage to hunt seals providing their extended families with fresh meat, oil and furs. Others return to their villages in summer for subsistence or for commercial fishing, as, for instance, the Anchorage Moravian Bishop Nicholson does. On the urban Indigenous community level, some measures are also being taken to help Indigenous males to integrate into the urban environment. For instance, Southcentral Foundation, a non-profit tribal health care organization, promotes the Family Wellness Warriors Initiative to Indigenous males living in the city that involves training aiming to "build resilience, self-efficacy and healthy relationships" (Ray et al., 2019, p.2). As Gottlieb (n.d.), the former president and CEO of the Southcentral Foundation put it: "We are trying to get more and more men involved because our Native men are still leaders in our communities… Family Wellness Warriors Initiative encourages men in the community to be strong protectors for their families, like they were in the old days". The program appeals to the traditional Indigenous male roles of leadership and protection of the communities to encourage Indigenous men to remain leaders in both rural and urban communities.

As I argued previously, the religious denominations the Yupiit attend in the city also help both men and women to reproduce the village lifestyle, thereby, reducing stress related to the adaptation of both genders to the city. However, as previously discussed, the Yup'ik and other Indigenous populations have to embrace ethnic diversity in the urban churches that perhaps resulted in the spatial separation rules becoming less strict. In the urban parishes, the female and male laity stand all together during the services. The same can be said about the Starring celebration in the city that starts at Saint Innocent Cathedral and continues in the parishioners' households: even though the spinning of the star is always performed by males, both men and women sing, stand, sit and eat all together. Interestingly, a group of male volunteers at the Cathedral plays an important role in

helping the sisterhood in their weekly activities (Anthony Lekanof, personal communication, 2022). Regarding urban Moravians, as outlined above, despite the gender equality generally promoted by this as well as other Protestant denominations, Yup’ik Moravian females in the city also play a more traditional role of caring than urban Yup'ik Moravian males by sharing Native food during church gatherings with the community. Thus, even though some gender roles in the urban churches become more fluid (e.g. Yup’ik men help the sisterhood in their traditionally female activities), the other Yup’ik gender-specific activities continue to be practiced within the religious denominations in the city, creating possibilities for the Yup’ik men to reproduce their village lifestyle.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed in what ways the subsistence practices in the village and in the city enable the Yupiit to practice their gender-specific tasks, while connecting the rural and the urban Yupiit through the process of subsisted food distribution and exchange. The urban Yupiit with steady jobs and income maintain connections with their ancestral lands by subsisting in the rural areas in summer. The high cost of travelling prevents many urban Yupiit from returning to their home villages; however, there are successful cases of urban Yup’ik families that manage to hunt, fish and pick berries to sustain their social network by distributing Native food among their extended family members and church communities. Subsistence may not be economically vital for the urban Yupiit as compared to their rural relatives. However, it helps them to recreate the village lifestyle by practicing subsistence activities with the extended family members.

Native food distribution and exchange play a very important role in gathering the extended family and community members otherwise scattered across the city. As the Yupiit embrace

Indigenous and non-Indigenous diversity of the city, they participate in the food distribution with the other Indigenous populations, producing themselves some subsisted food not typical for their regions to further distribute it in various Indigenous circles. The religious denominations that the Yupiit attend remain the only public spaces where Native food distribution is regular.

Naming and adoption have been shaped by the process of colonization, so that not all the Yupiit continue to engage in the creation of new fictive kinship relationships. Nevertheless, the namesakes, as well as biological and adoptive families continue to maintain their relationships that cut across religious denominations and geographical boundaries, connecting the village and the city.

Some of the Yup'ik gender roles have been shaped by the process of migration, especially the male role of a hunter, as it is more challenging for Yup'ik men to transfer their local environmental knowledge to urban surroundings, while participating in the wage economy and following strict hunting regulations. The women's tasks of processing subsisted food and of berry-picking are easier to recreate in urban settings. The religious denominations, in particular, the Russian Orthodox church, remain a vehicle to recreate gender separation and the female role of caring for the community, despite a greater gender fluidity influenced by various Orthodox populations the urban church has to embrace.

CHAPTER VII: RENEGOTIATION OF DANCING, ARTS, LANGUAGES AND TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICES IN THE CITY

In the previous chapter I analyzed how the choice of the Yupiit to navigate between the village and the city impacts their subsistence activities, their reproduction of natal and fictive kin through naming and adoption, the negotiation of their gender roles, and the food and goods distribution strategies. In this chapter I would like to focus on how reawakening Yup'ik dance, language, arts and healing practices in the urban setting helps create and negotiate Indigenous spaces. Following the perspective of the Yup'ik language professor Marie Meade, I will use the term reawakening and revival instead of revitalization, because the latter one presupposes a previous extinction (personal communication, 2022).

Yup'ik Dance

According to Theresa John (2010), a Yup'ik scholar and professional dancer, the *Yuraryaraput,* or Yup'ik ways of dancing is central to Yup'ik "socio-cultural conceptual theory, ontology, cosmology, epistemology, Indigenous pedagogy, and significant to [their] spirituality" (p.

108). Thus, Yup'ik dancing or *yuraq* encompasses various aspects of Yup'ik lifeways. "Yuraq is the center of Yup'ik life and spirituality; but it is a part of the Agayuliyaraq or, intentional sending of thoughts to the universe; yuraq is a visual part of our worldview" (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). Transmission of Yup'ik songs by both genders occurred from generations to generations, while "their content depended on the ceremonies" they were composed for; the majority of ceremonies occurred during the winter time, involved a lot of preparation by all community members, including children (John in Fienup-Riordan et al. 2010, pp. xvi-xviii). In the past, *yuraq* was performed in the *qasgiq*, or men's ceremonial house, which is "a place of learning how to live through watching and listening" (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2022). According to Valerie Tony, a Yup'ik dance group leader, Yup'ik dancing means "drum, dance, song [that] has a message which is communicated through the dance movements" (Willett 2017, p.56). Yup'ik dancing is story-telling (John 2010, p.160). Spatial compositions of Yup'ik dance may be described as follows: the drummers are situated in the back of a dance group, whereas dancing women stand in front of them and men dance on their knees in front of women.

Valerie Tony (2020) also argued that "y*uraq* is the way to connect with the ancestors" (personal communication). Accordingly, as Theresa John (2020) put it, "we learn about our ancestors through dancing and singing their stories (personal communication). Some of the dances were performed at the annual celebrations to maintain relationships with the deceased and with animals, whereas others were "communal invitational" (John 2010, p. xxv-xxvii). Before and some time after the contact with Europeans, dancing men wore wooden masks that served as a representation of animals (John 2010, xxviii). The Yupiit celebrated several ceremonial events in an annual cycle, predominantly from November to February; three of them focused on maintaining relationships with the nonhuman world as described above: *Nakaciuq* or the Bladder Festival, the

Elriq or Feast of the Dead, and *Agayuyaraq* or “the annual masked dances" (Fienup-Riordan 2000b p. 113, Williams 1996, p. 60).

As described previously, Russian Orthodox priests did not approve of but tolerated the ceremonies, whereas the Moravian and Catholic missionaries gradually eradicated them. When the dances and songs became prohibited, “Elders sang them to children for going to bed” (Theresa John, personal communication 2020). After the Vatican II Council, Catholic priests contributed to the revival of *yuraq* and to the incorporation of some of its elements into mass. Some of them became skilled dancers (Fienup-Riordan 2000b, p. 116). Today, some elements of Yup’ik dancing (motions and wearing gloves) are part of the Native services organized by the Native Ministry at Saint Anthony Catholic Church in Anchorage. The Russian Orthodox Church hosts Indigenous dancers in front of Saint Innocent Cathedral and at events outside the parish. As for the Moravians, some parishioners bring and use Yup’ik fans in their singing at the Anchorage Moravian Church.

In the 1960s-1970s, there was a revival of Yup’ik dance starting with the Yukon region encouraged by the Catholic priest Father Astruc (Fienup-Riordan 2012). It has spread out to the city of Anchorage with the increasing migration of Yup’ik and other Indigenous populations. Since the 1980s, the Yupiit Yuraryarait dance festival in St. Mary’s and the Camai dance festival in Bethel have been organized annually attracting the Yup’ik and other Indigenous dance groups to these Yup’ik towns. Yup’ik dance and songs have been adopted to new musical styles, for instance by such Yup’ik artists as Philipp and Stephen Blanchett, Ossie (Aassanaaq) Kairaiuak who together with Karina Møller of Greenland combine Yup’ik songs and modern musical styles in performing as Pamuya, a musicale band, or by Byron Nicholai who combines Yup’ik singing with rap, hip-hop and other modern musical styles (Perea 2021).

The tradition of urban Indigenous dancing started in 1970 with the creation of an Indigenous dance group under the umbrella of Urban Natives United, a non-profit organization that aimed at "promot[ing] the education and well-being of all the Natives of Alaska" and at "assist[ing] in the organization of other Urban Native groups, and to aid all Native groups" (Charles V. Lucier Papers, Williams 1996, p. 495).

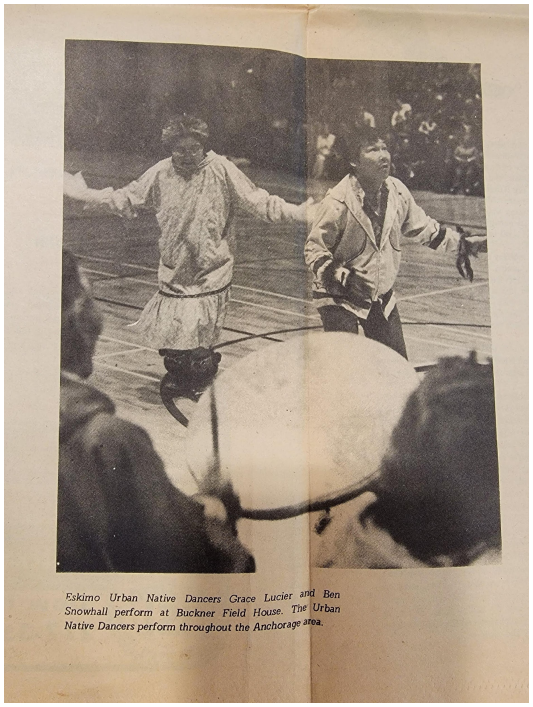


Figure 46. Urban Native United dance group members at Buckner Field House, Charles V. Lucier Papers, 1903-2009
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

The group performed mostly Inupiaq dances, but it comprised some Yup'ik members, and among them, Ben Snowball and William Tyson, who co-founded Greatland, a Yup'ik dance group that "represented the whole Alaska Indigenous dances" (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2022). In 1983, Snowball founded a Yup'ik dance group, Kicaput, meaning "our anchor" as it was founded in the city of Anchorage (Williams 1996, p. 495). One of its members, Ossie (Aassanaaq) Kairaiuak, became its leader and later founded another Yup'ik/Cup'ik group, Acilquq. Acilquq is

one of the main urban Yup'ik dance groups existing in Anchorage today (Williams 1996). Another one is the Yurapik Drummers and Dancers.

Before Covid, the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) allowed both dance groups to practice *yuraq* in the hospital lobby on a weekly basis connecting the groups with rural and urban, Indigenous hospital patients and visitors who were able to watch or participate in the dancing practices together with the group members. During the Covid-19 pandemic ANMC closed its doors to visitors, dance groups and religious gatherings, so that the group stopped to meet for practices. The pandemic was detrimental to the process of maintaining connections with the rural populations through gatherings at ANMC. Nevertheless, the Indigenous peoples continued to dance: some danced, took videos and posted them on social media (Perea 2021), while others joined dancing sessions over Zoom or gathered outside. In 2022, the Alaska Native Heritage Center allowed both groups to practice *yuraq* at their premises. Acilquq started to practice in the main hall of the Center, while a smaller Yurapik Drummers and Dancers group was allowed to dance in a reconstructed Yup'ik *qasgiq* situated on its territory on the same day.

Valerie Tony is the leader of the Yurapik Drummer and Dancers group, originally from Alakanuk, Alaska. The translation of Yurapik into English is "real dance". It is a traditional dance group in which "[the groups members] adhere to the same guidelines and principles as any Yup'ik village does… and [they] are urban-bound interpreters of [their] oral history that strive to represent [their] ancestors and Yup'ik spirituality with [their] knowledge to the best of [their ability]" (Yurapik Drummer and Dancers Facebook Page). The group was founded in 2009. Currently there are 13 members in the group (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). Her parents assigned her as a group leader. For Valerie's group, "*yuraq* is not about fun: it is the way to connect with the ancestors" (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). In addition to their weekly practices,

they dance at such events as the University of Alaska Anchorage graduation ceremony as well as for tourists. I joined and participated in some of the group's practices before and after the Covid-19 pandemic that involved preparing Valerie's daughter for her first dance. Valerie's children danced their first dance in the village and in the city (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). Although the first dance may be organized in an urban setting, it is difficult to respect the "Yup'ik cultural protocol" there, as such ceremonies necessitate access to a place for several days (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020).

Ossie (Aassanaaq) Kairaiuak is the leader of Acilquq or "plant root", which is an urban Yup'ik dance group founded in 2012 "with the intent to recognize [the Yup'ik] respective village roots" (Aassanaaq Kairaiuak[74], personal communication, 2022). The group comprises approximately 30 members that "come to practice to go off the stress they have" (Aassanaaq Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022). Practices "help to let go off the stress that was felt the week before and to come back to recharge to face another week" (Aassanaaq Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022). Thus, for the group members, *yuraq* practiced in an Indigenous space contributes to well-being.

While Valerie Tony likes to practice at the "calm *qasgiq*" at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, because at the Native hospital where they used to practice "there is a lot of death and a lot of grief", Ossie would like to return to practice at the hospital (Aassanaaq Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022; Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2022). Ossie liked "servicing" the hospital patients coming to watch or to participate in the practices:

74 In his fifties

> "A lot of the times the patients, a lot of them, have escorts to travel with them. We do not want them to get too homesick and then after our practice I do make an attempt to do a meeting with the people that we service" ((Ossie) Aassanaaq Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022).

For Ossie, the practices he leads aim at reducing stress and homesickness of the group members and the rural and urban patients who participate in or watch the practices at ANMC. In addition, *yuraq* at the hospital allows to "renew extended family ties" as "even myself, when I see a relative I have not seen in a while, it makes me feel happy, as the human contact with our extended family is important to maintain the ties" (Ossie Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022). "Each week is different, but always for the most part, a lot of fun" (Ossie Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022). The Yup'ik dance practices here fulfill the function of entertainment that helps the Indigenous patients and Indigenous urban community members to cope with the stress related to health issues and to the lack of the habitual, rural lifestyle, by reproducing it to some extent:

> "It is a popular social activity that allows people to go back to their traditional social activity that they know about, which is drumming and singing, this event has no negativity involved. In modern life it has no rules to follow they used to follow a long time ago. It's a safe space" (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020).

The group also moves across the city to participate in such events as the Indigenous Peoples' Day at the University of Alaska Anchorage and the Quyana Night, a dance festival occurring at the

Alaska Federations of Natives convention in Fall. During the pandemic, the group met to dance in a park. After the Covid-19 pandemic, the group has also been provided with space to practice at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, where they have the possibility to create an Indigenous space without, however, being able to entertain the rural family and community members at the hospital on such a large scale. Nevertheless, while participating in some of their practices at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, I observed some of the extended family members visiting from the rural areas come to participate in the practices.

Both Acilquq and Yurapik Drummers and Dancers have representatives of different generations coming to practices reproducing the village community dancing. Not all of the group members speak the Yup'ik language fluently, especially, the younger generation that may create challenges for the leaders to teach them the dances:

> "For any drum leader like me, we carry a lot of weight… it gets too overwhelming at times, and those who are familiar with [the language], that makes it, but we need to strike a balance somehow to teach them more of the language itself, so that they will know what they are dancing. I walk my kids through the songs so that they will know what the motions mean. We have got to build this foundation first before they can do dancing" (Ossie Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022).

Despite the challenges related to the lack of language skills by youth and some other group members, the practices continue to attract the younger generation, as I could observe both at the ANMC and at Alaska Native Heritage Center, creating very stable Indigenous spaces in the city,

after the religious denominations described above, as these practices provide connection to the Yup'ik identity, to the close and extended family members:

> "When you think back to it, you know, my ancestors danced, my grandpa, he made songs, and students in Kwethluk still dance them, he would tell he remembers, he grew up in the mountains, when his family came to the village area, he would see the dancing the *qasgiq*, it's kind of a connection for me for my grandmother, I never knew her, my dad's mother, she passed away when he was one year old, he was raised by his aunt who kind of took him as her own; in the Yup'ik ways when two sisters have children, their children are considered as brother and sister. People would say, my grandmother I am named after, was a very good, well-known sewer. Just be able to have this connection. My first awareness of the dancing watching it, seeing a story come to life in front of me, like watching a cartoon, it's basically a story being sung, and we have very general moves for walking, looking, then there could be variations for chopping etc. People doing it their own way. that was very intriguing. It was very entertaining. I think Yup'ik people are very good at humor, they love to tease. It's another way to connect. Education, story-telling, fun, depends on a situation" (Tatiana Andrew, a member of the Nunamta Yup'ik Dancers group, personal communication, 2019).

As some of my collaborators "see the heritage" of their village and their "connection with the grandparents" in the urban church (Anthony Lekanof, personal communication, 2022), the others maintain the connection through their participation in the dance practices and performances. Thus,

the younger generation might join the dance practices that help create Indigenous spaces and find these connections with the deceased and living, close and extended family members through reproducing the village dance practices in spaces provided by the ANMC and the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the closing of these seemingly permanent Indigenous spaces. At the same time, the churches, while having a capacity for creating Indigenous space in the city permanently, that may reproduce the village lifestyle through regular attendance and possibilities of Native food exchange, experiences difficulties with attracting the younger generation to their services. Moreover, I observed some instances of the Indigenous younger generation accusing the churches of eliminating the traditional ceremonies and beliefs in front of the Elders who remain active members of the churches. As discussed previously, there is a growing need in a permanent, secular Indigenous space in the city, according to one of the members of the Anchorage Native Community Council, Augusta Reimer (2019). Nevertheless, there is flexibility as to where a Yup’ik dance practice can occur (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2022).

My own experience of Yup'ik dancing started with attending a Yup’ik/Cup’ik dance class at the University of Anchorage Alaska. Six other female students participating were Indigenous, thus, I was the only non-Indigenous student in class. We learned about the history of Yup’ik/Cup’ik dance in general and we practiced several Yup’ik dances with the instructor. The instructor called our group “Arnaat Yurartait” or “The UAA Women Dancers”. I was the only student in class who had not yet had their first dance. The first dance is organized for a child getting their first catch or gathering shared with the community or for other reasons to celebrate their accomplishments in order for them to be introduced to and to join the community dance group (John 2010, pp. 149-150). The instructor invited the urban Yup’ik dance group Acilquq, and other Yup’ik community

members by the end of the term to celebrate our accomplishment of the course. The instructor planned to organize a potluck and a gift-giving ceremony after the dancing, following a Yup'ik protocol of the first dance.

For my first dance the instructor chose a song from Toksook Bay and asked the author of the song for permission to dance it. When you dance a Yup'ik song, you dance a story (John 2010, p.160). Thus, all the students learned to dance some Yup'ik stories. The instructor was our drummer. The elementary level Yup'ik language classes I took at the same University were not sufficient for an easy learning of the songs, thus, I memorized the motions by constant repetition and by observing the other skilled students on weekly classes. This corresponded to a classic situation of the Yup'ik educational process that is based on observation and repetition: "our Yup'ik education is by repetition, by acquiring the knowledge just from listening, from watching, from observing" (Astruc citing Chanar in Fienup-Riordan 2012, p.111). The preparation for the dance performance also involved going shopping with the instructor and one of the students to buy practical gifts for the gift distribution ceremony that was planned after the performance: gloves, tank tops, soap, hair bands etc. As the first dance is "a lesson of sharing", all the students also invested into the celebration by bringing food to share, including some Native food, in particular, *akutaq* (Valerie Tony in Willett 2010, p.49).

The Acilquq dance group members as well as some other urban Yup'ik community members were invited to the celebration of class completion. Several Yup'ik babies and younger children joined the celebration together with their families and Elders. It started with the food distribution, where the Elders were served first. Once the audience was full, the instructor said a prayer to start the performance. All the dancers wore the *qasperet* (Yup'ik hooded overshirts) to "represent their culture" (Ikuta 2004, p.47). For my first dance, I was given a *qaspeq*, a Yup'ik headband and fans

as a loan. The instructor presented our dance group to the community, and we danced several songs together. The last song to dance was my first dance. The instructor introduced me to the community, and I danced accompanied by the other students on my side.



Figure 47. My first dance at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, May 2019
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

After the performance, the invited Acilquq dance group also danced in front of the audience. The gift distribution started with the Elders and continued until all the invited community members had a gift. What was lacking in this celebration was also the practice of presenting the information about the deceased the dancer was named after: a child having their first dance represents their namesake who passed away but returns to the community through the process of naming (John 2010, p. 150). At this point I was not given a Yup'ik name. Nevertheless, after the celebration I was invited to dance with the group at ANMC where I was given a Yup'ik name.

The urban context also allowed for a shorter gathering only. The first dance ceremony in the past lasted for several days (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). Such a long celebration is very difficult to organize in the city due to long distances, scatteredness and busyness of the

working Yupiit. Nevertheless, the celebration enabled the Yupiit to form a temporary Indigenous space in one of the University's premises by recreating a "pop-up *qasgiq"* and to simulate a village celebration involving dancing of different groups, food and gift distribution (Senungetuk 2017). The extended family members of several generations, including Elders and babies, participated in the celebration contributing to the reproduction of the village atmosphere to be experienced by the community, along with the gift and food distribution before returning back to their urban lifestyle later in the evening. The danced stories connected the Yup'ik generations to each other (John 2010). "When you dance, you meet your ancestors" (Valerie Tony, personal communication, 2020). Thus, by dancing the Yupiit connected with their ancestors. The younger generation comprises an active and significant part of the Yup'ik dancing groups in the city and reconnects with the Elders through experiencing the dance practices describing subsistence and other cultural activities. The stories also reconnected the Yup'ik former villagers to their home through the description of subsistence and other cultural activities in the rural areas in the songs and through their relationships with the song authors deceased and living in the villages.

Yup'ik Arts in the City

Over the past few decades traditional Alaska Native art forms have been experiencing a revival. Many Yup'ik and other Indigenous artists produce art for sale that simultaneously connects the artists to their ancestral lands, community and culture (Mossolova 2020). Some of them earn their living, others supplement their income with sewing *qasperet*, creating jewelry and carving and selling them online, via social media, and in various markets and bazaars. They connect with the

ancestral lands by subsistence activities such as gathering plants for using them as materials for their art creation, maintaining the social networks with local hunters to buy skins, bones and other parts of subsisted animals, collaborating and exchanging with other artists. Only the artists who are "a quarter blood quantum" are allowed to work with certain materials. "We have to abide by certain regulations and laws for our subsistence that brings not only food but, you know, we use it for our artwork...You have to be at least a quarter blood quantum, and there is a lot of controversy with that" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022). Under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act, only Alaska Native peoples who are members [being at least one quarter blood quantum] of a "federally or officially state-recognized tribe or Alaska Native Corporation" are allowed to produce traditional Alaska Native art from marine mammal materials (U.S. Deparment of Interior Website[75] 2021). My collaborator, Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower grew up in the Inupiaq community in Barrow and became an Inupiaq artist, but she is Hawaiian on her mother's side, thus, being "barely a quarter" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022). Thus, with more intermarriage occurring between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, more Indigenous peoples raised in their correspondent Indigenous communities may not have the right to produce and sell Indigenous art.

The Alaska Native Regional Corporations play an important role in the revival effort: some of them sponsor art making workshops and programs; they buy, display art and provide space for Indigenous art and crafts bazaars at their premises (Jackinsky-Horrell 2012, p.67). During my fieldwork in Anchorage, I visited Indigenous art markets and bazaars hosted by the Bristol Bay Native Corporation and the Alaska Native Medical Center. The latter also has a permanent Craft Shop that sells works from Indigenous artists of all the Alaskan regions to hospital visitors. The Alaska Native Heritage Center funded with the Corporations' help also has a permanent craft shop

75 https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/iacb-2021-alaska-native-arts-booklet-web-nov-2021-a.pdf. Last accessed January 27th, 2024.

and collection of Indigenous art works. Artists' workshops and classes are regularly organized in the Center. Other Native Corporations participated in the creation of some museums in the rural areas. For instance, the Alutiq Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak also has a permanent art collection and a gift shop, offering art programs and workshops to adults and children (Alutiiq Museum Website[76] n.d.). Museums throughout the state also include Indigenous arts into their collections and collaborate with Indigenous artists to sell their work in their gift shops. Another example is the Anchorage Museum which offers a permanent exhibition "Living our Cultures" and a Learning Lab organized and maintained by the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center in collaboration with "the Alaska Native Elders, artists and educators" (Anchorage Museum Website[77] n.d.).

I collaborated only with several urban Indigenous artists during my fieldwork; most of them acquired knowledge and skills at regional schools and workshops in rural and urban areas, while some of them learned from their siblings. The exposure of Yup'ik artists living in Anchorage to Indigenous arts from different regions allows them to learn from various Indigenous artists. For instance, one of my Yup'ik collaborators who sews *qasperet* (or Yup'ik hooded overshirts that have become an Alaskan identity marker for Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations), also sells some beaded art works. She learned beading from Athabaskans and acquired her sewing skills from her sister (Anonymous 2, personal communication, 2020). Another collaborator, Christina Waska, a Yup'ik artist, also learned to bead and make crafts at her village school, but her sister taught her designs (Christina Waska, personal communication, 2020). Christina is a full-time artist who sells her crafts online and during Indigenous and non-Indigenous events throughout the year. Interestingly, ninety percent of her sales are generated from non-Indigenous customers, for instance, working at ANMC (Christina Waska, personal communication, 2020).

76 https://alutiiqmuseum.org/visit/on-exhibit. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.
77 https://www.anchoragemuseum.org/visit/smithsonian-arctic-studies-center/. Last accessed January 21st, 2024.

Moses “Uksuq” Wassilie[78], an urban Yup’ik artist, originally from the village of Nunapitchuk, initially learned designs and carving skills from the Anchorage Museum artifacts and exhibitions where he worked; Moses later pursued his education acquiring knowledge and skills in “painting, sculpture, carving and drawing” at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Alaska Anchorage (Alaska Native Heritage Center Website[79] 2024; Moses Wassilie, personal communication, 2022).

Britt’Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, another collaborator and an Inupiaq artist, also acquired skills in creating Indigenous crafts predominantly at her school in Barrow and urban workshops. Together with her practical skills, she learned the importance of discipline and of precision in her school classes that she applies to her current art projects:

> “You have to customize [your piece] to your measurements, and you also need it for survival, the temperature is sometimes eighty below, you need something that is reliable, that’s going to be quality work, it’s either you gonna survive or not, with the regalia you need to think that this one stitch will be for death. If your clothing is falling apart you can’t maintain your heat. There is a specific stitch you need to do to sew [skins] together, and if you mess up once, you can create a bubble; a lot of these seamstresses are very experienced. She taught us how to skin-sew a pair of mittens. She made sure that we had small stitches. Made you redo it. It is in the back of my mind. Every time I make a piece, I try to make it pretty consistent, as perfect as I can. I didn’t think about it until I started making a jewelry. I

78 In his seventies
79 https://www.alaskanative.net/artists/moses-uksuq-wassilie/. Last accessed January 18th, 2024.

> want to get quality, I want to embrace that cultural background, and that uprising that it can cost you life, that little stitch" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022).

The urban artists that have a possibility to go to their villages still collect some of the materials there, for instance, grass that they often dye to weave baskets, parts of earrings and of Yup'ik dance fans. Traditional practices gathering grass also involved responsibility and discipline: "When we were going to pick the grass, we didn't just go out and pick grass. Before the season, we used to go out and I guess, meditate. We'd go out and ask for good weather during the grass picking" (Rita Blumenstein, a Yup'ik artist and traditional healer, 1984 ch. 5).

All of the artists that use parts of the animals in their work maintain relationships with Indigenous hunters that they receive their materials from. For instance, Cristina Waska buys furs from her friend at Anchor Point (Christina Waska, personal communication, 2020). Some artists buy their materials in the Alaska Fur Exchange store in Anchorage. "It could be very pricey but sometimes they have good deals" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022). Bartering also occurs between hunters and artists as well as among artists. "I do a lot of bartering with other artists and hunters... They are usually at the Fur Rondy and AFN shows… I have recently bartered with a hunter from my town. I made his wife earrings'' (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022).

Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market is another example of an "Indigenous arts show" and a part of the annual Fur Rondy winter festival occurring in February and in March. The Market is held at the Diamond Center Mall in Anchorage during the last week of the festival; it attracts Indigenous artists from different Alaskan regions. Indigenous artists apply to a vendor list to pay for

their participation and table; only Indigenous peoples having a BIA card (that is a proof of a tribal enrollment) can become participants, as "[the organizers] want to be selling authentic Native work" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022). After the Covid-19 pandemic, the group has also been provided with space to practice at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, where they have a possibility to create an Indigenous space without, however, being able to entertain the rural family and community members at the hospital on such a large scale. "The organizers print out cards with the name and homeland of the artists which "makes selling more personalized… and it's good for networking too, it helps to guess how people are related" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022).

This market is one of the largest annual Indigenous markets that serves as a temporary Indigenous space in a non-Indigenous public space where the Indigenous artists sell their arts to Indigenous and non-Indigenous visitors. I conducted participant-observation sitting at a table with one of the Yup'ik vendors at the Market who was selling her and her son's work, together with her family. Some Yup'ik vendors participated in the event together with their close family members; others were selling works made together with the family; many were sitting next to or shared their tables with their extended family members. Other relatives were visitors who were coming and going. I witnessed several artists discussing bartering and possibilities, wanting to trade raw materials and Native food. Many artists were selling their crafts simultaneously working on them in front of the public.

In the evening, many vendors met again while attending the Native Musicale and the local churches. Thus, the Market is an annually created, Indigenous space that allows for selling the crafts to various urban and rural, visiting populations, but also for bartering and connection with the extended family members from both the rural and urban areas. The rural artists bring in their crafts to earn cash from non-Indigenous and Indigenous visitors in order to spend it on goods that are

lacking or too expensive in the villages. They sometimes bring work of their fellow artists who are unable to come to Anchorage and sell it together with their own. Thus, the Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market as other, annual Indigenous art and crafts markets in the city, contributes to the ongoing circulation of people, social networks, crafts, money and goods between the village and the city.

AFN (Alaska Federation of Natives Convention) is an even bigger, annual event that occurs in fall and that has more Indigenous vendors selling their crafts at the crafts fair accompanying the convention from various regions. Lee (2003) described the crafts fair as more than an "economic venue" where "social bonds are strengthened" but also as a site of political activism and "empowerment" of these urban and rural female vendors (pp. 590-591). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, AFN Conventions in 2020 and in 2021 were held virtually. Thus, at the early stages of building my relationships with the Yup'ik and other Indigenous communities in the city, I only managed to participate in the in-person Conventions in 2018 and 2019 as a visitor, without conducting any participant observation on site. I saw a more significant scope of the Yup'ik vendor gatherings at the crafts fair and a similar spatial combination of tables shared by the Yup'ik artists sitting predominantly together with their close and extended family members. However, the pandemic brought some changes into the tendency of the Indigenous vendors and their visitors to consider AFN as the main gathering of the artists.

> "AFN is a lot bigger, it's very popular with Alaska Native artists and those artists with no website, they only go to this event, they participate to make up their income for their living. Fur Rondy is a little slower, we don't see

> that many people as at AFN but this year it was more than at AFN because we had so many cancellations during Covid that people are willing to socialize again" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022).

Despite various opportunities that Indigenous artists have to create, disseminate and promote their art works in the city, they experience the same issue as Indigenous dance groups and other members of urban Indigenous communities: the lack of a permanent Indigenous space.

> "There is a lot of talent but anytime I go to an Elder and ask where I can buy their work outside this market, they say they don't have Facebook. I have a business idea I want to pursue: to create a profile for them with professional photos… Anchorage, it's a hub of all smaller communities coming here for shopping or events, it would be nice to have a place for that…A lot of people work out of their homes, like myself. I try to create from what I have; we have little space, it's kind of hard to cut antler or ivory in your house, and the particles are so dangerous for your hands and legs" (Britt'Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022).

The urban artists continue to depend on their rural social networks for the materials used in their work, while the latter regularly come to participate in the largest annual markets such as AFN and Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market to earn cash and to barter with their artist and material provider networks. The urban and rural artists remain interdependent and interconnected. Their impact on the Indigenous community members through workshops, selling and demonstration of their work at AFN, at the Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market and other bazaars and crafts shops is

present even though it remains relatively fragmented because of the lack of this permanent Indigenous space in the city. “At least you know when you are creating, you are helping the other, giving a boost to their cultural identity, supporting other artists as well” (Britt’Nee Kivliqtaruq Brower, personal communication, 2022).

Language

In the city, the Yup’ik Immersion Program and Alaska Native Cultural Charter School (ANCCS) are the other Indigenous spaces created within the non-Indigenous environment where both Indigenous teachers and students negotiate their identities and practices. In both schools, the only Indigenous language being taught is Yup’ik, meaning that all non-Yup’ik and non-Indigenous students also learn the language. I would like to analyze how the Yup’ik language teachers and educators create a learning environment according to Yup’ik cultural norms and practices, while being exposed to the ethnic diversity of the school environment. I would also like to elaborate on the role and ability of Yup’ik parents in the process of their children’s learning the language and traditional practices in urban environment. I will briefly discuss in what ways colonialism impacted the use of the Yup’ik language has never become extinct, it is currently spoken by approximately 10,000 people in Alaska; in 17 out of 68 Yup’ik villages (most of them situated on the Lower Kuskokwim River) it remains the first language for the village children (Alaska Native Language Center Website[80] n.d.). Such a favorable situation of the Yup’ik language can partly be explained by the Russian Orthodox and Moravian Churches’ interest in its retention that resulted in numerous translations of liturgical materials and the Bible into Yup’ik.

80 https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/languages-move/centralakyupik.php. Last accessed January 20th, 2024.

Nevertheless, European contact and the creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools resulted in the gradual eradication of the Yup'ik and other Indigenous languages, as the Indigenous students separated from their parents and sent to boarding schools were physically punished for speaking their languages (Charles 2005, p. 107). Although Indigenous children have been gradually allowed to speak their languages, until the end of the 1970s, Indigenous languages had not been part of the boarding school curricula in the boarding schools (p.15). Then in the 1970s, a pilot bilingual program was issued by BIA that consisted in teaching 6-year old Yup'ik native speakers in the villages in Yup'ik but with the English curriculum" (Marie Meade, personal communication, 2022). Marie Meade decided to become a Yup'ik language teacher in those villages: she had a 6-week orientation in Fairbanks. The villages assigned for this first bilingual program were Nunapitchuk, Napaskiak and Akichak (Marie Meade, personal communication, 2022). In 1970, the Yup'ik Language Workshop at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) was launched under the leadership of Irene Reed. In collaboration with other specialists and Yup'ik native speakers, including Marie Meade, it resulted in the creation of the first grammar book of Central Yup'ik (Charles 2005; Marie Meade, personal communication, 2022). Since then, a lot of different curricula and programs have been developed, for instance, the Lower Kuskokwim School District bilingual programs. Today, the Yup'ik language remains largely in use in villages such a Manokotak, Togiak and Twin Hills (Marie Meade, personal communication, 2022).

> "The use of our Yup'ik language was strong when I was growing up [in Manokotak], our language in Yup'ik was very strong. It was used as a main language. The outside influence in the English language was more scarce. Our Village was more remote. There was no TV. Many of the

> adult parents did not have English education. The Yup'ik language was used in our church services, in sermons and in translated songs. In my Elementary school years, We were taught to read, speak and write in Yup'ik" (Rhona Shavings[81], personal communication, 2020).

Thus, even in these communities, the Yup'ik has been losing out against the English language. Nevertheless, there is a constant "effort" on the part of the rural schools, teachers and fluent speakers in the communities (Charles 2005, p. 109). In the city, the main efforts of maintaining the Yup'ik language among urban Indigenous students are supplied by the Yup'ik Immersion Program at the College Gate school and ANCCS.

The latter was founded in 2007, offering "a rigorous academic program with a curriculum focused on Alaska Native values developing academic achievement and social and emotional learning growth" (Anchorage School District Website[82] 2022). The school partners of the Alaska Native Heritage Center, the Cook Inlet Tribal Council and Southcentral Foundation that allow the students to attend school break camps (Anchorage School District Website 2022).

81In her fifties
82https://www.asdk12.org/Page/5409. Last accessed January 21st, 2024.

