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Developing Spirit in Northwest Alaska

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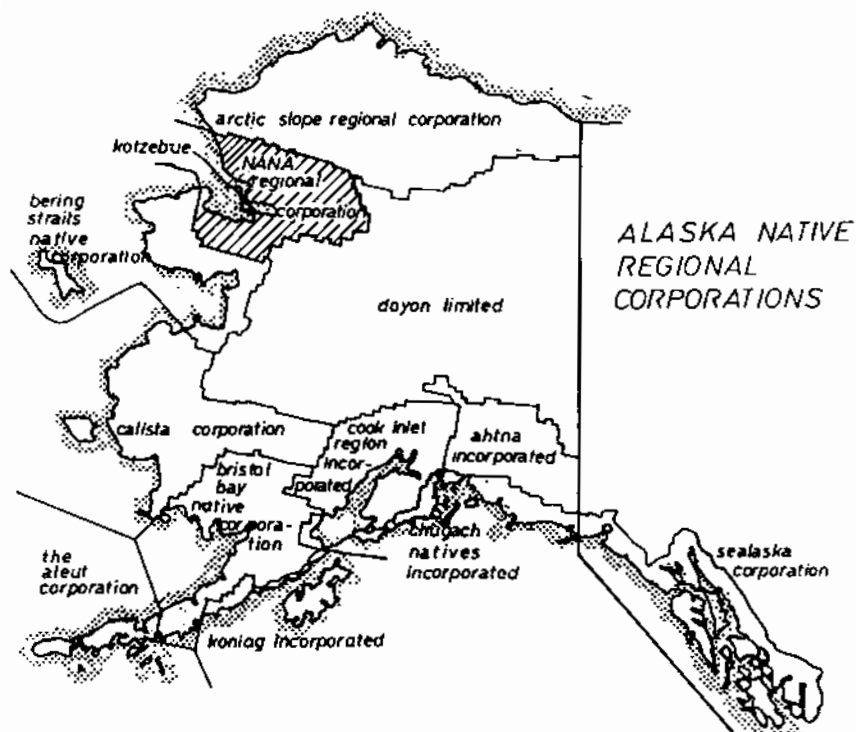
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With the application of any development project for socio-economic improvement there naturally arise numerous categories of people in relation to the project: development planner, funder, consultant, implementor; and development recipients of equally many types variously involved with the effort or its results. The members of each of these groups will hold essentially different attitudes toward the development according to the perspective afforded by their connection to the project, their past experiences from other projects with possibly different perspectival relations to them, and the kind of project now in question.

All too frequently development planners have pursued goals quite divorced from the desires or needs of those “developed,” while funders may be unaware of the true impact of the project, disinterested, or politically hamstrung in any effort to guide its course. As Hjort and Dahl have indicated elsewhere in this edition, development recipients may in turn often be skeptical of development projects and view their implementation as a farmer might a heavy rain—sometimes good, sometimes bad, but almost always unpredictable in choice of impact area.

The ruinous effects of misconceived or misapplied altruistic ideals have become a cliché to the anthropological profession, and the avoidance of such disasters is a prime motivation for the hiring of anthropologists to conduct feasibility studies or progress reports.

The NANA Region of northwest Alaska (a name derived from the former Northwest Alaska Native Association) provides an interesting counter-example to the common case where development is planned and imposed from the “outside” in a manner removed from local, recipient input; yet the NANA example is not without its own problems and dilemmas. This paper will explore the attitudes toward development generated in the NANA



Region. While there certainly are difficulties which can be avoided by good, grass-roots planning and sensitivity to local context and culture, there are still very fundamental problems which persist. Solutions to problems regarding the ethics of development control do not necessarily provide solutions to all the inherent problems spawned by development itself, even if locally desired.

Development strategy in the NANA Region is remarkable not least for its local control and policy integration. Most importantly, however, regional corporate leadership has confronted not only the issue of what kind of development is needed locally, but also what long-range effects will result on the people of the region. The NANA Regional Corporation has assumed the responsibility to supply its shareholders, the people of the region, with needed development. It has also shouldered responsibility for providing developers with a local labor force sound in body and mind. The Corporation has mounted nothing less than an ethnic and spiritual revival of the Inupiat (Alaskan Eskimos). In effect, the Corporation has come to concern

itself with the process of *developing attitudes toward development* as part of its overall strategy of survival for its Native shareholders as culturally distinct *Native* shareholders. In the following pages I shall attempt to explain the occurrence of this unique situation while outlining the basic tenets of the NANA Corporation's development strategy and Spirit Program. This corporation strategy and program in turn have significant repercussions, not all of them desirable, on the attitudes of those toward whom they have been directed.

