INTRODUCTION

Our lives revolve around fish. It’s something that’s been in our life forever. It’s the mainstay of the people. [Old Harbor fisherman, interview with author, March 7, 2010]

In a recent set of interviews about the changing nature of fishing in small coastal villages of the Kodiak Archipelago in the south-central Gulf of Alaska, I asked people to talk about the historic and current importance of salmon to their communities. Many said plainly, “Without salmon, the Kodiak villages wouldn’t exist.” For over a hundred years salmon in particular have formed the backbone of life in the Kodiak region. The singularity and importance of such a resource was, of course, difficult for people to articulate. Salmon are so commonplace, so unquestionably part of daily life, and so vital that they easily become submerged in thought and expressive culture, as David Koester (chapter 3) discusses in this volume.

While making explicit the importance of salmon is difficult in directed conversation, the tangible marks of such significance are easy to observe. On a recent visit to the village of Old Harbor (plate 2) on the southeastern coast of Kodiak Island (figure 7.1), I detected the physical and symbolic presence of salmon all around me. As I visited with an elder on a blustery winter day and talked about fishing in the old days, her nephew walked in
the door and dropped off a frozen red salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) into her sink. “For you, Auntie,” he said and was out the door. The headed and gutted red salmon was a welcome treat, but like many of the elders in the village, my companion especially craves the humps of the spawning male
pink salmon (*O. gorbuscha*) and salmon heads. On the table that afternoon sat a bowl of silver salmon (*O. kisutch*) spread, along with dried salmon, *tamuuq*, with seal oil for dipping. On the walls of the house, like nearly all of the houses in the village, hung photographs and paintings of salmon-fishing boats and fathers, brothers, daughters, and nephews working on the water or processing fish. Had I been visiting in the fall, young and old would have been casting for silvers in the creeks or setting a net to catch a winter pack of fish. The entire village would have been alight with many working smokehouses and fragrant with the smells of salmon slowly smoking. Conversation would inevitably circle back to the perpetual tending of the fires and the patrolling for bears. Had I arrived in summer, I would have witnessed the commercial salmon purse-seine season luring recent village out-migrants back to their boats and communities for a few months. The six to eight active salmon fishermen of Old Harbor and their crews would be out in the nearby bays setting their seine nets and pulling in load after load of first red, then pink salmon. Salmon “jumpers” would be sailing out of the water along the coast of the village as they migrated back to their natal streams, creating peaceful sounds in the surrounding silence.

While the singular importance of the marine environment has always been a core feature of human life in the Kodiak Archipelago, the nature of the dependence on salmon has shifted over time. The first peoples of Kodiak utilized fish to supplement their marine mammal diet. Later cultures took advantage of shifting climates to locate their villages along rich salmon streams and lakes. Dried salmon played a role as a vital local food source and trade good during the Russian invasion and subsequent sea otter fur trade. The capital expansion of the salmon-salting and salmon-canning complexes of the American colonial period near the turn of the nineteenth century set in motion the development of the contemporary dependence of Kodiak economies on salmon fishing. The salmon canneries and developing ties to commercial fishing have had perhaps the most lasting effect on the current context of Sugpiaq communities and their relationships to salmon. In addition to being unable to imagine the existence of their communities without salmon, many informants stress the importance of cannery relationships in developing contemporary fishing economies and village communities.

The story of salmon and Sugpiaq peoples is a complex one with many contradictions and ironies. Drawing on insights from political ecology and postcolonial studies, this chapter explores the changing and enduring ties of salmon and Kodiak Sugpiaq peoples. The colonization of the Kodiak Archipelago by Russia and the United States has had a lasting effect on the
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social ecologies of place in the contemporary period. Throughout these histories, resistance, domination, and adaptation have shaped unique social, economic, and cultural hybridities of contemporary village lifeways (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001). Embracing difference as an analytical concept opens up possibilities for exploring the current challenges to fisheries engagement in the Sugpiaq region. On the concept of difference, Arturo Escobar (2008:6) notes, “People engage in the defense of place from the perspective of the economic, ecological, and cultural difference that their landscapes, cultures, and economies embody in relation to those of more dominant sectors of society.” Through an investigation of major waves of social change in Sugpiaq communities and the hybridizations that have resulted, I will be able to trace the economic, ecological, and cultural differences that have come to characterize contemporary Sugpiaq villages. These differences have not meshed well with the recent enclosure and commodification of fishing access rights, which has constricted the nature of human–environment relationships in Kodiak villages (Carothers 2010). While Sugpiaq economies are becoming less connected to commercial fishing, subsistence practices, individual and community identities, and place attachments still embody the close connections to salmon and marine resources. However, the recent economic severing of Kodiak villages from the resources of the sea will have profound impacts on the future of these practices and identities.

In this chapter I provide a brief historical review of the waves of influence that have shaped contemporary Sugpiaq communities and salmon fisheries. These historical details are central to understanding contemporary human–salmon relationships. After introducing Kodiak prehistory, I summarize the Russian colonization that dramatically impacted Indigenous ways of life in the Kodiak Archipelago and created lasting hybridities in local cultures and identities. Next, I review the subsequent period of Americanization that created new extractive industries and political relationships, further altering the social and economic relationships within Kodiak communities and between communities and the state. Drawing on archival and ethnographic research, I trace the transitions experienced in Sugpiaq communities in the first half of the twentieth century to illustrate the development of seasonal, flexible, place-based fishing lifestyles in the period of cannery development in the Alaskan territory. I conclude by exploring the nature of the economies, cultures, and identities of difference that developed in the cannery period in light of neoliberal policies that increasingly bring about an alienation of local resource rights because they demand utterly different social and economic arrangements.
The human history of the Kodiak Archipelago spans over seven thousand years (Clark 1998). The cultural traditions evident in the archaeological record are shared across the neighboring Alaska Peninsula, Chirikof Island, Prince William Sound, and Kachemak Bay regions. Since the earliest cultural period identified by archaeologists, Ocean Bay I, inhabitants of this region seasonally located their settlements at the mouths of salmon-rich streams. In this early phase, hunting of marine mammals including seals, sea lions, whales, otter, and porpoises was the dominant livelihood. By about 2000 BC, the Kachemak cultural tradition developed in this region of the Pacific. Throughout this period, people were increasingly pursuing fishing, as evidenced by the prevalence of notched pebbles and grooved-stone fishing weights in the archaeological record (Clark 1984). The late Kachemak period in the Kodiak region was one of central winter village settlements of semisubterranean houses at the mouths of bays and seasonal occupation along salmon streams (Fitzhugh 2003; Steffian and Saltonstall 2004; Steffian, Saltonstall, and Kopperl 2006; Yesner 1989). The maritime hunting and fishing cultures and economies of the archipelago supported over ten thousand people organized into a complex coastal village–based social system that involved social stratification, territoriality, and trade (Clark 1979, 1998; Fitzhugh 2003). While a detailed, traditional account was never fully documented, the cultural history of the ancestors of Indigenous peoples of Kodiak Archipelago has been pieced together from oral history; explorers’, colonizers’, and missionaries’ accounts; and archaeological study (Clark 1984). Donald W. Clark (1984:148) remarks on the cultural mixing that has characterized Kodiak peoples in prehistory as well as the current era: “The Koniag phase, and in general the Pacific Eskimo, is neither an in situ development nor a direct result of a population and cultural replacement; rather it is an amalgamation of old and new elements and replacement or loss of numerous former traits during the course of several centuries, accompanied by population mobility.”

