

Beluga hunters in a mixed economy: managing the impacts of nature-based tourism in the Canadian western Arctic

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ABSTRACT. The Inuvialuit Region of the Canadian western Arctic continues to support a variety of land-based activities as part of the regional mixed economy. Tourism development, one of the newer elements of the mixed economy, has potential to conflict with beluga whale hunting, one of the traditional activities. The paper asks the question: can local employment be created through nature-based tourism development in Inuvik, Aklavik, and Tuktoyaktuk in the Inuvialuit Region in ways that support the local mixed economy and minimize conflict with the traditional sector? Results of interviews with Inuvialuit elders and tour operators indicate that both parties regard tourism as a desirable employment option and a creator of economic benefits, with relatively few economic drawbacks and relatively little environmental concern. The problem, however, is that tourism also brings with it social impacts and cultural drawbacks that are, in the Inuvialuit view, mostly related to (a) intrusiveness of tourists, especially in relation to the beluga hunt; (b) representation of the aboriginal hunt in a negative light; and (c) commodification of culture. On the balance, nature-based tourism development has the capability to support the local mixed economy, subject to resolving the conflict between beluga whaling activities and tourists. Fundamentally, however, the conflict is between Inuvialuit lifestyles and values versus the values and expectations of tourists.

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Introduction

Most groups in the Canadian north participate in a mixed economy consisting of transfer payments, wage employment based mainly on service-sector jobs, and a traditional sector based on land and local resources. Creating a local wage economy that is compatible with the land-based sector has always been problematic. Oil and gas developments, power projects, mines, and even tourism development have impacts on the traditional culture and economy of aboriginal peoples. The importance of land-based activities has been well documented since the 1970s, both qualitatively and quantitatively, indicating the robustness of the mixed economy, despite predictions of its demise (Usher 1989; Myers 1996; Berkes and Fast 1996).

The experience of industrial development throughout the Canadian north is that it has operated to the detriment of land-based economies through damage to local food

resources and through social impacts on local communities (Berkes and Fast 1996; McTiernan 1999). Developments resulted not only in environmental degradation but also impacted indigenous cultures, a finding that no doubt applies to some other parts of the circumpolar north as well.

However, some of the social and environmental impacts of development can be avoided and/or mitigated. Local socio-economic objectives can be incorporated into development planning, reorienting policies away from development for the benefit of the south and towards northern indigenous community-based development. An essential component of such a policy change would be to seek development opportunities that are consistent with land-based activities and the maintenance of environmental quality, reinforcing ecological, social, and economic sustainability. Can local employment be created through tourism development, in ways that support the local mixed economy and minimize conflict with the traditional sector? This is the research question asked in the present study, with specific reference to nature-based tourism development in Inuvik, Aklavik, and Tuktoyaktuk in the Canadian western Arctic.

The authors use the term 'nature-based tourism' to include two fairly distinct categories, ecotourism and cultural tourism. Understanding the differences and the interrelationships between ecotourism and cultural tourism is essential to evaluating the compatibility between tourism and the Inuvialuit land-based economy. Ecotourism is 'tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed

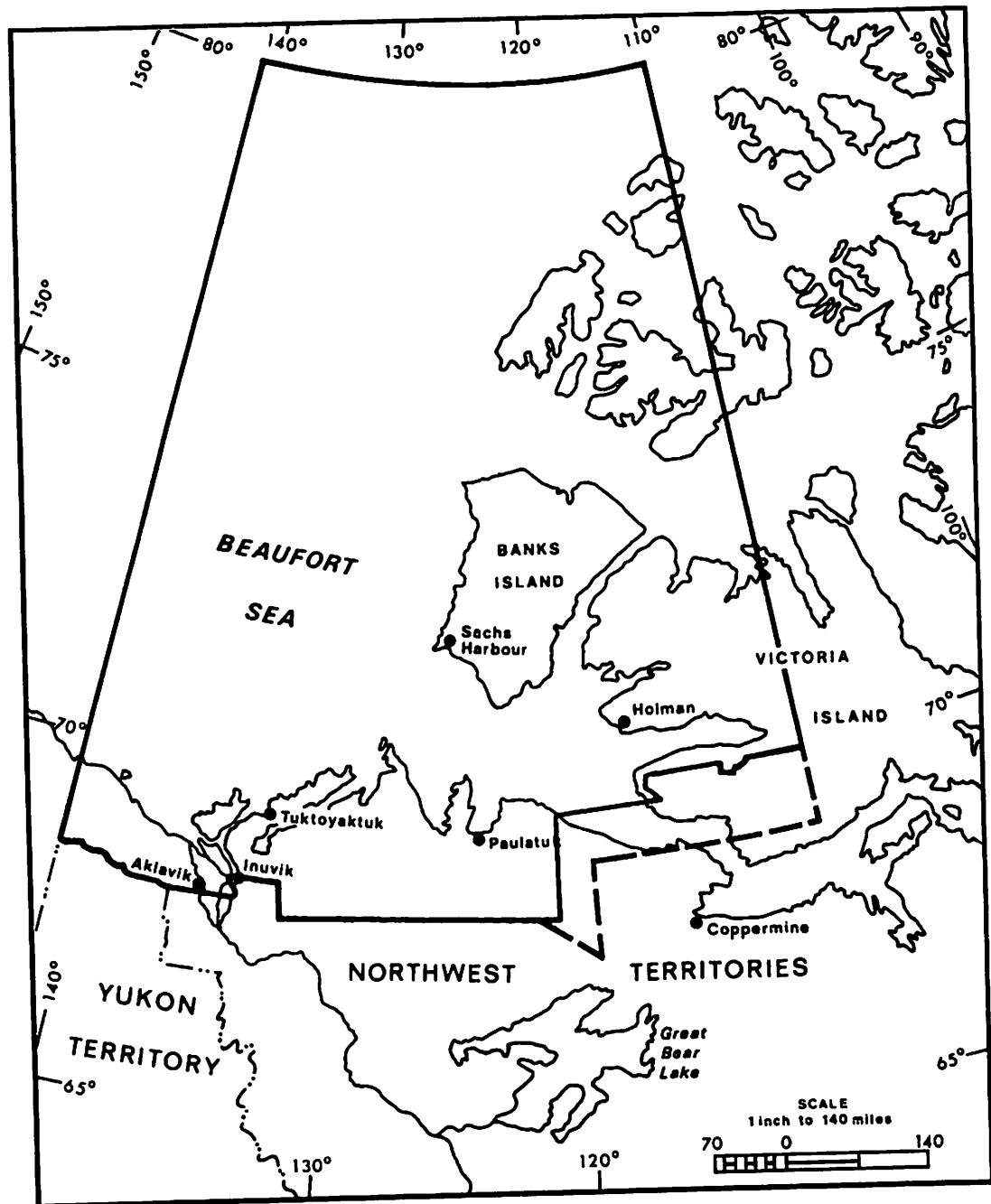


Fig. 1. The western Arctic and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural areas' (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996: 20). In ecotourism, the natural environment represents the primary attraction. For example, the majority of Canadian ecotourists prefer experiences related to wilderness (Eagles 1992). By contrast, Smith (1996) described cultural tourism as having a strong aboriginal presence and focusing on the connection between land and culture. Cultural tourism (also called indigenous or heritage tourism) refers to tourism that 'indigenous people must be directly involved in either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction' (Hinch and Butler 1996). It provides visitors 'with access to and intimate knowledge

of natural areas' (Williams and Stewart 1997).

