

Community-engaged field research in Southeast Alaska: Lessons learned from an early career researcher

By Ryan Naylor



OUTLINE

Broad Overview of Dissertation

Theoretical Framing

Methods

Lessons from the Field

Implications

INTRODUCTION

Resilience of Alaskan Coastal Communities

(Fakhri, 2017; Pachauri et al., 2014; Pörtner et al., 2019)

Arctic & Oceanic Governance

(Dawson et al., 2014; Johnston et al., 2017; Steffen et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2013)

Southeast Alaska as premier landscape to study future Arctic tourism

(Hillmer-Pegram, 2016, Meredith et al., 2019)



INTRODUCTION

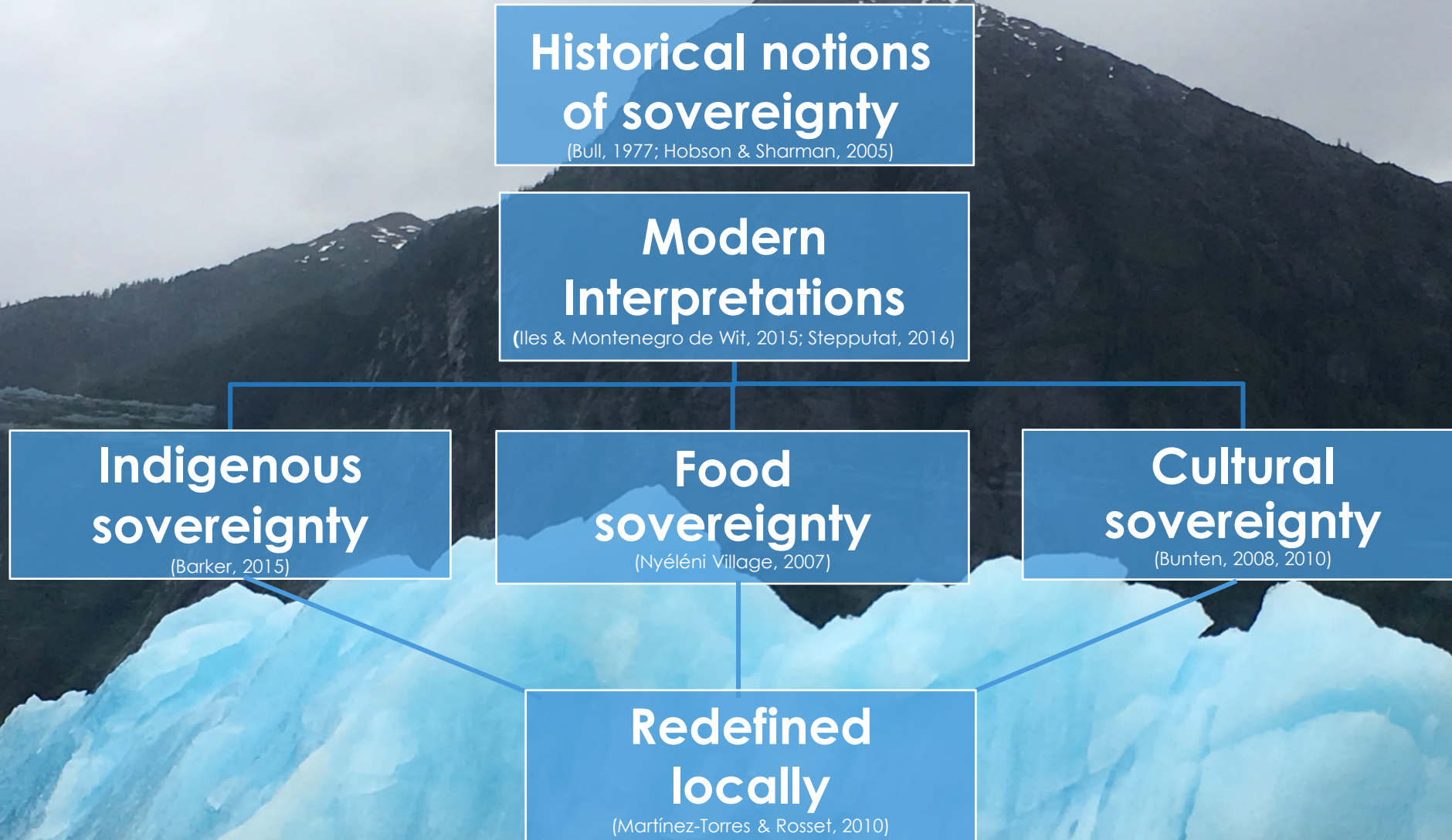
SOVEREIGNTY

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SOVEREIGNTY = A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT



SOVEREIGNTY = A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT



LIVELIHOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The enhanced levels of local resident control and influence over management institutions and decision-making regarding:

- **persistence of valued traditional practices,**
- **how new production opportunities are integrated into local socio-ecological systems,**
- **and how local community wellbeing is perpetuated over time.**



Naylor, R. S., & Hunt, C. A. (2021). Tourism and Livelihood Sovereignty: A Theoretical Introduction and Research Agenda for Arctic Contexts. *Societies*, 11(3), 105. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11030105>

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS



Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (#2134843)
NSF Arctic Social Sciences Program



RQ1: Around *what issues is sovereignty centered* for residents in Alaskan coastal communities?

RQ2: What is the *influence of tourism* on livelihood sovereignty in Alaskan coastal communities?

RQ3: How will current, and anticipated, *climate dynamics* influence livelihood sovereignty in Alaskan coastal communities?

RQ4: How can *greater levels of sovereignty* be achieved in Alaskan coastal communities?



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MULTI-SITE ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE-CONTROL STUDY



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MULTI-SITE ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE-CONTROL STUDY



Small scale
cruise tourism
Months of
Fieldwork = 7

Medium scale
cruise tourism
Months of
Fieldwork = 3

Large scale
cruise tourism
Months of
Fieldwork = 3

Petersburg, AK



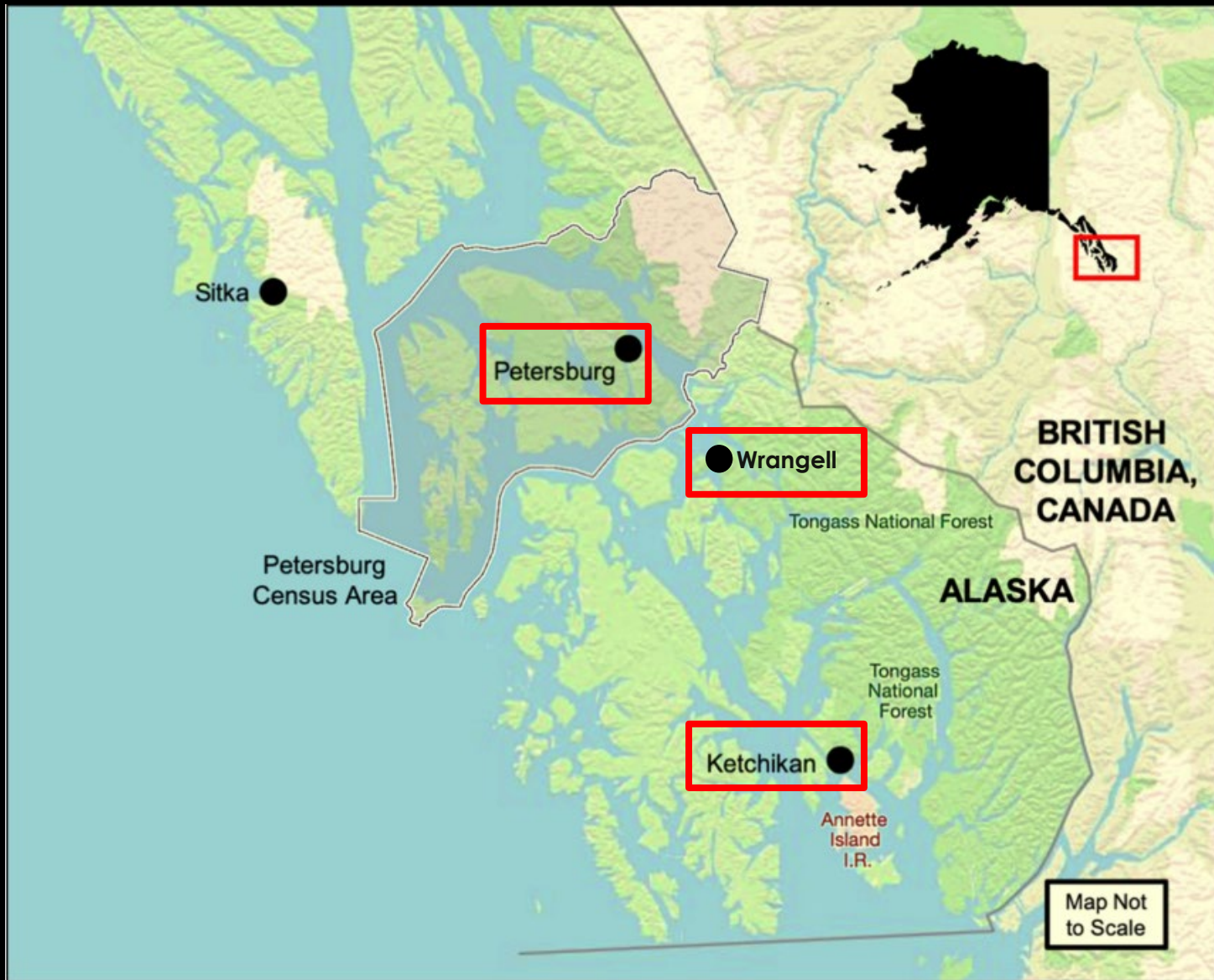
Wrangell, AK



Ketchikan, AK



MULTI-SITE ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE-CONTROL STUDY



When keeping community characteristics relatively similar (i.e., population, economy, geography), how does differential forms of tourism influence community development?

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DATA COLLECTION

Archival Literature

- Scholarly literature
- Local government documents
- Local Newspaper
- Local Radio Station
- Local Library Archives
- Forest Service literature

Participant Observation

(Musante & Dewalt, 2011; Spradley, 1979)

Passive Observation

- Public Events
- Borough/City Meetings

Active Observation

- Daily Interaction

n = 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork

Interviews, n = 134 (Musante & Dewalt)

Informal Interviews, n = 19 (Spradley, 1979)

Semi-structured Interviews (Guest et al., 2012)

- Petersburg, n = 37
- Wrangell, n = 40
- Ketchikan, n = 38

Sampling (Bernard, 2011)

- Snowball, Opportunistic, Quota



**City and Borough of Wrangell
Comprehensive Plan
June 2010**



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TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT



- Petersburg Indian Association
- Wrangell Cooperative Association
- Ketchikan Indian Community
- Saxman IRA Tribal Council



