

# **Development Planning in the Northwest Territories:**

**The Case of Tourism**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this thesis is to argue that effective economic development planning cannot occur without integrating the planning, policy-making, and programme development processes. The Government of the Northwest Territories' tourism development planning efforts are examined and analysed in an effort to identify the determinants of successful development planning.

For a number of decades economic development activity in the Northwest Territories has been based on non-renewable resource extraction. The result has been the creation of an unstable and dependent economy that largely serves the needs of non-residents. Increasingly Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), like other governments across Canada and around the world, has turned to development planning to deal with the instability and dependency problems that are an inevitable adjunct to non-renewable resource based economies. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has concluded that tourism can provide some protection from the economic storms that periodically sweep across the non-renewable resource based northern economy.

A review of planning, policy, and programme theory indicated that while the three are different they are not discrete fields of study or activity. Rather, they are all integral parts of development

planning. Thus, it is necessary, to examine not just government planning documents but also governmental policy and programmes, before commenting upon, and learning from, a government's development planning activities. This thesis has drawn information and examples from a variety of GNWT planning, policy, and programme sources relating to tourism development in the NWT. An examination of these documents and numerous unstructured interviews with those planning the development of the NWT's tourism sector have led to the following findings:

1. The GNWT has assumed that tourism is an effective tool for diversifying and stabilizing the economy of the NWT. Indeed, it could be said that the GNWT has focused its hopes for an improved economic future on tourism.
2. The quantity and quality of information for planning collected by the GNWT has been 'inadequate'. No information on the tourism perceptions, desires and concerns of NWT residents was collected.
3. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism has recognized the shortage of data as a problem and has taken steps to address it. However, most new data being collected is marketing information with little relevance for policy and programme planning.
4. The goals and objectives of the NWT Tourism Strategy were drafted by technically oriented planners with access to little information on the perceptions, desires and concerns of NWT

residents. The Strategy implicitly assumed that tourism would have a positive cost-benefit ratio, that increased tourism would diversify and stabilize the NWT's economic base, and that increased tourism would be well received in the small/remote communities of the Northwest Territories.

5. The GNWT's only formal statement of tourism development policy (the NWT Tourism Strategy) was articulated in Community Based Tourism: A Strategy for the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry.

6. The GNWT used its Territorial Parks programme as a tool to foster tourism and spread its benefits across the NWT.

7. GNWT tourism planners and policy-makers have unquestioningly accepted the notion of "tourism [as] a desirable industry for the Northwest Territories", without exploring the long term implications of the striving for a tourism dependent economy.

8. The GNWT did not recognize/acknowledge that tourism was/is an export industry that may be subject to many of the unpredictable fluctuations that the primary industries were/are noted for.

9. The Northwest Territories is an example of a jurisdiction in which development planning, at least with regard to tourism development, has not occurred. By removing its planning efforts from the complex socio-economic reality of the Northwest

Territories the GNWT's planning efforts can be said to be rational, but also top-down, and technocratic.

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I alone bear responsibility for any errors or omissions in this thesis.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This thesis attempts to assist in the evolution of development planning by drawing lessons, of both a specific and generalizable nature, from the tourism development planning experiences of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Development planning could not, and would not, evolve if past planning efforts were not critically revisited. Simply put learning from experience can occur in one of two ways: first, by examining past actions that have not worked, recognize them as mistakes, and then avoid repeating them in the future; second, by consciously repeating a course of action that has produced desired results. The process of experiential learning, however, be it first or second hand, cannot occur if one is unable to understand why a particular action did or did not work.

This thesis argues that effective development planning cannot occur without integrating the planning, policy-making, and programme development processes. The conclusions drawn from an examination of tourism development planning in the Northwest Territories, both those specific to the case of tourism planning in the NWT and those applicable to development planning in general, rest upon the careful examination of the relevant theoretical literature and the Government of the Northwest Territories' tourism development planning experience.

At the level of general applicability this thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

- \* What are the respective roles that planning, policy, and programmes play in the development planning process?
- \* Can there be sound development planning without the planning, policy-making, and programme development activities of government being integrated into a procedurally rational whole?

With regard to the specific case of tourism development planning in the Northwest Territories this thesis will answer the following questions:

- \* Has the GNWT articulated a tourism development policy?
- \* Has the GNWT's tourism development policy served to orient the tourism development programmes such that important tourism resources are developed in a manner consistent with GNWT tourism development policy?
- \* Does the GNWT have, at its disposal, informational resources of sufficient quantity and quality to do proceduarally rational development planning?

- \* Has the GNWT critically analysed the ability of tourism to provide diversity and stability within the economy of the NWT?

### **Method**

The information upon which this thesis is based has been obtained from the following primary and secondary sources:

- \* relevant literature on planning, policy, and programme theory;
- \* personal, unstructured interviews with government officials, consultants, and persons knowledgeable about tourism planning in the NWT;
- \* documents, memoranda, and letters made available from the files of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Deh Cho Regional Council.

### **Rationale**

Over the last four decades much of the economic development planning and activity in the NWT has been closely tied to the extraction and exportation of hydrocarbon and mineral resources. Gurston Dacks has pointed out that "Ottawa [has] based its most significant northern decisions less on its commitment to northerners than on its hopes that the North would contribute to the country's economic health generally and energy supply particularly."<sup>1</sup>

The recurrent emphasis that governments and the southern private sector have placed upon developing the non-renewable sector of the northern economy resulted in a resource extraction logic prevailing over much of the economic thinking and planning in the NWT. As one report pointed out, "mining and oil and gas development have received the greatest share of federal and territorial government financial support and attention."<sup>2</sup> This situation has significant implications for the residents of the the NWT since to some extent the nature of a region's economic base determines who the primary beneficiaries of economic activity will be. In the case of the NWT it has been argued that non-native northerners are the most likely recipients of both the direct and indirect benefits of a non-renewable resource based economy. Some authors have even gone as far as to state that "the well being of non-native northerners depends ultimately on non-renewable resource development."<sup>3</sup>

The concentration of economic interest and power in the hands of the central government, the southern based private sector, and non-native northerners has resulted in the creation of an unstable and dependent economy that is structured to serve the needs of a few northerners and a great many non-northerners. Indeed, the outside and non-native influence on the territorial economy has been so pervasive that as James Cameron puts it; "in traditional economic terms, the economy of the NWT is neither balanced nor mature. It

lacks diversity within and between the primary, secondary, and service sectors."<sup>4</sup>

Southern/non-Native stake holders in the territorial economy appear to have been little concerned about adapting their economic development projects to satisfy the needs of the North and her people. Most often it has been assumed that the North and, more particularly, northerners would change to accommodate and adapt to the needs of the developments.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the wage economy of the North is essentially a staples based economy that exists not because of an internal dynamic, but rather because of the demands and desires of metropolitan centres in southern Canada, the United States, Europe, and Asia.<sup>6</sup> As one author has argued, the "staples basis [of the northern economy] necessarily makes it a boom-and-bust economy and [the] lack of internal economic links acts as a brake on [its] development."<sup>7</sup> Another author has contended that regional development is primarily held back or suppressed "by the outward drain of economic surplus from the region."<sup>8</sup>

Significant numbers of northerners, especially the 58% of northerners who claim a Native heritage, are bound to the North by bonds more enduring and compelling than those of economic self-interest. Native northerners in particular derive much of their personal and cultural identity from living in the North. Thus, emmigration from the North during periods of economic slow down or collapse can be expected to impose significant psychological costs on those forced to adopt such a strategy in order to ensure

personal and/or familial economic security. The enormity of the costs associated with leaving the North to assure economic well being has meant that a great many northerners (again, especially Native northerners) are virtually forced to remain in the North regardless of the state of the economy.

During the autumn of 1986 it was reported that northerners were "girding for one of their toughest economic winters yet."<sup>9</sup> This, because "the primary industries of the Northwest Territories [were] under considerable pressure resulting from [a] recent sharp fall of oil prices and the continued low metal prices world-wide."<sup>10</sup> Oil and mining companies responded to the collapse in international oil and metals prices by closing their northern operations. The pullout left "an ever growing number of once proudly self-reliant northerners" unemployed and facing the prospect of going onto welfare.<sup>11</sup> Newspapers reported that in the Beaufort/Mackenzie Delta region of the NWT an estimated 700 individuals would lose their full time jobs as the oil companies closed down NWT operations to wait out the slump in the world demand, and price, for oil.<sup>12</sup>

In the Deh Cho region, located in the southwestern corner of the Northwest Territories, few residents held full time oil industry positions during the boom years of the oil sector. There were, however, many people who worked in the industry on a seasonal basis. These individuals were affected by the pull out of the non-renewable resource companies. During 1985/86 regional residents



found approximately 1800 person months of employment with companies exploring for hydrocarbons, one year latter during the 1986/87 exploration season only 80 person months of employment were generated by hydrocarbon exploration.<sup>13</sup> In the South Slave Region hundreds of lay-offs at the Pine Point lead/zinc Mine, for twenty years the single largest private sector employer in the NWT, made inevitable the closure of an entire town, as well as swelling unemployment rolls.

The Government of the Northwest Territories responded to the difficult economic situation by adopting a range of short term 'band-aid' actions. One example was, the announcement that "\$1.8 million would be added to the current [territorial] budget of the Department [of Social Services] to cover [any] increased demand for assistance that may occur as a result of lay-offs in the non-renewable resource sector."<sup>14</sup> The territorial and federal governments also co-operated in the creation of an Action Force on Economic Development to investigate and implement economic development options for the western Arctic in the face of the non-renewable sector's collapse. With the release of the Action Force's report it became clear that the Force had concentrated on the development of short term job creation activities. Indeed, the Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic, who was also a member of the Action Force on Economic Development, noted that "not a single new dollar was used [in any of the Action Force's twenty proposals; instead] already budgeted for activities were just brought forward a bit."<sup>15</sup>

In the face of the collapse of the non-renewable resource sector northern politicians began to promise that "as the [non-renewable resource] sector continue[d] to experience difficulties, new employment alternatives [would] be sought."<sup>16</sup> Tourism was identified as one of the areas that was to receive increased attention from the GNWT's policy, economic planning, and programme development personnel. At the November, 1986, First Minister's Conference on the Economy in Vancouver, B.C. the GNWT's Government Leader argued that there was great potential for northern economic development in three sectors of the economy. The Government Leader specified:

- \* mining
- \* tourism
- \* hydrocarbon exploration and development<sup>17</sup>

The increased attention paid to tourism has occurred largely in response to the twin realizations that the potential for economic vitality in the NWT is lost when "survival becomes entirely dependent upon economic and decision-making forces that lie outside the control of those who will be affected by such changes"; and that relatively few Native northerners appear willing accept the personal, cultural, and psychological costs that must be paid if they were to move to access economic opportunities.<sup>18</sup> To address these concerns the Government of the Northwest Territories set out to identify new "opportunities for economic health and growth" and tourism was been singled out as an economic opportunity that could be used to stimulate economic development. <sup>19</sup>

Both within and without government circles tourism has come to be seen as a way of providing economic opportunities that are less boom/bust (i.e. more stable) than those in the non-renewable resource sector. A Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Economic Development and Tourism document prepared in 1986, for example, argued that "tourism has a solid record of weathering economic declines in the NWT."<sup>20</sup> The document also pointedly noted that "this record for economic stability is particularly attractive now that the slumps in world mineral and petroleum prices have caused severe recession in the industrial sector."<sup>21</sup> The Government of the Northwest Territories is also interested in developing the sector further because it is relatively labour intensive and can provide employment opportunities that "are compatible with many existing native skills (e.g. guiding)".<sup>22</sup> In addition, the tourism sector 'dove tails' nicely with some aspects of the traditional sector; especially native arts and crafts. Tourism is seen as being able to provide substantial 'spin-off' benefits and opportunities for the artisans and crafts people of the NWT.<sup>23</sup>

As well as focusing on tourism for strategic reasons there appear to be a couple of opportunistic reasons for seeking to further enhance the tourism sector. Primary, among these is the fact that tourism is "one of the world's fastest growing industries" and the "fastest growing sector of the territorial economy."<sup>24,25</sup> Tourism is also an attractive sector for the GNWT to attempt to develop

because numerous travel industry experts have concluded that the Northwest Territories has "the potential to supply a wide and attractive range of tourism products in the wilderness and adventure markets, the most rapidly expanding [tourism] market in North America."<sup>26,27</sup> Thus, the GNWT hopes to be able to turn to, and capitalize on, an economic activity that requires just the raw material that the NWT has the most of; wilderness.