In 1981 I was funded by the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR) for a study of my own design concerning Native minority rights and reindeer herding in Alaska (Beach, 1985). I have worked extensively in the field herding reindeer with the NANA Regional Corporation, headquartered in Kotzebue, Alaska, and during this period, 1981-82, have been on hand to experience the dramatic surge of the Spirit Program and its export to other Native regions in Alaska. I have also observed the formulation and application of other, more standard, development programs as well as the reactions these have inspired. Although the NANA Regional Corporation, like any other corporation, is devoted to the administration of money and resources for the benefit of its shareholders, the Native character of the Corporation brings a special meaning to this mandate that can be grasped only with a background of the legal and socio-economic status of Native Americans in Alaska.

Background

With the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971, 12 Native land-holding Regional Corporations (and many smaller, Village Corporations) were established, among them the NANA Regional Corporation in the NANA Region (Kotzebue Sound area). The NANA Region refers to an area of approximately 38,000 square miles, an area larger than 13 of America's states. The region has a population of about 5,000, 90 % of whom are Inupiat. In return for 44 million acres of land and one billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) to be distributed among the new corporations, the aboriginal claims of Native Alaskans were finally to be extinguished (Arnold, 1978:147). Natives (defined by at least one quarter blood) born in 1971 or earlier who then registered as residents within their region became shareholders in the region's newly created Native Corporation. To give the Natives the chance to preserve these corporations under Native ownership, ANCSA provided that undeveloped corporation land would not be taxed nor could corporation stock be transferred to non-Natives by any means (including bankruptcy) for twenty years (i.e. until 1991). Beginning

in 1991, however, these special provisions will be lifted. Native corporation stock may thereafter be sold to anyone, with the sole provision that the corporation has first right of refusal. Only a few years remain. Already multi-million dollar conglomerates are maneuvering for the opportunity to acquire stock in this valuable land.

Native ownership of land held under the corporate framework is in marked contrast to earlier government policy and the "reservation system" common among Indian tribes in the "Lower 48" (the contiguous United States). Indeed, Alaskan Natives were given the option either to go with the corporate system, which offered them a high degree of economic self-determination, or to choose the older reservation system which would place their land under federal trust. Indian experience in the trust relationship has been poor to say the least, and it was quite understandable that the Alaskan Natives chose to place their land within the corporate structure. Only a few small areas opted for the reservation model.

Under the corporate structure the Natives of a region as a collective are free to govern the development of their land and resources as they see fit. The Native corporations of Alaska run mines, oil rigs and construction firms, and may even have investments and joint ventures with numerous businesses outside of the region. As noted, however, the corporate framework is not without its hazards, for the rights of land ownership, as opposed to those resulting from the placement of land in trust, contain the right to sell the land (beginning in 1991). The government could argue that not to allow alienation of stock would be analogous to refusing a house owner the right to sell his house. The same stance was taken many years earlier in the Lower 48 by the Federal government when plots of land were carved from the Indian reservations and handed to individual Indians as private property. These private Indian land owners were frequently tricked out of their titles or bought out at a very low price (Cohen, 1982 ed.). However, a government which refused its Natives the right to do what they wish with lands owned by them might be called a Big Brother.

At present, however, only about half of the 44 million acres destined for transfer has actually been conveyed to Native ownership. Many unforeseen difficulties have hindered the transactions. Full and clear title to the government land must be established before it can be turned over to Native ownership, and every hunter's cabin, well or boat dock can cause delay. Mining and navigational rights are still contested in many areas, and vast tracts of land were "frozen" while being considered for designation as National Parks or Monuments.

One wonders at the propriety of the delayed conveyance of land to the corporations. The survival of the Native Corporations as *Native* entities is

predicated on their being in possession of the land to develop. What if the land is still not fully conveyed by 1991? As at least some of the corporations may have passed out of Native control at that point, is it the intent of the Act to convey huge additional tracts to them? Surely this land was meant to be transferred to Native ownership. And, if conveyance of the land must be delayed, then should not the 1991 deadline be similarly delayed?

Besides the 12 landed Regional Corporations, villages within the regions were also fitted into the corporate framework so that Village Corporations as well as Regional Corporations have the right to make land selections. (Village Corporations do not, however, obtain subsurface title; this goes, instead, to their Regional Corporations.) The amount of land each Regional Corporation and each Village Corporation could select depended upon the size of the registered Native population in 1971. The NANA Region has 11 villages, all but one of which have chosen to merge their corporations with the Regional Corporation for purposes of increased administrative efficiency and the power of unified policies. In the NANA Region only the Village of Kotzebue maintains a Village Corporation independent of (though closely related to) its Regional Corporation.

Like most corporations, the Native regional corporations and the village corporations are profit oriented, a fact which bars them from eligibility to receive many state, federal and private grants. For this reason regional corporations have often founded non-profit branches. NANA's non-profit arm is the Maniilaq Association. This body provides the services for numerous community programs funded from a wide variety of sources, including government agencies and, of course, the NANA Regional Corporation itself. Not only does Maniilaq serve as a vehicle for government aid, it hosts professionals experienced with working in the Alaskan "bush," and because of this is also able to compete successfully with other organizations for service contracts. Currently Maniilaq supplies the NANA Region with a multitude of services ranging from a mental health program to an agricultural program. Maniilaq also runs an employment bureau and issues unemployment relief payments.