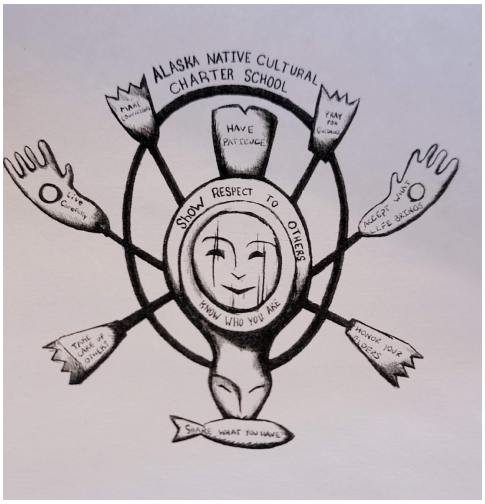


Figure 48. The Alaska Native Cultural Charter School's advertisement at the University of Alaska Anchorage, June 2022 (Photo credit: O.Lauter)

They have the Yugtun (Yup'ik) Choir performing at Indigenous events such as the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) Conference, the Alaska Native Heritage Center Holiday Bazaar. The school's Native Youth Olympics team participanted "in the games at APU [the Alaska Pacific University) (ANCCS Facebook Page n.d). They offer workshops for the families of students, for instance on about drum-making, and create additional Indigenous spaces in the city by organizing Indigenous crafts markets (Friends of ANCCS Holiday Market) in the city (ANCCS Facebook Page n.d). Between 2018 and 2020, the school offered Yup'ik as the only Indigenous language taught to the kindergarden- through the 6th grade students (Alice Rearden[83], a former ANCCS teacher of the Yup'ik language, personal communication 2022). The teacher faced challenges in designing lessons for the students:

83 In her forties

> “There [was] lack of money and of resources. And the approach in teaching language, there is not a lot of info on how to teach language because everybody gets language at high school, how am I gonna do it with the elementary kids? People teach language at high school. I did borrow online [materials from the Lower Kuskokwim School District] but they teach ELL [English language learners whose first language is Yup’ik] and I tried to differentiate it with the elementary. There is no money in charter schools, I made dynamic power points, and I taught around themes. In the second year what changed my approach to teaching language was attending an Anchorage School District Professional Development...[then] I was better to come up with a better curriculum” (Alice Rearden, a former ANCCS teacher of the Yup’ik language, personal communication 2022).

Less than five percent of the students in this school were non-Indigenous during the time Alice taught there, and the majority of the students were Yup’ik. However, the other Indigenous students were willing to learn their own languages instead of Yup’ik:

> “The way I explained it to the students was that I know, Yup’ik is not your native language, but there are very few resources for teaching other languages, you are very lucky to have Yugtun here. Learning a language, not only Yup’ik, you are lucky to learn a language in an elementary setting, I had to come from that perspective for the other students who said why [they had to] learn Yup’ik. I had to do a lot of that” (Alice Rearden, personal communication, 2022).

The school also offers subsistence activities to its students, such as seal skinning (Tatiana Andrew, personal communication, 2022). For instance, they have "cultural weeks" that allow them to practice the Alaskan Indigenous value of food distribution. During these weeks they learn "how to make and process food which [they] shared at the end with the community through a potluck. We cut and dried salmon, processed a seal, a goose, made fry bread, and akutaq-berry mixture. We dried meat and made soups. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was good for students who normally do not have a chance to get out" (Alice Rearden, a former ANCCS teacher of the Yup'ik language, personal communication 2022). Thus, despite the fact that the Indigenous children living in the city might have less exposure to subsistence activities, they have possibilities to learn about them in the urban classroom.

The story-telling method used by the Yup'ik Elders and hunters in the *qasgiq* (men's ceremonial house) has also been used by Alice Rearden in her Yup'ik language lessons:

> "One thing that I incorporated into my classroom was storytelling because I have heard many stories from elders. This was part of the cultural lesson. The students responded well to the stories and if given a choice, many times, they chose a story over watching a video and would constantly ask for stories. I told short stories such as raven stories and other origin stories or legends, longer stories that had to do with how to behave well and good choices to make. They also liked hearing scary stories and about how life was like in the past. I also told them *qanruyutet* which are sayings that our elders live by in order to have good conduct and students responded well to them. They were my social-emotional lesson component" (Alice Rearden, a

former ANCCS teacher of the Yup'ik language, personal communication 2022).

Learning about Yup'ik values is also included in the curriculum of the Yup'ik Immersion Program being a part of the eight language immersion programs in the city that I am going to describe and to analyze now. The ethnic diversity of the city can be observed through the development of eight school immersion programs in which the students learn half of the day in the corresponding language and half of the day in English (Anchorage School District Website[84] 2022). The following immersion programs are offered in Anchorage: Japanese, Russian, German, Chinese, Spanish, Spanish Two-Way, French and Yup'ik. The Yup'ik Immersion Program at the College Gate school started to be implemented in 2018-2019, adding a new class for each subsequent year, so that the 5th year has been implemented during the school year 2023-2024 (Anchorage School District Website 2022).

Yup'ik is the leading Indigenous language in Alaska due to population size and the number of speakers, while the Yup'ik Indigenous population is one of the largest ones in the city. Thus it is not surprising that "Anchorage District did a survey with all the parents and community and the Yup'ik language came out first within the Indigenous languages; they chose to take the Indigenous language as Yup'ik as it was taught in the community" (Berntsen Darrell[85], the College Gate School Principal, personal communication, 2022). The Immersion Program works in collaboration with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the Alaska Native Heritage Center Preschool Programs to "recruit" children with a level of proficiency in Yup'ik acquired in these programs (Berntsen Darrell, personal communication, 2022).

84 https://www.asdk12.org/Page/5409. Last accessed January 21st, 2024.
85 In his fifties

In the Yup'ik Immersion program "the content is [taught] through the language, the science and social studies are [taught] through the language, and you are teaching language [as well] (Alice Rearden, personal communication, 2022). The model the Immersion follows is the Dual Language Immersion (Anonymous 8, personal communication, 2022). This type of immersion program combines instruction to both native and non-native speakers (Green 2010). The Yup'ik teachers translate the materials from this type of program into Yup'ik to teach science and social studies, reading and writing in the Yup'ik language, but mathematics, reading and writing are taught in English during another half of the school instruction day; the teachers also used some additional materials from the Lower Kuskokwim School District, for instance, their reading curriculum (Anonymous 8, personal communication, 2022). Thus, despite the fact that some materials from the school curricula developed in the rural areas are used by the urban Immersion Program, the Yup'ik teachers need to translate most of the materials from the program.

Cultural activities, such as dancing, traditional gathering, "the science of food preparation and how it helps the culture to survive over the 7000 years" are also included in the daily routine (Berntsen Darrell, the College Gate School Principal, personal communication, 2022). The Immersion classes also "work on fish for drying, on canning fish (told the process and shown, but the students won't do anything beyond observing). They have also made *akutaq* (Eskimo Ice Cream) and jam. We went on a berry picking field trip in August. The students made jam and *assaliaq* (fry bread) after" (Anonymous 8, personal communication, 2022). Thus, Yup'ik Immersion, similarly to the ANCCS, maintains Yup'ik subsistence and food processing activities in the urban setting, connecting the Yup'ik and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous children to the land and to the Yup'ik and Alaskan Indigenous lifestyle, while also practicing Yup'ik dancing. The Yup'ik children have to embrace the diversity of being in the same classroom with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. Nevertheless, they have a possibility to connect to their culture and

language on a daily basis, no matter what their background or religious affiliation is. In contrast to the Yup'ik language being taught at the ANCCS on a weekly basis, the Yup'ik Immersion Program students learn several subjects in the language and the language itself on a daily basis for half of the day.

I came to visit and conduct a one-day participant-observation in the Yup'ik Immersion program classes of the school in May, 2020. The program students prepared for the Assembly that thay would hold later in the day. They were going to practice the Yup'ik dancing in front of the school later. For the dancing the female students wore the *qasperet* (Yup'ik overshirts) and Yup'ik headdresses. Some of the female and male students used fans. One of the female teachers and several male students were the drummers, while the male dancers danced on their knees with the female dancers behind them, respecting the traditional spatial dancing pattern they had been taught. Despite the children coming to one of the teachers and asking questions in English, the teacher always answered in Yup'ik. In one of the classrooms the Yup'ik names of the children were displayed on the wall.

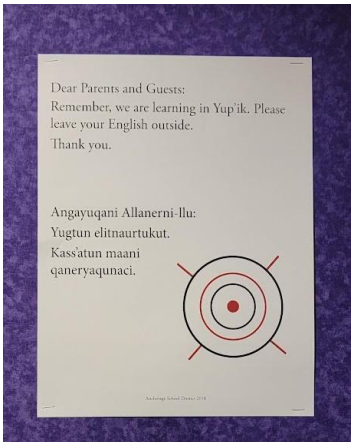


Figure 49. Teaching materials and instructions displays in the Yup'ik Immersion Classrooms, May 2022
(Photo credit: O.Lauter)

The Yup'ik naming practice is therefore included into the learning process. "The Yup'ik names we give have been after people who have died from our [teachers'] areas [Chevak, Kasigluk, Togiak, Chefornak]. For the kids that didn't have a Yup'ik or other native name, we drew names to

choose their Yup'ik name. We also may have named some of the kids after someone we knew, if they reminded us of them" (Anonymous 8, personal communication, 2022). Although the practice of Yup'ik naming at school does not follow the traditional protocol of being named after the deceased relatives or community members involving the ritual of water sprinkling and sipping, some of the traditional elements are used, such as the idea of the namesakes to acquire some traits of the deceased, when the children are named in accordance with their resemblances with the deceased relatives of the teachers.

Hence, both ANCCS and the Yup'ik Immersion Program at the College Gate School are permanent Indigenous spaces that allow the urban Indigenous children to learn the Yup'ik language and to immerse in subsistence and food processing activities, while being separated from the ancestral lands. "It's a wonderful thing that the Charter School teaches it. I think when they are exposed to it, it makes them feel really proud, they want a connection, they want to know what they are learning is valuable. When I had kids whose grandparents are Yup'ik, to know the sound, to be able to say they sound very well, it's a confidence booster, it's a huge challenge to learn any language not supported enough and present enough in the urban setting" (Alice Rearden, a former ANCCS teacher of the Yup'ik language, personal communication 2022).

It is, indeed, challenging to teach the language and the culture to urban Indigenous children, as they are scattered across the city of Anchorage and they usually have little exposure to the language. All of my collaborators who are Yup'ik language teachers spoke about the challenges to teach and retain the language in the city. According to Marie Meade, a Yup'ik language teacher at the University of Alaska Anchorage (2022), it is more difficult to teach the Yup'ik language in Anchorage at schools than in the rural areas, as the lifestyle in Anchorage is very different from the villages (personal communication).

> “Yup’ik people in Anchorage are much more disconnected from the community as compared to the village. Some Yup’ik concepts are difficult to translate into English. Children in Anchorage have less place-based knowledge, so it adds an additional layer of difficulty to the explanation of Yup’ik words” (Alice Rearden, personal communication, 2022).

> “[In Bethel that is a hub in the Yup’ik region] if you can imagine they are more surrounded by Native people, they are using it every day, they are hearing it all the time, especially in a few villages where Yup’ik is the main language being spoken, it is challenging [to retain it in Anchorage], here [in Bethel], you hear it from your grandparents at the radio station, from your aunties, uncles, from your immediate family in the village more; so in Bethel [the language is retained] not that much but still immersed in it. In Anchorage are not immersed in it at all. Anchorage is a really busy city and you don’t get any downtime here. In Bethel I have a Saturday and a Sunday. In Anchorage, when do you have time [to practice the language] unless your have your grandparents here. You don’t hear it as much (Alice Rearden, personal communication 2022).

Another challenge cited by a teacher includes the remoteness of the subsistence areas from the city: “not same terrain as home, have to venture further out when wanting to do more traditional activities (berry picking, etc.)” (Anonymous 8, personal communication, 2022). In order to subsist, the urban inhabitants have to drive two or more hours out of the urban area. Thus, the capacity to subsist requires having one’s own transportation and money for gas.

Lack of local traditional knowledge is one of the challenges that the Yup'ik and other Indigenous children who grow up in the city, experience in learning the language and culture.

> "People are unaware of this severity of weather in Anchorage. That's difficult. You do have a lot more opportunities for teaching because you do a lot of diversity. You can get multiple perspectives in Anchorage, I think in the village you have the source of information, but it is also very specific, it is not that worldly, it's crucial for that region, but in Anchorage not that crucial. What I have found in working with education and the youth is that translating this cultural information into some lesson usable today is really difficult" (Quentin Simeon, personal communication, 2020).

However, in rural areas, despite more possibilities of exposure to the language and local traditional environmental knowledge, not all children are fluent in the Yup'ik language, and their language proficiency depends on how much effort their parents put into involving children in subsistence and other cultural practices. "Kids [in Anchorage] have much less everyday exposure to the language, however, in villages it depends on families, whether a kid speaks Yup'ik as there are families who speak English only at home" (Marie Meade, personal communication, 2019).

> "All the tribal corporate offices [in the village] have to speak English when they do their jobs in terms of computer use, writing letters, the kind of work they do. When they go home the TV is never off, it is in English, the only time they have no English, when they are in the steam bath, when they eat.

> Even social media is taking over their life… Those of us who have split families in terms of migration, it does not matter where we live, it matters how much time we take as parents to make them do something to inspire them and to make them learn. So even though it may seem that a small village life has different conditions than city people, it's not really that, because sometimes city people do way more education on traditional language and culture than the village people because they put more effort, that they make a schedule and they plan it. I think the problem with the village people is that they are so used to their schedules; the longer you live in these conditions, the more you get used to this life in the village. My sisters make time [for traditional activities] in the village…When I was a kid, we did not have any choice, we had to do the work together, we had to make things happen, we used to camp for a week, for example. Now the transportation is faster, guess what, people do not camp too much any more, it takes away time from camping. Some of the parents want to go back to their warm beds and to television. They have a really fast technology" (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020).

DeHass (2014) argued that the introduction of new technologies (all-terrain vehicles) and their acceptance by the Sugpiaq living in Nanwalek, Alaska has led to an increase in practicing subsistence (p.v). But, in some cases, they might contribute to a shortage and fragmentation of family time spent on these subsistence activities. My collaborator Theresa John (2020) noticed that the introduction of some of the new technologies in the Yup'ik region might also be detrimental to the duration of family gatherings in the fish camps, pointing out that it becomes more and more

important for the parents to save time for practicing subsistence activities together with their children away from the internet and TV in both rural and urban areas (personal communication).

There are less Indigenous spaces in the city than in the village that allow for language and knowledge transmission. Yup'ik children are exposed to ethnic diversity in the city, where even the Yup'ik language is being learned by a mixture of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the Yup'ik Immersion Program and at the ANCCS. However, urban Yup'ik parents have the possibility to expose their children to the language on a daily basis starting from the preschool age by enrolling them in the Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the Alaska Native Heritage Center Preschool Programs. The Alaska Native Studies Program at the University of Alaska Anchorage has also offered Yup'ik language classes of the elementary level as well as Yup'ik dance and other classes teaching Indigenous cultures.

The urban Yup'ik and other Indigenous parents' efforts to practice their Indigenous language and subsistence activities are an important factor to maintain their connection to the village lifestyle and to the extended family members living there. One of the effective ways to maintain the connection is to bring children to the village in summer during the subsistence season. However, only the parents with a steady income can afford to fly to the villages:

> "The challenges are money, when you have too many kids, it's hard to decide to transport them because it's so expensive to maneuver around.

> When it's summer time, you have five kids, three kids are left out, you take two kids and they learn, maybe they will teach the others. In the village it's easier to throw the kids in the boat. The choice is on the family" (Theresa John, personal communication, 2020).

As I analyzed in the previous chapter, some Indigenous families living in the city having or not having a possibility to go to the villages in summer, subsist with their children in the areas that are two-three or more hours away from the city. Thus, it is possible to fish, go berry-picking and for some of them, even hunt moose and seals in the areas that are relatively close to Anchorage.

> "Most of the kids, probably half of them [at the ANCCS], have been brought out to subsistence at different levels and means, I used to bring kids dip-netting and I consider it subsistence; if we get blackberry picking we get enough, 2-3-5 gallon buckets, it makes us last through the winter. More than a half of them in that school at least do try to subsist, the subsistence is a big part of their lifestyle and their identity, and most Yup'ik people who moved to the urban environment do try to subsist because it's part of the way they grew up, like a lot of the Yup'ik people from my village that moved to Anchorage. They do the same thing I do, and they still value their lifestyle, and it's up to them to show it to their kids even though there are challenges, even up to the last penny they would pay for gas to do that. It is still very much the essence that they want to pass on to their kids" (Alice Rearden, personal communication, 2022).

Thus, despite the challenges that the urban environment adds to practicing the Yup’ik language and the activities related to subsistence and food processing, Indigenous spaces such as the Yup’ik Immersion Program and ANCCS in collaboration with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the Alaska Native Heritage Center provide educational opportunities that Yup’ik parents can choose from to maintain their urban children’s connection to the rural extended families through the development of their language and culture proficiency. Also, such regular gatherings as the Yup’ik dancing practices and workshops organized at the Alaska Native Heritage Center and also, previously, at ANMC, allow the parents to connect their children to the urban and rural community members on a weekly basis. Also, despite the financial constraints that prevent some of the Yup’ik parents to bring their children to subsist and to participate in the fish camps in the rural areas together with their close and extended family members, some relatively close-by but regulated and limited subsistence opportunities exist in the Anchorage surroundings. However, these opportunities are only available to those who can afford transportation, as reaching these areas may take several hours. The activities and celebrations involving the distribution of Native food continue to be organized by some of the families, not only in the churches, as described in the previous chapter, but also in the private and public, secular Indigenous spaces:

> “They watch what we as parents do and they practice any kind of activity that we do. I've been to throw parties which is a tradition that comes from *uqiquq* (seal distribution party), people share the catches that their children caught to others; we have memorial feasts in honor of those we lost. I also cut and dry salmon or what I can when I have the means at my home. Lots of people have steam baths and invite people over, many people participate and bring their kids to *yuraq* [Yup'ik dance]. People follow other practices like giving an offer of food and water before they subsist, they go berry

> picking in the mountains to store a lot of berries for the winter or to share during feasts. I had my daughter follow some of the abstinence practices that I followed after she had her first period" (Alice Rearden, personal communication, 2022).

While urban Yup'ik children are more separated from the village and practices that connect them to it by mere exposure to mainstream culture and ethnic diversity in the city ethnic diversity, their parents have possibilities to reproduce the village lifestyle in the city, especially, through more easily transferable activities, such as Native food distribution, fishing and berry-picking, food processing and dancing (Lee 2003). At the same time, parents in the rural areas also need to make efforts to becime creative in view of filling the time children spend on devices with subsisting, beading, dancing and other traditional activities. Among other challenges that the Yupiit face in the rural and the urban areas is a high rate of alcoholism: alcohol addiction remains a very important issue for Alaska Natives that continues to result in high rates of violence and disease with an early age at substance use initiation (Seale et al. 2006; SAMHSA Website[86] 2014). In the next section, I will analyze how the Yup'ik and other Indigenous peoples relate the concept of the historical intergenerational trauma to physical and mental health issues they are exposed to in rural and in urban areas. I will examine in what ways the historical trauma discourse in the city among the Yup'ik and other Indigenous populations contributes to the negotiation of better strategies for improving the well-being in the urban environment. I will analyze what traditional practices the Yupiit use in the city in their efforts to lead healthier lifestyles.

86 https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/TEDS-Spot146-AIAN-2014/TEDS-Spot146-AIAN-2014.htm Last accessed January 25th, 2024.

Intergenerational Trauma and Traditional Healing

To begin with, when I participated in various Indigenous gatherings before the Covid-19 pandemic, the topic of historical trauma was regularly brought up in order to discuss in what ways the traumatic past of the Indigenous populations impacts today's life, and what should be done to live a healthier life. The notion of historical trauma started to be discussed in relation to the research of how the Holocaust victims' experience impacted their offspring (Kellermann 2001, p. 38). The term 'historical trauma' is widely used by doctors, social workers, anthropologists and sociologists, and, importantly, by the Indigenous peoples themselves (Evans-Campbell 2008 p. 320; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski 2004, p. 2). According to Brave Heart (2003), historical trauma is "a cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experience" (p. 7). The holistic character of the Indigenous worldview consists in a tendency to view colonization, abuse, the loss of culture and languages, the generational gap and other traumatic events in the past as the origin of today's problems of the Indigenous communities (Burnette et al. 2018). "We need to know where we are going. Our people have always done that. They have always told stories of the past to understand where they were at today. That the trails they have gone down in the past will help them to know the trails they will go in the future" (Southcentral Foundation 1991 p. 32).

Yup'ik author, Harold Napoleon (2005) argued that the Yup'ik refer to the historical trauma called "the Great Death" (the influenza pandemic of 1900) in their discussions as the main cause having disrupted the Yup'ik way of life or Yuuyaraq, including the generational gap between Yup'ik Elders and the younger generation. To him, community discussions about these traumatic events of the past are indispensable for healing (Napoleon 2005). At the same time, as Britt'Nee

Kivliqtaruq Brower (2022) put it, “without culture, we don’t like to talk about trauma, we try to focus on the positive only, it does not excuse all the bad that happens, we just choose not to talk about trauma. It’s hard to open your wounds. Instead of talking and healing we mask it with substance abuse. [But] there are more healing circles happening that try to heal those generational traumas” (personal communication). I would like to elaborate on the other events that the Yup’ik attribute to the formation of historical trauma.

The 1900 influenza was not the only epidemic that wiped out a significant part of the Yup’ik population. The influenza epidemic of the years 1918-1919 in the Nushagak region also resulted in numerous deaths among the Yupiit (VanStone 1967). As for tuberculosis, it possibly started to spread in the Kuskokwim River area in the 1840s with the appearance of Russians, so that by the 1880s it became “the most common disease among the Alaska Natives” that continued to be one of the main mortality reasons until the 1970s (Oswalt 1990, pp. 143-148). If the tuberculosis rates have dropped, alcoholism remains one of the main health problems for the Yup’ik and other Indigenous populations in Alaska.

Alcoloh and substance abuse rates, as well as sexually transmitted diseases, domestic violence, depression and suicede remain high within Yup'ik communities (Harvard Kennedy School Website[87] 2023). “Of the 962 alcohol-attributable deaths during 2010– 2016, 474 (49%) were among Alaska Native people, who comprise 15% of the population... In 2016, the rate of alcohol attributable mortality was more than 7 times as high in Alaska Native people than in non-Native Alaskans (80.7 vs. 11.4 deaths per 100,000 persons, respectively)” (Pahoe 2018, p.3). These health problems persist even if the Yupiit and other Indigenous peoples in Alaska have been working to combat them at community and tribal level.

87 https://indigenousgov.hks.harvard.edu/publications/calricaraq-indigenous-yupik-wellbeing-yukon-kuskokwim-delta-tribal-communities. Last accessed January 22nd , 2024.

In 1953, the Anchorage Medical Center of the Alaska Native Service opened as a response to the tuberculosis epidemic. Until 1990, the Federal Government ran the health care service through the Indian Health Service (Augusta Reimer, a developer of the first Traditional Healing Office in Anchorage, personal communication, 2019).

> "Since the 1990s the tribes around America were taking over the health care services all over the US, and the Southcentral Foundation that provides outpatient care to Native people now took over the traditional healing program and they hired healers. In 1995 I was asked to create a traditional healing program for the hospital under the Indian Health Service; they assigned me to that position. I tried to create a traditional healing office and to bring healers and the traditional healing to the hospital but they were very afraid of it…" (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 2019).

Thus, starting from the 1990s, the Indigenous health institutions began to look for and to offer their own solutions to the health problems described above. Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage conducted a survey in 1991 that identified the traditional practices of the Indigenous peoples of Alaska that contributed to healing and to the well-being in the past to understand how these practices could be incorporated. They identified Alaskan drum groups, talking circles, dancing as the traditional healing practices (Ibid.). As for traditional healers, Southcentral Foundation defined them as medicine men using some of the practices, for instance, using herbs for healing, that the shaman applied to sick people (p.64).

> "Traditional healers would have been known in a community, it would not be coming for a book, they would have a natural talent to be a healer. Normally, you ask to see a healer, in American Indian tradition you might offer tobacco and ask whether a healer would work on you. Develop a reciprocal relationship with healers, they do not ask for money and they do not call themselves healers but it's reciprocal for you to offer something, if you don't have money (and they take money), but you offer something else. [In Southcentral Foundation] they can't do any ceremony inside the building like burning sage, in fact I used to do that when they hired me as a traditional healer… [Also] you can't go to see a healer unless you get a referral from a [primary care] doctor, and those doctors are mostly white people" (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 2019).

Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage offers "traditional counseling, traditional physical (healing hands and touch), talking circles (sharing and responding to story), traditional healing cultural classes (sharing knowledge passed down from Alaska Native Elders) and a healing garden [that] includes edible and medicinal flora used for generations" (Southcentral Foundation Website[88] 2023). Southcentral Foundation is located in Anchorage, it bases its therapy on the collective Alaska Native values and healing practices. As Augusta Reimer mentioned above, traditional practices such as smudging has not been allowed at its building (personal communication, 2019), despite smoking Labrador tea traditionally being used for purification by the Yupiit (Albertina Dull 2018, p. 270). Also, Alaska Natives in the city can only receive access to the services with a referral from primary care providers (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 2020; Southcentral Foundation Website[89] 2023). Thus, if a Yup'ik person would like to require a healing practice, they

88 https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/services/traditional-healing/. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.
89 https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/services/traditional-healing/. Last accessed January 23rd, 2024.

have to embrace the diversity of the Alaska Native healing practices, and some restrictions in practices and in the access to the services apply. Nevertheless, at least one Yup'ik traditional healer had a practice in the city. "Rita Blumenstein, she learned as a child that she had a healing gift; she grew up in a traditional Yup'ik way. When Southcentral Foundation took over she was the first traditional healer to be hired… She moved to a different position…Rita continued to help people privately" (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 2019). Rita Blumenstein was of Yup'ik, Athabascan, Unangax̂ and Russian descent, but she grew up in a Yup'ik village of Tununak. She was not only a healer but a basket maker, a skin sewer, an ivory carver, a drum maker and a storyteller who shared her traditional knowledge through workshops (Blumenstein 1984, ch.1). My collaborator Augusta Reimer told me that Rita used drumming in her healing sessions at the Southcentral Foundation (personal communication, 2019). Other Yup'ik traditional practices have been incorporated into today's healing programs.

For instance, in 2011, the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation launched the Calricaraq program that aims at inspiring Yup'ik individuals and communities to heal trauma with the help of ancestral knowledge (Harvard Kennedy School 2023). Calricaraq Elder's Council consisting of forty Elders from different communities of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta supervised the program. The program facilitators can travel to a community upon request to work with Elders to apply local ancestral knowledge during a three-day community gathering to discuss the concept of the historical trauma, violence and abuse, and traditional ways that contribute to healing and well-being (Harvard Kennedy School 2023). The book *Qanruyuteput Iinruugut: Our Teachings Are Medicine* edited by Alice Rearden (2009) was a result of a project by the Association of Village Council Presidents that hired Elders from different communities from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta to share their knowledge about the Yup'ik ways of living as a method of combating alcoholism (p.vii).

Rasmus et al. (2019) analyzed the Qasgiq (Yup'ik men's ceremonial house) Model that was developed to gather Elders, community leaders, members, youth and service and agency representatives in order to discuss changes in Yup'ik communities in post-contact times, to identify Yup'ik cultural strengths and activities, for instance, subsistence activities that would aim at alcoholism and suicide prevention on a community level (pp.11-12). Both of the intervention models are based on the assumption that each community is unique and that Indigenous knowledge passed by the Elders is essential for finding prevention solutions at community level. Customizing such programs to the needs of the urban Yup'ik community seems to be problematic, as the Yupiit from different regions migrate and settle down in the city.

Nevertheless, in addition to the traditional healing services offered by the Southcentral Foundation, the Yupiit have been developing their own strategies that might contribute to the well-being by reproducing the village gatherings in the city. As analyzed earlier in this chapter, Yup'ik dancing practices occurring on a weekly basis aim at distressing and at acquiring positive energy that helps to cope with the urban lifestyle until the next weekly meeting (Aassanaaq Kairaiuak, personal communication, 2022).

Another method of releasing stress in the urban area by replicating an activity popular in the village is to *'maqi'* or to take a steam bath with close and extended family members and friends. As analyzed in Chapter IV, some Yup'ik families in the city have built steam baths in Anchorage to invite their cousins and friends, predominantly, of the same gender, to socialize on a regular basis. Hensel (1996) fairly pointed out that the disappearance of the Yup'ik men's houses gave way to the creation of smaller, family steam bath houses (p.123).

Csoba DeHass (2009) described the steam baths as gender-based spaces where “social networks are cultivated, extended and re-organized” (p.133). She analyzed them in terms of “private and public dichotomy”, pointing out at the public character of steam baths that through “being naked also provided the occasions to discuss topics that otherwise would not have been likely to come up in other conversations” through “a special connection of shared intimacy where women were more open about their feelings and thoughts” (pp. 134-136). During my fieldwork in Alaska, I was invited to take a steam bath with my Yup’ik collaborators and friends only twice, probably due to the Covid-19 pandemic. One of them was a farewell party invitation, as I was preparing to leave Anchorage and the other was a hospitality gesture of my Yup’ik female friend’s family, when I briefly accompanied her to her home village. Thus, in the steam baths I did not participate in intimate conversations. However, I have heard from several of my female collaborators that steam baths in rural and in the urban areas are another example of “safe spaces” that allow for both physical and psychological purification that partially reproduce talking circles and help to release tension through storytelling, joking and more intimate conversations in comparison to other Indigenous spaces created in the village and in the city. Perhaps this is one of the reasons steam baths are so popular among the Yup’ik and some other Indigenous peoples in Alaska, so that I regularly met smaller Yup’ik groups of women in an Anchorage sports club offering a steam bath to its customers, either socializing inside the steam bath area or in the coffee room. Certainly, in this case, a steam bath becomes an unsafe place for sharing stories, as the Yupiit have no control over the social networks they are exposed to in a predominantly non-Indigenous city space. This remains a price to pay for living in the city.

Conclusion

Despite various challenges described above such as disconnection from one's ancestral lands, the historical suppression of the language and of dancing, the Yupiit continue to reawake the Yup'ik language, dance and arts in the city by the creation and maintenance of Indigenous social networks and spaces. The most permanent Indigenous spaces in the city remain the Alaska Native Medical Center and the Alaska Native Heritage Center. The former one has provided a permanent platform for the continuous exchange between the village and the city through regular meetings of the Yup'ik dance group members and the patients from rural areas, reproducing the village lifestyle and serving as a stress reliever for both the patients and the urban inhabitants. The Alaska Native Heritage Center allowed the dance groups to practice in their buildings after the Covid-19 pandemic, when the Alaska Native Medical Center remained closed for religious and dance practices at their premises. During the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the Indigenous spaces were transformed into the online ones. The Yup'ik Immersion Program is another permanent Indigenous space where the Yup'ik and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous children learn the Yup'ik language and other disciplines in the language, while embracing ethnic diversity inside and outside the program that is a part of a regular, elementary school. One of the challenges the Yup'ik instructors have in the city is the disconnection of the children from Yup'ik ancestral lands and their limited exposure to the language outside the program. Nevertheless, some of the parents continue to subsist in the areas nearby Anchorage and to take their children to the fish camps in the villages in summer. The Indigenous arts play an important role in maintaining connections with the village, as the urban artists depend on the rural hunters but also on other rural and urban artists for acquiring raw materials and new skills from workshops and exchanges they have during craft shows and bazaars with each other.

CONCLUSION

For this dissertation, my investigation started with the following question: why is Anchorage called the biggest Native village by the Yupiit and other Alaska Natives despite being an ethnically diverse city with the majority of the population being non-Native? Indeed, in villages, Alaska Natives remain "the social majority", while in the city of Anchorage they become "an ethnic minority" (Hanson 2015, p. 107). Why do they reduce the ethnically complex city of Anchorage to an Indigenous village in their discourse? Despite being exposed to the ethnically diverse, non-Indigenous majority of the city on a daily basis, the Yupiit (and other Indigenous populations) consider the city as an extension of the rural social landscapes. The Yupiit continue to migrate to the city of Anchorage in search of better employment, education and healthcare, bringing and binding the village to the city by relying on and maintaining social networks consisting of both rural and urban extended family and community members. While some of the close and extended family members may already live in the city, the others remain in the village. Maneuvering between these rural and urban social networks becomes a strategy to adapt to the urban lifestyle, while simultaneously sustaining the ties to the ancestral lands that constitute the core of Yup'ik identity.

This dissertation also demonstrates the interplay between urban anthropology and the anthropology of religion. "Urban anthropology and the anthropology of religion usually do not cross paths… the lack of anthropological attention to religion in the urban landscape is remarkable"

(De Theije 2012, p. 109). Studying the urban Yup'ik lifestyles is impossible without studying the religious traditions they bring to and practice in the city of Anchorage.

I started to explore this understudied religious dimension in Alaska by examining in detail the historical and current interactions between the Yupiit and the Russian Orthodox, Moravian and Catholic Churches in Chapter III. I elaborated on the strategies that Yupiit have used and continue to use to adopt and to adapt to each of the Christianity branches in order to create their own Indigenous Christian institutions that have expanded to the city, following their migrating Indigenous leaders and members. The religious denominations that have migrated to Anchorage in parallel with the Yup'ik and other Indigenous populations serve as a vehicle to keep connected. Both urban and rural Indigenous parishioners connect by contributing to the ruralization of the city. As my research has shown, the churches remain the most permanent among the public Indigenous spaces in the city where the Yupiit reproduce their village lifestyles on a regular basis by attending services and meeting their extended family members.

My study of the religious dimension of the urban Yup'ik lifestyle started with exploring the question of why the urban Russian Orthodox Church remains a regular gathering place for the Yupiit Orthodox being exposed to the ethnic (both Native and non-Native) diversity of the urban Church. In the Russian Orthodox Church, the majority of the clergy is Yup'ik, with two Yup'ik Deans currently serving in both urban parishes. Another Yup'ik priest was in charge of the third urban parish that was considered to be "the village church" before its closure during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Yup'ik chaplain regularly visits Yup'ik and other Alaska Native Orthodox patients that stay at the Alaska Native Medical Center, connecting them to the urban Orthodox Church. The Yup'ik clergy dominating the urban Orthodox landscape are relatives of some of the permanent

parishioners. In addition, their extended family members from villages attend services, while coming to the city for medical appointments and conferences.

Furthermore, a Yup'ik priest is in charge of the urban celebration of Starring, one of the most elaborated Indigenous Orthodox celebrations that incorporates the Yup'ik tradition of honoring the deceased by distributing significant amounts of food and gifts to their namesakes. This celebration gathers the Yupiit, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, scattered across the city, in the urban Alaska Native parishioners' households. They host the Yup'ik priest, the choir and parishioners, and they celebrate Starring according to the tradition of the priest's village of Nunapitchuk, creating temporary Yup'ik spaces and reproducing the village tradition in the city.

The dynamics of the city shapes the Yup'ik Orthodox lifestyle in its turn, as it becomes more challenging for them to maintain their religious identity. Among the factors that might reduce their connection to the urban church are the limited Orthodox spaces and lack of transportation to attend these spaces. Nevertheless, extended family ties, especially in case of the Yup'ik Orthodox clergy and parishioners, remain an important tool for the Yupiit in view of reconceptualizating urban spaces as extensions of the rural, religious and social landscapes.

As the Russian Orthodox Church is only one of the urban spaces which the Yupiit internalize, I expanded my research to Moravian and, to a lesser extent, Catholic religious spaces that the Yupiit create on their own or in collaboration with other urban Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. One of the main characteristics of the Moravian parishes in the city is that they have predominantly Yup'ik leadership that often builds on the network of the urban extended family members and friends. Despite the fact that both the Russian Orthodox and Moravians in the city have Yup'ik chaplains at the Anchorage Native Medical Center (ANMC), they founded their urban

churches as a response to the increasing migration of the Indigenous populations to the city, whereas the main reason of the Catholic Native Ministry development in the city were ANMC patients coming to Anchorage from the rural areas.

The religious diversity of the urban environment enables some Yupiit to acquire multi-denominational experiences which one of my collaborators defined as “church hopping”. Nevertheless, the majority of my Christian collaborators remain loyal to the churches they attended from their childhood. Mirroring the village tradition, Moravian Yupiit attend the Orthodox celebration of Selaviq, while Orthodox Yupiit may be present at the Protestant Native Musicale. In this case, however, their role is limited to passive participants, as they do not take part in the rituals of the other church. In addition, multi-denominational marriages are also practiced in the city (for instance, when a Moravian pastor can marry an Orthodox female).

All three Churches create and serve as permanent spaces in which Yup’ik extended family members and friends meet, pray, eat and exchange Native food and gifts, thus, recreating the village lifestyle. While the Yupiit incorporated the elaborate system of food and gift distribution to the namesakes of the deceased into the Orthodox celebration of Starring that occurs in the urban setting, the Moravians share food and gifts during Memorial Feasts. Connected to the Protestant church network, the Moravian church and ministry members use an opportunity to create a common, Indigenous Christian space once a year - the Native Musicale.

Other annual events, such as the Alaska Federation of Natives and its Native crafts market, the Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market and BIA Tribal Provider’s Conference, serve as possibilities to manifest the Alaska Native collective identity and political activism, while creating possibilities for urban Yupiit and other Indigenous populations to connect with but also to extend

both social and rural networks. For instance, urban Indigenous artists' business depends directly on rural hunters' materials. Thus, both meet and discuss bartering and other opportunities during those events. The annual sales of the rural artists also depend on these events because they come to the city to generate and spend cash on buying goods unavailable in rural areas.