Since the mid 1980's the GNWT has argued repeatedly that tourism offers an opportunity to broaden and stabilize the NWT's economic base of the NWT. Given this, and the fact that the tourism industry is still very much in a nascent stage one would expect that the GNWT would be putting a significant amount of effort into planning and developing the sector in an orderly and rational fashion.

## **Organization**

This thesis has been organized into seven chapters. The first chapter discusses the purpose of, rationale behind, method used in researching, and finally the organization of the thesis. Chapter two examines planning, policy, and programme theory and explores the linkages which form the three activities into a procedural whole - development planning. Chapter three examines the informational resources the Government of the Northwest Territories has developed in its effort to turn tourism into an important diversifying and stabilizing component in the fabric of the

territorial economy. Chapter four examines the policy and regulatory environment in which tourism development occurs in the NWT. Chapter five examines the GNWT's tourism development programs, with special emphasis on the Territorial Parks system. Chapter six examines the extent to which the GNWT has considered whether developing tourism is an appropriate means through which to attain economic development in the North. Chapter seven discusses the conclusions and planning implications that flow from the examination of tourism development planning in the Northwest Territories.

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Planning/Policies/Programmes: The Linkages**

Planning, policy-making, and programme development be it related to economic and tourism development in the Northwest Territories or anything else cannot be understood in a conextual vacuum. This chapter provides the reader with a link between the theories of planning, policy, and programme planning and the reality of planning, policy, and programme activitiy in the NWT.

The objective of this chapter is threefold: first, to argue that while planning, policy, and programmes are different, they are not completely discrete when viewed from a development planning perspective; second, to embark on a brief, and selective, discussion of the theoretical debates in the areas of planning, policy-making, and programme development; third, to draw from the relevant literature and theoretical debates criteria which define good planning, good policy-making, and good programme development.

The literature on planning, policies, and programmes is voluminous and varied, as are the definitions of planning, policies, and programmes. Indeed, one is often pressed to discern consensus, within the literature, on much other than the fact that all three can, and do, occur in the public sector, though not exclusively. The very volume of the literature on planning, policy, and programmes is, however, an unmistakable indicator that a great many people see

some divergence between the planning process and the processes of policy development or programme design.

To some degree the divergences in the literature are artifacts of the intellectual models built to enable people to conceptualize and better understand organizational behaviour. To the extent that the divergences are intellectual constructs which facilitate the understanding of a complex process the reader of planning, policy, and programme theory has to be aware that when models are being developed a "process [of] abstraction, selection, and simplification is going on."<sup>1</sup> The careful reader comes to realize that planning, policies, and programmes differ in ways that are seldomly addressed clearly in the literature. Generally, the literature argues that: planning is a process for decision-making, policies establish sectoral goals and define the organizational sanctions (both positive and negative) that will be used to attain them and programmes articulate the objectives, activities, and administrative procedures by which positive sanctions can be used to pursue overall goals.<sup>2,3,4,5,6</sup>

Regardless of the apparent divergence, the disparity of definition, and the variety of views expressed in the literature on planning, policy, and programmes one is able to discern some interesting convergences as well. As one begins to probe these divergences, intellectually explore the intricacies of organizational decision-making, and actually attempt to plan, and develop policies or programmes independent of each other in a practical working

environment, one increasing realizes the arbitrariness of the divergences. Experience working with policies and programmes drives home three points: first that planning, policy, and programmes are separate, but highly interrelated; second policies and/or programmes do not simply emerge, they are, instead, formulated by people intent on bringing rationality to bear on future situations and actions; third, that the main point of planning is to get action toward the attainment of defined goals through the development of appropriate policies and programmes. It is the first point that is of fundamental importance when attempting to understand the relationship between planning, policies, and programmes. Without proper planning, policies and programmes become little more than a series of unrelated, often irrational, responses to the crisis of the moment. Planning is more than an activity that merely facilitates the development policies and programmes; planning is the process by which appropriate goals and objectives are established. Planning also provides the means by which rational, goal directed, policies and programmes are brought into being and, as such, forms a procedural cement that ensures the formation development planning.

### **Planning Theory**

Planning is an ever changing field. Consequently, there is little agreement about exactly what planning is; and even less about how it can and should be done. In the Canadian context Page and Lang,

after documenting the confusion surrounding the profession and practice of planning, noted:

The very fact that there is no consensus on the purpose of planning tells us something about the variety of perceptions and beliefs that enter into planning activity.<sup>7</sup>

In the American context work by Hudson and Hemmens point to a very similar situation - a profession, its theory, and its practice all in a state of flux.<sup>8,9</sup> Indeed, so significant and pervasive is the state of flux that at least a couple authors have gone as far as to contend that planning is experiencing a paradigm shift or crisis.<sup>10</sup>

In the midst of such change and so many conflicting perspectives it is hardly surprising that there is no agreement on something as basic, and as important, as a definition of planning. Planning has been defined in diverse ways; below are but a few of the countless definitions:

"Planning may be defined as the method for directing" change.<sup>11</sup>

"Planning may be broadly defined as the application of knowledge, in an organized manner, to maintain and/or change a given system."<sup>12</sup>

"...planning is a process of selecting and designing a rational course of a collective action to achieve a future state of affairs."<sup>13</sup>

"Planning involves bringing rationality to bear on future actions, linking knowledge to actions."<sup>14</sup>

Although planning in the professional sense is a relatively recent development, the number of planning theories that have been espoused is significant. Theories of planning are almost as numerous, and as varied as the definitions of planning. Transactive, rational, radical, synoptic, adaptive, advocacy, and incremental theories of planning have all been formulated, proposed, and espoused at one time or another. However, the rational comprehensive and incremental schools of thought have dominated the field of planning for sometime. Indeed, to a great degree they have become the reference points against which other planning theory is compared.

The most persistent school of planning thought is often called 'rational' or 'rational comprehensive', planning. The 'rational comprehensive' approach consists of between four and nine (depending on the author) steps which, if followed, produce a rational and comprehensive plan.<sup>15,16</sup> According to one author these stages are;

- \* Determination of Goals
- \* Needs Assessment
- \* Specification of Objectives
- \* Development of Alternatives
- \* Evaluation/Ranking  
of Alternatives
- \* Selection of Alternative  
Courses of Action
- \* Implementation
- \* Evaluation of Actions
- \* Feedback

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When the 'rational comprehensive' model was first explicated and espoused it was generally seen as a linear process, with the

planner proceeding directly from one stage to the next, the end result being the emergence of a perfectly rational, and completely comprehensive, plan. As the 'rational comprehensive' model of planning was first envisioned, comprehensiveness was seen as the planner attempting to be exhaustive. That is, the planner was expected to conduct a "detailed analysis using quantitative methods" and examine all possible actions and outcomes.<sup>18</sup> Reviews of planning practice have indicated that very seldomly did this actually occur. It was observed that, in general, the world did not change and evolve in a strictly linear fashion. As a result, planners steadfastly applying a linear interpretation of the rational-comprehensive model of planning and policy-making found their work and observations repeatedly thwarted.

As experience with the 'rational comprehensive' model accumulated it became clear that the strict linearity of the model was one of its greatest problems. The model did not provide the planner with an accurate representation or understanding of the world, and thus significantly limited his/her ability to influence or change it. Thus, faithfully applying the 'rational comprehensive' model did not ensure the outcome that was originally expected.

Over time the definition of comprehensiveness has evolved. Some of the more recent proponents of the 'rational comprehensive' model point out that the model does not have to be, and indeed never was, strictly linear. The rational comprehensive model, it has been argued, is not comprehensive "in the sense of being exhaustive but in

the sense of being integrative."<sup>19</sup> The authors who hold this view point out that "planning is a dynamic rather than a static process and often follows a spiral rather than a linear course".<sup>20</sup> They also argue that there is feedback between the various steps which makes the entire 'rational comprehensive' planning process interactive and interdependent linking a variety of ends and means into a rational whole.

The second, and some would argue the "most pervasive" model of planning was "formally proposed in response to the shortcomings of the rational comprehensive approach."<sup>21,22</sup> Disjointed incrementalism, incrementalism, adaptive planning, or even 'muddling through' are all labels used to refer to this second theory of planning. The development and espousal of this theory of planning is most closely associated with the work of Charles Lindblom.<sup>23,24</sup> Lindblom argued that the rational comprehensive theory of planning was neither practical nor desirable. Lindblom also contended that it was impossible for any person, or group of persons, to think both rationally and comprehensively about the ends, the means, and the implications of all planning problems, situations, or options. Lindblom pointed out that plans and decisions made in large scale organizations, be they in the private or public sectors, tend to be made in an atmosphere of some crisis, which is often simultaneously rife with a plurality of competing interests. As a result of the disjointed, and essentially incremental nature of organizational planning and decision-making Lindblom felt it made little sense to "talk about policies at all".<sup>25</sup> In place of carefully thought out

policies Lindblom found what could be described as a series of fragmented and often unrelated decisions.

One of the most significant problems with the incremental theory of planning is its lack of a normative base. Lindblom's incremental theory of planning focuses almost exclusively on the means of planning. That is, emphasis is placed on using the technical aspects of planning to discern which one of a small number of options, which differ only marginally from the status quo, is the most suitable. Thus the final product (the plan) is subject to limitations of time and money as well as to the outcome of the bargaining and mutual adjustment process that is integral to the incremental planning/decision-making process. The theory is also very largely descriptive. It does not help the planner or the decision-maker determine how an organization "would have to act in order to be in some sense more effective or efficient" because the model does not prescribe how planning should be done. Instead it only argues that planning is done incrementally.<sup>26</sup> The fundamental premise of the incremental theory is that planning should occur with as little disruption to the status quo as is possible.

