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The Nez Perce Environmental Economy

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Abstract

The Nez Perce Indians face a difficult task ensuring their cultural and religious ties to the environment in a world constantly in search of natural resources. The problems faced by the Nez Perce are not uncommon and occur on many Montana tribal lands as well. This thesis focuses on providing a complete picture of the Nez Perce Nation and its relationship to its environment with regards to the cultural, religious, and financial viability of the tribe. Incorporating many different secondary sources and the use of two sociological theories, phenomenology and rationalization, this thesis helps answer the question of how the Nez Perce do it. On an individual level, the tribal members may display or harbor different ideas about their environment compared to that of the tribe. However, the tribe maintains a strong sense of cultural and religious attitudes towards their environment while also seeking financial benefits from its natural resources. While the case of each tribe is different, the Nez Perce provide an example of maintaining traditional beliefs in regards to natural resource consumption.

Introduction

American Indians today face new challenges compared to their ancestors. America's growing pressure to find more natural resources is pressed upon tribes. Furthermore, the often bleak economic state of Native tribes allows for closed economic doors to be potentially open. For example, while a tribe may not have much economic development potential in areas such as gaming or tourism, their natural resources may present an opportune way to make money. As tribal culture and religion is often focused on the surrounding environment, Native American tribes might be forced to realign their cultural and religious beliefs in order to improve financially. According to the U.S. Department of the Interior, "there are '15 million acres of potential energy and mineral resources' in addition to the 2.1 million acres already tapped" (Grogan, Morse, Youpee-Roll 2011:6). These numbers apply to all Native American tribes as reported. The implicit, economic potential of the larger amounts of land and resources is tribally and nationally recognized. For many western American Indian tribes, their mineral, water, forest, and land rights increase in monetary value as outside interests take notice of their abundance. Within the Nez Perce reservation, out of 750,000 acres, "385,277 acres are considered cropland, 261,954 acres are used for grazing, and 100,159 acres are forestlands" (Steele 2013:3). The earning potential for these acres increases but also impacts the tribal view of land. As many western American Indian tribes face the possibilities of a growing environmental economy, the Nez Perce tribe of Idaho experiences the same issues but with a different purpose.

The Nez Perce Nation is located on a large reservation in north-central Idaho. Traditional Nez Perce Indian land ranged from southeastern Washington to northeastern

Oregon and most of north-central Idaho. Much of the modern reservation contains culturally important land for the Nez Perce. The preservation of traditional land provides the opportunity to maintain a strong connection to their environment on both a personal and tribal scale based on their desire for a strong sense of cultural identity. Furthermore, on the Nez Perce's reservation, the complex ecosystem and abundant resources foster a strong cohesion between the tribe and its surrounding environment. This relationship symbolizes itself within many tribal actions, whether they are cultural, religious, or financial. The relationship also introduces difficult questions for the tribe. Perhaps the most important, what is the responsibility and consequences the tribe must accept for their environmental actions?

The purpose of this case study is to examine these questions and the tribe's response, on both the individual member and collective group's level, in light of social theory. The research focuses on the evolving relationship between the tribe and its environment, with an emphasis on the logging and salmon industries. Guided by both Phenomenological and Rationalization theory, this case study explores the tribe's modern resource management and its effects upon the tribe's cultural, religious, and financial institutions.

Brief History

The Nez Perce tribe once controlled over 15 million acres spanning southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon and north-central Idaho. As Steven Evans describes, "the Nez Perce homeland is marked by tremendous mountain ranges and deep canyons" (Evans 1996:8). "From time immemorial," the Nez Perce's have held sacred "the

mountaintops, the ridges, and the high meadows between the precipices, which are sources of countless streams” (Evans 1996: 35). Early on, “Lewis and Clark observed that the Nez Perce’s enjoyed a lifestyle peculiarly adapted to their environment” (Evans 1996: 9). Thus, prior large scale contact with outsiders, the Nez Perce was a peaceful tribe reliant upon their traditional land and its cycles for sustainability. Within their domain, they flourished as the abundance of rivers provided salmon and mountain habitats provided roots and large game. The treaty of 1855 between the Nez Perce and the U.S. government brought the first wave of land reductions for the Nez Perce. The treaty originally reduced tribal land by 13 million acres. After the gold rush of 1860, the treaties of 1863 and 1868 further reduced Nez Perce land by 90% as well disbanded the Nez Perce consolidated government with three other tribes located in Washington and Oregon (National Park Service 2014). (The consolidated government had brought three tribes together to work against the American government for maintaining their spiritual and traditional grounds.) Finally, the treaty of 1873 relinquished the Wallowa and Imnaha valleys from Nez Perce control, areas of spiritual and cultural importance. The influx of settlers called for governmental action aimed at ensuring the economic rights of the miners and other proprietors. This action marked the beginning in long and continuing efforts by outside forces to encroach on Nez Perce land with the focus on extracting the abundant resources.

The current Nez Perce reservation consists of 750,000 acres within north-central Idaho. Within the reservation, the drainages of the Snake, Salmon, and Clearwater rivers help create diverse landscape that ranges from 700 feet at its lowest to over 9000 feet at its highest. As the tribe was losing its land, the economic value the tribe placed upon the

land diminished as well. When using the term economical in correlation to the tribe in a historical sense, it is important to remember that the tribe viewed the land based on its resource productivity. Therefore, the ability to live on the land was the economic value. Land reduction was a hard fact that many tribes were forced to eventually accept. Most tribes retaliated in wars or resistance, with the Nez Perce being no exception. The loss of land signified not only a loss of spiritually important land but culturally and economically important land. Christopher Vecsey argues, in *American Indian Environments*, that “removal was more than a political loss; it was a crisis of life itself, a religious crisis of the deepest order” (Vecsey 1980:26). The loss of culturally important land presented the Nez Perce tribe with a difficult situation. In order to both assimilate into American culture while enforcing their own, the tribe made difficult decisions in response to the preservation of their cultural and spiritual resources. Over time, the financial benefit of these choices became the key dilemma. Therefore, the present-day Nez Perce reservation represents the continued evolution of Nez Perce culture based on its remaining lands and resources.

Research Question

This research focuses on providing a thorough case study of the modern relationship between the Nez Perce tribe and its environment. By delving into the issues the Nez Perce face in balancing their connection to the environment and the environment’s financial opportunities, we find that the tribe faces a similar problem as many other western tribes. For example, the Lakota Sioux’s persistent fight in regaining the spiritual Black Hills is a similar dilemma in which the cultural importance of the land

constitutes the basis of their fight. While the Lakota Sioux focus their fight on regaining the land, the Nez Perce focus their fight towards maintaining the strong relationship through a variety of programs. The important difference between the two tribes' actions rests on the success the respective tribes have had. The Lakota Sioux are still fighting to regain their land while the Nez Perce continues to foster their desired environmental relationship with all areas defined by the 1855 treaty.

In order to explore the various matters, secondary sources, such as books and government documents, provide the reasons for Nez Perce actions. The theories, phenomenology and rationalization, postulate the reasoning between the difference at the tribal and individual level. Hypothetically, the difference between the individual and tribal relationship will be significant. Although there will be a lack of definitive proof, the tribe will maintain a strong connection via their environmentally, focused programs. On the other hand, individual members will adjust their attitudes towards the land based on their interaction with it. Although it would be nice to say that all members share a deep and continued connection through the various programs, it is theoretically impossible because each member will rationalize differently as well perceive the land differently. Therefore, based on the theory of rationalization, individual members will rationalize the land due to their learned cultural understanding of it. Based on phenomenology, individual members will have associated different ideas with the surrounding environment based on their bodily interactions and lessons attributed. In order to fully understand the hypothesis, this case study will highlight the various programs and apply both theories to understanding the issue. As a whole, the case study answers the question of what is the modern day relationship between the Nez Perce and

their environment. Specifically, how has the relationship affected the culture, religion, and financial viability within the tribe?

