THE PAST IS THE FUTURE
The Cultural Backdrop for Economic Development Activities in the Western Hudson Bay Region

Brock Junkin

ABSTRACT

The bulk of the inhabitants of the Hudson Bay basin are aboriginals and the culture characteristic of the aboriginal lifestyle does not always lend itself to traditional views on economic development. It is therefore important to develop a succinct understanding of the northern cultural context before embarking upon economic development initiatives. There is an ocean of bad experience over the past sixty years which bears testimony to the perils of not dovetailing culture with development policy. In the Western Hudson Bay region this cultural context flows from the subsistence harvest and this discussion paper seeks to set the backdrop for economic development initiatives.

INTRODUCTION TO THE HUNTER-GATHERER LIFESTYLE AND ECONOMY

The Aymara word for tomorrow is "qaruru" which is composed of two elements: "qaru" or right behind and "uru" day. Literally translated tomorrow is the day before or the past is the future. In order to know the future you must look to the past. A community without a past has no future. From a community economic development context this interesting vignette on language has two profound implications: the past can not be ignored as it shapes the future and our ability to communicate development objectives will be greatly imperiled in the absence of our understanding of the context and language of the people we seek to assist. Many a politician has harangued the Aymara by saying "let's look ahead and forget the past". This has led to 500 years of sterile development effort in the Altiplano of Bolivia and Peru as to "forget the past" is necessarily to forget the future because, according to the logic construct of the Aymara language and culture, the past is the future. Hence misunderstanding of this simple concept has and continues to stymie development effort. Further, "forgetting the past" ignores the strengths which are inherent in any culture and which have been built up as a consequence of millennia of trial and error in the environment to which the culture has adapted. To ignore these strengths is to weaken develop-

Brock Jukin, CEO and President, SAKKU Investments Corporation, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut.

ment efforts. Further it runs contrary to successful development experience (Brown; Government of Nunavut; Porter). It is therefore incumbent upon those who choose to aid in economic development to cultivate an intimate understanding of both the past and the culture of the focus of their effort so as to be able to (1) design appropriate programmes, (2) communicate effectively with the people involved and (3) ferret out the inherent strengths of the underlying social fabric. In this way relevant effort is expended, mutual understanding is reinforced and viable opportunities are recognized with economic progress resulting.

The societies of the circumpolar peoples and the Inuit of Nunavut and the First Nations of the Sub-Arctic are that of "hunter-gatherer" (Brody; Bone). That differs from most of the rest of the world which is essentially agrarian.[1] The difference between the two boils down to the level of manipulation of the environment. With the hunter-gatherer society there is reduced manipulation (Brody, p. 89). The society adapts to and lives with its surroundings. There is no need or want for the accumulation of the surpluses of the wealth maximizing model (Sahlins, p. 7). This contrasts sharply with an agrarian based society where there is strong intervention on the part of society in the ambient environment. The hunter-gatherer society is characterized by egalitarianism. "Pride in success is expressed through giving the results of the hunt to others" (Brody, pp. 118, 147; Sahlins, p. 7). It approaches Johnstone's "humanist" (p. 99) approach to profit. The agrarian society is characterized by wealth maximization. This "mechanistic" approach, as Johnstone would put it, stems from the risk of failure which faces an agrarian society. With the manipulation of the environment through agriculture comes vulnerability "to weather, rival plants, animals that could destroy crops, theft of the produce by other human beings" (Brody, p. 151). The farmer guards against this by accumulating wealth or building up inventory "for a rainy day". The altruistic nature of the predecessor hunter-gather society is stamped out or at least minimized when society diverges to agriculture and the institutions that it spawns (Taylor, 1982–1987).