### **Policy Theory**

As with planning, policy and policy-making have also been the subject of a burgeoning body of literature since the late 1950's. Within this body of literature the term policy has been used in a wide variety of different ways. In some sources the term has been



used to denote "the goal of governmental intervention," in others it is used to refer to the means by which a goal will be achieved.<sup>27</sup> Lowi, and Nagel after him, argued that in reality the term 'policy' actually refers to both the ends and the means of governmental intervention. Lowi argues that policy is "a general statement by some governmental authority defining an intention to influence the behavior of citizens by use of positive or negative sanctions."<sup>28</sup> Nagel chose to define policy as "governmental decisions designed to deal with various matters such as those related to foreign policy, environmental protection, crime, unemployment, and numerous other social problems."<sup>29</sup>

Both Lowi and Nagel have, of course, overlooked the fact that organizations other than governments (e.g. corporations, service clubs, sport federations) can, and do, make policy. In addition, neither author discusses the linkage between the point within the organization from which a general statement of intent emanates and that statement's value, or credibility, as policy. Clearly, those general statements of intent made by low level public or corporate bureaucrats do not carry the same authority that those statements issued from the Cabinet or Board of Directors level do.

Bauer, like Lowi and Nagel, chose to limit his discussion of policy to the public sector when he contended that policies are the highest level and most complex form of governmental decision-making. Policy decisions have the widest implications, the longest time frame, and require the greatest amount of information,

analysis, and thought to produce.<sup>30</sup> Despite the public sector bias, and the attendant over simplifications, the essential point made by all three authors remains valid. That is, policy orients the activity of groups of people, be they in public or private organizations, or members of the general public.

Policy-making has experienced many of the theoretical dilemmas that planning has, and as in planning theory, the greatest debate rages between those who see policy-making as a rational and comprehensive process and those who argue that it is an incremental activity.<sup>31,32,33</sup> Nagel identifies five stages which those who pursue the 'rational' approach to policy formation use to arrive at their policies. They are:

Agenda Setting  
Adoption  
Implementation  
Evaluation  
Termination of Policy <sup>34</sup>

It can be argued that the above listing implies a 'rational comprehensive' process of policy-making. Both Nagel, with respect to policy, and Mayer with respect to planning, feel their respective subjects can be given a sense of order and comprehensibility, by breaking complex and highly interdependent processes into conceptually discrete stages.

When the concept of 'rational' policy-making was first explicated in the literature the policy maker was (some may argue

still is) expected to dutifully proceed from one stage to another with the end result being the production of rational policy.<sup>35</sup> As with 'rational comprehensive' planning there has been considerable criticism of the concept of 'rational' policy-making. The writings of Charles Lindblom again provide the critics with the foundation for their arguments. The critics of rational policy-making argue that it is unlikely that an organization can marshal the resources necessary to undertake a completely rational and comprehensive policy development exercise. In addition to organizations being unable to commit resources sufficient to ensure the development of rational policy, the critics argue that it is impossible to think rationally and comprehensively about all the available policy options and the long, medium, and short term implications of each.

Nagel acknowledges that theory of 'rational comprehensive' policy-making as originally proposed is flawed in that it "requires a degree of rationality which is impossible to achieve."<sup>36</sup> However, Nagel goes on to defend the rational theory of policy-making by pointing out that policy-making does not necessarily have to be exhaustive and encompassing of all levels of rationality to be termed 'rational'. Nagel argues that policy-making is 'rational' when a set of procedures "that will maximize benefits minus costs if one has adequate information and average luck" are used during the development process.<sup>37</sup>

Since both the incremental theory of planning and policy-making spring from the same body of literature. The reader is

invited to refer to the earlier discussion of the attributes and short comings of the incremental theory of planning for clarification on the theory of incremental policy-making.

A third theory of policy-making has been developed in response to the difficulties inherent in the other theories. This third theory of policy-making, usually referred to as "mixed scanning", has come to occupy what might be termed the middle ground between the rational and incremental theories of policy.<sup>38</sup> Mixed scanning acknowledges that in the real world of policy-making much of the decision-making is, out of necessity, incremental. The theory, however, goes on to argue that policy makers can, and should, step back from the fury of day to day activity and 'scan' the policy horizon to identify broad or long term policy issues and options. It is this broader scanning that Etzioni sees as providing the opportunity to achieve 'fundamental' changes in policy direction. Once the broad scanning process has been completed and a new, or significantly altered, policy goal has been identified the policy-maker can revert to an incremental mode to deal with day to day issues and problems. By virtue of having stepped back and scanned the policy horizon, the policy-maker, is able to direct incremental activity in the context of a more clearly defined policy goal.

### **Programme Theory**

The literature relating to programme development theory is somewhat less voluminous than is the literature of either planning

or policy theory. This does not, however, indicate the existence of an area little concerned with theoretical matters. Indeed, there are some considerable theoretical debates occurring within the literature.

The theoretical debate within the literature on programme development is divided between programmes as process and programmes as activities, or sets of activities. Simon and Bauer, for example see explicit linkages between the various types organizational decision-making activities.<sup>39,40</sup> In the work of these authors, and others, programmes are seen to be integral components in the continuum of organizational decision-making.

A 'process' or continuum view, similar to that forwarded by Bauer, of programmes and programme development implicitly permeates the definition and discussion presented by Mayer. Mayer argues that " a program is an attempt to achieve a given end by providing activities that are voluntary."<sup>41</sup> Programmes are linked, in Mayer's argument, to policy and development planning in that, like a policy or a plan, a programme has a set of objectives, a set of activities for achieving the objectives and a set of administrative procedures (or mechanisms) for carrying out the activities. Thus, programmes have, contained within them, aspects that are "strategic" (objectives), "tactical" (activities), as well as "trivial" (administrative procedures).<sup>42</sup> Programmes, like policies, provide the "initial conditions of intervention" and are thus, more than mere 'follow through' or implementation; which is a set of specific

actions that "complete the casual chain that runs from intervention to the attainment of desired objectives."<sup>43,44</sup>

The competing perspective within programme literature is usually associated with the human services professions (e.g. social work, health care, education, etc.), and does not recognize the process perception of programmes. In this literature, as two collaborating authors argued "programmes are usually seen as being the means by which governments pursue their broader purposes or ends" and it is only "poorly defined programmes" that have objectives of their own.<sup>45, 46</sup>

The 'human service view' of programmes and programme development is somewhat simplistic. In addition, the human service view presents problems during programme implementation and evaluation. Pressman and Wildavsky, for example, have contended that it is vital to understand the distinction between programme development and implementation activities.<sup>47</sup> Implementation activities they argue, are those actions which, when taken together, bring about the attainment of stated objectives.

Programmes refine, sharpen, or focus the policy-making and policy implementation process. A programme is an organizational intervention that is based on the premise of voluntary compliance. As Mayer has written, a programme is "an intervention that constitutes a service or activity ... provided to facilitate volitional change."<sup>48</sup> It is in this sense that programmes refine the policy

process; for it is through programmes that organizations are able to bring 'positive sanctions' to bear in the interest of meeting articulated goals and objectives.

## Conclusions

Planning, policies and programmes are different from each other. In the first place, planning is an activity - something that one does. Policies and programmes, on the other hand, constitute the outputs (on two different levels - one more general than the other) of planning. The literature on planning, policies, and programmes has tended to emphasize the differences between the three activities more than is necessary and/or productive. Emphasizing differences is a well respected pedagogical tool, however, it must be realized that instructive models can "create 'reality' rather than simply observ[ing] it."<sup>49</sup> While it is true that planning is not the same thing as policy or programme development it is very closely related and cannot be constructively viewed, understood, or done in isolation from them.

In an effort to clarify the theoretical debates about planning, policy, and programme theory this chapter adopted the literature's long standing tradition of discussing planning, policy, and programme theory in relative isolation from each other each.

Planning can be rational and comprehensive by "being integrative".<sup>50</sup> Planning is a dynamic decision-making process

which proceeds in a spiral fashion, as a result of feedback from the various steps of the process. The continual feedback facilitates the refinement of the policies and programmes that flow from the planning. The entire planning process is interactive and interdependent, linking a variety of ends and means into a rational whole.

Policies are the first order (the most general) outputs of planning. Usually a policy is a broad statement of objectives with regard to a particular area of interest. Indeed, so broad and far reaching are most policy statements that they are often called 'motherhood statements' - statements of general intent with which almost everyone can agree. While policy statements may make some reference to implementation activities, any discussion of the activities often lacks specificity. Seldomly do policy statements detail the means by which the 'motherhood' objectives will be attained.

Programmes are second order outputs of planning. Programmes like policies have within them a set of objectives. Programmatic goals, however, tend to be much more specific than those outlined at the policy or motherhood statement level. Programmes are planned "to achieve a given end by providing activities that are voluntary."<sup>51</sup> As a result programmes establish a set of activities (positive sanctions) and a set of administrative procedures for bringing those positive sanctions to bear on a given situation. Well planned programmes complete the causal chain that runs from



defining a planning issue or task, through the implementation of interventionist activities, to the realization or achievement of the desired goal.<sup>52</sup>

### **Implications**

It remains to explicate the criteria this thesis will use to define good planning, policy-making and programme development. They are:

**A 'process' view of planning, policies and programmes must be the basis of any definition of good planning, policy, and/or programmes.** Planning, policy-making, and programme development cannot be properly, viewed as remaining separate from one another. Rather, planning, policy-making, and programme development are ingredients that, when blended, produce unique and mutually supporting, whole - the development planning process. Together they provide the context (or environment) within, and the means by, which an organization works toward change.

**Rationality is the cornerstone of good planning, policy, and programmes.** Not the linear rationality of the earliest explications of 'rational comprehensive' theory but the procedural rationality of the more recent versions of the theory which stress the desirability of a rational process. That is, a process which leads the

planner, policy-maker or programme developer to first articulate his/her goals, and then derive policies and programmes that are consistent with, and move toward the realization of the goals.

**Good planning, policies, and programmes are integrally linked and share a set of common characteristics. Namely:**

Change Directed  
Goal Oriented  
Choice Maximizing  
Procedurally Rational  
Collectively Oriented 53

**Meaningful policies and programmes cannot be developed in a vacuum, there must be reference/linkage between them.** To attempt to do the otherwise would result in policies and programmes that are as misleading as helpful. In the context of this thesis the implications of the linkages are that any exploration and analysis of the planning associated with the development of the tourism sector in the NWT cannot be conducted without an exploration and analysis of the outputs of the planning process - the tourism policies and programmes of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

**For development planning to be successful and efficient it is necessary that planning, policies, and programmes be integrated into an operational whole.** An operational whole is created when a rational and systematic planning process informs the development of policies, and then guides the selection of appropriate programmes, and finally (though this area has been deemed to be beyond the scope of this thesis and therefore not discussed), directs the identification and implementation of specific projects.

**Planning is more than the mechanistic adherence to a planning method, an acceptable result will not be produced if local social, political, cultural, and participatory realities are not addressed.** Development planning is as much a social and political process as an economic or technocratic one. Governments have attempted to solve developmental problems without the support and participation of their public, in general, however, the efforts have failed for want of clear and realistic goals and objectives. The issue in planning is not which planning theory or model is right and should be adhered to, but how decisions are made, and whether or not the people most affected have had an opportunity to affect the outcome. Development planning must address not only the narrow technical issues of planning development, it must also address the

broader social, political, and economic issues inherent in planning for development.

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## **Chapter 3**

### **THE INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES OF THE GNWT: Planning, Policies, and Programmes in a Vacuum**

The objective of this chapter is to identify the informational demands of the planning, policy, and programme development processes, and then compare these with the informational resources available in the NWT to determine whether or not the resources available are sufficient to meet the demands being placed upon them.

As has been pointed out in Chapter 2 the planning of policies and programmes is intended to bring rationality to bear on future actions.<sup>1</sup> To design a "rational course of collective action" "the application of [information and] knowledge in an organized manner" must occur.<sup>2,3</sup> In short, planning, policy-making, and programme development are all information intensive activities. As a result, without good information, good planning can not occur.