A combination of good leadership on the local level and the fortunate circumstance of NANA leaders being well situated in state legislature has assured the region of necessary funding to date. Nonetheless, dependency on outside aid is seen as a major point of regional vulnerability. The success of Maniilaq is largely due to its ability to bring in large grants from "outside." Of course, there are many services which are beyond Maniilaq's domain but which are still funded from outside sources, usually government (the postal service for example).

The single most significant observation made during this study was that the NANA regional economy is an economy at a major juncture in its overall development. On the one hand, it can be demonstrated that close to 90 % of all the income earned is directly or indirectly derived from governmental expenditures. Nearly 40 % of all the cash earned in this economy is dependent on the annual funding levels of the federal government alone through such activities as public health, welfare, housing, sanitation, aviation and defense. This value would go even higher if the indirect federal funding of programs administered by the state were included. In light of current and anticipated federal cutbacks, this single observation poses the greatest threat to maintaining current economic levels and social well-being throughout the region. (*NANA Region: Coastal Management Plan, 1982, Economy:5-6*).

The fear of government cut-backs becomes all the more serious when coupled to the growing needs of the region. The population of the NANA area is rising steadily, increasing the need for services and employment. By 1990 it is estimated that the population will have reached 8,000 people, while employment opportunities will probably maintain current levels at best (*NANA Regional Strategy, 1982: Forecast of Employment and Population*). Even the present situation is far from ideal. The Region is beset with grave social problems, most of them stemming from the impact of White contact. The following condensed description of regional social problems and their causes has been culled from sources which express the Inupiat viewpoint, notably the *NANA Regional Strategy* and *Nuna*, Maniilaq's own Native newspaper.

Most problems can be derived from the breakdown of and threats to three key elements of Inupiat tradition: the extended family, the Inupiat language and the subsistence lifestyle. Of course, the three are highly interrelated. Traditionally the Inupiat people of the Region lived in rather small, scattered camps, moved frequently and followed a seasonal subsistence lifestyle (see Burch, 1975). They congregated in larger numbers sporadically where and when resources were abundant or for trading purposes. The trend toward centralization of the population did not begin until the turn of the Century, and the real congregations into permanent villages as we know them today began only during the last 40 years (*NANA Region: Coastal Management Plan, 1982. People:10 ff.*). Village life is recent and reflects the growing dependency on Western technology, cash economy and services.

Although the subsistence lifestyle remains vitally important to Inupiat villagers, their new village existence has led to a sudden need for modern infrastructure. Besides providing necessary services, schools and clinics have created jobs. Local Inupiat would preferably hold a job to obtain the increasingly necessary cash while at times taking "subsistence leave" from

the job to hunt or fish. Plumbers, pilots, electricians, and construction workers continue to be in demand. However, these positions have often been filled by an imported labor force: Whites and not infrequently Asians. The traditional values and skills of the local population were not particularly useful in the competition for the new jobs. And, when Inupiat children were sent "outside" for schooling, they either did not return or came back as failures in the competitive Western society. They had had no role models of successful entrepreneurs in their families, and unlike Whites and immigrant Asians, had no understanding of the capitalist economy.

But those who had failed to join the Western society often found it equally difficult to return to the Inupiat society. They had been educated with White values and motivations. In school they had been punished for speaking their Native language. Commonly they took to alcohol, compounding for their own children the problems they had faced.

Even when schools were brought into the region, children were not permitted to speak Inupiat there. Both the teaching form and the content of the subjects taught were foreign, so that parents and children grew farther apart. Parents could give little support and approval on matters they did not understand, and had little negative reaction if their children dropped out of school. Moreover, parents and elders found it increasingly difficult to teach the youth Inupiat traditions, values and skills. Often the newly created language barrier stifled whatever chances there might have been for elders to impart their knowledge to the young.

Not only was communication between generations damaged, but modern living patterns with institutionalized care of the aged tended to splinter families physically as well. The old extended family is dissolving. Children in the region have grown up increasingly removed from close contact with their grandparents. Frequently parents have become demoralized and alcoholic, both unable to present adequate role models and convinced that their own traditional knowledge and skills were out-dated and of no value to today's youth. As a result, respect for elders declined drastically.

Naturally the above conditions have led to a loss of subsistence skills, traditionally learned from the elders, and further dependence upon the cash economy and employment in the Western system. A major problem has been the "all-or-nothing" attitude of employers who refuse to countenance "subsistence leave." The Inupiat who suddenly leaves his job to hunt caribou for a few days during their fall migration in the effort to bolster a precarious home economy may find his job gone on his return. Moreover, the subsistence lifestyle is regarded as supplying basic Inupiat cultural idioms, much as does the Inupiat language. The loss of subsistence skills and/or the opportunity to utilize subsistence resources means not only a loss

of "import substitution" to a family and greater dependence on cash, but also a loss of shared values and traditions linked to the land. The pursuit of subsistence goals and the closeness to and respect for the land which this activity brings its practitioners are credited with cultivating a serenity of mind and a uniquely Inupiat spiritual experience: "Our land is the physical symbol of our Inupiat Spirit . . . By staying close to the land, we will stay close to God" (*NANA Regional Strategy*, 1982:90). During the last gubernatorial election, powerful hunting sportsman organizations in the urban centers sought a repeal of the state Subsistence Law. To the Alaskan Native, a threat to subsistence resource utilization is far more than a threat to his food base; it is an attack on his Native identity and the survival of his culture. Although the Subsistence Law repeal initiative was defeated on November 2, 1982 and the frontal legal attack has been thrown back, the Inupiat of the NANA Region feel that economic and social realities have laid their culture under siege.