The oscillatory movements and circuits between the village and the city have become strategical choices of the Indigenous populations of Alaska that allow them to compensate what they might lack: going to the city enables rural inhabitants to participate in the political negotiations and religious events on a wider state scale, to earn cash, to gain access to healthcare services not available in villages or in the rural hubs, to connect with the urban relatives and friends to barter Native food and raw materials against goods from the city. In their turn, urban Indigenous peoples return to the village for subsistence activities and commercial fishing, for acquiring materials for their crafts, for maintaining their ties with the extended family members and with the ancestral lands. Certainly, Voorhees (2010) fairly contended that "an unmitigated celebration of emergent indigenous cosmopolitanism overlooks the fact that not all Alaska Natives can afford to cultivate a mobile lifestyle that integrates the resources of rural and urban worlds" (p.71). At the same time, the interdependence of both rural and urban Indigenous relatives serves as a partial compensation for the urban Alaska Natives that do not have financial means to return to their ancestral lands: they benefit from at least some of their rural extended family members' trips to the city that continue to bring and share Native food and gifts with their consanguineal, affinal or fictive kin in exchange for other types of sharing (transportation, city accommodation, and other services). Thus, the situation of interdependence connects the village and the city: "In Alaska, rural and urban are kind of the same... If rural Alaska is not successful, urban Alaska is not successful" (Nicewonger et al. 2022). Hence, according to the data collected, I contend that the process of the ruralization of the city goes

along with the process of village urbanization that contributes to a better connection of the urban population with their rural relatives, creating additional opportunities for sharing and exchange.

The sharing of Native food serves in its turn to socialize and strengthen ties with the urban social networks that include friends, members of the same churches and co-workers (for instance, from Native corporations with the headquarters located in Anchorage). The value of sharing is typical of many Indigenous populations in Alaska, thus, Native food distribution, circulation and exchange contributes to the maintaining of the collective Alaska Native identity in the city, as it happens on the inter-tribal level. The boarding school experience, the implementation of the Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act and the urban exposure to different ethnic identities have resulted in new friendships and partnerships among members of different tribes, and have led to the creation of additional Native food, raw material and service exchange networks.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, ANMC (the Native hospital) was a unique, urban space in which the Yup'ik Orthodox, Moravian and Catholic chaplains visited the rural patients and helped them with adaptation during their illnesses. The hospital also opened its doors to both religious services and secular events (such as conferences and workshops). Urban Yup'ik dance groups danced in the hospital's lobby on a weekly basis, gathering and entertaining the extended family members and other Indigenous dancers and patients of different generations and recreating the reawakened tradition in the city. Urban Yup'ik dance groups that practiced at ANMC and, after the Covid-19 pandemic, at Alaska Native Heritage Center, are active participants of the Cama-i Dance Festival annually occurring in Bethel (in the Yup'ik region) and of the Quayana Alaska dance celebration at the AFN convention in Anchorage. These created Indigenous spaces, in their turn, are manifestations of the Yup'ik and other Indigenous identities through the tradition of dancing that additionally bring the rural and urban social networks together.

Difficulties in relation to the return to the hospital for secular and religious activities after the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated one of the challenges that the Yup'ik and other Alaska Native populations experience in the urban setting: the absence of a common, secular, Indigenous space and a limited number of Indigenous religious spaces. The conversations with my collaborators and the discourse of the recently created Anchorage Native Community Council pointed out the same issue: urban Alaska Natives lack secular, permanent spaces that would allow them to reproduce their village lifestyles by practicing their traditional activities, such as dancing, craft production and Native food sharing. Besides, at least some parts of the younger generation, LGBTQ+ and other Yupiit that might have confronting relationships with Christian Yupiit, do not attend churches. Thus, they are unable to enjoy the extended family network meetings and sharing that the religious spaces provide. Moreover, some of my collaborators highlighted the notion of lack of "safe" spaces in the city. As Hanson (2015) noticed, her Native participants migrating to Anchorage were "soon discouraged by the racism they encountered" (p.107). My collaborator, Marie Meade added that she had been "warned to watch for danger and to be careful because it's not like the village…it's a larger community" (personal communication, 2024). Hence the ongoing need for Indigenous spaces in the urban setting that provide cultural continuity goes along with a need for protection from racism and unsafe city environment. Some Yupiit compensate this lack of public, secular spaces by subsisting locally: it allows them to connect with the nature, to contribute to sharing Native food and to practice rituals (e.g. feeding the ancestors and asking them for protection during berry-picking). Others combine practicing both Christian and ancient rituals, such as burning clothes of their deceased relatives. One alternative that emerged as a result of Indigenous adaptability and creativity was the organization of virtual dancing, craft workshops and Elders' presentations during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of them continue to occur both occasionally and regularly.

Today Anchorage Native Outreach Ministry continues to practice online services, while Saint Innocent Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church has switched to the hybrid format of conducting them in-person and broadcasting them through social media. Broadcasting allows the rural family members and urban Christians who are unable to attend services in-person to join their religious and social networks virtually.

Other traditional practices that continue to connect the Yupiit from both the rural and urban areas are naming and adoption. Yup'ik naming contributes to the creation and maintenance of fictive kin relationships between the families of the deceased and their namesakes living in villages and in the city. Fienup-Riordan (1994) noted that the relationship between a deceased and their namesakes was pivotal for understanding the Yup'ik life-death cycle and cosmology (p. 120). Although I came to a similar conclusion, the data collected and analyzed during my fieldwork contributes to its further understanding.

I found that even if the colonization and Christianization processes impacted the naming tradition, so that not all the Yup'ik children carry Yup'ik names today, it transcended the current religious affiliations. At this stage of my research I hypothesize that naming and the idea of the reincarnation of the deceased through their namesakes persist for several reasons. One possible reason is that missionaries did not pay enough attention to the belief in the reincarnation and to the fictive kin relationships created because they did not hear the Yup'ik names being used on a daily basis. In her book, Fienup-Riordan (1994) argued that "Out of respect for the namesake, however, the name was then never used in direct address or indirect reference" (Fienup-Riordan 1994, p. 246). Analyzing the example of how honoring the deceased through their namesakes was incorporated in the Selaviq celebration, I further suggest that the Christian Yupiit chose to keep the naming practice because they have not abandoned their traditional beliefs. This contrasts with what

Blaisel et al. (1999) argued in their article "Parousial Movements among the Inuit of Northeast Canada" that "a combination of shamanism and Christianity was not longer considered as viable by most Inuit" (p. 406). As for the Yupiit, they continue to creatively adopt and adapt to different forms of Christianity in both villages and the city by using different tools and strategies. While the Yup'ik Orthodox incorporate feeding and gift-giving in the Selaviq celebration, the Moravian Yupiit do the same for the Memorial Feasts. As for more regular activities, I also observed and heard from one of my collaborators that the Yupiit Moravians choose particular verses from the Bible for their weekly testimonies that illustrate the correctness of the Yup'ik traditional values and instructions as well as their similarity with the Christian values. The Yupiit continue to find parallels between their traditional beliefs and Christianity by applying them to the latter.

Furthermore, at this stage of research I contend that the Yup'ik perception of God is also being constantly negotiated. As cited in Chapter III and discussed with collaborators informally, some Elders consider that the faith they had in the past (in Ellam Yua) is similar to the one (in God) that they adopted later. I also heard several encounters on Jesus being considered "a good man" which might be a parallel to the Yup'ik *ircenrraat* (instructions) that teach on how to be a Yup'ik or a "real" or, in other words, a good person. I agree with Blaisel et al. (1999) that "established churches had acquired firm roots in Inuit culture" (p.406). Furthermore, in contrast with the argument by Pelkmans et al. (2005) that "conversion among the Nuer resulted in a fragmentation of group identity and relations" (p. 12), I argue that for the Yupiit, conversion did not cause a fragmentation of identity because they continue to use creativity and agency to balance the present and the past and to incorporate their traditional beliefs into their ongoing dialogue with Christianity.

Speaking about the tools that the Yupiit use to negotiate and renegotiate their lifestyles, the naming process remains an important tool that sustains the fictive kin ties along with the more

recently adopted fictive kin relationships between the Yup'ik Christian godchildren and godparents. Adoption remains another tool to expand kinship ties, as adopted children continue to maintain relationships with both the adoptive and biological families. However, today adoption also has become a necessity for children in families with alcohol and substance abuse issues. While the fictive kin relationships continue to be sustained, there is a tendency of losing the knowledge of kinship terms, to a greater degree, in the city, especially, by the younger generation (Marie Meade, personal communication, 2024).

Local subsistence continues to play an important role for some of the urban Yupiit that cannot afford to fly to their ancestral lands in summer. Fishing and berry-picking remain the mostly widely practiced activities in the areas near the city. Hunting is more problematic because of the state and federal regulations that apply to the areas. The families that have motivation and the financial means to subsist close to the urban areas also participate in Native food sharing and exchange circuits in the city.

In Anchorage, it is easier to manifest female Yup'ik identity through the traditional female subsistence activities, such as berry picking and food processing. It is more challenging for the urban Yup'ik men to exercise traditional male hunting activities and to apply the local environmental knowledge they acquired in the villages. The ability to practice these activities is tied to the capacity to generate cash needed for the equipment and transportation to subsistence sites. Aware of the urban men's struggles to maintain their Indigenous identity, Southcentral Foundation accompanies them and offers them participation in such programs as the Family Wellness Warriors Initiative. It promotes training for resilience and building of healthy relationships in the city. Despite more possibilities to subsist in rural areas, rural hunters' success is also dependent on the ability to earn money needed to buy gas and equipment.

With the ongoing migration of the Yupiit and other Alaska Native populations to the city, Yup'ik Immersion Program, Alaska Native Charter School and Native Studies Program at the University of Alaska Anchorage have been developing their curricula around the Yup'ik language and cultural activities (e.g. subsistence, dancing, craft production). As per Chapter III, the Moravian and Russian Orthodox missionaries contributed to the standardization of the Yup'ik language. As shown in Chapter VII, today's schools in the city also play an important role in the process, as they develop the same curricula for children whose families come from different Yup'ik areas. Yup'ik children have much less exposure to the language in an urban setting as compared to the regional hubs and villages. At the same time, practicing Yup'ik language and subsistence activities in the rural areas is also dependent on the motivation and financial means of the Yup'ik families. As for non-Yupik, Alaska Native children that attend the same urban schools, they are required to learn the Yup'ik language because it is the only Indigenous language being offered in the city. For them and their parents, learning a non-native but an Alaska Native language is also a part of the renegotiation process they engage in in the urban setting.

While I was able to share and to examine the traditional activities and spaces that the Yupiit internalize and negotiate in the city of Anchorage to ruralize the city, I did not have any possibility during my fieldwork to expand my research to a study of the urbanization of Yup'ik villages, as a result of the oscillatory migration between the village and the city. Further research on how the urbanization of rural spaces impact traditional activities and social network strategies in the villages would be beneficial to contribute to the study of the dynamics of the rural-to-urban migration. A Social Network Analysis among the Yup'ik and other Indigenous populations living in the city might be useful to conduct in order to acquire a better understanding of the relationship structure between rural and urban social networks.

My current participation in an interdisciplinary research project awarded by the National Science Foundation is focused on “improving culturally sensitive energy strategies” in two rural Indigenous communities in the Bristol Bay region (Lauter et al. 2023). Our team uses the co-production of knowledge framework for searching for solutions to improve energy efficiency together with the Indigenous collaborators (Ellam Yua et al. 2022). In addition, we take into consideration the Indigenous perspective on climate change that equally contributes to its better understanding (Lavrillier & Gabyshev 2021). As building of trust and of long-term relationships with the Indigenous communities is a part of this approach, I use the experience gained and the methods used during my fieldwork in Anchorage in order to bridge Western and Indigenous knowledge systems. Also, my contribution to this project consists in examining the interrelationship and mutual impact of the rural traditional practices and daily household activities with energy use.

Another research project that I would like to re-submit for potential funding by the National Science Foundation is focused on examining the impact of archival data on understanding current environmental change in the Bristol Bay region of Alaska. In collaboration with the Yup’ik Alaska Native community, I would like to explore the opportunity to create an interactive platform to visualize and to provide access to the translated, metadata tagged, and digitized archival collection containing environmental data and Indigenous knowledge in travel journals of explorers and missionaries of the 19th century that remain unknown, understudied, and largely removed from the origin and descendant communities they represent. This community-engaged project will examine the ways in which environmental data contained in travel journals and reports of Russian Orthodox parish priests from the Alaskan Russian Church archive collection contribute to the ongoing scientific discussion about environmental change in the Arctic. Despite a certain degree of bias in the missionaries’ accounts, their environmental observations are interesting and understudied sources of data for environmental studies (Borm et al. 2021, p. 8). The created interactive platform

will elicit Indigenous perspectives on the historical environmental data that will be analyzed and compared with the current, locally observed change. I am planning to use the experience of reading, translating and analyzing the Alaskan Russian Church archive collection as well as of building the relationships with the communities to develop this community-based project.

Lastly, during my fieldwork in Anchorage my Yup'ik collaborators shared their motivation to connect with their "Siberian Yup'ik relatives" living on the Chukotka Peninsula. I would like to use my fieldwork experience to build a cultural bridge between the Yupiit living in Alaska and in Russia by creating and re-submitting the community-based project in collaboration with the Indigenous populations and with an interdisciplinary research team. This team includes Dr. Butler, Associate Professor at the University of Alaska Anchorage, who will participate by developing low cost, culturally adaptive video communications.

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ANNEX

Table of Alaska Native Organizations and Events Discussed in this Dissertation

AFN Convention	Alaska Federation of Native annual convention that "serves as the principal forum and voice for the Alaska Native community in addressing critical issues of public policy and government. The convention convenes thousands of official delegates and participants from membership organizations across the state" (AFN Website)
AFN Convention Bazaar	A crafts fair that takes place during the annual Alaska Federation of Natives Convention
Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN)	The largest statewide Indigenous organization in Alaska
Alaska Native Heritage Center	An Alaska Native cultural and educational organization located in Anchorage, Alaska
Alaska Native Heritage Center Holiday Bazaar	An Alaska Native Crafts Fair taking place in December
Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC)	A hospital that provides primary and behavioral health care to Alaska Native and American Indian people living in Alaska
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)	A non-profit tribal health organization whose main goal is to provide healthcare to Alaska Natives and American Indians living in Alaska
Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship	A Christian Fellowship with an active radio and television ministry; an organizer of Native Musicale
BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) Conference	An annual conference that includes tribal governments, village community members and government representatives
Calista Corporation	An Alaska Native Regional Corporation created under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) serving Alaska Native shareholders in Southwest Alaska
Cama-i Dance Festival	An annual gathering of Cup'ik/Yup'ik dancers and state, national and international groups in Bethel, Alaska
Cama-i Room	A gathering space that is organized at the

	University of Alaska Anchorage to help Alaska Native students living on-campus to adjust to the urban and academic environments
Charlotte Jensen Native Arts Market	An Alaska Native crafts market organized annually during the Fur Rondy festival in the Dimond Center in Anchorage, Alaska
Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)	A Tribal nonprofit organization that serves Alaska Natives and American Indians living in the Cook Inlet region of southcentral Alaska
First Alaskans Institute's Elders & Youth Conference	An annual statewide conference hosted by First Alaskans Institute and community members before the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention; the conference's workshops allow for a dialogue between the Alaska Native Elders and youth
Fur Rondy	The Fur Rendezvous (or Rondy) winter, annual festival that takes place in Anchorage and that signifies the approach of spring
Indigenous Peoples' Day	A holiday in the United States that honors its Indigenous population and history; celebrated on the 2nd Monday in October which is also the United States Columbus Day holiday honoring the explorer Christopher Columbus
Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women Day	A National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (May 5th)
Native Musicale	An annual Christian musical festival held in Anchorage during the Fur Rondy winter festival, connecting the Indigenous Protestants from the rural and the urban Alaska
Native Student Services	Provides an Indigenous space and support for Indigenous students on campus at the University of Alaska Anchorage
Native Youth Olympic (NYO) Games	An annual competition in Alaska Native sports and games by Alaska Native youth held in Anchorage
Quyana Alaska	An annual Alaska Native dance festival held during the Alaska Federation of Native Convention
Southcentral Foundation	A non-profit tribal health care organization that provides outpatient care to Alaska Native and Native American peoples living in Alaska

Consent Form

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	**RESEARCH SUPERVISORS:**
Olga Lauter PhD Candidate in Anthropology UVSQ, France Non-degree student, University of Alaska Anchorage (907) 891 6850	Professor Lavrillier and Professor Borm 55 avenue de Paris 78035 Versailles Cedex Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines

DESCRIPTION:
I would like to understand how the Yup'ik Indigenous People living in urban areas preserve their cultural and religious identity. If you agree to participate in this interview you will be asked questions on the topics. You will spend about 60 minutes of your time on this interview.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION:
Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If you don't wish to participate, or would like to end your participation in this study, or not wish to answer a question, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to you to which you are otherwise entitled. In other words, you are free to make your own choice about being in this study or not, and may quit at any time without penalty.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
Upon your wish, your name will or will not be attached to your responses. Any information from this interview that is published will or will not identify you by name, according to your wish. The data collected in this research may be used for a dissertation publication or a paper publication and can be shared upon request before being published.

BENEFITS (and INCENTIVES):
The results of this research may benefit the Yup'ik, other Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities by contributing to a deeper understanding of cultural and religious heritage preservation and negotiation. You will receive a gift card or a monetary compensation and gratitude for participating in this study.

RISKS:
There could be some questions that might seem uncomfortable to answer. Feel free to let me know that you do not want to answer such a question and I will proceed to another question immediately. No other risks are known.

SIGNATURE:
Your signature on this consent form indicates that you fully understand the research description above, what is being asked of you in this interview, and that you are signing this voluntarily. If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to ask them now or at any time throughout the interview.
Signature and Date_____` Authorization for recording the interview YES/NO
Printed Name _____ Authorization to use your name for publications YES/NO

A copy of this consent form is available for you to keep

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Interviews

Interview with Anonymous 12 – February 13th, 2019

The following topics were discussed during this interview: Russian and Alaskan Orthodox Starring; Participation of Moravians in Starring; food distribution and gift-giving; the Yup'ik value of sharing; teasing.

Interview with Marie Meade – April 2nd, 2019; May 4th, 2022; June 15th, 2024

Olga: Waqaa, Marie. Thank you for speaking with me. Could you tell a few words about your biography?

Marie: I was born to Elena and Nick [unclear] in 1947 and was raised in the tundra village of Nunapitchuk. I was raised bilingual.

Olga: And you said you received your education in Nunapitchuk and in Bethel, right?

Marie: Yes.

Olga: What about your Yup'ik teaching career?

Marie: I have worked as a Yup'ik teacher for more than thirty years. I worked with Irene Reed and others on the state's earliest bilingual education material in the 1970s. There was a pilot bilingual program in 1970. After I graduated from high school in Bethel, my parents did not want me to go to a boarding school, I had to catch up with the high school curriculum in Bethel. The pilot BIA program was to teach 6 year olds who spoke exclusively Yup'ik in the village, in Yup'ik but with the English curriculum. I had a 6-week orientation with Irene Reed in Fairbanks. The villages assigned for this first bilingual program were Nunapitchuk, Napaskiak and Akichak. Then in a year, I asked Irene if they had a job for me in Fairbanks while they were working on materials in Yup'ik. In 1970, the Yup'ik Language Workshop at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) was launched under the leadership of Irene Reed. In collaboration with other specialists and Yup'ik native speakers we created the first grammar book of Central Yup'ik. Since then, a lot of different curricula and programs have been developed, for instance, the Lower Kuskokwim School District bilingual programs.

Olga: As you continue your work in certification of the Yup'ik teachers today, I have the following questions: what are the areas in the Yup'ik region where the language remains strong today? Are there any revitalization of the language happening in other areas?

Marie: Manokotak, Togiak and Twin Hills are the areas where the Yup'ik is strong. There are areas where it is weaker, for instance, Igiugug where there is a grant for the language revitalization. I say "reminded" or "awakened" rather than "revitalized" because revitalization means that it was 'dead'.

Olga: Do you think it is more challenging to teach the language in the city? In Anchorage?

Marie: It is more difficult to teach the Yup'ik language in Anchorage at schools. Kids have much less everyday exposure to the language, however, in villages it depends on families, whether a kid speaks Yup'ik, as there are families who speak English only at home. Yup'ik people in Anchorage are much more disconnected from the community as compared to the village. Children in Anchorage have less place-based knowledge, so it adds an additional layer of difficulty to the explanation of Yup'ik words.

Olga: We have recently met at a funeral. I wanted to ask whether my understanding is correct in that funerals are rare occasions when the Yup'ik people scattered around the city, meet? I observed several times that the Yup'ik came and stayed and brought food and ate and sang together to uplift the moaning family members. I also saw this in the funerals of Annie's daughter, that people were glad to see each other together in one space.

Marie: Yes but Funerals in Anchorage are conducted differently [as compared to the villages]. In funeral homes there could be some loud laughing, which goes against the way the funerals are held in the village – quietly supporting and uplifting the moaning family.

Olga: I have some additional questions, Marie. When Yup'ik people are named after the deceased, what do they acquire, the same traits, some essence?

Marie: They acquire behavior and language.

Olga: A question about kinship. Is it correct that Yup'ik people are losing their knowledge of kinship terms today?

Marie: Yes, especially, the younger generation.

Olga: I see. But some younger people's experience in the villages, when they go back with their parents, might help in maintaining the knowledge?

Marie: They may learn there by doing and by watching.

Olga: Is it true that safety is an issue for Alaska Natives in Anchorage? Do they search for safe spaces there?

Marie: I was warned to watch for danger and to be careful because it's not like the village… it's a larger community.

Olga: Quyana, Marie.

Interview with Augusta Reimer – August 21st, 2019

Olga: So, Augusta, I want to ask you a few questions about your biography. How old are you etc? If it is appropriate.

Augusta: It is fine. I was born in Nome, Alaska, in 1942. My father moved us all to Anchorage, when I was three, and I have moved there ever since. Almost my whole life. I worked at the old Alaska Native Medical Center hospital as the patient educator, and in 1995 I was asked to create a traditional healing program for the hospital under Indian Health Service they assigned me to that position. I tried to create a traditional healing office and bring healers and the traditional healing methods to the hospital but they were very afraid of it. And everywhere I turned, they put a barrier. After 2 years of that, I served for twenty years, I was ready to retire and I left. Back then Indian health Service the federal government ran those services about that times in 1990s the tribes around America were taking over the health care services all over the US; and the Southcentral Foundation that provides outpatient care to native people now took over the traditional healing program; and they hired a group of healers, and created an office for them.

Olga: To you, you said previously that your Mom did not really reach you the Inupiaq culture? May be she did unconsciously?

Augusta: People were mean to them, to these girls, and they used to say they were mean, so that they learned to not really appreciate Native people. My mother didn't want to teach us some language. We had to absorb what is to be an Inupiaq person just from listening to her and watching her.

Olga: I am trying to understand how Native people in Anchorage preserve their culture. Your Mom made this decision, but now times have changed, and under today's circumstance she would speak more? But today how do Alaska Natives preserve their culture in Anchorage?

Augusta: It's more hard in Anchorage because being Native is leading a subsistence lifestyle and it is difficult to speak the language in Anchorage. You have to shop at the grocery store now. We do not have the same kind of subsistence food. We grew up here in the White people's world and we had no other choice but to move to the Western society. That is hard to do in Anchorage.

Olga: That is why one of the purposes of the Native Council is to find some space for Native people?

Augusta: To offer whatever kinds of activities to make people identify with being Native, be proud of being Native and gather all together.

Olga: What kind of activities?

Augusta: Everything I tell you is only my opinion. In the ideal world, we would learn our language, some people are, I would like to but I am not sure I would. For me just gathering together with Native people and trying to do things in a respectful way and to live by the Native values. That is what we are trying to do in the Native Council.

Olga: By the way, speaking about healing, and Rita Blumenstein, did she start to heal at the Southcentral Foundation?

Augusta: Rita Blumenstein she learned as a child she had a healing gift; she grew up in a traditional Yup'ik way. When Southcentral took over, she was the first traditional healer to be hired. They made a lot of restrictions on her, drumming was not allowed. They can't do any ceremony inside the building like burn sage. In fact I used to do that, when they hired me as a traditional healer, they made me stop. You can't overcome some of the barriers. Rita then moved to a different position. Rita continued to help people privately.

Olga: And how would it be possible to approach a traditional healer?

Augusta: Traditional healers would have been known in a community, it would not be coming for a book, they would have a natural talent to be a healer. You cant go to see a healer unless you get a referral from a doctor, and those doctors are mostly white people. Normally, when you ask to see a

healer, in American Indian Tradition, you might offer tobacco and ask whether a healer would work on you. Develop a reciprocal relationship with the healer, they do not ask for money and they do not call themselves healers but it is reciprocal for you to offer something, if you don't have money, you offer something else.

Olga: By the way, we have already discussed with you the importance of sustaining relationships for Native communities. You meant that Native people do not want to invest into short-term relationships with researchers, right?

Augusta: Yes.

Olga: Thank you so much, Augusta.

May 3rd, 2022

Olga: Augusta, I have a question about the Anchorage Native Community Council. Is there still a need of a common, Indigenous space in the city?

Augusta: Yes, there is lack of a permanent space in the city that is an issue.

Olga: Is my understanding correct that during Covid-19 pandemic, the Council encouraged donations to the Native community?

Augusta: Yes, the Council encouraged urban hunters to share substance foods with the Community.

Olga: Thank you.

Interview with Tatiana Andrew – October 5th, 2019

Olga: Hi, Tatiana, if you do not mind, I will ask you a couple of questions about you and your family.

Tatiana: Yes.

Olga: As far as I understood, your Dad is Yup'ik and your Mom has Slavic origins.

Tatiana: Her grandparents immigrated to America from Slovakia.

Olga: Where were you born?

Tatiana: In Dillingham because that's where they were for the summer. My other siblings were born in Bethel. Then they went back to the seminary.

Olga: You spent most of your lifetime?

Tatiana: In different places of Alaska. He was ordained right after that. My father is from Kwethluk, so we considered it home. But he was the priest in [unclear], in Tuntutuliak, for four years, then I stayed for two years with my grandparents in Kwethluk. I would be going back and forth. In the fourth grade my Dad was transferred to Dillingham, so I moved there in 1989.. Basically, I was growing up in Dillingham but had a close connection to the Kuskokwim [area]. By going to Mt. Edgecumbe [School] I was able to conenct with a lot of friends. I still have friends in every cultural group.

Olga: And what about your life in Dillingham?

Tatiana: When I moved, it was such a drastic change for me. It is a Yup'ik region but it was so different culturally for me. In the villages, I was, I am half White, half Yup'ik, I was considered Kassaq [White in the Yup'ik language) but in Dillingham I was considered Yup'ik, not really Kassaq. There were different students, also non-Native ones. It was just a big change.

Olga: Interesting. And when did you move to Anchorage?

Tatiana: It was October 6th, 1999. I got a job and I planned to leave home for the first time and I went to some college. But soon after that the Bishop transferred my Dad to Anchorage to service in Prince William Sound. For him. We moved here.

Olga: Was it hard to get used to the urban life?

Tatiana: I never thought I was going to live in a city. I loved coming to go shopping, to watch movies. But living in Anchorage... living in Dillingham help with this transition phase from the villages. It was not too hard but still an adjustment. I grew up being in the street care-free. We were out all day. Here with my sister's children, she feels bad because here we say to them: oh, you cannot go to the park. Something bad can happen here.

Olga: And was it difficult culturally?

Tatiana: When we came here, we started to go to Selaviq, it is more difficult to plan, to go, between this and this time, you need to go to a couple of homes. In the villages easy access to the next house, everyone participates. You need liable transportation to get anywhere in the city, it is very vast, it is harder to walk around. In the villages, we have snowmachines but you can walk more easily. Some Elders, it is harder for them to get around here. A lot of times in the villages, families live together, grandparents live with their children and grandchildren. Often grandparents are babysitting.

Olga: Is it hard to preserve the Yup'ik identity here in the city?

Tatiana: You can lean towards, it can become difficult. It can be your personal choice. It is all about the effort you make. You can go subsist in the summer times, it is definitely harder but you can go ice-fishing too, if you are making the choice.

Olga: There is also church-hopping and other attractions too in Anchorage, I was told. Is it a difficulty for the Orthodox church?

Tatiana: May be in how to attract people. When I was in school in Sitka, there were other religious groups inviting people for ice-eating. May be that is something we lack in our church here partially.

I do not know how I am trying to say it. It is also important to have transportation to go. Here people would pick up someone voluntarily. The Cathedral does not have any I think. I do not know why.

Olga: And you say you are from Kwethluk?

Tatiana: That is what we say. My Dad is from Kwethluk, and we grew up there. And connection to our grandparents were there. My Mom moved to Alaska in 1974 and has never left. And when she married my father, my grandfather trapped all the squirrels for her parka, my aunts tanned them. It was welcoming her to the family.

Olga: And when did you start Yup'ik dancing?

Tatiana: At the age of five in Kwethluk. Before I was going to school. And then I went to Kwethluk when I was 6. There were those dancers from Chevak, they brought dancing back to the school. The community was there, I remember it was warm, and this lade picked me, and my Mom encouraged me, that is when I fell in love with it. Before I left. The teacher made a video tape, and when I moved to Dillingham, I practiced. I tried to get involved and to dance in Dillingham but it was not prevelant. They would just try to bring it back. They did have some, and with the Elders. For my own opinion and observations as a child, people did not want to be Yup'ik in Dillingham. The children in my generation do not speak Yup'ik in the area.

Olga: Do you have any ideas, why?

Tatiana: I think with me and my family, I speak it more than my siblings because I was in schools where it was mainly Yup'ik. It was the main lamguage and my first langauge. My younger siblings grew up in Dillingham, they did not have that structure. We would do mostly doing some projects, it was not actual Yup'ik learning. It has a big part to do with the BIA times. The outside contact happened. The Orthodox missionaries came but they learned the language. Even for the Yup'ik people, services and gospels were done in the Yup'ik language. When the BIA, the U.S. government, Sheldon Jackson divided Alaska and sent missionaries to assimilate. I do not know

how the Moravians fit their, in Bethel. But the Orthodox missioanries did not make people change or stop speaking their language.

Olga: But in the villages are the services still in Yup'ik?

Tatiana: For the most part, I have recently there, it was nice to hear them in Yup'ik in Nunapitchuk and in Kwethluk. Of course, with the connections from outside... I know here in Anchorage typically it is English. In our Saint Alexis Chapel, it's my sister and I. We do not know the Slavonic pieces, in Dillingham it was mainly in English. It is very diverse at the Cathedral. It is nice to feel like home. So here at the parish we would to utiize the different languages.

Olga: Do you feel at home in Anchorage?

Tatiana: I have been here for 20 years but I still feel that I am from Kwethluk. It was always a joy to go home in the summer. My brother lives there now at the Grandpa's house.

Olga: How did you find each other with your current Yup'ik dance group?

Tatiana: When I lived in Dilligham, I was trying to connect with the dance group here and there. But I went to Mt. Edgecumbe [School], they had a dance group, for me it was a highlight. I met friends there, I wanted the group from there to continue. . We got the group going. I wanted to be a part of a Yup'ik dance group. And so I kind of took charge of the leader. We learned some songs from John Pingayak, some students shared songs. And there were other kids up to Yukon area. And we taught each other. So, my junior year for the founder's week the school invited Chuna McIntyre, he is a well-known artist. And he came and taught us how to make headdressers and some dance songs. It was wonderful. He is from Eek, Alaska. And he returned home but asked the office to call me, I was kind of nervous. And he invited me to perform with his group in Washington D.C. And I was over the moon, but trying to be calm and saying that I need to ask a permission from my parents. I just remember screaming and saying to my Mom. Can I go, please, please? It was 1994 when I joined the group. It is amazing to be a part of this group for the past 25 years. The places I have gone, the people I met. And what I learned. Because Chuna's Nunamta

Yup'ik Dancers group, by being a part of it, it would be the similar set, but he exlains pretty indeeptly to the audience, I would learn more and more. His emphasis on the traditional side, his regalia, and he has that knowledge from his grandmother. I have beautiful headdresses, belt, I inherited my mother's parka. When it was giften to me, Chuna refurnished it to follow my family line.

Olga: What is it for you, the dancing?

Tatiana: Healing, prayer, all of it. "When you think back to it, you know, my ancestors danced, my grandpa, he made songs, and students in Kwethluk still dance them, he would tell he remembers, he grew up in the mountains, when his family came to the village area, he would see the dancing the *qasgiq*, it's kind of a connection for me for my grandmother, I never knew her, my dad's mother, she passed away when he was one year old, he was raised by his aunt who kind of took him as her own; in the Yup'ik ways when two sisters have children, their children are considered as brother and sister. People would say, my grandmother I am named after, was a very good, well-known sewer. Just be able to have this connection. My first awareness of the dancing watching it, seeing the story come to life in front of me, like watching a cartoon, it's basically a story being sung, and we have very general moves for walking, looking, then there could be variations for chopping etc. People doing it their own way. that was very intriguing. It was very entertaining. I think Yup'ik people are very good at humor, they love to tease. It's another way to connect. Be together. Education, story-telling, fun, depends on a situation.

Olga: To tease is to include?

Tatiana: Yes. We also have teasing cousins, and they are meant to tease each other. But I do feel there is a lot of teasing in the culture. Laughter is a good medicine.

Olga: And what about traditional healing, at ANMC, what do you think about it?

Tatiana: From my point of view, I have never gone, for my small circle, they are using talking circles, I do not think there is anything worng with it. In the church, we have a chance to reconcile,

to go to a consession. They talk about the Creator at ANMC. I know there is a lot of traumas, different types of them. All these changes. Even introducing substances, alcohol, domestic violence, abused. Everything going towards healing is always a good thing.

Olga: May be last question: I heard that Selaviq, some Moravians come to the event. Why?

Tatiana: You have to think at the very beginning, before the Moravians came, it was celebrated, some of the carols are still very similar, most of them, it is about the traditions of back then. What they continue to do. They do not know the right words but they still sing it the way it was taught. But families marry into families, whether Orthodox or Moravian, Selaviq is very similar to an old Yup'ik tradition of the winder celebrations. So it is another way of coming together. And the Moravian people are spiritual as well. So to come together, you visit and laugh, you meet people, and relatives. You marry into each other's religion as well. And it is also in memory of these departed, and you want to give respect. Selaviq with a q becomes more of a Native tradition, it is the same as carolling for the Nativity on the 25th. OCA chose the new calendar (as the Catholic church has) but Alaska was the only one that chose to remain on the Old calendar as Russia. And it is because of the traditions. You do not turn people away, it is for everybody, it is an opportunity to share the gospel. They like to celebrate too, and may be their parents were Orthodox, and they are not anymore, but they do it out of respect. Also, multiple stars travel across the Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna areas after January 7th, representing Alaska Native people from different regions (Unangan, Sugpiaqs, Yupiit).

Olga: I see, thank you.

March 15th, 2022

Olga: I have a couple of questions, if you do not mind, that I wanted to ask.

Tatiana, do you know when the first conversation about Olga Michael's canonization started?

Tatiana: Since the end of the 1990s. But the pandemic has delayed the process.

Olga: And why did the conversations start?

Tatiana: For example, someone was healed by the soil from her grave. And Matushka Olga was simply a "human" , a healer who has recently passed away.

Olga: I see. Another question, if you do not mind: I heard about the so-called Aleut choir tradition in the [Saint Innocent] Cathedral. Do you know about it?

Tatiana: They [the Unangan] brought their beautiful Slavonic singing tradition [to Anchorage] from their home villages. The choir leader was Iliodor Philemonof.

Olga: But today the Yupiit seem to be the majority in the choir and in the church among the Indigenous parishioners?

Tatiana: Yes, I think it started in the 1970s with the first Yup'ik priests' families were coming to Anchorage from the villages.

Olga: And today, are the priests related to each other?

Tatiana: Everyone knows everyone in the priest community, all are related.

Olga: And speaking about the relation of the deceased and their namesakes. What is it about?

Tatiana: Well, it can serve as a consolation in times of grief.

Olga: Thank you. Another questions I have been thinking to ask since the Covid pandemic. What are the main changes, if any, you noticed in how the church operated?

Tatiana: The Cathedral started to broadcast services over Facebook, in addition, it became possible to ask for a confession over the phone.

Olga: I see, thank you, and one last question, if you do not mind: I remember that you know about the

Alaska Native Cultural Charter School through your sister's children. Are there any traditional activities they do there?

Tatiana: I know that they did seal skinning.

Olga: That is great that they have these opportunities here in the city. Thank you so much!

Interviews with Anonymous 1 and Anonymous 3 – October 15th, 2019

The following topics were discussed during this interview : the past and present of the missions in Alaska; Yup'ik values; Yup'ik testimonies in Protestant churches; Alaska Native values; Yup'ik dancing; importance of dreams in the Yup'ik culture; subsistence.