Before specific policy and programme options can be proposed the planner must understand the general political and socio-economic reality in which planning occurs, as well as any the current impediments to development. In addition, good information makes the task of formulating plans, policies, and programmes possible by making the linkages between the environment, goals, impediments more understandable and allowing planner to identify

what specific policy and programme options will do, who they will benefit, how effective each will be.

Robert Chambers writing about information and development planning noted that "a great deal of the information that is generated [in support of development planning efforts] is ... irrelevant, late, wrong and/or unusable anyway."<sup>4</sup> In the most general sense then, good information, in the context of development, can be defined as information that is relevant, timely, correct, and usable for the task at hand.

Given that adequate information is a necessary pre-condition to good planning, policy and programmes, it is possible to glean important clues about the extent and quality of the planning going into policies and programmes by examining the amount, and the quality of information being collected for use in the process. After all policy and programme options cannot be accepted or rejected without understanding what they will do, who they will benefit, and how effective each option might be. In the case of tourism in the Northwest Territories, three types of information are required for the government to do credible job of planning the sector's development. First, planners have to have a good understanding of the current, as well as the potential, scope and depth of the NWT tourism sector. That is, planners must know how many tourists are currently coming to the Northwest Territories, how much money they are spending, how many Territorial residents are employed in the tourism sector, what is it that the tourists come for, how long

they stay, and how they travel. Second, planners must have a clear understanding of the needs, aspirations, and capabilities of NWT residents with regard to tourism. The planners must know who will benefit from the development of tourism. Will, for example, Native people derive significant benefit from the development of tourism, or will it be largely non-resident lodge owners? What factors are, or could constrain the involvement of Territorial residents in the sector? Does tourism fit with the value systems of the people in the Northwest Territories? What kind of tourism development, if they want it at all, do the people in the communities prefer? Third, what are the tourism resources of the Northwest Territories? Are these resources accessible? To what degree are the NWT's tourism resources currently being utilized for tourism or other uses (e.g. subsistence in the case of hunting and fishing)? What is the potential impact of tourism development on the resource base?

Understanding the scope and depth of the NWT tourism sector is a basic step in attempting to develop sound, rational, and effective tourism policies and programmes. While the GNWT's tourism planners have access to some basic information on tourism in the NWT, there is reason to question its reliability. A document prepared by the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Economic Development and Tourism on October 23, 1986 discussed the size and scope of the NWT's tourism sector. The document argued that:

Today, available data suggest that annual visitation reaches 44,000. These visitors spend an estimated

\$1,000 each to generate some \$40 to \$50 million in business revenues and more than 1500 full time and 2000 part-time jobs, mostly for territorial residents; business travelers spend even more per capita.<sup>5</sup>

A consultant's report prepared, in April of 1986, for the territorial government's Department of Economic Development and Tourism painted a similar picture. The consultant concluded, based on data from the years 1982-84, that:

More than 40,000 business and pleasure travelers visit the Northwest Territories every year. It has been estimated that this activity injects approximately \$60,000,000 Cdn. into the territorial economy, stimulating about 4,000 person-years of employment annually. As a private sector economic activity, tourism is the second largest producer of employment in the Northwest Territories.<sup>6</sup>

A third consultant's report, again prepared for the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in 1986, again draws similar conclusions about the size and nature of the NWT tourism industry. This third report looked at the level of tourism and travel expenditures for the year 1981-82 and extrapolated from that figure (\$58 million) to conclude that "the Northwest Territories' tourism industry would employ 1,943 people directly and a further 684 indirectly."<sup>7</sup> The information provided in each of the reports is important in that it provides the Department of Economic Development and Tourism with some sense of the size the tourism sector. The information is, however, of a relatively general nature, and perhaps should have its reliability questioned.

Within the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, some officials have noted that even the most 'up to date' data (i.e. any of the three studies discussed above) regarding the 'state of the tourism industry' is at least five years old.<sup>8</sup> This fact becomes a very significant handicap when attempting to plan for the development of an industry that is rapidly changing and in which five year old data can be significantly, even dangerously, misleading. The problems of relying on five year old data are driven home when one realizes that "the value of tourism around the world totalled more than \$658 billion US in 1979, representing 2.4 million trips. By 1983, only five years latter, this had grown to \$1.09 trillion US - or 3.6 million trips (66% increase)".<sup>9</sup> Thus, planning policies and programmes utilizing data that are five or more years old very significantly increases the possibility of developing inappropriate policies and programmes.

As well as being seriously out of date, the GNWT's tourism data has been, and still is , collected in circumstances which are considerably less than optimum. It has been claimed that the GNWT's most recent data are less than adequate for planning and decision-making purposes. The "data has an error rate of at least 40 - 50 % because the data collections exercises were [structured] in a very biased way."<sup>10</sup> Additionally, because the GNWT "changed [its data collection] method part way through [the research exercise it] cannot do [any] comparisons, [it is] left with contradictory data."<sup>11</sup> As a result of switching data collection method part way through

the exercise the Government further compromised data that were already of very questionable utility given their age.<sup>12</sup>

The reported data utilization practices of some long time employees of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism may have even further exacerbated already significant data problems. It has been reported, that those who used the available tourism data on a daily basis were aware of the short-comings in the 'official' statistics, and developed a tendency to discount the data in response to this knowledge. Thus, when discharging their daily duties (policy and programme planning, report writing, etc.), some Government officials regularly utilized estimates, based on their personal knowledge of tourism in the NWT, in place of factual figures.<sup>13</sup> Thus, over time, data that have come to be accepted as 'factual' by Economic Development and Tourism officials, private operators in the industry, and even the government of Canada are actually only unsubstantiated guesses, which have, over the years, been given the appearance of fact.

Observers from outside the GNWT have found reason to question both the quantity and quality of the data available for use in planning the development of the NWT's tourism sector. One consulting company noted:

management information has not been accessible or achievable through research of sufficient quantity or quality necessary for the formulation of policy, informed decision-making, economic planning, program development, implementation and management.<sup>14</sup>

At another point in the same report the consulting firm argued "research and statistical information are generally inadequate" and "vital ... planning information concerning [tourism] plant capacity, growth rates and competitive initiatives are missing from the GNWT's data banks."<sup>15, 16</sup> A second consulting firm, while somewhat more obtuse in its criticism of the quantity and quality of data available makes much the same point by noting that "the available data on travel activity ... is not as complete or specific as would be desirable."<sup>17</sup> This is a particular problem given that the NWT is an enormous jurisdiction (over 1.6 million square kilometers) with very diverse geographic, cultural, and social resources which establish fundamentally different socio-economic realities in different areas of the NWT.

An additional data problem is that most of the tourism related data available pertains to one region of the NWT - the Fort Smith (administrative) Region. The fostering of tourism development on a territorial basis requires, data base that provides information on all regions of the NWT and not just the Fort Smith (administrative) Region. One consultant to the GNWT, while attempting to discuss the state of the NWT tourism industry noted that beyond what was available for the Fort Smith region "data [were] not available for the other regions [of the NWT]."<sup>18</sup> This reality may have been a significant liability for planners attempting to fulfill the goals of the NWT Tourism Strategy and ensure that tourism "opportunities [were] dispersed throughout the Northwest Territories ...".<sup>19</sup> At the

very minimum the GNWT's tourism planners need to know whether or not there currently is tourism activity, its volume (expressed both in person days and cash in-flow), type, the most usual mode of travel, reason for visiting, and destinations. For, only with such information will the planners be able to assess the economic viability of investment in tourism related ventures of the NWT (other than in the Fort Smith Region).

Significant inconsistencies in the data quickly become apparent when one begins to compare certain aspects of the 'official' data to the underlying trends in the sector. For instance, it has been noted that:

[G]NWT internal data shows a dramatic rise in [tourism] spending of 62.5% in the summer of 1983 over the summer of 1982. This increase is extremely remarkable - or suspect - given that there was no recorded increase in visitation in the NWT data for these two periods.<sup>20</sup>

The quality of the data available to help plan the development of the tourism sector, and thus of the entire economy of the NWT, becomes even more suspect when one begins to compare the data generated by internal sources with that generated by extra-territorial sources. One extra-territorial source, the consulting firm Canadian Facts, produced data on the NWT tourism sector that was at considerable variance to aggregated "[G]NWT internal data".<sup>21</sup>

Canadian Facts records total visitation to the Northwest Territories as being down 7% while total expenditures are up by 1%. NWT data has visitation up by 40.2% and spending up by 26.3%.<sup>22</sup>



The Government of the Northwest Territories' Fort Smith Region, as noted above, contains the vast majority of the NWT's tourism investment (especially in the form of fishing and hunting lodges) and receives the largest level of visitation with 66.5% of all travellers to the NWT visiting this region.<sup>23</sup> The high visitation rate reflects the fact that two of the NWT's three highway access routes run through the Fort Smith region. As one consultant's report noted when discussing the NWT's Tourism market: "the primary destination area [within the NWT] is the Fort Smith region. This is due to the fact that this region is road accessible, is closest to markets (Alberta and British Columbia) and off the Liard Highway connection between the Mackenzie and Alaska Highways."<sup>24</sup>

When one moves from examining the tourism information available at the territorial level to examining the data available at the regional level it becomes obvious that the reliability and utility of the information actually deteriorates. The research firm, Canadian Facts, reports a decline in visitation to the crucial Fort Smith region between 1982 and 1983 of 22% with a resultant decline in total tourism expenditures for the region of 1.5%.<sup>25,26</sup> The tourism data generated within the NWT, on the other hand, reports a decline in visitation of 24.9% but an increase in tourism expenditures within the Fort Smith region of 18.3%.<sup>27</sup> Consultants working in the area of tourism marketing for the territorial government's Department of Economic Development and Tourism, when they became aware of the very significant data problems, felt compelled to caution those who might use their report. The

consultants, with reference to the inconsistency of the data wrote: "Given such discrepancies in the data, caution should be used in interpreting this data."<sup>28</sup>

The complete lack of information about the NWT's travel account provides but one more example of how the GNWT's tourism planners are thwarted in their attempts to understand the tourism component of the NWT economy. It is known, for example, that for southern Canada "the largest Canadian travel market is the domestic market. It now accounts for 80% of all tourism expenditure in Canada."<sup>29</sup> Because there is no reliable information regarding the travel patterns of NWT residents GNWT tourism planners simply have no way of determining whether a similar situation exists in the NWT or not. In the absence of any information on the territorial travel account the tourism development planners have little chance of coming to understand the travel patterns of northerners. Without such understanding tourism development planners are left wondering whether fostering domestic (i.e. intra NWT travel for NWT residents) is needed, desirable, or feasible. For without the means to understand the dynamics of the NWT travel account planners cannot even determine whether there is a problem that needs to be addressed with policies and/or programmes in the first place. As one consultant lamented:

Unfortunately we could find no travel account data for the Northwest Territories. As a result we are unable to comment on the size of the Northwest Territories' travel deficit or surplus. If the Northwest Territories' travel account is in a surplus position it would be a positive sign of a healthy tourism economy. If it is [in] a

negative position then the Northwest Territories would look to import substitution possibilities to develop its own resident travel markets and stop the leakage of income and employment associated with residents traveling outside the Northwest Territories.<sup>30</sup>