The combination of difficulties outlined above results in some frightening statistics: the NANA Region has the highest rate of suicide in Alaska, ten times the national average; rates of homicide and rape are commensurably high; only 2% of all people sent to college actually complete their degree requirements. Unemployment is unusually great. Alcoholism is rampant (Christensen, 1982). To quote Willie Hensley of the NANA Region, champion of the Native position in ANCSA:

For the past ten years we've been trying to make a success of the NANA Corporation. But my conclusion is that things are worse—in human terms—than they were before all of the improvements (in Heidecker, 1982:16).

Undoubtedly the social problems and their causes described above are not confined to the NANA Region. What is distinctive about the predicament of the Alaskan Native as opposed to that of other Native Americans, however, becomes evident when the unfortunate social situation is related to the deadline of 1991. Obviously, the more non-Natives come to own NANA stock, the more Native culture and traditions will be jeopardized. An economically strong corporation, one able to provide its shareholders with sizable dividends, stands the best chance of convincing its Native shareholders not to sell their stock after 1991, and of buying up the stock of those who do wish to sell nonetheless. When offered a fat price for his corporation stock by a non-Native oil company, the jobless, demoralized Native may find it all but impossible to refuse. He may even be lured into debt by attractive loans and be forced to redeem them by selling his stock against his will. But Corporate leaders are not worried only about the responses of

the debilitated and unemployed. They find that their children are being trained for personal success, not community solidarity. According to John Schaeffer, president of the NANA Regional Corporation:

We're educating all of our kids to leave us even if they don't go to college. We're educating them to think like white people, so . . . in 1991 they think they're going to make money from their stock . . . We're educating our kids to sell us out. Then who's going to own NANA? Who's going to own our land? Not us. Not the Inupiat. Some big company will own the land. We're right back to where we were when we thought we were going to lose it. (in Christensen, 1982:3).

The NANA Corporation faces a terrible dilemma: to help its people enjoy a good living standard (and thus to minimize their need to sell out in 1991), the Corporation must promote employment, cash flow to the region and services, i.e. development; but, equally important in the equation for survival if not more so, the Corporation must defend the key elements of Inupiat tradition: the extended family, the language and the subsistence lifestyle. Not only are these elements vital to the very concept of being a Native—as the foundation for Inupiat cultural survival rather than mere physical survival—they are also intimately related to the holding of jobs, the attainment of educational goals and in general the establishment of the necessary context for a healthy society. Both economic development and maintenance of traditions are essential to the survival of a healthy Inupiat population. Yet, paradoxically, nothing poses a greater threat to the preservation of the extended family, the Inupiat language or the subsistence lifestyle than do the very development projects that the region so desperately needs.

Development Goals and Ideology

Under ANCSA, Native rights in Alaska have been structured within a highly capitalistic framework. The Native Regional Corporations have as a mandate to make profits, just like any other business corporation, for their shareholders. Obviously, however, the financial successes of a Native Corporation do not necessarily further the social and cultural goals of its shareholders. Industrial jobs may bring money, but they may also destroy the environment; new jobs help solve a difficult unemployment problem, but they can also splinter extended families and curtail subsistence activities. The list of conflicts can be expanded indefinitely. The shareholders are Natives first and shareholders second. They have not simply speculated in their Corporation's stock, nor do they value their shares merely for individual monetary gain. It is plain that survival will demand adaptation to the

industrial world and the capitalistic system within which the Corporations must operate. But, survival as *Inupiat* requires recognition of an essentially different dimension, a cultural dimension whose traditions are not easily reconciled with the Corporation's mandate.

The NANA Corporation is well aware of the difficult path it must negotiate to develop the land for the people and to develop the people to preserve their land as Native land. What has emerged is a two-pronged strategy of development: rural and economic development on the one hand, and spiritual development on the other. Rather than push for economic and spiritual goals independently of each other, a course which could only exacerbate the problems already described, the Corporation has faced the dilemma squarely, seeking instead to integrate its development policies.

Many of the present-day problems in the NANA Region are caused by the clash of two different cultures and economic systems. The history of Alaska since outsiders arrived has been one of natural resource exploitation. Often, local people have been forced to compete with private enterprises for the same resources. Superior technology has made outsiders more competitive, more successful and not dependent on local cooperation or consent. Outsiders often continued their activities despite objections from local people. The Native Claims Settlement Act has changed that situation. Outsiders must now cooperate with local people to gain legal access to resources. (*NANA Regional Strategy*, 1982:30-2).