Anthropologists and others have used various names to classify the Indigenous peoples of the Kodiak Archipelago, including Koniag, Russian Aleut, Pacific Eskimo, and Suk Eskimo (Clark 1998). Many Indigenous people from the Kodiak region today refer to themselves as Aleut or increasingly as Alutiiq (the self-referent for “Aleut” in the Indigenous Sugt’stun language). This name dates back to the eighteenth-century fur trade period when Russians referred to Indigenous peoples of the Aleutian Islands, the Unangan (see Reedy-Maschner, chapter 6, this volume), and the Kodiak Archipelago and other coastal areas as Aleuts. The term Sugpiaq (from
suk meaning “person” and piaq meaning “real” or “genuine”) in Sug’tstun is used by Native speakers, anthropologists, and others to refer to the Indigenous peoples of the central Gulf of Alaska, including the Kodiak Archipelago, along with the Alaska Peninsula, Kenai Peninsula, and Prince William Sound. In a recent volume Sven Haakanson Jr. and Amy Steffian (2009:205) note the preferred usage of Sugpiaq (plural: Sugpiat) to refer to the Indigenous peoples of these regions and Alutiiq to refer to their language. I follow that convention in this chapter.

RUSSIAN PERIOD

According to written records, Indigenous Kodiak Islanders successfully repelled several Russian ships that made contact between 1760 and 1780 (Black 1992; Pierce 1981). In August 1784, Grigorii I. Shelikov, along with 130 Russians, ten Aleut “volunteers” from the Fox Islands, and two interpreters, established the first Russian settlement on Kodiak Island (Black 1992). The Russians were received with violence by the Sugpiaq peoples on the east side of the island; Shelikov (1981[1786]:40) describes being “warned about the aggressiveness of the Koniag people.” According to his accounts, the local people repeatedly attacked the Russian baidaras (large skin boats) with their weapons of arrows and spears, expressing “their desire that we leave their shores or be killed” (Shelikov 1981[1786]:39). The guns and cannons of the Russian fleet eventually brutally overpowered Sugpiaq resistance. The massacre of Refuge Rock (Awa’uq) occurred shortly after their arrival when an estimated three hundred to four hundred Sugpiaq men, women, and children were killed (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001:54; Lisiansky 1968[1814]:180); none of the Russians were reported to have been killed during this slaughter, although five or six were wounded (Pierce 1981; Shelikov 1981[1786]). Shelikov (1981[1786]:40) documents taking one thousand hostages (retaining four hundred as captives), including children abducted from their families “as a pledge of their good faith.” Some of the adult male captives were reported to have been executed (Pierce 1981:12). After these violent attacks and other displays of the dominance of their gunpowder and weapons, the Russians were able to erect a settlement at Three Saints Bay (Staraia Gavan) in the southeast of Kodiak Island and another eight years later at Saint Paul’s Harbor (Pavlovskiaia; present-day Kodiak City) (Black 2004).¹

By 1805 the population of Sugpiat in the Kodiak Archipelago was estimated to number only four thousand (Lisiansky 1968[1814]). This number would drop even lower in the next several decades as continued violence, forced labor, and disease further decimated the Indigenous population.

¹
A respiratory disease was documented in 1804, influenza-like attacks in 1819–1820 and 1827–1828, and a smallpox epidemic reached Kodiak in 1837–1838. The smallpox epidemic was particularly devastating and had lasting effects on village life in Kodiak. Prior to the smallpox epidemic sixty-five to seventy-five villages existed in the Kodiak Archipelago. These villages were fused into only seven to enable medical care to be administered more efficiently (Pullar 2009).

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the Russian American Company (formerly the Shelikov-Golikov Company) and its base in Kodiak had gained monopolistic control over the lucrative Asian fur trade in the North Pacific (Black 2004; Lightfoot 2003). Local men were conscripted into sea otter hunting to supply pelts to the company and to a lesser extent whale hunting to supply meat and oil to the company settlements at Kodiak and Afognak. Hiermonk Gideon comments that while the language and reports of the Russian American Company express “kindly and friendly treatment” toward the Indigenous peoples of the islands, this was not what he observed. He reported, “On the west end of Kad’iak, the Russian promyshlennye, coming ashore, formed a line with firearms loaded, and announced: ‘Now, tell us if you are not joining the (hunting) party, [just] say so!’ [The guns were cocked.]—‘We’ll shoot.’ Under such threats who would dare to express dissatisfaction?” (1989[1805]:69).

The hunting parties were often absent from their homes from March to September (Gideon 1989[1805]), or even longer. Urey Lisiansky (1968[1814]:177), a captain of the Russian Navy, notes encountering a village settlement in the winter of 1805 made up entirely of “emaciated beings,” “literally half-starved” women and children who in the year-long absence of the male hunters servicing the Russian company were without provisions. Indeed, throughout his travels, Lisiansky remarks on the lack of resources in the Sugpiaq settlements he visits. While the Russian Navy captain is quick to blame “sloth and idleness” for such poverty, he is surprised to learn from village leaders (toyons) that instead the forced labor and “high price fixed by the Russian company on every necessary article” prevented most village settlements from procuring enough necessary subsistence foods and purchasable items from the Russians during these times (1968[1814]:179).

Perhaps reflecting previous social hierarchies, men who owned their kayaks (qayags in Alutiiq and baidarkas in Russian) were under different obligations to the company than boatless men. In the early 1800s, Gavril Davydov (1977[1809]:168) observed that “he who has a baidarka is rich. Such a person is even now regarded with respect by the Russian; for a Koniaga who has a baidarka always has a source of food. He can hunt
animals for which he will get, not very much, but at least something from the company, while his comrade who travels with him and does the same amount of work, must consider himself lucky if he is well-fed and clothed somehow or other.”

Elder men and boys were drafted to hunt puffins and other birds for parkas; unfulfilled bird quotas were required to be supplemented with fox and land otter pelts. Sugpiaq women were also forced into laboring for the company for most of the year. Women were responsible for making grass baskets, collecting berries, and constructing bird-skin parkas, kamleikas (waterproof layers worn while kayaking), sinew thread, and cordage for seal nets (Gideon 1989[1805]). In compensation for this obligatory labor, the company made small payments of tobacco, beads, and parkas, which Sugpiaq peoples themselves had been forced to procure materials for and produce (Luehrmann 2005).