At some levels within the Department of Economic Development and Tourism there is an acknowledgment that the quantity and quality of data available must be improved if the Department is to assist the GNWT do serious economic planning with a focus on the tourism sector.<sup>31</sup> Concern about the state of the knowledge with regard to tourism in the Northwest Territories has also begun to surface in government documents. Recently the GNWT acknowledged that "there is a critical need to develop and maintain a comprehensive data base to monitor and assess the progress of all aspects" of the tourism sector.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, before a meeting of the Northwest Territories Travel Industry Association government officials argued that "research is the fundamental tool for planning and implementing [an] effective and efficient ... development strategy".<sup>33</sup>

The new data the GNWT has proposed that it collect is of a particular type, for a particular purpose, and may not be directly useful in territorial tourism development planning. The tourism related research and planning recommended by government officials and consultants to date has related almost exclusively to the marketing of NWT tourism products. For example, one government document argues:

Research is especially important, from the gathering of information about the type of visitor who already travels in the NWT and what his/her preferences are ... to determining the type of characteristics which a potential visitor has, including the tourism facilities he expects to find, the type of experiences he prefers and the value-for money relationships which are necessary. Only with the input and information feedback from the industry will we be able to determine whether our collective initiatives are successful or not.<sup>34</sup>

Based on the foregoing examination of the informational resources available to facilitate the tourism development a number of observations can be made. First, the data collection efforts of the GNWT have been seriously flawed. As a result, there is 'inadequate' information, both in the quantity and quality senses, for sound planning. Second, there are indications that the reliability, of even the most basic information about the scope and depth of the NWT's tourism sector, is in question. Third, the data that is available is five, or more, years old, and this is a significant handicap for planners attempting to encourage and direct the development of a very rapidly changing industry. Fourth, what data there is pertains almost exclusively to one administrative region of the NWT - the Fort Smith Region. Fifth, there is some evidence that in response to an informational vacuum, individuals working in the area have taken to generating their own 'facts' about tourism in the NWT. While this shows ingenuity and drive on the part of people working in the field of tourism development it does not enhance the chances of those individuals making rational tourism development decisions. Sixth, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism is working to improve its informational resources.

However, it appears that the Department is concentrating on the collection of marketing oriented information rather than information would be that relevant in a policy and programme planning context. Seventh, there is no evidence of the tourism planners consulting the public in an attempt to develop an understanding of the aspirations, needs, and capabilities of NWT residents with regard to tourism.

Rather than expending its resources collecting marketing oriented data the GNWT should be attempting to secure for itself policy and programme planning relevant information. Such information would make it possible for tourism planners to do three things: first, understand who travels in the Northwest Territories, when they come, how they get there and what brings them; second clearly understand what the needs, aspirations and capabilities of NWT residents (particularly that majority of the population that is of Native decent and which resides in the many small and remote communities of the NWT) with regard to tourism; third, develop some feel for the type of tourism resources present in the NWT, the degree to which those resources are already utilized (in both tourism and non-tourism contexts), the availability of specialized human resources (e.g. skilled guides, seasoned managers/administrators, accountants, etc.) to facilitate the emergence of a broadly based and well rounded tourism industry.

## Implications

The implications, for planning and planners, of having poor information are several and significant. While plentiful and accurate information alone will not ensure that sound decisions will be made. However, decisions made on the basis of accurate information will, on average, be better than those made by people utilizing less than reliable information. The planning, policy and programme processes are information intensive and dependent. Planners, policy-makers and programme developers collect, process, and analyze information as they work to understand the situation they are faced with, determine the goals, and objectives that will be strived for, and finally, propose, rank and implement a variety of policy and programme options that will bring about a more desirable state of affairs or future. Planning, policy-making, or programme development that occurs without access to relevant, accurate, and timely information does not have the benefit of all the facts and therefore is unable to develop the most rational and/or appropriate set of alternatives. Without sound information planners and policy-makers are unable to comprehend what it is about the present situation that is undesirable, let alone propose rank and implement policy and programmes to improve the situation at some future point.

## References

### Chapter 3

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- <sup>2</sup> Robert R. Mayer, Policy and Program Planning: A Developmental Perspective (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice - Hall Inc., 1985), P. 4.
- <sup>3</sup> John Friedmann, Retracking America: A Theory of Transactive Planning (New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1973), P. 50.
- <sup>4</sup> Robert Chambers, "Rapid Rural Appriaisal; Rationale and Reportoire" presented to the World Bank Agricultural Sector Symposia, January 1980 (mimeo).
- <sup>5</sup> Government of the Northwest Territories, "Schedule A, Canada-Northwest Territories Tourism Development Subsidiary Agreement, Draft Document", (October 23, 1986), P.1.
- <sup>6</sup> Briar International Business Resources Ltd., "A Strategic Marketing Plan for Tourism for the Government of the Northwest Territories", (Ottawa: April, 1986), P. A.
- <sup>7</sup> Derek Murray Consulting Association, "Discussion Paper Review and Summation of the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry, Documents and Programs", (Regina: Department of Economic Development and Tourism, 1986), P. 10.
- <sup>8</sup> Personal communication with G. Hamre, Special Advisor, Park Development, Economic Development and Tourism, Government of the Northwest Territories, January 20, 1987.
- <sup>9</sup> Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Economic Development and Tourism, "Strategic Marketing Plan: A Presentation to the NWT Tourism Industry Association Annual General Meeting -1986", P. 2 (Emphasis added.).
- <sup>10</sup> Personal telephone communication with Aimee Britton, of Briar International Business Resources Ltd., April 8, 1987.

- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Personal communication with G. Hamre, January 20, 1987.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Briar International Business Resources Ltd., "A Strategic Marketing Plan", P. G.
- 15 Ibid., P. 13.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Derek Murray Consulting Association, "Review and Summation of the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry", P. 12.
- 18 Ibid., P. 17.
- 19 Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Community Based Tourism: A Strategy for the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry, (Yellowknife: Department of Economic Development and Tourism, 1983), Pp. 10-11.
- 20 Briar International Business Resources Ltd., "A Strategic Marketing Plan", P. 28.
- 20 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid., P. 29.
- 23 Percentage figures computed by the author from information contained in, Derek Murray Consulting Association, "Review and Summation of the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry", P. 14.
- 24 Derek Murray Consulting Association, "Review and Summation of the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry", P. 14.
- 25 Canadian Facts is a consulting firm commissioned by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism to undertake the 1984 Northwest Territories Travel Survey. Canadian Facts collected



field data by sampling the traveling public at eight airport and two highway locations in the NWT. Data collection took place at all points between June 25 and September 4, 1984. A stratified, multi-stage probability sampling technique was used to identify data collection stints. Two questionnaires, one a personal interview (of three to five minutes in duration) and the other a self-completed mailback interview were used.

26 Briar International Business Resources Ltd., "A Strategic Marketing Plan", P. 28

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Derek Murray Consulting Association, "Review and Summation of the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry", P. 6

30 Ibid., Pp. 8-9

31 Personal communication with G. Hamre, January 20, 1987.

32 Government of the Northwest Territories, "Schedule A, Canada-Northwest Territories Tourism Development Subsidiary Agreement", (Draft Document), October 23, 1986, P. 5.

33 Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Economic Development and Tourism, "Strategic Marketing Plan: A Presentation to the NWT Tourism Industry Association", P. 3

34 Ibid.

## Chapter 4

### TOURISM POLICY AND REGULATION IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The objective of this chapter is to examine the most general level of outputs (policies and regulations) of the Government of the Northwest Territories's tourism development planning efforts. Planning, is an intellectual activity which cannot be directly observed or measured. Consequently, one must resort to the observation and measurement of planning indicators to gain an insight into planning activity. The links between planning and policy-making and/or programme development make it possible to glean information about the development planning being done by an organization by examining the policies that have been forwarded by that organization. In short, policies and programmes can be planning indicators.

There is a wide spread perception, both within and without the Government of the Northwest Territories, that there is a shortage of tourism development policy in the NWT. Within government the shortage of tourism policy was most clearly identified in a 1983 Department of Economic Development and Tourism document entitled Community Based Tourism: A Strategy for the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry. The document noted that:

To date there has been not one overall government or industry strategy or set of policies to guide the direction

of the tourism industry. There are a few isolated policy statements, some fragmented planning and a set of now out-of-date legislation.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, from outside the GNWT the shortage of a clear policy has been commented on by consultants retained by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism to assist in the development of the NWT's tourism sector. One of these, after "a review of all current documents, programs and studies dealing with tourism in the Northwest Territories", noted that while:<sup>2</sup>

the Government of the Northwest Territories has always expressed an interest in developing tourism ... the interest expressed by the Government of the Northwest Territories has always been unstructured ... <sup>3</sup>

Non-governmental organizations have also expressed concern about the paucity of tourism development policy in the NWT. The Deh Cho Regional Council, for example, pointed out to the Department of Economic Development and Tourism that the 1983 document Community Based Tourism is the only tourism development policy statement published by the government. To the Regional Council "the irony [of the GNWT's tourism policy situation was] clear and obvious; ... [given that] the only 'solid piece' of [tourism development] policy documentation lament[ed] the fact that there [was] 'not one overall government or industry strategy or set of policies.'"<sup>4</sup>

## THE NWT TOURISM STRATEGY

Despite the deficiencies of Community Based Tourism the Government of the Northwest Territories has stated that the paper "can be referred to as the NWT Tourism Strategy".<sup>5</sup> Given this, and the fact there are no other policy documents to turn to it is necessary that Community Based Tourism be mined for whatever nuggets of insight into the GNWT's economic development planning efforts it may contain.

Within Community Based Tourism one broad goal for tourism development in the NWT is made explicit. It is stated that the goal of the NWT Tourism Strategy is to "assist communities and their residents across the NWT in achieving their tourism revenue and employment objectives in a manner compatible with their lifestyles and aspirations."<sup>6</sup> It is also argued, however, that the Tourism Strategy is built upon twelve 'Guiding Principles'. They are listed as being:

a) Tourism is a desirable industry for the Northwest Territories; and, its opportunities should be dispersed throughout the Northwest Territories and not to just a few large centres.

b) Tourism should only be developed and promoted in those communities which are ready and interested in being involved in the industry, and where a tourism wage economy is, judged by the community residents, to be compatible and complementary to their lifestyles. Priority will be given to those communities that have a limited range of economic development opportunities.

c) Opportunities for jobs, training and business development shall be directed to ensure maximum economic benefits for the Northwest Territories' residents; and tourism development shall be phased to reflect and be integrated with the training and skill levels of Northwest Territories residents.

d) Tourism should be primarily a private sector industry; and this includes all profit-oriented forms of businesses, development corporations and organizations involved in the travel industry.

e) Resident ownership of facilities and services shall be encouraged. The private sector should take the lead in developing viable operations, with the Government involved in the provision of support services (roads, airports, research, general information distribution). In the short term, however, government will need to provide incentives to encourage and facilitate tourism development.

f) The private sector shall be encouraged to provide products and services to visitors at a fair price.

g) Communities, local and regional development corporations and associations, and the general public shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in consultation programs to help ensure that Northwest Territories residents derive maximum benefits from tourism-related activities in and around their community.

h) Tourism in the Northwest Territories should be a year round industry, not just a seasonal one. The spring season has much potential.

i) Large volumes of visitors at one time in one location are not desirable in all by the larger communities. Avoiding large numbers will ensure high quality experiences for the visitors, be within the capabilities of our smaller tourism businesses, and minimize disturbances to community residents.

j) Tourism should build on the natural, cultural and historic resources of the NWT;

and, emphasize the identification and development of attractions based on learn, observe and experience opportunities. To minimize social and environmental impacts, the tourism industry should not compete with hunters and trappers for scarce natural resources.

k) It is recognized that the various tourism destination zones across the NWT are different from each other with respect to their sophistication and level of development needs; and, this will determine the selection of programs drawn upon by each, and influence the way in which the programs are used.

l) Each tourism destination zone has specialized geographical/historical/cultural products to offer, and this will result in distinctive and complementary tour packages for each area.<sup>7</sup>

By critically examining the content of Community Based Tourism the author was able to develop a much more complete picture of the scope and intent of the NWT's tourism development policies and programmes. An analysis of Community Based Tourism indicated that the twelve guiding principles could be classified as being one of three different types of statements. The analysis was conducted by defining principles, goals/objectives and programme initiatives and then examining each principle in light of the definitions and assigning the appropriate category.

