The Search for Interpretation Sovereignty: Accommodating Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute) Voice in Protected Area Interpretation

Rachel E. Lahoff
Portland State University
The Search for Interpretation Sovereignty: Accommodating Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute) Voice in Protected Area Interpretation

Rachel E Lahoff
Portland State University
December 13, 2013
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Acronyms</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables and Figures</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Hegemonic Interpretation in the Ancestral Territory</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Factors Currently Guiding Interpretation in the Ancestral Territory</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: The Importance of Interpretation Sovereignty</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Linking Interpretation Sovereignty to Tribal-Agency</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Acronyms

BLM  Bureau of Land Management
CRIT  Colorado River Indian Tribes
DA  Department of Agriculture
DOI  Department of the Interior
LDS  Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)
FS  Forest Service
FWS  Fish and Wildlife Service
NCA  National Conservation Area
NPS  National Park Service
NRA  National Recreation Area
NVSP  Nevada State Park
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Types of Protected Areas in the Study and Decade of Last Remodel

Table 2: Study Sites with Amount of Integrated Native Content

Table 3: Nuwuvi Content in the Selected Visitor Centers

Table 4: Frequency of Emergent Themes in Interviews Regarding Factors Impacting Collaborative Interpretation

Figure 1: Study Area Sites

Figure 2: Etic Interpretation of Nuwuvi at Zion National Park

Figure 3: Historical Photo of Nuwuvi, Taken by Outsider

Figure 4: Contemporary Nuwuvi Interpretative Panel at Zion National Park

Figure 5: Contemporary Nuwuvi Interpretative Panel at Zion National Park

Figure 6: Recreational Panels at Red Rock Canyon’s Visitor Center

Figure 7: Outdoor Interpretive Pavilion at Zion National Park
Abstract

Within the Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute) ancestral territory, an area that spans four states including Nevada, Utah, California and Arizona, there are abundant protected areas that are managed by both federal and state agencies. These agencies utilize interpretation as a means to educate the public about natural and cultural resources on the landscape, in situ. In this paper, I argue that protected area interpretation in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory follows a hegemonic model, in that it reflects cultural hegemony that places western science discourses over other discourses, including Nuwuvi ways of knowing. As a result, natural science themes dominate interpretation over cultural themes. Additionally, when native culture is interpreted, it is done so primarily by non-natives. This has resulted in a lack of interpretation sovereignty in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. I argue that interpretation sovereignty, as one tool of sovereignty, can reinforce Nuwuvi strategies of self-determination; therefore, the lack of Nuwuvi voice in protected area interpretation contributes to hegemonic suppression of native communities in the region.

Introduction

Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute), or ‘the people,’ are a group of Numic speaking peoples whose expansive and dynamic ancestral homeland traverses four states (Nevada, Utah, California and Arizona) and encompasses portions of the Great Basin, upper Mojave Desert and Colorado Plateau. Nuwuvi are placed-based peoples whose oral history explains that the Creator placed them in their homeland when the world was new, in order to protect the natural resources that exist on the landscape (Spoon et al. 2011:16). Today, Nuwuvi live on reservations, as well as in rural and urban communities throughout their ancestral territory. The Nuwuvi population is roughly 3,000 people, and it consists of seven federally and non-federally recognized Native American nations, including: the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT), Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Moapa Band of Paiute Indians, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, and Pahrump Paiute Tribe, and the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah (PITU) (Spoon et al. 2011:9).
Though Nuwuvi culture remains strong today, their history is plagued by incidents of aggression at the hands of dominant Euro-American populations. With the influx of Euro-American settlers beginning in the early nineteenth century, Nuwuvi settlements and culture were severely disrupted, and their population drastically diminished due to war, disease and gradual encroachment by settlers. In the century that followed, Nuwuvi endured forced relocation and assimilation tactics, such as mandatory attendance of youth boarding schools, by the U.S. government that continued into the late twentieth century (Spoon and Arnold 2012:478).

With Nuwuvi numbers substantially reduced and their populations largely relocated both within and out of the ancestral territory, the lands in the region by and large came under the control of the United States government over the course of the twentieth century. According to a 2009 survey by the Congressional Research Service, the federal government owned approximately 57.6 percent of land within the four states that comprise the Nuwuvi ancestral territory (Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah). In Nevada alone, the federal government owned 81.1 percent of the land (Gorte et al. 2012:4-5). These lands are primarily administered by four agencies: the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Park Service (NPS) under the Department of the Interior (DOI), and the Forest Service (FS) under the Department of Agriculture (Bureau of Land Management 2012).¹ All four of these federal agencies, in conjunction with state agencies, play a major role in managing the lands within the ancestral territory, as the region houses a plethora of federal and state controlled protected areas, such as parks and refuges, among others.

¹ The Department of Defense is also a major land owner (19 million acres). Other land managing agencies (e.g., Agricultural Research Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Energy, National Aeronautics and Space Administration) are estimated to encompass roughly 5-10 million acres of federal land (Bureau of Land Management 2012:1).
One tool, among many, that federal and state agencies use to manage designated protected areas is interpretation. Interpretation is used to educate the visiting public about the natural and cultural resources that exist within the bounds of a protected area. Interpretation, as opposed to formal instruction, does not attempt to relate facts, alone, but rather is a place-based tool used to convey a morally grounded message about the surrounding landscape (Ham 1992:3-4). Protected area interpretation appears in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to visitor centers, trail signage, brochures, and live demonstrations (Beck and Cable 1998:5). The protected areas scattered throughout the Nuwuvi ancestral territory contain a wealth of valuable interpretation; however, in light of the fact that Nuwuvi are indigenous to this area, there is surprisingly little interpretation of their culture.

In this paper, I argue that federal and state agencies that operate within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory frequently neglected to incorporate Nuwuvi perspectives in protected area interpretation, which effectively reproduced a cycle of suppression of the subaltern voices of Nuwuvi. I suggest that interpretation sovereignty, as an aspect of a larger sovereignty movement, can be used as a tool by Nuwuvi to resist harmful cultural hegemonic practices. This paper is the result of five weeks of fieldwork, including site visits to seven protected area visitor centers and key consultant interviews with federal and Nuwuvi representatives.

In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the hegemonic nature of protected area interpretation within the ancestral territory. I argue that the hegemonic model of interpretation generally reflects the United States’ culturally hegemonic society that values western science explanations over other ways of knowing. Chapter 2 focuses on the factors that guide protected area interpretation from the perspective of the dominant land management agencies, and how these factors fail to incorporate the Nuwuvi voice. In Chapter 3, I discuss how interpretation
sovereignty can contribute to the overall health of Native American communities in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. In the final chapter, I examine the factors that impacted tribal-agency interpretive collaboration and trace linkages between collaboration and interpretation sovereignty. This paper is meant to open a dialogue about the hegemonic nature of current interpretation practices in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory and the importance of interpretation sovereignty to Native American populations such as Nuwuvi.

**Theoretical Framework**

For this study, I employed a critical, problem-oriented approach to researching the hegemonic nature of protected area interpretation in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. My research is grounded in sociocultural anthropological theory, specifically Gramsci’s theory of hegemony (Gramsci 1971). For the purpose of this paper, I use Gwyn A. Williams definition of hegemony, as “an order in which…one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing…customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations” (1960:587). Hegemony is perpetuated by consent of the public, which relies on social systems of dominant and marginalized populations (Eley 2002:322).

I argue that in protected areas within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory, interpretation of Native Americans follows a hegemonic model in which land managers that represent the dominant “political society” use interpretation to perpetuate their version of a subaltern Nuwuvi population. By using these etic interpretations of Nuwuvi in public settings, the agencies are presenting their one perspective of Nuwuvi to “civil society,” which then consents to this version of social truth (Bates 1975; Gramsci 1992). For example, if a federal agency relies solely on archaeological evidence and interprets Nuwuvi culture as an artifact of the past, members of the
general public will learn to view Nuwuvi in this light. If, on the other hand, Nuwuvi partner with
the agencies to interpret themselves as a vibrant, living culture, the public will learn to view
Nuwuvi outside the hegemonic model. This theoretical framework of employing the theory of
hegemony guided my research and subsequent analysis of the general lack of Nuwuvi
interpretation sovereignty, discussed below, in protected area visitor centers and the problem this
poses to marginalized Nuwuvi communities in a culturally hegemonic society.

In the following chapters, I borrow from Raheja’s concept of visual sovereignty and
Lyons concept of rhetorical sovereignty to discuss the overall lack of “interpretation
sovereignty” in protected area interpretation within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. Raheja
suggests that visual sovereignty occurs when “indigenous filmmakers and actors revisit,
contribute to, borrow from, critique, and reconfigure ethnographic film conventions, at the same
time operating within and stretching the boundaries created by these conventions” (2007:1161).
Lyons defines rhetorical sovereignty as “the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine
their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals,
modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (Lyons 2000:449-450).” Both of these scholars
identify visual and rhetorical representations of Native Americans as potential venues to assert a
form of sovereignty. Further, Raheja and Lyons argue that these forms of sovereignty posses the
potential to destabilize hegemonic representations of Native Americans in ways that could
benefit the health of these populations (Lyons 2000:449; Raheja 2007:1161).

Building on these manifestations of sovereignty, I use interpretation sovereignty to refer
to a move beyond hegemonic interpretations of Native American culture by land management
agencies that represent the dominant Euro-American population. For example, agencies such as
the BLM, FS, FWS and NPS provide an outsider’s (etic) perspective of Native American culture
that relies primarily on archaeological evidence, as demonstrated in the next chapter. Instead, interpretation sovereignty is characterized by Native Americans contributing to interpretation in a meaningful way, infusing native voice and (emic) perspectives into content that deals with Native Americans and their culture. This in turn enhances the message. I argue that instead of interpretation sovereignty in the federal and state managed protected areas with the Nuwuvi ancestral territory, land management agencies have largely silenced Nuwuvi voice altogether. This may rob this Native American population of an important tool in the fight for self-determination, a strategy for cultural viability and sovereignty (Lyons 2000:449).

Methodology

Protected Area Methodology

This paper is the result of five weeks of fieldwork in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory conducted as part of an internship with The Mountain Institute, supervised by Dr. Jeremy Spoon. The fieldwork included site visits to seven protected area visitor centers representing both federal and state managed lands. These sites included: Death Valley National Park, Great Basin National Park, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, Pipe Spring National Monument, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Valley of Fire State Park, and Zion National Park (see Figure 1). The six federal sites included National Parks and BLM lands, operating under the Department of the Interior, and Forest Service lands, operating under the Department of Agriculture. The seventh protected area was a Nevada state park (see Table 1.) The seven protected areas were chosen as they are situated throughout the ancestral territory, and they represent a variety of federal land managers. As research conducted in the protected areas did not involve surveying members of the visiting public or receiving assistance from federal agents, no permits were required.
At each of the seven protected area visitor centers I utilized participant observation, interfacing with interpretive staff as a visitor, observing other visitors and making visual site observations. I recorded my observations in both photographs and descriptive field notes (Bernard 1988:192). Observations focused on content-related interpretation strategies, including thematic organization of content, the use of audio-visual devices and the content, itself. In observing the content, I made note of how often and in what ways Nuwuvi and other Native American peoples were interpreted. In subsequent analysis of my data, I employed a thematic content analysis of both my field notes and photographs. I isolated emergent themes and used them to identify these themes appearing across the different visitor centers (Bernard 2002; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). I then constructed frequency distribution tables to show patterns of theme occurrence in the visitor centers (Sullivan 2013).