Sonja Luehrmann (2005, 2008) draws upon Andrei Grinev (1999) to describe the particular colonial arrangements used by the Russians in Alaska in contrast to their colonization of Siberia. In Alaska, the Russian American Company was more deeply involved in Indigenous communities because they forcibly controlled production, labor (very few Russians ever became skilled marine hunters [Gideon 1989(1805)]), and, importantly, the redistribution of goods. By contrast, the Siberian colonies were required to pay tributes to the company in cash or pelts, but they retained local control of hunting practices. As Gideon (1989[1805]) notes, this level of control deprived the Sugpiat of their former economy. Over time the majority of the Sugpiat had been dispossessed of their means of production in the form of baidaras and baidarkas and wealth in the form of fur and feather parkas.

Far from a monolithic entity, the Russian state at the time was made up of a complex set of actors diverse in their visions for the new territory. While the Russian American Company and Russian Navy dominated the economic and militaristic affairs in the Russian colony, processes of social assimilation shifted into the domain of Russian Orthodox missionaries. Shelikov and his partner, Ivan Golikov, financed the first Russian Orthodox church built on Kodiak and lobbied for missionary support in Alaska. Catherine II responded by sending an ecclesiastic mission of ten men in 1794. By the next year, several thousand Sugpiat had been baptized and many formal marriages performed. From early on, the missionaries played a key role in educational assimilation. In the beginning of this process of conversion, Alaska Native boys were kidnapped and forced to attend school. In time, parents would come to willingly send their children to mission
schools (Black 2004). Similar to their intrusion into the economic sphere, the penetration of Russian spiritual and cultural practices into Sugpiaq communities was extensive, and as a result, Russian and Sugpiaq practices and beliefs became joined.

Lydia Black (2004) contends that Orthodox missionaries made great efforts to learn local languages and incorporate local beliefs into their teachings. She also provides detailed accounts of how Russian clergy members actively fought the Russian American Company on behalf of Indigenous peoples (2004:237–238, for example). In advance of formal approval from the Russian state, monks began administering an oath of allegiance to the state that would grant Indigenous people citizenship rights. The clergy’s support of the local people against the company provides an important historical context that helps explain why many Sugpiaq people today are still firm in their Russian Orthodox beliefs and continue to associate Russian Orthodox faith with their Indigenous identity.

The intermarriage of Russian men and Sugpiaq women created lasting hybridities: cultures and economies of difference that have persisted through current times. Over twenty Russian family names are still common in Sugpiaq communities today (Madsen 2001). Black (2004) discusses the formation of a new social class in Kodiak and throughout Russian America. Black traces the earliest usages of the term Creole to church records in 1816. The term is defined in the Second Charter of the Russian American Company (enacted in 1821 and at that time thought to apply to 180 men and 120 women) and used to designate “extraterritorial birth rather than racial descent” (Luehrmann 2008:117). Black states that the term Creole comes from criollo, used by the Spanish in the late 1500s to refer to individuals of European descent born in the West Indies. As defined by the Russian state, Sugpiaq peoples could claim Creole status without having a Russian parent (Pullar 2010). Residing in a Russian American settlement town or pledging allegiance to the Russian czar granted Sugpiaq individuals entry into the Creole class (Oleksa 1990, cited in Pullar 2010). Mixed marriages were also recognized as legal unions by the Russian state. The children of mixed marriages were considered citizens of the state, entitled to the estate and property of the Russian father. Creoles made up about 90 percent of the Kodiak population when the United States purchased the territory from Russia in 1867 (Oleksa 1992, cited in Pullar 2009).

When the United States took control of the territory, the status of the Creoles changed dramatically; as Black (2004:287) notes, “The proud creoles would become contemptible half-breeds.” Descent was racialized in the American period with a loss of status for Native and Creole peoples.
as a result. We see in this period the introduction of the Euro-American notion of purity that was largely absent in the Russian period. This framing has continued to be a dominant lens through which ethnicity and race are approached in the United States. During this challenging period of transition, many people in the Kodiak region began to identify themselves as Russian (Pullar 2009, 2010) and continued to do so until processes of “political awakening” and revitalization of the Sugpiaq culture gained force in the 1960s (Eaton 2009; Pullar 1992). The civilizing governmental-ity of the colonial US state was apparent in early “divide and conquer” policies of Indigenous language and cultural suppression, resettlement, and forcible removal of children for placement in boarding schools and continues through recent assimilative policies, such as the corporation model established by the land claims processes in the 1970s. The complex history of changing sociopolitical relationships in the American period deserves more attention than is given here (see, for example, Berger 1985; Davis 1976; Langdon 1986). The following section focuses specifically on the shifts brought about by the capitalization of the salmon industry during this period.

**Americanization: The Development of Fishing Livelihoods of Difference**

Gordon Pullar (2009) has recently synthesized a historical ethnography of Kodiak village communities around 1867, when the United States purchased the Alaska territory from Russia. Contributing to a volume exhibiting Sugpiaq masks collected from Kodiak area villages by Alphonse Pinart in 1871, Pullar ties together various accounts to describe transition-ing economic and social communities and imagine what Kodiak villages might have been like in this transitional period. While sea otter populations had declined dramatically by the 1890s, hunting continued until at least 1900 (Pullar 2009). Fish- and whale-processing plants were developed in the Kodiak region during the late 1880s through the middle of the twen-tieth century. The relationship between Sugpiaq communities and these resource-extractive industries was a complex one of resistance and intimate participation, giving way to cultural and economic hybridization. The social, economic, and cultural shifts brought on by the widespread development of salmon canning in the Kodiak Archipelago, particularly against the backdrop of other widespread changes in the sociopolitical relationships between Indigenous peoples and the state during Americanization, have had perhaps the most lasting impacts on contemporary Sugpiaq villages.

The highly productive Karluk River system on the west side of Kodiak
Island was one of the first locations where US companies established commercial salmon extraction and processing facilities (figure 7.1). A salt house and packing facility in the village of Karluk (Kal’uq) produced salt fish and dried fish for use throughout the Russian colonies in Alaska (Elliot 1886 in Pullar 2009); however, no major commercial trade of fish developed until the American period. Commercial salting and drying of fish was soon to be overshadowed by the burgeoning canning industry. The first cannery in the Kodiak region was built in Karluk in 1882; less than a decade later, five canneries were operating on the congested spit. At the turn of the century, over four million fish were extracted from the Karluk River, canned, and supplied to international markets (Roppel 1994). As salmon populations began to decrease in the Karluk, canneries were built throughout the Kodiak Archipelago, including the sites of Larsen Bay, Afognak Island, Alitak Bay, Olga Bay, Moser Bay, and Uganik Bay. The intense corporate competition of the early cannery period exerted pressure on fish stocks and oversupplied a developing market. Companies began to consolidate and utilize more efficient harvesting technology (particularly fish traps) to cut production and labor costs. The Alaska Packers Association, headquartered in San Francisco, and the Northwestern Fisheries Company began to dominate as the centralized heads of most of the companies operating in the region (Roppel 1994). Throughout south-central and southeast Alaska, the salmon-canning industry reached its peak of production (pre-1978) in 1936 when 25,221 workers caught and canned 129 million salmon, over 600 million lbs (B. King, personal communication 2004).