Although distinct ecotourism and cultural tourism 'products' exist in the western Arctic, most tours have been packaged and marketed by integrating aspects of both types of tourism (Notzke 1999). Many of the local aboriginal people do not perceive the distinction between the two kinds of tourism. Thus, the practices in the western Arctic blur the academic boundaries between ecotourism and cultural tourism. For this reason, the authors have chosen to use the term 'nature-based tourism' to include both ecotourism and cultural tourism, consistent with Brandon (1996: i), who observed that 'ecotourism is a subset of the spectrum of tourism types that make up nature-based tourism.'

The Beaufort Sea-Mackenzie Delta region, where the

communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, and, Tuktoyaktuk are located (Fig. 1), is an appropriate setting to carry out a study on nature-based tourism for three reasons. First, there is a conflict in the area between Inuvialuit (Canadian western Arctic Inuit) hunters of beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*) and the nature-based tourism industry (Mathias and Fast 1998). Second, there is a demand for improved local employment opportunities in the wage sector, including nature-based tourism (Tressler and others 1999). Third, there are mechanisms in place, through the existing land claims agreement and current Canadian government legislation, for the Inuvialuit to compel development to address their concerns and to shape it for their needs (FJMC 1998).

The conflict between Inuvialuit beluga hunters and tourists has been developing rapidly with the growth of the number and type of tourists in the region. According to the figures of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), visitor arrivals in Inuvik increased more than seven-fold between 1987 and 1998 (Dressler 1999). Almost all of these tourists are interested in viewing wildlife, as well as in aboriginal culture, and some of them end up in sites where belugas are being hunted or butchered, often creating uncomfortable encounters for both parties (Fast and others 1998). Similar situations have occurred elsewhere in the Canadian Arctic; the mere presence of ecotourists and cultural tourists holds the potential to disrupt Inuit hunting activities and culture (Nickels and others 1991; Milne and others 1995).

Increasingly, the Inuvialuit see job creation in the wage sector as essential to providing a livelihood for a growing population. Wage income is complementary to the land-based economy because hunting a large area from permanent settlements requires the availability of disposable cash to buy and operate outboard motors and snowmobiles and to rent air charters (Notzke 1999). The Inuvialuit see the development of small-scale, nature-based tourism as a means of acquiring cash to supplement hunting activities and to provide jobs. Cultural tourism and ecotourism are considered desirable, giving the Inuvialuit the opportunity to enter into low-capital entrepreneurial ventures, which are potentially compatible with their culture and sensitive to the environment (Hinch and Butler 1996; Notzke 1999). However, there are potential conflicts with tourism, and, until recent years, the Inuvialuit were virtually powerless to resolve these conflicts.

Starting in 1984, formal mechanisms became available for the Inuvialuit to achieve both their economic needs and social objectives. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement, signed in 1984, covers an area of 72,000 km² and includes the six communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, Holman, Paulatuk, and Sachs Harbour. Section 14 of the Agreement provides the Inuvialuit with exclusive rights to hunt all marine mammals; establishes a co-management body for marine mammals and fish (the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, or FJMC); and gives the Inuvialuit the first

priority for wildlife-related guiding, outfitting, and other commercial activity (DIAND 1984). A second mechanism is Canada's 1997 Oceans Act. The Oceans Act addresses the integrated management of activities in coastal, marine, and estuarine waters of Canada, and contains language that provides for the inclusion of 'bodies established under land claims agreements' and other stakeholders, specifically mentioning 'affected aboriginal organizations, coastal communities and other persons' (Section 31). The integrated management program under the Oceans Act is designed to address multiple-use conflicts.

Methods of study

This study was undertaken under the integrated management program of the Oceans Act, with the cooperation of the FJMC and other local and regional authorities. To address the conflict between Inuvialuit beluga hunters and tourists and to investigate the compatibility between hunting and tourism, both qualitative (semi-directive interviews) and quantitative research methods were used with four groups: Inuvialuit elders; tour operators; representatives of various local and regional agencies ('institutional representatives'); and tourists. The results of the interviews with institutional representatives are used as background and context to this study. The results of the quantitative survey with tourists are not reported here but may be found in Dressler (1999). The present study is primarily based on the qualitative and quantitative surveys with Inuvialuit elders and tour operators.

The first step in addressing multiple-use conflicts and minimizing the negative impacts of tourism is to identify and assess community concerns. Nickels and others (1991) emphasized that gauging resident needs and concerns is an appropriate method for communities to gain a better understanding of how tourism works, and that this is particularly important in small Inuit settlements where the many impacts of tourism are still unknown. This paper therefore explores, based on Inuvialuit elder and tour operator perspectives, the salient positive and negative impacts of cultural tourism and ecotourism development. The study follows the approach that planning for sustainable tourism starts with the collection of the perspectives of pertinent publics (Liu and others 1987). It explores the dynamic interrelationship between tourism development and the Inuvialuit mixed economy, culture, and environment, and it seeks to explore how the motives of tour operators and visitors work together to force positive and negative impacts on the communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, and Tuktoyaktuk. These three communities are considered tourist destinations; the other three Inuvik region communities are relatively more isolated.

To identify community perspectives on tourism development, 10 Inuvialuit elders in each of three communities — Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, and Inuvik — were chosen to participate in formally structured interviews. Fifteen males and 15 females were chosen from a list of residents of 50 years of age and over, provided by the local

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Hunters and Trappers Committees. The respondents were selected from the list using the 'snowball' sampling approach, culturally appropriate for the Inuvialuit. That is, the researcher took direction from the community to approach people appropriate and willing to be interviewed, who, in turn, suggested others who might be appropriate and willing to be interviewed (Ryan 1995). Older Inuvialuit were chosen to obtain community perspectives because they have experienced the social changes of the last few decades and tend to be familiar with both the land-based economy and the modern economy. In most aboriginal groups, 'elder' refers to a social role, rather than to a particular age category. Although the present study did not sample 'elders' in the strict sense, the community directed the choice of informants to those likely to be respected for their views.

Interview questions were fixed in order and form, and were both close- and open-ended. They covered relevant socio-cultural, economic, and environmental variables, and were administered individually, in a face-to-face setting. Questions were designed to uncover elders' perspectives on how tourism impacted their day-to-day cultural and economic activities (for example, resource harvesting), and their environment. Interviews took place in either the informants' homes or 'out on the land,' in hunting camps, and followed the usual rules of confidentiality. Elders were given a choice about the use of a tape recorder.