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ADVISORY BOARDS

- Three community advisory boards
- Regional Advisory Board
- Identity and incorporate community specific issues
- Knowledge co-production from data collection to dissemination



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OTHER FORMS OF OUTREACH

- 19 community presentations
- 21 community organizations
- Participatory workshops
- 3 Community reports
- Local methods of dissemination

Doctoral student studies Wrangell tourism industry

By CAROLEINE JAMES
Sentinel reporter

For communities around the globe, tourism can be both a blessing and a curse. The industry can provide a much-needed economic bump, but in Venice, millions of international arrivals inflate prices for residents and replace locally owned businesses with tourist traps. Closer to home, the city of Ketchikan has hosted cruise ships with capacities of nearly half its population, which can crowd out residents and risk the town's authentic character.

As the tourism industry expands, Alaska communities are seeking a path forward that will allow them to hold onto their decision-making power, keep economic benefits in town and retain their cultural distinctiveness. Doctoral student Ryan Naylor of Pennsylvania State University is conducting a research project on how tourism impacts a community's ability to determine its own future.

On April 25, he presented some preliminary thoughts from his work to the Wrangell borough assembly. After analyzing data throughout the summer and fall, he hopes to return to Wrangell in December to present more concrete findings.

Though this work is in the early stages, he hopes to produce something that Wrangell and communities throughout Southeast could use to guide their decision-making processes. "I want this research to be able to benefit local communities, rather than something that just sits on the shelf that will never be read," he said.

Wrangell, Petersburg and Ketchikan are his case studies. Each community has its own attitudes toward tourism and each is having different conversations about the future of the industry. For Wrangell and Petersburg, that might

involve questions about how to sustainably scale up. For Ketchikan, which anticipates more than 1.4 million cruise ship visitors this summer, the conversation is geared toward determining acceptable limits.

Naylor has been impressed with the Wrangell borough's community engagement efforts, particularly surrounding the 6-Mile mill site and the tourism best management practices program. "At the end of the day, I truly believe that tourism, unlike many other industries, is a community-wide industry that has community-wide impacts as well as community-wide responsibility to manage it properly," he said. Because all residents will be affected by the direction the industry takes in their town, they should be included in the conversation.

Living in Wrangell last winter, he conducted 40 interviews with community stakeholders, observed daily life and helped out around town where he could.