Rather than being caught in a one-way relationship of structural dominance and passive reception, local peoples were actively involved in these processes of change. Whether engaged in aggressive resistance to loss of resource access rights or adaptive adoption of those elements of the cannery system that fit with their ways of life, Sugpiaq villagers were agents of change during these times; however, as Luehrmann (2008:109) notes, the stakes with cannery development were high: “Canneries not only made the Alutiiq a minority in their homeland but also challenged Native rights to resources they had always used—and salmon were more crucial to survival than were the sea otter pelts the Russians had prohibited the Alutiiq from using.”

**Acts of Resistance**

Several early acts of resistance occurred in the villages of Afognak (Ag’uaneq) and Karluk. In 1889 the chiefs of the village of Afognak sent a letter to the governor of Alaska: “We, the natives and all of Russian population of Afognak, appeal to your excellency to help us retain possession of
the fish streams where we are dependent on getting our winter’s supply of food for ourselves and families. We can not get any chance of fishing in the streams, as the cannery fishermen of all the companies operating here have taken possession of the mouths of the rivers” (Arnold 1978:77). Salmon depletion by the expanding canning industry prompted a Presidential Proclamation in 1892 prohibiting all commercial and subsistence harvests within a 3 mi limit surrounding Afognak Island. Thus, the Indigenous peoples who built their livelihoods around salmon were now banned from fishing. A hatchery constructed within this newly declared Afognak Forest and Fish Culture Reserve was intended to halt the demise of the salmon fishery. Along with the Afognak peoples, fishery agents fought for the removal of this ban for over fifteen years. Not until 1909 did the Afognak Sugpiat gain back the legal right to harvest fish for their own consumption and small-scale trade, and not until 1912 could they harvest a commercial catch. The right to fish commercially in the reserve was given only to residents of Afognak, where officials had some difficulty making permanent residency decisions. In 1913 commercial fishing rights were extended to residents of several nearby islands and to white men married to Native women. After some debate with the canneries, licenses to fish were issued to Native fishermen. In that year, seventy-two fishermen received licenses and fished in twelve crews of four to six people. The first six days of fish caught were taken for home consumption. Over the next few years, Kadiak Fisheries, based in Seattle but with plants locally, became the major buyer of salmon from Afognak fishermen. The company also loaned fishing gear and supplied transportation to several fishing spots (Roppel 1994).

Afognak Sugpiat also fought to restrict commercial fishing in areas around Afognak to Afognak fishermen only (specifically excluding fishermen from the nearby village of Ouzinkie [Uusenkaaq] on Spruce Island who traditionally were not allowed access to Afognak waters for fishing; see figure 7.1). In 1915 the commissioner of fisheries declared that Ouzinkie fishermen could only access the waters to the east of Afognak Island. As a result, the western waters of Afognak Island were exclusively for Afognak villagers. With the implementation of the White Act in 1924, which imposed conservation measures and legislated against exclusive access rights, these fishing rights for the Afognak residents were repealed (Roppel 1994).

In later decades, Sugpiaq fishermen in Karluk, unsuccessful in earlier battles with canneries and the federal government, continued to fight for a reservation that would preserve their access rights to the fish of their home shores (see Grantham 2011). In 1943 after a decade of petitioning, the Karluk Indian Reservation (Public Land Order No. 128, May 22, 1943)
was created to protect Indigenous fishing and trapping rights, in particular from being appropriated by nonlocals. The reserve set aside 35,000 acres of coastline on Shelikof Strait, including the mouth of the Karluk River, for beach seining and offshore purse seining for Sugpiaq fishermen. The Native Village of Karluk set aside a small portion of the Karluk Reservation for their exclusive use, an area that extended 1,000 yds northeast and 500 yds southwest from the mouth of the river and 500 yds from shore at mean low tide (Native Village of Karluk n.d.). The Native Village of Karluk enabled other fishermen to apply for permits to access the other areas of the reservation for fishing. In 1945 at least thirty such permits were issued: twenty-nine to “resident” fishermen (including five fishermen from Karluk, five from Afognak, three from Uganik, two from Old Harbor, two from Ouzinkie, twelve from Kodiak) and one to a “non-resident” (a fisherman from Seattle). Reflecting the close relationship between fishermen and canneries at the time, only three of those thirty fishermen were described as “independent” on their permits; the others listed relationships with nine canneries throughout the Kodiak region (Native Village of Karluk n.d.). As Anjuli Grantham (2011) notes, the Alaska Packers Association (APA) ordered local agents to ignore the designation of the reservation. APA’s A. K. Tichenor wrote to the local cannery superintendent (Gordon Jones) on June 8, 1944: “Nothing must be done...which may constitute any recognition on our part that the Karluk Indian Reservation is valid or legal or anyone has any rights in connection with our property. It is important therefore that we continue our fishing operations as we did last year, hiring the Indians as our employees, furnishing them with our gear, and letting them use our beaches to catch our fish for us” (Grantham 2011:2). APA joined six other cannery companies to file a suit against the reservation. Just three years after its creation, the Karluk Indian Reservation was determined by US District Court judge Pratt to violate the White Act’s nonexclusion clause based on its inclusion of ocean waters. This legal challenge of reservation domain was the first to include marine space and resources (Roppel 1994).

**Cannery Engagements and Changing Communities**

Over time, as the remote Kodiak communities began to develop in tandem with salmon canneries, resistance gave way to close participation. Sugpiaq communities and canneries codeveloped, and canneries were the primary vehicle for integrating coastal villages into commercial fish harvesting and wage employment (Davis 1976; Mishler 2003). Remote canneries located near Sugpiaq villages came to offer village services, such
as company stores, electricity, communications, and health care. Sugpiaq labor in the canneries varied by community and over time (Luehrmann 2008; Partnow 2001; Roppel 1994). Generally, men harvested fish by beach seine, set gill net, and later by purse-seine vessel. Women worked manually preparing fish and later on the mechanical “slime lines” (Befu 1970; Davis 1971; Dombrowski 2001; Roppel 1994; Taylor 1966). In the early years, fishermen were paid in trade goods or credit at the company stores (Moser 1902), a practice that continued through the second half of the century. Elder fishermen remember fondly these days of “pay after fishing” or “slap it down” (Opheim 1994). Edward Opheim Sr. (1994:93) in a memoir about dory fishing for cod around Kodiak in the 1920s recalled: “After ten years of cod fishing, I did not have a dime to call my own, but at least I had a credit standing at any story or cannery on the islands.” Patricia Roppel (1994:249) describes how in the mid-1900s, the sign over a cannery store in Alitak at the south end of Kodiak Island read “‘Lum and Abner’s Jot Um Down Store’ because all bills were settled after the season closed.”