Tour operator perspectives were elicited through 22 formally structured interviews. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Government of Northwest Territories, provided a list of licensed tour operators operating out of Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Inuvik. From this list, 25 tour companies operating in the western Arctic region were initially contacted by telephone from Winnipeg. Of these, 20 tour company representatives/owners were later interviewed in Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, and, mostly, Inuvik. Two international tour operators were interviewed over the phone. All local interviews were structured; they were conducted in a face-to-face setting in their offices, homes, and cafes. Three of the 20 local tour companies interviewed were tour booking agencies, which also conduct their own tours. The remaining 17 functioned as both tour companies and outfitters. Individual interviews were confidential; open- and close-ended questions addressed specific details concerning the local tour operator's yearly operations and the potential impacts on the local economy, culture, and environment. Questions were ordered to address each of the three categories sequentially.

Nature of the conflict: the Inuvialuit and tourism

Some 7000 aboriginal people live in the vast and diverse Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Inuvik is the administrative and economic centre of the region. Of a 1996 population of 3270, 37% were Inuvialuit, 14% Gwich'in, 7% Metis (mixed), and 41% non-aboriginal. In the smaller communities, Aklavik (population 710) had a Inuvialuit

majority with some Gwich'in, and Tuktoyaktuk (population 943) was a primarily Inuvialuit village (88%).

The Inuvialuit are descendants of the members of the Thule Culture (McGhee 1976). The Mackenzie Delta Inuit were historically known as beluga hunters, and large communal beluga drives took place in the summer months in bays around the delta, with as many as 200 whalers in kayaks. The first meeting between the Mackenzie Delta Inuit and Europeans did not occur until 1799. From the mid-1800s onwards, the Mackenzie Delta Inuit were impacted by diseases brought by non-native whalers, and several waves of Alaskan Inuit (Inupiat) moved into the Delta, replacing the Mackenzie Delta Inuit. Permanent settlements in the region were a relatively late development. The construction of Inuvik did not start until 1955, and most aboriginal people did not settle until the 1950s and the 1960s.

The 7500 km² Mackenzie Delta dominates the western Arctic landscape as a highly productive area for waterfowl, fish, and beluga whales. It is also the site of hydrocarbon development. The oil and gas boom of the 1970s had a huge social and economic impact on the Inuvialuit, converting hunters into industrial workers within an extremely short period. However, the boom ended in the 1980s as world oil prices declined, and by 1990 much of the oil and gas industry had left the western Arctic. By that time, the land claims of the Inuvialuit had also been settled, changing the relationships between the Inuvialuit, outsiders, and the land.

The Inuvialuit have had experience with tourism since the early 1950s, guiding for big-game hunters and sport fishers. After the completion of the Dempster Highway in 1979 and the expansion of the global ecotourism and cultural tourism industries, numbers of 'non-consumptive' tourists gradually increased and eventually exceeded hunters and fishers. To replace the jobs that disappeared with the hydrocarbon industry and to reduce the dependency of Inuit communities on transfer payments, the GNWT developed in 1983 a regional community-based tourism strategy (CBTS) (GNWT 1983).

Cultural tourism and ecotourism were considered to be the most appropriate types of tourism for the remote and isolated communities of the western Arctic and were incorporated into the CBTS. Thousands of tourists participate in wildlife viewing and cultural community tours. The 1994 GNWT visitor exit survey (N = 5553) for the Inuvik Region illustrates this well, with visitor interest in wildlife/nature observation and native culture being highest at 88% and 84%, respectively. Among the most popular activities are beluga whaling watching from the land, water, and air, and cultural community tours in Tuktoyaktuk. The 1994 GNWT exit survey shows that 26% of tourists coming to the Inuvik Region participated in cultural community tours, 14% in other cultural activities, 11% in boat tours on the Mackenzie River, and 4% in airplane tours (GNWT 1995).

Inbound, local, and outbound tour companies, both

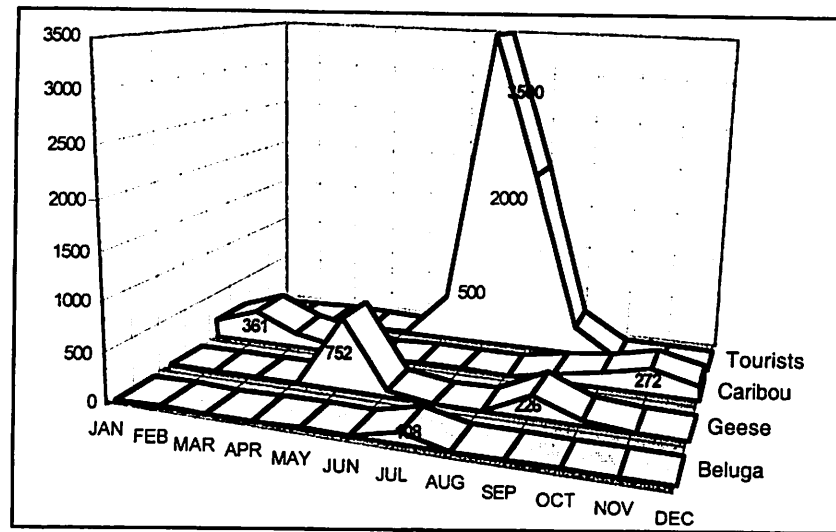


Fig. 2. The Inuvialuit harvest of beluga, goose, and caribou by the communities of Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, and Inuvik, relative to tourists for the year 1994 (GNWT 1995). Measured by thousands of animals harvested and of tourist arrivals.

aboriginal and non-aboriginal, cater to the needs of cultural tourists and ecotourists. Inbound tour companies are the booking agencies for the clientele of outbound and local tour companies; most are charged with arranging travel schedules, making contracts with airlines, and advertising and managing tour groups. There are three major inbound tour operators in the western Arctic, and more than 22 smaller local tour operators in Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Aklavik. Local tour companies provide the actual tours (goods and services) to tourists, most of whom have been directed to them by inbound operators. Outbound tour companies are typically located in larger southern cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver, and bring in international tourists (Higgins 1996).

By far the largest numbers of tourists come into the region in the summer months. The main Inuvialuit wildlife harvests (the spring goose hunt and the midsummer beluga whale hunt) coincide with the peak of tourist visitation. This is shown in Figure 2, constructed using data from the unpublished 1994 Inuvialuit harvest study juxtaposed against data on tourist numbers from the GNWT visitor exit survey (GNWT 1995). As ecotourists, cultural tourists, and hunters tend to congregate where beluga whales are, the probability of conflict increases.

The Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan (BSBMP) tourism guidelines were established to minimize this potential conflict (FJMC 1994). The guidelines were drawn up by the FJMC, which is the main co-management body under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC), and the local Hunters and Trappers Committees. The tourism guidelines have specific clauses, such as those against the harassment of marine mammals, that are enforceable under the Federal Fisheries Act, the National Parks Act, and the Territorial Travel and Tourism Act and Regulations.