Using its valuable land as leverage, the Corporation has made rigorous demands on any prospective developer in the region. For example, some profits must be sacrificed (in the short run) in order to give hiring priority to local workers, to provide them with training, and to allow them to take subsistence leave. To comprehend this side of NANA's development strategy, consider the Region's new and most cherished economic development project, the *Red Dog mine*, described below. At the same time, the Corporation seeks to tailor its *Spirit Program* to further the goals of economic development. Shareholders learn, for instance, that the Inupiat are members of two worlds, that they must not stagnate in their old traditions but that they can remain true to basic Inupiat values while pursuing a modern, Western career. The Spirit Program, begun by Corporation leaders, teaches its shareholders to regard development companies and government agencies simply as they would a new hunting ground, a new and demanding environment for the traditional Inupiat hunter to master. The modern Inupiat maintains the old values by helping his people survive in this new world through his skill as a "hunter."

Red Dog Mine

The Red Dog zinc-lead deposit is located 145 km north of Kotzebue and 115 km east of Kivalina. It is one of the richest deposits of its type in the world, with an estimated 77 million tons of ore assayed at 17% zinc, 5% lead and 2.6 ounces silver/ton. The potential life of an open-pit mine at Red Dog is considered to be at least 50 years (*Orbit*, 1983:4). The deposit and the prospective routes for transportation to the sea lie within the NANA Region.

NANA's partner in the Red Dog mine project is Cominco American, a mining company with wide experience in the north. Cominco American has the capital and the expertise, NANA the land. After an initial squabble over staking of a claim and drilling by Cominco in an area proscribed in 1973 under ANCSA, NANA and Cominco signed an agreement on February 5, 1982 to proceed with exploration and potential development of the mine.

For NANA, the Red Dog mine would grant some freedom from the Region's dependence on government spending and allay fears of government cut-backs. It could also provide employment opportunities to local workers and supply the training necessary to make their skill competitive with that of outside labor. Before agreement could be reached, the NANA Corporation insisted that Cominco adopt NANA policies for the social development of the local Inupiat. For Cominco, the mine offers huge profits, and the company was therefore willing to accept the lower efficiency of local labor and the expense of training programs. NANA has also made provision that the additional White people brought into the Region by the mine are to have their own housing area and not be settled in the Inupiat villages.

In order to convince the NANA Corporation of its good faith and its respect for the northern physical and social environment, Cominco invited NANA leaders to observe company operations on other sites in both Canada and Greenland. "They were able to meet privately with local Indian, Inuit and Greenlandic Inuuk leaders at these locations, to hear whatever these local people wanted to tell them about Cominco (*Orbit*, 1983:7)."

Under terms of the agreement between NANA and Cominco, the Red Dog mine will be operated and funded by Cominco. NANA will receive minimum payments of \$1 million/year. Cominco will pay NANA 4.5% of net smelter royalties until Cominco has recovered its investment, and after that NANA will receive 25% of the net proceeds, rising to 30% within five years of Cominco's investment recovery, and rising further by 5% every five years until Cominco and NANA share proceeds equally. "In addition, Cominco has undertaken to assist in the vocational training of NANA

shareholders, so that eventually they will comprise the permanent work force at Red Dog (*Orbit*, 1983:11)."

Cominco American has been quick to pick up on the NANA ideology and to espouse tenets of the Spirit Program. In the Cominco magazine, *Orbit*, NANA ideals are often commended. Mention is frequently made of "our Inupiat partners." There are large spreads of imposing color photographs extolling Inupiat traditions and the values of the Spirit Program.

But it's much more than a business arrangement. For the people of NANA it's another step in strengthening their economic base while continuing to preserve their important traditions.

And for Cominco, it's also an engineering challenge and the opportunity to make further progress in our remarkable and pioneering record in working harmoniously with Native northerners, including Inuit in Canada, and Inuuk in Greenland. (*Orbit*, 1983:7-8).

NANA has hosted meetings with Cominco representatives in Kotzebue with doors open to the public. I have found that while most local residents feel their NANA Corporation has driven a hard and good bargain, they are somewhat distrustful of the facility with which Cominco spokesmen tout NANA doctrines, especially in light of the legal battle over staking and drilling rights on the deposit some years ago. A number of the Inupiat with whom I have discussed the matter are wary. They fear that NANA has far more to lose than Cominco if the mine remains undeveloped, and that should Cominco play a waiting game its bargaining position will improve dramatically as NANA becomes increasingly desperate. Occasional Cominco statements or releases magnify this concern. "(The mine's) isolation, (the) environmental aspects, the large capital expenditure required . . . and the current depressed prices for zinc and lead are all factors that must be considered before Red Dog gets the go-ahead (*Orbit*, 1983:4-6)."