Theory

The theories of phenomenology and rationalization apply to understanding the relationship between the Nez Perce and their environment because both theories have arguments supported by the Nez Perce's actions. Phenomenology will tackle the individual understanding of Nez Perce culture (Kirby 2008). Phenomenology is defined as the:

Study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view...an experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning together with appropriate enabling conditions (Stanford 2003).

For individual actors, they experience objects and associate meaning to the object. These meanings become bracketed and, thus, define the object as such. The basis of phenomenology focuses on the idea of individual characters creating the world around them. The objects or relationships within the observer's direct experiences constitute the "lifeworld" (Overgaard 2009: 4) Within the "lifeworld," the person establishes their conscious understanding based on the rules set in place (Overgaard 2009: 4). More specifically, the "lifeworld" is "the world we ordinarily take for granted, the pre-scientific, experientially given world that we are familiar with" (Overgaard 2009: 4) Within Nez Perce culture, each individual member has created a unique understanding of their surrounding world based on their constant interactions with it. Within this understanding, the individual brackets their life to best assimilate with their surroundings. Therefore, an individual's "lifeworld" may compel them to act in certain ways

(Overgaard 2009: 4). For example, a tribal member, who grew up reliant upon the financial gain the environment brought, may only understand the environment as a means to financial gain.

Rationalization helps explain why certain individuals may act differently than others. While predominantly an economic theory, rationalization “is a process whereby thought and action rooted in emotion...and tradition are replaced by value-rational thought and action” (sociology.com). George Ritzer’s modern approach to rationalization presents the idea of formal rationality (Ritzer 30: 2013). Within formal rationality, people disregard their needs and values to accommodate the Western, industrialized world (Ritzer 30: 2013). For individual Nez Perce members, their actions may disregard their needs and values because of their desire to assimilate into western culture. While they portray a unique relationship to the environment, the individuals may disregard tribal desires in order fulfill theirs. For example, a Nez Perce man may request their share of lease money because they need its support. Furthermore, they request it because it represents their idealized power over the land compared to outsiders. While the tribe has a legal right to the land, it could be conceivable that outside interests represent a threat to this legal right. Therefore, a Nez Perce tribal member’s rational attitude towards their environment represents their ideological understanding

Methodology

A case study should utilize many different sources of information while examining them in light of theory to provide a clear picture of the subject. Within this case study secondary sources will provide the base sources of information. The Nez

Perce tribe is a difficult tribe to research due to a lack of research based on their modern actions. Most works about the Nez Perce tribe focus on either the plight of Chief Joseph or the relationship between the tribe and Lewis and Clark. Such books include *Chief Joseph* (Vanessa Gunther 2010), *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (Elliot West 2009), and *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest* (Alvin Josephy 2007). Therefore, finding books relevant to what I am discussing was difficult. In order to find such works, I expanded my search to include tribal literature related to the environment, such as *Wisdom Sits in Places* (Keith Basso 1996) and *God is Red* (Vine Deloria 1973). Such works may apply to all Native Americans but can provide basic arguments for the Nez Perce's actions.

In order to focus on literature pertaining to Nez Perce culture, the use of broad American Indian writings and essays were utilized to substantiate my hypotheses. Furthermore, as no case study regarding the modern Nez Perce exists, literature focusing on the tribe and individual programs does exist. The literature focuses primarily on the relationship between the tribe and salmon but no other resources. For the theoretical aspect, sources defining traditional Nez Perce as well Native American beliefs were the most plausible. Articles, like Charles Schmidt's *Who Decides the Law of the Land*, (1998) and books, like Robert Warrior's *Tribal Secrets* (1995), provide the information for explaining the theoretical differences between the tribe and its individual members. Thus, the methodology of this case study will utilize secondary sources as the basis for the arguments.

Fundamentals of American Indian Religion

Within American Indian societies, the sense of spirituality within their environmental relationship remains an important tool for cultural identity (Vecsey 1980: 3). Within American Indian mythology, this relationship demonstrates itself within the various stories connecting the land to a specific aspect of their religion (Vecsey 1980: 6). Tribal culture is often a representation of this relationship. Over time, outside forces such as “the white man” forced the tribes to forfeit these sacred lands under the premise of better opportunities (Vecsey 1980: 7). As the process plays itself out, the tribes are often left with land that, traditionally, has no importance. The tribe must then adhere to western culture in the hopes their culture would be destroyed. Consequently, tribes began to lose the sacred connection they carried. For scholars, this “disenchantment” became a major source of study for understanding the modern tribal culture and religion. For Robert Warrior (1996), this issue became the central idea in his attempt to understand how tribal religions could be modernized amidst current environmental practices.

For Robert Warrior, the question focused on how a tribal religion can modernize and not if they could. In *Tribal Secrets*, Robert Warrior posits that “ecological, political and spiritual crises of the twentieth century are the result of the misguided attempt to separate humanity from the rest of creation” (Warrior 1995:71). This separation forces the decline of strong religious and cultural environmental ties within American Indian cultures. In order to reverse this trend, Warrior focuses on discussing both Vine Deloria’s and John Joseph Matthew’s literature for the answer. In Vine Deloria Jr.’s *God is Red* (1994), Warrior found Deloria’s argument focused on the pressured transformation of the Native religious tradition to conform to Catholic religious tradition (Warrior 1995).

Catholic religion's idea of history is concrete, without places, and focuses on an endpoint while Native religion is much more place-oriented, evolving, and never ending. The beauty of Native religions, Deloria argues, is their evolutionary ability in the face of outside forces. Thus, in order to combine the two viewpoints, the future of the religion rests on the realization "that the basis of Indian tribal religions is not preserving social forms and ceremonies but creating new forms and ceremonies to confront new situations" (Warrior 1995: 84). Rather than fighting for tradition, tribes must alter their view of history towards relational but concrete. The tribes must create new ceremonies focused on their relationship to the environment but also inclusive of new ideas. For the Nez Perce, traditional ceremonies, such as the First Salmon, must become about the representation of their environment as well its economic purposes.

Dominant societies place various pressures, either negative or positive, upon tribal culture. The pressures Native Americans face is whether they should integrate into American culture or maintain a strong semblance of traditional culture. Thus, the tribe's continued fight to preserve its cultural and religious environmental connections is paramount to the tribe's sustainability. In order for a tribe's environmental relationship to remain intact, the rebuilding of community responsibilities must be implemented into the education process (Warrior 1995: 110). Otherwise, Deloria believes "the struggle for self-determination will be a false lead that encourages Euro-American values of professionalization, accumulation of wealth, and exploitation of land" (Warrior 1995: 110). Younger, native generations must understand the importance of combining both traditional and modern viewpoints. By doing so, the chances of cultural preservation in

the modern, economic atmosphere remain high. Overall, Warrior understood this ideology as paramount for today's tribes.