The tourism guidelines have provisions to designate areas where tourism may take place; to require tour operators

to obtain HTC and the camp owner's permission if they are to visit whale hunting camps; to establish tour lengths; to prohibit photographing and filming of certain hunting activities; to prohibit low-level flying over whales and whaling areas; to require tourists and tour operators to remove all garbage from activity sites; and to leave cultural artifacts as they were found (FJMC 1998). In particular, the BSBMP has power to establish zoning; Zone 1A is where subsistence activities take priority over water-based tourism. Figure 3 shows Zone 1A, Inuvialuit whaling camps, and flight paths in the area. The tourism guidelines require airplanes to fly no lower than 2500 feet over any area designated as Zone 1A, but such provisions are difficult to enforce. This appears to be the case for other provisions as well; it is generally thought that the tourism guidelines have had limited success in achieving their goals.

Inuvialuit perspectives on nature-based tourism

This section provides a summary of Inuvialuit responses to questions about economic, cultural, and environmental benefits and problems associated with nature-based tourism (Table 1). Almost three-quarters of Inuvialuit elders 'strongly agreed' and more than 90% 'agreed' that there were economic benefits to be gained from tourism development. A great majority of elders stressed that tourism was one of the only stable and accessible employment alternatives in the area. Many respondents indicated that, since the collapse of international fur markets, it was no longer possible to make an income from hunting and trapping (for example, Wenzel 1991). Others pointed out that the oil and gas industry employed very few Inuvialuit. Tourism was thought to be accessible to both older and younger Inuvialuit.

However, regarding the desirability of an increase in tourism development, elders expressed a range of opinions. While most elders in Inuvik desired an increase in tourism,

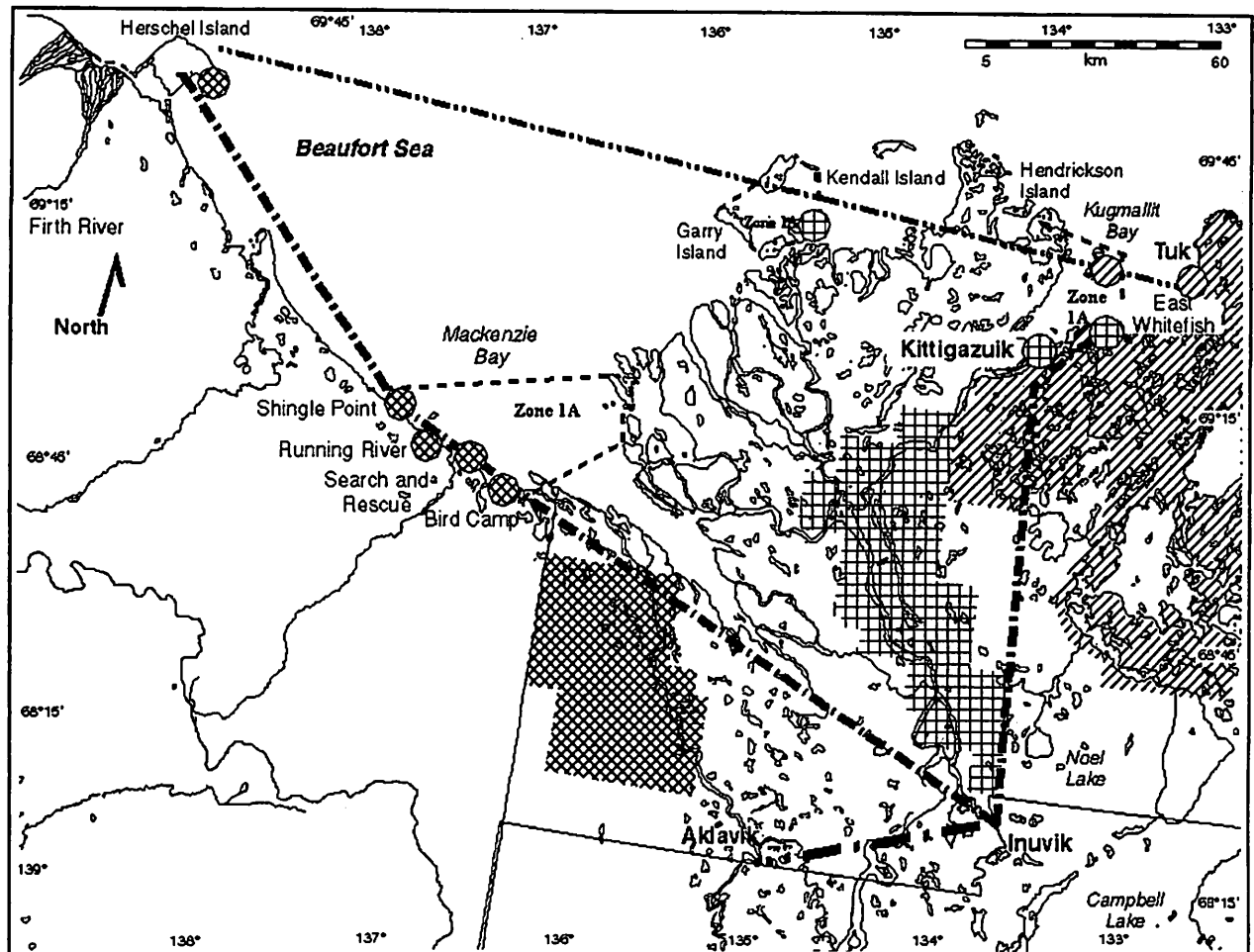





Fig. 3. Scheduled and chartered flight paths in relation to Inuvialuit whaling camps and Zone 1A, traditional beluga harvesting areas. Heavy dotted-and-dashed line = >400 flights; medium dotted-and-dashed line = >300 flights; light dotted-and-dashed line = <100 flights.  = Aklavik Inuvialuit private lands, with whaling camps in circular areas;  = Inuvik Inuvialuit private lands, with whaling camps in circular areas;  = Tuktoyaktuk Inuvialuit private lands, with whaling camps in circular areas.

elders in Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik did not. Elders in Tuktoyaktuk thought that tourism held considerably lower economic benefits as compared to those obtained from the oil and gas industry, which had concentrated there during the boom years.

These views may be in part due to the high number of visitors coming to Tuktoyaktuk (averaging up to 3000 per year) and raising discontent among residents. Similarly, responses from Aklavik contained greater scepticism about the benefits of tourism, as only half of the elders perceived there to be any economic benefits. They may have voiced such an opinion because of low visitation rates (rarely over 300 tourists per year) and thus minimal economic benefits for Aklavik. However, a strong interest for community participation in tourism was obvious in all communities. In Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk, all but one elder agreed that the community should become involved in tourism development.

Economic drawbacks, as perceived by the Inuvialuit, seemed to be related to problems in the equitable distribution of benefits. The majority of Inuvialuit elders indicated that only those individuals who are directly involved in tourism

received benefits, while overall community benefit remained low. One elder from Tuktoyaktuk commented: 'Well, only the tour companies make money and no one else or just a few carvers or maybe a few handicrafts but not too much, you know. I used to bring a lot of tourists to Mona's shop, but they hardly leave with anything from the shops. They just go there to see the shop and ask a lot of questions.' Overall, one-third of the elders thought that tour operators benefited most from tourism, followed by artists and carvers, guides, people with equipment, and people selling country foods. Elders from Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk held this opinion more strongly than those from Inuvik. Many thought that if a wider range of cultural activities were included in tourism, then perhaps community benefits could become more substantial. For example, sale of country foods to tourists could lead to increases in casual and opportunistic employment opportunities.