Principles in the context of planning, policy, and programmes are statements of fundamental or self-evident truth, statements of that are assumed to be fact. Principles provide the base from which decisions/activities are initiated. Although Community Based Tourism identified twelve principles which were to guide the NWT

Tourism Strategy, only two of the statements were actually statements of principle. The two statements of principle were:

a) "Tourism is a desirable industry for the Northwest Territories;" and

i) "Large volumes of visitors at one time in one location are not desirable in all but the larger communities."<sup>8</sup>

Goals/objectives are statements which describe the desired or expected outputs of planning, policy, and programme activities, they are also the primary means of determining the intent of a policy. Very commonly, Goals/objectives are expressed as normative statements. There were a number of goal/objective statements contained within the twelve 'guiding principles' of the NWT Tourism Strategy. Namely:

a) "[Tourism] opportunities should be dispersed throughout the Northwest Territories and not to just a few large centres."

b) "Tourism should only be developed and promoted in those communities which are ready and interested in being involved in the industry,"

d) "Tourism should be primarily a private sector industry;"

e) "The private sector should take the lead in developing viable [tourism] operations,"

h) "Tourism in the Northwest Territories should be a year round industry, not just a seasonal one."

j) "Tourism should build on the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the NWT; and, emphasize the identification and development of attractions based on learn,

observe and experience opportunities. To minimize social and environmental impacts, the tourism industry should not compete with hunters and trappers for scarce natural resources."<sup>9</sup>

Programme initiatives are the activities and administrative procedures implemented to achieve the stated goals/objectives. Programme are most frequently expressed as activities that an organization will undertake. There were a number of programme initiatives contained within the twelve 'guiding principles' of the NWT Tourism Strategy. Namely:

b) "[Tourism development] priority will be given to those communities that have a limited range of economic development opportunities."

c) "Opportunities for jobs, training and business development shall be directed to ensure maximum economic benefits for the Northwest Territories' residents; and tourism development shall be phased to reflect and be integrated with, the training and skill levels of Northwest Territories residents."

e) "Resident ownership of facilities and services shall be encouraged. ... In the short term, however, government will need to provide incentives to encourage and facilitate tourism development."

f) "The private sector shall be encouraged to provide products and services to visitors at a fair price."

g) "Communities, local and regional development corporations and associations, and the general public shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in consultation programs to help ensure that Northwest Territories residents derive maximum benefits from tourism-related activities in and around their community."<sup>10</sup>



From the foregoing analysis a more complete view of the GNWT's Tourism Development Strategy (and therefore the GNWT's tourism development policy) begins to emerge. The analysis indicates that the additional tourism development goals of the GNWT are as follows:

- 1) the wide dispersion of tourism across the NWT;
- 2) private sector development of the tourism industry;
- 3) the development of a year round tourism industry;
- 4) the development and marketing of tourism products based on the comparative advantages of the NWT - the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the NWT; and
- 5) the development of non-consumptive tourism products which do not compete with the hunting/trapping/fishing economies of the smaller and remote communities.

Based on the analysis of the NWT Tourism Strategy's twelve 'guiding principles', it is clear that a significant number of important policy directions and statements are contained within Community Based Tourism. However, they were expressed not as clear policy directions and statements but as guiding principles. As guiding principles they are seen as statements of fact and not as statements indicating the direction and magnitude of a desired change in tourism development. As a result, much of their ability to direct and orient the actions and activities of both the public and the bureaucracy was lost.

The point of policy is to orient the activity of groups of people within organizations. People cannot be oriented to strive for a goal if there is no agreement upon just what goals are being worked toward, or if the goals are poorly or inappropriately expressed. In the case of the NWT Tourism Strategy only a single goal was explicitly identified, that being to: "assist communities and their residents across the NWT in achieving their tourism revenue and employment objectives in a manner compatible with their lifestyles and aspirations."<sup>11</sup> In addition to this very general 'motherhood statement' the Strategy was also found to contain a number of other goal/objective (i.e. policy) statements. These however, were expressed as guiding principles rather than as policy statements. As a result they lost much of their ability to orient the activities of the bureaucracy.

In chapter 2 it was noted that policies contain both positive (programmatic) sanctions and negative sanctions. In general, negative sanctions find expression through the planning and implementation of a regulatory regime, which defines both the limits of activity, and the mechanisms of redress available to government should those limits be exceeded.

In the context of directing the development of the tourism sector in the Northwest Territories, it is the Tourist Establishment Regulations and the Outfitter's Regulations which provide the GNWT with the legal means to orient those who do not voluntarily accept the policies and goals of the NWT Tourism Strategy. There is,

however, some evidence to suggest that the regulations have not been successful in orienting tourism development activity. In a June, 1984 memo to his Minister, then Economic Development and Tourism Deputy Minister B. James Britton, noted:

Under the Travel and Tourism Ordinance and associated regulations, the following key criteria are set out for reviewing lodge applications:

- (i) impact on current/traditional land uses
- (ii) biological carrying capacity of the affected waterbody(s)
- (iii) nature of the proposed building plan; and,
- (iv) public "interest".

Regions are given much latitude in establishing more specific criteria (within the umbrella of the four key criteria), and detailing a process for actually carrying out the review. Unfortunately, the present administrative practices and procedures for reviewing lodge applications do not:

- (i) adequately respond to the wishes of area residents;
- (ii) facilitate knowledgeable public input;
- (iii) clearly set out the responsibilities of the Department, local groups and the applicant;
- (iv) facilitate a prompt and standardized processing of license application; and,
- (v) reflect the spirit of guidelines of the recently approved Tourism Strategy.<sup>12</sup>

It should be emphasized that, the Deputy Minister effectively argued that the regulatory regime put in place was inconsistent with the policy goals espoused by the GNWT in its NWT Tourism Strategy when he noted that:

The present administrative practices and procedures for reviewing lodge applications do not: ...

- (v) reflect the spirit of the recently approved Tourism Strategy.<sup>13</sup>

The 1983 conclusion of the Deputy Minister was implicitly restated four years later when the Department of Economic Development and Tourism sought assistance in identifying and addressing deficiencies in its tourism development legislation and regulations. In a "Request for Proposals: Licensing and Enforcement" inviting consultants to prepare proposals to identify and address the problems in existing tourism legislation and regulations the Department acknowledged that its tourism development "... regulations/practices [have not been] fully consistent with the Department's stated goals and objectives for the industry."<sup>14</sup> In addition, the same document stated that "... there has not been a uniform application of the legislation and regulations across the NWT ..."<sup>15</sup>

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism reportedly issued the "Request for Proposals" in response to comments made by non-governmental groups (i.e. the Deh Cho Regional Council, Tourism Industry Association of the NWT) concerned about the state of tourism development policy in the NWT.<sup>16</sup> The Department hoped that it could address the concerns and problems identified by the non-governmental groups by re-designing the tourism development regulatory regime in the NWT. By preparing a 'request for proposals' the Department of Economic Development and Tourism implicitly acknowledged that its "administrative practices and procedures" still did not "reflect the spirit" of the GNWT's Tourism Strategy well into 1987, even though the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories had adopted the

NWT Tourism Strategy in 1983 and despite the fact that the Deputy Minister had high-lighted the problem in mid-1983.<sup>17</sup>

Having examined the tourism policy and regulation of the the GNWT it is possible to make a number of observations about the state of tourism development policy in the Northwest Territories. First, there is a perception both within and outside the GNWT that the GNWT has little more than a few "isolated policy statements" with regard to tourism development.<sup>18</sup> Second, that most of these isolated statements of policy are contained within one document - Community Based Tourism: A Strategy for the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry, which itself laments the lack of tourism development policy.<sup>19</sup> Third, an analysis of the NWT Tourism Strategy indicated that the GNWT had in fact identified a number of important policy directions and statements regarding tourism development but that these were expressed as self-evident truths and thereby lost much of their ability to orient the activities of the GNWT bureaucracy. Fourth, there is some evidence that the lack of clear policy has had repercussions for the regulatory regime. For example, the administrative practices associated with the regulatory regime do "not reflect the spirit of", and are inconsistent with, the NWT Tourism Strategy's goals.<sup>20</sup>

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## References

### Chapter 4

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- 4 Deh Cho Regional Council, "Deh Cho Regional Tourism Development Area: Background Paper", (Fort Simpson: Deh Cho Regional Council, November 12, 1986), P. 4.
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## **Chapter 5**

### **GNWT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

The objective of this chapter is to examine the second order outputs (programmes) of the Government of the Northwest Territories's tourism development planning efforts. As noted in an earlier chapter, planning, is an intellectual activity which cannot be directly observed or measured. Consequently, one must resort to the observation and measurement of planning indicators to gain an insight into planning activity. The links between planning and policy-making and/or programme development make it possible to glean information about the development planning being done by an organization by examining the programmes that have been developed and implemented by the organization. More particularly, it is because ideally the goals and objectives of programmes are sub-sets of those outlined in policy statements that programmes can be effective planning indicators. Further, well planned programmes complete the planning process that runs from defining a planning issue or task, through the identification of policy options and the implementation of interventionist activities, to the realization or achievement of a desired goal.<sup>1</sup>

Limitations of space make it impossible to examine and analyse all the GNWT's tourism development programmes (a review of GNWT tourism development programmes reveals that there are programmes to: publish tourism guide books, pamphlets, and maps;



support for tourism operators wanting to attend sport and travel shows; promote package tours; promote community attractions and events; promote the development of new markets; etc.) of the within the confines of a single thesis. As a result, the examination and analysis of the GNWT's tourism development programmes will be limited to the park development programme.

The GNWT's park development programme is but one of the tools to used by the government to develop the tourism industry and the entire economy of the NWT. Senior GNWT officials have confirmed that the Territorial Parks system has been created to created to serve and enhance the tourism sector by attracting free spending tourists to the North.<sup>2</sup> The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, during an interview, stressed that there was a "desperate need for more parks in the NWT to enhance the northern experience of people in the North on vacation."<sup>3</sup>

The Government of the Northwest Territories' Act Respecting Parks in the Northwest Territories sets out five classifications of parks. It has been argued that the emphasis of the Territorial Park system as been on outdoor recreation and public enjoyment because of the importance "the Government of the Northwest Territories places on economic development through tourism."<sup>4</sup>

By examining the spatial and category distribution of planned and existing Territorial parks it is possible to determine

where the Department of Economic Development and Tourism is focusing its park development efforts. By comparing the Department's efforts to the NWT Tourism Strategy is possible to ascertain the degree to which the programme assists in achieving the Strategy's goals.