Figure 1. Study Area Sites
Table 1. Types of Protected Areas in the Study and Decade of Last Visitors Center Remodel/Update

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Government</th>
<th>Death Valley</th>
<th>Great Basin</th>
<th>Spring Mountains</th>
<th>Pipe Spring</th>
<th>Red Rock Canyon</th>
<th>Valley of Fire</th>
<th>Zion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Department</td>
<td>NPS</td>
<td>NPS</td>
<td>FS</td>
<td>NPS</td>
<td>BLM</td>
<td>NVSP</td>
<td>NPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decade of Last</td>
<td>DOI</td>
<td>DOI</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>DOI</td>
<td>DOI</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>DOI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Remodel</td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>2010s</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>2000s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Consultant Interviews**

In addition to visitor center site observations, I used key consultant interviews with Nuwuvi representatives to provide data on native perceptions of contemporary interpretation in protected areas within their ancestral territory. To garner adequate representation from Nuwuvi Nations, I utilized the Working Group methodology developed by Spoon and Arnold in which an individual selected by their tribal government acts as a representative for their Nation (Spoon et al. 2012:28). I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of the pre-established Nuwuvi Working Group that have been involved in interpretive planning projects administered by Spoon and Arnold since 2008 (Spoon and Arnold 2012:484). This Working Group consists of six Nuwuvi members, representing the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT), Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Moapa Band of Paiute Indians, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, and Pahrump Paiute Tribe, as well as a representative from the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe (Spoon et al. 2012:28).²

The majority of these consultants have taken part in projects currently underway regarding Nuwuvi interpretation in their ancestral territory. Jeremy Spoon and Richard Arnold, in association with Portland State University and The Mountain Institute, are implementing interpretive planning projects in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. The Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) is funding these projects. The projects include the building

---

² Though related, the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe is from a different Numic-speaking ethnic group than Nuwuvi (Spoon and Arnold 2012:493). I have included this Nation in my research due to prior involvement with ongoing interpretive planning projects and ancestral ties to the study area.
of four visitor centers at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Spring Mountain National Recreation Area, Pahranagat National Wildlife Refuge and Desert National Wildlife Refuge (Spoon and Arnold 2012). It is understood that Working Group members’ interview responses are likely influenced by their participation in projects facilitated by Spoon and Arnold.

Key consultant interviews were also conducted with federal agency representatives working within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory, in order to assess land managers’ perceptions of the status of protected area interpretation. Federal agency interviewees were also chosen due to their expertise in or prior experience with interpretation. Seven of the eight federal agents chosen for interviews had previously been involved in collaborative projects facilitated by Spoon and Arnold. The remaining one agent had not been involved in projects facilitated by Spoon. This federal agent is the chief of interpretation and resource management at a site chosen for this study. It is understood that the federal agents whom have participated in Spoon and Arnold’s projects are likely influenced by their participation in these projects.

In order to analyze the key consultant interviews, all interviews were audio recorded and partially transcribed. I then performed a thematic content analysis of my transcripts, in which I coded the transcripts using data-driven inductive codes to highlight emergent themes among the interviews. I then identified the occurrence of these themes among all of the interviews (Bernard 2002; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). I organized this qualitative data quantitatively, through constructing frequency distribution tables, where each emergent theme was listed alongside the number of times it appeared in the interviews (Sullivan 2013:67). I subsequently used these frequency distribution tables to form analytical categories to identify which themes were the most prevalent in the interviews. These analytical categories were then organized thematically to produce the results in the following chapters (Bernard 2002).
Chapter 1
Hegemonic Interpretation in the Ancestral Territory

Interpretation in protected areas within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory frequently follows a hegemonic model that is perpetuated by land management agencies dominated by Euro-Americans and Euro-American ideology. In this chapter, I discuss two overarching themes that characterized protected area interpretation in the study area. The first is that there was a general lack of interpretation related to Nuwuvi and other regional Native American groups because of the preferential treatment given to western science and natural resource-related interpretive content. The second theme is that when Nuwuvi culture was interpreted, it was done so from the etic perspective of the land management agencies. Both of these themes typifying interpretation contribute to a lack of Nuwuvi voice and interpretation sovereignty in Nuwuvi ancestral lands.

Privileging Western Science in Protected Area Interpretation

Western culture has endowed science and scientific discourse a level of power that places it above other discourses since medieval times (Foucault 1994:205). Western science is based on Cartesian logic, which seeks to explain natural phenomena in precise mathematical terms and to divide culture from nature (Jelinski 2005:275). The privileging of western science over other ways of knowing is an aspect of cultural hegemony that has manifested itself in protected area interpretation. Science-related themes were far more prevalent in the visitor centers included in this study than culturally related themes. In the following section, I discuss my findings related to science-related interpretive content in the study area visitor centers.

I observed that only two of the seven visitor centers, Pipe Spring National Monument and Valley of Fire State Park, incorporated a roughly equal amount of cultural and natural science related interpretive content. It is important to note here that Pipe Spring National Monument’s
visitor center is located on the tribal lands of the Kaibab Band of Paiutes, and it is jointly operated by the tribe and the National Park Service (National Park Service 2013b). Valley of Fire State Park is operated solely by the Nevada State Parks; however, the abundance of petroglyphs is touted as a main attraction of the Park (Nevada State Parks 2012). The context of these two parks serves as a logical explanation for their somewhat equal treatment of cultural and natural science interpretive content in their visitor centers.

The remaining five protected areas demonstrated a discernable difference in the amount of natural science related content and cultural content in their exhibits. At each of these five visitor centers, twenty-fifty percent or less of exhibit space integrated Nuwuvi or other Native American groups into the content (see Table 2). In fact, there was no permanent interpretation of Nuwuvi culture at the Spring Mountains NRA Visitor Center.3 While brochures, a type of non-personal interpretation contained information related to where to find cultural resources on hiking trails in the protected area, all of the exhibits at the visitor center were devoted to natural science related themes.

Table 2. Study Sites with Amount of Integrated Native Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Death Valley</th>
<th>Great Basin</th>
<th>Spring Mountains</th>
<th>Pipe Spring</th>
<th>Red Rock</th>
<th>Valley of Fire</th>
<th>Zion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 50% Native Content</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 25% Native Content</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Death Valley National Park’s Furnace Creek Visitor Center contained both natural science and cultural themes in the interpretive content; however, the primary theme at the visitor center was a natural science theme: “Hottest, Driest, Lowest.” Additionally, interpretive content touched on numerous western science topics, including but not limited to: geology, hydrology, ecosystems, flora/fauna, and climate. The exhibits focusing on these topics, by and large, did not

3 The lack of Nuwuvi interpretation at the Spring Mountains NRA is particularly alarming considering the fact that Nuwuvi consider the Spring Mountains to be their creation place. Nuwuvi refer to this landscape as Nuvagantu or Nuvankai, and they believe that they have been here since time immemorial when the Creator placed them here (Spoon et al. 2011:9).
integrate any culture information. Interpretive content related to culture was divided between Native American groups, past and present, as well as non-native settlers such as miners, ranchers and community members from the Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS). Within the 10,736 square foot building, only one double-sided panel was devoted to Native American content (National Park Service n.d.).

Great Basin National Park’s main visitor center was organized around five primary themes: What is the Great Basin?; People in the Great Basin; and From Desert Floor to Mountain Peak; The Great Basin Night Sky; For Future Generations. Much like Death Valley’s visitor center, Great Basin’s interpretive content primarily focused on western science related themes. In only two of the five themed sections were Native American populations mentioned, and in only one was “people” the main focus. In the “For Future Generations” set of panels, cultural resources of native groups were mentioned. The “People of the Great Basin” set of panels focused on humans in the environment, but Nuwuvi shared this section with LDS community members, ranchers, miners and the builders of the Transcontinental Railroad.

The Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center was thematically organized using the natural science categories of: Earth, Fire, Water and Air. Each of these categories had their own pavilion, where topics related to these themes were interpreted. These four main themes incorporated both natural science and cultural interpretation; however, cultural content was relegated to one panel in both the Earth and Air pavilions, and this panel was split between Native American content and non-native cultural content. In the Fire Pavilion and the Water Walk, less than fifty percent of interpretive content was related to Native American culture.

The Zion National Park Visitor Center, unlike the previous six discussed, was largely centered around recreational activities offered at the Park. These exhibits consisted of seven
outdoor interpretive pavilions. Four of these pavilions were devoted to recreation. Though recreation was the primary theme at each of these four pavilions, the panels within these pavilions discussed the natural resources one could experience during the recreational activities. The three remaining pavilions at the visitor center were devoted to flora and fauna, hydrology, and humans in the landscape. This final pavilion contained the only cultural content, and only two of the six topics discussed focused on Native Americans.

As demonstrated above, Native American interpretation was most often minimally represented in relation to western science themes concerned with natural resources. This disparity, which is explained in part in Chapter 2, manifests the culturally hegemonic practice of silencing indigenous voices in the ancestral territory. The over-privileging of western science interpretation over native culture interpretation is just one way that Euro-American land management agencies silence Nuwuvi voice. The following section deals with the silencing of Nuwuvi through denying Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty in visitor centers when native culture is interpreted.

**Nuwuvi Interpretation in Protected Areas**

Interpretation of Native American culture was present to a degree in protected areas within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory; however, seldom did Native American groups, themselves, contribute to the interpretation. This etic approach to native interpretation potentially robs Native Americans of the chance for interpretation sovereignty within the ancestral homeland, which perpetuates the cycle of hegemonic interpretation of these subaltern groups. This section discusses the research findings related to interpretation of Native American culture, when present, at protected area visitor centers in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory (see Table 3). The two main themes that emerged in Nuwuvi interpretation at the study sites were: 1) Etic interpretation
far outweighed emic interpretation, and 2) there was an overall lack of interpretation of contemporary Nuwuvi culture.

**Emic Versus Etic Interpretation of Nuwuvi**

An overarching theme at the protected areas selected for this study was a general lack of an emic perspective in Nuwuvi interpretation. An emic perspective of Nuwuvi culture was present in a limited way in only three of the seven protected areas studied: Furnace Creek Visitor Center (Death Valley NPS), Great Basin Visitor Center, and Pipe Spring Visitor Center. In the remaining four visitor centers, three had an etic-only perspective (Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center, Valley of Fire Visitor Center, and Zion Visitor Center), and one, Spring Mountains Visitor Center, had no mention of Nuwuvi at all (see Table 3).

Table 3.
Nuwuvi Content in the Selected Visitor Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Death Valley</th>
<th>Great Basin</th>
<th>Spring Mountains</th>
<th>Pipe Spring</th>
<th>Red Rock</th>
<th>Valley of Fire</th>
<th>Zion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Content</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etic Only</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emic+Etic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Nuwuvi (Textual)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously mentioned, the Furnace Creek Visitor Center had one double-sided panel devoted to Native American culture, specifically the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe. Within this exhibit, there was a panel entitled “Tupippuh Nummu (Our Homeland),” which presented an emic perspective on the tribe’s campaign for land rights in the Park. The reverse side of this panel, entitled “Our Land,” contained a video recording of tribal members discussing their connections to the land. This panel also contained quotes from tribal members regarding native connections to the land.