The overall perception of cultural benefits arising from tourism, such as the revitalization of tradition through arts and crafts production, was moderate, and there were differences among the three communities. In Tuktoyaktuk, only four elders considered there to be any cultural benefits

Table 1. Inuvialuit perspectives on the economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism. N = 30.

	High (%) agreement	Medium (%) agreement	Low (%) agreement
Response to economic issues			
Overall economic benefits	63	30	7
Desire for community involvement	87	—	13
Community benefits	7	13	80
Overall economic drawbacks	3	7	90
Response to cultural issues			
Overall cultural benefits	63	13	24
Benefits of cultural exchange	73	—	23 (N/A)
Tourism aiding subsistence	67	20	13
Acceptance of tourists			
visiting hunting camps	53	33	14
Level of tourism interference			
with hunting activity	53	—	47
Need for restrictions on tourists	77	—	23
Need to educate tourists on Inuvialuit culture	77	—	23
Response to environmental issues			
Tourism has increased at the coast	73	—	27
Tourism has harmed marine mammals	27	—	73
Tourism has affected land animals	57	—	43
Tourism has affected the land	20	—	80

arising from tourism, and in Aklavik, slightly more than half of the elders felt that tourism could be culturally beneficial. In contrast, all but one elder in Inuvik was pleased with the cultural impact of tourists, and most thought that tourism could bring significant cultural benefits.

Tourists who were appreciated the most were those who were friendly, respectful, and interested in learning about Inuvialuit culture. In Inuvik, Aklavik, and Tuktoyaktuk, almost three-quarters of the elders felt that there were significant benefits to be derived from tourism through cultural exchange. Many elders contended that exchanges concerning 'life in the south' and 'life in the north' brought significant benefits to each party. The interviews revealed an Inuvialuit vision of cross-cultural exchange on the land, consistent with the view of tourism as a medium for breaking down cultural barriers between hosts and guests (Smith 1989).

The majority of elders argued that participatory and culturally oriented tourism was the best medium for educating tourists on subsistence living. Such tourism, especially if it involved the younger Inuvialuit generation, could help to revive traditional knowledge and bush skills. Most elders felt that sharing country food was the best way to involve tourists in cultural activities. 'If tourists were to truly learn about the Inuvialuit way of life, they must eat the food they do, and the Inuvialuit should not be shy about their customs. One Tuktoyaktuk elder commented: 'People are still hesitant to show our traditional ways of life, though; this may be an impediment to [tourism] development. But at the same time it gives a little encouragement to keep things going...this is what attracts tourists. Everybody should see a different lifestyle. I don't

see anything wrong with this at all. Just because the tourists come in doesn't mean that I am going to change the way I eat.'

Two-thirds of the elders indicated that land-based tourism also supplemented their subsistence activities with cash. All but one respondent in Aklavik agreed that tourism money greatly contributed to the financing of hunting, fishing, and trapping. A recurring theme was that tourism monies were generated through side attractions, such as arts and crafts sales, country food sales, guiding, and drum dances. However, Inuvialuit elders did stress that such activities brought in only enough money to partially cover the cost of southern foods and supplies needed for hunting, such as gas and tools.

Cultural drawbacks of tourism, in the Inuvialuit view, were related to intrusiveness, cultural misrepresentation, and commodification. Four elders felt that under no circumstances should tourists be allowed into hunting camps, and many others held mixed feelings towards inviting tourists into their camps. Overall, one-third of the elders were ambiguous about mixing 'staged' hunting/fishing camp activities with tourism. Elders from Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik held a less favourable view of tourists visiting their camps and participating in cultural activities than did elders from Inuvik. Cultural community tours evoked resentment among many elders in Tuktoyaktuk. The 'Tuk Town Tour,' attracting as many as 3000 visitors a year, created potential of cultural misrepresentation (through photos of butchering of belugas). One common concern of elders in Tuktoyaktuk was that such photos could be used by animal-rights activists. Two elders claimed: 'Photos should not be taken while we are hunting or preparing foods — this is our way



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of life and should not be misrepresented.' Moreover, 'many people react differently [to being photographed]. Some care; others don't care. Most important is that people should ask permission before they take photos while locals are preparing whale and other foods.'

Beluga whales are hauled onto sandbars for processing; in Tuktoyaktuk, a small island near town is used for this purpose. Visitors encroach upon the whalers to take photos and ask questions. The longer it takes a hunter to process a whale, the greater the chance of *maktak* spoiling, with the end result of a potentially painful bout of botulism. Moreover, one elder declared that he did not appreciate the 'gawking eyes' of tourists. The effects of the 'tourist gaze' is illustrated by Smith (1989) in Kotzebue, Alaska, where the Eskimo women erected makeshift barricades to shield their seal processing from tourists. Elders in Tuktoyaktuk also received questions from tourists that revealed ignorance and a lack of respect. The question 'Do you Eskimos still live in igloos?' came up all too frequently.

Some respondents commented on one major cultural impact concerning the younger Inuvialuit: children asking for money for having their pictures taken by tourists. Seeing this as leading to children 'begging,' an elder in Tuktoyaktuk stressed, 'this is not the way we want our children to be educated — this type of visitor behaviour spoils it for the community and is very unacceptable.' Nevertheless, for most Inuvialuit elders, the problem was not so much that tourists took photos of them personally, but rather that they disapproved of photos being used to misrepresent whale hunting and local social conditions.

A common concern of the elders was how to determine the attitude of tourists towards hunting *before* they entered whaling camps. When asked what type of tourist was preferred least or most, nearly half of all respondents mentioned that they disliked 'environmentalist' tourists, meaning those with a preservationist or animal-rights ideology. Concerns with 'environmentalist' tourists were highest in Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk. Several elders suspected that Greenpeace activists might be posing as cultural tourists to infiltrate whaling camps, often by marine kayak, to film and interfere with the hunt. Concealing hunting and processing for the purposes of tourism was not thought of highly, although it was considered necessary by some (see Grekin 1994, for a similar situation in Pond Inlet, Baffin Island). One elder in Tuktoyaktuk commented on the difficulty of screening tourists: 'No, I would never have tourists visiting my hunting camps. I can't understand that people would allow people to come to their camps in the first place. We don't know if it's people from Greenpeace, and Greenpeace is really against our way of living. It is very difficult to assess the whole situation.'

One elder in Inuvik indicated that he does not mind when tourists visit. However, if they start to dictate how the Inuvialuit ought to live, he said they would not be appreciated. He also stressed that there are other ways of interacting with tourists that are less personal, although

still pleasant. He felt that casual conversation during 'Elder Feasts' provided good opportunity for questions and answers, while allowing elders to control the amount of information and time they wished to give to tourists.