Literature

Mythology

The spirituality of the Nez Perce Indians has very much to do with the animals and plants its livelihood historically depended upon. Long being a tribe symbolized by their strong environmental ties, the Nez Perce represented their beliefs within mythology. For the Nez Perce, the salmon and coyote are the most important animals as shown by their big roles. While being the most important animal, the salmon acts a figure of prosperity and survival within stories of Nez Perce culture and creation (Columbi 2012, Walker 1980). Its importance in the creation and early days of the tribe is defined by other animal's actions. Many characters within Nez Perce mythology worked to maintain a healthy amount of salmon. For example, within the creation story, the Coyote's first act was to create the means by which the salmon would enter into Nez Perce territory. It is within these stories that the tribe symbolizes its appreciation or the fish. Furthermore, the tribe's willingness to use physical beings as representative of their beliefs symbolizes the idea of the earth and the tribe in an active and healthy relationship. Maintaining this idea constitutes the salmon's transcendence from a primary food source to a key figure within Nez Perce culture.

Within Nez Perce mythology, the coyote is the creator. The coyote's role within the creation story, and many others, symbolizes the tribe's belief in its resources as being a gift from the earth. The coyote created the tribe by first "building a fish ladder...at

Celilo, so that salmon could go upstream for the people to catch” (Walker 1994: 9). He then “left in his wake great camas roots and great serviceberries” (Walker 1994: 9). Finally, he tied himself to three mountaintops and was swallowed by the monster (Walker 1994: 9). Within the monster, he set a fire and proceeded to cut out the heart (Walker 1994: 9). After the monster had exploded, the heart of the monster still remains (present today in Kamiah, Idaho) (Walker 1994: 9). The creation story features many environmental ties for the Nez Perce culture. The building of the salmon ladder pertains to the strong connection the tribe shares with the salmon. The planting of camas roots and serviceberries pertains to the strong reliance on the plants for sustenance. Finally, the location of the heart of the monster provides a geographic point in which the Nez Perce can tie its history to the earth. Throughout the many stories within Nez Perce mythology, the strong connection between the tribe and its environment is evident in the many explanations for why certain areas are as they appear.

In Deward Walker Jr.’s *Myths of Idaho Indians* and *Blood of the Monster*, he drives home the historical relation between the tribe and its surrounding environment through the tribe’s mythology. His argument that the “coyote is the creation of the Nez Perce and much of their environment” displays the continued relationship the tribe shares with its environment. Vecsey (1980) provides a similar argument. He correlates the importance many tribal nations placed upon their environment as evident by their stories. Vecsey argues that American Indian culture revolves with their surroundings and, thus, plays a huge role in deciding how they would act (Vecsey 1980: 6). American Indians have long been considered the first “environmentalists;” thus, they actively preserved their environment to ensure their physical and spiritual survival (Vecsey 1980: 6). For

both authors, mythology provides a clear gateway into the Native American culture and its reliance upon the environment as key role players in the creation of tribes. Therefore, both Walker's book and Vesey's essay provide insights towards understanding American Indian spiritual culture and its relation to their environment.

Reservation Land Usage

Maura Grogan conducted a research project in 2011 titled *Native American Lands and Natural Resource Development*. Within the project, the author focused on the mining and oil industries effect on Native American tribes located in western states such as Arizona, Montana, and Utah. Within their project they found many instances of tribes being both open and opposed to natural resource extraction on their land. However, the relationship between the tribal governments and the federal government has confused who has claims to the lands and what can be done on the lands. An important decision to help clarify the process was the passage of the Indian Mineral Development Act in 1982. The act "strengthened tribal control of mineral development" (Grogan 2011: 19). Furthermore, the act allowed the tribes to negotiate with corporations without the involvement of the federal government (although they could request assistance). Along with the act, many federal agencies are in place to assist the tribe in ensuring proper payment from corporations. However, the lack of expertise in the field has created a situation in which the tribe and the government must rely on the corporation to properly report the correct numbers. The honorary agreement has many shortcomings but is the best available.

The overarching theme of the report was to provide an in-depth look at the relationship between tribes containing non-renewable resources and third-party interests. Its aim was to find if the relationship benefited the tribe in that it allowed the tribe to accept the proper royalties and lease fees it was due. While the basics of the study did not pertain to the Nez Perce tribe because of their lack of such resources, the study did shed a light on the complicated relationship. The federal and tribal government wants the tribes to benefit economically from their resources. Furthermore, programs are in place to which define a significant amount of responsibility in the negotiations and contracts for the tribes. However, the true problem lies within inner-tribal conflict over whether the land should be used for economic benefit.

One such example is the Northern Cheyenne in Montana. The tribe elected to “not mine their substantial coal reserves;” however, “there is pressure even within the tribe to change that stance” (Grogan 2011: 11). The beneficiaries of the various environmental programs are the tribe as a whole. Individual land owners do not have the power to contract with corporations. Therefore, the continued struggle lies in finding the balance as a tribe to appease individual members seeking the economic benefit of their land. In relation to the Nez Perce, the same idea can be applied to how the Nez Perce treat their land. The logging contracts on tribal land apply to the whole tribe and not individual land owners. Therefore, the process of energy extraction extends further than individual tribal members.

William Hagan (1980) focuses on the utilization of reservation land. He discusses the history of outsiders encroaching upon American Indian land to steal their resources (Hagan 1980: 65). Furthermore, he links this attitude to greed, the basis for many of the

relationships between outside companies and American Indians (Hagan 1980: 75). He believes American Indians are immune to greed-driven resource extraction and, therefore, do not understand its implications. While the tribes do willingly allow resource extraction, they do not perceive its cultural and religious beliefs as being affected. The attitude of greed dominates the modern social landscape of Native Americans and their environment. While the tribe may not choose to be greedy, the western culture instills the idea that monetary gain is a positive attribute. As the idea is a positive tribes begin to understand and rationalize their actions as being congruent with the western culture. Thus, their ownership of the land becomes about the money gained and not the social benefits lost. However, if Hagan's ideas are brought into modern times, the implication of greed would be irrelevant. Within modern times, tribal cultures have, hypothetically, began to understand the implications of greed. Thus, they may act based on increasing social benefits, primarily culturally.

Economic Benefits

The next six sections will provide many of the different Nez Perce programs in place intended to assist with rehabilitating and continuing a strong economic and cultural connection to the surrounding land. Core to the belief of the Nez Perce tribe, the “necessity of oneness with the earth and environment” is best displayed through “natural resource management that meets the demands of modern society” but promotes “cultural protection and economic stimulus” (NPTFFMD). Therefore, the discussed programs overall goals are to both protect cultural resources yet promote economic practices.

Fishing

The Nez Perce tribe has long integrated the local fishing habitat into their culture. Within this relationship, the tribe formed a strong spiritual connection to the various fish species as well the annual cycles. Therefore, as the tribe began to lose their land and ancient waterways, they fought to maintain control over areas they had always fished. Within the Treaty of 1855, “the Nez Perce retained total fishing rights on all streams and rivers within the boundaries of the original 13.4 million acre reservation” (Nez Perce Fisheries). Within this agreement, the tribe dictates the fishing seasons, the total count, how fish can be caught and many other rules and regulations. The purpose of the agreement, according to the Department of Fisheries Resource Management, the tribal program to enforce the agreement, “is to recover and restore all species and populations of anadromous and resident fish within the traditional lands of the Nez Perce Tribe” (Department of Fisheries Resource Management). , The Department of Fisheries Resource Management works “to restore a balance with nature, bring fish populations and their habitats to healthy conditions, and provide harvest opportunities for tribal members” (Nez Perce 2013:6). Therefore, the Nez Perce do actively work in ensuring future generations with the same resources they and their ancestors received.