The Great Basin Visitor Center utilized an etic-only perspective in textual interpretation of Native American groups. This visitor center did bring in an emic perspective of Native
Americans in the visitor center video, which is played on a visitor-requested basis. The video touched on a variety of topics to orient the visitor to the park, and it contained footage of the Duckwater Shoshone’s Chairwomen speaking about her family history on the land and native connections to the land, past and present. While this video did incorporate an emic perspective through the lens of the Chairwoman, it was fairly narrow in terms of providing a heterogeneous picture of the tribes culturally affiliated with the land and their lives today.

Pipe Spring National Monument’s joint visitor center and museum was the only one of the visitor centers included in this study that contained primarily emic perspectives on Nuwuvi culture, specifically the Kaibab Band of Paiutes. Multiple panels used the first-person narrative to discuss the people’s connection to the land, as well as contemporary Southern Paiute culture, among other topics. As previously mentioned, this visitor center is located on tribal lands and is jointly operated by the tribe and the National Park Service. These factors likely contribute to the uncommon treatment of Nuwuvi interpretation from an emic perspective.

The visitor center at Zion National Park provided an etic-only perspective in its interpretation of Native American culture. In the panel entitled “Original Inhabitants: Native Peoples,” three quotes from a 1995 ethnographic overview and assessment were used to describe Southern Paiute peoples from the etic perspective of the ethnographer. In one of the quotes, the ethnographer described Nuwuvi beliefs regarding their relationship with Zion’s landscape: “Southern Paiute believed they have lived in this area since the time of creation…” (Stoffle et al. 1995). The visitor center also used third-person narrative to interpret Nuwuvi subsistence practices from an etic perspective (see Figure 2).
Red Rock Canyon also used a third-person narrative in interpreting Native American culture. These etic-only perspectives primarily focused on native subsistence practices of the past and cultural resources on the landscape. Photographs taken by non-native peoples often accompanied these textual interpretations. For example, in the Water Walk exhibit, a panel explained Nuwuvi adaptations to the desert climate and was accompanied by a photograph attributed to the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkley (see Figure 3).

The Valley of Fire Visitor Center again used a third-person narrative to interpret native peoples associated with the region. This etic portrayal of Native American groups primarily described settlements of native peoples in the landscape and adaptations to the environment. The visitor center also included replications of petroglyphs in an exhibit entitled “The Search for Peoples of the Past.” Native peoples were grouped into etic categories based on chronological settlement patterns in the lands bounded by the park.
Contemporary Nuwuvi Interpretation

Clearly, an etic approach to interpreting Native American culture was more common in the protected area visitor centers within the ancestral territory. This deprived Nuwuvi of the opportunity for interpretation sovereignty within their traditional homeland. In depriving Nuwuvi of interpretation sovereignty, it also created a scenario where themes Nuwuvi identified as important were often left out of interpretation. An emergent theme in interviews with Nuwuvi participants in this study was in regards to archaeological-only interpretations of Nuwuvi culture. Nuwuvi interviewees consistently expressed a desire for interpretation to incorporate contemporary representations of Nuwuvi culture. The following four statements captured some Working Group members’ thoughts regarding the importance of contemporary interpretation of Nuwuvi in the ancestral territory:

The Timbisha Homeland Act, it’s very important. A lot of people know about that, and we tell everybody. We got our land back, and we own the acreage down here. So it was important to tell that story and how we got to that point. And they came and asked us what we wanted to see in there, and that was one of the things. We just want people to know that we’re here, and we weren’t just here yesterday.
-Working Group Member, Timbisha Shoshone Tribe
What ties us here is the land. Even though we were brought here at gunpoint, it’s still sacred to us. We want to protect that. It’s like a homeowner, that’s my house. That’s my kingdom. Don’t tread on me. Don’t trespass. The land means something to people.
-Working Group Member, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe

A little history about the people. That’d be good, I think. History of the people, of the area… And showing them now. How they’re still here today. Stuff like that. People, the Southern Paiute people, are still here. In the area.
-Working Group Member, Las Vegas Band of Paiutes

What we do want, though, to stress to anybody that’s doing interpretation of Native Americans or Southern Paiute is to get out of those terms of ‘was’ and ‘once were.’ So that that way we can put in the wordage to say ‘they still do’ or ‘they still work here. They still live here.’
-Working Group Member, Kaibab Band of Paiutes

Though there was a strong desire in Nuwuvi for the public to know about their contemporary culture, an emergent theme in observations of selected protected area visitor centers was an overall neglect of interpreting contemporary Nuwuvi culture. Three of the seven protected areas in this study, by and large, neglected to interpret contemporary native culture, including: Spring Mountains NRA, Valley of Fire State Park, and Red Rock Canyon NCA. As previously mentioned, the Spring Mountains contained no mention of Nuwuvi culture in the visitor center, including contemporary Nuwuvi. Valley of Fire included contemporary Southern Paiutes on their settlement timelines; however, this was the extent of any mention of contemporary Nuwuvi tribes. Further, Southern Paiute were interpreted as separate from archaeologically determined “older” tribes within the landscape. This practice of separating contemporary Nuwuvi tribes from past inhabitants represents a hegemonic model of interpretation that opposes Nuwuvi oral history, which places them in the landscape since the beginning of time (Spoon et al. 2011:16). Red Rock Canyon’s approach to interpreting Nuwuvi was to discuss contemporary native peoples as descendants of the indigenous groups. For example, a panel entitled “First Peoples,” contained the sentence: “The Southern Paiute, whose descendants are still here today, lived on what was seasonally available.” Instead of simply
saying, “The Southern Paiute are still here today,” Red Rock Canyon’s approach implied that Southern Paiute existed only in the past, and their “descendants” are all that is left of the culture.

The remaining four visitor centers contained varying degrees of interpretation of contemporary native cultures. Zion’s visitor center included a brief nod to contemporary Native American culture within the pavilion devoted to humans in the landscape. On the “Living Traditions” panel, a sentence read: “Southern Paiute culture today is not a historic artifact, but a vibrant, living tradition.” This panel also included information about ongoing tribal collaboration with the park to continue traditional harvesting practices and a photograph of a contemporary Nuwuvi tribal member (see Figure 4).

Figure 4.
Contemporary Nuwuvi Interpretative Panel at Zion National Park

Great Basin’s visitor center contained no textual interpretation of contemporary Native American culture; however, the video in the visitor center incorporated footage of contemporary Native Americans speaking about pressing issues, including the Duckwater Shoshone’s Chairwoman. Both Death Valley and Pipe Spring visitor centers contained interpretation of contemporary native culture. While Death Valley’s visitor center focused primarily on the Timbisha Shoshone’s land rights battles, Pipe Spring’s visitor center discussed a variety of topics, including the constitution of the Kaibab Band of Paiutes and general aspects of daily life, today on the reservation. Both Death Valley and Pipe Spring visitor centers also utilized
photographic representations of contemporary Nuwuvi to supplement their textual interpretation (see Figure 5). Great Basin’s visitor center used the previously mentioned video to provide a visual of contemporary Native Americans.

![Figure 5. Visual Representation of Native Peoples at Death Valley National Park](image)

**Conclusion**

Land management agencies that commission interpretation within a protected area have the ability to direct visitor learning to topics and themes that the agencies believe are the most significant related to the land (Markwell 1996:9). Because of the role that western science plays in our culturally homogenous society, land management agencies tended to over-represent themes related to science and natural resources in relation to subaltern themes involving Nuwuvi or other Native American groups, as demonstrated above. This over-representation of natural science related content reinforces the cycle of hegemonic discourses related to what is significant for the public to “take away” from protected area interpretation. Compounding this issue is the fact that non-native populations interpreted Native American culture. In seeking to teach visitors about protected areas through interpretation, land management agencies take on the role of experts on the subjects included in the interpretation (Markwell 1996:10). Through consistently
utilizing etic perspectives to interpret native culture, Native American groups such as Nuwuvi were denied the opportunity for interpretation sovereignty in the ancestral homeland. This denial was demonstrated by the general absence of emic Nuwuvi interpretation and interpretation of contemporary Nuwuvi culture. While this chapter illustrates the lack of interpretation sovereignty in the study area, the following chapter discusses why interpretation sovereignty is so difficult for Native American groups, including Nuwuvi, to achieve.
Chapter 2
Interpretation Guided by Principles of Dominant Society

In this chapter, I review which factors presently guide interpretation in the study area. I argue that land management agencies did not generally consider incorporating Nuwuví voice a priority in planning for protected areas interpretation within the ancestral territory. Rather, agencies place a greater value on incorporating western science-based content and archaeological representations of Nuwuví culture. Though these approaches to interpretation are important, they neglect to convey a full picture of Nuwuví populations. By not accommodating Nuwuví voice in the factors that currently guide interpretation in protected areas in this region, land management agencies used interpretation to reinforce cultural hegemony and subvert the subaltern voice of Nuwuví. In order to assess which factors guided interpretation, I analyzed Nuwuví and federal agency interviews and identified emergent themes regarding guiding factors for protected area interpretation. I then constructed a frequency distribution table to quantify how many times the emergent themes appeared in the interviews. The resulting five themes were:

1. Available funding within an agency impacts interpretation.
2. Interpretation reflects varying agency mandates.
3. Interpretation hinges on the mission of the specific protected area.
4. Individual managers at a protected area can direct interpretation.
5. Native interpretation often reflects readily available archaeological research material.

While there are multitudinous complex factors also at work in influencing interpretation, these five themes were repeatedly discussed by the interviewees as primary determinants in what is interpreted at a given protected area. In the following sections, I provide a brief overview of each theme as it was discussed by the interviewees, then conclude with a discussion of how these factors guiding interpretation inhibit the inclusion of Nuwuví interpretation.
Available funding within an agency impacts interpretation

Interpretation is at the mercy of agency budgets. Agency budgets can fluctuate a great deal depending on national or region trends. During the time of this research, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) played an integral part in agency’s abilities to fund various projects (including funding this project). SNPLMA was enacted into law in October of 1998. The law allowed the BLM to sell public land within a designated boundary around Las Vegas, and a portion of the revenue from the land sales was allocated to a special account available to the Secretary of the Interior for projects such as those related to interpretation in protected areas (Forest Service N.d.). SNPLMA funds were continually referred to as a critical component in the funding of interpretation. A Refuge Manager for the Fish and Wildlife Service summed up the importance of SNPLMA money to their agency in this way:

There’s two really big reasons why we even have some facilities here, public facilities at Moapa Valley. One is that we received Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act dollars… So that was huge. It’s the only reason we’ve been able to plan for and build these facilities here. And even open the refuge.

Interpretation, specifically, was impacted by budgetary factors depending on how a particular agency prioritized interpretation in relation to other services. In an interview with a Visitor Services Manager at Fish and Wildlife, the interviewee expressed a personal struggle to prioritize interpretation within her agency:

The importance of interpretation and education – I feel like I have to preach that and how it can be used as a tool to help improve the management of refuges…When it comes down to money, I mean, we’re fighting that battle all the time. You want to hire another wildlife biologist or do you want to hire someone that can help tell the story and build your relationships with your community and with the local support base? And those are tough decisions. And Fish and Wildlife Service will err on the side of science as opposed to communication. And that’s changing, but I feel like I have to be part of that battle, struggle to get the Fish and Wildlife Service to value communication as a tool to get their words out.