Interview with Anonymous 4 – November 10th, 2019

The following topics were discussed during this interview: Russian Orthodox church in Alaska; Starring; Saint Alexis parish.

Interview with Anonymous 6 – November 23rd, 2019

The following topics were discussed during this interview: Russian Orthodox and Moravian denominations in rural Alaska; Selaviq; different lifestyles in rural and urban Alaska; Yup'ik sharing practices between rural and urban extended family networks; adoption; Native Musicale and Alaska Federation of Natives.

Interview with Quentin Simeon – January 16th, 2020

Olga: First of all, I would like to thank you for accepting to see me. And I would like to ask you to say a few words about your background, please.

Quentin: All right. Quenin Simeon. I was born and raised on the Kuskokwim river, specifically, in the villages of Bethel and Aniak which are about 70 air miles apart on the Kuskokwim river. So I grew up primarily what would be the Yup'ik culture and most of my I would say cultural heritage that type of education, I primarily got when I was living in Aniak, and most of my Western education from school, from kindergarten on, I got most in Bethel. I did spend a little bit of time in the school in Aniak. But the majority of what I would consider my heritage, I have got that from Aniak.

Olga: And so your family is from Aniak?

Quentin: From both places. My Mom is from Bethel, my Dad's family is from Aniak. I grew up kind of balancing between those two places. And I would say that our school is outside.

The time that we spent snowmachining, hunting, trapping, fishing with a net, that was school when we were working with the animals and with the land in those areas, that is our learning.

When I was a kid, probably, once we got into the fishing season in the beginning of June, that's when you started your work basically to make sure your nets were good, that your boat was good, the engine was working good, getting all the staff prepared. Then the fishcamp comes along, and then you spend about two weeks solid in the fishcamp until the fish are smelt and all done. Your job as a kid was done from time being, once the fish are cut we are… packing the fish. You are not working for yourself, everything for the family, you don't really have that sense of for me for me for me, this is for everybody. If we don't do this work, we are going to starve in the winter. It gave you a concept of time of understanding like what we are doing now is for the winter. That concept of always getting ready...all of this is in the process of getting ready for smth else. Even if its

summer time, we are getting the fish ready for the winter… Then you get done with your red and king season, it's time to go to berry picking, blueberries, blackberries first, salmonberries, and cranberries at the end, and then its silver salmon time to fish at the end of summer. Usually we gathered most of the fish, the silvers was more for fun. Silver summer time is more luxury, extra special smoke.

Olga: At what age did you start?

Quentin: Three. You are involved at all times when I was a baby it was watching, being there, it was sitting there, there was always a job for you to do. At the age of seven, I was packing fish to about ten. Once I was about ten, I was on the boat, harvesting fish, pulling the net. And ten on, you are doing the men's staff, pulling the net, being at home packing the fish, whatever it may be according to your age group. It depends on what you are capable of doing at the time.

Ever since I was about 17, I have been in the city, so my sisters had these jobs, collecting wood for the smoke house, since there is no boy, it does not matter. You are a girl, you are getting wood too (laughing). Since I left, I am ten years older than my sisters. I am gone, they learned. And I learned women's tasks.

Olga: What were they?

Quentin: Cutting fish, that's primarily women's job, but I was the only kid. I am not very good at it but I learned how because that was my job. My job for cutting fish when I was a kid was primarily thinning and cutting off heads, because it does not take that much of skills to do that, as when you are filleting or making strips, that was primarily done by the women in the family, mostly because the guys were doing other jobs. My sisters mostly do boys' jobs at home. My stepmom is an amazing fish cutter but she can keep up with the work my dad and sisters do back home.

Olga: Then you went to Bethel?

Quentin: In Bethel, I did not have that much of a cultural education. I learned some language, stories, but primarily through schools. Academic environment. What I learned as far as stories in

Aniak, those were stories we were taught at camp on a snow-machine trip, on a fishing trip. The place would inspire a story. It was a lot more a fluid sort of experience. Whereas in Bethel we heard general stories about the Yupik culture in a broad sense, in Aniak it was specific. So, the stories were incorporated into the land. How we were taught was completely different, where the environment became a part of the teaching situation. It's crucial. People live the way the land tells them to. People speak really fast Yup'ik in Aniak, and they speak a much slower version of Yup'ik in Bethel. How come is the Yup'ik in Bethel is that much slower? My Dad said that in Aniak the water is much faster, so you have to do so much faster, as the water is what is setting your pace. For example, I was about 12 years old, and we were drifting in Aniak. What happened was that our net cut a tree, and the net is tied to the boat, the water is moving at about 18 nods which is fast, it was the tension of the net being stuck on the tree, and it will drag your boat to the bottom. We had to chop the line to save our lives in the circumstance . The next summer I am fishing in Bethel, and we get a snake, it is not an alarming experience, the water is moving at about 6 nods, about three times less. We can just idle up river and undo the snake. And then we are fine. We almost died in Aniak. The pace of life in Aniak is much faster.

Olga: What about Anchorage?

Quentin: In Anchorage it is much faster.

Olga: What about the language?

Quentin: I am not a fluent speaker. I would think you gonna speak quicker once you are in Anchorage, because everything has to be quicker. But once you are on the phone with "home", in Bethel, I revert back to the pace as soon as I can. Because that's comfortable.

Olga: Why not in Aniak?

Quentin: Most of my time is based in Bethel. That pace of Bethel is my pace.

Olga: Which one do you consider your home?

Quentin: My home is still in Aniak. In Aniak we would be traveling on the river, we would always mention Ohagamiut, where my great-grandfather was raised. Anybody who is from Aniak is from somewhere else, Aniak was founded in 1936, a brand new community … I wanna go back there. When I think about my lineage, it goes back to Ohagamiut, where my story is the richest. Does it make sense?

Olga: Yes.

Olga: How long are you in Anchorage?

Quentin: I am in Anchorage since 1994. I am very much adapted but I still go home, I still go to the tradition, I go back home to learn from the land and the animals.

Olga: How do the Yup'ik people preserve the identity in Anchorage? Does it depend on a particular individual or family? What is your opinion? What is challenging? What is positive?

Quentin: Sure. The biggest, well, there is a multiple facets to answering your question. One of the biggest aspects of being in Anchorage is the diversity. Here you are exposed to the multitudes of Alaska Native perspectives. In Anchorage, you have students, old people, young people. We are all very different. And we are also very different from our own communities. Growing up in Aniak is much different from growing in Tuluksak as the Yup'ik . Even being from coast to interior is completely different, . You have to honor the diversity of that. You can't go as deep as you want to. With the students there, you have to honor all of their cultures and give them some substance that is worthwhile to all of them but deep, able to reach all of their perspectives but having some substance to it. I can go deep to the culture if I need to speak with the Yup'ik kids, because I know enough about being Yup'ik. Whereas if you are in Anchorage, some students might have those perspective, most of them don't. Because they are urban. One of the challenges for an educator, is being able to translate this traditional knowledge in a way that is acceptable by younger person who is unfamiliar with the environment where this information comes from. In Bethel, in the Y-K Delta weather is king. If the tundra says, you can travel on it, you travel on it if it says, you don't, you won't. In

Anchorage you are very much separated from this perspective. We are insulated from nature a lot here but you can do a lot of things because you are protected by the buildings and the windows. We are very much more influenced by the weather in our home town. That concept of saying hundred degrees below zero, doing something outside is a really bad idea. Don't do that (laughing). People are unaware of this severity of weather in Anchorage. That's difficult. You do have a lot more opportunities I think for teaching in Anchorage because you do a lot of diversity. You can get multiple perspectives in Anchorage. I think in the village you have the source information but it is also very specific, it is not as worldly, crucial for that region, in Anchorage not that crucial. What I have found in working with the education and especially the youth is that translating this cultural information into some usable lessons usable today, that is probably really difficult. When you grow up in that environment, it's obvious how ill-prepared humans are to be in that environment. In the Western perspective we are the custodians. In our culture, it's the opposite. We are subject to the will of the land. We are allowed to live one the land, it gives us the permission. The whole scenario is flipped. Conveying these ideas for me is challenging. But it's one of the funniest thing to be able to translate. Sneaky education and storytelling to my children or students. Telling stories about the fish camp and what it was like, reinforces the lessons inside of me as well. When I do not take part, I am not as culturally or spiritually fit. When I am able to share those stories, be in my culture and share those things, then I am more whole person and I am happier.

Olga: May I ask you a question?

Quentin: Yeah, sure.

Olga: What about the churches in Aniak?

Quentin: A Russian Orthodox and a Catholic. I was an altar boy until I was 17. I was very much Catholic. The only other I was familiar with Moravian and Mormon. Moravians were kind of like Catholicism. Russian Orthodox was very different. Mormon was like wow, that was like, very different, a white people church.

Olga: Do you still attend the church you grew up with?

Quentin: In Anchorage when I first moved to Anchorage, I was ready for a spiritual growth, I looked into Lutheran church, into Baptist church. Lutheran, I didn't like, it seemed rigid to me. Baptist, too much singing, I am not a singer, but it was cool, I had a great time. From there I was like, there is more religions than just Christianity. Then I met a rabbi to speak about Judaism, a Muslim, and we talked about the Koran. I was like wow, this is really cool. I was looking at the multitude of different religions. God is in all of these religions, nobody owns God, God is bigger than that, that was really cool to have this epiphany but I struggled as I was still Christian, Alaska Native and scientific. They did not cooperate in my mind and in my soul.

Olga: I see.

Quentin: After I graduated in 2006, I got a book called elegant universe that was about the string theory and multiple universes and dimensions, and how we are being energy and particles. That book was able to mash my scientific knowledge and Yup'ik spirituality. I got to cut out a lot of Christian ideas. But string theory literally tied together all of my spiritually with my scientific.. So God was able to make sense in my soul for the first time. So in 2007, that's when I was able to validate my Yup'ik spirituality with science. That brought a lot of peace.

Olga: Some youth say that Christianity stole culture. There is a conflict going on between the youth on the one hand and the Elders it seems. Do you think the conflict is related more to Anchorage area?

Quentin: I think it is global. There is a book called The Celestine Prophecy. This book talks about spiritual enlightenment happening globally because truth is finding its own way to the light. It kind of prophesises that more and more consciousness is collectively spread across the population, it will spontaneously generate more consciousness of truth, I think. That's kind of what's happening, it's the fallacy of how Christianity was kind of used as a tool to subjugate the populations, I think that is going to become more and more prominent. People will understand that the truth of their spiritual

journey . has been redirected to not bring them to truth, I think that it is going to become more prevalent in our culture.

Olga: Because at the moment, there is still this younger generation are present, but mostly the Elders. Do you think it's the part for the Elders who live in Anchorage, it's preserving of their traditions?

Quentin: Even in the village it's a part of your culture. My Grandma is Catholic. She does not speak Yup'ik. She still has a lot of Yup'ik culture inside of her. We were at her homestead, a bird flies into the house. In Yup'ik culture, that bird is there to steal a name. And to take it to the creator for them to die basically. She closes the doors and kills the bird and burns it.

Olga: But "burning is shamanism"? That's what I heard.

Quentin: Almost. A messenger is stealing your name for them to kill you, so my grandma is acting in accordance to a cultural belief that was not brought by Christianity. It's a very Yup'ik spiritual idea that this bird is stealing your name, and you die. We killed the bird. The bird's remains had to be killed and burnt. She still has these Yup'ik and religious beliefs, they are mixed up together, your Yup'ik spirituality, your first animal is a spiritual experience. We are really spiritual people. I had the first kill, my initiation into manhood,. When I was 12. I got my first caribou. That was me I had to learn to give and to share. My particular needs and wants are of little consequence because we need to do all the necessary things for the family. You are part of this moose hunting machine or fishing machine, and it does not work, if you do not do your part. and that was huge, that sense of community, that was very powerful.

Olga: And the Catholic church? Did people from families stemming from different religious come together?

Quentin: We would do Catholic Christmas and then go selaviqing. It seemed that those who were Russian Orthodox seemed to be more fluent in their language, as there was more acceptance of cultural stories and incorporating into the contemporary culture.

Olga: What is in your opinion ideally the happiest person here in Anchorage? How can a Yup'ik person be most happy here?

Quentin: When I was in college, I read "Yuuyaraq" for the first time in my sophomore year. When I was able to incorporate that story into my life and making it a part of me, also understanding the history of my people in an academic and even just a historical sense, I was happy and much more confident in my essence as a Yup'ik man, once I had my stories the Yup'ik way. I am still upset and a little angry that I do not speak my language. If I was able to hunt, pick berries, fish, speak my language and share my stories with my kids and community, it would be great. I do not have a steam bath, but I do have a place where I can share stores. I can share some language. I do have a place where I can share my stories. That's huge, the stories, also being able to dance. Dancing and storytelling.

Olga: Where do you dance?

Quentin: I don't dance very often, At Native Hospital. Once in a while. There is this Yukon group, I danced with them. Between 2002-2010 I was in my culture, with my people. Then I got a divorce. Ever since 2015 I am reintroducing myself back into the community. Last year it was the first time when I was welcome, allowed myself to become welcome, because I was sick, spiritually sick. Now it's a slow journey to prove that I am still a human being, I haven't lost my realness. That's what I am doing now.

Olga: Thank you so much.

Quentin: You are very welcome.

Olga: It's a very honest interview.

Interview with Anonymous 5 – January 26th, 2020

The following topics were discussed during this interview: feeding and gifting of the deceased during Starring or Selaviq; Olga Michael (Matushka Olga); Kwethluk; Yup'ik naming practices; urban lifestyle; Yup'ik sharing practices; Starring celebration in rural and urban Alaska.

Interview with Anonymous 13 – January 31st, 2020

The following topics were discussed during this interview: prejudices towards Alaska Natives in the U.S. army; commercial flying in Alaska; complex identity of Alaska Natives of mixed ancestry.

Interview with Lisa Jenkins – February 19th, 2020

Olga: Hi Lisa. How old are you?

Lisa: I am 20.

Olga: And what village are you from.

Lisa: I am from the village of Atmautluak.

Olga: Is it near Bethel?

Lisa: Yes.

Olga: This is the village you grew up in, right?

Lisa: Yes.

Olga: And you are a UAA student, you are getting your Bachelor's degree to become a nurse. What are your plans? Are you going back?

Lisa: If I do get the scholarship I want to apply for, I will have to work for the hospital for a few years, to pay for my loans and stuff. So may be after that.

Olga: You have been here for how long now?

Lisa: Since the Fall 2018. I was planning to be here for four years of college but [unclear] I am not really sure I'll graduate. That is my second year now.

Olga: How is life in Anchorage? Have you ever lived in some other places?

Lisa:: I lived in my village my whole life. I was so excited to be out because living in a village, I mean, depending on whether you love home or you love traveling. I love traveling but it is hard because I am away from the food I am used to. I am around different, diverse people.

Olga: You live in the dorm, right? Do you have any Yupiit around you?

Lisa:I have a couple of friends from the Bethel area, we try to stick close to each other. We try to keep each other, what is the word…

Olga: You support each other?

Lisa: Yes, because college is hard. Being away from home is hard especially for the guys cause some of them from the last semester [came back] cause they missed a lot of hunting. Most of them went back, they are not really here this semester. They were freshmen, it was hard.

Olga: What is life like in the village? How is it different from the city life? Do you think you can get used to this life?

Lisa: Some of the family members do live here, fishing, hunting, berry picking. I am not sure how good fishing is here though. I know there is dancing here, and crafts. Traditional healing.

Olga: Southcentral Foundation?

Lisa: Yes.

Olga: Some members of your family go to the dancing practices, right?

Lisa: Some of them. Have you been to Cama-i Room?

Olga: No, but I signed up for them on FB. What is Cama-i Room?

Lisa: Cama-i Room is for students who live on campus, who are homesick. Once in a while they have Native food. When they miss home, when they need someone to talk to, they can come there. When I first came to Cama-i Room, I stayed because I did not know anybody. I was kind of homesick.

Olga: So it helped, right?

Lisa: Yeah.

Olga: So, how is life different in the village?

Lisa: In the village I am the sibling that stays inside, doing cooking and cleaning, my other siblings do stuff outside. My Dad said [to me] at the age of ten, you are supposed to learn the woman's stuff. I am still learning it.

Olga: And how are you learning? You look at what your Mom is doing?

Lisa: Every time I do it, I have to ask her, she does not really measure.

Olga: Did you stay for the summer semester?

Lisa: No, I left.

Olga: To a fish camp?

Lisa: Yeah. Helping with fishing but I have to babysit.

Olga: And Lisa, you are Moravian, aren't you?

Lisa: Yes.

Olga: Are you going to the church here?

Lisa: I haven't' been going to the Native church for a long time. I need to get my license. I have no transportation.

Olga: So why do you think it worked for you here in Anchorage? And not for those who left?

Lisa: Depending on... I am not the first generation… my older sister came here but went back; it is much more better. One of my friends, he is the first to go to college, it depends on where they need you to go home.

Olga: So you are saying your sister left?

Lisa: She almost got her degree but she decided to go back and help.

Olga: How many siblings do you have? If I dare ask.

Lisa: I have three older sisters and a younger brother. She went back to care for my younger brother and my Dad. He got cancer, and my Mom worked.

Olga: I see… And speaking about the church, you said you have not been there for a long time. But if you go, you go to a Moravian one, right? Because you said "Native Church".

Lisa: I know that they are both Moravian. I think that they mostly speak Yup'ik. I am not sure about the Inupiaq. I have only been to the one in the Midtown area. A year and a half ago.

Olga: In the village you have both, Russian Orthodox and Moravian. What about Selaviq?

Lisa: Selaviq, yeah… My birthday is on January 7th. So growing up, my birthday was always big (laughing).

Olga: So you celebrate both?

Lisa: In the village, we celebrate our Christmas, we celebrate their Christmas which is Selaviq.

Olga: When do you go [to celebrate Selaviq], what do you do? Do you sing?

Lisa: I do not know how to sing their staff, I do not know how it is here, but they have their own group singing, as a Moravian I just stand, I do not know how to sing.

Olga: And there is a gift-distribution and eating? Right?

Lisa: Yes.

Olga: And the priests are fine with celebrating both?

Lisa: For me, we have one God, I can kind of celebrate both.

Olga: I see. Thank you so much, Lisa, quyana for answering my questions.

Interview with Christina and Albertina Waska – March 3rd, 2020

Olga: Hello Christina and Alberina, so you live in Anchorage but where are you originally from?

Christina and Albertina: We are originally from Newtok that eroded in 2007.

Olga: How do you like it here? Are there any challenges in the urban lifestyle?

Christina: We like it here. My Mom is sick, she lives here now, she need to go to ANMC. The pace is different here.

Olga: Are you a full-time artist now? And in the past, what was your employment?

Christina: I worked at hospitals, I interviewed people in villages, now I sell crafts.

Olga: Where do you buy your materials?

Christina: From a friend at Anchor Point.

Olga: Where did you learn to create crafts?

Christina: I learned to bead and make crafts at school in the village but then my sister taught me designs.

Olga: Do you sell you crafts to Alaska Natives?

Christina: 90 percent of my sales are generated from non-Natives customers. For instance, from those working at ANMC.

Olga: I see. I have a question on sharing. Is it a very important value for the Yupiit? Is it practiced in Anchorage?

Christina: [In Anchorage] we all share with each other the food we get from our villages. Some people are stingy. They do not share, so they do not get Native food or any help back. When you share, you get it back.

Olga: Thank you for your answers!

Interview with Anonymous 2 – March 4th, 2020

The following topics were discussed during this interview: Yup'ik values; subsistence in Bristol Bay and in Homer, Kasilof, Kenai; commercial fishing regulations; Yup'ik language proficiency in rural areas; Yup'ik and Alaska Native crafts (Athabascan beading, Yup'ik qaspeq sewing); Cook Inlet Tribal Council and Alaska Native Heritage Center crafts workshops and classes; fish and game processing techniques in Anchorage.

Interview with Bonnie Gregory – March 26th, 2020

Bonnie: Hello?

Olga: Hello, Bonnie. This is Olga. What is your last name, by the way? I never asked you.

Bonnie: Gregory.

Olga: Thank you. Bonnie, we met briefly during the Selaviq event. And it was after Christmas. Then I saw at the Native Musicale. Is it all right if I ask you what your place of birth is, and your profession.

Bonnie: I was born in Bethel, Alaska. I am essentially Yup'ik, I am also partly Russian, partly Athabascan. I graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, minoring in Alaska Native Studies. I am 57.

Olga: OK, thank you. You were born in Bethel. Did you grow up in Bethel or you moved at some point?

Bonnie: I went to a Christian Covenant Evangelical private high school my junior and senior year at (unclear), it's a Northern community, it's an Inupiaq village. It was the faith-based private high school.

Olga: Why this choice? How did it happen that you went to this school?

Bonnie: Well, I wasn't doing too well academically, I just felt in my heart that I needed to go somewhere to do better academically. I was not disciplining myself in a state school. But once I went to a Christian school, it just changed my whole attitude about school, it just did, so I had like a different, it just made me more studious, more responsible, more grounded. Even of I was young, it set a lot of standards for me.

Olga: I am sorry I do not want to interrupt, I am listening…

Bonnie: Yeah, it was a positive outcome. I became more studious, and just a lot more reflective.

Olga: While you were there, where was your family?

Bonnie: They were in Bethel, I got a part-time job, while I was in high school. I also paid for a part of my tuition. Most of the students cleaned the buildings or made breakfast for other students to pay a part of our tuition because it was not free, so to make breakfast for freshmen to senior classes, where we would clean certain rooms, a lot of responsibility.

Olga: How long have you studied there?

Bonnie: Two years.

Olga: And then, what happened?

Bonnie: I went to college in the Fall.

Olga: But not in Bethel?

Bonnie: No, I returned later on.

Olga: Have you had a possibility to go back to Bethel from time to time, to see your parents?

Bonnie: I went there when our dad almost died. And I was there for may be about a month. He got better, and then we came back to Anchorage. I went back for a timely visit before he died. And then when he died, we went back. And I was back when my cousin died during a berry-picking season. Basically, it was for emergency, deaths and funerals. I haven't gone there for pleasure. It was mainly for emergency.

Olga: How long have you been living in Anchorage?

Bonnie: I believe it's been 11 years. Let’s see. Yep. 11 years.

Olga: And before that? You got your degree in Fairbanks, right?

Bonnie: Yes, I lived in Fairbanks.

Olga: Now your Mom is with you, right? How long has she already been living with you?

Bonnie: She is disabled, she can't walk, she wanted for me to care for her in her last days, and out of my siblings I am the one that is ... what's the word, I took the position as the eldest, even though I am the youngest. A lot wiser...not emotional, I take care of things and get them done correctly. So

she told me when I was 14 that I would take care of her, that of all my siblings she wants me to take care of her towards the end of her life. I was really young but I said ok, and now it's been a year. It was like I am coming next month you gonna take care of me before I die, and then you bring me back to bury me by your Dad. I said, ok, come on over, we are ready for you. It's been a challenging time and adapting from being independent to having like another child, like a role reversal. It's like a role reversal but we have adapted. She was a pillar, you know, in our community, church, region. Now we have to help her. We have been under a lot of grace right now. Now we are laughing. We have just transitioned, taking care of her legal stuff now, her lands now...

Olga: How much time did it take?

Bonnie: It's gonna be 3 months. She came on the day our dad passed away, I do not think she knew.

Olga: I am sorry.

Bonnie: No, he was a very honorable man, so we are not in tears any more, we know we have hope we gonna see him one day because of our biblical foundations we have in God.

Olga: By the way, so are you Moravian?

Bonnie: I was brought Moravian, yes, but I go to a Korean church, when I can I go to a charismatic church where they worship, and praise, like (unclear) jumped and danced. But I bring my mom to the traditional church, religious and very in order, but me, personally I go to the Korean church in the morning, and bring her to the Moravian church in the evening. I was raised in the Moravian church, and the Christian school I went to was the Evangelical Covenant Church. They basically have the same doctrine, the theologies are the same. They have parallel foundations, it was easy to [unclear] because I already had it.

Olga: By the traditional Moravian church you mean the one meeting in this Covenant church?

Bonnie: Yes.

Olga: And you mentioned that you have siblings. How many do you have?

Bonnie: 4 brothers, 2 girls, now there are 3 brothers.

Olga: Do they live in the village?

Bonnie: They live in the village. I flew like an eagle, I am the only sibling that left.

Olga: I see. Your mom decided to change the lifestyle, it's quite a change, right? Was it difficult for her?

Bonnie: It was kind of hard cause, you know, she had her own transportation in the village, very independent lady, but you know now it took her time to transition. And we found out whether she can go to [unclear] with other Natives in the Southcental Foundation, I tried to bring her once a week there, there is a lot of Bethel people there Inupiaqs, Tlingts, from all the different regions of Alaska. She saw people there, from home, she talked to them and enjoyed the company and the dancing. And even though we live in the municipality, the Native tradition and lifestyle is still active here in Anchorage. People still have their feasts. We love to eat, we love to share our Native food, we have our celebrations where they throw stuff from the top of the house, basically only women sharing our food at birthday parties, memorials, and deaths, and weddings, it's just continual. We go to potlucks, and that's the way we are sharing, they respect, honor, and it makes us unified. Traditions are activated through feasts, it continues the bond, it continues the culture, it's still an activation, even though we are in Anchorage, we even go to the Valley to go to Native feasts, to weddings.

Olga: Do you go mostly to the extended family? Or you also acquired some friends that are not a part of your extended family? How does it work?

Bonnie: Yes, mainly through church, at the Russian Orthodox church, and Selaviq, there's people you click with quickly, you have the same heart. That's how we connect. They invite me to their house, to birthday feasts, just recently I made good friends, I mean we were good friends but now she taught me how to bead Athabascan style stuff. I wanted to try something new and make my own

Athabascan gloves. She taught me how. Now I know how, I started my first project. So there's my childhood friend, there is an activation, high school friends, childhood friends, mainly through church, I have Catholic friends, Russian Orthodox friends, Covenant friends, charismatic, we always love to eat, share our Native food.

Olga: Do you have any stock at home, I mean, fish… I was told that people go hunting and berry-picking here, others are being sent some food from the village that they also share here. How is it in your case?

Bonnie: I was a bible teacher for many years. I had a women Bible Study group in my home and my cousin's house until I transitioned here. When you have relationships with these different people from different regions, they started giving me food like muktuk, reindeer from Barrow, eagle eggs from a friend from Dillingham, my other cousin gave me herring eggs from Sitka, so there is a lot of sharing in our culture; one time I, you know, my faith is strong in God, and one time said, God, I do not have but desire this food. And I got so much food my fridge was always full, overflowing I had to call people to come get some food. I got fish, birds. We are generous, and they know that I love to feed people. I welcome them in my home to feed them because that's my gift to them for serving God. And so people constantly give me food, even salmonberries, and blueberries, I have got some much fish and so much caribou. People are very generous.

Olga: When you say "sharing in the culture", do you mean the Yup'ik culture, or Native culture, in general?

Bonnie: I have Athabascan, Yup'ik, Inupiaq friends, and so we love to share.

Olga: What do you like to share? Food? Anything else? What about sharing?

Bonnie: Well, That's embedded in our traditions, culture, when we conceptualize life, when we begin to conceptualize life, when we come to our senses, it's embedded in our traditions, no matter what culture is, in Alaska. When you catch our first catch you are not allowed to have it, distribute to the Elders in need, it's called a rite of passage. There is different rites of passage in your female

or male role. Even my first fish, or berries, or first eggs I got my Mom had a big party for me, even if I was small, I remember, my Mom had a big feast, it's not just her, it's in our region, where she collected a lot of women's stuff, and stood on top of the roof throwing candies and utensils, the stuff women can use.

Olga: Was there any difference or it was the same, sharing of food and gifts?

Bonnie: For most Natives in Alaska and in our Nation, there are always rites of passage, and you know it's part of our culture, like the first dance in the Yukon, they have a big potlatch there. My Athabascan friends, when they have a potluck for someone passing away, they make these beautiful beaded gloves, they work so hard on it, to honor the family, it takes a year to make blankets, these beautiful elaborate designs, the Inupiaqs share whale meat. We are so giving, it's in our identity.

Olga: Did you have your first dance in the Bethel region?

Bonnie: No, the Yukon, they have that, my Mom was a little like... religious, and they were kind like banned, when Sheldon Jackson was a part of that. In our region, there was a lot of shame, and blame, and condemnation of the language and identity, and dancing. My Mom, it was not promoted in the village. But when I went to college and I started studying our history, I disagreed and joined a dance group.

Olga: Where?

Bonnie: In Bethel. She is still traditional in religiosity and I still honor her but that part had a lot to do with that spirit of religion and tradition, but there is a proliferation of our identity now, it has been more than 10-15 years that people are coming back to their identity, the language is coming back, and there is some decolonization of the people and the faith, people are now choosing their own faith instead of like forced religion, I see people in Alaska are very resilient regardless of what is going on, when you have your identity you are securing who you are. I see our people are very resilient even though there are institutions that pave our identity, it's shifting. Education, the hospitals, the government… but now people are adapting, having the regalia, even though there was

a role reversal, because in the past men were the providers. When I was going to UAF I did my studies on the role reversal. A big majority of Native women were getting their credentials. There was a small amount of Native men getting theirs, and the women adapted much faster. When the food stamps came, it changed the role dynamics in our villages. There is quite a few men that are starting to come, but when I did my research, a big margin of women were getting their degrees, they accelerated faster than men. Now I see more, but we need more to be activated, and you really have to have the foundation though with someone who is responsible, loving, caring. Some of them are bitter that they lost the language, but there is people that went beyond that and grew stronger from that.

Olga: I see. And where is home for you now?

Bonnie: Bethel is not my home any more. Anchorage is my home, and there is a lot of culture here. We were communal, we had rituals, yearly gatherings before colonization. And I see this foundation going on in Anchorage, It's still in activation. As long as they are secure.

Olga: Do you sometime return to Bethel now?

Bonnie: No, not really. I haven's gone there for pleasure for years. I adapted to the city. But the village is still in the city.

Olga: Thank you very much, Stay safe, stay healthy.

Bonnie: Thank you. You have a really wonderful heart.

Olga: Thank you, quyana, piuraa.

Interview with Carrie Paton – April 20th, 2020

Olga: Hello, Carrie.

Carrie: Hi, Olga.

Olga: So, my first question is on cross-cousin teasing. Does it still exist in villages? Does it occur in Anchorage too?

Carrie: In the village it is still the same but so many of us have moved within our group; [teasing] comes up once in a while, not all the time. Things started changing too fast, I got to see the change coming, but I have seen my age group still teasing each other, mostly, the cross-cousins.

Olga: Also, you told me you go back to the village to subsist annually, right?

Carrie: We go to our fish camp in Igushik [Bristol Bay] every year. It's getting smaller and smaller, because my Mom does not eat a lot of fish any more. Growing up my Mom used to put up three hundred fish to feed her family and my father's dog team. Today, fifty to sixty [fishes] are enough. Also, we had to move our cabin due to erosion.

Olga: Do you pick berries, while being there, too?

Carrie: We go pick blackberries, cranberries. I go as much as I can and I share with the older people and people unable to pick up by themselves. I think it is still preserved as far as sharing goes. It's mainly women that pick berries.

Olga: I see. I also have another question on Yup'ik adoption. You mentioned earlier that your brother was adopted by another family, correct? As far as I know, adoption is a Yup'ik traditional practice. Does it still occur?

Carrie: My Mom ended up giving him to the family that lost their only son and couldn't conceive. Her husband was my mom's first cousin. They also adopted another boy, the same situation, both from the first cousins. I saw a lot of that growing up, family members adopting a baby. It is still being practiced today. My cousin's daughter adopted her baby out to her aunt. A couple of years

later, she was unable to get pregnant. Recently, her husband's sister had a baby and gave the baby to them. It still happens.

Olga: I see, quyana. And speaking about your passion for singing songs in Yup'ik and directing a choir for Native Musicale, how did it develop?

Carrie: I was named after Yuracista, "the one who makes songs", who was a Yup'ik man from Togiak. My cousins call me Yuracista because they relate to my love for singing and to me directing a choir.

Olga: Quyana for answering my questions.

Carrie: Aa-ang.

August 5th, 2021

Olga: Hello Carrie thank you for answering my questions. Is my understanding correct that today Yup'ik names are used to manifest the Yup'ik and Alaska Native identity? I saw some names included in signatures. And on business cards.

Carrie: Yes, and they may be included in the baptismal records too. Another new practice is to name after living which is nice in a way but it goes against the tradition.

Olga: I see. Another question. Did I understand you correctly from our previous conversations that Church plays an important role in people's lives in the village?

Carrie: With evangelization, the Church became a central part for gatherings in the village.

Olga: I am also very interested in the topic of sharing Native food in the village and in the city. Do the Yupiit and other Alaska Natives still share Native food?

Carrie: I have recently bartered a turkey with [unclear] from Dillingham against seal oil. We also share and exchange Native food in the city.

Olga: I also participated in your choir rehearsals and performances at Native Musicale. What is it for you today, this festival?

Carrie: It is time of touching base with each other.

Olga: Thank you, Carrie.

Carrie: You are welcome.

March 6th, 2022

Olga: Hi, Carrie. Thank you for finding time to answer some additional questions. I did not ask you for details on how Yugtun Aturtet was formed.

Carrie: Yugtun Aturtet, or Yup'ik Singers in English, has been participating at Native Musicale for many years now. I attended college here in Anchorage in 1976. I started to join a weekly fellowship. We sang at the Alaska Native Service Hospital back then. It became popular, and a choir for singing at the Musicale was formed.

Olga: I see. And what about your project on Yup'ik [church] songs?

Carrie: I am working on a project with a song editor to translate songs into Yup'ik and put them on musical notes. I have been doing it since 2016.

Olga: Interesting. Another question. We have already discussed the topic of adoption. Your Mom, you said, gave your brother to the family. And you adopted yourself. Is the tradition still important in the community?

Carrie: I adopted five children. I trusted the families. My daughter was my brother's biological daughter. The other thing I wanted to share, one of the traditional things, if you keep not having a baby, I have heard my mom saying, you adopt out, she gave a baby with seizure to her cousin, the first adopted out baby, so the baby's health could be restored. Babies are taken out to heal. My cousin had two first, there were health problems, one baby died. She gave her 3rd baby away to heal

- that baby was healthy. Her 4th pregnancy was normal. I think things have really changed in just one generation, I don't think during my mom's bearing age, [there was] alcohol and drugs but during my childbearing years lots of people were having alcohol, people started drinking, many children were drug exposed, babies being born and unwanted; these kids have problems. Adoptive parents are having to deal with it, but they have been prepared, they knew they are mostly aware of a lot of behavioral problems in the villages. Some teachers report behavioral problems with learning disabilities.

Olga: Quyana for sharing.

Carrie: Aa-ang. You are welcome.

Interview with Anonymous 11 – April 30th, 2020

The following topics were discussed during this interview: bilingual teaching; Yup'ik language teaching; different lifestyles in Alaskan villages and in Alaskan hubs; Yup'ik sewing (learning to sew by watching); Yup'ik dancing; Chevak dancing; Alaska Federation of Natives.

Interview with Valerie Tony – June 15th, 2020

Olga: Hi, Valerie. I have a couple of questions to you about yuraq (the Yup'ik dancing) and cross-cousin relationships.

Valerie: Yes.

Olga: I have heard that relationships of cross-cousins are expressed through teasing. Is it correct?

Valerie: Yes. Cross-cousins try to outperform each other in dancing.

Olga: Is it correct that that you used to practice yuraq at UAA? Were there any limitations to do it there?

Valerie: UAA gave us a room to practice but it required us to include any interested University students. As for limitations, it is impossible to respect the Yup'ik cultural protocol there or anywhere in the city, because [the first dance] takes several days and nights.

Olga: And where did your children do their first dances?

Valerie: Both in the village and in the city.

Olga: What about dances practices? Should there be any particular condition or location to practice yuraq?

Valerie: You can have dance practices everywhere.

Olga: I see. A question about subsistence in or near Anchorage. Are you able to practice subsistence activities you learned to practice in your village in the urban environment?

Valerie: Those skills can used everywhere to survive.

Olga: Where do you go to subsist?

Valerie: We go camping and fishing to Kenai and Homer. We go berry-picking to Eureka, to the Arctic Valley, to Talkeetna. Everyone has their own secret spots. But we let the Elders gather nearby.

Olga: I see. What about fishing? Is it the same as in your village?

Valerie: No, the fish in Kenai is dry in comparison to Alakanuk.

Olga: What do you mean?

Valerie: The Yukon salmon has extra fat.

Olga: Thank you. And, going back to the topic of the Yup'ik dancing, what is it for you?

Valerie: It is the center of Yup'ik life and spirituality but it is a part of the Agayuliyaraq (intentional sending of thoughts to the universe). Yuraq is a visual part of our worldview. In the past, yuraq was performed in the qasgiq, a place of learning how to live through watching and listening. It is the way to connect with the ancestors. When you dance, you meet your ancestors.

Olga: By the way, we have spoken that William Tyson and Ben Snowball co-founded Greatland. Was it a Yup'ik dance group?

Valerie: Yes, but it represented Alaska Native dancing from different regions.

Olga: What about your group? When was it founded? How many members does it include?

Valerie: It was founded in 2009, we currently have 13 members.

Olga: How did you become a leader?

Valerie: My parents assigned me.