Spirit Program

The *Spirit Program*, or *Ilitqusiat*, is a campaign to maintain Inupiat traditions and revive basic human values in the face of ever increasing Western acculturation. It is also hoped by regional leaders that through these efforts the Native sense of solidarity will rise to the challenge of 1991 to preserve the land in Native hands. The *Ilitqusiat* message was first articulated by Willie Hensley a few years ago (in the early 1980s), while NANA Corporation president, John Schaeffer (Hensley's cousin), has been instrumental in promoting the movement locally. As the movement gains in force, "found- ing fathers" seem to gain in number, but its leaders maintain that all they

have done is recognize the seriousness of the region's problems and turn to the elders for advice. The Corporation takes credit for funding and supporting the movement, but it wants the people to realize that it is a movement borne of the wisdom of their own elders and in many ways derived from dissatisfaction with the necessarily commercial nature of the Corporation. Corporation leaders have founded a Spirit Committee, built a Spirit Camp and have helped institute Elders' Councils in the local villages. The program is dedicated to the maintenance of: Knowledge of language, Sharing, Respect for others, Cooperation, Respect for elders, Love for children, Hard work, Knowledge of family tree, Avoidance of conflict, Respect for nature, Spirituality, Humor, Family roles, Hunter success, Domestic skills, Humility and Responsibility to tribe.

These "official" values are usually displayed together as listed here on posters in the villages. Spirit leaders point out that they certainly are not only Inupiat values. Many of them are basic to human morality, and all of them closely parallel Christian teaching. In fact, Friends pastors figure prominently among Spirit leaders. Inspection of these so-called "Spirit values" reveals them to be largely concerned with the fostering of collective responsibility and a commitment to group solidarity. Individual achievement and self-fulfillment are channelled toward traditional roles. One might imagine that a restriction to traditional role models would have dangerous consequences in a reality so harried by change, but traditional values such as "Hunter success" have been somewhat redefined to allow for new content. While the hunter may have to stalk new "prey," he is still to do it for the general good of the entire group, in accordance with traditional practices of distribution. The Spirit Program seeks to correct much of the damage caused by White contact, but it does not advocate despending with all White influence. It does not call for denial of modern technology, or demand racial exclusivity. Western technology is considered an important tool if properly harnessed by the Inupiat. The Christian faith, well entrenched in the region, is looked upon as one of the few good efforts by encroaching Whites. The real fight is to recapture lost values. According to John Schaeffer:

... the first good white people (who) came up here ... were the missionaries and they brought something good to our people, the gospel; our people were ready. In those fifty years our population had been reduced by half from disease and starvation. Our people could recognize something good and they wanted what the missionaries had to offer.

So we gave them our kids and said: teach them, teach them this new way: because we weren't surviving the old way anymore.

The government replaced them with school teachers, because they couldn't have these

preachers teaching school. But our people couldn't tell the difference. They looked the same, they were doing pretty much the same thing. We asked if they were Christian and they were, just like the missionaries. It even sounds the same, teacher, preacher. So we continued to let them teach our kids. We thought they were teaching them values like they would learn at home or from the missionaries, but they weren't. (in Christensen, 1979:5).

The fight is not merely to instill the very same values that had been taught in the extended families of old (although many of these are indeed on the list as applicable today), but also to return to the teaching of values in general. Spirit leaders recognize, however, that some old values and skills are no longer applicable and should be replaced. In a letter to the NANA shareholders for the 1981 annual report, Chairman Newlin and President Schaeffer write:

This past year has been our most important year since the passage of the Settlement Act. This was the year NANA addressed its most important needs, our inner needs, our Inupiat Spiritual needs. During the next several years a great deal of our effort will be directed toward development of a strong identity and dedication to those aspects of our culture, both past and present, which will enable us to survive the turbulent future with dignity and purpose. We shareholders of NANA will attempt to develop a new "Inupiat Culture." This effort will take the cooperation and involvement of every shareholder to be successful. (NANA 1981:6).

The trick, vital to so many minorities today, is to adapt, to grow, but in such a way that identity is preserved. This can only be done through self-determination under conditions where the rate of change demanded does not exceed the rate of change acceptable for continuity of identity. It is a difficult task even in the long run; to win the race by 1991 is almost impossible. The leaders are not naive enough to hope for complete solidarity by 1991, but they know that a start must be made, that any progress helps, and they hope to keep controlling interest of the Corporation in Native hands.

To spur the development of a "new Inupiat Culture," the *NANA Regional Strategy* suggests that "Elders pick occasions for ceremonies marking youth progress as Spiritual Inupiat (1982:86)." The Corporation has introduced "Spirit Days" in the school calendar when parents and elders meet with children in school to teach them traditional skills and values. It is suggested that village elders assume real authority to judge and control bad actions. The Corporation has also campaigned successfully in 10 of the region's villages to forbid the importation or public consumption of alcohol. Villagers have exercised the "Local Option Law" against alcohol, and the Corporation is trying to help, "provide social recreational alternatives to

the bar scene (ibid:91)." In order to help "strengthen the Spirit and pride of the Inupiat Eskimo," it is suggested that the Region, "provide high media coverage of positive role models, especially of those who function well in both cultures (ibid:10)."