This interviewee went on to compare her agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, with the better-funded Park Service:
The funding is definitely the problem. There’s not very much funding for interpretation and education in Fish and Wildlife Service overall. And there’s where the difference is with a national park. I think if you were in a national park and you justified the expenditure, it would be a lot easier to get that [interpretation] approved.

As this interviewee demonstrated, funding is inextricably linked to agency mandates. In National Park Service protected areas, where education of the public is prioritized, interpretation is easier to fund than in agencies such as Fish and Wildlife Service. According to an Educational and Volunteer Program Manager for the Forest Service, his agency also experienced funding difficulty in regards to interpretation, because other line items were considered more essential in Forest Service lands:

But as far as the agencies… part of it comes down to mission and resources. So the Park Service has money for interpretation … then the Forest Service just has less and less money… there’s just so little interpretation in the Forest Service, which isn’t because nobody wants to do it. It’s because you’ve got to keep the road open, and you’ve got to keep some toilet paper in the bathroom…and then if you have money left over, you do the interpretation. But you can’t really say, ‘well screw the roads and the toilet paper. We’re going to do interpretation.’

According to this consultant, the Forest Service had limited resources for interpretation, because their funding in general is limited, and maintaining the facilities and the roads is considered more important than interpretation for the public. Again, this demonstrates that the availability of funding within an agency was a crucial element for interpretation in a given protected area.

**Interpretation Reflects Varying Agency Mandates**

Each federal agency operates under a different set of mandates and regulations, and these mandates strongly influence interpretation at a particular protected area. Part of the reason why different land management agencies have different mandates relates to which department the agency operates under. The federal agency managers interviewed for this study represented both the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. In interviews with federal agency representatives, consultants repeatedly spoke about the influence that the federal departments that housed their agencies had on the mission of the agency. One federal agent,
working as a refuge manager for the Fish and Wildlife Service summarized this sentiment, stating:

The Forest Service…they’re in the Department of Ag [Agriculture]. But all the other land management agencies are within the Department of Interior. So because of that difference, there’s a difference in missions…

One of the differences in missions, as this interviewee hints at, had to do with the permitted uses of the agency lands dependent on their department. For example, being under the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service must follow the mission of the department, which is to “provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management” (Department of Agriculture 2013). This mission demonstrates that natural resources on Forest Service lands may be viewed as commodities, such as timber, oil or other forestry products. Fish and Wildlife, on the other hand, have a mission that focuses on flora and faunal preservation for conservation sake. Differences such as these manifest themselves in protected area interpretation. The following two statements by a Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge Manager and a Visitor Services Manager, respectively, demonstrated how an agency’s mission directs its interpretation:

Our mission, which is wildlife – that probably pushes itself out more, because it kind of justifies why we’re here, and why we’re different. Because there’s a lot of protected places, but there’s not a lot of protected places that have a focus on wildlife. So I think that’s where there’ll be more of a heavier weight in explaining why the refuge is here. Hence, why are these animals here? Why are they special? So yeah, I think that does give more weight.

Well, Fish and Wildlife’s primary goal for interpretation, I mean just in general, just communicating the message of the mission of Fish and Wildlife and the mission of each refuge. In general, it’s wildlife first…What’s interesting is that cultural is not usually part of the Fish and Wildlife mission.”

An Environmental Planner and Tribal Liaison from the Forest Service also spoke of agency mandates as a factor directing interpretation. As this was in reference to Forest Service lands,
harvesting pine nuts is a permitted use of resources, and so interpretation at this protected area had to address this mandate-related topic:

Pinion juniper ecosystems is always a big one, and that’s something that comes into play a lot, because nowadays, it’s not just indigenous families that are coming up to pick pine nuts. We also have all sorts of visitors coming…and unfortunately, we also have people collecting them without permits, and selling them, too. So there’s the education piece that we’re trying to get out there and garner some more awareness and respect through interpretation.

At the BLM managed Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, many recreational activities are allowed though regulated, such as rock climbing, hiking, biking and camping. As such, recreation-related interpretation was featured at Red Rock Canyon’s visitor center in the form of thirteen panels devoted to recreational activities, located at the 360-degree view deck (see Figure 6). National Park managed protected areas like Zion National Park also allow a variety of recreational activities, because these lands experience high visitor foot traffic. In 2012, the 401 sites that made up the National Park System saw 282 million recreational visits (National Park Service 2013a). Due to the strong presence of the visitor on National Park lands, their interpretation was highly geared to recreation. At Zion, for example, of the seven outdoor pavilions that contained the visitor center’s primary interpretation, four were dedicated to recreation in the park (see Figure 7).

Figure 6.
Recreational Panels at Red Rock Canyon’s Visitor Center
As demonstrated above, protected area interpretation can vary from site-to-site as agency mandates play a strong role in determining interpretive content. Within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory, Fish and Wildlife Service lands tended to focus on the flora and fauna of a site, while Park Service lands may have placed more emphasis on visitor recreational experiences. The Forest Service and BLM protected areas discussed above also showed a focus on visitor-related activities due to the variety of permitted uses of those lands. Though certain mandates are agency-wide, however, each protected area is unique in terms of why that area was created, what species of flora or fauna are present, or if there are cultural resources within that bounded landscape. This brings us to the following section related to interpretation at individual protected areas.

Interpretation Hinges on the Mission of the Specific Protected Area

In addition to the variance in agency approaches to interpretation due to mandates, interpretation is also influenced by the specificities of the individual protected area. Each protected area, be it a National Park, Wildlife Refuge, National Monument, etc., is established
for a specific reason or set of reasons, which directs the mission for that particular protected area.

In an interview with a Refuge Manager for the Fish and Wildlife Service, the consultant explained that interpretation at her refuge centered on the flagship species that initiated the creation of that refuge, an endangered species of fish. The fish was used as a means to further Fish and Wildlife’s message around conservation:

It [interpretation] probably just settles on two things, and one is just the history and the purpose of the area…And then the opportunities for visitors in the literal sense of what you can do, but also what they can help do for the future…Those are kind of two primary goals for the refuge…which was established for the endangered fish…most of the messages you’ll see here talk about the history of the area…it might be very pinpointed of this is a dace, and this is what the dace is all about…And then conservation, in general. Conserve water. It’s important to species like the fish.

The Refuge Manager goes on to describe why her refuge focuses on the endangered fish as opposed to Nuwuvi culture:

It [the fish species] was why it was established. So if this was established to preserve the history and culture of the Southern Paiute that lived here, then of course it would be a very different message, and we’d probably have one little blurb about, oh there’s an endangered fish here, too…The purpose of the refuge heavily influences [interpretation], and it’s the mission of our agency: to conserve resources for future generations. So we want to get those messages across.

An Environmental Planner and Tribal Liaison employed by the Forest Service echoed the fact that interpretation is largely guided by natural resources present within the protected area. In regards to the National Recreation Area where this interviewee works, she stated:

I would say that given the unique resources here at the NRA, we have a tendency to focus on springs [in interpretation]…The Spring Mountains is aptly named because we have springs all over the mountains. That provides all sorts of habitat for both wildlife, plants, and humans, as well. We have a lot of caves and cave resources, so that tends to be another theme.

Another aspect of how the specificities of a particular protected area come into play in interpretation relates to the allowed uses of that specific site. Not all protected areas managed by the same agency have the same allowed uses. According the Forest Service Environmental Planner and Tribal Liaison interviewee:

From most Forest Service units, we offer multiple uses. So we do everything from timber to grazing, mining, recreation, you know, a whole slew of uses. But here on the NRA, the primary focus is conservation of natural and cultural resources and providing recreation opportunities. So we’re a little bit limited in some of the services that we can provide.
As such, the NRA where this employee worked was an unique example of Forest Service land that may not have the same sorts of interpretation that other, non-NRA Forest Service lands have, because of the NRA focus on conservation.

**Individual managers at a protected area can direct interpretation**

When discussing protected area interpretation, it is important to consider the role of an individual within an agency in influencing interpretation at a site. Though individuals’ experiences are shaped by the fact that they live within a culturally hegemonic society, they still possess intentioned agency that allows them to view their experiences from a personal perspective (Ortner 1996:12-16). Therefore, land managers among all the different agencies may have widely heterogeneous opinions about what are the most important topics to interpret based on personal experiences or preferences. A land manager’s experiences at one protected area will likely impact their view of protected areas they manage in the future. A Refuge Manager employed by the Fish and Wildlife Service spoke of her background as an inhabitant of New Mexico, where Native American culture is very conspicuous, as impacting her perspective upon moving to Nevada to manage a new refuge:

> When I first moved to Nevada, it was silent here. I didn’t know who the people were here. I came from New Mexico, which it is very prominent who the people are…Their culture surrounds you…But out here, I did not know. I’m like, there’s just nothing out here. I have no idea. So it was really absent and void, and it was very noticeable when I first moved out here having that so much from where I came from before.

This manager’s history of living in an area where indigenous culture is so at the forefront caused her to view a protected area where indigenous culture is not prominent as void of cultural elements that should be present. As such, she was more familiar with native culture as an important component in interpretation.

Personal interest is also a factor that comes into play when discussing an individual land manager’s perception of interpretation. One Fish and Wildlife Service employee stated it this
way: “Maybe they dabbled in anthropology or something in the past, so they have a strong interest” (Refuge Manager, Fish and Wildlife Service). Another Fish and Wildlife interviewee working as a Visitor Services Manager spoke of one’s personal interest in a topic as a possible inhibitor of acknowledgement of other topics:

> It can be in people’s perspective. It depends on who you’re speaking to. Who you’re dealing with. I mean, you can speak with biologists. At Fish and Wildlife Service, I’ve thought of this a lot of times, and they’ll talk all about biology and wildlife, and then they’ll go, ‘oh, yeah, yeah. Plants. Oh, yeah, yeah. Soil.’

In this case, the interviewee was highlighting how natural resources may be at the forefront of a biologist’s mind in terms of interpretation, whereas cultural resources are totally off of their radar.

Nuwuvi interviewees also agreed that individual land managers play a crucial role in determining interpretation. This Nuwuvi participant, a member of the Kaibab Band of Paiutes, described how a Park Service Superintendent with a specific interest in Nuwuvi culture strongly influenced interpretation in a way that increased native representation:

> He instills it in his staff that what his ideas are for the Park Service…’Okay, I’m the superintendent here, but I don’t see nothing about Southern Paiute. All of this is geology and Pueblo. I don’t see anything about Southern Paiute.’ And I think that’s what made him open this up. Because he did find money to support that and reorganize the interpretation there at the monument.

Clearly, interviewees identified the impact that an individual working at a protected area can have on the interpretation at that site. Land managers are indeed a heterogeneous group, and their past experiences and personal ideologies can be reflected in interpretation.

**Native interpretation often reflects readily available archaeological research material**

A reoccurring comment made by various federal agency and Nuwuvi interviewees related to interpretation as dependent on research materials related to a specific protected area. Several of the Nuwuvi participants expressed dissatisfaction with the status of Nuwuvi interpretation, as
they believed it is overrun with references to Nuwuvi of the past, only. Interviewees linked this trend of using the past tense to discuss their culture as related to interpretive content using only historical sources regarding Nuwuvi. One Nuwuvi representative from the Kaibab Band of Paiutes expressed his concern this way:

They get most of all their information from past records and stuff. What we do want, though, to stress to anybody that’s doing interpretation of Native Americans or Southern Paiute is to get out of those terms of ‘was’ and ‘once were.’ So that that way we can put in the wordage to say ‘they still do’ or ‘they still work here. They still live here.’