When discussing the Nez Perce fishing and economic benefits, it is important to keep a loose definition of economic benefit. Therefore, the rest of this section will define economic benefit as a financial or cultural benefit of significant proportion to the tribe. Thus, the selling of fishing permits within reservation land would correlate the same as the reintroduction of previously absent salmon species. When browsing through the fisheries department website, one is quick to see the many different success stories the

tribe's fisheries have. For example, the Clearwater River Coho restoration project began when the Nez Perce tribe understood the "cultural and ecological importance of the Coho to the Clearwater river" (Department of Fisheries Resource Management). Since its inception, the tribe was able, through the use of advance fishery technology and pure determination to bring back a species considered extirpated in the Clearwater River basin. With the completion of the first successful Coho run, the tribe benefited both financially through sold fishing permits and culturally through the reintroduction of a vital salmon species.

The tribe's spiritual and cultural connection to the salmon drives its attitude towards conserving the fishing habitat. Another key way for the tribe to ensure their complete control over fishing practices within the reservation is ensuring only Nez Perce tribal members the opportunity to both fish for ceremony and commercial purposes. According to Nez Perce Code, "any Nez Perce tribal member shall be authorized to engage in commercial fishing" by following the rules and regulations set forth by the Nez Perce tribe. Only tribal members can conduct commercial fishing and only tribal members can benefit economically from fishing within Nez Perce authority. For ceremonial fishing, members must apply for a permit to use caught fish for ceremonial purposes. Therefore, the tribe does help ensure a continued spiritual connection with the fish because of allowing traditional practices to be held. Through the enforcement of strict fishing laws as well the creation of advanced hatcheries, the tribe symbolizes Native American efforts to maintain traditional beliefs.

Hunting

The economic benefits the tribe seeks from hunting regulations do not generate much financial support. Rather, through the treaties of 1855 and 1863, the Nez Perce tribal members retained the right to hunt out of the state season within reservation land. Unlike the water rights the tribe received, the extent of Nez Perce hunting grounds reaches the modern day reservation border. Much like fishing rights, the Nez Perce do exercise their ability to regulate and define hunting laws within their reservation borders. However, hunting permits are not needed from the tribe. Therefore, the extent to which the Nez Perce benefit financially from hunting regulations is very small. They regulate their own and state/federal hunting regulations in order to maintain a healthy resource system. Thus, the main benefit of hunting is the providing of rule enforcement jobs.

Logging

The Nez Perce tribe's location coupled with two national forests, Nez Perce national forest and Clearwater national forest, create a unique economic opportunity for the tribe. The creation of two programs, the Nez Perce Forest Products Enterprise and the Nez Perce Tribe Forestry and Fire Management Division, symbolizes the desire for the tribe to benefit both economically and culturally from their surrounding forest. According to the NPTFFMD (Nez Perce Tribe Forestry and Fire Management Division), believe "timber resource is recognized as being only one component of the total forest value" (Nez Perce Tribe Forestry & Fire Management Division). Furthermore, the program understands that the "health and productivity of the timber resource is ultimately dependent upon maintaining the overall health of all forest resources" (Nez Perce Tribe

Forestry & Fire Management Division). As “the income generated from the Nez Perce Tribe’s forests help the tribal government,” the Nez Perce understands the environmental, economic, and social impact of the forest (Nez Perce Tribe Forestry & Fire Management Division). Overall, the whole goal of the program is “providing economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable forest management to the Nez Perce Tribe (Nez Perce Tribe Forestry & Fire Management Division). The creation of two separate programs geared towards promoting environmentally and economically sound practices represents the tribe’s continued fight to maintaining the importance of their surrounding land.

A fundamental practice for the Nez Perce tribe is the AAC. The AAC (Annual Allowable Cut) provides “the Nez Perce Tribe with an annual cash flow from the harvest of forest products” (2005). The process of fulfilling the AAC starts with the Nez Perce Forest Products Enterprise. The enterprise prepares “all timber sale bids, notices, agreements, and contracts that are offered by the Nez Perce Tribe” (2005). Furthermore, it compiles “a log scale report on log deliveries” and documents “financial transactions to contractors and the Nez Perce Tribe” (2005). By controlling much of the annual cut, the tribe dictates how the resource should be managed. If they manage it according to their basic principal of culturally and economically driven practices, the tribe maintains a strong sense of identity with the forest while profiting from it. Therefore, the tribe’s focus is not on the economic benefit the forest provides, but rather its cultural and spiritual benefits.

Carbon Royalties

The Nez Perce tribe actively uses carbon royalties as a means to offset forest loss. Beginning in the 1990s, “the Nez Perce Forestry and Fire Management Division began developing a Carbon Offset strategy to market Carbon Sequestration Credits” (Kummet: 1). Within the program, the tribe “planned to reinvest revenue from the sale of carbon to acquire previously forested lands and then replicate the process with additional afforestation projects” (Kummet: 1). In order to participate in the market, “the Nez Perce tribe indirectly monitors the impact of climate change through inventories of natural resources” (Kummet: 2). Basically, the Nez Perce understands the climate impact due to foresting.

By selling carbon to logging companies, the tribe offsets the loss of oxygen production and renewable resources. Furthermore, the tribe reuses the money made from carbon sales to replant barren forest land. The program represents the tribe’s understanding of resource management. Furthermore, the program represents the tribe’s understanding of balancing economic benefit and cultural benefit. Rather than distribute the money, the tribe replenishes lost forest land for both future economic purposes as well as cultural and religious purposes. Amongst other benefits, the program improves “water quality through watershed protection” and reduces “soil erosion and sedimentation, which improves the fish habitat in the river below, and the restoration of wildlife habitat” (Kummet: 3). Therefore, by replenishing barren land with carbon offsets, the tribe actively maintains important cultural and spiritual symbols such as the wildlife and fishing habitats, both integral parts of Nez Perce religion. Finally, the program is one of the many modern examples of the tribes continued reliance on

economic opportunities to maintain a strong cultural and religious identity with their surrounding land.

Land Usage Fees

Land usage fees are not isolated to the Nez Perce tribe. Within Grogan's study, many western tribes utilize land usage fees as a way for third parties to extract natural resources for the economic benefit of the tribe. While the Nez Perce reservation is primarily composed of farmland, pastureland, and forestland, the tribe utilizes fees as a way to rent out non-tribal land and still reap the financial derivatives of the land. Valdasue Steele's *A Guide to Living on the Nez Perce Reservation* (2013) provides the basics of the Nez Perce land usage program. In order to lease land on the reservation, a potential user must contact the Nez Perce Tribe's Land Services Department to apply (Steele 2013:7). The process generally involves bidding and most leases are only 5 years long (Steel 2013:7). For farms, most leases "are crop share or cash rent" while "grazing leases are per animal unit month" (Steel 2013:7). After the lease is accepted, the user must "sign a conservation plan and the BIA manages the lease contract for the landowners" (Steele 2013:7). The simple process has many goals for the Nez Perce tribe.