Spirit leaders are quick to dismiss any contention that their movement signals a mere restoration of the past or an isolationist stance in relation to Western institutions. On the contrary, they emphasize the value of adaptation to both worlds. They do stress, of course, that Western elements be mastered as means to Inupiat ends.

NANA's symbol is an Eskimo hunter moving aggressively toward a successful future in a vast, beautiful and sometimes harsh world. NANA is all of us together as one hunter, successful if we are of one mind and purpose, hungry if we are split by doubts and mistrust of each other. As one hunter is small and insignificant when compared to our environment so is NANA when compared to the corporate and governmental environment in which it must hunt successfully to survive. (*NANA 1981:1*, cf. *Orbit*, 1983:9-10).

Hensley himself epitomizes the new Inupiat ideal. In a well-known photograph Hensley dances in the traditional manner to Inupiat drum music while wearing his three-piece business suit (*The Kotzebue Basin*, 1981:178). Hensley and others spread the word that corporate lifestyles and the Inupiat perspective are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they *must not be* if the NANA Corporation is to survive and keep the land for its Native people. Were the Natives to disregard business administration and ignore government agencies they would soon be stripped of their land, jobs and services. The Inupiat today have too much at stake to resist integration with the White world, but integration should be approached with an Inupiat Spirit (Heidecker, 1982:17). The young are frequently admonished to "use Western institutions, such as schools and governments, to promote Inupiat values and lifestyle (*NANA Regional Strategy*, 1982:87)." They are told to take the best of both cultures. Schools are asked not to make the children feel that they must choose between a White way or an Inupiat way (ibid:11).

As these points indicate, the NANA Regional Corporation has thrown itself wholeheartedly into the task of the conscious cultural development and identity management of its shareholders. It does so with the justification that after the secularization of the school and the splintering of the extended family, no other institution was on hand to perform this necessary job. In a sense, the Corporation sees itself as the super-extended family of its shareholders.

In the NANA Region during the past few years, there has been an increasing recognition of the role of the extended family in providing mutual support to the nuclear family. The extended family responsibility has been taken on by a larger entity. Rekindling the responsibility of the extended family has been promoted by the leadership of the NANA Regional Corporation. (*Nana Regional Strategy*, 1982:37).

It is not precisely clear to what extent the Corporation intends to keep this role or to what extent it seeks to reinstate the extended family so that it might re-assume its responsibilities. The two roles need not be mutually exclusive.

Closing

Numerous other examples (for instance, Corporation scholarships to college students from the region and the establishment of the NANA Museum) demonstrate concrete steps taken by the NANA Regional Corporation to foster the subsistence lifestyle, the Inupiat language and the extended family together with other Spirit values in a modern context of economic development. Development partners are made to comply with NANA's ideals. In the long run the encouragement of a skilled and responsible local work force can only be beneficial to everyone. It is the Corporation effort to "develop a new Inupiat Culture" which holds our main interest here, for of necessity this means a development of Spirit directly related to the more usual economic projects throughout the Third World. The Spirit strategy, among other things, is dedicated to the development of an "ideology of development."

Under the mounting pressure of the 1991 termination of exclusivity, the NANA Corporation seeks to foster generations of shareholders who are dedicated to the preservation of their own Native character and the integrity of their Corporation. Indeed, the two are recognized as being inseparable. Toward these ends, a complex and highly integrated Regional Strategy has been formulated to deal with both economical and spiritual development policies. The Strategy is noteworthy for its attention to both economical and spiritual needs and its awareness of their interrelationship.

The Region's Spirit Program tries to nourish a strong sense of Inupiat solidarity and love of traditions, while yet at the same time advocating a shrewd knowledge of the "Western system," so that it might be exploited for Inupiat ends rather than the reverse. In so doing, the Corporation is consciously promoting a new Inupiat identity—new in the sense that it wishes to incorporate useful Western elements and, in effect, "beat them at their own game." Of course, it is a difficult course to chart, for there is

always an inherent danger that in learning the manipulations required of the Western capitalistic system, one loses the Inupiat Spirit. Indeed, this is a common criticism levelled at Inupiat leaders by their clients, who at times feel out of touch with their "Corporation bureaucrats." Ironically, it is the creators and leaders of the Spirit Program who are most immediately susceptible to insinuations that they have abandoned Spirit values. Unavoidably it is the modern leaders of the Native Corporations who, because they must become professional businessmen, politicians and administrators, face the greatest risk of losing the Spirit for which they are fighting. The substantial gains of the NANA Spirit Program reflect the character of its leaders.