This same participant later discussed how historical sources used by interpretive planners might not be complete representations of history and prehistory. As the following statement demonstrates, incomplete source material for interpretation can neglect entire indigenous groups, which leads to an incomplete picture in the resulting interpretation:

We always like to let people know that even though we’re not in those history books or we’re not as out there as Hopi and Zuni and these other tribes are, you know, we still have a tie and a connection to the land and these areas and landscapes and air and water and stuff. That those things are ours still.

Another Nuwuvi participant from the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe echoed the idea that interpretation tends to focus on historic or prehistoric representations of native culture. This interviewee saw a lack of collaboration between the tribes and the land managers as a primary factor contributing to overwhelmingly historical depictions of natives in interpretation.

The older museums didn’t involve us or ask us how we wanted to be portrayed or talked about. What information do they have on us, and most of it’s old. And that was pretty much what we said about the visitor center here. It was just all old, and it talked about yesterday. We just wanted the public to know that we’re still here today, and we’re still a part of our homeland here. We’re still here.

Again, this Nuwuvi interviewee stressed the concern that the public will not learn from interpretation that native culture still exists today. She saw collaboration with tribes as a way to bolster public knowledge of contemporary native culture through interpretation.

Another perspective that was repeated by both Nuwuvi and federal agency interviewees was that historical photographs and prehistoric and historic native material culture dominates
native interpretation, as opposed to having references to contemporary native culture. In an interview with the Nuwuvi Working Group representative from the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe, the interviewee described what she found at one local museum. Though this museum is not situated in a protected area, specifically, the representations of native culture at this museum within the ancestral territory is indicative of larger trends in the area:

Over here in Beatty, there’s a museum there, a real small one. And they have tons of old pictures...there was all kinds of pictures there. And there was pictures of my dad and his brothers from a long time ago...They were just little boys. They had baskets in there. And a basket made by my grandmother… is in that museum.

While the use of historical photographs provides an interesting visual component to interpretive exhibits, when used alone, the photographs do not portray Nuwuvi as contemporary peoples. A Nuwuvi consultant from the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe discussed his belief that photographs of indigenous peoples at protected area visitor centers need to be supplemented by more extensive interpretation of who the contemporary people are:

People need to understand who all lived in this area. Especially here, CRIT, Las Vegas, even though they call us different names, we’re pretty much the same people. Same language pretty much. Same culture. Same traditions. So I think that needs to be emphasized a lot more, I mean, than just a picture of a Native American. I think it needs to come with some other stuff.

Nuwuvi participants discussed current interpretation as largely based on historical and prehistoric material culture and photographs; however, some federal agency representatives highlighted some changes in agency approaches to interpretation of Nuwuvi culture. In an interview with a Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management employed by the Park Service, the interviewee spoke of the interpretation at Pipe Spring National Monument before the Park Service began engaging with the Kaibab Band of Paiutes regarding interpretation:

…this is in the early nineties. And it was…about half pioneer and half Paiute, because there happens to be a lot of really amazing photos that John Hillers took of the Paiutes here…that were available for use…There was a couple baskets and things like that. It was cultural material type interpretation... One of the things that we have is a journal...[of] the first superintendent here…They’re just and amazing treasure trove of what he was doing… So there was always a nod to – in the interpretation here – a nod to the Paiutes and the Native Americans around here, but that was just kind of it.
As demonstrated in the above statement, interpretation at the monument in the 1990s reflected available research material, which, in terms of native interpretation, was primarily historical photographs and Paiute basketry. This interviewee went on to state that in more recent years, interpretation of the tribes changed because of collaborations with tribal members increased the amount of resources available regarding contemporary Nuwuvi culture:

In the nineties …the tribe…sent him [the Superintendent] an official letter in writing that said, ‘we want the Park Service to do more interpretation about the history of our people.’ And so we said okay. And the first way we started doing more of that…was just literally talking about them more in the regular interpretation and having demonstrations. Hiring Paiute people even just as demonstrators to come in and do things.

Having the tribe initiate contact with the Park Service and collaborating working with the agency clearly had an impact on this protected areas interpretation. As this interviewee states, incorporating the tribes into the interpretive processes lessened the reliance on archaeological data in the interpretation. Again, this statement demonstrates that the land management agencies rely on available sources, which are often archaeological, in interpreting Native Americans. While archaeological material provides an important perspective on indigenous cultures, incorporating contemporary Nuwuvi content promotes a fuller picture that demonstrates that Nuwuvi are not solely a relic of the past.

**Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the silencing of Nuwuvi voice in protected area interpretation through neglecting to consider its importance as one of the factors currently guiding protected area interpretation. The five themes discussed above demonstrate that Euro-American dominated land management agencies select protected area interpretation dependent upon factors they determined to be important. As protected area land managers are a part of the hegemonic structure of the dominant class, they are able to undermine Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty by
neglecting its value in determining interpretation in protected areas within the ancestral territory. While western science themes and archaeological interpretations of Nuwuvi culture are important aspects of protected area interpretation, they do not represent a complete story of Nuwuvi culture and relationships with the land. Up to this point, this paper has argued that interpretation sovereignty is largely absent in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory, and this is due to the lack of value placed upon interpretation sovereignty by dominant land management agencies. In the following chapter, I present a discussion as to why interpretation sovereignty is important for the health of Native American communities.
Chapter 3  
Interpretation Sovereignty as a Tool of Nuwuvi

Interpretation sovereignty is vital to the health of Nuwuvi communities. In this chapter, I identify three areas where interpretation sovereignty, as part of a larger movement towards visual and rhetorical sovereignty, can be used to promote the health of Native American communities (King 2009:214; Lyons 2000:449; Raheja 2007:1160). The first area I discuss is self-determination. I argue that interpretation sovereignty can be utilized as a tool to contribute to self-determination within Nuwuvi communities. Second, I identify interpretation sovereignty as a means of addressing and reversing some aspects of trauma in Native American communities. Finally, I argue that interpretation sovereignty is a powerful weapon to fight anti-Indianism that exists in contemporary society (Pewewardy 2002).

Self-Determination

Interpretation sovereignty is an adept instrument with which to further self-determination in Native American communities. According to author Scott Richard Lyons of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, self-determination among Native American groups is “the general strategy by which we aim to best recover our losses from the ravages of colonization: our lands, our languages, our cultures, our self-respect” (Lyons 2000:449). In the following section, I discuss the importance of self-determination for American Indian populations and argue that interpretation sovereignty is an effective way to move towards self-determination.

---

4 It is important to note that self-determination is not tantamount to self-governance. Rather, self-determination can be linked more closely to the concept of sovereignty because it is more inclusive. As Lyons describes it, “Non-Indian reductions of Indian claims to sovereignty as arguments for "self-governance"--that is, for a degree of local financial and political control modeled after western governmental systems--obscures this holistic people-oriented emphasis (Lyons 456).
In a post-settler state, such as the U.S., self-determination is a key method for achieving cultural survival for indigenous communities. The U.S. is a classic example of a post-settler state in that the ‘settler residents’ have, in their minds, transitioned from settlers to ‘natives’ of a state that they created, and in this process they have relegated indigenous populations to ethnic minorities (Hibbard et al. 2008:137; Pearson 2002:1000). Beginning in the 1490s and continuing into 1890s, European settlers sought to eliminate Native American culture through brutal genocidal tactics against American Indian communities that lay in the way of colonization (Willmon-Haque and BigFoot 2008:52). Native American populations suffered from violent warfare with settlers, new diseases that plagued their communities and aggressive encroachment of their lands. In the century that followed, the U.S. government continued in its attempts to squelch native culture through assimilation tactics such as suppression of religion and forced attendance of youth boarding schools (Raheja 2007:1182). The profoundly negative effects of existing as an indigenous minority within the confines of a post-settler state are still felt in contemporary Native American communities. If, as Lyons suggests, self-determination is the means by which Native American populations can overcome these effects of colonization, including disenfranchisement for the land and disruption of knowledge transmission, it is crucial to their cultural survival.

Interpretation sovereignty, as an aspect of visual and rhetorical sovereignty, can be used as a means to further self-determination because it offers native groups the chance to work outside the bounds of cultural hegemony and resist continued assimilation (Lyons 2000:449). By inserting native voice into interpretations of native culture, American Indian groups such as Nuwuvi can reclaim their own story from dominant renderings of their story, thereby reclaiming their past, present and future identity and moving towards a sense of self-determination (King
2009:222). In this way, interpretation sovereignty is an individual tool, within a larger sovereignty toolkit, that can be utilized to promote the overall health of native populations.

**Trauma**

I suggest that interpretation sovereignty, as a form of sovereignty exercised in the public sphere, is a means of challenging aspects of cultural hegemony that exist in society today. This fact is important to subaltern groups, such as Nuwuvi, because cultural hegemony, in combination with factors such as poverty and historical trauma, increases vulnerability to trauma among these groups (Willmon-Haque and BigFoot 2008:52). In the following section, I highlight two statistically identifiable instances of trauma in American Indian communities to demonstrate how interpretation sovereignty, in conjunction with other tools within the sovereignty movement, can play a role in combatting trauma through disrupting cultural hegemony.

Suicide is an easily identifiable instance of trauma in Native American communities. In a study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the highest suicide rates in the country between 2005 and 2009 were among American Indian/Alaskan Native males, and American Indian/Alaskan Native women had the highest suicide rates of all female race/ethnicity groups (CDC 2013a). This same study also showed that American Indian/Alaskan Natives had by far the highest suicide rates for youth between 10 and 24 years of age, with 31.27 and 10.16 suicides per 10,000 among males and females, respectively (CDC 2013b). Youth suicide is particularly detrimental to American Indian communities, as it represents tragic loss of opportunity for cultural transmission from older generations to younger generations (Strickland 2006:5). In a 1997 study by Duran and Duran, the authors discuss colonization as a possible producer of posttraumatic stress that leaves American Indians particularly susceptible to risk factors associated with suicide (Strickland 2006:6). This link between colonization and suicide
risk in Native American populations is logical when colonization is understood to contribute to
cultural hegemony, and cultural hegemony is viewed as a risk factor that increases vulnerability
to trauma. Because interpretation sovereignty provides one venue for marginalized indigenous
groups to undermine cultural hegemony, interpretation sovereignty can thus be viewed as an
opportunity to decrease exposure to risks associated with cultural hegemony, such as suicide. For
example, utilizing a park’s interpretation to assert a contemporary Nuwuvi presence in the
ancestral homeland opposes the hegemonic model of interpretation as perpetuated by the United
States’ culturally hegemonic society that subverts Nuwuvi populations.

The second aspect of trauma that I wish to discuss here is instances of poverty in
American Indian communities. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) performed
by the U.S. Census Bureau, the highest national poverty rates between the years of 2007 and
2011 were for American Indians/Alaska Natives at 27.0 percent (Macartney et al. 2013:2). The
fact that American Indian communities experience such high rates of poverty causes a multitude
of complex issues within these communities. For example, poverty is inversely related to both
education attainment and secure employment (Willmon-Haque and BigFoot 2008:54). American
Indian women face additional obstacles as a result of exposure to the trauma of living in poverty.
According to D.S. BigFoot (1989), American Indian women are often burdened with extended
family commitments, which can produce negative financial and psychological effects (Willmon-
Haque and BigFoot 2008:54). To complicate the matter further, poverty is also linked to
instances of suicide (Strickland 2006:6).