Several elders from Tuktoyaktuk stressed that the GNWT should let local residents control the number of tourists coming into their community. For many elders, the thought of their community being overrun by tourists was not a desirable one. One elder from Inuvik commented: 'If you let too many tourists come in they might take over the whole country. They might just take over and start living on the land.'

A persistent problem for the Inuvialuit is the independent adventure tourist travelling by kayak. Elders mentioned that on nine occasions kayakers got close to the beluga whales while the hunt was on, and that they often arrived unannounced at whaling camps. The major destination for many kayakers travelling along the Yukon North Slope is Kaktovik, Alaska North Slope. Many of these kayakers will first stop off at Running River and Shingle Point whaling camps of Aklavik and then at Herschel Island. Given their increasing numbers along the coast and their unannounced visits, an elder from Aklavik said that she felt as if she were under constant surveillance. In Tuktoyaktuk, elders commented that kayakers often travelled up the East Channel to navigate Kugmallit Bay. This route took the kayakers along some of the whaling camps of East Whitefish Station (belonging to Inuvik) and Hendrickson Island (belonging to Tuktoyaktuk).

Elders were also concerned about chartered planes flying low over the water to view whale hunters in action. The most frequently used travel route by chartered planes is from Inuvik to Herschel Island and Tuktoyaktuk. Elders from Aklavik indicated that, while en route to Herschel Island, the planes often fly very low over both Running River and Shingle Point whaling camps. For elders from Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk, low-level flying over Kugmallit Bay, East Whitefish Station, and Hendrickson Island whaling camps was the major issue (Fig. 3). One local HTC took action against low-level flying in 1998 by refusing a tour operator's licence application due to previous disruptions at the Shingle Point whaling camp.

Elders from Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk perceived that tourism activity often interfered with hunting. In Inuvik, however, such concerns were much less. Elders from Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik asked for greater restrictions on visitors, while fewer elders from Inuvik thought that this was necessary. Elders from Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk agreed that local 'shore guardians' and guides were key to deterring inappropriate tourist behaviour. Over three-quarters of the elders stressed that the use of guides was an essential tourism management tool. Conflict was also considered to be best averted by word-of-mouth communication, and by use of 'trapper radio.' As the trapper radio is kept on open frequency, the location, time, and offence can be communicated to others who may be closer, and even back to government offices in Inuvik.

Regarding the environmental impacts of tourism, elders from Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk commented very precisely as to where and when tourism increases and consequent incidences occurred. For example, Tuktoyaktuk elders pointed out that with the departure of the oil and gas industry, many more organized tours and independent tourists were arriving via the shallower waters of Kugmallit Bay, and travelling farther away from Inuvik in order to view animals more easily.

Three-quarters of the elders maintained that tourism did not affect marine mammals (beluga whales) at all. Most elders agreed that tourists would just look, watch, and listen. Other elders also thought that if beluga whales could survive the more severe impacts of the oil and gas industry, they could deal with tourism too. The remaining informants who felt tourism could harm the beluga whales, mentioned the noise of charter planes, the approach of the independent marine kayaker, and the noise of outboard motors ('kickers') that scared the whales out of the shallower waters (where hunting typically occurs) into deeper waters. One elder from Inuvik commented on changes in beluga behaviour as affected by boats: 'the beluga do run and they do stop — and they seem to be disturbed.' Similarly, an Inuvialuit man from Aklavik mentioned that during weekends, when boat traffic was heavier due to hunting, it was more difficult than usual to harvest whales; he thought that it was the noise of 'kickers' that disturbed the whales. Thus, hunting boats as well as tour boats may harass beluga whales.

Overall, more than half of the elders thought that tourism affected land animals significantly, more so than it did beluga whales. Elders from Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik stressed that land animals, such as caribou, dall sheep, and geese would be most adversely affected. Fewer than half of the elders from Inuvik thought so. Two elders from Tuktoyaktuk explained that during the spring goose hunt, large flocks of geese have been scared off by low-flying charter planes and helicopters. Elders from Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk claimed that noise from low-flying planes drove caribou into a running panic. Such occurrences were most evident on the Yukon North Slope and Herschel Island. Adventure travellers, generally with their own modes of transportation, were known to camp on the shore of Herschel Island and on the Tuktoyaktuk town coast, inadvertently disturbing nesting shore birds. Significant disruption to shore-breeding birds by hikers and kayakers camping along the banks of the Firth River and Herschel Island has been reported by Talarico and Mossop (1988).

Beyond the area along the coast, the Inuvialuit pointed out, there were very few tourists, except for sport hunters with guides, who ventured out onto the land and could pose a direct threat to animals. Without an all-terrain vehicle, access to land animals was very difficult in the summer. Indeed, the Inuvialuit themselves must travel far to capture an animal. Consequently, most elders did not think that tourists could harm the land, at least not at the current level of tourism.

Tour operator perspectives on nature-based tourism

Tour operators were asked a series of questions, paralleling those in the previous section, about economic, cultural, and environmental benefits and problems associated with nature-based tourism (Table 2). The majority of the local tour operators did not consider themselves as full-time 'tourism professionals.' This was especially so among Inuvialuit entrepreneurs who split up a work week with numerous jobs in order to support themselves. Five out of the seven Inuvialuit tour operators were involved in tourism on a casual-contract basis, and only two were operating full-time. The two Gwich'in tour operators also ran their tours on a casual-contract basis. The benefit of this arrangement is that it afforded a greater degree of flexibility to hunt, trap, and fish.

The importance of land-based activities in the Inuvialuit mixed economy is revealed when one compares employment patterns between aboriginal and non-aboriginal tour operators. Among the non-aboriginal tour operators, 36% were employed full-time by local institutions (for example, Renewable Resources boards), while this was the case with only one aboriginal tour operator. Nine percent of non-aboriginal tour operators were employed in primary or secondary industries. Among aboriginal tour operators, by contrast, 27 and 9% were employed in primary and secondary industries, respectively. All but one hunted and trapped. From this, it is clear that the Inuvialuit, more so than non-aboriginals, attempt to balance wage earnings with subsistence activities.

Some 73% of the tour operators thought that tourism alone could not bring in enough income to support them. Very few said they started their company believing that it would be their sole means of income. Half of the companies were very young businesses, in operation for five years or less. Such rapid change made for a poorly organized industry. Nearly all tour operators agreed that to manage the tourism industry more efficiently, a greater co-ordination of effort was required, for example, sharing tourists when tours were over- or under-booked.

A minority of respondents among non-aboriginal tour operators thought that Inuvialuit values were inconsistent with the 'capitalist-venture-oriented' philosophy of the tourism industry. A few commented that they found the Inuvialuit 'work ethic' to be lacking; they tended to shirk business responsibilities in favour of hunting. One local Community Economic Development Officer complained: 'when the ice goes out the people go out; in July and August when people are out on the land it is difficult to find people to do tours in town.' This was particularly the case when the main beluga whale harvest began. In Aklavik, for example, during the beluga season very few people were at home; most were in camps at Running River and Shingle Point. For many informants, this activity pattern limited the potential of conducting tours and developing tourism.