The overall goal of the program is to "provide land management services to the NPTEC and individual-Indian landowners that provide economic benefit while protecting and enhancing their natural and cultural resources (Nez Perce Land Services). Another important goal of the program is to "develop and promote the use of biological control agents (insects) for the control of noxious weeds" (Nez Perce Land Services). The Nez Perce tribe is open to non-Indian land ownership as long as the owner complies with

strict regulations. The program is designed to provide economic benefit to the tribe through both financial opportunities and cultural preservation. Therefore, the money earned from the program is directed back to the tribe to be dispersed amongst the members. Aside from the financial gain of land fees, the landowner's practices ensure a continued cultural and religious tie to the land. The tribe understands the importance of agriculture and uses it to help maintain the culturally important environment. Therefore, the program is one of the best examples of the tribe utilizing their surrounding environment to strengthen their cultural and religious ties.

Land Value for Nez Perce

American Indian traditional beliefs may pose a difficulty in understanding the financial connection the Nez Perce tribe shares with its environment. Miriam Hammer's "Valuation of American Indian Land and Water Resources: A Guidebook" (2002) focuses on the insecurity of Native American tribes in placing an economic value on their land. The trouble many tribes face today focuses on a lack of interpretation regarding Native American's land values. Increasingly, "American Indians have become offended by the suggestion of putting any monetary value on resources that have cultural and social importance" (Hammer 2002: 3). Thus, "the problem facing economists" is to find a balance between suggesting economic values in light of Native Americans values "Hammer 5: 2002). As Native Americans "would like to see a greater weight placed on their cultural and religious values for their water and land resources," modern economic policies do not place such a value on resources. Therefore, the idea of land value is

strikingly different between the modern land resource market and Native American tribes.

For the Nez Perce, the same issue is hypothetically assumed. As the tribe values their surrounding environment based on its cultural importance, the land valuation is dependent upon both tribal resources and outside interests. In the case of logging, the tribe's Annual Allowable Cut represents both their desires and outside desires. The Nez Perce understand the importance of resource management and act to manage the land based on its cultural impact. Thus, they may choose to vary the cut based on present cultural beliefs. For outside desires, the logging cut represents a certain amount of money to be garnered from the lumber. They pursue a cut designed to reach the best economic outcome. For both parties, the value of the land differs based on their view of the land. Thus, the idea of land valuation does contribute heavily towards Nez Perce environmental actions.

Historical Assertions

Pre-Modern Relationship

Mentioned previously, the gold rush of 1867 brought a large influx of miners and prospective land owners to Idaho. According to Valdasue Steele, "over 50,000 miners" moved to the reservation which led to the establishment of Lewiston and Orofino (Steele 2013: 2). With the influx, outside interests were introduced to the regions valuable resources. Outside interests began the long and successful fight to reduce the Nez Perce reservation land from its original 7.5 million acres to 750,000 acres (Steele 2013: 2). Within the lost land, many sacred sites, such as the Wallowa mountain range, were

removed from tribal ownership. The forced land reduction along with the loss of sacred land created two ideologies within the tribe.

One faction argued for a smooth assimilation process into American culture. The other faction argued for a more traditional approach to the problem with the only hypothetical result being a monetary demand for all land. Now while the two groups did not physically exist, they hypothetically could have because the Nez Perce tribe's ordeal mirrored many other tribes. Within the other tribes, such groups existed with the older generations fitting within the assimilation faction and the younger generations fitting into the traditional faction. The uniqueness of the Nez Perce tribe's dilemma was their first initial reactions. Many people know of Chief Joseph's war and flight to Canada as a result of outside interests pressuring the government to take action against the group. However, most people do not know of young tribal leader's quick understanding of the American economic system as well the importance of land preservation through management.

Steven Even's novel *The Voices of Old Wolf* (1996) discusses the two groups. However, it was not due to an ideological split. Rather, one band, led by Chief Joseph demanded the inclusion of the Wallowa Mountains into the reservation (Steele 2013:2). Since the government was unwilling to compromise on the matter, they originally created another reservation to accommodate Joseph's demands (Steele 2013:2). The other group was represented by those who lived within the government created reservation. It was Joseph's band who demanded traditional lands while the other bands demanded assimilation. Therefore, traditionalists, as they will be called, focused their efforts on reclaiming the sacred Wallowa Mountains within Northeastern Oregon. On the other

hand, modernists focused on pacifying the growing tensions between the tribe and the US by pushing for assimilation of the Nez Perce into American culture.

A major factor in assimilating for modernist members was the adoption of resource extraction for capital gain. As discussed in land valuation, a key issue facing Native Americans is their general misunderstanding of land value in the American sense. Especially for a tribe just beginning the assimilation process, the difficulty for putting a price tag on their environment would run contrary to their cultural and religious ties. Therefore, the tribe's pre-modern relationship with the environment was represented by their assimilation into American resource economies.

Two examples exist representing the Nez Perce quick assimilation into resource extraction. First, Chief Joseph, before he became the legendary war chief and leader, was a strong proponent for the reclamation of traditional land. The Wallowa Mountains, the original home of Chief Joseph, were ideal fishing and hunting grounds as well rich in spiritual history. After Chief Joseph and his band had been removed from the land and resettled in Idaho, he fought the action through several venues, one being the actual sale of the land. His "plan, and undoubtedly the plan of those who followed him, was to extract a cash settlement from the federal government," from which he would "use these funds to purchase an area where they might live in conjunction with the white citizens" (Evans 1996: 34). Therefore, his approach combined using the western practice of land-buying with the Nez Perce's strong association with the land.

The introduction of natural resource companies symbolizes the tribe's first attempts at maintaining a strong connection with their land through modern practices. Chief Joseph understood that such companies were not going to disappear and that

reclaiming his original home land was not possible. Therefore, his rational propelled him to undertake a modern practice in order to regain a sense of the lost land. Rationally speaking, Chief Joseph did not need to buy back the land. He could have fought for it; but, instead, he opted to buy because he could and it was a method he probably thought would find favor with the government. His ideology fits into the perspective of formal rationality. Instead of being driven by his cultural valuation of the land, he attempted to buy because of his submission of western practices.

Another factor in his decision was driven by his objective understanding of the mountains. He had a strong interest in the land because it was both his original home and it represented a strong connection to the environment. His interactions with the mountains and their sacred sites associated the area as a place of importance for himself as well his band. In his argument with Alice Fletcher, the agent in charge of the allotment process for the Nez Perce, he demanded that he take back the Wallowa Valley. He stated, “our fathers were born here...we will never leave them” (Greenwald 2002:78). Furthermore, Chief Joseph’s father reminded him to “always remember that your father never sold his country” (Deloria 1994: 173). He grew up associating his homeland as a place of importance and one that should not be given up. The importance of regaining the land not only focused on preserving tradition land but also providing ideal management for it. Chief Joseph and his band best understand the land and the proper practices for its management. In order to ensure the land would remain the same, the chief felt it was best if they were in charge of its preservation. Therefore, his association drove him to attempt in acquiring the land through American terms.

The allotment act of 1887 provoked different reactions within the Nez Perce tribe. In Lapwai, the tribal headquarters, Alice Fletcher was often met with displeasure. One tribesman was quoted saying “who made this law...this is our land by long possession and by treaty...we are content to be as we are” (Greenwald 2002:61). However, she found the attitude towards allotment more favorable amongst the Kamians, who resided in present day Kamiah. There she found tribal members “better versed in the concepts that informed the Dawes Act: sedentary agriculture, Christianity, and citizenship” (Greenwald 2002: 62). The split within the tribe signifies two separate groups content with preserving their land in various manners.