It remains to be seen if the Corporation will be successful in this effort. Whether or not massive sale of NANA stock to non-Natives is avoided in 1991, it is certain that the struggle of the Corporation to resolve the dilemma of its position as economic developer and guardian of Native traditions will be ongoing. The 1991 deadline lends a sense of immediacy to the problem, but in general principle the dilemma is common to any group of people who can exercise a modicum of self-determination regarding their economic development. Something like NANA's Regional Strategy, which seeks to orchestrate economic plans with Spirit values, must evolve if a people with the power to be more is to avoid being only a development recipient. In the NANA Region, the Native people are, temporarily at least, collective owners of the NANA Corporation. They must therefore become development planners, consultants, implementors, recipients and to some extent even funders. The NANA Strategy document has received attention from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris. It was a finalist among contributions from 54 nations in a competition sponsored by the Institute for Cultural Affairs under the U. N. Development Program and is to be used as a textbook in the School of Business and Management at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The NANA Regional Strategy is currently studied as a model in many Third World developing countries, for the great question is whether they can succeed in this tremendous boot-strap effort.

Yet, with laudatory progress toward self-determination of development comes a burden of blame. Projects falter and social realities thwart good intentions. Insensitive "outsiders" can no longer be as readily faulted. The Corporation, which instructs its shareholders to treat Western institutions and government as a hunter would new hunting territory, runs the risk of being treated like a game animal itself. The individual Inupiat "hunter" may find that his own survival necessitates milking the Corporation for all it is worth. Clearly it is important that the NANA Regional Corporation

demonstrate a profile to its shareholders different from that of other Western-type corporations. Corporate goals for the survival of the Inupiat culture must not become suspect as disguised self-interest. While Corporation survival may be necessary for the survival of the Region's Inupiat culture and society, the Corporation must constantly promote itself as a means and not an end in itself.

Local Inupiat reaction to Corporation goals and ideology is on the whole highly favorable, but naturally there are undercurrents of dissatisfaction which flare up at times, especially when it is felt that the cause of solidarity burdens the individual too much. It is then that the inherent weaknesses of the Corporation position are attacked. Corporation leaders might be accused of having become White, of failing to practice what they preach or of being in a position so favorable that the hard sacrifices they demand of others are easy for themselves. Indeed, I have heard it said that the Spirit Program was the Corporation's means of de-fusing or pre-empting much of the discontent leveled against it by local villagers. Apparently, villagers had felt estranged from their Corporation and were beginning to voice dissatisfaction with what seemed to them its narrow monetary policies. Then, suddenly, the Corporation itself began saying the same things, organizing its own critique and giving power to village elders. The Corporation administrators, who had been criticized by villagers as having left the Inupiat world and neglected their roots, were now very much in evidence back in the villages spreading the Spirit message. Undoubtedly it was a timely move in many ways.

The progress of the movement has not always been smooth. In 1983 the young people in the village of Sclawik waited until their elders had dispersed to their summer camps and then voted to re-instate alcohol. The region-wide teaching of Silva Mind Control, a popular, modern technique to increase brain power through concentration, which John Schaeffer had thought to introduce as a method of promoting the mental discipline much needed among the youth in the region, was vetoed by the elders (good Christians) on the grounds that it constituted a reversion to shamanism. These are but small points; Schaeffer, of course, bowed gracefully to the authority of the elders which he had helped establish, and went on to look elsewhere for an acceptable vehicle of self-discipline. Such minor incidents serve only to identify different factions and illustrate the political maneuvering which can occur.

As a final point of interest one might consider the reactions of the region's small white population. While the white contingent is small, it is extremely varied in background, ranging from teachers, construction workers, and service and military personnel to back-to-nature fanatics. It is difficult to

generalize, but I found myself and most Whites sympathetic to the Spirit cause. Few felt threatened by the movement, and many felt positively inspired by the quality and commitment of NANA Corporation leadership. Those who are critical object to the growing net of Native control. Some are angered by the Kotzebue IRA (Indian Reorganization Act) Tribal Council's proclamation (supported by the NANA Corporation) that all employers in the village must give priority in hiring to Natives. White researchers in the area were somewhat perturbed by the policy statement that a mechanism be developed "for local oversight of all ethnographic, anthropological and archaeological research in the region (*NANA Regional Strategy*, 1982:101)," or, as suggested in *NANA Draft: Land Use Policies*, that any scientific research be conducted only under permit by the NANA Department of Land. Corporation opponents readily criticize the region's dependency on government "handouts" while accusing the Corporation of "practically trying to form a separate country" with government funds. Given the parameters of the situation, such attitudes are to be expected.

On the whole, however, enthusiasm for the Spirit Program has swept the NANA Region and has spread to other Native regions. It is a highly significant social force. But, when all the speeches have ended, the traditional dances have quieted and the Spirit has subsided, the social changes demanded by development remain. The visiting observer cannot help but admire NANA resolve and goals, realizing that any success furthers human good. But when faced with the prospect of 1991, he can do little but shake his head, feeling that the end of the period of regional Native land ownership may be postponed but hardly avoided under current legislation.

The loss of the land will break even the toughest Inupiat Spirit. Such a loss would be a tragedy—for all of us. For while it is tempting to regard the Inupiat Spirit Program as one more hopeless stand by a small minority people against inevitability, deeper reflection whispers that it may be our own struggle too.

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