The growing commercial fishing industries, particularly salmon, cod, herring, and halibut, began to connect the Kodiak region to large fishing hubs like San Francisco and Seattle. Foreign fishermen, from Norway, Italy, and elsewhere, who had been fishing out of these US ports made their way north to Kodiak. Canneries also brought seasonal workers into the Kodiak region, and Chinese, Filipino, Mexican, and Japanese laborers began working in Alaskan canneries (Roppel 1994). Luehrmann (2008:65) describes how cannery development in Alaska was distinctive from the Russian fur trade: “The Alutiiq lost the importance of indispensable specialists because the cannery operators brought Asian contract workers up from California and Seattle.” The flow of outside labor contributed to a growing ethnic variation and segregation in many Alaska Native villages and seasonal cannery communities. Asian laborers were physically separated in large bunkhouses from Indigenous workers who lived in groups of smaller, more traditional dwellings. Social stratification at the canneries was evident in housing accommodations and differential wage scales and task assignments (Mishler 2003; Roppel 1994).

Beginning in the 1870s and continuing through the mid-twentieth century, foreign fishermen, and Scandinavians in particular, settled permanently in Kodiak Sugpiaq communities, some marrying local women. Roy Madsen (2001) notes the influx of Scandinavians into the region during the early twentieth century and lists over twenty-five family names that were common in Sugpiaq communities and that date back to this period of immigration and intermarriage. In the 1920s, about fifteen Scandinavian
men were counted in Kodiak and surrounding villages (Mishler and Mason 1996). Roppel (1994) writes that “the fishermen were from San Francisco, mostly immigrants—Scandinavians, Danes, Germans, and Italians…. Many of these men returned year after year and began to feel a sense of ownership for ‘their’ fishing grounds.” The integration of foreign fishermen into Sugpiaq communities prompted changes in the sociocultural values of work and wealth accumulation, as well as increased stratification within and between villages (Mishler and Mason 1996). As in the Russian colonial period, cannery development and the social shifts brought about by the inclusion of foreign fishermen into the cultural fabric of Sugpiaq villages helped to form and solidify new identities and assemblages of nation, commerce, and religion. Lucille Antowak Davis, a Sugpiaq elder born in 1926, recalled this scene from her early years growing up in the village of Karluk:

Fishing season is what I liked most of all because it was from inside. It touched you. We’d be sitting in the grass and mama would have blankets on us and we’d watch. The first thing they would do is blow the cannery whistle, three times. Even if we were sitting there we’d have to stand up. It was just like saluting the flag, okay? The American flag would come up and the guns were shooting. The church bell would ring on the side to wish the men a good season. The men were getting ready to go down with their boats, their fishing boats. With their oars, they pushed out and that’s when they would shoot three times. Boom! Boom! Boom! And then they made their haul. That was really special. The flag would come up, the American flag would come up, the church bells were ringing, everybody was happy. They didn’t take that day for granted, no way. [Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001:230]

Like Ms. Davis, most current village residents have favorable memories of their involvement with local canneries. Nancy Yaw Davis (1971) described this positive relationship in her ethnographic research in Kodiak communities in the 1960s. Canneries were viewed as “benevolent agent[s]” (Mason 2006). Elder fishermen throughout the archipelago expressed in interviews that they could not imagine their daily lives growing up or their village communities developing without the local cannery. One fisherman remarked, “The cannery used to bring all our fuel and groceries in the fall, fill up our houses with groceries for the winter. They were good people” (interview with author, March 6, 2010). Another added: “I don’t know what
we would have been doing if we didn’t have Shearwater [cannery]” (interview with author, March 6, 2010).

Beach seining and fish traps were a primary method of harvesting salmon before purse seining began to dominate after World War II (figure 7.2). During this time, canneries maintained “company boats” that fishermen could lease out for the season for a percentage of their catch. Village men were often skippers or crewmen on these boats. Provided that a fisherman continued to successfully catch fish for the cannery year after year, the cannery would continue to loan or lease the boats. Over time, some families, often with financing from canneries, purchased or built their own vessels. Rates of individual boat ownership varied by village. In Karluk, village fishermen in the 1940s expressed interest in owning their own boats and sought assistance from the federal government for purchasing them (Bingham 1946); however, by the 1960s only one Karluk fisherman owned a purse-seine vessel (Taylor 1966). In Ouzinkie some fishermen were able to build their own dory-style boats to facilitate independence from the canneries. In Old Harbor several fishermen were acquiring their own small wooden boats during this period.

The credit systems established by canneries did contribute to a paternalistic system of dependency and debt (e.g., see Befu 1970; Dombrowski 2001; Sider 2003). An Alaska Native Service schoolteacher based in the
village of Karluk provided evidence of this system in a letter to the general superintendent discussing a cannery labor dispute and strike vote: “Folks are afraid to do anything that might annoy the Alaska Packers for fear they will pull out and leave them to starve. They have been so dependent upon the Alaska Packers for their livelihood and for caring [for] them through the winter months on credit that they have lost any initiative they might have ever had” (Bingham 1946). The extension of credit in winter months that fostered these dependency relationships, however, is remembered fondly by informants today. Credit from the canneries has been described repeatedly in interviews as a safety net that often helped village families weather seasonal fluctuations and variations in fish stocks and prices. Many village residents describe their relationships with canneries as mutually dependent and as largely compatible with the flexible nature of the “maintenance economy” that characterized Sugpiaq fishing villages prior to the 1970s (Carothers 2008a, 2008b, 2010; see also Davis 1996 for a discussion of “livelihood” versus “accumulation” focused fishing lifestyles). For many fishermen, working on a beach seine gang, running a cannery boat, or working for wages in plants was to earn enough money to provide for their needs through the winter season. One fisherman recalled, “You could actually fish the summer and live most of the winter off what you made. The canneries back then they’d give you loans or whatever you needed to make it through the winter. They’d carry you, which they don’t do nowadays” (interview with author, March 7, 2010). The earnings of village fishermen in the cannery period were modest. The president and secretary of the Native Village of Karluk estimated an average season’s earnings for beach seining to be $400–$500 per person in 1948 (Masure and Ellanak 1948). According to four affidavits submitted in support of the Karluk fishing reservation between the years of 1938 and 1945, an average annual income in Karluk ranged from $700 to $1700; between 84 percent and 96 percent of income came directly from fishing (Native Village of Karluk n.d.).

The desire to accumulate and store wealth did not appear to motivate more fishing and cannery work by village households than was needed for winter sufficiency, and the fact that they fished or worked seasonally, or only when income was needed, made the Indigenous workforce “unreliable” in company discourse. Chinese, Japanese, and Italian workers were often described in early literature as preferred employees (Jacka 1990). Several early commentators on the nature of Sugpiaq involvement in fishing and cannery labor stress the mismatch between Sugpiaq ways of life and the desires of cannery employers. John Cobb (1921:98) notes: “In Alaska and at a few places in the States Indians are employed in the canneries. In Alaska
more would be employed if they could be secured. They make fair work people, but are rather unreliable about remaining through the season."

