

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Date:	12/05/2015	Entry Number:	1354
Case Study Name:	THE POLITICS OF TEK: POWER AND THE "INTEGRATION" OF KNOWLEDGE		
Authors:	Paul Nadasdy		
Document Type:	Journal article		
Year:	1999		
Language:	English		
Document Location:	<i>Baltimore, USA</i>		
Full Citation:	Paul Nadasdy, 1999. "THE POLITICS OF TEK : AND ' INTEGRATION ' OF KNOWLEDGE," <i>Arctic Anthropology</i> 36, no. 1 , 1–18.		
Region:	North America		
Country:	Canada		
Ecosystem Type:	Mountain, grassland, woodland		
Social Characteristics:	Indigenous community		
Scale of Study:	Global - National		
Resource Type:	Knowledge		
Type of Initiative:	Research-driven project		
Community-Based Work:	Land and Resource management; Environmental impact assessment		

Keywords:	Traditional knowledge, science, integration, knowledge, culture, value, belief, resource management
Summary:	This paper takes a critical look at the project of "integrating" traditional knowledge and science. The project of integration has been and continues to be the cornerstone of efforts to involve northern aboriginal peoples in processes of resource management and environmental impact assessment over the past 15 years. The idea of integration, however, contains the implicit assumption that the cultural beliefs and practices referred to as "traditional knowledge" conform to western conceptions about "knowledge." It takes for granted existing power relations between aboriginal people and the state by assuming that traditional knowledge is simply a new form of "data" to be incorporated into existing management bureaucracies and acted upon by scientists and resource managers. As a result, aboriginal people have been forced to express themselves in ways that conform to the institutions and practices of state management rather than to their own beliefs, values, and practices. And, since it is scientists and resource managers, rather than aboriginal hunters and trappers, who will be using this new "integrated" knowledge, the project of integration actually serves to concentrate power in administrative centers, rather than in the hands of aboriginal people.