Poverty, like suicide, is an instance of trauma that can be linked to colonization and
assimilation strategies that left American Indian communities disproportionately disenfranchised
within the culturally hegemonic structure of contemporary U.S. society. Interpretation
sovereignty, as one form of sovereignty and one of several tools to destabilize cultural
hegemony, can thus be viewed as ameliorating instances of trauma, such as poverty, that plague
contemporary American Indian societies. This is not to assert that interpretation sovereignty is a
universal remedy for eliminating suicide and poverty in indigenous communities; however
interpretation sovereignty can be viewed as an opportunity to disrupt cultural hegemony through
exercising sovereignty in the public sphere of protected area visitor centers. Specifically,
incorporating Nuwuvi perspectives into protected area interpretation opposes the hegemonic
model that currently suppresses Nuwuvi culture.

**Anti-Indianism**

Interpretation sovereignty, in addition to being a means to overcome trauma, is also a
powerful tool to fight anti-Indianism in contemporary society. Anti-Indianism, as defined by
Cook-Lynn (2001), refers to practices meant to “socially isolate, to expunge or expel, to fear and
menace, to deframe, and to repulse indigenous peoples” (4). Current hegemonic interpretation in
the Nuwuvi ancestral territory can be seen as contributing to aspects of anti-Indianism in that it:
1) under-represents Nuwuvi interpretation in relation to natural science interpretation, and 2)
primarily takes an etic perspective on Nuwuvi culture (see Chapter 1).

As deframing indigenous peoples is a crucial component of anti-Indianism, whether or
not agencies are consciously deframing Nuwuvi, they are doing so by under-represent Nuwuvi in
protected area interpretation. (Pewewardy 2002:1). Under-representing Nuwuvi can act to
deframe them in ways. For example, when land management agencies downplay the significant
impact that Nuwuvi have had on the land through time, including continued relationships
between the people and the land, this can be viewed as restricting American Indians to ‘partial
histories’ (King 2009:215). Another example of how under-representation can deframe Nuwuvi
can be seen at the Spring Mountain Visitor Center, which neglected to interpret Nuwuvi entirely (see Chapter 1). In doing this, the agency neglected to acknowledge the very existence of these indigenous populations both in the past and today. This practice fits into the definition of anti-Indianism, as it can be viewed as a forced forgetting of this population and the atrocities that they endured at the hands of Euro-American populations.

Denying interpretation sovereignty to Nuwuvi through interpreting Nuwuvi culture from an etic perspective may also contribute to anti-Indianism. Through resorting to only dominant interpretations of native culture, as opposed to infusing Nuwuvi perspectives, land management agencies by and large claim the Nuwuvi story. This effectively destroys Nuwuvi ability to have ownership over the ways in which they are interpreted for the public and themselves. While etic agency perspectives of Nuwuvi are useful and informative, in taking away ownership of the Nuwuvi story, land management agencies treat Nuwuvi as populations incapable of telling their own story without assistance from the dominant Euro-American culture. For example, protected areas such as Red Rock Canyon or Zion National Park that minimally interpret Nuwuvi culture from an etic perspective do not allow Nuwuvi to control how they are portrayed to the public. Denying Nuwuvi of control over their own story is a clear example of anti-Indianism. By exercising interpretation sovereignty in protected areas of the ancestral territory, Nuwuvi would shift the existing paradigm so that they could reclaim their story through interpretation thereby reversing the anti-Indianism that characterizes much of interpretation currently.

**Conclusion**

Interpretation sovereignty, while certainly not a magic bullet for solving all problems that may currently plague some Native American populations, can be considered a valuable tool for indigenous communities. It is one avenue for native groups to start reasserting their ownership.
over their past, present and future within a public setting. In this way, interpretation sovereignty can be viewed as a tool framed within a larger sovereignty movement that can be employed to work towards self-determination and combat both trauma and anti-Indianism. The following chapter builds on this idea that interpretation sovereignty is valuable to Native American communities, and argues that in order to foster interpretation sovereignty in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory, tribes and land management agencies must address certain factors that currently impact the feasibility of collaborative interpretation.
Chapter 4  
Linking Interpretation Sovereignty to Tribal-Agency Collaboration

Interpretation sovereignty plays an important role in fostering Native American cultural health, because it presents a public venue for these subaltern populations to challenge the culturally hegemonic interpretative model. This model is characterized by western science and archaeological content (King 2009:215). Though these themes are highly important components of visitor education, disallowing interpretation sovereignty can and often does lead to an omission of interpretations of contemporary Native Americans nations or native voices in cultural exhibits (Batten 2005: 32). In order to ensure a degree of Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty in the ancestral territory, the Nuwuvi nations and federal and state agencies must develop and maintain effective collaborative relationships. Collaboration is crucial to interpretation sovereignty efforts, because the agencies ultimately control the interpretation, as they own the protected areas and fund the interpretive projects. This endows the agencies the ability to act as gatekeepers of opportunities for Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty when funding and capacity allow. As such, it is necessary for tribes and agencies to collaborate in a meaningful way to ensure interpretation sovereignty in the ancestral territory.

In this chapter, I discuss crucial factors impacting tribal-agency collaboration regarding protected area interpretation. These factors represent emergent themes that presented themselves in the analyses of both federal and Nuwuvi interviews (see Table 4). The factors that affect collaboration include: Tribal-Agency Relationships; Agency Funding/Capacity; Tribal Funding/Capacity; Effective Tribal-Federal Communication; A United Nuwuvi Voice. In the following sections, I discuss each factor in detail and how it relates to the hegemonic model of
protected area interpretation in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. I then conclude by arguing that it is necessary to address the factors affecting collaboration in order to ensure interpretation sovereignty in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory.

Table 4. Frequency of Emergent Themes in Interviews Regarding Factors Impacting Collaborative Interpretation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>No. of Interviewees (out of 14)</th>
<th>Frequency of Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency Resources</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Resources</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal-Federal Relationships</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communication</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Tribal Voice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tribal-Agency Relationships**

Strong relationships between Native American entities and land management agencies play a critical role in the ability for these groups to collaborate on interpretation. As agencies represent dominant society and tribal governments represent marginalized populations, achieving cohesive relationships not characterized by dramatic power imbalances may prove challenging. In analyzing the agency and Nuwuvi interviews, the most prevalent theme regarding factors that impact collaborative interpretation was the importance of building and maintaining firm relationships between Native American entities and land management agencies. As shown in Table 4, this theme appeared forty-three times among the fourteen transcribed interviews, and thirteen of the fourteen interviewees mentioned this theme at least once.

An interviewee, employed as a Tribal Liaison for the Forest Service, spoke of the importance of relationships between her agency and local tribes as crucial to meaningful collaborative processes.

When I did get here, and SNPLMA was well within the works, we still had a relatively contentious relationship with the tribes at times. You know, we would submit letters or phone calls with the tribes, and sometimes we would get letters back with pages of comments of things we could have improved in our consultation process. And so fortunately with the ethnographic study, we were able to work with the Nuwuvi Working Group to develop those consultation protocols,
help those things run more smoothly. And now, I feel like we’re much more proactive in terms of
talking about what projects might be affecting cultural resources, than they had been in the past.

This interviewee went on to specifically point to interpretation as an area where strong
relationships with the tribes had beneficially impacted collaborative interpretive processes.

Ultimately, it’s all based on relationships, right? So definitely the personality of the people in
those roles can affect the quality of discussions, whether or not you’re in consultation or the
willingness of those tribal representatives to open up and trust that you are going to use their
cultural stories in a culturally appropriate way. So, I think it’s really based on the individual, and if
you have sort of a contentious working relationship with the tribes, then I think the quality of your
interpretation is definitely going to suffer. And I think we’ve been very lucky to have been able to
develop those relationships through various projects. I think we’ve really built a very robust
interpretive program with the Nuwuvi story.

This agency employee directly linked the success of their Native American interpretation with
their ability to build relationships with Nuwuvi peoples. She credited the programs facilitated by
Spoon and Arnold through SNPLMA funding as a key factor in the success of their relationships.
Empowering a Native American working group to closely collaborate with the federal
government created a stronger, more balanced relationship between the dominant agency and the
subaltern Nuwuvi organization.

Nuwuvi interviewees also frequently discussed strong tribal-agency relationships as a
vital part of the collaborative process. Tribal members interviewed for this study continuously
remarked on the importance of relationship building to successful collaboration. One native
interviewee from the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe discussed the value she placed on Park Service
management taking time to learn about and engage with her tribe.

We have a new park superintendent that just came on board. That same weekend she can here, she
attended the training with us. I thought that was really good. Because she took two days. I mean, I
know she’s got boxes galore, but she took two days that weekend to be with us for that
training…The superintendent before…he was very involved with us. Very involved. I don’t know
[the new superintendent] yet, but she was very good. Down to earth. Not real flighty person
talking bullshit. [Laughs] So we all liked her.

As this interviewee demonstrates, when a person in an agency management position engaged
with the tribes on a professional and personal level, this created trust among tribal members and
therefore an increased interest in collaboration. Another Nuwuvi interviewee from the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe spoke of his personal opinion of dealing with the different federal land management agencies. He also attributed relationship building as key to understanding how well the tribes will work with the agencies or not.

It works better once you know them, rather than just walking in and just meeting them. That way you’ve got a good feel of how they are. If they’re receptive or not receptive to the comments. The best one, I think, is the Forestry, the Fish & Wildlife. They’re really open. I think they’re more kind of like Native American people. Raised in that type of where, like, the animals and the land are more cherishable to them. Then it is to other people. Like the Bureau of Land Management people, they kind of hang their degree over their head on the wall…They’re a little bit different. Forestry, they want to hear that stuff. They want to know that plant. They want to know what it does. They’re more curious, to where the Bureau of Land Management has that, you know, I’m just doing my eight hours, and I’m going to get a promotion. So, what the hell, I don’t care. Again, it’s the people.

This same interviewee later discussed the importance of prior relationships in regards to encouraging tribal members to engage. In his perspective, the stronger a relationship, the more willing a tribal member was to collaborate with non-members: “Once you get involved in these meetings you start knowing people better. You make your connection there. So when you call on them, they’ll say, “oh, I remember. Come on down” (Working Group Member, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe). Again, when an individual that represents a dominant agency connects with an individual from a marginalized group and forms a significant relationship, successful collaboration can be achieved.

**Agency Funding/Capacity**

Chapter 2 demonstrates how crucial funding may prove to protected area interpretation. The same is true of collaboration. Adequate funding is a necessity for tribal-agency collaboration to occur. In fact, among interviews, funding was the second most prevalent theme regarding factors impacting collaboration. Agency and tribal government funding, combined, was mentioned 29 times in the interviews (see Table 4). In this section, I address agency funding as a barrier to collaboration with tribes, and the following section deals with tribal funding. In
discussing agency funding, it is important to note that while a certain level of consultation is mandated by all the agencies, collaboration between tribes and agencies regarding interpretation often is a question of available funds. According to numerous agency interviewees, collaboration with the tribes in the projects facilitated by Spoon and Arnold was largely dependent on SNPLMA funding. According to a Visitor Services Manager for the Fish and Wildlife Service:

The process that we’re doing here is a gift because of the SNPLMA funding. I mean maybe we wouldn’t have stepped back as much if it wasn’t for the SNPLMA funding that we’ve had to have this opportunity to engage the tribes… not many other refuges or Fish and Wildlife Service as a whole has gone through a process like this. Maybe they’ll do the minimum. What’s necessary. But really developing a relationship, we’re so underfunded I think they basically don’t have the time or the money to do as good of a job as we’re doing.