Engagements in commercial fishing and ideas about work were changing during the period. As I have mentioned, Craig Mishler and Rachel Mason (1996) discuss how intermarriage patterns between Scandinavian men and Sugpiaq women generated important sociocultural and economic hybridities in contemporary Kodiak villages that began to change the nature of Sugpiaq relationships with commercial fishing. Mishler and Mason discuss how fishermen brought with them a “Scandinavian work ethic” that they passed on to their large families. As the men who settled into the communities came without family, matrilineal kin were particularly important in structuring the community relationships of this generation. For the next generations, these family ties provided collective resources that allowed them to gain entry into commercial fisheries. Older brothers and maternal uncles taught youngsters the trade of fishing and later helped them to acquire boats. A former fishermen in his early forties remarked in an interview that he was part of the last generation that followed the Sugpiaq pattern of children living with and learning from their maternal uncles. He said, “The uncles will watch out for you, they’ll still be pretty hard on you. And teach you to work. And give you the lessons in life. Most fathers are very lax on their own kids. I was part of the last of that generation they did that with. That whole system changed starting in the ’60s, late ’70s” (interview with author, April 6, 2010).

In these times, boys (and often girls) typically began fishing when they were quite young—often at age five or six. By the teenage years, boys were capable of running or captaining a salmon purse-seining operation. Several young adults in Old Harbor were able to purchase their own small 32 ft wooden starter boats, called “grandies” (after the Grandy Boat Company in Seattle that built them), with financial help from canneries, brothers, or uncles. These boats could hold about 70,000 lbs of fish. Memories of the grandies provoke much laughter and stories about how “stink” they smelled from gurry. Village fishermen often gained entry to commercial salmon fishing by leasing grandies from the cannery for a percentage of their season’s earnings. After several seasons, some fishermen were able to purchase their own boats. One Old Harbor fisherman described how he got started running his own boat with the help of his older brother: “My older brother had little boats; then he had a bigger boat and he gave us the little boats to run and I started first and my other brother ran the little boat. Then from there we all got bigger boats. The canneries gave us loans to buy bigger boats to fish” (interview with author, March 7, 2010).
Grandies were traded in for larger wooden boats and then fiberglass boats, often referred to collectively as the “tupperware fleet.” These vessels tended to range in size from about 40 to 55 ft. As for all Sugpiaq villages, salmon became a mainstay fishery for Old Harbor fishermen. Over time various other species, including cod, herring, halibut, and crab, have fluctuated in importance. A handful of Kodiak Sugpiaq fishermen were able to become highliners in multiple commercial fisheries. The Old Harbor purse-seine fleet in particular became known for aggressive and territorial fishing practices (Mason 1993; Robinson 1996).

The subjectivities of economic and cultural difference in the village communities are evident in written accounts and people’s memories of these days. The canneries engendered a seasonal maintenance economy that complemented subsistence lifestyles based in place. Many fishermen note that this economic arrangement was fundamentally different than the one that developed as fishing rights were individualized and commodified beginning in the 1970s. The material and symbolic domination of capitalocentric logics (Gibson-Graham 2006) based on expert knowledge, alienable resource rights, and mobility of labor and capital appears to have made the maintenance and self-sufficiency economies of remote coastal Sugpiaq communities untenable (Carothers 2010). Scholars like Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham have written about deliberately cultivating alternative economic arrangements in looking forward to postcapitalist futures; however, in this case it is important to look back. We have briefly explored how the maintenance economies of the Sugpiaq villages functioned, but what went wrong? Why are these alternative economies disappearing?

ALIENABLE RIGHTS: CHALLENGES TO VILLAGE LIVELIHOODS

Well that’s one thing that was unique back then compared to today where it’s difficult to get started. You have to buy everything. Back then, we got a boat that belonged to the cannery. We leased it, of course. And, then, the seine skiff, we purchased that through the cannery. So we didn’t have to go to the bank without any kind of loan history or, you know, credit. Young guys just don’t have that now. It was a lot easier back then. Once you convinced the cannery that you were capable of doing it, they’d let you have a boat. [Ouzinkie fisherman, interview with author, March 14, 2010]
A series of changes in the 1970s set in motion a displacement of resource wealth from the Sugpiaq communities in the Gulf of Alaska. The salmon Limited Entry Act of 1974, the fall of the price of wild salmon, the catastrophic Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989, the increasing capital requirements of maintaining a legal vessel, and, as one informant described, “free money from the government and Native corporations” have dramatically altered the nature of village economies. Prior to these changes, in the 1960s, nearly every household in each village on Kodiak fished commercially; now, fewer than 30 percent do (Carothers 2008b). The reasons for this dramatic decrease in commercial fishing engagements are multiple. One of the root causes is limitation and commodification of fishing rights, such that they can be bought and sold, detached from place. David Koester (chapter 3, this volume) provides a theoretical discussion of the alienation of resource rights that processes of capitalization and commodification can generate, which is helpful to consider in this case as well.

The centrality of fishing, both as an economic activity and a valued life-way, has very much changed in Sugpiaq villages within the past generation. This interview excerpt from a former fisherman in his mid-forties draws attention to the importance of fishing and, at the same time, to the displacements of place and resources occurring in contemporary Sugpiaq villages:

SH: According to my dad and my mom, when I was born [in Kodiak, where women go to give birth] there were no phones or radio and so they [in the village of Old Harbor] didn’t know what sex I was. And up until then I had three sisters. My uncle had gone home before my mom and told my dad, “Ah, you had another daughter.” And he didn’t say anything after that. And so, when I got off the plane, my dad said, “Ma, what’d you name her?” And she—my mom—looked at him and said, “What are you talking about ‘name her’? Her name’s Sven Jr.” He said, “Ah, there’s my fisherman.” And it stuck. I didn’t even know I had another name until I was seven. In first grade, the teacher told me, “You better go home and ask your parents what your real name is.” I said, “My real name is ‘Fish.’” Even going to church, they asked me (my real name, and I said) “My church name’s Fish.”

CC: Did you feel that you had big expectations, then, to be your dad’s successful fisherman?
SH: No, not really. But I expected to go fishing after—I had planned on, in college, becoming a teacher so I could fish in the summertime. But my dad had lost his permit when I was eighteen because he couldn’t make the boat payments to the State of Alaska. He was one of the old-time fishermen where fishing “was to make enough money to make it through the winter.” Not “you have to make enough money to make a boat payment and pay all these other bills.” And so he lost his permit and that pretty much left me deciding to either go a couple hundred thousand dollars in debt and fish, struggling to make ends meet, or go off to college and figure out something else. And I think my dad losing his permit and it not being handed to me was a pretty strong impetus for me to go to school.

CC: You’ve mentioned the permits a couple of times. Could you tell me more about that from your perspective?

