

**WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSISTENCE HUNTING IN ALASKA.** Henry P. Huntington. 1992. London: Belhaven Press, in association with the Scott Polar Research Institute; Seattle: University of Washington Press. xvii + 177 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-85293-246-5. £32.00.

Since the early 1980s the study of local knowledge, or, more precisely, the ecological and environmental knowledge of indigenous peoples, has been an increasing focus of those anthropologists, developers, planners, and wildlife managers concerned with formulating policies for sustainable land use and environmental conservation. Worldwide, one conflict of interest has been between those indigenous peoples who depend upon and exploit natural resources in order to make a living, and those who, on the other hand, seek to limit and control such natural-resource exploitation as one solution to environmental and energy crises. Such issues are played out within a context of competing environmental and political agenda that quite often seem irreconcilable. In Alaska, one such conflict is that between traditional, or customary, Inupiat Eskimo subsistence hunting and state and federal agency management regimes responsible for wildlife management and conservation. This book sets out to address this issue and attempts to argue that 'effective' management is possible, that is, management that allows for the protection of wildlife populations *and* the subsistence needs of local people in northern Alaska. The author concludes that this can be achieved through the success of co-operative management schemes that involve local hunters as parts of the management process.

Given both the issue and the author's experience and involvement in wildlife management (he has worked for the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission in Barrow, Alaska), I found this book and its contribution rather disappointing. What I thought would be a hard-hitting analysis of conflict and attempted reconciliation between wildlife management and subsistence hunting turned out to be theoretically weak and academically naive, and little more than an extensive survey of existing literature. The text is peppered with quotes from other sources, some of them quite lengthy, and I was left with a good idea of what other people have written about the issue, but with little understanding of the author's own views. This is a serious critical comment not only of the author's theoretical weaknesses but of his literary style, because his liberal use of quotes from secondary sources becomes rather irritating. His own writing is direct and to the point, but his sentences are often snappy and blunt and nothing more than links between what can only be described in parts as a continuous sub-text of secondary material.

I also had the feeling while reading this book that the author 'held back' somewhat in writing it. We are presented with a lot of very interesting material and information about state and federal agencies and their management regimes, and about Alaskan Eskimo wildlife commissions, but we are told nothing about them as institutional

cultures. As far as the Alaskan Eskimo wildlife management plans and wildlife commissions are concerned, there is a leaning towards indigenous ecological wisdom in the author's evaluation of their effectiveness. While not wishing to deny the significance of local knowledge, I think the author should have said something about how the Inupiat perceive their own ideas regarding wildlife and the environment in relation to internal processes of social change. We are told briefly about decision-making and leadership in traditional Inupiat society (chapter 3), but what about the politics of community consensus in relation to the authority structures of the North Slope Borough and the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission? To say that effective management is possible only because of the involvement and knowledge of local hunters in the decision-making process is surely not a forceful argument unless we are told what that local knowledge is and how it is used. The book would have benefited from the inclusion of comments from local people themselves interviewed by the author. As someone who has worked for the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, the author is in a unique position to tell us what the people of the North Slope not only think about state and federal agencies, but what they think about local management and local politics, and about those local Native people who are in positions of leadership and authority and are involved in the decision-making process. The politicization of Native culture is not just about empowerment and local control — Native elites have their own political agenda and ideological persuasions that have far-reaching consequences within local communities.

These weaknesses in the book are accentuated because it reads like a wildlife manager's report that the author tries to place in an academic setting that is hopelessly wide. Thus, in a section entitled 'The academic setting' (pages 6–12), he tells us that this setting is wildlife management, political science, anthropology, and polar studies. If the author had limited it to wildlife management and had then been more precise by what he meant, and if he had outlined a method, approach, or theoretical perspective to give weight to his study, then I would not have the same misgivings about this book. But I found little or no political science or anthropology in it. If the author indeed knows something about current anthropological work concerned with sustainable development, local knowledge, and the management of natural resources, then I would expect a far more stimulating discussion in parts. And what, I was left wondering, are the theoretical underpinnings of polar studies as an academic discipline?

These criticisms apart, there is no doubt that the issues addressed in this book are of pressing contemporary concern not only in the Arctic, but worldwide. Ever since the Brundtland Report, studies have stressed the need for sustainable development and reconciling this with government policy, and I do feel that this book has a value in that it provides an introduction and overview to the problem of integrating wildlife management, development, and sub-

sistence hunting in Alaska. However, while I can recommend it as a summary and guide to existing literature, I feel it is like a bowhead whale carcass without the meat. (Mark Nuttall, Department of Human Sciences, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH.)