As the Inuvialuit increasingly participate in tourism, they also create new tourism employment opportunities

Table 2. Tour operator perspectives on the economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism development.
 * = Yes response to tour and hunter contact represents frequency of contact as: 'often: 29%, sometimes: 57%, while no response represents: 'never: 14%.' N = 22.

	Yes (%)	Unsure (%)	No (%)
Responses to economic issues			
Can tourism alone support you?	27	—	73
Involvement in other employment	82	—	18
Preference for tourism over other work	59	18	23
Are local tourism training opportunities available?	55	25	20
Responses to cultural issues			
Has tourism affected local culture?	77	10	23
Can tourism be integrated into local culture?	68	14	18
Does your tour come into contact with hunters?*	86	—	14
Are you aware of existing guidelines?	27	18	55
Responses to environmental issues			
Should guidelines be implemented?	62	19	19
Are stricter guidelines needed?	54	23	23
Are stricter guidelines needed at coastal areas?	59	23	18

for others in the community. Based on the precepts of community-based tourism management, one of the more tangible results of sustainable economic development is an increase in direct and indirect employment (Murphy 1985). As the communities of Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, and Inuvik attempt to broaden their economic base, an indicator of economic sustainability is the diversification of local employment opportunities. In fact, half of the respondents said that they had hired, or anticipated hiring, local guides; fewer than half stated that they did not seek local guides.

Forty-seven percent of respondents thought that there were enough guides to choose from, but 57% maintained there was a lack of properly trained guides. Many of the Inuvialuit tour operators stated that the understanding by regional tourism agencies of what constitutes a 'qualified guide' was based on southern qualification standards and perspectives. They contended there was a shortage of qualified guides only with respect to standard government guide certification requirements. They argued that aboriginal people were already sufficiently qualified because they grew up on the land and knew it as 'their own home.' In the words of an Inuvialuit tour operator: 'There is a 1975 economic development model in the midst of developing the tourism industry here. [But] paternalistic government tourism development initiatives don't work here — the GNWT must consult with tour operators and outfitters here first.'

Forty-five percent of the tour operators felt there were no tourism training opportunities open to them; this was especially the case for service and hospitality training for ecotourism and cultural tourism. Tour operators from Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik expressed particular concern about the lack of tourism training in their communities. As Inuvialuit training needs were not met, the possibility of greater local involvement in tourism was reduced.

However, the manner in which local tour operators hired their employees reflects northern values. Sixty-eight percent of tour operators preferred hiring their employees by word of mouth, whereas only 18% preferred hiring with formal advertisements. In addition to being cost-effective, relying on local advice to hire an individual who is reputed to be a good worker was very much valued in northern communities. Aboriginal tour operators stated that hiring by word of mouth supported the local labour pool, as it reduced the number of transient employees.

When tour operators were asked if they thought tourism affected Inuvialuit culture, the majority (67%) felt there were only positive impacts, while 23% perceived there to be no impact at all. Breaking down the types of positive cultural impacts, 70% of tour operators thought that tourism increased opportunities for cultural exchange between visitors and locals. However, only 25% and 5% of tour operators responded that tourism helped to revive culture and instill a sense of pride in the communities, respectively. One non-aboriginal tour operator, perhaps with a hint of irony, noted:

Tourism has really helped out local culture — especially since the oil industries have pulled out of the region. Tourism gives people a chance for more personal initiatives — it gives them a sense of pride — especially in terms of arts and crafts production — this industry allows them to expand their financial base...I don't think that it [tourism] has affected local culture in a negative way — tourism may have only helped to re-instill some old cultural values amongst our people, especially the younger generation.

The extent to which tour operators thought tourism could be integrated into Inuvialuit cultural activities varied considerably. Although 68% agreed that tourism could be integrated with Inuvialuit culture, others pointed out that the words 'integrate' and 'traditional' were loaded terms.

Since culture exists independently of tourism, what constituted an authentic cultural tourism experience should be questioned. In contrast, when tour operators were asked how tourism affected Inuvialuit subsistence activities, the majority thought it could only enhance Inuvialuit traditions. Sixty percent strongly agreed that various influences from tourism, such as arts and crafts purchases, could benefit Inuvialuit traditions through cash that could be channeled to wildlife and fish harvesting.

Regarding the negative impact of tourism on local culture, tour operators suggested that their own behaviour and their tours have the potential to disrupt Inuvialuit lifestyle. To illustrate, 86% stated that, at one point or another during their tours, they had come into contact with hunters. Twenty-nine percent had fairly frequent contact with hunters, 57% infrequent. Visitor numbers alone do not explain the cultural impact; relatively few tourists and/or tour operators can cause most of the damage.

A tour that is likely to require the most cultural and ecological sensitivity from tour operators and visitors is the 'participatory cultural tour.' Such tours commonly took place in bush and whaling camps adjacent to Delta and coastal waters (Butler 1975). The numbers of tourists and the amount of time spent by them in these traditional settings are very limited. Not only is the actual accommodation small (designed for a family of six or less), but the level of intimacy between host and guest is very high, requiring each party to be respectful of the other. Hence, the tour operator carries much responsibility for onsite visitor management.

To help remedy some of the negative cultural and environmental impacts, tour operators said they have started to use their tours as a means of promoting conservation through environmental and cultural education. One-quarter of the tour operators stated they advocated low-impact touring, while one-half stated they facilitated discussion on local culture and ecology with their visitors. Overall, at least one-third of all the tour operators attempted to mitigate negative cultural and ecological impacts. It was not clear if the others followed the existing guidelines. How aware were the tour operators of the existence of the BSBMP tourism guidelines? Remarkably, 55% stated that they were unaware of any formal guidelines, and only 27% stated they had some understanding of them.

Next, the tour operators were asked whether they thought that tourists actually abided by the guidelines. Interestingly, 52% said that their clients adhered to some form of guidelines, whereas 24% thought they did not (24% answered 'don't know'). However, since the BSBMP tourism guidelines were not formally enforced, appropriate visitor behaviour must have been voluntary and likely based on common sense. Overall, however, it seemed that little use was being made of guidelines and information packages that promote cultural and environmental education.

The desire among tour operators to enforce the tourism guidelines was fairly high (62%). In fact, most agreed they

were essential to the operation of their businesses, but many thought that the industry's self-management capabilities were inadequate. Others were sceptical of the effectiveness of the tourism guidelines. Some indicated that they would resist new tourism guidelines, simply because there was too much regulation already. However, 54% of the tour operators said that if new guidelines were to be implemented, then they should be stricter than the previous ones. Moreover, 59% stressed there was a particular need for tourism guidelines on the Beaufort Sea coast, indicating that the current regulatory framework was not addressing the more contentious conflicts at Kugmallit and Mackenzie bays.