One of his favorite parts about living and working in Wrangell was experiencing residents' love for the town firsthand. "It's always fun to see the passion that individuals will have when talking about their town," he said. "Everybody here wants to ensure that the future of Wrangell is sustainable. That passion is surprising and exciting."

However, living through his first Southeast winter was "a shock." The darkness and heavy rain made it difficult to get around without a car, but he stuck it out. "Wrangell is an extremely inviting community and so it was very fun to be able to do my research here," he recalled. "If you come into the community with the initiative to want to give back, the community is going to welcome you with open arms."

Grad student reports back on Petersburg tourism impact research

Posted by Joe Viechnicki | Jun 16, 2022

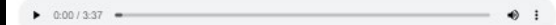


Ryan Naylor (Joe Viechnicki/RFSA)

A Penn State University graduate student is reporting on his research on community views of the impacts of tourism in Petersburg June 16, 2022.

Ryan Naylor lived in Petersburg for four months in 2019, interviewing residents and observing the public discourse about the industry. He meant to present the results of that work earlier but has been delayed by the pandemic. He'll be speaking tonight at the public library.

Joe Viechnicki spoke with Naylor about his research.



Naylor has completed his master's degree and is now working on a PhD in a related topic. He'll be talking about his master's work and answering questions Thursday, June 16, 2022 at the Helmi Jensen room of the Petersburg Public Library from 7-7:45 p.m.

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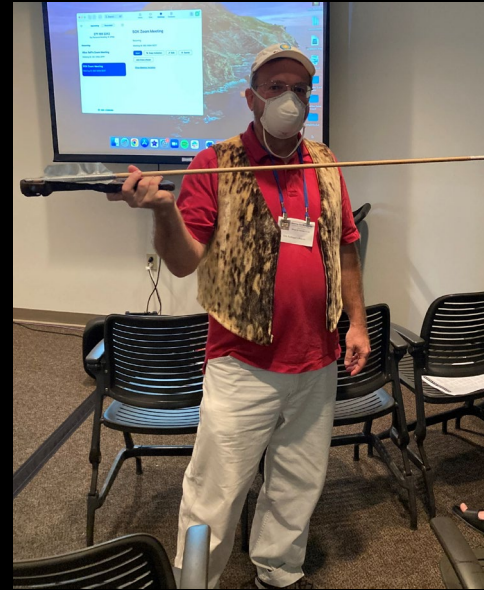
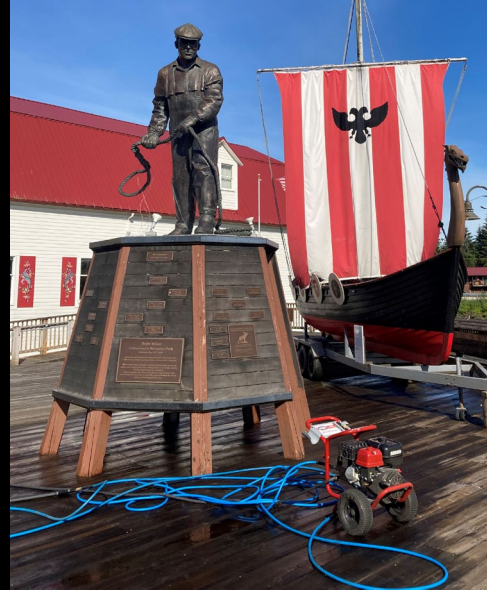
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LESSONS LEARNED: Earning Rapport



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LESSONS LEARNED: Tribal Engagement

1. Earned Trust
2. Iterative in-person engagement
3. Recognize Research Fatigue
4. Establishing protocols
 - Indigenous impacts presentations per community
 - Offering to help establish tribal IRB protocols
 - Source of reference for future researchers



LESSONS LEARNED: Advisory Boards

1. Repeated and direct interaction
2. Balancing availability vs. expertise
3. Research advocacy
4. Establishing a support system



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IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY RESEARCHERS

1. Maintaining connections

2. Respecting Indigenous Sovereignty

3. Communicating realistic expectations to oneself, communities, and peers

4. Identify other avenues for giving back outside of the project scope

5. Community-engaged research is a spectrum



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DIFFERENT FORMS OF SUCCESS

Ryan -

Thank you for your time,
research and involvement with
the City of Wrangell. Both the
WCVB + ED Boards enjoyed
learning from your studies -



CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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WRANGELL, AK, 99929

all the best in the next steps - Kate Thomas

THANK YOU

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