Currently there are forty parks in the NWT Territorial Park system, with an additional twenty four proposed parks under active consideration.<sup>5</sup> The vast majority of existing parks are located within the Fort Smith region; as one government official noted "virtually all [Territorial Parks] are in the Fort Smith region (see fig.1)."<sup>6</sup> Indeed, thirty two (80%) of the forty existing parks are located in the Fort Smith region, and twenty three (71%) of them are Wayside Parks.<sup>7,8</sup> Largely because of the the spatial and categorical specialization in the Territorial Park system some have argued that the system is "essentially a collection of public access areas" along NWT highways catering to "rubber tire traffic" tourists (i.e. those who tour in recreational vehicles) in the North.<sup>9</sup>

The disproportionate concentration of parks in the Fort Smith region is an artifact of the period and manner in which many of the existing Territorial Parks were created. Much of the system was created during the 1960's and 1970's, concomitant with the pushing of the first highways into the NWT. As a result, many Territorial Parks were established to provide rudimentary services and comforts to the traveling public. By and large a linkage between



park development and tourism was not made until sometime latter. However, once the postulation of a linkage between a larger and improved park system and increased tourism and greater economic opportunities was made, it served to reinforce and entrench the practice of building parks along the highways to service "rubber tire" tourists. For, during the 1960's and 1970's tourism tended to be dependent on highway access. In addition, there were no formal policy statements to guide tourism and/or park development in the NWT during that period.

The evidence suggests that many of the GNWT's previous park development priorities and practices have been abandoned. As discussed in Chapter 3 the NWT Tourism Strategy stresses that tourism development activities (such as park creation) should encourage the dispersement of tourism benefits and opportunities across the NWT. The development of the Strategy has significantly changed the focus of park development in the NWT. An examination of those parks being considered for future development is indicative of the change in focus.

At present of Economic Development and Tourism has twenty four new parks under active consideration/planning/development. Of the twenty four new parks being considered by the Department, eleven (46%) are classified as Wayside parks and will be located along existing highways. Of these, seven (64%) are to be located in the Fort Smith region, with the balance (four parks) to be located along the Dempster highway in the Inuvik region. Significantly, the

majority of the new parks under active consideration by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism are to be located outside the Fort Smith region. This is a dramatic departure from past park development practices. By locating a significant proportion of new parks away from the road system the Department feels it will be able to give small and/or remote communities a means to attract tourists and an opportunity to capture some of the economic benefits associated with tourism. As one official noted, the "Department [of Economic Development and Tourism] is attempting to use parks to disperse the benefits of tourism across the NWT."<sup>10</sup>

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism's enthusiasm for its parks programme has been predicated on several planning assumptions:

First, the provision of services, such as parks, will attract tourists to the NWT;

Second, once in the NWT tourists will spend their vacation dollars on territorial goods and services; and

Third, a net economic benefit will result from attracting tourists and will lead to increased economic development in the NWT.

While these assumptions are the very under-pinnings of the parks development programme, Department has never rigourously tested the validity of them.<sup>11</sup> Constraints of time and space do not allow

the definitive testing the above assumptions, however an indication of their validity can be obtained by examining the net economic benefit generated by Blackstone Territorial Park.

Blackstone Territorial Park is one of the largest (1430 hectares) and newest (formally opened in the August of 1985) parks in the Territorial Park system. It was also the most expensive, consuming six years and over one (1) million dollars during planning and development. As a result Blackstone Park boasts 19 tent/R.V. sites, 20 kilometers of walking trails, a superintendent's residence, and a 14 by 24 foot log interpretive centre. Between 1988 and 1992 an additional \$300,000.00 will be spent to complete the park and provide a sewage lagoon, an outfitters' area, more trails, signs and park gates.<sup>12</sup> The scale of the expenditure and resultant facilities place Blackstone Park in a class by itself relative to every other park in the Territorial system. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism in general, and in particular the officials involved during planning and development are justifiably proud of the park. Some have even gone as far as terming Blackstone "the only real park in the Territorial system."<sup>13</sup>

Despite Blackstone's well developed facilities and location beside one of the only two highways into the southern NWT, during the summer of 1987 park utilization was a disappointing six hundred visitor (party) nights.<sup>14</sup> It has been estimated that each party spends approximately 3 days in Blackstone.<sup>15</sup> During each of the previous two seasons of operation utilization was approximately the

same.<sup>16</sup> In 1987, as in previous years, visitors to territorial parks were charged a flat user fee of five dollars per night. Despite collecting approximately nine thousand dollars in revenue from Blackstone Park visitors during the 1987 tourist season operating costs exceeded user fee revenues by a wide margin. Total operating costs in 1987 were more than \$36,000, and included a \$15,000/season park superintendent's contract, \$9,000 in park supplies, and \$7,500 in park officers salary.<sup>17</sup>

The ability of the Government of the NWT to enhance the economic development of the North by building territorial parks must be questioned given the above. The evidence from Blackstone suggests that Territorial Parks have not become tourist attractors. In addition, they do not generate enough revenue to allow the government to recoup operating costs. As a result it appears that the economic benefits associated with parks may come in the form of transfer payments (i.e. the spending of NWT tax dollars to keep the parks operational) rather than from the tourists bringing money into the NWT economy.

The ability of Blackstone and many other territorial parks to contribute to NWT economic development has been further impaired by the GNWT's failure to secure legal tenure to a significant portion of the Territorial Parks system. The GNWT's Territorial Parks Act clearly requires that "the land included in a territorial park ... be owned by the Territorial Government ...".<sup>18</sup> However, research done for the Deh Cho Regional Council confirmed that "the land for

Blackstone [and fourteen other Territorial] Park[s] ha[ve] not yet been transferred [from the federal to the territorial government, and thus Blackstone and the other parks] ... ha[ve] not been legally created under the Territorial Parks Act."<sup>19</sup>

In the Northwest Territories the the Queen in Right of Canada is the land holder, for the Government of the Northwest Territories to obtain legal tenure to any land it must apply to the Federal Cabinet for an Order in Council transferring the land to the GNWT. Fourteen of the parks (35%) within the Territorial Parks System have been developed by the GNWT even though it does not have legal tenure to the land upon which the parks sit.

The discovery of the GNWT's lack of tenure to thirty-five percent of territorial parks resulted in the Deputy Minister of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism directing that the collection of park user fees be discontinued in those Territorial parks to which the GNWT lacks legal tenure until title is secured.<sup>20</sup> The Deputy Minister took this extra-ordinary action after the Department of Justice counselled that the GNWT could not legally collect user fees from tourists in the parks it did not have tenure to. The Deputy Minister's directive it is expected to significantly reduce revenues from the Territorial Parks system during the 1988 tourist season. Thus, the parks system will become an even bigger drain on the economy of the Northwest Territories than it has historically been.



Having examined the Parks Programme of the of the GNWT some interesting observations can be made. First the Territorial Park System is viewed as a tool to be used to strengthen the tourism sector. Second, at the micro level the introduction of the NWT Tourism Strategy, which identifies the dispersion of tourism benefits and opportunities to the smaller more remote communities as one of its primary goals appears to have had an impact on the dispersion of tourism resources (i.e. parks). That is, Territorial Parks have increasingly been located in a greater variety of areas. The evidence of this being the fact that since the introduction of the Strategy a majority of the parks proposals under active consideration are to be located outside the Fort Smith region. Third, at the macro level the park development program has not been as economically successful as the GNWT had expected it would be.

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## **Chapter 6**

### **TOURISM AS AN ECONOMIC BASE:**

#### **THE UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS**

The object of this chapter is to examine extent or degree to which tourism planners and policy-makers in the NWT have questioned the assumptions, or premises, that underlie the GNWT's push toward tourism.

Clearly one of the most important tasks of planners involved in a development planning process is to ask questions, not only technical questions about the means of planning but also questions about the implications of pursuing one set of goals and strategies over another. From the perspective of rational comprehensive planning theory, planners must spend a great deal of time in the:

- \* Specification of Objectives;
- \* Development of Alternatives;
- \* Evaluation/Ranking of Alternatives;
- \* Selection of Alternative Courses of Action;<sup>1</sup>

If these planning stages, phases, or activities are not completed one has to ask whether planning, in its best, most complete, and most powerful sense has occurred.

As chapter 3 noted, the NWT Tourism Strategy is the only document that outlines the GNWT's policy regarding tourism development policy. The Strategy uses the statement "tourism is a desirable industry for the Northwest Territories; and, its opportunities should be dispersed throughout the Northwest Territories and not to just a few large centres" as its point of departure for discussing tourism development policy.<sup>2</sup> However, the Strategy does not provide a rationale as to why, or under what conditions tourism development is 'desirable'. An extensive review of Department of Economic Development and Tourism files and interviews with key policy and planning officials failed to highlight evidence that the validity to the "tourism is a desirable industry" assumption had ever been questioned or tested. Instead, all sources provided statements affirming the desirability, and therefore the suitability, of tourism as a means of economic development for the NWT generally, and for its small and more remote communities in particular.<sup>3</sup> A staff person with a consulting firm assisting the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in developing tourism in the NWT, noted that in her experience the Department never questioned whether tourism was in fact an appropriate vehicle to 'piggy back' territorial economic development on.<sup>4</sup> Quite the contrary, the consultant reported that it was apparent from the outset of her dealings with the GNWT that "one of the [Government's] assumptions was the need to increase employment [in the NWT] dramatically, and [that] tourism was the answer; part of the quick fix!" The consultant went on to point out that Government officials had decided that "tourism was going to be the number one

[economic development] band-aid" for the NWT.<sup>5</sup> From the point of view of some officials within the GNWT there was, apparently, no need to discuss whether or not tourism development was appropriate since the appropriateness of tourism as an economic development tool was self evident.

Despite the GNWT's certainty about the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of tourism as a tool of economic development, there have been some calls to thoughtfully and carefully examine the development of a tourism based economic strategy for the NWT. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism has been urged to investigate, evaluate, and rank alternative economic development vehicles prior to committing to full scale implementation of a tourism based economic development strategy. One example of this admittedly small body of thought was contained in a letter to the editor of a major N.W.T. newspaper. The author argued that:

Recently a great deal has been written about bringing tourism to the NWT in a greater scale as a viable alternative to the downturn in the economy.

I think the issue of expanding tourism should be given the same amount of thought and consideration as division [of the NWT] and land claims, for it can have the same lasting effect on the land, wildlife, people and way of life.

Perhaps the question of how to attract tourists should be readdressed to ask, "What type of tourism will bring in the needed dollars, but will have the least adverse effect on the land, wildlife, and people that live in the NWT? There are many types of

tourists, some make great guests and others should stay home.

I sincerely hope the Minister will heed a word of caution and temper his zest for the tourist dollar with a good dose of thought and projection to the future. No tourist dollar is ever free. The cost is usually an adverse impact on land, wildlife, people and the way of life.<sup>6</sup>

On the surface it may appear that the author of the above letter expressed concern solely about the possible negative ecological and socio-cultural implications of striving to create on tourism based economy. However, a different, and more important point is also being made. The author has implicitly asked the GNWT to consider its position carefully and be sure that it understands the issues involved prior to committing the economy to a particular course. Developing an understanding the issues surrounding tourism development goes well beyond a routine gathering of the facts and analyzing of the data. The letter's author is questioning whether the GNWT has really planned for tourism development or merely planned the development of tourism. The planning of tourism development is often limited to the technical tasks of the identifying, prioritizing, and selecting cost/benefit optimizing solutions to problems. At its worse the planning of tourism development is merely the rationalization or professionalization of bureaucratic decisions that have already been made. Planning for tourism development, on the other hand, focuses on the identification of the public's aspirations, expectations, and concerns and the integration of those into the policy and programme options that are developed.