SH: Well, the limited entry permits, which I think was—personally, it was a death knell for a lot of the villages, the start of it, for the fishing industry because it’s controlled by that. Nobody can just start up and go fishing like they used to. You limit people and, then, you put a monetary value on who can fish and who can’t. And you, basically, force people out of an industry. What happened in Old Harbor—I don’t know how many permits are left but probably of the twenty or more that was there originally, how many do you have left? Eight that are active? People can’t make payments and it becomes, “Hey, I’ll sell you my permit if you give me money.” So what happens? Just like land. You give people land, and if they don’t have any money, land is money. They sell it. It’s the same thing. And that’s what happened to a lot of the villages or is happening, even. Look at Akhiok, Larsen Bay, Port Lions, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie. I mean, Old Harbor, Port Lions, and Ouzinkie are some of the stronger ones, but if you look at what’s happened to Karluk and Ahkiok...you have how many permits fishing in Ahkiok, one? I think one left. Out of everybody that used to have permits. [interview with author, April 6, 2010]
Elsewhere I (2008a, 2008b, 2010) have explored in greater depth the mismatch between the limited entry permit system and Kodiak Sugpiaq fishing economies. In general the individualization and commodification of fishing rights marked a fundamental shift in the economic arrangements that village fishermen secured during the cannery period. One fisherman remarked that individual ownership “was a whole new concept and foreign to having a fleet [of boats] stay at home as opposed to having to go back to the canneries” (interview with author, April 6, 2010). Limited entry in the 1970s ushered in the haves and the have-nots. As one informant described: “Captains became richer, had more things, were able to do more, had more money. And then the folks whose families didn’t have permits, that changed” (interview with author, April 6, 2010). In the 1980s, with less support from the canneries, “fishermen [became] more independent after limited entry” (interview with author, March 7, 2010). However, with this independence came a growing dependence on the formal economy—banks, loans, insurance. The more informal engagements that some fishermen had with commercial fishing—crewing for a short season, working in the cannery for a limited time, fishing only the summer salmon season for a cannery—were largely cut out with the change in how fisheries were managed. These alternative economic arrangements of Kodiak villages that seamlessly mixed subsistence and commercial production have been constrained by the recent shifts to capitalocentric fisheries management. Seasonal employment was a valued lifeway. One fisherman described this moral framework underlying the right way to work and structure one’s life: “It’s not wrong to not be employed in the winter if you’ve made enough in the summer...you can go hunting, you can build a net, visit with grandkids, you can go traveling...visiting time is gone. You fish so hard. Community exchange is gone—dancing, starring, we don’t have time...it’s not immoral not to be working...the social dynamic is forever changed when you schedule your life like that” (interview with author, February 2, 2011).

Informants are clearly nostalgic about past arrangements when subsistence and commercial fishing lifestyles merged more easily. However, the cannery period that informants remember so fondly was also based on a history of exploitation, exploitation that earlier generations of Sugpiaq peoples forcefully resisted. By attending to informants’ harsh criticisms of fisheries enclosure and commodification and their nostalgic longings for previous times, we come to see a strong critique of the crisis of the current era—the economies of difference that have adapted and persisted despite waves of intense change are now largely untenable. Without investment from federal, state, and tribal sources and transfer payments, rural fishing
villages in this region would not be able to sustain themselves. This fact marks a truly new period for Sugpiaq communities. Surviving the brutality of the Russian invasion and fur trade, the forced cultural assimilation brought about by US tribal policies, and the economic development of large-scale fisheries extraction is the amalgamated Sugpiaq culture and economy, which has until now been based in place and on the resources of the sea.

**ENDURING TIES: ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES AND IDENTITIES**

Even the critiques of enclosure aid in the erasure of alternative economies by leaving them undocumented and devoid of possibility. [St. Martin 2007:528]

Rather than vestiges to be swept away by enclosure and a capitalist becoming, the unique characteristics of fisheries economies, which are found throughout the world and represent the conditions under which millions of people labor, might become the conditions of existence of alternative economic futures. [St. Martin 2007:533]

This chapter has spanned a diverse and dramatic history of change in Sugpiaq communities and documented shifts in the nature of place, resource attachments, and the politics of difference occurring over a relatively short period of time. The eldest Sugpiaq remember their parents and grandparents hunting sea otters from baidarkas for the Russians. They lived through health epidemics that decimated their villages. They witnessed the development of heavily capitalized salmon fishing—fish harvesting from small beach seines to fish traps to 56 ft fiberglass purse seiners and processing on drying racks on the beach to mechanized “slime lines” in the cannery factories. Many who have since passed never witnessed current trends severing the Sugpiaq people from the sea. The “violence waged against alterity” (Moore, Kosek, and Pandian 2003:6) in this history has taken many forms, from the physical overpowering of Indigenous hunters and communities during the Russian conquest to the symbolic dominations of the cultural logics underpinning widespread resource enclosure in recent decades.

Beginning with Clark’s (1984) first assessment of the assemblages of disparate material cultures evident in the archaeological record, this review has covered various kinds of linked social, economic, and cultural hybridities forged by Sugpiaq peoples through time. As the recent volume
Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001; Crowell 2004) demonstrates so richly, the Sugpiat have always challenged notions of purity and boundedness, from early Russian intermarriage and cultural mergings to contemporary alternative fishing economies. The nature of their relationship to salmon has also shifted through time. A mainstay resource throughout their history, salmon became a major vehicle for linking Sugpiaq villages with capital and nonlocal people who were also seeking out new relationships with salmon. The early commodification of salmon led to enduring engagements with capitalist economies, and the relatively recent alienability of these relationship rights marks a new turn for Sugpiaq relationships with salmon. A handful of Sugpiaq commercial fishermen remain, largely those with access to capital that can be fully engaged in commercial enterprises. But many households, though displaced from commercial fishing, do continue to access salmon for subsistence. Salmon remains a keystone species. The enduring ties are active ones—by continuing to harvest, process, share, and consume salmon and other resources of the sea, Sugpiaq peoples continue to form strong attachments to the resources that surround their villages. Setting a subsistence net for salmon to dry, smoke, and freeze for the winter is a common and highly valued practice for many local people. The tie that has been severed is the one to an economic model that works in rural coastal communities in Kodiak—subsistence-based economies supported by rich local resources, the use of those resources as needed, and flexible engagements with commercial enterprises.

Katherine Reedy-Maschner (2009) writes that the notion of “entangled livelihoods,” rather than mixed economies, better captures the contemporary coastal village economy in southwestern Alaska. She states that commercial fishing and subsistence fishing in Aleut communities “are mixed seamlessly and with banality; it is simply what you do…the people, gear, fish, and other subsistence foods are so intertwined that disentangling the commercial and subsistence as two separate systems is difficult (and unnecessary)” (2009:141). The economic displacements caused by restricting and commodifying the commercial sector of these entangled livelihoods have been more pronounced in Kodiak communities compared to the Aleutian communities that Reedy-Maschner (chapter 6) explores in this volume. For many in the Kodiak Archipelago, fishing no longer generates any income. Just as Gavriil Davydov (1977[1809]) observed in the early nineteenth century, those who own their means of production, a baidarka in the Russian days or a fishing boat and fishing rights in today’s time, are rich, while
others must leave rural villages for work or become dependent on support services and transfer payments.