The Dawes Act was meant to break up existing reservations into 160 acre allotments with the intention of both assimilating the tribes into American culture and breaking the strong cohesion within tribes. The agreeing attitude from the Kamians stemmed from the 1863 treaty in which “their village had been partially divided into twenty-acre parcels” (Greenwald 2002: 62). Their attitudes represent a growing understanding of the increased presence of outside interests on their land. In general, once both sides agreed to participate in the allotment of their land, the tribe “used their land selections to perpetuate traditional environmental and cultural practices” (Greenwald 2002: 8). The Nez Perce initially understood the impending loss of land but chose to act upon it in order to maintain a strong association with their environment. They rationalized their decisions based on what gave them the most cultural preservation opportunities. Furthermore, they traditionally understood their surrounding land as a means for cultural identity. In order to maintain the strong identity, it was important they chose land with strong correlations to cultural beliefs

Modern Day Relationship

The modern day relationship between the Nez Perce and its environment bases itself on integrated resource management. This practice stems from traditional practices and cultural understandings. As “they depended upon the land and its creatures for physical and spiritual sustenance,” the tribe presented “a unique understanding of the natural cycles turning upon the land and river systems” (Meyers 1993). This inherent belief in the environment as sacred evolved to combine modern economic practices with modern beliefs. Prior to the influx of outside populations, the land on which the Nez Perce resided only carried cultural and spiritual value. Today, the influx created a third valuation, financial. In order to accommodate to this third valuation, the tribe has created various programs and relationships to maintain its strong cultural and religious ties.

Integrated resource management is often credited to only being seen on reservations, chiefly the Nez Perce. At the core of integrated resource management, a society conducts their management in accordance with “the life cycles of fish, wildlife, and plants of the region” (Meyers 1993). By adhering to this principal, a society can come “to understand the interrelationships among” the various elements (Meyers 1993). For the Nez Perce, finding a sense of harmony with their environment was important to their spiritual health. An important part of this belief is “spiritually maintaining the proper relationships with the land and its fish, plant, and animal populations” (Crawford et al 2005:147). This relationship gains “both food and spiritual guidance for the human communities” (Crawford et al 2005: 147). In seeking this relationship, Nez Perce members sought a *weyekin*, a guardian spirit symbolized by an aspect of the surrounding

environment (Crawford et al 2005: 147). The *weyekin* indicated a sense of “kinship, in which human, animal, fish, plant, and spirit are in partnership” (Crawford et al 2005: 147). The overall understanding within Nez Perce religion was the concept of maintaining a deep connection with the surrounding environment. The practice of integrated resource management allows for this connection to continue in modern times.

Within the Nez Perce government, many tribal departments are geared towards continuing this connection. Of the 47 tribal departments, 17 departments deal with environmental issues. Within each department, commissions or programs specifically focus on one issue. Within the Department of Natural Resources, 12 different commissions and programs deal with issues ranging from logging to land leasing. The many departments display an active role towards promoting a healthy economic and cultural atmosphere. Many environmental departments and commissions base their actions on promoting cohesion with the environment while seeking economic gain to benefit the tribe. Therefore, the political structure of the Nez Perce promotes the continuance of traditional beliefs amidst an atmosphere of economic gain..

The Nez Perce have implemented various programs and created relationships focused on providing a monetary income for their environmental practices. The foremost example of this practice is the Nez Perce fish hatchery. According to the fish and wildlife commission, the three main goals of the commission are:

- “1. To develop principles, tribal code, and policies, promoting a comprehensive and cultural approach to conservation, enhancement and management of our natural resources.
2. To establish the Commission as meaningful participants at the policy level.

3. To provide excellent quality salmon to the Nez Perce Tribal membership for ceremonial and subsistence purposes” (Wilfred 2006)

The fish hatcheries implement these goals in order to manage the preservation of the native fish species, most importantly the salmon. As the salmon are a cultural icon to the Nez Perce, the fish hatchery rigorously helps maintain a healthy population of the various salmon species. The creation of water canals mimicking Idaho’s waters is revolutionary within hatchery sciences. . The re-introduction of former species, such as the Coho salmon, aims at creating an environment similar to the traditional fishing habitat. The Coho salmon were extinct from Idaho waterways, yet the tribe worked to reintroduce the species despite warnings from Idaho Fish and Game. Idaho Fish and Game were skeptical because they believed the reintroduction of the species could have adverse effects on the ecosystem. However, the Nez Perce’s traditional understanding of the land proved more beneficial than a scientific understanding. After the creation of the first fishing season, Silas Whitman maintained that “the returning Coho are being harvested and spawning, and part of our cultural connection to these fish has been re-established” (Phillips 2014). The various management practices promoted and utilized by the Nez Perce hatchery helps relate tribal members to an important cultural icon. Therefore, in terms of strengthening ties, the hatchery has helped modernize the tribe’s relationship with their environment.

Based on the above mentioned goals of the fish and wildlife commission, the tribe still strives to maintain a strong cultural connection to their land. Another aspect of this attitude is present in the relationships the tribe has built with outside programs. Within the Wildlife Mitigation Agreement for Dworshak Dam, the Nez Perce “tribe provides a

specific service in exchange for a fee from the sponsoring federal agency” (1992). Furthermore, these contracts “have fulfilled their obligations to the local environment and built bridges to the local non-Indian community (Wildlife Mitigation Agreement). What this agreement symbolizes is the increased presence of the Nez Perce in issues of their surrounding environment. As the “Nez Perce Tribe has entered into numerous Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with state and federal agencies,” they are allowed “to carry out environmental protection programs across the entire 1855 treaty area” (1992). Therefore, the tribe has come to extract a financial means in helping protect their environment.

A final understanding of the relationship between the Nez Perce tribe and its environment stems from the tribe’s ardent belief in preserving their land. According to the Nez Perce Department of Natural Resources, the goals of the department represent “an attempt to ‘speak for the land’ when others turn away” (The Newberry Library). This attitude is best represented in the continued Nez Perce resistance to mega-loads, wolf hunting, and water rights. In response to state-sponsored wolf killings in the Lolo pass region, the Nez Perce Tribal Natural Resources Director Aaron Miles states “there’s a way to be able to blend our view and our culture with sportsmen and whoever lives on this land” (Barker 2014). Aaron Miles states it correct in asserting that a balance can be found in which the Nez Perce and their traditional beliefs can still be maintained amongst a cloud of resource extraction. Therefore, while wolf-killing is disrespectful towards the Nez Perce, they understand that killing the wolves helps maintain a balance. Therefore, they understand how the two sides can meet. By giving voice to the wolf, Miles asserted the tribe’s strong relationship to their land. Furthermore, he asserted that such a

relationship can extend beyond the bounds of the tribal membership. By increasing the land's voice, the Nez Perce tribe has successfully modernized its environmental relationship.

Topic of Objectivity and Subjectivity

The view Native American populations have towards their environment is important for this case study. The ideas of objectivity and subjectivity differentiate the understanding of land based on the tribal associations within the land. Within Native American culture, there is a distinct correlation between places and stories. For Keith Basso, “landscapes and the places that fill them become tools for the imagination, expressive means for accomplishing verbal deeds (Basso 1996: 75). The landscapes become “eminently portable possessions to which individuals maintain deep and abiding attachments (Basso 1996: 75). For Vine Deloria, every “holy site contains its own revelation” (Deloria 1994: 277). Therefore, Native Americans maintain a subjective view of their environment, based upon their many experiences and cultural practices tied to them.