An Environmental Planner and Tribal Liaison for the Forest Service echoed this sentiment regarding the importance of SNPLMA funds for collaborative processes:

I think one of the benefits for us with the SNPLMA money, we were able to create an interagency project, where we developed a consultation protocol that replied both to Forest Service lands on the Spring Mountains and Fish and Wildlife lands in the Sheep Mountains.

This Forest Service representative felt that the increase in funding that her agency saw allowed it to develop a cross-agency protocol that helped to stabilize consultation processes, which in turn facilitated collaboration for projects such as interpretation at visitor centers. This same interviewee later built on this idea by suggesting that collaborative projects done through SNPLMA funding potentially enable a sustainable collaborative relationship with the tribes:

I just think, you know, we’ve been very fortunate here on the NRA to have this opportunity to invest in our relationships with the tribes with SNPLMA funding, and we’re just hoping that we’ve built enough momentum that it can start sustaining itself even though the funding is starting to dwindle. So we’re hoping we can rely on the tribes a little bit more to help maintain that relationship.

Again, funding through SNPLMA was highlighted as a key part of the relationship-building process between the tribes and the agency. Though the funding may no longer be available, it allowed the agency to develop a relationship with the tribes that she hopes will continue in future collaborations regarding interpretation.
Tribal Funding/Capacity

Native American governments and organizations, like federal agencies, also suffer from issues surrounding limited resources. Native entities are particularly susceptible to poverty and a general lack of resources due to their subaltern status in society (Willmon-Haque and BigFoot 2008:52). As with federal agency funding issues surrounding collaboration, interviewees also repeatedly identified tribal funding and lack of capacity as impediments to collaboration. This theme was mentioned by six of the fourteen interviewees, and it appeared a total of ten times in these interviews (see Table 4). Nuwuvi representatives discussed a desire to engage more with federal and state agencies regarding interpretation, but due to a lack of resources and a need to attend work, they could not engage to the degree that they thought could be beneficial.

According to one Nuwuvi participant from the Moapa Band of Paiutes, this was a reoccurring issue when it came to agencies reaching out to tribal members to attend meetings, but the people asked are unable to: “Well, there was one person that was able to go out. But she did say we could go out at a different time… Some people work, and it doesn’t work with their time off. That’s where the problem is.”

While tribal members were limited in their participatory ability due to work, they were also sometimes limited because of other factors going on in their community. For example, many tribes in the Great Basin region are often in the midst of entrepreneurial endeavors such as the building of new casinos or working with private companies such as solar companies. In an interview with a Refuge Manager from the Fish and Wildlife Service, the interviewee spoke of such problems with the tribes having limited capacity to engage about interpretation due to other community obligations:

They’ve [the tribes] got a lot of things they’ve got to work on and do just like we’re really busy, too. So we try to keep up the connections and the engagement, but they’ve got a lot going on, too. Everyone’s busy… they’ve got a whole suite of social issues. They’ve got projects they’re
Another inhibitor of complete consultation and collaboration between tribes and government agencies had to do with the sheer amount of consultation that tribes are being asked to do.

According to the Environmental Planner and Tribal Liaison working for the Forest Service, there is a general hesitancy to ask tribes to collaborate on all projects because the agency is sensitive to the amount of consultation being asked of the tribes:

The tribes are so spread out here, and they are consulting not just with Forest Service, but with BLM and Fish and Wildlife and Park Service, and their state and local entities, as well. So they are constantly being bombarded for requests for consultation, because we’re all required by law to consult with them. So we’re trying to find that balance where we’re respecting the fact that, yes, we may be impacting their cultural resource, but we don’t want to bombard them with too much so that they just shut us out completely.

This interviewee again demonstrated that a tribe’s capacity is an issue when it comes to collaboration. As she suggests, because of the sheer amount of consultation that tribes are faced with, agencies may be hesitant to reach out regarding interpretive collaboration. As such, tribal government funding and capacity issues can inhibit collaboration, thus inhibiting interpretation sovereignty. Because of Nuwuvi and other indigenous groups’ subaltern status, funding and capacity for collaboration presents a very difficult obstacle to overcome.

**Effective Communication**

Effective communication between agencies and tribes presents a complex yet crucial factor in collaborative interpretation efforts. Communication was an emergent theme in the interview, as ten out of fourteen of the key informant interviewees discussed communication as a vital element to the collaborative process. Communication was mentioned a total of ten times in these interviews (see Table 4). Communication between the agencies and the tribes may be difficult for a variety of reasons. One way in which consultants spoke of communication was in regards to the government agencies knowing the right tribal member to contact. Both Nuwuvi
and federal agency interviewees discussed missed opportunities due to a lack of knowledge about who to contact from the tribes, as well as the difficulty in maintaining a contact when tribal government staff turns over. The following three statements from Nuwivui interviewees dealt with the issue of staff turnover, and the resulting problems with collaboration with the agencies.

So we kind of try and work with the different departments, and the different agencies that we work with. BLM, Fish and Wildlife. Whenever I can get any info on it. But you know, there’s a lot of information getting passed to the wrong people, so we’re trying to straighten that issue out also…We’ve missed a lot of information that was out there. It never came to us…We’re trying to straighten all that stuff out, where it comes to the right people.
-Working Group Member, Moapa Band of Paiutes

BLM got in touch with us, but they left a message on our preservation phone number, which last year they had to let her go. So I didn’t get the message until, like, three months ago. And they says, ‘we were wondering how come she hadn’t called us back.’ And I says, ‘you know, she’s no longer employed with the tribe.’ And that’s the problem, too, with a small tribe is the turnover rate for employees and the tribal government changes frequently… It’s hard to maintain consistency within the tribal government.
-Working Group Member, Kaibab Band of Paiutes

A lot of them [interpretative planners] really want to work with the tribal government, but they don’t know who is the affective one they should ask… The state museum usually gives them a directory. A directory of whose the chairman, who’s the museum director or cultural person to work with and stuff like that…They will attempt to work with these people. And sometimes they work, sometimes they fail. The person gets transferred or moves away or – it’s always something comes up. I would say that there’s a large turnover in that area. So they only progress so far, and then it falls away.
-Working Group Member, Colorado River Indian Tribes

These statements about missed opportunities demonstrate that in cases where the agencies representing the dominant population seek out collaborative opportunities with marginalized indigenous groups, failed communication results in a lack of collaboration. The following statement from a Fish and Wildlife Service Visitor Services Manager also expressed the difficulties in knowing whom to contact in terms of interpretation:

Usually they [agency representatives] would just contact somebody in the tribe, and somebody was referenced to them. Whether that’s the appropriate person, whether it’s an elder, whether it’s a cultural representative, it might be somebody that’s just available and willing to help out.

Bureaucratic issues also were also discussed in interviews as playing a role in inhibiting communication between tribes and agencies regarding interpretation and collaboration. For
example, in the quote below, a Timbisha Shoshone interviewee expressed frustration about Nevada’s legal processes that she, as a tribal member, sees as difficult to engage with:

For Nevada, you have to have information sharing agreement and consultation agreement… before they’ll share any type of cultural, natural resource information we do on projects… It just don’t seem right. Because they want to have input from the tribes, yet we can’t get the information. We have to jump through hoops.

Along these same lines, a Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management for the Park Service discussed communication difficulties, which she attributed to cultural differences in communication practices: the federal government’s culture of communication and the tribes’.

Well, the Park Service comes from a military background…so everything is very regimented in little boxes, and you do things this way. You write things down at every step of the way. And tribal cultures aren’t like that. So trying to get that together, trying to get words out of them sometimes, was hard, because even though their culture is very verbal – that’s how you pass on stories – you don’t write them down… So how can we do this in a different way? How can we get it written down? And a lot of it was learning more about them and learning about their stories and trying to figure out when to ask…And to know enough to ask that. So that you weren’t writing things down that they really didn’t want.

Again, this statement demonstrates the importance that effective communication had on collaborations between the tribe and the different land management agencies regarding interpretation. Because communication between an agency and Nuwuvi organizations is so crucial to collaboration, it is therefore crucial to Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty.

**United Nuwuvi Voice**

Within the Nuwuvi Working Group, alone, there are six tribes represented (Kaibab Band of Paiutes, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, and Pahrump Paiute Tribe. This is a heterogeneous group of individuals that represents diverse populations of people. A consistent theme regarding interpretive collaboration between the agencies and the tribes was the presence of a united indigenous voice. Specifically, federal agent consultants expressed a desire for a united Nuwuvi voice with which to engage regarding interpretation. Five out of eight federal agency participants in this study discussed a
lack of consensus within and among the tribes as leading to difficulties in collaboration (see Table 4). The following statements from federal agency interviewees captured this sentiment:

I haven’t worked with a lot of tribal groups, but this tribal group – there’s big family head butting. This family is in charge now. And then somebody will get elected to be the Chairman, so that family is in charge now. And they have different priorities. And getting them to work together is kind of difficult sometimes. Just knowing and understanding those dynamics is part of what it takes to work with the tribe. We don’t want to be prying into people’s personal history, but it’s still really important to know. Because when you get two of the wrong people together in a room, nothing’s going to work.
-Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management, National Park Service

You might just get a perspective from one person and not all seven of the tribal members. One individual, and you might not even have the right person representing the tribes. Until you know for sure and you check with the whole Working Group, you’re not really sure you’ve got the right representation. Not that it’s a wrong representation. It might just be an individual’s perspective.
-Visitor Service Manager, Fish and Wildlife Service

The tribes – you know, with interpretation, often the challenge is to work with native people, the native community, itself, hasn’t agreed on what the native story is. And so you’re trying to tell a story, but here is your experts who are going, ‘oh it’s this way.’ ‘No, it’s this way.’ And it’s like, well which way do you put down.
-Educational and Volunteer Program Manager, Forest Service

As these statements demonstrate, land management agencies found it difficult to collaborate with the tribes when they were unsure of which Nuwuvi story to interpret. There was a fear, within the agencies, of telling the wrong story, or telling one overarching story that is meant to apply to a heterogeneous group of people. The agency representatives interviewed for this study showed a clear desire to engage with a united Nuwuvi voice in discussions relating to interpretation in the ancestral territory; therefore, Nuwuvi presenting a united voice is a vital part of the process of exercising interpretation sovereignty.