Discussion and conclusions

Returning to the research question, the results indicate that nature-based tourism development in the three western Arctic communities Inuvik, Aklavik, and Tuktoyaktuk, has the perceived capability to support the local mixed economy. The inter-community comparisons indicate that elders in Inuvik are more favourable to tourism development than those of the other two communities, which are smaller, more isolated, and thus perceived to be more vulnerable to tourism impacts. In the region as a whole, realizing the perceived benefits of tourism requires the resolution of the conflict between beluga whaling activities and tourists. More fundamentally, the results suggest, this is a conflict between Inuvialuit lifestyles and values versus the values and expectations of tourists.

Northern mixed economies have evolved on their own, against the predictions of the conventional wisdom of the 1950s and the 1960s that hunting economies would eventually be replaced by a modern economic order. Hunting and extensive land use have persisted (Berkes and others 1995), and there is strong contemporary interest in traditional environmental knowledge of northern peoples (Duerden and Kuhn 1998; Berkes 1999). The land-based economy continues to be a cornerstone of the well-being of northern aboriginal communities despite government policies that 'interpret[ed] the native lifestyle as so unrewarding as to be dead, incapable of resuscitation. Accordingly, the special characteristics that differentiated northern natives from other "poor Canadians" were ignored, and it was decided that the northern native people should have applied to them the politics of welfare state generally applied to its less advantaged members' (Dacks 1981: 29)

Communities of the western Arctic, as elsewhere in the Canadian north, support a mixed economy (Berkes and Fast 1996; Treseder and others 1999). Within such a system the formal wage economy and the traditional land-based economy co-exist, and may be mutually supportive (Notzke 1999; Hunn 1999). Because the Inuvialuit face high costs of living and high levels of unemployment, they often rely on hunting activities to produce food for local consumption and materials for handicraft production. However, hunting and fishing brings food to the table but very little cash, especially since the collapse of the fur

markets in the 1980s (Wenzel 1991). Since subsistence activities have high capital and operating costs associated with them, the Inuvialuit also require a cash income to make ends meet. People work for wages to support subsistence, but, more to the point, 'subsistence should be understood as a long-term relationship between a community and its land and resource base, rather than a strictly economic activity' (Hunn 1999: 30).

The western Arctic population, and therefore the labour force, is growing more quickly than the number of jobs available, employment opportunities are tight, and there is a great need for new industries to create wage labour. Tourism is one such industry (Notzke 1999). The results of this study strongly indicate that the Inuvialuit, at least those interviewed in this study, regard tourism as a good employment option and a creator of economic benefits. Furthermore, this view is stronger in Inuvik, which has relatively more experience with tourism, than in the other two communities. The respondents see relatively few economic drawbacks and environmental concerns. But they also regard tourism as creating individual benefits and inequity, and seek ways of creating more community benefits. The majority of the respondents also see tourism as creating cultural benefits, both through exchange with southerners and through tourism income, which in turn enables subsistence activities that support Inuvialuit culture.

The problem, however, is that tourism also brings with it cultural drawbacks, mostly related, in the Inuvialuit view, to the intrusiveness of tourists, especially in relation to the beluga hunt; representation of the aboriginal hunt in a negative light, as in 'animal-rights propaganda'; and the commodification of culture, as in 'staged' cultural events. Many Inuvialuit have mixed feelings regarding tourists, and the impacts of anti-trapping and ban-the-hunt movements have left some very suspicious of all outsiders. On the one hand, some fear that animal-rights activists may be infiltrating groups of cultural tourists, and kayakers may be spying on beluga hunting camps. On the other, many Inuvialuit have a vision of friendly tourists open to appreciating the Inuvialuit hunting culture, visiting with them, and sharing their country food. The Inuvialuit would control the flow of tourists and educate them on the land, as they would their own young people. Tourists would visit fishing and hunting camps in the company of aboriginal guides, and learn to respect the Inuvialuit way of life.

Such a vision would provide a long-term solution to the conflict, but, of course, it would require that the Inuvialuit are able to exercise a greater influence on the kind of tourist coming into their area, a view consistent with the Inuvialuit desire for more community involvement in tourism planning. However, this would not entirely solve the problem, because each southern visitor brings her/his 'cultural baggage' to the Arctic, and southern values are overwhelmingly urban and industrial. They are not consistent with the values of a society that regards the killing and butchering of large marine mammals as entirely normal for their livelihoods.

Hence, both the short-term and the long-term solutions to the conflict need to consider other ways of minimizing the intrusion of the tourism industry into the Inuvialuit beluga hunt. There is little opportunity to separate the hunt and tourism activities temporally. Both tourism activities and the beluga hunt occur in the summer, and, in fact, their peaks coincide (Fig. 2). The spatial separation of the two activities appears more feasible, as the Inuvialuit beluga hunting camps occupy discrete locations (Fig. 3). Inuvialuit hunting rights are well defined in law, tourism guidelines exist to limit the activity of tourists and tour operators, and there is no conservation problem in the hunting of beluga in this area (Mathias and Fast 1998).

What are the options for the more effective enforcement of these guidelines? According to tour operators, they understand the impacts of tourism and know how best to avoid conflicts, by managing themselves and visitors. This view is particularly strong among tour operators of Inuvialuit background. For most of them, appropriate tour operator behaviour is socially and culturally sanctioned: 'We police ourselves; we know the land and we know where our people are hunting whales...I think there is social enforcement rather than set guidelines. People know each other really well, [and] people generally stay in their own areas. In general, there is too much complaining out on the coast. But people are generally courteous to each other, and everyone really knows to stay outside of certain areas.'

Due to tight kinship relations in these small settlements, family groups or the community itself may ostracize a tour operator 'convicted' of breaching a behavioural norm. If a tour operator violates a social norm, word quickly spreads and leads to social sanctions. Communication is considered as the best means by which conflicts could be avoided. In most cases, whale watching tours are conducted far away from existing hunting areas, and it is in the power of tour operators to avoid whale hunting areas. Most tour operators consider the formal outfitter licensing process, co-ordinated by the Government of the Northwest Territories, to be sufficient in regulating tour operator and visitor impact.

However, the low level of tour operator awareness of the existing BSBMP tourism guidelines (Table 2) indicates that the conflict is likely to continue for some time. In the long term, the prospects may be better. The fact that the majority of tour operators agrees that guidelines are indeed necessary to help manage tour operators and visitors, and that they are increasingly necessary in coastal areas, indicates that problems are likely to decline as the industry matures, improving communication, co-operation, and professionalism. The Inuvialuit have probably not fully exercised their management powers to regulate tourism under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement of 1984 and its FJMC, and the additional mechanisms for the reduction of multiple-use conflicts under the 1997 Oceans Act. The Oceans Act provides for integrated coastal zone planning and the inclusion of bodies established under land-claims

agreements and, specifically, the affected aboriginal organizations and coastal communities, in decision-making. Thus, the potential exists to use both the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the Oceans Act in support of community-based development to strengthen the mixed economy, and to provide for the effective involvement of the Inuvialuit in tourism planning.

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