Olga: I see. By the way, I hear all the time that yuraq is about having "fun". Do you agree?

Valerie: Yuraq is not about fun: it is the way to connect with the ancestors.

Olga: By the way, I had a conversation with Ossie Kairaiuak. He prefers to practice at ANMC. What about you, what is your preference?

Valerie: I like to practice at the calm *qasgiq* at the Heritage Center, because at the Native hospital there is a lot of death and a lot of grief.

Olga: I see. Thank you so much for your answers. Quyana.

Valerie: You are welcome.

Interview with Anonymous 10 – August 31st, 2020

The following topics were discussed during this interview: laughter, singing and teasing as a Yup'ik traditional way of lifting away sadness; adoption; Yup'ik upbringing.

Interview with Jeffrey Kowchee – September 4th, 2020

Olga: You are from the Nome area, right? You spent a lot of time in Bethel.

Jeffrey: Yes. I was a hunter and a fisherman. People were surprised that I am here in Anchorage now. I am currently working as a suicide preventive coordinator, more over developing men's and family wellness based on my experience as an Alaska Native.

Olga: You are doing it on your own, or do you work for anyone else?

Jeffrey:I work for Tribal Tech Washington D.C. My boss is over there. Another thing I do is working for the Anchorage Native Community Council. They have just hired me as their administrator. This is for Alaska Natives living in Anchorage. We are hoping that we go ahead and have more preventive services, such as youth suicide prevention. We are hoping that we are able to provide all the services, that are from the village and in the village, here to Anchorage. Access to the services like in the village. There was an understanding probably around 14-15 years ago that there are not a lot of services in Anchorage that are available in the villages. We are trying to bring these services to Anchorage for Alaska Natives.

Olga: What are those services in the villages?

Jeffrey: Youth activities is the main thing, it is the main intent to provide the Alaska native youth service activities such as an open gym for Alaska Native in Anchorage. The services needed for Alaska Natives in Anchorage. I know that there is an effort in AIPC but they are limited in providing services.

Olga: Speaking about the Council. They also discussed a need for creating a space for Native people in Anchorage.

Jeffrey: That is correct. The organization is also looking at a wellness center. Out there in the villages it is called a community hall. Their intention is to provide Alaska Natives with a

community hall in the future. And they are hoping in addition to this community hall some [unclear] rooms for other activities.

Olga: Why is there a need for this extra space?

Jeffrey: The Anchorage Native Community Council has addressed some organizations in the past for these activities, unfortunately it was not very well accepted because of the fear of the funding being. It was a severe misunderstanding. With this collaborative effort, there was a misunderstanding about the intentions. That's the reason why.

Olga: And what are the challenges? Why is it necessary? Specific challenges for Anchorage?

Jeffrey: The main intention of the Alaska Native Community Council, the main reason is sobriety, to provide sobriety activities for high-risk families. The prevention is needed and that is recognized. To dig deeper, the Alaska Natives have the historical trauma based on the intention of having the Western view, some trauma was involved. The childhood adversity was experienced. There is so much abuse, the communities that have not been addressed, it was not brought forward.. But the communities were recognized. There is a lot of the Alaska Natives who had historical trauma on a variety of negative social issues. There is a generational gap. The kids did not experience the trauma that their parents had . There is like a void in the Alaska Natives, they do not understand why they are depressed, why there is so much physical and sexual abuse. There is no understanding. The Alaska Native Community Council would like to see and to welcome these activities. The grandparents and parents have experienced this trauma, not everyone, there is many people, some took it in really well and so they flourished, and others not, but the trauma happened to the parents. Early on in my experiences, there is some anger I did not understand, when I was growing up, I did not understand. We lost a lot of our culture, a lot of our language. I was very fortunate that my grandmother took me for any reason. I was the youngest. I was very fortunate to learn from my grandmother. Even my mom asked me about some meanings. To be honest, I did attempt suicide. There is a lot of historical trauma that I witnessed, But I turned my life around after the attempt. I

started to question myself why there is so much trauma around. I became a trauma counselor for the communities. The suicide rate is extremely high in the area I am from, in Nome area. Probably the highest suicidal rate in Alaska. That seems to me that closer our villages are from the bigger city, the higher suicide rate is. There is exposure and the traditional knowledge that is lost. The Western ways are more exposed around the bigger populations and closer to the bigger villages. Shishmaref are very traditional. It was very ironic to me. I experienced the very successful families with the traditional ways, while the ones who accepted the Western way, they were very focused on trying to do what they can to learn but also making sure that they learned the language and the traditional ways. I did grow up in very traditional ways but yet here I am in the city. I am fortunate to be able to pass this on to my youngest. In other words, I had to step out from my traditional lifestyles to come here to support the organization. It is possible to be both. I have seen almost an entire family, men who joined the service were successful. They returned to the village. There is some discrimination I have seen so far, very unfortunate, although it is nothing compared to what my parents experienced. I was in the service, I served for 22 years, traveled around the world. I was exposed to different lifestyles, I have a diverse knowledge of people around the world, dealt with all kinds of discrimination. There is some discrimination occasionally.

Olga: You served in the army as?

Jeffrey: Senior leader in the army. I retired.

Olga: I see, thank you. I have another question. Are there any challenges for the Native people, men or women, to get used to living here in Anchorage?

Jeffrey: It depends on a family, on a person. To me I am really home sick, although my wife is not.

Olga: What are the activities that could be practiced here to preserve Native identity here?

Jeffrey: Continuous use of language is important, the knowledge of the supplies available here in Anchorage. I can’t make a fish trap in Nome because the supplies are not available there, but they are available here. There is a greater availability of supplies.

Olga: What are other spaces to gather together?

Jeffrey: There is what they call steam baths, here in Anchorage,e taking a steam bath is not just healthy for the body, it's more of a social sharing, there could be a planning of visits. There is a social network that is happening here in Anchorage beneficial to Alaska Native, either for men or for females. A steam bath, it's a place to come together, that 's a really good place to have social network.

Olga: But is there an issue in those spaces to be scattered around Anchorage?

Jeffrey: That is the intention of the Anchorage Native Community Council to fill the gap for a focal area for these activities. To heal from historical trauma by gathering and by providing talking and peace; making circles and trainings for wellness and youth activities, to provide preventive services, like suicide and drug abuse preventive services. It depends on the family on what services and accessibility of social services. Some families are not able to make it, may be there is not transportation. There is some other issues that prevent people from participating. Unfortunate things that prevent a family to go to these activities.

Olga: You mentioned childhood trauma. I heard from some young people that they are opposed to the church.

Jeffrey: There is a number of people that had bad experience with the church in the past, sexual abuse, the grandparents were involved into these experiences [unclear]. I recently heard about a story [unclear]. It was hard for me to accept it because I grew up with the church.

Olga: I have a very different question. I heard several times about the importance of humor for the Alaska Native Communities, for healing. Is it important?

Jeffrey: Humor is very important in the Alaska Natives cultures. If we think about it, we leave our home in the dark, we work, go back home, it is very stressful, psychologically, you don't see the sun. Humor is very important.

Olga: Going back to the question of getting used to the urban life. Do you think it is equally difficult for men and women to get used to the city life? I read an article that claims that in terms of subsistence it is more difficult for men to transition. What is your opinion?

Jeffrey: I think it is more difficult to get used to the urban life for men than for women. It depends on what kind of preparation, what your intention is here in Anchorage, It is important to be well-prepared moving to the city, then for the transition.

Olga: What do you mean by being well-prepared?

Jeffrey: Making sure you find a place to stay. It is easier then to buy a vehicle etc.

Olga: What about maintaining a balance?

Jeffrey: It's very unbalanced for me right now. I have to go home to lead a subsistence lifestyle. Because I am kind of making a transition, I do have a couple of jobs that keep me very busy. There is a want and there is a need. Right now for me the need more [unclear].

Olga: Is it feasible to go back the villages to subsist?

Jeffrey: It is.

Olga: Is there a possibility to subsist here in the Anchorage area?

Jeffrey: Fishing is really easy in Anchorage. As long as you know where to go and you have someone who has already done it here. I was thinking it is easier for me to camp here than to go to Nome.

Olga: Thank you so much!

April 5th, 2022

Olga: Hello, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey: Hello, Olga.

Olga: Thank you for agreeing to answer additional questions. I am interested to learn more about the subsistence in the Anchorage and nearby areas. Is it possible to hunt here?

Jeffrey: The ability to hunt depends directly on a land ownership in an area. Whoever owns the land, regulates subsistence. It is easier to hunt on state lands. The main river areas, Nenana River is not that restricted, if you have a boat, you can hunt a moose.

Olga: Did you hunt there?

Jeffrey: I hunted moose in Ninilchik last summer 202, because my brother-in-law is a part of the local Native Corporation. Other than that I am not allowed to hunt. Fishing is more available here, in particular, dip-netting.

Olga: What about berry-picking?

Jeffrey: Berry picking is good in Big Lake and Arctic Valley.

Olga: Does the traditional knowledge help you to hunt only in Nome, or anywhere else?

Jeffrey: Traditional knowledge helps to hunt for moose everywhere, it helps to estimate an approximate location of moose, basic knowledge of how a moose goes and lives. what they eat in what location, what is the best area to hunt. It helps to respect the size limit by approximate size of antlers.

Olga: I heard that some people practice seal hunting too?

Jeffrey: Seal hunting is possible at a certain time in May in certain areas in the Whittier area.

Olga: Another question. Did you go to Nome after our first conversation?

Jeffrey: Covid prevented me from going home but nephews came to Anchorage for medical appointments and shared moose and bears and fish. It is an honor for them to share food and for me to receive food, as I taught them to hunt. I also gave them bullets that are easier to get in Anchorage.

Olga: Thank you very much for your answers.

Jeffrey: You are welcome.

Interview with Rhona Shavings (via email) – September 20th, 2020

Olga: When and where were you born?

Rhona: I was born in Dillingham, AK in 1966.

Olga: What education did you get and where?

Rhona: I have Bachelor's of Arts in Education.

Olga: Were you raised with traditional Yup'ik values and customs.

Rhona: Yes.

Olga: For instance, your Mom said you learned weaving. How did you learn it? Do you still like to weave and, if yes, why? What is the Yup'ik weaving about?

Rhona: My mother inspired me to weave. She never really taught me. But, I developed a desire to sew grass basket weaving from her scraps. When I finished my first basket, my mother praised my work and told everyone of her friends about my grass basket.

Olga: Do you practice any other Yupik crafts?

Rhona: I sew skin sewing.

Olga: Are there families in Manokotak that preserve the Yup'ik language in their families and share the knowledge with the younger generation? How did they manage to preserve their language?

Rhona: The use of our Yup'ik language was strong when I was growing up, our language in Yup'ik was very strong. It was used as a main language. The outside influence which is in English language was more scarce. Our Village was more remote. There was no TV. Many of the adult parents did not have English education. The Yup'ik Language was used in our church services, in

sermons and in translated songs. In my Elementary school years, We were taught to read, speak and write in Yup'ik.

Olga: As far as I understood, at least one of your children is fluent in Yupik? Is it more an exception than a rule that a younger generation person living in a Yupik village is fluent in Yupik? How did your child manage to become fluent?

Rhona: My 1st child out of my 4 children is fluent. She was taught how to read and write in Yup'ik from Kindergarten to 3rd grade. She had wonderful Bilingual teachers that her certified in Elementary. As a young mother, I thought it was a fad or a misconception that if English Language is taught to my children, they would do better in school which is taught in English by teachers that are hired from the mainland of USA.

Interview with Theresa John – December 19th, 2020

Olga: Hello, Professor John, this is Olga.

Theresa: OK, hi!

Olga: We actually spoke about the difference between the urban setting and the village. Correct me if I am wrong, but you said it is basically the same in terms of challenges. But Anchorage has more diversity, correct?

Theresa: The reason I said they were similar is in terms of the forces attacking them. All the tribal corporate office have to speak English all day when they do their jobs in terms of computer use, writing letters, the kind of work they do. When they go home it is the same structure, the TV is never off, it is in English, the only time they have no English, when they are in the steam bath, when they eat. Even the social media is taking over their life. Even the grandmothers/fathers are holding their cell phones, that's the unfortunate part, I see this more and more happening. Which is kind of frustrating. One of the Elders told me would happen 40 years ago: the Yup'ik world the only activity will be playful activities. Texting or playing games. When you look at it this way, Olga, not to learn Native knowledge system are similar. The children are taken 8 hours per day by the culture of their school. We also watch movies, we let kids watch cartoons. In a city, your life is a little more hectic. You probably have a full-time job, you probably have to drive a car, whereas in the village… nowadays, what I observe about the younger generation is that they want all the family members to be connected to the technology somehow. Parents buy smart phones for all of their children, even to 1st, 2nd grade. It prevents them to learn from their grandparents. Even with my own relatives' kids, as soon as they can move their fingers, they know what to do with smart phones before they learn to talk. Parents need to control their kids' lives. The English is always in the background even if we speak Yugtun. Technologies used to babysit for them. When they gonna work on the seals, they set up Ipads for the kids.

Olga: And what about subsistence? Sorry, do you hear me?

Theresa: They are trying to involve the children in the subsistence activities (I observe this in the social media) even if I am not home, I know what is happening in the village. They document their first catch, cutting the grass, running in the beach. So many activities are on media, that is one beautiful way to share their life with the families living in the cities. Inevitably they share their activities with the world. When my nephews and nieces teach their kids how to cut seal, or salmon, I try to send an inspirational note on social media. I am so happy you are teaching your children, please, continue to do that. Don't scold them if they messed up. It's time for encouragement. In the old days, they used to inspire us by saying next time its will be a little better. You know, we try to do this distant communication as if we live in the same house.

Olga: That is something positive about social media, right?

Theresa: Yes, that's the positive part of social media. If I see my nieces teaching how to bead, I offer money to show my inspiration, determination as life is hard for them. I contact their parents and ask to let me know if they need money for more beading materials. To me that is my proactive inspiration for her to continue this kind of work. I work hard to stay on top of social media. Those of us who have split families, in terms of migration, it does not matter where we live, it matters how much time we take as parents to make them do something to inspire them and to make them learn. So even though it may seem that small village life has different conditions than city people, it's not really that, because sometimes the city people do way more education on traditional language and culture than the village people; it is because they put more effort that they make a schedule and they plan it. I think the problem with the village people is that they are so used to their schedules; the longer you live in these conditions, the more you get used to this life, in the village.

Olga: I heard that some people go back to the villages in summer, and bring their kids, to learn.

Theresa: The challenges are money when you have too many kids it's hard to decide to transport them because it's so expensive to maneuver it around. When it's summer time, you have five kids,

three kids are left out you take two kids and they learn; may be they will teach the others. In the village it's easier to throw the kids in the boat. The choice is on the family. When I was a kid, we did not have any choice, we had to do the work together, we had to make things happen, we used to camp for a week, for example. Now the transportations are faster, guess what, people do not camp too much any more; it takes away time from camping. Some of the parents want to go back to their warm beds and to television. They have a really fast technology. People in Anchorage definitely have goody shipment from the village.

Olga: We discussed during your class that knowing kinship terms is to show respect. What about the younger generation, do they still know?

Theresa: Most of them people in Tooksok Bay know, even those living in the city, those don't change no matter where you go. But I know sometimes in like Tununak, in other villages, it has been lost a long time ago, because the schools were implemented long ago way before they were implemented in my village. A lot of villagers from Tununak, to them everybody is iluq even though they are women and men, it's wrong, because it is between man and man.

Olga: In Anchorage, I hear iluq all the time. But still in English, people know?

Theresa: In English what they are doing: they are transforming into the Western kinship system which is losing a lot of the more deeper kinship terminologies and strategies in Yugtun way. And, therefore, when they are losing the Yugtun kinship system, they are losing the level of respect for certain people they are supposed to. Because they are not educated, they are not learned.

Olga: Interesting, I heard about this special relationship between teasing cousins.

Theresa: Teasing cousins is a very deep, important kinship relationships passed on from many generations, it's a relationship between cross-cousins: they maintain it through their kinship tree. Therefore, we had many iluqs in many many villages around us. The iluq is a very special terminology between cross-cousins (male and male). The teasing cousin female and male and

female-female have different terminologies. Those relationships describe the type of social interaction we can have with each other.

Olga: I still have another question. I do not know whether you have some more time.

Theresa: I do.

Olga: Yup’ik dancing is popular in Anchorage. Why is it so?

Theresa: Dancing is a popular social activity that allows people to go back to their traditional activity that they know about which is drumming and singing, this even has no negativity involved. In modern life it has no rules to follow they used to follow a long time ago. It’s a safe space...

Olga: Quyana for your answers, Professor John.

Interview with Father Thomas Tikhonoff-Andrew – November 5th, 2021

Father Thomas: Hello, good evening.

Olga: Good evening, Father Thomas, this is Olga Lauter. If you do not mind, I would start with the questions I prepared. You were at Saint Innocent Cathedral when Covid started, you were the priest. Were there any changes in rituals and daily activities due to the Covid outbreak?

Father Thomas: Well, there weren't really any changes as far as the services were concerned. It's just that we got restricted on how many people were coming to the Cathedral. ….(unclear) two or three weeks we had.. we were restricted to family only. My wife Matushka Taissia and my daughter Rebecca and myself were the only ones but we broadcasted the services, especially over the weekend, for Saint Innocent Cathedral.

Olga: Were there any challenges to organize this?

Father Thomas: Well, we were limited as far as the audio-visual equipment. I had to use my cell phone and my microphone to make the quality of the music better and the sound better.

Olga: And the choir was limited too?

Father Thomas: Very limited. It was only Matushka and Rebecca.

Olga: At the same time, people were gathered in front of their screens and they celebrated together but not physically together. Were there any comments during services?

Father Thomas: I can't remember the exact number of people that came across services, stayed and attended over the Facebook live broadcast, but we had several thousand, I think, may be up to four- five thousand people who came and at least looked at the service. It was an expansion of not just the Cathedral and its members but also out into the further community where probably there were few non- Orthodox that joined in. And there were some comments that the Dean said it was the first time they had ever seen an Orthodox Christian service. And we have done all the services in English, so everyone who can come through that, can understand exactly what's going on.

Olga: Do you think it somehow affected the feeling of the community?

Father Thomas: I think it did, it exposed our normally quiet, closed church into the broader audience of different people out there.

Olga: Do you consider it as a positive change?

Father Thomas: I think it was a positive one. And you know, it probably opens the door to even help expose the Orthodox services out into the general public.

Olga: It is interesting that the outbreak can lead to positive changes. And then?

Father Thomas: We had a limited number because they had assigned… (unclear) number of outbreaks but it never came about. We still do have a signing list required in case people did come in with an infection and infected other people. And masks are mandatory.

Olga: Except for the clergy?

Father Thomas: Yes, the clergy and the choir.

Olga: But, interestingly, other churches do not necessarily wear masks, as they consider that's where the Lord is and nothing can happen there. But I am interested in that the Orthodox Church in Alaska and in Anchorage follow the guidelines.

Father Thomas: We do that as to not to tempt the Lord saying that, yeah, we fully do this because we know he is going to protect us, we have our faith in God, but we are not gonna tempt him.

Olga: And for Easter were there any other changes for this year?

Father Thomas: For the procession, normally, we have the procession before the Matin service, but this year we couldn't because, number one, we need a lot of people to carry items like the banners, the gospel, cross, icon things like that. Since we were so limited. we only did our procession inside our cathedral.

Olga: And no baskets?

Father Thomas: There were a few, but absolutely no baskets.

Olga: And then there was a limited number of people that could come. People also do not venerate, wear masks in front of icons, it's also different from the normal?

Father Thomas: Yeah, I think, I do not know. if I remember right either 997 and 977…. is the maximum (unclear). But we are only allowed 25 percent of capacity which is only a little more than 200 people. Our regular big Sunday, outside of large, big holidays like Christmas or Easter, a couple of hundred is almost a normal number of attendance for people, on every regular given Sunday.

Olga: And now, it does not change for the better, there would be some changes for Christmas with 25 percent.

Father Thomas: Yeah, it leaves only couple of hundred people. But I am not the Dean of the Cathedral any more.

Olga: I also wanted to ask how many (approximately) parishioners are there at the Cathedral?

Father Thomas: I do not know. I left at the end of May.

Olga: During your time, but may be it is hard to estimate…

Father Thomas: A couple hundred of people on a regular Sunday.

Olga: I see. What would be an estimate for the Indigenous peoples coming to the church?

Father Thomas: Hard to say, 50/60 percent about half I'd say of the people that do come to the church. I would not say, I really do not know the number of people that are members of our church but I know that the Yup'ik are the largest number of the Alaska Native people, and in terms of membership in our church. I guess conservatively it's about half, but I could do wrong.

Olga: I understand. But you say may be about a half.

Father Thomas: May be about 50/60 percent.

Olga: And among those 50/60 percent, around half are Yup'ik, right?

Father Thomas: Yes.

Olga: I see. And speaking about this Selaviq event, I didn't manage to speak with you about it, so I am curious to ask whether…. by the way, you are from Marshall?

Father Thomas: Yes.

Olga: Is it different how you celebrate it there?

Father Thomas: No, it fact it is very similar, not exactly the same as what they do here at the Cathedral, they are reflecting from the Kuskokwim area. My observations are that the traditions we have now are spread over from the Kuskokwim region.

Olga: Is there any difference?

Father Thomas: I do not see any differences in the celebration styles between what I grew up with and what I see in any of the Yup'ik regions except of the Bristol Bay area, their melodies are slightly different from what we had learned in the Yukon and the Kuskokwim regions.

Olga: May be that's the reason why the Cathedral and the Bristol Bay groups, so to say, celebrate separately?

Father Thomas: Yeah, there's, there are different areas, the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, Aleutians and the Kodiak and Prince William Sounders, they sound differently but the celebration styles are about the same, if not similar, with a very small difference.

Olga: May be I could ask a too general question. I know that you served in Kenai too. As far as I understood, for a long time, but I have never asked for how long.

Father Thomas: For 15 years.

Olga: Oh, it was quite a long period of time. And before that?

Father Thomas: Before that we were here in Anchorage. I was just a newly ordained priest. Actually, Kenai is my first assignment.

Olga: I see. And if I dare ask, before that, you were a teacher?

Father Thomas: Yes.

Olga: How was it different the services in Kenai and in Anchorage?

Father Thomas: If you compare Kenai to the Cathedral, there you have basically Athabascan who didn't really practice the culture and language, We were basically free to use English, there is a very limited amount of Slavonic. But at the Cathedral we have a lot of diversity from different parts of Orthodox church. A lot more activity here than what we had in Kenai.

Olga: Also, you are saying you mostly used the English language in Kenai, and here?

Father Thomas: I think they are pretty comfortable though, they are about the same (unclear).

Olga: Concerning Selaviq, I also heard there are different groups but did I understand correctly that Saint Innocent mainly celebrate it the Yup'ik way?

Father Thomas: Yeah.

Olga: Why?

Father Thomas: May be because in the Cathedral we have more Yup'ik priests from the Yukon and the Kuskokwim. The other reason is that the leader for the Saint innocent group is primarily Yup'ik.

Olga: Is it a coincidence that the majority of priests are Yup'ik?

Father Thomas: I do not think it is a coincidence. Like I said it's the largest group in Alaska.

Olga: But at he same time, I saw that during Selaviq there were not only Yup'ik households inviting the star.

Father Thomas: Yes.

Olga: May be some Unangan people?

Father Thomas: I think so. But I was not with the group 100 percent of the time.

Olga: Thank you so much for the conversation, Father Thomas.

Father Thomas: You are welcome.

Interview with Anonymous 7 – November 16th, 2021

The following topics were discussed during this interview: historical connection and relationship between Russian Orthodox and Alaskan Orthodox Churches; the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska (Orthodox Church of Alaska) and its structure; Julian Calendar; Yup'ik clergy; Yup'ik Orthodox tradition; Saint Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, Alaska; Sisterhood of Saint Innocent Cathedral; tithing; Church funding; worshiping in Old Slavonic and Alaska Native languages.

Interview with Anthony Lekanof – March 29th, 2022

Olga: Hi, Anthony.

Anthony: Hi, Olga.

Olga: May be I will start with asking how old you are and what your employment is.

Anthony: I am 25. I am an Aleut corporation board member and a shareholder.

Olga: How did you become one?

Anthony: My grandparents who used to live on Saint George [Island] gifted me shares.

Olga: Are you from Saint George too?

Anthony: I was raised in Saint George. I have a deep connection with his grandparents.

Olga: Where did you go to school to?

Anthony: I attended the MEHS boarding school in Sitka. Also, I am Aleut but also Athabaskan and Russian.

Olga: I see. The majority of my questions to you are on the Russian Orthodox Church here in Anchorage but I will start with a different one if you do not mind.

Anthony: OK.

Olga: In your opinion, is there any difference in Indigenous people living in the village and in the city?

Anthony: Urban and rural Indigenous people are not different.

Olga: OK. The first church-related question. What is your role in the church?

Anthony: I am a reader.

Olga: I know that the church is very important to you. But do you feel connected to your village through it?

Anthony: It is my connection to my grandparents and to Saint George.

Olga: I see. I have questions on the parishes in Anchorage. For instance, the Saint Alexis parish, why, in your opinion, people described it as “a village church”?

Anthony: Because it was predominantly Native, and because it supported Native migrants, their culture is different.

Olga: And in the Diocese, the majority of the clergy is Yup’ik, I was told. I was also told that one of the reasons for this majority is that the Yup’ik population is the largest Indigenous one in the state. What do you think?

Anthony: The Yup’ik clergy is predominant, not only because it’s the major Alaska Native population but also because their community of faithful was easier to pass the traditions to, as they were not as geographically separated as the Aleut.

Olga: May be the last question: What is the role of the female Seminary graduates in the Diocese?

Anthony: Female graduates in Kodiak later take care of the Bible School education, organize choirs, helping giving back. Role of Matushkas and female parishioners is to continue the tasks set up by the Sisterhood.

Olga: Could you explain more about what the Sisterhood of Saint Innocent Cathedral is in charge of? And other church organizations?

Anthony: Sisterhood at Saint Innocent is family-oriented, taking care of the church, plus there is a group of male volunteers helping them. Parish Council is a voice of parishioners, they are being elected every couple of years. They have a board of Directors and trustees.

Olga: Thank you, Anthony.

Interview with Darrell Bernsten – May 4th, 2022

Olga: Hello Mr. Bernsten, thank you for finding a moment to answer my questions.

My first question is how the Yup'ik language was chosen for the Immersion Program?

Mr. Bernsten: Anchorage District did a survey with all the parents and community and the Yup'ik language came out first within the Indigenous languages; they chose to take the Indigenous language as Yup'ik as it was taught in the community. Yup'ik was the number one language.

Olga: What does a day look like for the students of the Program?

Mr. Bernsten: The students in Yup'ik immersion study half day in the Yup'ik language and half day in English.

Olga: And what kind of students attend the program? Are they Alaska Native?

Mr. Bernsten: It is a mixture of all races. We also have a preschool program over at the Heritage Center and the Cook Inlet Tribal, we try to recruit the kids that have this background in Yup'ik.

Olga: In terms of your curriculum, do you belong to the Anchorage School District?

Mr. Bernsten: Yes, but our language side is modeled after the Yukon Kuskokwim model.

Olga: Are there any cultural activities the students practice?

Mr. Bernsten: Cultural activities are embedded throughout the day: they learn about dancing, traditional gathering, the sciences of food preparation in Yup'ik and how it helps the culture to survive over the 7000 years.

Olga: Do you invite Elders to those classes?

Mr. Bernsten: With Covid we cannot have guests in the building. Before Covid, we invited guest speakers who live in or who visit Anchorage.

Olga: I know that you do not have a lot of time. Thank you for discussing those questions with me.

Interview with Bishop William Nicholson – May 4th, 2022

Olga: Hello Bishop Nicholson, thank you for finding time to speak with me.

William Nicholson: Hello, Olga.

Olga: Could I ask you to describe the structure of a Moravian Church in Alaska?

William Nicholson: A Moravian Church in Alaska includes a pastor, Elders, trustees and other church members. Church members elect the board of Elders Trustees. Pastors are chairmen of the Boards. Elders care for the spiritual oversight of the congregation, for instance, they assure speakers for services. Trustees are in charge of the budget and of secular questions, such as building maintenance. Elders, trustees and church members are all in charge of the church, especially in the pastor's absence.

Olga: Is the schedule for Moravian services different in Anchorage as compared to the villages?

William Nicholson: The church schedule remains the same for both urban and village churches: we follow the Moravian texts, we celebrate the Advent, Christmas, and Easter, we observe 40 days of Lent, Easter sunrise on the grave site, and the Lovefeast service. The schedule is the same around the world: the 2pm [service] is traditional, a Bible School, a Sunday School… The AncMc has evening singspirations that underline its Pentecostal feature.

Olga: Can women become pastors too?

William Nicholson: The pulpits are open for every gender

Olga: I see. What is an approximate number of the members in your urban church?

William Nicholson: The church is inclusive and open to everyone. Over the past three years we have 50 to 75 members. Previously, we used to have around 150-170 members.

Olga: And who finances the church?

William Nicholson: Native corporations as well as the members help with donations. The members also do tithing and help with property lease.

Olga: I noticed that you regularly invite speakers from other churches. Is this correct?

William Nicholson: AncMc loves networking with other religious groups and pastors locally and internationally.

Olga: How do Moravian pastors in the village earn their living?

William Nicholson: By working for village corporations, for the State of Alaska, or as carpenters.

Olga: What about you?

William Nicholson: I go to Dillingham for commercial fishing in the summer, as Yup'ik Moravian pastors did in the 70s and 80s.

Olga: I see. I have another question on your visits to ANMC [hospital] as a chaplain.

William Nicholson: I used to serve as a recognized hospital chaplain, I went through the ANMC orientation to become a volunteer chaplain because people were coming from villages and asked for help, so [there were] regular visits in the [hospital's] cafeteria, mingling with people, with the family going to the cafeteria together. [since the pandemic, it had been only possible to visit] more seriously ill people.

Olga: By the way, speaking about Covid, I know that you started to broadcast services. Did it lead to any changes in the church?

William Nicholson: AncMC gained in variety because a broader audience started to join services online.

Olga: Thank you. Another question about the Native Musicale. What is it for you?

William Nicholson: It is both a celebration of Christian faith and a social event for Indigenous believers [who] come from different regions across Alaska and [who] love music. Alaska Natives are very musically inclined.

Olga: It happens during the Fur Rondy. What is it too you?

William Nicholson: A secular festival of welcoming spring.

Olga: Thank you so much for answering these questions.

William Nicholson: you are welcome, Olga.

Interview with Moses Wassilie – May 8th, 2022

Olga: Hello Moses, thank you for meeting me. The first question I have: are you from Nunapitchuk?

Moses: Yes, I was born there in 1946.

Olga: But later you spent your school years in different areas?

Moses: I was at the Moravian Children's Home in Kwethluk, and I went to Mt. Edgecumbe boarding high school in Sitka.

Olga: Where did you learn paining and crafts?

Moses: I learned a lot from the Anchorage Museum, from its artifacts, where I worked and lived. Then I went to the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe.

Olga: I see. And you danced with the Kicaput Dance group.

Moses: Right.

Olga: I have a question about one of the main motifs of your art – the triangle with a circle in the middle. What does it represent?

Moses: The circle is the eye of awareness, the Inua. Somebody is always watching you.

Olga: Thank you. I hope we can speak more at some point.

Olga: All right, here you go.

Matushka Diane: Here you go.

Olga: Thank you. Matushka Diane, first of all, if I dare ask, where you were born?

Matushka Diane: Kind of a story about what brought me to Orthodoxy?

Olga: Yes.

Matushka Diane: I was born in Wisconsin. My family was Catholic, so I was Catholic. And so I was raised Catholic. I went to a Catholic elementary school, high school, even college. The only reason I went to a Catholic college was that it was small, a private college, verses the big universities. There were nuns, and priests, and all of that kind of stuff there. It was not the old-fashion strict, you know. I had a good college life.

Olga: Good.

Matushka Diane: You know what I mean (laughing). I spent my summers, my sister lived in Bethel, so I spent my summers when I graduated from high school, the minimum wage in Wisconsin was 3.35 [dollars] an hour, Alaska was still kind of booming in the oil industry, so I came to Alaska, I was going to work in the seafood, fishing industry in Bethel, that was what brought me there. Cause my sister was a nurse at the hospital, the Indian health service hospital. So I went, and unfortunately, I was there one day, and my Dad was killed back in Wisconsin. So I think I was just meant to be with my sister at that time, you know. My sister and I, I was here may be 24 hours, and we flew back home.

Olga: I am sorry.

Matushka Diane: Yeah. So that summer I ended up staying with my Mom in Wisconsin, because my family was pretty traditional. My Mom did not know how to drive, she did not pay any bills, my Dad took care of all of these things. So I stayed with her, I knew better about those things. Then my

sister came back. And then I went to school that Fall and then came back every weekend. But the next year I went back up, and I think, I am sure I met Father that summer, because he ran a fishing boat, and what I took care of was hiring all the people, kind of an HR. There was no formal hiring, you know, I hired all the people from the processing plant. So, of course, I would process all the paper work and do all that stuff. So that's how we kind of first met. And then I think it was probably the second year. It is kind of all blurred because it has been 30 some years. But then we started kind of dating over the summer. And then it became long distance. And so I did that all the way through my schooling. And then I think it was my fourth, fifth year in the school, and six months after my Dad died, my Mom got cancer. I think it was from the stress, truly and honestly, you know, from my Dad's death. Plus she smoked all her life. So my fifth year, Father went to the Seminary, I think they called it a single student, by himself. And the second year of his schooling, he took off to come to Wisconsin, to help take care of my Mom. I was in my last year of school, and the cancer had moved throughout her body. And she, so that Christmas he moved there in the Fall with me, and stayed there with us, to help take care of her, while I finished my schooling. My sister was up here in Alaska, I think. So we got engaged that Christmas. And then, after that, my Mom was kind of like, my brother got engaged, I got engaged, my sister was set, then, she kind of let go. It was enough fighting. So she passed away in February. And I came up in May for my usual summer, and then in August we married in the village, in Nunapitchuk, where Father is from. I knew Catholic and Orthodox were close. But I still had to be chrismated because I was baptized Christian. In order for us to get back to the Seminary, I had to be Orthodox. He still could have married me, but at the time, I had to be Orthodox in order to get back to the Seminary. And it was not that different. And of course, I wanted to know that if we had a family, I did not want to have anything mixed for me. It was just normal for me to be the same religion. I did not know there were people with mixed marriages like that. That is how it was. The day before our wedding I was chrismated. And it was one of the first days I went to the church. The priest, Father Phillip Alexie,

who passed away ever since, I think he is Tatiana's God father, actually, may be, oh no, may be he is a relative. Anyway, he used to be very nervous speaking English, because Yup'ik was his primary language. And so he chrismated me the day before, and the next day we were getting married. And I had never been to a wedding in the Church. Really, had been hardly to any services, except going to some service in the village. Because we always worked 7 days a week in the summer, so I really have never been exposed. But nobody was worried because I was going to the Seminary. So it was going to be my catechism, right? So I said to Father Phillip: "Can we have a rehearsal?". People have rehearsals, you know. And he was like "Rehearsal?" That was foreign to them. You just don't do that. He said: "Just watch me, just watch me". So the whole wedding I am just like looking at him intensely, what do I get to do? Waiting for some sign to do something? I was like, you could just see me on the video. It felt like forever, and it was in Yup'ik, not in English. I did not even understand what was going on. (Laughing). What am I doing? So anyway, after that I think after that, a week later we were in the Seminary. So there I just jumped into it very fast. And at the Seminary it was good there, you live the Church, you know, and I was young. When you look back now, you say, you were so young and so naive, you just did everything. It's just a different world, but I was learning it. And we had some at the time they were really good about. Today they teach the women… this is what you need to do. Your husband is going to be a priest. We took care of the Bishop. And there was more structure, grooming sounds like derogatory, like training of what your life is going to be like. Making sure this is what you wanna do. This is what a priest's family looks like, this is what you should do. This is how you should behave.

Olga: It was before.

Matushka Diane: Yes, before. Now it feels like it's not like that there.

Olga: And how is it?

Matushka Diane: What I see is that families coming out of there, the women… and it may just be how the world is now, so many things have changed. You do not know: is it the world? Is it the training? But they do not have the Matushka there like when Matushka Kreta was there.

Olga: They do not have a female leader?

Matushka Diane: Exactly. Who says this is your role, this is how you should behave. When the Bishop comes to your church, this is what you do. Do not get too close to the people in the parish. Because you know, you want to live some of your private life. There is just certain things. They wanted you to be successful back then. And now it seems like it does not happen, you know. Like, now you have, unfortunately for me, what I see is a lot of the Yup'ik and really Yupík, because that's what most of our priests are, are lazy, Matushkas do not do anything, they do not support their husbands, they do not help in things. I just do not see that.

Olga: And the majority is Yup'ik?

Matushka Diane: Yeah. We have two Aleut priests in our Diocese. And we do not have any Tlingits, which is not surprising.

Olga: I heard the number of 75 to 80 percent of the priests that are Yup'ik.

Matushka Diane: At least, or probably even higher.

Olga: Does it mean that the Yup'ik Orthodox tradition dominates?