Akhil Gupta (1998) in his exploration of postcolonial realities in farming communities in north India uses the concept of hybridity to describe the impurity, incommensurability, and blending of differing cultural practices, discourses, and structural forces. Gupta (1998:6) is clear that as an analytical concept hybridity must retain the “messiness” of these meldings. Arturo Escobar (2008:13) also notes the importance of not letting the concepts of hybridity overlook the “potential of difference for worlds and knowledges otherwise.” The erasure of difference is seen in recent discourses and policies that attempt to imagine human beings as isolated profit-maximizers, mobile in place and livelihood (Davis 1996). But the centrality of hybridity and difference in these theorists’ approaches complicates universalizing discourses of market-based resource governance. As Courtland Smith (chapter 1) reviews in this volume, dominant logics from agricultural production systems have dramatically shaped fisheries management to center on increasing production and profit. The economic imaginaries underpinning recent market-based governance propose the sameness of individuals via an ability to pay. The hegemony of economic efficiency as the goal of resource management, and the market as the distributor of resource rights, has dramatically limited the scope of the possibilities of difference, of alternative modernities, persisting in the Sugpiaq region and emerging in others. And yet, even in the past arrangements that informants often recollect as the good life—the cannery period of mutual dependence and a seasonal economy of hard work in the summer that produced time for subsistence and other life pursuits in the winter—certain dependencies were created that have become largely unsustainable. As Reedy-Maschner (chapter 6) argues in this volume, despite the relative abundance of resources and access rights that remain in the eastern Aleut region, many deprivations exist, and she directs us to question the sustainability of places in the global system more generally.

When discussing the disconnections experienced in Sugpiaq communities since the watershed moment of the 1970s when fishing rights became alienable, I am often presented with the question “So what?” Challengers often note that these shifts are part of an inevitable process of change produced by global capitalism in agriculture and other natural resource industries. Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham (Gibson-Graham 1996, 2006) explore deliberate, forward-looking constructions of alternative economies that challenge the perceived inevitability of capitalist globalization.
In this chapter, rather than looking forward, we have looked back and attempted to understand how alternative economies functioned in the past and how different economic-cultural linkages shaped both people and environments. The discourses, motivations, and practices linking people and salmon embody one set of alternative social-political-cultural-economic relationships that scholars like Gibson and Graham propose for future paths. One of the goals of this contribution is to document possible imaginaries of the past that are often overlooked, as Kevin St. Martin (2007) does in his critique of enclosure processes. The “so what” question can be explored as a question of “So what is lost?” The transitions being experienced in Sugpiaq villages are characterized by many locals as a “death knell,” a severing of place relationships. As more families leave their home communities in search of work, the links between place and people become more symbolic than experienced. Sugpiaq fishermen from across the region are consistent in their stories and their certainty that without salmon and salmon fishing, their communities would not exist. Reedy-Maschner (2010) describes how Aleut peoples also base their identity on these relationships. As the various authors in this volume attest, the resources of the sea have brought about large-scale interconnections across the North Pacific region, some ephemeral, some enduring. As processes of delinking resources from place are under way, how are local and regional sustainability redefined?

The permanence of people in the Kodiak Archipelago has always depended upon securing the bounty of the sea—not in a timeless history of social-ecological harmony as Marianne Lien (chapter 11, this volume) is careful to note, but through the development of economies and cultures of difference in the face of hegemonic restructuring. These processes of hybridization have also been an enduring feature of Sugpiaq adaptation. What is new about the current changes, and what are the implications? While thinking about economy and culture as bounded spheres is limited, we should note that in the Sugpiaq case, economic dispossessions (e.g., the ability to make income from salmon) outpace cultural change (e.g., the dominant imaginaries that Sugpiaq villages are still fishing villages). Sugpiaq economies have shifted from salmon dependence, but Sugpiaq ecologies, cultures, and identities still very much embody the close connections to salmon and marine resources. The recent economic disconnections of Sugpiaq communities and the resources of the sea have profound implications for the future of these ecologies, cultures, and identities.

My recent winter visit to the village of Old Harbor concluded with a short, bumpy ride on a small five-seater plane. As we headed northeast from Old Harbor toward the central hub of Kodiak town, we passed over...
Kiliuda Bay. My elder companion pointed down: “I was born there” (personal communication 2010). It took me a minute to make out the barely visible structure beneath us. Here was the site of the Shearwater Cannery, the cannery that entire families from Old Harbor would relocate to for the summer fishing season. My companion’s mother, whom she calls “a full-blooded Aleut,” gave birth to her at that site over seventy years ago. Her mother’s husband was a Norwegian who settled in the community of Old Harbor in 1931. Together they had nineteen children, fourteen of whom survived into adulthood. Individual and collective Sugpiaq histories are full of stories, experiences, and memories of the mixing of people, places, and economies. These histories of hybridities provide a lens through which we can better understand how nature–culture and human–salmon relationships have shifted over time. We take note of the ephemeral nature of some ties, like the defunct canneries dotting the landscapes near Kodiak villages, and the enduring nature of others that are shaped by these histories but emerge anew as people continue to forge relationships with salmon and other keystone resources and symbols in their defense of place, livelihood, and identity.6

Notes
1. Lydia Black (2004:141n2) notes that an earthquake in 1788 left the Three Saints Bay harbor inaccessible to large vessels. According to oral history accounts, Baranov’s vessels were said to have found suitable anchorage in a neighboring bay (the current site of the village of Old Harbor). Expanding the headquarters in the southern part of the island was difficult without timber resources. Baranov relocated the settlement to Chiniak Bay.

2. Also promyshlennik, a Russian rank-and-file employee of the Russian American Company.

3. The companies included Alaska Packers Association, Grimes Packing Company, Libby, McNeill & Libby, San Juan Fishing and Packing Company, Kadiak Fisheries Company, Frank C. McConaghy Company, and Parks Canning Company. While these companies did not have plants in Karluk at the time of the litigation, they had all processed fish from Karluk previously (Roppel 1994).

4. The acronym PAF for “pay after fishing” was a play on the acronym for Pacific American Fisheries, which operated canneries at Alitak, Zakhar Bay, and elsewhere in Alaska. PAF went out of business in 1966, but the expression meaning “pay after fishing” is still used here today and elsewhere in Alaska (specifically Bristol Bay) (B. King, personal communication 2004).

5. I thank an anonymous reviewer for commenting on the importance of not
valorizing a period of exploitation. The reviewer noted a missing dialogue on the role of nostalgia in people’s recollection of past fisheries arrangements. I regret that my short discussion of this topic does not fully respond to this critique.

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