**OUT IN THE COLD: THE LEGACY OF CANADA'S INUIT RELOCATION EXPERIMENT IN THE HIGH ARCTIC.** Alan Marcus. 1992. København: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. 117 p, soft cover. \$10.00 (US).

The story of development in Canada's Arctic has been told many times and from many different perspectives, and the various factors that have constrained it are by now well-known. This study, which deals with certain momentous events in the lives of a relatively small number of Inuit, exemplifies all these factors as if in a microcosm. I found it a first-rate piece of work.

To anyone with but a passing interest in recent Arctic history, the momentous events are themselves well known. They concern the setting up of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, now the northernmost civilian communities in Canada, in 1953–1955, by relocating Inuit from more southerly (in some instances, very much more southerly) communities. The reasons for the Canadian government sponsoring this relocation have also been fairly well discussed. However, it is to the author's credit that, because of meticulous research, this no-nonsense report not only fleshes out the details of these events in a most compelling way, it also demonstrates, for the first time in academic writing, what a sorry affair the whole business was. The author is careful to accept that his analysis has the benefit of hindsight and the perusal of substantial archival documentation (it also profits from the recollections, looking back over nearly 40 years, of many of those involved). Yet it is clearly only such analysis that can spell out vital lessons for the future: the failings of this episode, which have led an eminent professor of law in an independent report to call upon the Canadian government to apologise publicly to the Inuit, stem precisely from the government's confused motivations, inadequate research, and preparedness to take enormous risks with people's lives. Of particular interest to anthropologists was the government's evident lack of appreciation in this context of the nature of Inuit social structure and culture. Not surprisingly, the episode is today fast becoming, in Inuit eyes, a metaphor for government inadequacies vis-à-vis the Inuit throughout this century.

What is clear from this report is that the paternalistic attitudes of government in relation to Inuit, which generally prevailed in extreme form in the 1950s, were double-edged. Where the relocation of the Inuit to the high Arctic is concerned, the ostensible motives were the reasonably well-intentioned ones of 'dealing with' highly complex social and economic 'problems' in the northern Quebec emigrant community. Was this community in good or bad economic shape? Even the author hasn't decided (pages

22, 40, 50). Yet the extreme subservience of Inuit to government officials at this time also meant an almost total breakdown in communications between the two sides, such that the Inuit really had no idea as to what was being proposed on their behalf.

And then there were the ulterior motives.... (David Riches, Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9AL.)

**THE SOVIET ARCTIC.** Pier Horensma. 1991. London and New York: Routledge. xii + 228 p, maps, hard cover. ISBN 0-415-05537-7. £45.00.

There is a long tradition in Soviet scholarship of hiding interesting books on specific subjects under the bushel of dull, general titles. Something of this tradition seems to have rubbed off on the author of this intriguing, original, and provocative book. This is a published edition of his doctoral thesis, circulated under the title of 'The northern frontier: Soviet polar policy since 1917 and its relation to the history of exploration' (University of Groningen 1988). But even the earlier title did not do justice to what tries ultimately to be a study of the role of Stalinism as an ideology and as a style of exploration, foreign policy, and historiography in the Arctic.

The book is a treasury of details of expeditions, persons, and events. But the author places Soviet polar activity firmly within the context of political goals and constraints, such as the need to define the USSR's northern frontier or to link the country's western and Pacific coasts, and closely follows the nuances of each period. He also shows a fine appreciation of the political implications of technological advances such as icebreakers, or aeroplanes ('effective occupation could be replaced by domination from the air'). At the same time, he discusses the ambivalent attitude towards foreign countries, with the delicate interplay between an admiration for their polar explorers and the insecurity of a young state supposedly beset by these same countries cast as imperialist enemies. Thus research and strategic considerations were supplemented by propaganda, in the form of history and popular literature.

The Soviet Union had scored many firsts, and Stalin saw the country's own Arctic record as an advertisement for the socialist ideology and way of life that supposedly made these achievements possible. At home, this record provided readers with a model of revolutionary heroism; abroad, it aimed to command the admiration of foreigners and to validate legal claims. To the latter end, the propaganda also looked backwards, in a nationalist vein, to very early Russian explorers. The author carries the study into the Cold War period, with a discussion in particular of the historical writings of Belov and Pinkherson. But the story seems to tail off during the 1970s and 1980s and a skimpy appendix on Gorbachev's new era (not in the original dissertation) only serves to emphasise that the book's real focus is on the Stalinist period.

The author returns repeatedly to the theme of Stalinism