Matushka Diane: No, may be it is just because of the volume of the Yup'iks but also in the Prince William Sound, the Sugpiaqs, the Aleuts…

Olga: I mean in terms of being priests?

Matushka Diane: May be.

Olga: Because I was told that at the beginning the Cathedral here was supported by the Unangan and the Sugpiaqs, they brought the tradition of singing, and then at some point it changed. Today, for instance, the Yup'ik tradition of Starring is important. But please correct me if I am wrong. Do

you think there is this Yup'ik tradition dominates the Cathedral and the Anchorage Deanery in this sense?

Matushka Diane: I think you are correct that it shifted. We first moved here in 1994. We were in Bethel. Father graduated in 1991. And we were in the Bethel Parish for 3 years. Nobody had ever wanted that parish because Bethel is kind of a wild wild West. We of course got there. But we moved here because Father Nicholas Harris who was the founder and the priest. He used to do everything.

Olga: I read in the book.

Matushka Diane: Oh, you got the book. So he did everything. And I am not sure at what point but they wanted a Native priest for the [Alaska Native Medical] hospital. So that's why Father came here as a Chaplain. And mostly I think they wanted Yup'ik because the Yup'ik language is mostly still alive and speaking. When I first went to the village, no-one spoke English there.

Olga: How did you do?

Matushka Diane: Well, they did speak it, but it was not there first language, for sure. Father's mother would never speak to me in English. She would say a few words. And she knew more but she wanted me to learn some things. There were a few key words, like coffee and tea, some certain words that I learned. Tatiana was more fortunate to learn the language but she grew up in the village. But the children would speak [Yup'ik] to me, and they thought I would respond, they did not know any difference. And it's not like that now, unfortunately. They still are fluent, and they still speak it, but not as much. At the time, there were people coming from the villages, the Elders, who did not speak English, so that they were scared of the hospital. So it was really important to have a Yup'ik priest there, because they were more comforting, while the Unangan and Sugpiaqs had more English. It was not as hard for them. So I think, I do not want to say, just the influence of him coming, but I think that when initially the Church started, we had the choir director, Michael Lekanof, he was Aleut, right. And a lot of them had already lived in Anchorage at that time. When

now, more and more Yup'iks are moving to the city. They never would come to the city. They were not successful there, it was too much for them, too tempting with alcohol and everything here. And I think that full shift has changed with history. There's more Yup'iks here now.

Olga: But it started…

Matushka Diane: Yes, it started with the Aleut.

Olga: And it started to change when you came?

Matushka Diane: I don't know if it was then, may be earlier, but I think he was the first Yup'ik priest associated with the Cathedral because before that it was Father Nicholas (unclear), none of them were Yup'ik. I think Father was probably one of the first ones that was Yup'ik to come here. And the majority of our clergy are now Yup'ik: Father Thomas Andrew, and now Father Daniel Charles. You know it's not uncommon, but before they were all like, nobody wanted to live here because priests wanted to be in the villages. The Yup'iks did not want to be here.

Olga: But when did it start really to show, the Yup'ik influence?

Matushka Diane: And when we came, and I do not want to give my husband that credit, I do not really know whether it was before then, I mean there were some Yup'iks here. But when we first started the Starring which is really strong in the Yup'ik culture, I mean, Aleuts do it, everybody does it, but probably not as hard core as the Yup'ik people, and of course, Father knew nothing else, so he wanted to do it the way the Yup'iks did it, right?

Olga: In his village, right? Because it can be different in different villages, right?

Matushka Diane: Yes, it's very different.

Olga: Very different?

Matushka Diane: So when we have spent Christmas and Starring in Chenega Bay, so we, you know, experienced that, we experienced different areas. It was a big adjustment for him because he is pretty shelter-minded. He is very much like, this is the only way to do it. Anybody else that does it, does it wrong. It's just how he is, I was like, you have to be open-minded. What he actually

learned here is that what we have done over the years, and it took him a while to adjust, because he is pretty stubborn in his tradition.

Olga: Excuse-me for interrupting you.

Matushka Diane: No, go ahead.

Olga: By being stubborn in his tradition, do you mean it is typical of the Yup'ik culture?

Matushka Diane: I think but it might just be a part of my husband, you know, because I have found, some of them are more open-minded. But this is how they lived and breathed. Father's Dad was a lay pastor. What he learned here over the years, his father was a lay pastor, he would preach, there was no other way. And part of that is also his personality. I said we need to be more open-minded. What he has done over the years, we have adapted, now we sing Aleut at our Starring, we do different things, he let different groups sing. But he also learned how to do it. It's kind of evolved. When we first started, he was like, this is the only we I learned to do it, right. But as we had more people joining in, and being a part of it, they wanted to bring their own tradition.

Olga: So the choir asked him to include some hymns and kolyadi?

Matushka Diane: So the choir for Starring, you mean?

Olga: Yes.

Matushka Diane: Because it is not really the choir of the Catherdal.

Olga: Yes.

Matushka Diane: So we have choir practices, and we have Chrystal Dushkin who you probably know. She would come and she was a big participant. She would come and learn the Yup'ik because she loves the culture. And then she also taught us Unangan, you know. So that kind of started all of that. And just as different groups would come, and then it just became a part of it. It really helped Father to grow out of that.

Olga: But at the same time, the basis itself is still from the village of Nunapitchuk?

Matushka Diane: For Father, yes, when he leads it. Because he is still like, you know, you are coming to a home, you sing first, and then the preacher or the priest, whoever is preaching, gives a sermon, and then you feast if they are feasting. First, they pass their gifts, and then you feast. And that is the same structure, every time.

Olga: It is the structure for the Yup'ik Selaviq? Or is it different in different villages?

Matushka Diane: I would say, it's pretty much the same, kind of everywhere, they may skip a part, they might not feed, or they may not pass out gifts, but the singing is always first because you are following the star at home.

Olga: But when you say that Selaviq is different in different villages, what are the differences?

Matushka Diane: Well, some of the traditions, like, in Prince William Sound, they I would say [The Selaviq tradition in villages] is pretty much the same, they may skip a part, they may not have gifts but the singing is always first because you are following the star at home. In Prince William Sound they instead of passing out gifts they do a crazy thing that we have never seen, they like put food and different gifts all over the floor, and you stand by them, and you stand there all around and you sing and then they say sprazdnikom and everyone runs to get the staff and that's crazy
and they throw things like throwing the handful of candy, rolling, what they have developed it as their celebration. The first time Father saw it, he was almost disturbed by this, he said that it should not be this way. And there is coins flying and all this kind of stuff, and he is, this is what they developed as their celebration. At first he was like, I don't like that. I don't like that. And now he likes it. This was just different. And in the Sound there was also alcohol during the Starring which was very disturbing to him. In Kodiak they did that actually too, I think that the Yup'ik village , my guess is probably the only area because it is so taboo, it's not just good for the people, that alcohol is not part of the Starring and Father always tells me they were taught, if there is alcohol in the home being served, the star will not enter. And that's kind of how he was. There was a couple of

homes in Anchorage where there was alcohol being served. And that was really hard, and he wouldn't go, that was very hard for him.

Olga: But if you compare villages in the Yup'ik region, is it different?

Matushka Diane: I think it's a little different, but not really much. The style of singing, because the songs and the hymns are the same, but they are a little bit different, you are probably familiar with the geographic area. Like Father is from the tundra, and Father Daniel is from Kasigluk, they are kind of the same to somewhat degree. But when you go up river, it's different, but it's the same songs, it's just slower, and a little bit pf pronunciation might be different, just like the Yukon is a little bit different. Because in Bethel we used to have people who came from the Yukon and celebrated in Bethel, first time, and they would try to correct us, that we were singing it wrong. Some of that is Yup'ik, some of that is Slavonic, so the speed of singing, the tempo might be different.

Olga: But generally, it is the same. So the majority of the priests is the Yup'ik. But are the priests mostly all related?

Matushka Diane: When I look back historically, who was related to who. I do not know if Father Daniel is related to my husband, even though they are very close in villages, right. I think there is some, and they consider relatives, even though it is extended, a way out there. For me, I would not even think about being my relative. But I was laughing when Father and I married that I had, you know, all tundra as my relatives. Because he introduced me like, this is my cousin, I said it is not a cousin in my eyes, it is like five generations away. But he is still his cousin.

Olga: And he knows?

Matushka Diane: Oh, he knows, usually they know, or it is discovered. When they talk about so and so, they never met this person, but they will say this is my Dad's so and so, and then they know they are cousins. I am like, OK. This is how that works. I know that Father Victor Nick, he used to tease me that I was his aunty, because somehow him and Father, they are related. I said, no, I am

not, because it means I am older than you. There was just teasing. But in their eyes this is how it was.

Olga: But a lot of them are related, right?

Matushka Diane: I think so. It is almost like, often there is an extended family in the church.

Olga: And what about the expression Yup'ik Orthodoxy?

Matushka Diane: Very often I asked Father: Is it Orthodox? Or is it Yup'ik? And he does not know. Because it is so blended into the tradition. Often I have to ask Father.

Olga: So it is so blended that you do not know any more. It is so interested.

Matushka Diane: We might speak with an Orthodox from another area; and he might not know a certain tradition. For instance, in the weddings, they stand on the rug right? In the Yup'ik tradition. Then we went to some weddings. That did not happen. So I said to Father: "Is it Yup'ik or is it Orthodox? What is it?" And he could not answer me because this is how it has always been for him. We also stood on the rug. There are some customs and traditions that are different. I grew up in the Yup'ik Orthodox faith. So when we came here, to the Cathedral, we were exposed to so many different things, then it was like, oh.

Olga: And, I also have a question. I saw this reading about Matushka Olga. About 7-8 priests came to the Seminary during her lifetime. It has never happened in another village.

Matushka Diane: I did not know about that.

Olga: I was wondering how it was related.

Matushka Diane: Usually, students are from Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Napaskiak…

Olga: Why?

Matushka Diane: I think it's just the family and the faith. And the Yukon too, Russian Mission, Pilot Station, it's interesting there are a few priests from Marshall even then they have strong Catholics in the village.

Olga: May be it's a family tradition?

Matushka Diane: I think it's the leaders of you know and may be certain Yupik families are stronger leaders than the others, I think that Yup'ik people are really humble, they are not very boastful, not at all quiet, they do not put themselves out there. Not to say they are not strong; they are just not strong leaders. I think when you look at the Tlingit people, they are very loud.

Olga: I read they are warriors.

Matushka Diane: Yes, there is a part of that.

Olga: Speaking about Matushka Olga. I read that at some point there was a decision about glorification. The conversation started some time ago.

Matushka Diane: It takes years for that to happen because they gather stories and different situations. It takes time for that to happen. Did you ask Father Michael Oleksa about that?

Olga: A little bit. But he is very busy.

Matushka Diane: It is too bad. He is one of the initiators of all of that.

Olga: Yeah. I also heard that Covid also interfered with it too.

Matushka Diane: And, you know, one of her daughters is a Matushka. Matushka Helen, she is married to Father Alexander.

Olga: I see. And where are they?

Matushka Diane: I think, in Napaskiak.

Olga: And her granddaughter, her name is Olga. She wrote a Master's thesis on Matushka Olga.

Matushka Diane: Oh, I did not know that either.

Olga: They also called her Olenka.

Matushka Diane: It was her, I do not want to say, but something like her street name.

Olga: So, why was it initiated? Why was this decision made about her being canonized?

Matushka Diane: I am not sure but I think she helped a lot of people. I never got to meet her. But I heard she was very good to people. I do not know what she did in her life.

Apparently, there have been citings when people saw her. Once they were in a home during Starring and they could see people outside the window and she was one of them, and that was after she passed. You could see this profile outside singing. It gives me goose pimples to think about it, that I saw this, and I can't remember where it was. People tell stories.

Olga: And dreams?

Matushka Diane: And dreams. Yup'ik people very much interpret dreams.

Olga: Yes, that's what I noticed.

Matushka Diane: That is superstitions to me.

Olga: I noticed that their discourse often starts with "I had a dream". Thank you for pointing out at this. I was thinking about it.

Matushka Diane: I have a Yup'ik friend trying to withdraw from alcohol. I am trying to help her through the withdrawals. She told me she had this scary dream. She saw her body… her soul leaving her body. And it just scared her. These are those dreams you hear of. There are another dream about climbing the ladder and falling. Father talks a lot about people having certain dreams and what that means. Interpretation… A lot of time it has to do, you know, with people making wrong choices and they interpret these dreams. People see Matushka [Olga] in their dreams too.

Olga: And she is Yup'ik. . Also, a technical question I was asking myself. Father Peter travels a lot, right? He has recently gone to Saint Paul?

Matushka Diane: Yes, he was there for Easter.

Olga: So, parishes that do not have permanent priests, how does it work?

Matushka Diane: Normally, the clergy depending on the size of their parish are assigned multiple parishes, so the priest in Kasigluk has Nunapitchuk. The parish finances them coming for holidays and funerals. That's their responsibility to visit parishes.

Olga: And who finances them?

Matushka Diane: The parish. Usually it happens for holidays. Or funerals. Father's situation is kind of unique because he is retired. Throughout the years though, even if he was the chaplain, because there were times when he was assigned. There were times when he had assigned parishes. He was assigned Chenega Bay.

Olga: And when you are assigned?..

Matushka Diane: That's when you do your regular visits. That's your responsibility.

Olga: So he was assigned other parishes, while being here in Anchorage?

Matushka Diane: Yes. To actually serve them. But now, because he is retired, he is kind of a free agent. For Easter three villages called him and all wanted him to come.

Olga: But when you are assigned, it is still the parish that pays?

Matushka Diane: Yes. When we were young, and did not speak up, some tickets came out of our pocket. It does not happen often. But when you are young, and you feel you have this responsibility, and you are afraid to tell the Bishop. And that's what I mean. When you grow, you become more like… you know, Bishop Gregory, I would never say the things to him that I know say to Bishop Alexis. Times have changed, or I have been matured, or whether that's the world changing. I do not know what it is.

Olga: But you said that you were taught how to communicate with Bishop?

Matushka Diane: Yes, having respect and being obedient. You were so respectful. It was such a different world. You never said no. We were told the church is first. When Bishop David said that the church is not first, we were shocked. Because that's not what we were taught. At all. I think there is no discipline any more.

Olga: When you were there, in the seminary, women were also students? What is the role of females? Did it evolve over time?

Matushka Diane: Mostly the role of the women for students was mostly for reading, I do think that some women went there to find a husband, because they thought they could find good men there. But I think part of it was reading and the choir.

Olga: Are they still, female seminarians, are they descendants of lay leaders?

Matushka Diane: I don't know. The seminary in our Diocese seemed to be very separate.

Olga: But how was that back then, when you were there?

Matushka Diane: I think they very much came from the families that were strong Orthodox.

Olga: Logically.

Matushka Diane: Very much so And a lot of time, It was funny, one year they were students, and a couple of years later they were married to male students, and come back as married couples.

Olga: And speaking about Sisterhood. I learned that the Alaska Diocese Sisterhood is different from other sisterhoods in the sense that you have your own budget.

Matushka Diane: Do you mean the Cathedral one? A long time ago when we were first ordained there was a Diocesan sisterhood, like a brotherhood, during the annual Assembly we used to have meetings and the sisterhood came together , we would have meetings and shared ideas of how we would support the church. I do not know at what point it dissolved it is mostly now within the parishes, every parish usually has a sisterhood, some are stronger than others. That was one of the things we were taught at the Seminary is as a Matushka you need to lead the women and be a role model to get the women involved to help care of the church. That was always a big part of it. So I am kind of a born leader, I take things in charge that I do. So for me it is naturally what I do. That is why I have always been a strong part of the Sisterhood. Matushka Kathy, she is Yup'ik, she is very much the very same way. We are trying and I am trying to get her let her go off some certain things and not work so hard at her age. She is 80 years old. And you would never know that. She is amazing and she works so hard. It is most all the time her and her daughter [unclear.] She kind of

became my adopted mother, we are trying to engage the younger generation to do it, and unfortunately, they just don't feel the need to carry on.

We were taught you support your husband, behind every priest is a stronger Matushka. Like I look at Matushka Anastasia, Father Nicholas' Matushka, she was a strong leader teaching the young women how to do things.

Olga: Preparing the younger generation?

Matushka Diane: Through cooking and tradition, getting them involved. It was interesting to do those things. Now the younger generation is not interested in those things.

Olga: Do you have your own budget?

Matushka Diane: No. We have our own bank account that we use to raise funds.

Olga: Is it through holidays sales? The coffee hour? What are the goals?

Matushka Diane: I don't even remember where we even really started. Our Big Bake sales. It is almost uncontrollable now which is good but a lot of work. From what I understand, there is nowhere in the Lower 48, there is not coffee hour like ours. During the coffee hour, they may have a donation basket, but it is all free. That's usually what is seen in the church. That is something unique to the Cathedral that we raise funds to support the church weekly. We have just recently started to take the summers off to take a break.

Olga: And during Covid?

Matushka Diane: During Covid we tried to do some modified bake sales, mostly because the house Father Daniel lives in, we purchased that probably 6 years ago, so we are paying the mortgage on that. The Old Rectory house the caretaker, John Oleksa, of the Cathedral lives there, that was the very first parish house nearby the Cathedral, who does a lot of things around the church and keeps an eye on it. But the house need a lot of repairing. The sisterhood is really the backbone of the Cathedral to a lot of things, not only for the fundraising, they also do the cleaning, social

things, preparing for the holidays, they really are the backbone of what happens in the Cathedral in that sense.

Olga: Do you think it is individual, the strong leadership?

Matushka Diane: Yes. Matushka Anastasia always knew how to put people together.

Olga: But speaking about the Yup'ik people, sharing is one of the most important values, do you think it influenced the sisterhood?

Matushka Diane: Not necessarily. Matushka Anastasia and women had certain things going on. We do not see the younger generation taking that over. What will happen when we step out? When you look at out annual Christmas and Easter bake sale, the foods that we make, the fish pie, that, no-one is interested to learn the way how we do it. There is some, but not to the volume that they are going to come and make 300 fish pies for sale. We have gotten kind of a reputation because the food we make is good. In Kodiak it is the same. They have these bake sales not to the extent and volume that we have, Christmas and Easter, they do kind of the same. Matushkas are strong in Anchorage too.

Olga: By the way, I also was told that the Cathedral is called "a parish for all Alaska", with people…

Matushka Diane: Coming and going.

Olga: Right. It is hard to manage?

Matushka Diane: I think so. Especially, if some of those people that come and go come to the church, become of the big helpers and suddenly you have this big loss. Some people do not get involved because they know they are going to leave. I think that this could be a challenge. Some of them are transients, they are not going to be there for a long period of time. And the ones that stick around, are, you know.

Olga: Are there any traditions, village, Yup'ik traditions, Selaviq, anything else, in terms of how the Cathedral is managed? Food donations?

Matushka Diane: Fish donations came from the Parish Council, during Covid, initially what happened, we were trying to think, how we are going, we came with the idea to do a paypal account for donations, and we did that, it was amazing, people made donations, Father Daniel put on FB messages and people do donations, people who do not come to church, they still support. That boosted us and we did some government protection. And the fish got started,we felt like we get but not give back, we felt like we were in such a survival mode even prior to Covid. Tatiana Beck would take the youth to the Beans Coffee to help feed, volunteers, trying to think how we can give back to the community, the fish thing came up during this time, we did not have the capacity to organize a food bank, but we collect and the Episcopal church come and pick it up. We were like a donation site. We ask people to donate, one of our parishioners when he gets full, he comes and drops it off. It is kind of our way to help.

Olga: It does not happen in the villages?

Matushka Diane: No, not necessarily. Now they are trying to get more and more with the clergy getting the salary to survive, but I think about long ago when clergy were paid with food, and Father was telling me when he traveled to one parish, there was a journal from back then, and they were having there the name of the priest, and what they gave them for their service, a lot of times food was given to them for their services versus money. It was very interesting to hear that, when he would find things like that. When we first went to Bethel, we were not necessarily paid with food, they hadn't had a priest in 10-15 years, when we came. We were kind of starting from ground zero. Since then they have a new church, it is well-established, the younger generation has been moving to Bethel, there is enough people to support now. When we were there, it was not necessarily the case.

Olga: There is this outmigration to the hubs, it means parishes are fading, and funding is migrating too?

Matushka Diane: The people from the village are moving to the hubs and from Bethel to Anchorage, so in the villages I do not know how strong the parishes are because of that, I have not traveled to the Kuskokwim for many years, but I think, there isn't priests there, I hate to say that but it is a dying thing.

Olga: And jobs are still scarce there?

Matushka Diane: I think they have jobs and do subsistence. We did that when we were in Bethel. There is no need to get them that. I do not know the older priests did that a long time ago. They were more sacrifying than the younger generation that shifted to hunting and fishing.

Olga: And the parish buildings in the villages, how are they sustained? The Diocese helps?

Matushka Diane: No, they do not. The Diocese does not help with the building. When I was the Treasurer, there would be some villages who faithfully tithed. And it's the percentage is 10 percent, that's what they say. And some villages has a monthly check of 40 dollars, meaning that the parish had 400 dollars. It varies. A lot of time that is the families who have jobs.

Olga: And corporations?

Matushka Diane: Some corporations have money in their bugdet every year for their parish. Chenega Corporation… Chenega church is amazing. It depends on the Native corporation. Calista, they are not as rich as Chenega or some other ones, but they also have a large volume of shareholders who are not Orthodox, while others are all Orthodox, Chenega, for example. so it's very easy for them to just give to the Church, as you don't have to give to 5 churches. So that's why Calista is very careful with what they support. And they can't really do it.

Olga: And Bristol Bay?

Matushka Diane: Bristol Bay would be the same way. So certain ones do. In Saint Paul, it is not the corporation, but they have their fishing industry. Some parishes are supported by the fishing industry. When Father goes there, that fishing co-op or how they are called, they pay everything for him.

Olga: But also historically some lands were left to the church?

Matushka Diane: In the transition from the sales of Alaska, the Diocese has lands, we have much land, church land, however, we have sold some. And we lost some. All of the parishes are own by the Diocese. Land leased out helps to finance some of the Diocese, Bishop's salary and expenses. The (leased) land is owned and managed by the Diocese. In Juneau, in Sitka. Russian Mission has a lot of lands, we worked with the Housing Authorities to develop… if you lease you lands for the village, good for the community, if you build the housing, would you give the priest a house? And so we have done things like that.

Olga: By the way, a completely different question? Mixed families can celebrate together? Some Moravains buy and eat Kulich for the Gregorian Easter.

Matushka Diane: Kulich is not a Yup'ik tradition, Yup'iks did not know. I would say the Kulich tradition came to Yup'iks from Lower 48, but also from the Aleut and the Sugpiaqs. When we were in Bethel, I would make Kulich there, and the priests knew it from the seminary, they wanted bread they got at the Seminary. Tradition probably came to the Kuskokwim and to the Bristol Bay from the Seminary, at least for the Yup'iks. To me, Yup'iks did not really know fish pie. We learned fish pie in Kodiak. But the Yup'ik people boil everything. So it's a new tradition. And during the Christmas time, when we have Selavie, the Moravians joined, because they grew up with that, it become the activity for the whole village. It has become their tradition, like in Father's village. On Dec. 25th there is a Christmas Play in the Moravian church, everybody goes to that. So the village celebrates Christmas. The Orthodox may not participate in the services, may be in the play or in the exchange of gifts, and on January 7th everyone does the Orthodox. Some [Moravians] would come only because you follow the star, you do not arrive at the house before the star. You follow the star. I don't think that's like this now, they just wait when they get there now. Nobody goes into the house, we would arrive and there were people waiting to enter the house after the star. We would arrive and there would be people waiting.

Olga: And Anchorage Starring?

Matushka Diane: In the village they say we start at noon, they go to the first house, then they go to the second house, and they just move, there is no time, it used to go until 3-4am in the morning, I said, I can't do that any more. So now because people work [in Anchorage], we actually schedule, because in the past, they would do a few houses, it was for a week, in some villages they go three times, now they do just one time, because families cannot afford it because also it has become so big, it kind of evolved into a competition, twenty years ago I thought how those people could afford, I was amazed how much they gave out. Here we kind of did it with the schedule, because people work the next day. There were times in the villages that we were so far behind the schedule that people cooked and the food was cold, it's not fair to them, so here we put more structure here, because life is more structured here. The kids in some villages had vacation during Slavie, some of the school districts adjusted. It just became a village event, a part of their life. So many Bishops tried to change the calendar, you can't change it, even if you change it, they are gonna continue to do that because it became the part of their life, and they are gonna rebel. In the village, Starring is major, they don't have a lot of events. This is major for them. Moravians participate, everyone participates. What they kind of done - they do how they do it back home. I make all the Native food he likes. They all bring a part of their village here, yes.

In Anchorage they were accepting his tradition at first, because they were respectful, and this is how you do it, but I think then he was more open to it and he just said, do whatever you want to do, and I think it was helpful. Now Selaviq is a mixture of all the cultures. In Anchorage, it's hard for them to get Native food, they do what they have, they try to make it as at home, because it's the tradition. The outside one during Covid was fun. I did like the one at the Cathedral because all the people participated and the one outside, it's good downstairs too. We used to have it in our home, but that one year there was so many people there that the house was shaking. That's why we moved it to the Cathedral. On the basement it started in early 2000s, over the years it has kind of evolved

depending on the main priest, they might do it with us. But we would have at ours. And in the village the first home is the priest's home. That is not the case here. Only because we cannot do it the first day, because we are working, so it's on Saturday. It still starts at the church. The star starts to move at the church. Here in Anchorage the hospital would be the first place, and then it became such an event in the hospital that they scheduled a big celebration at the Native hospital, they had their dancers and food. They used to have some Native dancers, usually Yup'ik dancers, depending on who was in charge. That had nothing to do with us, but the hospital used it as a way to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas.

Olga: Thank you so much!

Matushka Diane: I hope I helped.

Olga: You helped a lot! Thank you!

Interview with Anonymous 8 – May 19th, 2022

The following topics were discussed during this interview: Yup'ik language teaching certification; Yup'ik immersion program in Anchorage; Yup'ik Immersion Program; fish processing activities in the classroom; berry-picking; Native food cooking activities in the classroom; Yup'ik naming; Dual Lamguage Immersion model.

Interview with Sister Frances Vista, D.C. – May 24th, 2022

Olga: Hello Sister Frances, thank you for our meeting.

Sister Frances: You are welcome.

Olga: Could you say a few words on how the Native Ministry was founded and developed?

Sister Frances: Catholic sisters visited the patients coming or medevaced to the Native hospital from rural Alaska. Then Archbishop Hurley help to organize a Mass at the hospital. In the 1990s. Sister Dana came to Anchorage to develop the Native Ministry at the hosptial.

Olga: So, in other words, Native Ministry emerged around the Native Hospital.

Sister Sister Frances: Yes. Archbishop Schwietz established the Ministry in 2009.

Olga: And when did you come to Anchorage?

Sister Frances: As a part of Daughters of Charity, I cam to Alaska to serve as the Native Ministry leader between 2011 and 2013. I worked on its development so that it continues to function until my next stint in 2019.

Olga: I see. And where does the funding for it come from?

Sister Frances: It is funded by the Black and Indian Mission.

Olga: By the way, I read that in 2012, the Ministry went to Rome, right?

Sister Frances: Yes, most of the members went there for the canonization of Saint Kateri. The trip encouraged them to become more active leaders.

Olga: How is the Ministry doing after the Covid pandemic?

Sister Frances: The hospital visits are still very limited, so that around 20 leaders continue offering prayers over the phone.

Olga: But you also have the Native Ministry Mass at Saint Anthony now?

Sister Frances: Yes, but hospital patients struggle with finding transportation to join.

Olga: OK. May be one more question: I noticed that you wear the Yup’ik qaspeq during the Native Mass. Why do you wear it?

Sister Frances: In respect to the Native people.

Olga: Thank you very much for answering my questions.

Sister Frances: You are welcome.

Olga: Thank you. I think it started. So you are saying that this is how it started.

BrittNee: Yeah, on my art training in Anchorage. I did the Leadership Anchorage. We focused on this life quadrants (your passions, your family, your culture, your education), and I ended up focusing on two quadrants that I really wanted to create better goals in my life. I did a lot of baking on the sides as well, I mainly do children's cakes. Really fun cakes for the kids, they love it. It's a long process, it takes a lot of time to bake a cake. I only have little time to bake. It's exhausting but in the end when you bring the cake, it is crazy, the kids love it.

Olga: Is it complicated to earn your living and to do the arts as a hobby? Is it your choice?

BrittNee: It takes a lot of self-motivation. It's my fun time. It takes a lot of self-discipline and motivation to set time for that every day. I feel like my creative process… I have to be in a certain mood waiting until I can start feeling motivated again. There are days I do not really feel that motivated.

Olga: But you participate in a lot of markets?

BrittNee: Yesterday I was coordinating with my friend Melissa. She was like, hey, let's go to another market Downtown.

Olga: Arctic Transition Summit?

BrittNee: Yes, I was so burned out after the one we did before. I need to take a nap.

Olga: When you participate, how do you learn about events?

BrittNee: It's a bunch of networking. I noticed since I've been in this art community, it's a pretty cool, small community of artists.

Olga: A lot of different Indigenous groups?

BrittNee: Yes, a lot of Indigenous, also, non-Natives. I try to be in the circle when I follow them on social media, keeping up with my friends' projects. Melissa Shaginoff has been a huge support in that.

Olga: Speaking about this network, how did you reconnect with the Indigenous network?

BrittNee: My first event, a year after 2017, my mentor challenged me to make something from my art. You are putting yourself out there. I did a lot of research to get my identity, what my brand should be. How do I want to look? There is certain aesthetic that I want to showcase.

Olga: I saw on your site that you attach your art to your culture, to the Inupiaq values, to the Indigenous knowledge. What do you mean by that?

BrittNee: I try to, whether I teach or pass on story, there is key stories, little stories. There is one on half-man, half-caribou, and to that there are few I really wanted to teach. I did my first official show, 65-70 pieces for it. I made a list of the things I wanted to teach about my Inupiaq culture that I can put in this one show at UAA. They had this gallery. In 2019, all of these pieces were done, while I was in school at the time, I dedicated each class assignment to my culture. And so, every assignment, I did, a lot of the pieces I did were from my classes.

Olga: What is your degree on, by the way?

BrittNee: In general, art, with an emphasis on Native Arts. But since they shut down the Native Arts program, I think my advisor was saying I could still have my emphasis, I would just have to complete just my core… I was working on this for my Bachelor's degree. At the beginning of 2022, I have re-applied for my Bachelor's degree. Because of my work at the hospital, they would not allow me to take time off for school. I didn't like that. I started looking for a new job. I need that freedom to be able to go back to school. I landed one this past month.

Olga: Congratulations!

BrittNee: Yeah, thank you. At the hospital it was very busy with Covid and just in general. I was felling really burnt out with 30 minute breaks, sometimes we cannot take breaks. It was demotivating in the sense.

Olga: But you still continued creating?

BrittNee: I find creating of jewelry calming. Yet, I am still able to express myself. It's nice because you'll see somebody from afar. I know exactly who made those earrings. I even wanted those Indigenous earrings. There are some new artists that I follow. I know exactly who made those earrings. I support and share their work on Facebook.

Olga: I see. By the way, I have heard that the majority of the customers are non-Indigenous?

BrittNee: I feel like it's a mix. I feel like I get a lot of support from my Indigenous artist friends. But also I do get a pretty good diversity with Native and non-Native [customers] at least what I am aware of. I feel like it's a mix. I feel like I get a lot of support from my Indigenous artist friends. Also I do get a pretty good diversity with Native and non-Native [customers] at least what I am aware of.

Olga: Is it online or in-person?

BrittNee: Mostly online, since Covid hit, we've been doing online markets, and they've been really successful. And we had in 2020 a collaboration of 4-5 artists. We all release things every month, we were doing that for a year. It help me to keep motivated, to create new work but also it helped me to create a new community of artists of a small group of artists, to get to know them better, and to keep them in mind for future events.

Olga: I see. I have a question about materials. How do you get them?

BrittNee: There is the Marine Mammal Protection Act, there is the Ivory Trade bands with Alaska Native groups. With the Mammal Protection Act, with our Alaska Native culture, we have to maintain our subsistence lifestyle we depend on, especially, in my hometown: a gallon of milk is like 10-12 dollars. It's hard to buy groceries and to survive off just food alone there. Whereas, if we

embrace our Indigenous cultures, we have Spring and Fall whaling and that brings off our food to our community. There is a lot of different shares of the parts of the whale. That was one of my favorite pieces I made…., so you know I got 65-70 pieces, this is what I want to teach about my Inupiaq culture to kind of focus on those things, Inupiaq values. We have to abide by certain regulations and laws for our subsistence that brings in not only food but you know, we use it for our artwork. There are rules to abide by, and you have to be at least a quarter of Alaska Native to work with certain materials, so, for ivory, you have to be a quarter blood quantum. There is a lot of controversy with that because the blood quantum, I am barely a quarter. There is a lot of diversity in our culture. I am Inupiaq but also Hawaiian from my Mom's side. So I am not a full Alaska Native but I grew up more Alaska Native than she did with my Mom's Hawaiian background. We rely on our subsistence foods, on ivory, we do not waste any part, we use all of the animal for art work. I feel like that's a big part of our Inupiaq values, respect for our animals, the spirituality in every way possible, by using every piece. I love that, I think it's cool to be able to use a seal vertebrae and to create like a snowy oil with it. Those are my favorite pair of earrings I made. I think these were my first earrings I created. I had a vision of this seal vertebrae that I saw in the Native store… And it was nice to have Alvin Madison, our teacher, very knowledgeable, humbling.

Olga: Alvin?

BrittNee: Yes, Alvin Madison. He was amazing just in terms of supporting you, your goals, and teaching you ways that you can create and bring your visions to life. You think it, you can create it. Alvin was having that mentality. A lot of his art work spoke to me as an individual. He has a piece in the Native hospital. I have always wondered who the artist was. I think it's a caribou. This is just so cool, I was wondering who the artist is. And going back to my first show at Fur Rondy, I met this lady artist, Sheila. She was having a conversation about all these visions I had of what I wanted to create. And she said, ¨you need to meet my teacher Alvin". So from there I think it was in September 2017. I finally made a visit in the Native art shop and from there I was like, now it's

cool. I was watching Sheila carving her mask. I wanted to definitely meet Alvin. I kept in contact with Sheila. She is one of my friends now. She is Tlingit, she is so knowledgeable. She also took this Native art class with Alvin. I am so blown away by her skills. She showed me, she inspired me. She's been a huge advocate for a lot of people. She brought me to Alvin, it was my missing puzzle piece, you know. I worked at the hospital passed his artwork. I loved the piece so much. I always thought this is exactly how I want my work to feel. A 3D piece. I like to express myself in 3D rather than in 2D. I want this freedom, something you can look at, feel it. I do like working with seal skin. We recently got this mukluk crimping class. We learned how to use bearded seal.

Olga: Where?

BrittNee: At the Wells Fargo Museum that hosted a workshop. It was worth every second. I was able to bring my daughter with me. So she could watch even if she does not participate, in the background, she will remember when she is older. She sees us learning, she may decide to do it in the future.

Olga: Did you learn mostly in Anchorage or in Barrow?

BrittNee: A combination of both. We grew up having an Inupiaq class. Till may be about middle school. We would do skin-sewing, we would do polish baleen. There was a bunch of different Elder teachers, mostly for skin-sewing. Very strict for good reasons, in terms of survival. You can't just go to a store to buy a parka. You have to customize it to your measurements, and you also need it for survival, you need something that is reliable, that's going to be quality work, it's either you gonna survive or not, with the regalia you need to think that this one stich will be for death. If your clothing is falling apart, you can't maintain your heat. If you may fall through the ice, there are so many different scenarios you can get yourself into. If you are not ready to survive under those conditions, it can cost you life. This is I think I wish I had more exposure to. There is a specific stitch you need to do to sew, and if you mess up once, you can create a bubble. A lot of these seamstresses are very experienced. She taught us how to skin-sew a pair of mittens. She made sure

that we had small stitches. Made you redo it. It is still in the back of my mind. Every time I make a piece, I try to make it pretty consistent, as perfect as I can. I didn't think about it until I started making jewelry. I want to get quality. I want to embrace that cultural background, and this is upraising that it can cost you life, that little stitch. I am really fortunate to have such a discipline.

Olga: So it started with school, and then you started taking classes here in Anchorage?

BrittNee: Before Covid they were doing a lot of language classes. And during those language classes, we learned so new techniques. I always wanted to learn beading. It was not until 2019, we did a language camp at the Native Heritage Center, and Melissa [unlcear], she taught us how to bead. This was exactly what I wanted to learn. I was very fortunate to bring my daughter with me too.

Olga: For the younger generation, they say, it can be challenging to learn tradition knowledge here in Anchorage?

BrittNee: Anchorage has always been the hub, a lot of our relatives are coming, shopping, getting reasonably priced groceries to ship back to their town. We see a lot of family here, there is a lot of gathering here, also through basketball.

Olga: By the way, you also use fox?

BrittNee: Sometimes I have some and not the other, I use whale bone, teeth, whiskers, I think I have seal gut, I am too scared to use them. I know that you can do seal gut parkas, I was tempted to do it. I do use as lot of fox, blue fox, red fox, Arctic fox, silver fox.

