Indigenous Social Responses to Imposed Regulations in Northern Alaska as a Measure of Resilience
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Data Sources

• 1978, 1988, 1993 North Slope Borough Censuses
• US Census
• Bureau of Economic Analysis
• Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Local employment 1979 to 2000
Government transfers to individuals ($2008)
Background

• Rapid increase in employment opportunities
  – Pipeline construction
  – Establishment of North Slope borough
• Rise in transfers
Caribou ban

- Household and hunter responses to state imposed limits on caribou hunting which took effect in 1976.
- Maintain sharing
- Maintain consumption
- Strategy to buy more store bought food
- Move into labor market
- Little increase in other subsistence, decrease in subsistence using caribou products
Characteristics of caribou households

- About $\frac{3}{4}$ of all households have one or more who hunt
- Nearly everyone uses caribou.
- Hunter households are larger, extended families
- Lower cash income
- As likely as non-hunter households to be employed
1978

- 71% reported that they hunted caribou 2 years ago.
- 4 out of 5 reported that ban had affected consumption
- Most households bought more, consumed less or both.
- More fishing. Less sewing and art that uses caribou.
- No marine mammals
Harvest and sharing

• Subsistence consumption down in 1978
• Slightly lower share of subsistence consumption from own harvest
  – 1978  61%
  – 1988  68%
  – 1993  67%
Sharing

• More caribou households received food in 1978
  – 1978  61%
  – 1988  20%
  – 1993  24%
Sharing

• Caribou households giving was lower in 1978 but prevalent
  – 1978  66%
  – 1988  75%
  – 1993  76%

• 1978 lower caribou harvest, fish, other large land mammals
Resilience

- Giving patterns are similar in all years
- Hunter households received more during ban
- Importance of employment opportunities.
- 1978 hunters reporting working for oil companies
- In later years, North Slope Borough has become main employer
- Transfer income
Conclusions

• Role of mixed economy in resilience
• Excess and flexibility somewhere in the system
  – Transfers, Employment
• Climate change
  – Fuel Prices
  – Access, Herd size
  – Global downturn will affect govt transfers
  – North Slope oil in decline
• Little support for movement to other subsistence
  – At capacity
  – Lacking skills and equipment
  – Lacking access
Social ties

• Caribou similar to whaling community is involved – everyone uses
• Requires and reinforces cooperation and social ties
• Look at operation of North Slope borough and distribution of benefits (employment) see correspondence with harvest distribution.
• Success on NSB is not just a matter of having resources.
• Ability to incorporate new resources to maintain lifestyle.