Conclusion: Ensuring Interpretation Sovereignty through Collaboration

Effective tribal-agency collaboration hinges on addressing the five themes outlined in the previous sections (Tribal-Agency Relationships, Agency Funding/Capacity, Tribal Funding/Capacity, Effective Tribal-Federal Communication, A United Nuwuvi Voice). Because federal agencies represent dominant populations and Nuwuvi are subaltern populations within
U.S. culturally hegemonic society, effective tribal-agency collaboration is key for Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty to occur. Both federal and Nuwuvi Working Group interviewees identified that current collaboration, though beset with its share of complications, is an important part of the interpretation planning process. This is because interpretation in federal and state managed protected areas falls under the jurisdiction of these management agencies, and so Nuwuvi, although the original inhabitants of these lands, must partner effectively with the agencies to achieve a degree of interpretation sovereignty in the ancestral territory. Interpretation sovereignty, as a form of sovereignty, is one tool to engage in the battle for ongoing Native American cultural health (Lyons 200:449; King 2009:222). Tribes must engage tools such as interpretation sovereignty in order to cycle out of oppression resulting from colonization and its aftermaths, which have shaped our post-settler state into a culturally hegemonic society.
Conclusion

Interpretation is an important educational tool that is meant to convey to the public a morally grounded message about natural and cultural resources within the landscape (Ham 1992:3-4). In the Nuwuvi ancestral territory, interpretation was characterized by a hegemonic model in which western science and archaeological content dominated the exhibits, leaving little to no room for emic perspectives on Nuwuvi culture or interpretations of contemporary Nuwuvi peoples. Through collaborations between Nuwuvi nations and federal or state agencies, interpretation sovereignty can be engaged to avoid the pitfalls of the traditional hegemonic model of interpretation. There are a number of tools within the larger sovereignty movement, which can be used by tribes to reinforce strategies of self-determination in the fight for cultural vitality (King 2009:222; Lyons 2000:449-450). Interpretation sovereignty is by no means a single, ultimate weapon for subverting cultural hegemony in the post-settler United States; however, this paper is meant to demonstrate that by establishing a degree of interpretation sovereignty in the public sphere of protected area interpretation, tribes can move towards reclaiming their story from dominant society.

In my research, I employed the theory of hegemony and the concept of interpretation sovereignty to attempt to understand that status of Nuwuvi interpretation in protected areas in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. My research entailed five weeks of fieldwork, in which I made site visits to seven protected areas in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory and evaluated the interpretive content at each site’s visitor center. These site visits were complemented by key consultant interviews with both federal agency representatives and Nuwuvi working group members. The interviews were inductively coded to establish analytical categories regarding Nuwuvi
interpretation in the study area. This paper is a result of my analysis of the data collected in the field.

In Chapter 1, I demonstrated that protected area interpretation in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory was characterized by a hegemonic model, that 1) over-represented western science themes and content in relation to native themes and content, and 2) primarily used etic interpretations of Nuwuvi culture from the perspective of dominant society. In Chapter 2, I provided a possible explanation as to why interpretation in the study area followed this hegemonic model by identifying the factors that guided interpretation as revealed in key consultant interviews. This chapter highlights the fact that interpretation sovereignty was not identified as an important consideration by agencies in the interpretive planning processes. In Chapter 3, I discuss the value of interpretation sovereignty to native communities. I argue that it is a powerful tool for the tribes to engage, within the larger sovereignty toolkit, to reinforce self-determination strategies and thus combat trauma and anti-Indianism. In Chapter 4, I build on the concept that interpretation sovereignty is valuable to native populations, and argue that interpretation sovereignty can only be achieved through successful collaboration with land management agencies. I discuss the need to address factors that impact effective collaboration, as identified by key consultants.

**Moving Forward with Nuwuvi Interpretation Sovereignty**

It is my hope that this research reveals the hegemonic nature of protected area interpretation within the Nuwuvi ancestral territory and why there is this general lack of interpretation sovereignty in the study area. This paper is meant to demonstrate the value of interpretation sovereignty to native communities and the importance of addressing obstacles to collaborative interpretive planning. It is my desire for this paper to present a stepping-stone for
how to move forward in interpretative planning processes in ways that facilitate Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty. My research is meant to contribute to the ongoing projects administered by Spoon and Arnold dealing with interpretation in the Nuwuvi ancestral territory. As one of the primary objectives of these projects is to increase Nuwuvi interpretation, my findings from this research show the value of the ongoing projects as part of a movement to combat hegemonic interpretation of Nuwuvi and increase Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty (Spoon and Arnold 2012).

As a result of my research, I recommend that land management agencies revisit current protected area interpretation with a paradigm shift regarding the importance of Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty. I argue that the most effective way to generate this paradigm shift is to increase the efficiency of tribal-agency collaboration in interpretive planning processes. In order to do this, I recommend addressing the five factors identified as impacting the efficiency of collaboration in Chapter 4 (Tribal-Agency Relationships, Agency Funding/Capacity, Tribal Funding/Capacity, Effective Tribal-Federal Communication, A United Nuwuvi Voice). While these factors are highly complex and some, such as tribal government and federal funding, are inevitable, they must be first recognized, and then addressed to some degree in order to facilitate the process of collaboration. I recommend further research to decipher how to address these factors and thus enhance the interpretation collaboration process.

Nuwuvi interpretation sovereignty is a powerful tool within the sovereignty toolkit, and it is a tool well worth developing through effective collaboration with federal and state agencies. Agencies may also benefit from fostering interpretation sovereignty in that enhancing collaborative relationships with Native American nations may assist them in reaching compliance mandates relating to government-to-government consultation. Additionally,
collaborations with Nuwuvi nations can provide agencies with new perspectives on resource management issues. Increased indigenous voice in interpretation may also enrich the interpretation, itself, through providing multi-vocal perspectives on protected area resources, both natural and cultural.
Appendix A
Informed Consent Form: Nuwuvi Working Group

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rachel Lahoff from Portland State University, Anthropology Department. This researcher is a graduate student, and this research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master’s degree. This researcher is acting under the supervision of Dr. Jeremy Spoon, professor of anthropology at Portland State University. The researcher seeks to analyze the interpretation of human-environment dynamics in protected area visitor centers. This research is meant to contribute to a larger study that aims to increase representation of Native American culture in protected area visitor centers. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your previous involvement with interpretive exhibit planning projects.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to partake in one interview that should last approximately one hour. In this interview, you will be asked questions regarding interpretation in visitor centers, including how you view interpretation and the representation of Native American culture in regional visitor centers. You will also be asked to comment on your experiences with the current interpretive planning projects. The purpose of this interview is to attempt to gain an understanding of your perspective on current visitor centers in the area and how they interpret Native American culture, or not. This interview will be audio recorded by the researcher, and then transcribed by the researcher. This will be done in order to accurately capture your quotations and sentiments.

I am not aware of any risks that you may experience while participating in this study, except the possibility of missing work for this interview. In order to compensate for any economic losses, you will receive a $150 stipend check for your participation. You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, but the study may help to increase knowledge, which may help others in the future.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to you or identify you will be kept confidential. A report will be generated for this study, and provided to Dr. Spoon; however your identity will be kept confidential in the report. This information will be kept confidential, as audio recordings will be kept on the researcher’s person at all times or locked in her luggage and will be stored on a password-protected computer. Transcriptions of your interview will also be kept on a password-protected computer.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study, and it will not affect any current or future relationship you may have with Portland State University. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without affecting any current or future relationship you may have with Portland State University.

If you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, contact Rachel Lahoff at address: 2129 NE Couch Street, Portland, OR 97232; phone: 215-932-5262. If you have concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research and Strategic Partnerships, Market Center Building 6th floor, Portland State University, (503) 725-4288.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study. The researcher should provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

Printed Name: _____________________
Signature: _____________________ Date: _______________

61
Appendix B
Informed Consent Form: Federal Agency Representative

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rachel Lahoff from Portland State University, Anthropology Department. This researcher is a graduate student, and this research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master’s degree. This researcher is acting under the supervision of Dr. Jeremy Spoon, professor of anthropology at Portland State University. The researcher seeks to analyze the interpretation of human-environment dynamics in protected area visitor centers. This research is meant to contribute to a larger study that aims to increase representation of Native American culture in protected area visitor centers. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your previous involvement with interpretive exhibit planning projects.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to partake in one interview that should last approximately one hour. In this interview, you will be asked questions regarding interpretation in visitor centers, including how you view interpretation and themes you consider important to interpretation. You will also be asked to comment on your experiences with the current interpretive planning projects. The purpose of this interview is to attempt to gain an understanding of your perspective on current visitor centers in the area. This interview will be audio recorded by the researcher, and then transcribed by the researcher. This will be done in order to accurately capture your quotations and sentiments.

I am not aware of any risks that you may experience while participating in this study, except the possibility of missing work for this interview. In order to decrease amount of work missed, the location and time of the interview will be agreed upon prior to the interview date. You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, but the study may help to increase knowledge, which may help others in the future.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to you or identify you will be kept confidential. A report will be generated for this study, and provided to Dr. Spoon; however your identity will be kept confidential in the report. This information will be kept confidential, as audio recordings will be kept on the researcher’s person at all times or locked in her luggage and will be stored on a password-protected computer. Transcriptions of your interview will also be kept on a password-protected computer.

Your participation is voluntary, and it will not affect any current or future relationship you may have with Portland State University. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without affecting any current or future relationship you may have with Portland State University. If you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, contact Rachel Lahoff at address: 2129 NE Couch Street, Portland, OR 97232; phone: 215-932-5262. If you have concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research and Strategic Partnerships, Market Center Building 6th floor, Portland State University, (503) 725-4288.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study. The researcher should provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

Printed Name: _____________________
Signature: _________________________ Date: ______________
References

Bates, T.R.

Batten Bronwyn

Beck, Larry and Ted, Cable

Bernard, Russell


Bureau of Land Management

Center for disease Control and Prevention


Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff

Cook-Lynn, Elizabeth
Gorte, Ross W., Carol Hardy Vincent, Laura A. Hanson and Marc R. Rosenblum

Department of Agriculture
http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=MISSION_STATEMENT,

Eley, Geoff
2002. Placing Habermas. In The Anthropology of Politics: A Reader in Ethnography,

Fereday, Jennifer and Eimear Muir-Cochrane
and Deductive Coding and Theme Development. International Journal of Qualitative

Forest Service
N.d. Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest,
United States Department of Agriculture. http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/htnf/about-
forest/offices/?cid=stelprdb5327297, accessed November 7, 2013.

Foucault, Michel
1994. Chapter 5: Two Lectures. In Culture/ Power/ History: A Reader in Contemporary

Gramsci, Antonia


Ham, Sam
1992. Environmental Interpretation: A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and

Hibbard, Michael, Marcus B. Lane and Kathleen Rasmussen
2008. The Split Personality of Planning: Indigenous Peoples and Planning for Land and

Jelinski, Dennis E.
2005. There is No Mother Nature – There is No Balance of Nature: Culture, Ecology, and
King, C. Richard

Lyons, Scott Richard

Macartney, Suzanne, Alemayehu Bishaw and Kayla Fontenot

Markwell, Kevin

National Park Service


Nevada State Parks

Ortner, Sherry,

Pearson, David

Pewewardy, Cornel

Raheja, Michelle H.
Spoon, Jeremy and Richard Arnold  

Spoon, Jeremy, Richard Arnold, Karla Hambelton, and the Nuwuvi Working Group  

Spoon, Jeremy, Richard Arnold and the Nuwuvi Working Group  

Stoffle Richard W., Diane E. Austin, David B. Halmo, Arthur M. Phillips III  

Strickland, C. June, Elaine Walsh and Michelle Cooper  

Sullivan, Michael III  

Williams, Gwyn A.  

Willmon-Haque, Sadie and Dolores Subina BigFoot  