Olga: Where do you get those?

BrittNee: There is this Alaska Fur Exchange store here in town that has some materials. It could be very pricey but sometimes they have good deals.

Olga: Do you have some partners, let's say, in Barrow, from the extended family?

BrittNee: I will do a lot of bartering with other artists and also with hunters. I like scraps. If they are not available. They are usually at the Fur Rondy and AFN shows.

Olga: Is there any bartering with the family?

BrittNee: My aunt has a parka made from my grandma. They had all those fur scraps, there is the tail, there is a lot of beautiful fur they didn't use, so they said, hey, they know I'll take it.

Olga: During the Native Arts Market during Fur Rondy, I was allowed to sit by an Indigenous artist, everyone comes there, is this a networking event?

BrittNee: I do a lot of networking. My future goal is to open up a Native Arts show, something that connects a lot of Native artists. There is a lot of talent but any time I go to and Elder tand I ask 'where I can buy your art outside of this market', they say, 'I do not have Facebook'. They do not have a platform. I have a business idea that I want to pursue that involves this. May be we can create a profile for them. There is also the disconnect with the younger generation who wants to learn but does not have space to gather and create. When we were at the Native Art Shop at UAA, there may be 14 of us, we had no limitations, to have something like the in the community, especially, in Anchorage, it's a gathering place, it's a hub for all the community members that come here for shopping or events. It would be nice to have a place for that, and then to make it possibly franchisable like a Native Art Shop open to them for that around Alaska. May be they do not have the money for the tools, or they do not have space; a lot of people work at their homes to create things, especially myself. I try to create with what I have. We only have limited space with no garage. It's kind of hard to cut antler or ivory in your house. The particles are so dangerous to your lungs that you do not want that in your house. When the baleen at times when you sand it, those particles are not good for your health. I am confused if I want to do a non-profit or a for-profit. I am trying to decide how to pursue that. I do not make art to make money at the moment. It is a way to express myself, a mental break, a relief, embarrassing yourself…

Olga: Is it about your Native identity?

BrittNee: Yeah, not a lot of people are fully-blooded Natives, there is an identity crises, when we are like 'Am I Native enough?'. Am I accepted? I do not look Native. There is a lot of insecurity in being accepted as Alaska Native. I do have that a lot in the sense of identity. I do not feel like I look Native. It's kind of… what are the standards? It's hard because there are lots of stereotypes that we have to live above. Whether it's, I heard about really negative stereotypes about Alaska Natives, and it makes me feel bad and it makes me work even harder to live above that. There is also a lot of trauma from boarding schools days, and alcoholism, and substance abuse. And instead of talking and healing, we mask it with substance abuse, all the trauma, with our culture, we do not really talk about trauma, we focus on positives only. But it does not excuse all the bad that we experience.

Olga: Is it about culture?

BrittNee: It is hard to talk about traumas. It is hard to open those wounds and to speak about those intergenerational traumas. I participated in a pilot study at UAA on cultural identity and there is a lot of generational trauma; and they talk about their trauma, that they were raped or beaten for speaking their language. Or taking out of your home. That's all they know, they were young, they did not know how to express their emotions and whom to trust. Trying to heal those traumas, you have to re-open your wounds. I do not think a lot of people are open to expressing it unless they have been ok with themselves to be able to avoid that for future generations. There are so many negative stereotypes about "uneducated", "stupid" Natives. You need to get to know them as a person, but to discriminate like that it's just wrong on so many levels. It affects your identity and how you feel as a person. I felt insecure because I was afraid of people saying, oh, she tries to look Native but she does not really look Native. There's always to be a feedback like this. There is still this identity crises. There are always some people who have blue eyes and blond hair who would be over-quantitative and treated differently until that person realizes, like, 'wait, who is your family?', 'oh, you are Native'. To be validated like this, that's what I am trying to help with. At least, when you are creating, you are helping others to boost their confidence.

Olga: Through wearing the jewelry?

BrittNee: Yes, but also through supporting other artists. Empower them. All the sexes.

Olga: I see. But may be coming back to this question of Fur Rondy, of the Native Arts Market. Who is the organizer?

BrittNee: There is this website. There is a vendor list to apply to when you want a table. You have to show your BIA card to qualify. They want to be selling authentic Native Art.

Olga: The Dimond Center?

BrittNee: I think they work in partnership… This year it was kind of chaotic. With Fur Rondy. They support the Native Market. They always print out your name and where you come from. That's nice to see. May be they know so and so, that is good for networking. It also makes pieces they sell more personal that way, and kind of having that knowledge of their family. Who is your family? To get an idea of their tree and how you could be related to them.

Olga: Bartering materials is a common thing during such shows, right?

BrittNee: Bartering takes place… I have recently bartered with a hunter from my town. I had whale's whiskers from him. In return, I made his wife earrings.

Olga: Those big markets are a possibility for networking?

BrittNee: We trade and exchange with each other.

Olga: Is it similar with AFN?

BrittNee: Yes, Alaska Federation of Natives is separate from Fur Rondy. AFN is a lot bigger, it's very popular with Alaska Native artists and those artists with no website, they only go to this event, they participate to make up their income for their living. Fur Rondy is a little slower, we don't see that many people as at AFN but this year it was more than at AFN because we had so many cancellations during Covid that people are willing to socialize again. People are finally ready to go out again. I think I ran into 50 people in one day. With AFN, artists may make their income there. I

know a lot of artists there are full-time artists; they do that for a living. This is a lot of work. You have to be disciplined enough.

Olga: Thanks a lot of spending so much time on sharing your knowledge with me!

Interview with Alice Rearden – May 27th, 2022

Olga: Thank you again for accepting speaking with me, Alice.

Alice: Yes. I can tell you how I taught it in Anchorage. The reason I got into teaching is because Marie [Meade] got sick, and I took over her class at UAA. This was back in 2015. And when I took over her class I really liked teaching but I realized that I did not know how to teach. I just did not have the tools or methodology to be a good teacher. I like a challenge. And I always wanted to get my teaching degree. I got my bachelor's degree in history and anthropology. So anyway, I wanted to move back to Bethel. I really wanted to focus on my experience in teaching. I saw how there is very little language teaching in our state and how there are very few Native teachers that are certified. There are very few who are experienced in our language. I had years of experience transcribing and translating. And naturally I love the language, I love the structure and what I learned working with Elders. I decided to go back to school, may in 2018. Even when my twins were 2 or 3 years old. I did a year-long program through UAF. They give you a scholarship. It starts in May, ends May. When I was done with it, now I was certified, I saw there was an opening at Alaska Native Cultural Charter school. Two teachers from it moved right over to the Immersion Program. I went and applied for the position. Apparently, they had a program there where K through 8 would learn Yugtun. I was going to teach those 300 students, the entire school. I was the only one teaching the whole day, 6 classes a day, 5 days a week. That is the program that they had. But they just got a new principal. All the teachers mostly of Yupík background said to me you can't do it alone, you are taking 2 peoples' position. I said to them that I told it to the principal but she said: 'you are going to teach the whole school'. So I had no choice in the matter. I quickly realized, there is absolutely nothing there, no worksheets, no curriculum, nothing. They even took the ipads with them. I had to differentiate. I did not have the tools to really work with the younger kids. I was just shocked. I kind of panicked and talked to the people, to the previous teachers. They said: 'We

did TPR: total physical response'. You show them a picture, have them say a word. Did you have a guideline, themes, framework that I can use? Any rotation of what you do. They had nothing.

Olga: At this point was the Yupik the only language offered?

Alice: We have the most speakers and resources. I scrambled and asked the whole bunch of people around me what was helpful. The principal asked: 'Why don't you go over to the Aquarian school to the Spanish teacher?'There are no other program that teaches language as a special to the whole school. The teacher at school there was shocked that I taught the whole school. She said that I had no resources. For Spanish there is a hundred of resources. She said: 'Why don't you ask you principal?

I let somebody else teach kindergarten and 1st grade to focus on the others'. And it freezed me up. I asked the principal. And she said: 'No but I can get you a sub on Mondays'. But that creates more work for me because I need to write plans for the sub, and there is not Yup'ik sub, but she said that they would find you one. Anyway, I had a very challenging time because I had no resources.

Olga: But what about the Rilke School?

Alice: Those are Immersion Schools, they are different. In those schools you teach content through the language. You are teaching science and social studies or math or science through the language and at the same time the language. Anyway, there [was] lack of money and of resources. And the approach in teaching language, there is not a lot of info on how to teach language because everybody gets language at high school, how am I gonna do it with the elementary kids? People teach language at high school. I did borrow online [materials from the Lower Kuskokwim School District] but they teach ELL [English language learners whose first language is Yup'ik] and I tried to differentiate it with the elementary. There is no money in charter schools, I made dynamic power points, and I taught around themes. In the second year what changed my approach to teaching language was attending an Anchorage School District Professional Development… [then] I was better to come up with a better curriculum.

Olga: By the way, were all the Alaska Native students happy with learning the Yup'ik language?

Alice: The way I explained it to the students was that I know, Yup'ik is not your native language, but there are very few resources for teaching other languages, you are very lucky to have Yugtun here. Learning a language, not only Yup'ik, you are lucky to learn a language in an elementary setting, I had to come from that perspective for the other students who said why [they had to] learn Yup'ik. I had to do a lot of that. It's a wonderful thing that the Charter School teaches it. I think when they are exposed to it, it makes them feel really proud, they want a connection, they want to know what they are learning is valuable. When I had kids whose grandparents are Yup'ik, to know the sound, to be able to say they sound very well, it's a confidence booster, it's a huge challenge to learn any language not supported enough and present enough in the urban setting.

Olga: What about any traditional activities practiced at this school?

Alice: They learned how to make and process food which [they] shared at the end with the community through a potluck. We cut and dried salmon, processed a seal, a goose, made fry bread, and akutaq-berry mixture. We dried meat and made soups. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was good for students who normally do not have a chance to get out.

Olga: Did you have a possibility to implement any Indigenous teaching methods into your classroom routines (e.g. meeting Elders, storytelling etc)?

Alice: One thing that I incorporated into my classroom was storytelling because I have heard many stories from elders. This was part of the cultural lesson. The students responded well to the stories and if given a choice, many times, they chose a story over watching a video and would constantly ask for stories. I told short stories such as raven stories and other origin stories or legends, longer stories that had to do with how to behave well and good choices to make. They also liked hearing scary stories and about how life was like in the past. I also told them qanruyutet which are sayings that our elders live by in order to have good conduct and students responded well to them. They were my social-emotional lesson component. The school also had a one week long 'cultural week'

where I was part of the group that taught students how to make and process food which we shared at the end with the community through a potluck. We cut and dried salmon, processed a seal, a goose, made frybread, akutaq-berry mixture. We dried meat and made soups. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was good for students who normally do not have a chance to get out.

Olga: Is it possible and, if yes, in what ways it is possible to pass on and to maintain any aspects of the Yup'ik culture to the kids born/raised/going to school in Anchorage? From a teacher's but also from a parent's perspective?

Alice: Yes, it's very possible to pass on your culture to students and kids. They watch what we as parents do and they practice in any kind of activity that we do. I've been to throw parties which is a tradition that comes from uqiquq (seal distribution party), people share the catches that their children caught to others, we have memorial feasts in honor of those we lost. I also cut and dry salmon or what I can when I have the means at my home. Lots of people have steam baths and invite people over, many people participate and bring their kids to yuraq (Yup'ik dance). People follow other practices like giving an offer of food and water before they subsist, they go berry picking in the mountains to store a lot of berries for the winter or to share during feasts. I had my daughter follow some of the abstinence practices that I followed after she had her first period.

Olga: Are the Yup’ik people in Anchorage disconnected from the Yup’ik community as compared to the village?

Alice: Yup’ik people in Anchorage are much more disconnected from the community as compared to the village. Some Yup’ik concepts are difficult to translate into English. Children in Anchorage have less place-based knowledge, so it adds an additional layer of difficulty to the explanation of Yup’ik words. In Bethel that is a hub in the Yup’ik region] if you can imagine they are more surrounded by Native people, they are using it every day, they are hearing it all the time, especially in a few villages where Yup’ik is the main language being spoken, it is challenging [to retain it in

Anchorage], here [in Bethel], you hear it from your grandparents at the radio station, from your aunties, uncles, from your immediate family in the village more; so in Bethel [the language is retained] not that much but still immersed in it. In Anchorage are not immersed in it at all. Anchorage is a really busy city and you don't get any downtime here. In Bethel I have a Saturday and a Sunday. In Anchorage, when do you have time [to practice the language] unless your have your grandparents here. You don't hear it as much. But most of the kids, probably half of them [at the ANCCS], have been brought out to subsistence at different levels and means, I used to bring kids dip-netting and I consider it subsistence; if we get blackberry picking we get enough, 2-3-5 gallon buckets, it makes us last through the winter. More than a half of them in that school at least do try to subsist, the subsistence is a big part of their lifestyle and their identity, and most Yup'ik people who moved to the urban environment do try to subsist because it's part of the way they grew up, like a lot of the Yup'ik people from my village that moved to Anchorage. They do the same thing I do, and they still value their lifestyle, and it's up to them to show it to their kids even though there are challenges, even up to the last penny they would pay for gas to do that. It is still very much the essence that they want to pass on to their kids.

Interview with Aassanaaq (Ossie) Kairaiuak – June 13th, 2022

Olga: Hello, Ossie. Thank you for accepting to speak with me.

Ossie: Hi, Olga.

Olga: So, let me start with asking you about your dance group, Acilquq. What is the meaning of the word 'Acilquq'? And when was the group founded?

Ossie: It was founded in 2012 with the intent to recognize [the Yup'ik] respective village roots. It means a "plant root" in English.

Olga: How many dancers do you have?

Ossie: Fluctuating, probably 30. It's fluctuating, probably, I would say, maybe 30 members; and then a lot of people come for the company, just for the company.

Olga: Why do you want the dance practice to return to ANMC [after the Covid-19 pandemic]?

Ossie: A lot of the times the patients, a lot of them, have escorts to travel with them. We do not want them to get too homesick and then after our practice I do make an attempt to do a meeting with the people that we service. It makes the time fly. People catch up with long time friends they have known over the years, and also people like watching the practice, and mimicking. It lightens up the mood, your stress goes away.

Olga: Do you see your extended family there? Does dancing there help maintain the ties?

Ossie: Dancing there allows to renew extended family ties, even myself, when I see a relative I have not seen in a while, it makes me feel happy, as the human contact with our extended family is important to maintain the ties. Even non-Yup'ik people, and some non-Natives come because it's an amazing amount of positive energy that touches them. Some patients I can recall a couple of times, you can see in their eyes: they are heavy. You can just feel it, they are going through challenging times. We entertain them, while they are missing home. Each week is different, but always, for the most part, a lot of fun.

Olga: Are all the drummer Indigenous?

Ossie: Pretty much all drummers are Yup'ik and Indigenous.

Olga: I learned that not all the dancers speak the Yup'ik language. Do you teach them? How?

Ossie: For any drum leader like me, we carry a lot of weight… it gets too overwhelming at times, and those who are familiar with [the language], that makes it, but we need to strike a balance somehow to teach them more of the language itself, so that they will know what they are dancing. My children do not speak the language. I walk my kids through the songs so that they will know what the motions mean. We have got to build this foundation first before they can do dancing. They become familiar, the voice and the motions they have to familiarize themselves with the song, and they know what the words mean. If they pay attention to the intonation and what not, that's when we know they are not paying attention to the song. [Such dancers] are good dancers, but they do not really follow the drums, the words being used. When I started teaching dancing at the University, I found some of them do not speak the language. There is many reasons for the people not speaking the language. I went through the motions with them, with the words themselves I made them close their eyes to force them to listen. Also, some are shy, some go upfront, it's always fun to watch them. I told them, you got to clear your mind and focus. I don't care about your mistakes. But you got to concentrate.

Olga: I see. And what keeps people motivated to gather and practice weekly?

Ossie: They help to let go off the stress that was felt the week before and to come back to recharge to face another week.

Olga: Quyana, thank you so much for speaking with me.

Ossie: You are welcome.

Interview with Anonymous 9 – April 21st, 2023

The following topics were discussed during this interview: Yup’ik dancing and potlucks in Anchorage; Yup’ik dancing at Saint Anthony Catholic Church.

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Challenges in combining Indigenous and scientific knowledge in the Arctic

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ABSTRACT

A 'co-production of knowledge' transdisciplinary approach connects different systems of knowledge that are in collaboration with each other. The transdisciplinarity presupposes bringing natural, social sciences, and Indigenous knowledge together. A growing body of literature on knowledge co-production and better control over research by Indigenous stakeholders contributes to a better collaboration of different knowledge holders. However, as power imbalance and issues of trust continue to persist, further analysis of case studies, where different knowledge holders collaborate, allow for a better understanding of how better long-term collaborations could be built. This reflection paper examines several observations and parts of interviews carried out during a recent ethnographic study on urban Indigenous identity preservation in Anchorage, Alaska in collaboration with the urban Yup'ik population. It may serve as an illustration of some challenges that might hinder the co-production of Indigenous knowledge and Western science. The observations examined in this paper may contribute to a further understanding of different approaches to learning of Arctic Indigenous and Western knowledge systems that are in need of further clarification to enable their better interaction for meeting current sustainability challenges.

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Introduction

Collaboration between Western scientists and traditional knowledge-bearers across Indigenous and sustainability sciences has the potential to create techniques and methods for sustaining resilience in a rapidly changing social-ecological Arctic environment. In particular, Indigenous knowledge values, beliefs, and practices, and their sustainable and responsible human-environment relationships have the possibility to significantly contribute to meeting contemporary sustainability challenges both on the local and the global scales (Austin et al., 2019). Even though many Arctic researchers and policymakers consider Indigenous knowledge systems to be essential for sustainable development and environmental management (Athayde et al., 2017), connections between Indigenous peoples, Western scientists, and politicians still require further improvement (Raymond et al., 2010; Ellam Yua et al., 2022).

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In this reflection paper, I illustrate what aspects my Indigenous research partners considered as important to pay attention to for building a more successful collaboration with non-Indigenous researchers. This work emerges from an ethnographic study in Anchorage, Alaska between 2018 and 2022 with the urban Yup'ik partners, most of whom migrated to the city from villages. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The fact that the Yup'ik population is scattered across the city of Anchorage made me search for methods that would allow for building trust under the condition of not living within the community.

I do not claim that the example of my four-year immersion into the urban Indigenous community may be generalizable for all instances of knowledge collaboration and co-production projects. However, it serves as an illustration of still ongoing processes that require further investigation and discussion among different knowledge system stakeholders in an effort to develop more efficient knowledge co-production.

Despite a growing body of published literature on the methods of bridging Indigenous and scientific knowledge for meeting contemporary sustainability issues both locally and globally, challenges still exist in successfully integrating Indigenous knowledge and Western science to contribute to resilience (Abu et al., 2020; Austin et al., 2019; Chapman & Schott, 2020; Hill et al., 2012). Furthermore, even though the involvement of Indigenous people in sustainability science has been increasing, it continues to vary systematically among disciplines and countries, sometimes creating an illusion of including Indigenous participation and integration due to still existing power imbalance (Brunet et al., 2014; Corntassel, 2008; Moreno-Cely et al., 2021; Zurba et al., 2022). These statements may seem to be common knowledge; however, past power imbalance created in research due to colonialism continues to resonate within both Arctic Indigenous communities and Western research, while the latter continue to often focus on Western institutional goals and interests (Ellam Yua 2022).

Some Indigenous communities see collaboration with Western scientists as a necessary, complementary partnership to balance two different approaches, with the condition that both of them must be considered equal (Martinez and Kawagley in Mercullieff & Roderick, 2013). However, others still distrust distinct and historically dominant academic research traditions and methodologies (Christie, 2006). As for non-Indigenous scientists, some may still experience difficulties in considering traditional knowledge-bearers as equal partners having concerns about the validity and reliability of traditional knowledge (Austin et al., 2019; Du Toit et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2016), while others may need more training on Indigenous scientists' approaches, values and beliefs (ARCUS, 2022).

Both traditional knowledge and Western science approaches can benefit from collaboration with each other, in particular when it comes to sustainability. While Indigenous knowledge offers the depth of a local and culture-specific experience, Western science allows for a broader context beyond the local level (Bohensky & Maru, 2011). Thus, the potential of Indigenous and scientific knowledge integration for sustainability science encourages us to search for better methodologies that enable their collaboration. According to the authors cited below, decolonizing Indigenous knowledge and Western science requires further efforts on both sides. For Indigenous communities, decolonization efforts require, on the one hand, reclaiming the best practices and values of traditional cultures and assuring their transmission to younger generations to encourage the process of Indigenous sustainable self-determination, thus creating more opportunities for Indigenous-led projects (Alfred, 1999; Austin et al., 2019; Corntassel, 2008; Griffiths & Kinnane,

2010; Reed et al., 2020). On the other hand, Indigenous communities need to create new and powerful forms out of a still-ongoing colonial process, while accepting the cultural change (Dennison, 2012). Researchers grounded in non-Indigenous research methods need to accept the diversity of knowledge systems shifting away from the human-centered dominance of nature and universality of knowledge, while constantly questioning 'one-size-fits-all solutions' (Brunet, 2014; Country et al., 2016). In particular, Western scientists should become aware and respectful of the significance of Indigenous protocols or attitudes that represent the holistic worldview in which humans, non-humans, entities, and collectives are interconnected in a relationship of mutual respect and responsibility (Whyte et al., 2015).

Methods

I conducted a four-year ethnographic study on how the urban Yupiit negotiate their traditional lifeways in the city of Anchorage. Prolonged engagement was one of the methods that I used to validate my findings during four years in the field. Another ethnographic method I used was triangulation, as I collected and compared data from different sources: interviews, participant observation, and archives. One of the interviewees whose point of view on collaborations between different knowledge systems I illustrate in this paper kindly agreed to review a draft of this paper.

Research problem statement

Bridging Indigenous and scientific knowledge brings with it specific challenges. Even though Western sciences may share many common values and approaches across the disciplines, difficulties remain within Western interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research approaches themselves, despite efforts to overcome barriers to communication between different knowledge systems and some progress associated with these efforts. The concept of epistemological pluralism is an interesting approach to collaboration and innovative research aiming at achieving transdisciplinarity by avoiding disciplinary-dominated research (Miller et al., 2008). Transdisciplinary research presupposes the transcendence of disciplines that relate to each other, while constituting one whole system without rigid borders (Athayde et al., 2017). In contrast to interdisciplinary research, transdisciplinary research goes beyond academic disciplines, allowing different stakeholders to both work on and benefit from common projects in different ways, while respecting each other's different approaches and values (Christie, 2006). According to Miller et al. (2008), transdisciplinarity is possible to implement by recognizing that a particular way of knowing is not sufficient to understand the world's complexity. Respect and negotiation of one's research values and aims need to be conducted regularly in order to prevent researchers' tendency to privilege one epistemology over another. Very important in this regard, as far as the integration process is concerned, is flexibility allowing for changes in perceptions during a project to be discussed between bearers of different knowledge systems. Shuttenberg and Guth argue (2015) that, for knowledge co-production to be a success, the appropriate necessary level of integration needs to be defined and achieved. However, some literature indicates there are potential risks to a transdisciplinary approach and knowledge integration (Johnson et al., 2016), claiming that certain Indigenous knowledge practices will not engage with non-Indigenous practices and vice versa (Christie, 2006). Thus,

contradictions need to be discussed and accepted. Taking this into consideration, sustainability requires an approach that concentrates on selecting the best knowledge system practices that allow for their complementarity (Altman & Whitehead, 2003; Tengö et al., 2014), while each individual knowledge system remains distinctive and not absorbed by the integration (Bohensky & Maru, 2011). I argue that such an approach is beneficial for both Western science and Indigenous knowledge, as it allows for needed interaction between the two knowledge systems while paying attention to preserving knowledge integrity.

My work supports the contention by Tengö et al. (2017) that creating and encouraging opportunities for building relationships, trust, and respect are vital for knowledge integration. Knowledge interaction is impossible without initiating a productive dialogue between different knowledge system practitioners that is enabled by the creation of 'an ethical space of engagement' setting new parameters for agreements (Ermine, 2007, p. 193). In this paper, I elaborate on the process of building relationships during my ethnographic study experience in Anchorage, Alaska between 2018 and 2022, and describe the ways some of its challenges were overcome. I claim that the challenges in relationship-building encountered during this study may be relevant to those faced by other non-Indigenous researchers in interaction with Indigenous communities. I contend that more discussions on how to effectively build relationships between Indigenous and Western sustainability scientists are needed in order to improve the complex but promising process of knowledge interaction. If discussions with each other may become difficult because of trust issues, how can we build sustainability together? In the first part of this article, I focus on some observations carried out during my recent ethnographic study on the negotiation of cultural and religious identity among the urban Yup'ik population that directed me to reflect on the obstacles and ethical dilemmas non-Indigenous researchers may face and may need to overcome while conducting research in collaboration with Indigenous communities. In the second part, I am going to elaborate on Indigenous approaches to learning and its role in education as a part of a transdisciplinary approach and the co-production of knowledge. This second part is a discussion on methods that Western and Indigenous researchers may use to pave the path to integrate the different knowledge systems to develop sustainability. Although it may seem that the topics of ethnographic fieldwork and of knowledge co-production are not easily linked, they share common issues of mistrust and of power inequity that continue to arise, as a result of colonialism, and that need to be resolved in order to improve future knowledge integration.

Part I. Discussion

Challenges in and approaches to bridging Indigenous knowledge and Western science

In this section, I reflect on the challenges encountered during my ethnographic study experience and on how analyzing and discussing them with the Indigenous community of Anchorage helped me in building long-term relationships. For instance, especially, at the beginning of the study, it was easy for me to receive permission to carry out observational research at various activities and to participate in different events of the community where I built relationships. In these ways, the urban Yup'ik community welcomed me as a learner. However, when it came to semi-structured interview requests, some of the collaborators were reluctant to participate in official interviews and to sign a consent

form. When I explored why and asked for feedback from collaborators, several common topics emerged.

Question of trust

To start with, the specificity of my ethnographic study consisted in the fact that I did not live within the community I was studying, but that I was rather in close proximity to the community members on a regular basis. Thus, especially at the beginning, I experienced and overcome challenges of community acceptance that may be similar to those faced by researchers who come to Arctic communities for short-term projects and who have difficulties in building trust without any prior connections to rely on. I had the extra challenge of building relationships with the Indigenous community members who gathered in urban Indigenous spaces less frequently than they would in rural villages (Castleden et al., 2012). After spending some time with Indigenous collaborators, I started to ask them for formal interviews. I realized that while some of them were open for discussions, others avoided being formally interviewed. I formed a preliminary conclusion that one reason for the reluctance was distrust. In order to validate or refute my assumption, I searched for helpers among the urban Indigenous community for clarification, while comparing their feedback with the existing literature. Indeed, some Indigenous communities still distrust Western researchers due to previous and still existing research methods and practices that continue to colonize Indigenous knowledge (Anonymous, personal communication, 6 December 2019; Christie, 2006). According to Smith (1999), stories about research and researchers have been associated in Indigenous communities with stories about colonization and injustice. Gone (in press) describes how the abusive behavior of researchers has resulted in mistrust on the part of Indian American and Alaska Indigenous populations since the beginning of the twentieth century. The scholars' awareness of the issues of trust, and efforts of Indigenous communities to establish control over research contributed to the implementation of some collaborations based on mutual trust; nevertheless, Indigenous communities may still sometimes be reluctant to collaborate with non-Indigenous researchers based on mistrust stemming from past interaction experience (Johnson et al., 2016). Researchers from various disciplines approach and conduct surveys with Indigenous people in Alaska on a regular basis. Besides, local and foreign journalists, writers, photographers, and tourists attempt to reach Indigenous people for the purpose of writing articles, reports, fiction, and for conducting photo exhibitions and filming (Anonymous, personal communication, 8 August 2019). Thus, sometimes Indigenous people do not immediately recognize the difference between a researcher asking for permission to carry out a long-term project and a journalist or a writer aiming at exclusively conducting a series of interviews in order to write a newspaper article or a fiction piece (Johnson et al., 2016). Hence, as the Alaskan Indigenous educator Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley (1997) put it, they become overwhelmed with various outsiders willing to gather data in the communities, considering themselves to 'have been researched to death' (p. 3). Still, I decide to explore other reasons for why some Indigenous communities remain so skeptical about Western science, as well as ways to reduce the skepticism and to encourage interest in collaboration with different knowledge holders. This is discussed below.

As in the past, scholars from around the world continue to travel to rural and urban northern Indigenous communities for many reasons, such as to complete fieldwork for a Ph.D. degree or a shorter-term scientific project. Some of them come to the field for a

short and limited amount of time, often with little funding available, as was, for example, in my case. Numerous resources and ethical guidelines exist for conducting research with Northern communities (National Science Foundation website, n.d.). Indigenous communities establish their own ethics guidelines and review boards in addition to the United States and foreign institutional review boards (Ellam Yua et al., 2022). These measures aim to provide ethical training to scholars and contribute to protecting Indigenous communities from unethical methods and practices. However, ethical boards and training for social scientists do not exist in all institutions around the world (Oellers & Wegner, 2010). In addition, limited funding opportunities, for instance, for graduate students may lead to engagement in short-term projects with little time for building trusting relationships, and with little funding to share with Indigenous communities. This means this research in itself is not sustainable, even if its subject might be sustainability. As Cooke et al. (2020) put it 'the deadline-driven culture of science (e.g. in academic or government environments) and funders may not align well with the time constraints, capacity, or interests of co-producers, especially in Indigenous communities' (p. 92). All these factors may undermine the collaborative nature of research, leading Indigenous communities to remain skeptical about Western researchers who take without giving back (Cochran et al., 2008; Doering et al., 2022; Ellam Yua et al., 2022). Thus, prioritizing funding that supports graduate student training (ARCUS, 2022) as well as building partnerships between different knowledge system bearers, that all the stakeholders equally benefit from, is likely to contribute to building better relationships through investing time into learning about each other's motivations and approaches.

Second, ethics training and requirements, while being a means of protection against unethical practices in Indigenous communities, do not seem to resolve all the potential ethical dilemmas, partially due to insufficient cultural sensitivity. For example, as Christie (2006) argued, it can lead to situations where researchers need to justify their ethics to Elders of a researched community as well as to academic review boards whose ethical guidelines may differ. Thus, the consent form that review boards require researchers to present to potential Indigenous interviewees for signature may be perceived by an Indigenous community as a confirmation of 'trust as a static decision' refusing any possibility of its re-questioning or renegotiation (Smith, 1999, p. 136). In some instances during my four-year ethnographic study, I was welcome to learn from the Indigenous community members in an informal setting, as a friend, but it was more difficult or sometimes impossible to obtain signed consent. Active involvement of 'Indigenous facilitators' in collaborations between Indigenous community members and Western researchers is needed to stimulate and improve mutual understanding (ARCUS, 2022). In some cases, I managed to obtain consent later through Indigenous intermediaries and translators who negotiate constantly in interacting within and between Indigenous and Western worlds. I also relied on them to check that I was in line with the Indigenous collaboration rules.

Insufficient communication between Indigenous communities and Western institutions and researchers leads to the 'lack of familiarity with the Other' as a result of the colonial process that continues to undermine Indigenous people (Austin et al., 2019, p. 582). Thus, non-Indigenous, Indigenous knowledge-bearers and institutional boards need to find a format of collaboration that is more culturally sensitive and decolonized. Dialogue and debate are valuable in building mutual trust (Bohensky & Maru, 2011). To encourage discussions, Western researchers need to be truly interested in investing in learning about

Indigenous cultures as well as in developing informal, friendly relationships with Indigenous communities prior to working with them (Anonymous, personal communication, 30 August 2020).

Knowledge sharing and traditional intellectual property recognition

During my ethnographic study, I heard from some collaborators that sharing back study results with Indigenous communities may still be overlooked (Anonymous, personal communication, 15 February 2019). To become sustainable, academia needs to aim at being more collaborative by sharing results back to Indigenous populations. As the Indigenous educator Kawagley (1997) considered the main Indigenous researchers' goal to gather data as ambitious and career-oriented two decades ago, feedback from my collaborators showed that their access to non-Indigenous research results may still remain limited. Indeed, some researchers still come to Indigenous communities with ready hypotheses and questions to discuss, thus, collecting data to earn a degree or to accomplish a project for specific career purposes. If they consider traditional knowledge collection exclusively as a personal gain, not only does this kind of approach not contain any benefit to Indigenous communities, it also contradicts community values in which knowledge is accumulated to be transmitted not only for individuals but also for community use by future generations. Sharing and reciprocity are important values of the Yup'ik people (Fienup-Riordan, 2018), as well as of other Indigenous communities in Alaska, thus, for initiating a dialogue with Indigenous communities, non-Indigenous researchers need to receive more culturally-oriented training that reflects Indigenous values (Ellam Yua et al., 2022). More Indigenous-led workshops and presentations need to be organized on an international level that spur discussions about ethical challenges and proper ways of collaboration with Indigenous communities. Furthermore, non-Indigenous researchers need to recognize and respect traditional intellectual property, as it goes against the Indigenous values to use knowledge without proper approval (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 16 February 2020; Christie, 2006). It is important for non-Indigenous researchers to work on ensuring that the results of their research are accessible to Indigenous communities under consideration.

Fear of misinterpretation

Some of my Indigenous partners agreed to collaborate with a remark that 'no information gathered should be misinterpreted' (Anonymous, personal communication, 20 December 2019). Fear of data misinterpretation is one of the sources of distrust of researchers by Indigenous communities. It needs to be recognized and addressed by academia on a regular basis (Athayde et al., 2017). Western researchers interpret traditional Indigenous knowledge from a Western perspective. A scientist shapes their research through the prism of their culture. Hence, to avoid data misinterpretation, the option for sharing results back before publishing should be suggested to the Indigenous collaborators at the early stage of a project discussion. Indigenous partners could be given a choice of means by which the results can be shared. For instance, it could be via an oral presentation in front of the whole community or shared in written form, so that they are available for individual or collective reading by interested community members. This paper was proposed to be shared and it was reviewed by one of the Indigenous community members. By making clear the obligation to share the results gathered, the risk of misinterpretation is diminished, while allowing for better exchange outcomes and for reducing distrust. Some of my Indigenous collaborators agreed on interviews to be recorded under the condition of being

able to read through the study results before their publication. Such an approach may simultaneously build better trust while enabling a verification with Indigenous partners. However, one of the challenges for sharing the data with Indigenous collaborators consists in the fact that, in some foreign institutions, for instance, in France, doctoral dissertations may be required to be written in the native language of a respective country, and special authorizations and letters of recommendation are needed to publish in another language. Thus, extra funding and time need to be allocated for translating study results to share with the corresponding community.

Confidentiality issues

Challenges of confidentiality are closely connected to the question of research results sharing. It may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if the research results are shared for review to members of the same small community before publication if they often can identify each other, even if the anonymity is respected (Ellis, 1995). I had a collaborator I became friends with in the course of my recent ethnographic study. Some information was given informally but, as it came to an interview request, the collaborator hesitated to be formally interviewed. They finally agreed under the condition that they remained anonymous. However, they were worried about their perspective being shared and disclosed in a paper form, as the community members and other potential readers might recognize them by the manner the perspective would be shared. A researcher needs to filter the data according to the ethical perspectives in reflecting in advance on what kind of material and to what extent research result publications might potentially harm community members. Which research outcomes to publish need to be chosen in a careful and ethical manner, even though not all the community members require outcome review before a publication. In other words, Western researchers need to treat Indigenous collaborators as equal partners (Austin et al., 2019; Bohensky & Maur, 2011). Hence, in order to build and to maintain trust, researchers may want to consider the Indigenous communities they collaborate with as potential readers of their publications, by filtering the data gathered in an ethical manner that prevents collaborators from exposure to any potential harm or risk.

Relationship-building and temporality

Short-term projects are one of the further factors contributing to the distrust of researchers by Indigenous communities (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 6 December 2019). Being in close contact with the urban Yup'ik community for four years helped me analyze and develop long-term relationships. As one of my Indigenous partners put it, researchers coming to collaborate from abroad may not be worth the investment in relationships from the Indigenous perspective, as they usually have a short-term objective to complete and then they go back home (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 6 December 2019). Sustainable relationship-building is a long, time-consuming process (Castleden et al., 2012). As mentioned earlier, some researchers coming to complete their projects in Indigenous communities often do not have enough funding for a long-term stay. Thus, the timelines dictated do not accommodate the orderly process of interaction, according to Indigenous rules (Christie, 2006). This challenge concerns, in particular, early career researchers pursuing doctorate degrees and coming from abroad. However, time is a crucial factor for building relationships between Western and Indigenous scientists (Brook & McLachlan, 2005; Ellam Yua et al., 2022). For urban Yup'ik Indigenous people as well as

other Indigenous people in Alaska and in the Arctic, the building of long-term relationships is indispensable for developing trust (Anonymous, personal communication, 8 March 2020). As Haig-Brown (2003) put it, 'when [Western researchers] allow themselves to recognize limitations and to take the time to really listen to people who are not just like us … they can learn to listen differently to the words of study participants' (p. 1). This approach can be beneficial for both sides, if Western researchers consider themselves as learners, on the one hand, from the very first stage of their research in such a manner, as they introduce themselves to an Indigenous community to conduct a study, and, on the other hand, the Indigenous community's teaching role is clearly announced. Defining the roles from the very beginning in such a manner, that both sides have in a research project, allows for a teaching and learning relationship development that presupposes having a trustful relationship. Indigenous teachers and learners often have close and long-lasting relationships through common ancestors, land, and waters (Merculieff & Roderick, 2013). Without trust, a long-term and nurturing dialogue between a non-Indigenous researcher and an Indigenous community, bridging Western science and traditional knowledge is difficult to implement. The possible outcome for scientists implementing a short-term project could be incomplete, superficial, or even incorrect data, hindering the quality of the study conducted. Hence, the more researchers invest in spending time in building long-term relationships with Indigenous communities, the better the chances are for academia to open and develop a dialogue with traditional knowledge-bearers. There is a possibility to initiate and develop long-lasting relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities, if funding agencies understand the reasoning and importance behind supporting community participatory research studies over an extended period of time (Chilisa, 2012). Thus, researchers need to develop solid arguments for increasing and justifying the costs of lengthening project in order to build trustful relationships with Indigenous communities.