Keith Basso's *Wisdom Sits in High Places* focuses on strong connection a tribe has with their environment through their use of place-names. As “landscapes and the places that fill them become tools for the imagination,” American Indians “can maintain deep and abiding attachments, regardless of where they travel” (Basso 1996:105). Basso argues “philosophers and poets are asserting that attachments to geographical localities contribute fundamentally to the formation of personal and social identities” (Basso 1996:105). Furthermore, locations that are “symbolically constituted, socially

transmitted, and individually applied” function “to place flexible constraints on how the physical environment can (and should) be known” (Basso 1996:72). The relationship a tribe shares with its environment does not stop by simply putting a name to a place. Rather, each place has a cultural and social teaching for the tribe.

Within Nez Perce culture, the waterfalls of Cielo indicate the spiritual birthplace of the salmon. Furthermore, the waterfalls represent cultural knowledge of why the salmon are important. For Keith Basso, the usage of place names is best understood with the theory of phenomenology. To him, “the self-conscious experience of place is inevitably a product and expression of the self whose experience it is” (Basso 1996: 107). Thus, “the nature of that experience...is shaped at every turn by the personal and social biographies of those who sustain it” (Basso 1996: 107). For each member, their personal experience with the place constitutes their understanding of its importance. Thus, for the Nez Perce, the waterfalls of Cielo represent traditional practices based on their experience with the area.

Within Nez Perce culture, there are several public places with religious and cultural significance. Most notably, the heart of the monster is a mound next to the Clearwater River. However, the mound represents the creation of the Nez Perce tribe. Within Nez Perce mythology, the Nez Perce tribe was created after the coyote crawled into the monster and cut out his heart. The heart and the present day mound are the same place. Another important example of place names is the “Smoking Place.” It is located within the Lolo National forest bordering Montana and Idaho. The actual place consists of conical mounds of stones that are six to eight feet in height. The place is a series of stops along the Lolo trail to help guide the Nez Perce from Idaho to Montana. Lewis and

Clark used the same area to return. There is no indication of a story attached to the place. However, the tribe stopped Lewis and Clark's crew and required that they participate in a smoking ceremony. The smoking ceremony was the tribe's way of maintaining the spiritual significance of the area. Thus, the tribe's objective view of the land relates to its environmental practices. They act according to their associations based on their interactions and knowledge of the place's significance.

Theoretical Aspect of Results

Phenomenology

The theory of phenomenology provides a better understanding of the Nez Perce relationship. As the theory's basic premises states, an individual's interactions, be it bodily or mentally, with their surrounding environment produces certain knowledge distinct to both the actor and the object. Furthermore, this knowledge is defined in part by a pre-determined set of understandings and the unique interaction itself. Therefore, a person looking at a tree will define the tree based on the natural knowledge of the person and the interaction between the tree and the person. They may then surmise that the object is a tree based on their natural knowledge. However, they may describe the tree differently based on their unique interaction. The object may become a tree that is living or dying, young or old, and so on. Thus, the theory, when applied to the Nez Perce, separates their actions into two categories, tribal and individual, based on the unique interactions.

Toohoolhoolzote, a famous Nez Perce chief prominent in the negotiations of reservation treaties, surmised long standing Nez Perce beliefs when he stated, "the earth

is part of my body... I belong to the land out of which I came” (Meyers 1993).

Toolhoolhoolzote’s adamant belief in a strong tie between the tribe and its environment came almost a century before current tribal understandings. Nevertheless, the various programs do display a similar attitude in both their overall goals and their individual actions. Through this connection, the strongly correlated his surrounding environment to his cultural understanding based on the cultural rules in place. His objective understanding of the environment was formed through his many interactions, creating a strong connection. The modern Nez Perce tribe represents a similar understanding. The constant interactions with the environment govern their objective understanding through the laws of both ancient and modern times.

As seen in Nez Perce mythology, the physical environment, namely animals, were understood as certain role-players. The salmon was the chief provider while the coyote was the creator. The animal’s roles dictate the tribe’s application of programs. The fisheries, a huge part of Nez Perce culture, symbolize the salmon’s association with cultural importance and sustainability. The tribe’s actions on the forefront of many environment issues, such as the keystone pipeline and mega-loads, symbolize the land’s association with traditional beliefs. Therefore, on the tribal level, the Nez Perce’s interactions and knowledge built from these interactions dictate their actions towards animals and the land..

The modern economic practices of the tribe represent the growing appreciation for the land’s financial assets. Through economic practices, the tribe has gained an appreciation for their land’s financial assets. Associating environmental preservation practices with financial gains promotes a classification of the environment as an

economic opportunity. Therefore, tribal members are raised to experience the land as a means to an end. This association does not negate the strong cultural and religious ties that date themselves to ancient times. As the tribe still resides within the heart of traditional lands, the correlation between locations and their religious/cultural connotations remains intact. Rather than only hearing of such locations, young tribal members have the opportunity to experience the locations and their meanings. This opportunity marks the young member's objective understanding of their environment. By placing cultural and religious significance upon the surrounding environment, young tribal members create within their "lifeworld" a surrounding environment governed by the cultural and religious implications it carries (Overgaard 2009: 4). Thus, the Nez Perce tribe's "lifeworld" establishes a dual-meaning to the environment, one of financial means and one of cultural/religious means (Overgaard 2009: 4).

For individual members, the same association may or may not hold true. At the individual level, tribal members may adhere to the tribe's environmental policies to fit in. In order to receive the land's profit, individual members may put aside their disbeliefs. Their true attitudes may best reflect their individual interactions and the ideas developed from the environment. A major hypothesis of this case study asserted that individual's display differing views due to different predispositions and interactions. Therefore, while the tribe, as a whole, displays a strong connection, individual members may hypothetically not

Each tribal member has a unique relationship to their environment. While some members share the tribe's attitude, others associate the environment with money. This can be especially true for the younger generations. As many tribes fight for cultural

preservation, the younger generation more often abandons cultural identity. Therefore, while the elders continue a strong relationship based on the belief in traditional association, younger members could abandon this relationship. Therefore, some members may view the environment as a financial commodity that provides a sustainable income. As profits from tribal projects are shared amongst members while also dispersed amongst various programs, the money can symbolize the environment as an economic entity. While the tribe has worked hard to distinguish the environment as culturally and spiritually important, some members may distinguish the environment as financially important.

The “lifeworld” of an actor correlates the varying values placed on the environment based on unique interactions (Overgaard 2009: 4). While interviews would have been beneficial in solidifying this claim, it is hypothetically possible that the difference between tribal association and individual association does strike true. A young tribal member’s association with the environment could be cultural or financial. But for the purpose of tribal continuity, the member would adhere to the cultural association. A good example of this attitude is a member’s participation in various programs while also demanding for quicker payments or future shares in leases. On the other hand, a member may demand the share but only for the purpose of returning it to the program in place. Such an attitude would reflect the member’s objective understanding of the land as part of their cultural identity. Overall, it would appear that phenomenology is supported at both the tribal and individual level

Rationalization

The theory of rationalization provides an alternative explanation. Within rationalization, actions are depleted of emotion drive. Actions become based on a rational mindset driven by what most benefits the actor. Rather than taking the job because it looked fun, the actor takes the job because it offers the best financial gain. When applied to the Nez Perce, it is again important to distinguish between tribal and individual actions.