In its enthusiasm to embrace what are seen to be the positive aspects of tourism the GNWT has spent little time or effort investigating and resolving the negative economic implications of developing a tourism based economy. The tourism industry, in general, is known to have high costs (owing largely to the labour intensive nature of the industry) and low returns to the owner/operators. This problem of low returns to owner/operators has already been documented in the NWT's tourism industry. For example, in 1980 it was been determined that the net income to sales ratio for sport fishing lodges in the NWT (which cater to a lucrative 'up-scale' segment of the tourism market) in 1980 was only 2%.<sup>7</sup> The low rate of return that appears to accrue to owners in the tourism sector combined with a high labour requirement may generate a situation in which the "new employment alternatives" that the GNWT is hoping tourism will generate will be low skill, low pay, low responsibility, seasonal or part-time, personal service (e.g. fishing guide) jobs.<sup>8</sup> In some circles in southern Canada and the United States "new employment alternatives" with skill, pay and employment duration profiles very similar to many tourism sector "employment alternatives" have been referred to, only half jokingly, as 'Mac-jobs'. Others argue better a job than no job. The salient point from a planning, policy, and programme point of view, however, is not which group is correct but that the GNWT appears to have given no consideration to, and entered into no discussion regarding, the possibility that a tourism based economy may only provide a limited range of employment opportunities for northern residents.



It appears that the GNWT has not asked a number of fundamental questions before deciding to identify tourism as the engine of future economic development for the NWT. The fundamental questions are:

- a) What type of employment opportunities should the people of the Northwest Territories have?
- b) Can tourism provide the desired opportunities?
- c) Can better or comparable opportunities be provided in industries other than tourism?

As argued and documented extensively above in Chapter 1, one of the primary reasons for pursuing tourism development is the GNWT's desire to create some diversity within, and add stability to, the NWT's economy. The development of a larger tourism sector will clearly provide some diversity to an economy that is fundamentally geared to primary resource production and the provision of government services. The ability of tourism to provide the economic stability so greatly desired by northerners is not nearly as certain.

There are a number of factors, which when combined, limit the ability of tourism to ensure economic stability within an economy. Not the least of these factors is the fact that "the tourism industry is becoming competitive".<sup>9</sup> Examples of the increased competitiveness within the global tourism sector are easy to find. During the mid 1980's, for example, "Canada's market share of world tourism ... declined ... in a world of increased competition".<sup>10</sup> In the past decade tourism has become an industry with a global marketplace. As a result the NWT, must compete for tourism

revenue not only with other Canadian areas, or areas in the USA, but with tourism destinations around the world. In addition, the commercialization of exotic or adventure travel has eroded the NWT's traditional and potential markets substantially and forced the NWT to compete with exotic adventure vacation destinations as diverse as Nepal and Antarctica. In such and environment factors such as a changes in transportation costs can have a significant impact on tourism visitation rates in the NWT. Taylor has noted, for example, that when air travel costs to and in the North rose during 1979-81 a sharp drop in the tourist visitation rates at Auyuittuq National Park on Baffin Island were immediately evident.<sup>11</sup>

Tourism is a unique export industry. Just as the NWT exports minerals, and other resource products so it exports impressions of the North through tourism. The GNWT, however, has explicitly recognized, acknowledged, or dealt with the potential implications of the commodity export reality of tourism. As an export commodity, tourism is linked to national or international markets which react to a wide variety of national and international economic developments and trends. The export nature of tourism means that it is subject to forces completely beyond the capability of people in the NWT to influence, let alone control. Thus, when factors such as oil prices, air fares, the external debts of some countries, currency fluctuations, high rates of unemployment, and budget deficits fluctuate so would the tourism market and thus the economic health of the NWT.<sup>12,13</sup> Thus, even if tourism were to become the dominant sector of the Territorial economy its export nature may leave the

NWT as vulnerable to boom/bust cycles as the current non-renewable resource based economy.

Chapter five highlighted some additional concerns with regard to tourism's ability to bring economic stability to the economy of the NWT. There is some evidence to suggest that public sector investment in support of tourism development (at least in the form of park infrastructure) returns limited, if any, economic benefits. Indeed, such public initiatives can become little more than defacto transfer payment programmes.

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## **Chapter 7**

### **CONCLUSION and IMPLICATIONS**

To this point in the thesis we have examined the Government of the Northwest Territories' rationale for seeking to expand the tourism sector of the NWT economy. We have briefly reviewed planning, policy, and programme theory and explicated a number of criteria which define good planning, policy-making and programme development. And we have examined, in some detail, several different aspects of the GNWT's tourism development planning efforts. It remains to summarize the findings of the thesis and explicate the planning implications/lessons that can be drawn from the experiences of planning tourism development in the NWT.

#### **Findings**

1. The GNWT, particularly the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, viewed tourism as an important and effective tool for diversifying and stabilizing the economy of the NWT. In addition, the GNWT appeared to have increasing expectations about economic and employment opportunities northern residents would have access to as a result of a greatly expanded tourism industry. Indeed, it could be said that the GNWT has focused its hopes for an improved economic future on tourism.

2. The quantity and quality of planning relevant information collected by the GNWT has been 'inadequate' for sound planning. Even basic information about the scope and depth of the NWT's tourism sector was not accepted by NWT staff planners as being useful or reliable for making policy and programme decisions. The planners had no information on the perceptions, desires and concerns NWT residents had about tourism.

3. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism recognized the shortage of data as a problem and has begun to address the problem. However, the Department's new data collection efforts have concentrated on the collection of marketing oriented information rather than information that has some relevance for policy and programme planning. While appropriate and accurate information alone will not ensure that development of sound policy and programme planning, on average the right type of accurate information will improve the policy and programme decisions made by planners. After all, the planning, policy and programme processes are information intensive and dependent.

4. Tourism development planning is controlled by GNWT bureaucrats. The goals and objectives of the NWT Tourism Strategy were drafted by technically oriented, southern trained, planners. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that the goals and objectives of the Strategy reflect the values and perceptions of its framers. The Strategy has implicitly assumed that tourism would have a positive cost-benefit ratio and that increased tourism would diversify and

stabilize the NWT's economic base. It also implicitly assumed that increased tourism would be well received in the small and more remote communities of the Northwest Territories.

5. The GNWT's only formal statement of tourism development policy (the NWT Tourism Strategy) was articulated in Community Based Tourism: A Strategy for the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry.

6. The GNWT used its Territorial Parks programme as a tool to foster increased tourism and spread its benefits across the NWT. The NWT Tourism Strategy produced a significant shift in the focus of the Territorial Parks programme. For the previous two decades 80 percent of all Territorial Parks had been created in the Fort Smith region. After the adoption of the Strategy a majority of all parks proposed for development have been located in regions other than Fort Smith. The change in focus was consistent with the NWT Tourism Strategy's major policy goal of spreading the benefits of tourism to the smaller communities of the NWT.

7. GNWT tourism planners and policy-makers unquestioningly accepted the notion of "tourism [as] a desirable industry for the Northwest Territories", without exploring the long term implications of the striving for a tourism dependent economy. No attempt was made to determine whether tourism would provide the sort of jobs and futures that northerners wanted/needed/deserved. In place of a careful examination of either the employment profile of



tourism economy or its ability to create jobs and economic opportunities there were been statements arguing that tourism was "compatible with many existing native skills" and that the sector would nicely compliment the arts/crafts, and hunting/fishing sectors of the NWT economy.

8. The GNWT did not recognize/acknowledge that tourism was/is an export industry and as such could be subject to many of the unpredictable fluctuations that the primary industries were/are noted for. Although the GNWT argued that tourism held considerable potential to "weather economic declines" the evidence marshalled to support the argument was very limited.

9. The Northwest Territories is an example of a jurisdiction in which development planning, at least with regard to tourism development, has not occurred. This is not to say that the GNWT has not done a great deal planning, policy-making and/or programme development. Clearly the GNWT has been active on all of these fronts, as this thesis has documented. However, the GNWT has pursued its planning with limited information and yet has attempted to emphasize the rational, positivistic, and technocratic side of planning. It has also removed its tourism development planning efforts from the complex socio-economic reality of the Northwest Territories. By doing so the GNWT corrupted its development planning process and denied its citizens the right to be involved in, and responsible for, determining their own future.

## **Planning Implications**

Lessons can be drawn from the NWT experience with tourism development planning that are be valid for development planners regardless of their location/situation.

The first lesson that development planners should learn, not so much from the particular case of tourism planning in the NWT but from the review of the literature, is that rationality is the cornerstone of good technical planning, policy, and programmes and thus of good development planning. The rationality required by development planners is not the linear rationality of the earliest explications of 'rational comprehensive' theory but the procedural rationality of the more recent versions of the theory which stress the desirability of a rational process.

The second lesson that development planners should learn is that the goals and objectives of a plan, a policy, and /or a programme should reflect the values and perceptions of its the people most directly affected. Assumptions of positive impacts, cost-benefit ratios, increased development and ready acceptance of the proposed polices and programmes should be avoided.

The third lesson that planners should learn from the particular case of tourism planning in the NWT is that models, no matter how sophisticated, are only models. They are representations of reality and not mirrors of it. As noted in Chapter 2 many models of

organizational decision-making have long seen planning, policies, and programmes as separate or discrete fields of study and activity. Viewing them as discrete fields has enabled individuals to conceptualize a very complex process and thereby come to a better understanding of organizational decision-making. As highlighted by the case of tourism planning in the NWT, in the context of development planning a 'process' view of planning, policies and programmes must be the basis of any definition of good planning, policy, and/or programmes. Planning, policy-making, and programme development cannot be properly, viewed as remaining separate from one another. Rather, planning, policy-making, and programme development are distinct ingredients that, when blended, produce unique and mutually supporting, whole - the development planning process. Planning, policies, and programmes are integral components of the development planning process. They form an integrated, procedurally rational whole in which the ends and the means are linked. Planning, policies, and programmes make development planning work, they are necessary preconditions to development planning. Should one or more be missing development planning cannot occur.

The fourth generalizable lesson to be learned from the tourism development planning experience of the GNWT is that sound development planning will not occur simply because planning, policy-making, and programme development activities have been integrated into a procedurally rational whole. That is, if the goals

and objectives articulated by planners do not faithfully represent the wants and needs people affected, the faithful translation of goals and objectives at the policy and programme level will not ensure development.

Finally development planning should enable the affected people to identify, understand and deal with the problems and conditions that confront them on a daily basis.

Development planning practitioners must come to view development planning as the cyclical process in which public involvement and continual feedback results in a rational and systematic planning process leading to the development of appropriate policies, and programmes. The three phases of the development planning process (planning, policy-development, and programme-design) represent different yet interrelated areas for study, research, and practice which planners may wish to pursue. The challenge for those interested in development planning in the tourism sector of the NWT or anywhere else, is to move away from the notion that it is adherence to a particular planning model that brings success and focus on the process of development planning.

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