Concept of expertise

One difference between Indigenous traditional knowledge and Western science approaches that needs to be examined carefully is the concept of expertise. For instance, Inupiaq and Yup'ik Indigenous traditional knowledge bearers – Elders – are considered to be experts by right in their community but, according to one of the Indigenous values – the importance of humility – they will never consider themselves as such (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 6 December 2019; Beans, 1997). Being an Elder is a status that an Indigenous community grants for knowledge and wisdom acquired over the course of a lifetime (Fienup-Riordan, 2018; Merculieff & Roderick, 2013). In contrast, in Western science, earning a degree and acquiring a higher position in the academic world presupposes a transition to a certain level of expertise. Much longer time is needed to become an Elder than to earn a degree. Thus, a researcher's goal to complete a short-term or long-term project in order to become an expert may be viewed skeptically by knowledge-bearers of an Indigenous community (Augusta Reimer, personal communication, 6 December 2019). Building long-term, trustful relationships under these circumstances may be a challenging task that involves flexibility and the ability to modify methodological approaches and research questions. At the same time, as Johnson et al. (2016) argued 'the openness of scientific enquiry is threatened by a powerful and self-referential expertocracy … embedded within academic structures, … as a result, much scientific research … pursues only those questions for which funding can be secured from government and corporate sources' (p. 8). In other

words, Western researchers' flexibility in pursuing research goals might be constrained by academic structures. Nevertheless, understanding the differences in approach to the question of expertise might contribute to better maneuvering between the limitations.

In my case, I facilitated inviting Elders and other members of Indigenous communities to a dialogue about Western science and Indigenous knowledge expertise with the purposes of trust-building, learning the values of the respectful target population, and collaborating with the members while respecting and practicing the values in the community. This approach requires decolonizing and contextualizing Western science thinking in new ways (Ellam Yua et al., 2022). There is a risk, however, that it will not be enough if only one side tries to reach for understanding the other. However, taking into consideration the fact that Western scientists are part of institutions historically associated with colonization and still being situated in the position of power, it is researchers' responsibility to make the first steps toward Indigenous communities by aiming at an attempt to understand the other, even though both sides need collaborations for facing the problems of climate change.

The past and still ongoing authoritative and dominant nature of non-Indigenous research needs to be openly recognized and awareness about the past practices and colonized nature of research needs to be maintained during the whole process of a collaboration to ease 'power-knowledge tensions' (Moreno-Cely et al., 2021). Employing the worldviews and values of a target population requires an investment of time. Academic institutions and funding agencies need to support researchers in their effort to invest needed time for developing relationships and learning the appropriate behaviors with the help of community members before determining research methodologies (Doering et al., 2022). Lifetime learning is one of the Yup'ik community values (Fienup-Riordan, 2018). Taking into consideration the importance of the value in the community, I have intentionally used the word 'learning' while explaining the details and goals of my project to several members of the community to work with. Such a manner to present the project turned out to facilitate its acceptance by some Indigenous partners who had not agreed to collaborate with me before. Thus, one of the ways to focus on building long-term relationships with an Indigenous community could be communicating a Western researcher's intention and motivation to learn from different knowledge system bearers on a long-term basis and not exclusively for one project. Returning to the question of the still ongoing power imbalance at different stages of a project and the intention to learn from Indigenous partners are important for establishing relationships of trust. Even though I was ready to readjust my research focus, questions, and hypothesis, as a result of a dialogue I hoped to lead with the Indigenous community, building a relationship of trust with the community was an ongoing process during the whole project that required a constant reassessment, communication, and negotiation, and that did not finish upon the completion of the ethnographic study.

Identifying and recognizing different approaches to the concepts of learning was a part of the decolonization effort indispensable for the facilitation of collaboration with the Indigenous knowledge bearers. Decolonization efforts are required on the part of Western researchers to learn about Indigenous approaches to sharing knowledge to reduce power inequity and to allow for equal opportunities for all the knowledge bearers to guide research equally (Ellam Yua et al.,, 2022). Indigenous communities, however, also need to invest in decolonization to encourage traditional knowledge sharing with the Indigenous youth.

Conclusion

Even though the potential of bridging Indigenous knowledge and Western science for meeting sustainability challenges is significant, more clarity is needed on how to bring both knowledge systems to an effective interaction, while preserving their integrity. Encouraging opportunities that lead to a productive dialogue through building trust and respect is vital for knowledge interaction. Taking into consideration the fact that Western scientific and educational institutions have been associated in Indigenous communities with colonization, it is non-Indigenous researchers' responsibility to recognize the lack of familiarity with Indigenous knowledge systems, to learn about them, to accept them as equal to Western science. A growing number of case studies and analyzes on transdisciplinary research, better control of Indigenous communities over the research process and outcomes contribute to a better collaboration. Nevertheless, the still existing power inequality, challenges related to the questions of trust, of confidentiality, of the fear of misinterpretation still persist. Hence they deserve further discussion and reflection in different stages of research project development and implementation. Johnson et al. (2016) note that already existing and emerging methods to bring together different knowledge systems are not exhaustive and they may not be applicable to every given situation and discipline. However, I suggest that the challenges I encountered are similar to those of many Western researchers collaborating with Indigenous communities, as the problems of distrust and of power imbalance continue to hinder successful collaborations between different knowledge system bearers across disciplines.

Disclosure statement

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PROTESTANT AND ORTHODOX MISSIONS IN ALASKA: SHELDON JACKSON'S AND IVAN VENIAMINOV'S ACTIVITIES

Abstract. *During a recent fieldwork in Anchorage and Kodiak, Alaska in summer 2017, the name of Sheldon Jackson, the general agent of education in Alaska constantly came up, in particular, while discussing punishments for speaking Native languages at schools and their consequent loss. In 1982, the anthropologist Richard Dauenhauer compared in his article two missionary strategies in Alaska in the 19th century: that of Sheldon Jackson, the Presbytarian missionary, and that of Ivan Veniaminov, the Russian Orthodox missionary. The same year, Stephen Haycox wrote an article arguing that Dauenhauer had failed to develop a sufficient historical context for the two missionaries and provided more details on Sheldon Jackson's strategy. The goal of both missionaries was to convert Native people to Christianity, thus, to eliminate their traditional religious beliefs. To reach the goal, both of them gathered ethnographic material, carried out missionary work, founded schools. In Veniaminov's and the Russian Orthodox Church's case, the elimination of Native traditional customs and beliefs was progressive and the approach was bilingual while Sheldon Jackson, like many other Protestants, insisted on Christianization, civilization and the exclusive use of the English language as the only possible means for indigenous people to become 'citizens' of the United States. This work acts as a survey over the existing literature and compares the respective missionary approaches.*
Keywords: *Orthodox, Protestant, Alaska, Church, missionary.*

In August 2017 during our first field work in Alaska, we had a opportunity to listen to two presentations of the Orthodox Church of America's Archivist Alexis Liberovsky about the relationships between the Orthodox Church and the government agent and Presbyterian missionary Sheldon Jackson after the sale of Alaska to the United States by Russia in 1867. The presentations took place in the Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Kodiak and in the Saint Innocent Cathedral in Anchorage.

There were several negative reactions parishioners manifested while the complicated relationships between Sheldon Jackson and the Russian Orthodox Church were being presented. During the same field work, in particular, during interviews with Native Orthodox parishioners and with Native clergy, the subject of Sheldon Jackson's missionary and education policy regularly came up. In particular, several interviewees spoke about their education, punishment for speaking their native languages and their consequent loss, as a result of Sheldon Jackson's education policy. In spring

1982, The Pacific Historian published an article by Richard Dauenhauer that compared Sheldon Jackson with the early Russian Orthodox missionary, Father Ivan Veniaminov, Bishop Innocent (canonized in 1977 as Saint Innocent). In this article, the author argued that "Veniaminov, with his emphasis on bilingualism, epitomized a positive, culturally supportive approach to proselytizing and education which was characteristic of the Russian Orthodox mission in Alaska" and that, by contrast, Jackson and other Protestants insisted on the elimination of native languages and their replacement by English which was "individually and culturally destructive" to Native people [4].

Stephen Haycox claimed that Dauenhauer failed to develop a sufficient historical context for the two missionaries in comparison, as they appeared isolated from the historical background. Haycox emphasized that in Jackson's case it led to important misunderstanding of his activities and motivation [4].

In the present article, two missionaries' strategies is goin to be compared and reexamined in order to give a new interpretation of those strategies in the given historical context. In the first section, the historical background will be examined. The second section is going to be dedicated to the missionary approach comparison and the relationships of the Protestant and the Orthodox Churches, while the third section is going to focus on the main differences in these missionary strategies.

As for the historical background, the future Russian Orthodox Church missionary and Metropolitan of Moscow, Ivan Veniaminov was born in the Irkutsk province of Siberia in 1797 and was first named Ioann Evseevich Popov. At age nine he was sent to Irkutsk Seminary where his name was changed to Veniaminov. After his graduation from the Seminary in 1823, he was sent to Unalaska Island, Alaska as an ordained priest [15].

Veniaminov had stayed in the Eastern Aleautians for ten years and became fluent in the Eastern Aleut language [12]. Not only he became bilingual, he also "developed kinship ties through the marriage of a brother to an Aleut woman and the marriage of a daughter to a Russian-Aleut man" [9]. In parallel to his duties, such as converting the Aleuts to the Orthodoxy, founding a boys' school, he learned Aleut, invented an Aleut alphabet, translated the liturgy, catechism and the gospel of Matthew into Aleut [15].

In 1839, after the death of his wife, he became a monastic and was chosen to be the bishop [9]. Veniaminov moved to Sitka in 1834 to continue his missionary work among the Tlingit [8]. He learned the language, carried out translations. He also wrote the first large Tlingit ethnography published in 1840 [3].

In 1841-1842 Veniaminov carried out his first tour through his diocese. In 1868 Veniaminov was chosen to the Metropolitan of Moscow that he held until his death in 1879 [9].

In 1834, the same year when Veniaminov started his missionary work in Sitka, the future first general agent for education in Alaska and a Presbyterian clergyman, Sheldon Jackson was born in New York.

Jackson was educated at Union College and Princeton Theological Seminary [15]. Before his work in Alaska, he worked as a missionary among Indians in the west of the country for more than ten years; he was one of founders of fourteen schools and of numerous churches.

After 1877, Jackson carried out education and missionary work in Alaska. He founded Presbyterian mission schools in six Alaska communities and raised funds among religious and political circles for education in Alaska [4]. To raise funds, he had to be very persistent and energetic. For instance, in 1880 he "*personally invited every member of Congress to attend one of three different lectures*" he was going to give on Alaska's resources, climate, inhabitants, living conditions and needs [5].

In 1880, under Jackson's supervision, the "comity agreement" took place with the participation of Protestant missionaries in order to divide Alaska into several different missionary areas to set up missions and schools. Alaska was divided among the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, the Baptists, the Methodists and the Moravians and the Congregationalists [16]. The Catholics and the Orthodox were not invited to the meeting. This goes into contradiction with the statement that "Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic clergy seem to have agreed quickly on a division into zones of influence" [2].

In 1885 Jackson was appointed as the general agent for education in Alaska [16]. When he became the general agent, he discovered Russian-Greek Orthodox churches throughout Alaska. Initially, the Protestants thought of not "*interfering with the Russian-Greek Orthodox work among the Natives*" [13]. Moreover, Jackson considered Ivan Veniaminov to be "the one among all the Russian priests to Alaska that has left an untarnished reputation and seemed to possess the true missionary spirit" [6]. Jackson thought of Veniaminov as a remarkable missionary on the north-west coast of America, among other two Protestant missionaries, starting as a priest in Alaska and having become the Metropolitan of Moscow.

However, Jackson's attitude towards the Orthodox Church was not favorable upon the whole: "*And in response to that call it was to be expected that the churches of the United States, with their purer religion and greater consecration, would send in more efficient agencies than Russia had done*" [6]. Hence, Jackson considered the Russian Church as an inferior one as compared to the Protestant Churches. In this respect, the question of Nicholas, a bishop of the Orthodox Church, late of Alaska and the Aleut Islands in his demand to the President William McKinley dated from October 5th, 1898 is notable: "*It was the Orthodox Church which brought the light of truth to that country; why then try to drive her out of it*

by every means, lawful or unlawful?" [17]. Hence, the relationships between Jackson and the Orthodox Church clergy were adversarial and they had tensions.

While comparing the Protestant and Orthodox missionary strategies and speaking about Christian denominations' adversary, it should be noted that it also might be natural for Veniaminov to 'defend' the Orthodox Church from other Christian denominations' missionary interference to the Alaskan Territory. For instance, he agreed with Governor Etholin's decision to build a Lutheran church for the Finns in Novo-Arkhangelsk (today Sitka) but he forbade any Lutheran missionary work among the Tlingit, thus, maintaining the "exclusivity" of the Orthodox Church in the area [10]. Thus, Jackson and other Protestants' intentions to dominate the area and to protect it from their 'Christian adversaries' might not be that different of that of Veniaminov's and of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska.

Like Veniaminov, Jackson was a missionary, he also founded schools, and at the time of his death occupied the highest position in his church [1]. Being Christian missionaries, both of them disapproved of original 'pagan' beliefs and both of them might contribute to the destruction of indigenous religious systems.

To understand these religious systems, Veniaminov published his first large Tlingit ethnography in 1840 that primarily contained the description of social organization, customs and beliefs and might be of particular interest for him, as a priest [3]. Indeed, in his instructions to the Missionary at Nushagak, Theopahnus, Veniaminov emphasized that the latter one should "make it [his] business to find out all about the religion, rites, customs [...] of [his] parishioners, more especially in order to be able the more surely and easily to influence them [17].

Jackson also traveled a lot in Alaska; he described indigenous customs and religious beliefs [6, 7]. However, most of his descriptions were taken from other sources for public relations purposes [5].

In the 1880s Jackson, established an anthropological museum in Sitka with collections of Native Alaskan artifacts. In 1892, for the purpose of Eskimo subsistence, Jackson organized the importation of domestic reindeer from Siberia. He continued his duties as the general agent inspecting schools and reindeer herds in Alaska until his resignation in 1906 [15].

As for differences in Jackson's and Veniaminov's strategies, the most important one was that Veniaminov's approach to proselytizing and education was bilingual, it was based on the preservation of native languages, while Jackson, like other Protestant missionaries insisted on the elimination of native languages and their exclusive replacement by the English language [1].

Concerning the bilingual approach, Veniaminov learned the Aleut language together with the Aleut chief, Ivan Pan'kov and invented an Aleut

alphabet to elaborate liturgical translations [11]. As not all other Orthodox priests were as good at learning Native languages as Veniaminov was, the bishop opened a seminary in Novo-Arkhangelsk in 1845 to bring up the Native bilingual clergy [10]. As a nowadays result of this bilingual strategy, one of our interviewees (Taisia A.,Yupik, in her sixties) managed to revive her mother language (lost because of Jackson's strategy) by going to the Orthodox Church where the services were conducted in this mother tongue (as a result of Veniaminov's strategy).

As for Native customs and traditional religious beliefs, according to Veniaminov, "*ancient customs, so long as they [were] not contrary to Christianity, [did not] need to be too abruptly broken up; but it [needed to] be explained to converts that they [were] merely tolerated [...] for nothing [insulted] and [irritated] savages so much as showing them open contempt and making fun of them*" [14]. Thus, his goal was a consistent and progressive elimination of Native traditional customs and beliefs while tolerating some of them and, hence, showing respect to the Native people.

On the contrary, Jackson did not differ from many Protestant reformers and missionaries in their conviction (like the Board of Indian Commissioners established in 1869) that "the only hope of survival for the American Indian was his rapid adoption of Christianity and Anglo-American culture" [13]. Indeed, Charles Bryant from Special Agent Treasury Department cited in Jackson's Report on Education in Alaska, published in 1886, described the Aleuts as having "natural gifts" that made him believe that "*the Aleuts might become as good as American citizens as any admitted under the 15th amendment to the Constitution*" [7]. According to many Protestants' opinion, "Christianization" and "civilization" were indispensable for the Natives to become "citizens" of the United States and "*the only mean by which Indian people would achieve some form of parity with whites*" [13].

Because of all these reasons, the Protestants believed in very strict English-only policies and punished the disobedience [16]. Native languages were supposed to disappear as quickly as possible. "*The Tlingit language is doomed to speedy extinction, the sooner the better for the Native*s". Children "*were required to speak and write English exclusively*" and "*the use of Indians dialects was prohibited*" at schools [1]. One of our interviewees of Alutiiq origin, Rosabel B. (in her eighties) mentioned that not only Native children in her class were physically punished for speaking their Native language but their parents were threatened to speak it either. As a result, she lost her Native tongue as the majority of all Natives.

Hence, Jackson's and other Protestants' language policy was destructive for indigenous people as compared to that of Veniaminov and of the Orthodox Church in that it imposed on Native people the Anglo-Saxon model without any compromise. Jackson, like other Protestants,

believed that it was the means to protect the Native people by making them equal to the white population of the American society.

However, Jackson's education policy was still different from Indian Office policy: the commissioner of Indian affairs assessed Jackson's policy at the transfer of Alaska native services from Bureau of Education to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1931 in the following way: "*The Alaskan education enterprise has been carried out in the past with a different philosophy and a different practice [than that of the Indian Office]. In contrast to the Indian Service, with its boarding schools, the office of Education in Alaska […] confined its effort to local community schools and a program of education that took into account in an amazing way the health and social and economic life of the native group*" [4].

Thus, Jackson avoided sending Alaskan Native children to remote boarding schools preferring local schools organized by the Protestant missionaries.

We consider that, while the missionary strategies of Ivan Veniaminov and of Sheldon Jackson were both aimed at the elimination of Native traditional religious beliefs by converting them to Christianity and by educating indigenous people according to Christian standards, Sheldon Jackson's approach, in the context of the Protestant missionary strategy, had a more destructive character. Veniaminov's approach was based on using Native languages, on tolerating and showing respect to some of pre-contact religious beliefs of the Native population. The Orthodox approach was to proselytize more gradually by using the Native languages at school and in the Church.

Like the majority of the Protestants, Sheldon Jackson saw Christianization and civilization as the only means of protecting the indigenous people. In order to protect the Native population, he aimed at shaping out of them the citizens of the United States, equal to the white Americans. For him, one of the measures to undertake was the immediate abolishment of Native languages and the exclusive use of the English language. However, in contrast to many other Protestant fellows, Jackson insisted on building local schools rather than sending the Alaskan Native children to remote boarding schools. Hence, his strategy was more tolerant in this respect as compared to other Protestant missionaries.

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Влияние исторической травмы на юпиков Аляски

Ольга Юрьевна Лаутер*

В течение двух лет наших полевых исследований с 2018 г. по 2020 г. в сотрудничестве с городским населением юпиков Аляски мы принимали участие в собраниях и занятиях коренных народов. На них систематически обсуждался концепт исторической травмы; обсуждения касались того, как прошлое влияет на сегодняшнюю жизнь коренных народов Аляски ради поиска способов улучшить их жизнестойкость и благополучие. Большая часть данных об исторической травме была собрана на встречах коренных народов; они конфиденциальны. Наши попытки обсудить историческую травму и ее влияние на юпиков в личных беседах лишь отчасти увенчались успехом, поскольку представители целевой группы избегали обсуждать влияние исторической травмы на свою жизнь. Однако, так как концепт продолжает обсуждаться на регулярной основе, представляется важным понимать, почему историческая травма является актуальной и регулярно обсуждается коренными народами, принимая во внимание и анализируя причины, по которым предпочтение отдается публичным обсуждениям.

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Определение исторической травмы

Концепт исторической травмы был сформулирован в связи с исследованием того, как трагический опыт Холокоста повлиял на потомков переживших его жертв (Kellermann 2001: 38). В последние два десятилетия он применялся к исследованиям различных колонизированных коренных народов Соединенных Штатов Америки и Канады, а также к афроамериканцам, палестинской молодежи и другим различным общинам, которые подвергались притеснениям, массовой колонизации и другим травматическим историческим событиям (Mohatt et al. 2014: 129). Представители различных дисциплин описывают по-английски механизм исторической травмы при помощи различных прилагательных: *transgenerational, intergenerational, crossgenerational, multigenerational,* — которые на русский язык переводятся практически идентично, указывая на передачу травмы из поколения в поколение, между поколениями (Goodkind et al. 2015: 486; Kellermann 2001: 37; Hamby et al. 2019: 4). Однако в обсуждениях городского сообщества коренных народов в Анкоридже в основном широко используется словосочетание «историческая травма» (historical trauma).

Термин «историческая травма» широко используется учеными (медиками, специалистами в области социального обеспечения, антропологами и психологами), проводящими исследования травм американских индейцев и коренных народов Аляски (Evans-Campbell 2008: 320; Wesley-Esquimaux, Smolewski 2004: 2). Данный термин появился в литературе по поведенческой психологии в середине 1990-х гг. (Goodkind et al. 2015: 486). Историческая травма определяется как сложная и передаваемая из поколения в поколение форма посттравматического стрессового расстройства, возникшая в результате европейского завоевания и колонизации коренных народов Америки (Brave Heart, DeBruyn, 1998: 58).

Потребность в формулировке концепта исторической травмы возникла из необходимости контекстуализировать культурные и религиозные практики коренных народов как независимый, новый способ терапевтического вмешательства (Goodkind et al. 2015: 487). Тереза Эванс-Кэмпбелл (Evans-Campbell 2008) выделила три различных уровня, на которых историческая травма может влиять на сообщества: индивидуальный, семейный и общественный. Для детальной оценки влияния прошлых травматических событий на коренные народы необходимо учитывать все три уровня, принимая во внимание их взаимосвязь.

И сейчас, два десятилетия спустя после своего появления, этот термин все еще широко используется как в академических кругах, так и среди представителей коренных народов — в неформальных дискуссиях и клиниках для коренного населения, а также упоминается в программах, направленных на улучшение психологического здоровья коренных народов. Поскольку данная статья посвящена коренным народам Аляски, мы будем использовать определение исторической травмы, сформулированное теми специалистами, чьи исследования сосредоточены на культуре и психологии американских индейцев и коренных жителей штата. Мария Брэйв Харт и Лемайра ДеБрюйн (Brave Heart, DeBruyn 1998) определили историческую травму как коллективное и совокупное ранение, нанесенное поколениям, которые обладают общей этнической, национальной или религиозной принадлежностью, в результате травматических событий. Другой коллектив авторов во главе с Натаниэлом Мохэттом (Mohatt et al. 2014) выделил три основных элемента исторической травмы: собственно травма или ранение; определенная группа людей, разделяющая общую травму; несколько поколений, которые она охватывает, оказывая влияние на потомков, которые сами не являлись свидетелями травматических событий.

Существуют важные различия в значении коллективной идентичности и памяти, а следовательно, и разные методы запоминания событий, и разные подходы к адаптации и противостоянию стрессу (Goodkind et al 2015). Таким образом, представляется важным проанализировать особенности исторических событий, повлекших коллективную травму, а также реакцию коренных народов Аляски на них. Результатом первых контактов европейцев с коренными народами Америки стала массовая гибель последних вследствие распространения инфекционных заболеваний, а также столкновений с европейцами. Исследования показали, как прошлые травматические события могут как вызывать уязвимость к стрессу (повышенный риск посттравматического стрессового расстройства, проблемы регуляции агрессии и реакции на стрессовые события), так и развивать жизнестойкость (Evans-Campbell 2008: 325). Данные результаты важны для понимания того, как и почему дискурс коренных народов об исторической травме связывает прошлые события истории коренных народов Америки с настоящим. Проанализируем травматические события, которые, по мнению коренных народов, являются причиной исторической травмы.

Последствия колонизации для коренных народов Аляски

История колонизации коренных народов Аляски в XIX–XX вв. характеризуется многочисленными событиями, которые привели к значительному сокращению населения вследствие новых болезней, завезенных европейцами, утратой культуры, частичной или полной потере языков, религиозных практик, традиционных знаний, включая системы родства, а также образовательных и духовных практик.

Относительно истории коренных обитателей Аляски юпиков следует упомянуть наиболее значительные эпидемии: оспы 1838–1839 гг., гриппа 1900 г. и гриппа 1918 г. в районе Нушагака,— они привели к массовой гибели людей и нанесли долговременную травму юпикскому народу. Что касается туберкулеза, болезнь предположительно распространилась в районе реки Кускоквим в 1840-х гг. с появлением там русских. К 1880 г. туберкулез, как сообщалось, был наиболее распространенным заболеванием среди коренных жителей Аляски; первое всестороннее исследование уровня смертности в Аляске показало, что от него скончался каждый третий коренной житель штата (Oswalt 1991: 143). Болезнь распространялась до 1970-х гг.; она не только значительно сократила численность юпиков, но и привела к дискриминации: например, учителя избегали любого физического контакта с ними. Несмотря на то, что к 1970-м гг. большинство широко распространенных и острых проблем, связанных с болезнями, было решено, массовый алкоголизм продолжает сказываться на численности юпиков, снижая продолжительность и качество их жизни как среди мужчин, так и среди женщин (Ibid.: 148). Из 962 случаев смерти, связанных с употреблением алкоголя, в 2010–2016 гг. на коренных жителей пришлись 474 (49%), при том что последние составляют 15% населения. В 2016 г. уровень смертности, связанной с употреблением алкоголя, у коренных жителей Аляски был более чем в 7 раз выше, чем у некоренных (80,7 против 11,4 смертей на 100 000 человек, соответственно) (Pahoe 2018: 3). Эта проблема является актуальной и сегодня.

Что касается миссионерской деятельности Русской Православной Церкви среди юпиков Аляски, то она началась с первого официального миссионерского визита Иоанна Вениаминова в Нушагак в 1829 г., открыв наиболее разрушительный период утраты культурного наследия коренного

населения. В 1880 г. под руководством Шелдона Джексона было заключено соглашение между миссионерами нескольких протестантских церквей с целью разделить Аляску на несколько миссионерских зон для создания миссий и школ (Williams 2009: 215). В результате данного соглашения территория долин рек Кускоквим и Нушагак стала зоной влияния моравской миссии (Henkelman, Vitt 1985: 24). Моравцы поддерживали сохранение юпикского языка, несмотря на исключительное использование английского языка в школах, организуемых Федеральным бюро по образованию, которому впоследствии на смену пришло Бюро по делам индейцев. Русская православная церковь также стремилась к сохранению местных коренных языков на Аляске. Например, по словам одного из наших информантов, регулярное посещение Русской православной церкви помогло ей восстановить свой родной язык (ПМА 1: Andrew). Политика Моравской церкви и Русской православной церкви способствовала сохранению языков их прихожан. Вероятно, одним из результатов данной политики стало относительно благополучное состояние юпикского языка, который является на сегодняшний момент самым распространенным из коренных языков Аляски: на нем говорят около 10 000 из примерно 21 000 юпиков (Alaska Native Language Center, 2020). Однако запрет церемониальных практик и празднований (например, юпикских танцев), а также цивилизаторская политика, в результате которой дети коренных народов насильно отправлялись в школы-интернаты, сыграли решающую роль в утрате культуры и языков коренных народов в целом, и юпикской культуры в частности.

До 1920-х гг. учащихся отправляли в профессиональные школы-интернаты за пределами Аляски. На Аляске они были созданы Федеральным бюро по делам индейцев (BIA) для ассимиляции детей коренного населения.

В школах-интернатах учащимся не разрешалось говорить на родных языках; если они не подчинялись, то подвергались физическим наказаниям (ПМА 1: Baldwin). Из поселений, где не было начальной школы, детей отправляли в интернаты в возрасте с пяти до пятнадцати лет (Hirshberg, Sharp 2005). Около 60% респондентов Дайан Хиршберг и Сюзан Шарп в целом характеризовали свой опыт посещения школ-интернатов как положительный, однако параллельно говорили о своей неспособности поддерживать длительные отношения, о страданиях из-за потери родного языка или о трудностях и лишениях, а также о физическом насилии над одноклассниками, свидетелями которых они были. Респонденты также рассказали о таких полученных травмах, как физическое и сексуальное насилие, злоупотребление наркотиками и алкоголем, а также о самоубийствах, причем некоторые из них сравнивали школы-интернаты с «концентрационными лагерями», где им приходилось выживать (Ibid.: 6). Дети не только теряли язык, но и становились чужими для своих семей, поскольку утрачивали навыки традиционного образа жизни ввиду постоянного или длительного отсутствия дома. Кроме этого, респонденты отмечали, что продолжительное отсутствие родителей в дальнейшем повлияло на их неспособность передать модель родительской семьи своим потомкам (Charles Easley 2005: 8). Утрата традиционных родительских моделей была предложена учеными в качестве возможной причины насилия в семьях коренного населения (Evans-Campbell 2008: 326). Традиционно у юпиков навыки детям с раннего возраста прививали родители и старейшины. Мальчики жили в полуподземных мужских общинных домах, получая навыки посредством наблюдения за работой старших мужчин, а также слушая рассказы и инструкции, в то время как девочки жили с женщинами и обучались в домах поблизости (Fienup-Riordan 2018: 86) Отправка юпикских

детей в школы-интернаты привела к разрыву традиционных связей между поколениями (Burnette et al. 2018: 371). Передача традиционных знаний из поколения в поколение была прервана, что нанесло долговременную травму не только детям, но и их родителям и старейшинам, которые больше не могли выполнять одну из главных своих функций.

Школы-интернаты в распоряжении Бюро по делам индейцев, прекратили свое существование в середине 1970-х гг.; травма, связанная с многолетним пребыванием в них, по-прежнему ощущается некоторыми представителями коренных народов, переходящими в настоящее время в статус старейшин. С 1970-х гг. некоторые из них стали причиной или же жертвой несчастных случаев, домашнего насилия, убийств и самоубийств, пытаясь балансировать между традиционной и западной моделями общества. Несмотря на то, что язык и культура юпикского народа, проживающего в дельте рек Юкон и Кускоквим, так же как и инупиатов из района Норт-Слоуп, вероятно, лучше сохранились по сравнению с остальными коренными народами Аляски (Charles Easley 2005: 8), юпики испытывают большие трудности, связанные с такими заболеваниями, как алкоголизм и наркозависимость, с семейным насилием и заболеваниями, передающимися половым путем (Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation 2020).

Эпидемии, искоренение традиционных религиозных практик в результате христианизации, а также обучение детей коренных народов в школах-интернатах — это травматические события прошлого, наиболее часто обсуждаемые сегодня на общественных собраниях коренных народов, посвященных исторической травме. В следующем разделе мы хотели бы более подробно остановиться на том, каким образом концепт исторической травмы представлен в обсуждениях коренных народов.

Историческая травма в дискурсе коренных народов

Один из аспектов, характеризующих историческую травму — это стремление избегать воспоминаний и обсуждения опыта травматических событий жертвами. Синтия Уэсли-Эскимо и Магдалена Смолевски (Wesley-Esquimaux, Smolewski 2004) рассматривают историческую травму как совокупность травматических событий, а также как болезнь как таковую. В качестве одной из ее характеристик они выделяют коллективное умалчивание. Также они подчеркивают значимость желания жертв заглушить травматические события, приводящего в дальнейшем к нарушениям социального функционирования на протяжении поколений, сопровождающимся неразрешенным гореванием, которое может передаваться последующим поколениям. Это может частично объяснить нежелание некоторых информантов обсуждать травматические события, а также их последствия, повлиявшие на них и их семьи. С другой стороны, традиционно в некоторых культурах коренных народов Аляски у старейшин существует обязательство передавать традиционные знания, накопленные в течение жизни и существующие в виде коллективной памяти, молодым поколениям; эта передача происводится устным путем, с использованием примеров из прошлого, для последующего использования и дальнейшей передачи знаний молодыми поколениями (Fienup-Riordan 2018: 136). Вследствие умалчиваемых травматических событий между поколениями коренных народов, в частности, разрыв между молодым и старшим поколением юпиков, образовался разрыв (Napoleon 1996: 12). В настоящее время разговоры об исторической травме начали проводиться публично в терапевтических целях — для исцеления от переживаний, связанных с трагическим опытом прошлого. Представители коренных народов, имевшие опыт обучения в школах-интернатах

рассказывают о нем, чтобы обсудить его с молодым поколением, а также чтобы найти способы исцелиться от связанных с ним психологических травм. Кроме того, историческая травма служит поводом для обсуждения разрыва между молодым и старшим поколениями, являющегося, по мнению коренного населения, ее следствием.

Мы согласны с Мохэттом и его соавторами (Mohatt et al. 2014) в том, что оценить влияние прошлых травматических событий на текущее состояние здоровья сложно, ведь интерпретация событий прошлого спорна, особенно в случае потомков людей, переживших травматические события, так как сами они имеют к ним лишь косвенное отношение. Практическая реализация, измерение и диагностика степени исторической травмы остается проблемой для научного сообщества. Тем не менее, дискурс об исторической травме представляет интерес для социальных наук в контексте наблюдения и анализа того, как коренные народы интерпретируют исторические события, какую роль они играют в передаче коллективной памяти последующим поколениям, а также в терапевтических целях исцеления от травм, с ними связанных. Мировоззрение коренных народов основывается на необходимости понимания взаимосвязи каждой части с остальными частями целого (Kawagley, Barnhardt 2011: 218). Холистическая составляющая мировоззрения коренных народов раскрывается в тенденции рассматривать колонизацию, угнетение, потерю культуры, языков, разрывы между поколениями как движущие силы негативных физиологических и социальных последствий в современной жизни коренных народов, в отличие от более фрагментарного западного подхода к вопросам физиологического и психологического здоровья (Burnette et al. 2018: 374). Таким образом, публичные повествования об исторических травмах являются средством связать травматические события

исторического прошлого с современным дисбалансом, существующим в обществах коренных народов (Mohatt et al. 2014: 130). Кроме того, обсуждение исторической травмы проводится с терапевтическими целями: заполнить пробел, возникший в преемственности поколений вследствие невысказанного и неразрешенного горя, поскольку передача знаний и опыта последующим поколениям играет ключевую роль в достижении благополучия таких коренных народов, как юпики. Обсуждение исторических травматических событий и опыта является первым шагом к улучшению жизнестойкости, к борьбе с алкоголизмом, наркозависимостью и суицидами. Однако за обсуждениями причин и следствий исторической травмы должны следовать дальнейшие действия, направленные на исцеление через культуру коренных народов. Дальнейшими терапевтическими действиями должны являться организация и участие в традиционных церемониальных практиках (ПМА 2: Reimer). Однако, в большинстве своем они утеряны в результате колонизации и христианизации, поэтому воспроизвести их трудно.

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Несмотря на то, что концепт исторической травмы возник в 1990-е гг., он до сих пор широко обсуждается в сообществах коренных народов, а также в научной литературе. Трудности в оценке того, как травматические исторические события влияют на состояние здоровья коренных народов сегодня, а также тот факт, что исторические события интерпретируются в основном потомками (за исключением старейшин, повествующих об опыте обучения в школах-интернатах), позволяют критиковать этот концепт. Другими словами, по мнению некоторых специалистов, он уязвим для критики за «упрощенную эссенциалистскую риторику» (Gone, 2013: 696). Однако помимо того, что обсуждение

исторической травмы проводится в терапевтических целях, заслуживающим дальнейшего исследования представляется изучение форм повествования об исторических травмах как первого шага к исцелению от ее последствий: оно может показать, как коренное население, используя коллективную память, интерпретирует исторические события для устранения дисбаланса и улучшения своего психологического и физического здоровья. По нашему мнению, дальнейшего изучения заслуживают различия в значимости коллективной идентичности для коренных народов. Также мы хотели бы проанализировать, каким образом коллективная идентичность может использоваться юпиками для адаптации и борьбы с травмами и стрессом. Например, интерес представляют аналогии, которые начали проводиться юпиками между пандемией коронавируса 2020 гг. и эпидемиями гриппа 1900 г. и 1918 г. в в дельте рек Юкон и Кускоквим, и Нушагаке; это делалось в попытке осмысления травматических исторических событий, чтобы быть начеку и оберегать старейшин общины. Также интересно изучить подходы коренных народов к исцелению посредством церемониальных практик.

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