In rational terms, the Nez Perce's relationship with the environment is driven by the economic atmosphere. While the reservation has many successful tribal businesses, such as the tribal casino, the environment remains at the center of its economic livelihood. As discussed in the programs section, each program strives to economically benefit the tribe. The many forest parcels provides the tribe with an economic opportunity. Their rational towards these resources falls under the ideology of formal rationality. Formal rationality defines actions as submitting to the western, industrialized world. By placing an economic value upon the forest, the Nez Perce shifts their understanding from subjective to objective. Objectively, the tribe views the land as so many board feet or chords. Thus, the tribe shifts their mindset to rationalize their action as necessary for fueling the economic engine.

Another component of formal rationality is the loss of values in order to acclimate. A central tenant of western society, it seems, is the idea that monetary gains equals growth of power. Hypothetically, the Nez Perce can view their resource programs as a source of power over their land. It is not power in the sense that they have total domain over their environment. Rather, it is power in the sense that only the Nez Perce

have the right to govern the environmental practices within their reservation. An example of this attitude is fishing. As the tribe rigorously enforces federal, state, and tribal fishing laws, they do so while receiving no restrictions to their own fishing rights. Their fishing right symbolizes their economic and cultural rights to the water. Therefore, they profit both economically and culturally. While the tribe does retain water and land rights, they still must adhere to federal policies and oversight on certain projects. One area where the federal government still maintains power is the national forests. While the tribe allows for annual cuts, the amount they allow must be agreed upon by the National Forest Agency. Nevertheless, the tribe's power over resource extraction stems from their rational outlook.

This rationality does not do justice for the tribe's rational driven by cultural preservation. While the tribe may be enforcing their domain through economic practices, the overall goal still remains to maintain their cultural identity with the land. As the environment is a big part of their cultural identity, the tribe would still rationalize their actions as maintaining a key part of their life. Chief Joseph's dad best displayed this attitude. He implored his son to "never sell the bones of your father and your mother (Deloria 173: 1994). Since his bones would be found on their traditional grounds, Chief Joseph's father understood the cultural connection between the land and the tribe. For Vine Deloria, "recognizing the sacredness of lands on which previous generations have lived and died" was as the basis for all actions (Deloria 278: 1994). For the Nez Perce, their understanding of the historical and cultural importance of the land does rationalize their actions. This is why Chief Joseph sought many ways to regain his homeland. In the end, as he was never able to recover the land, he never chose to live on the Nez Perce

reservation because it never resonated as his land. Overall, the tribe's rational thought towards their lands is both economically and culturally driven.

In rational terms, the understanding of individual tribal attitudes given to the environment is more complex. Different members may rationalize their environment variously dependent upon their predispositions towards it. Some may rationalize the environment to be an answer to their needs. Some may rationalize the environment to be a device to purvey their power. Finally, some may rationalize the environment to be a cultural and religious representation of their tribe.

For those who rationalize the environment to be an answer to their needs, they are simply capitalizing upon the economic opportunities it provides. In order to best provide for their monetary needs, a tribal member deduces the environment as the best option. The various programs and commissions represent the highest economic values. Therefore, the share each member receives presents the most rational option to sustained financial viability.

In rationalizing the environment to be a power seeking device, individual members are following the same ideology as the tribe. In order to display their dominance over a region, the environment is not a source to fulfill needs or wants. Rather, the environment represents the tribal members control over their reservation land. Again, this attitude is best represented in the fishing habits of individual members. While non-tribal members must fish within seasons and with legal equipment, tribal members are allowed to fish out of season using equipment of their choice. When one drives along the Salmon River during the salmon run, they will see non-tribal members along the river with a rod and reel; while, the tribal members could be perched upon

different bridges with a spear or net. This difference can cause tribal members to view their actions as symbol of power over non-tribal members. This symbol of power stems from the rational belief that the reservation land is their act of power over others. Therefore, individual members view the environment as the most efficient way to achieving their authoritarian status.

The final example of rationalization stems from the belief the environment provides an individual member's desires to culturally identify themselves. Vine Deloria believed the environment, specifically sacred places, instilled a "sense of social cohesion...and remind them of the passage of generations (Deloria 272: 1994). Members of the tribe may act upon their land in either preserving it or destroying it, for a sense of the "social cohesion" they desire (Deloria 272: 1994). Thus, the environment is the most efficient means to achieving a member's desired cultural identification. Rather than achieving this identification through ceremonies and outward expressions, members can employ the tribe's affiliation with the environment as their own affiliation. While the ceremonies may exude a strong cultural attitude, they do so at the risk of exposing an individual's lack or overtly strong cultural identity. The tribal member's rationality would follow the idea that the environment is ideal for fulfilling their desires.

Overall, rationality was supported by the Nez Perce's actions. Their usage of the environment as an economic means to an end adhered to their desire for partial assimilation and complete domain over their land. However, economic desires do not fully dictate their actions. A sense of cultural and spiritual fulfillment, on both a tribal and individual level, drives their actions. Much like phenomenology, the actions of the tribe versus the individual differed based on the individual's goals and beliefs.

Conclusion

The case study's goal was to provide an in-depth look at the Nez Perce tribe and its modern relationship to the environment. Long considered a tribe with strong associations to the environment, the Nez Perce still maintain a traditional connection through their management programs. As it would have been beneficial to use interviews, the true nature of their relationship remains unknown. It is not theoretically possible to assert the tribes relationship without actual members ideas. Nevertheless, the use of secondary sources, tribal resources, and theory portray the tribe's management practices as beneficial towards maintaining a strong cultural and spiritual connection while creating a financial tie.

The Nez Perce environmental actions are based on two tenants. First, the understanding and association of the land as an economic engine provides the tribe with the ability to control resource extraction. A growing concern for the tribe is modern resource practices. In America, resource extraction focuses on exploiting all the resources for the possibility of greater profit. This attitude is not found within Nez Perce culture and practices. Strict tribal quotas and laws work to ensure both economic profit and cultural preservation. The second tenant is the preservation of strong cultural ties. As the tribe is known for its strong dependence on the environment, their practices are geared towards resuming this relationship. The practice of integrated resource management provides the guidelines for the tribe. Keith Lawrence, a formal tribal wildlife program director, believed "the Nez Perce have traditionally adopted the best tools and methods to accomplish task" (Meyers 1993). "Today," he states" the tribe is

demonstrating that quality again through its use of technology on the cutting edge of resource management” (Meyers 1993). In displaying an aptitude for revolution resource management, the tribe continues their work towards preserving a strong cultural tie to the environment. Overall, the tribe’s actions successfully fulfill their desires of continuing an economic and cultural connection with the environment.

The tribe’s practice of integrated resource management would not be possible without the reservations natural resources. The practice, however, does not need to be unique to the tribe. Many western tribes hold similar mineral and natural resources on their reservation. Nez Perce understanding of the environment can serve as a beneficial, management practice. Tribes in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota can maintain cultural ties while still turning a profit. Therefore, if other tribes adopt similar practices, it can also be assumed that the tribal relationship versus the individual relationship remains unique to the individual’s interactions. For other tribes, it may be the same case as for the Nez Perce in which individuals may believe the environment as a source of income. Nevertheless, this correlation does not negate the tribe’s overall connection with the environment. By remaining true to traditional beliefs, the Nez Perce have displayed a strong desire to continue its relationship with environment.

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