An intimate appreciation of the hunter-gatherer lifestyle is therefore a prerequisite before we can successfully suggest economic modus operandi that will be viable in that context. Hunter-gatherers were essentially considered part of a primitive group of people lumped in with small scale agriculturalists and herders. The colonizers of these peoples thought them essentially inferior ... "an example of some earlier stage of evolution" (Brody, p. 126). The sophistication of their particular society and economy did not really receive significant attention until the 1968 Man the Hunter Conference which generated a great deal of subsequent interest and research. Among the seminal pieces spawned was the work by Marshall Sahlins "The Original Affluent Society" in his "Stone Age Economics". It was this essay that established the savoir-faire of this society and exposed the essential dichotomy between that of hunter-gatherer and agripastoralists. He and his peers found a surprisingly sophisticated society which eschewed material possessions in order to maintain their mobile lifestyle (Brody, p. 335) and provided a way of life characterized by virtues such as "kindness, generosity, consideration, affection, honesty, hospitality, compassion, charity," et al (Brody, p. 146) where people "ate well, lived longer and took better care of one another" (Brody, p. 144).

There is an important misconception on time spent in pursuing economic activity of which Sahlin's research disabuses us. To set the stage Sahlins quoted Herskovits who characterized the hunter gatherer society as being so mean and difficult and "precariously situated that only the most intense application makes survival possible" (Sahlins, p. 9). The conclusion one would be forgiven to reach was that barest survival was a full time occupation. In fact nothing could be further from the case. Sahlins discovered that in fact "the food quest is intermittent, leisure abundant..." (p. 9). After reviewing a host of literature and opinion he comes to the conclusion that a "mean of three to five hours per adult worker per day (is spent) in food production" (p. 15). Given the absence of other economic interests or desires the travails of the hunter-gatherer look pretty attractive compared to our own as we are caught up the maelstrom of consumerism.

Another misconception is the consideration that the hunter-gatherer existence is nomadic: no roots, always on the move. In fact, it is the southern existence that more closely resembles that of the nomad. True, hunter-gatherers move as the seasons change to take advantage of the bounty each geographic area furnishes. But they

move back with each cycle and the same routine of travel carries on over the centuries. They have a home and it is the land in the variety of its seasons. Those who have been spawned in the agripastoralist venue have no real home. They live for a period of time with their forebears and then strike out to points afield often changing venues of productive enterprise and geographic abode several times, to bear children who in turn leave to wander the globe. The hunter-gatherer, in contrast, remain largely confined to a small but productive geographic area, moving within the same according to the bounty of the seasons. Thus is the paradox and the inversion of the "settled hunters and the nomadic farmers" (Brody, p. 160).

Western society or civilization has another vain and self-congratulatory view of the hunter-gatherer society and that is that it is steeped in poverty. The essence of poverty, however, is not about the lack of material goods believe but rather it is about relative social status. Poverty is the "invention of civilization" (Sahlins, p. 16). Status in a hunter-gatherer society accrues from wisdom, skills and ability, i.e., elders and not through the accumulation of wealth which is seen for what it is, a burden.

The question of hunger is often associated with the hunter-gatherer existence. As mentioned earlier, there is the expectation that the votaries of this existence are in constant search of food to ameliorate quasi starvation. The question of the time involved to meet basic needs has already been adequately dispatched. Hunger as has been suggested in the review of time allocation is not often a factor in the society under examination. However, as the world has become increasingly civilized it is interesting to note that starvation becomes an increasing problem. As the evolution of culture increases, so does the level of hunger wrote Sahlins in 1972 (Sahlins, p. 16).

In concluding the hunter-gatherer backdrop it would be worthwhile to underscore once again the inversions in thinking which are necessary to appreciate the best application of economic development policies to pursue a hunter-gatherer activity. A summary of the hunter-gatherer societal frame as discussed follows:

- Movement: The life of the hunter gatherer is in fact less nomadic than those who come from the agrarian tradition. They move frequently but remain in a defined geographic area for their lives;
- Leisure: The hunter-gatherer does not live the subsistence life of toil as was thought up to the sixties. Indeed they have a life of relative leisure when compared to their agrarian cousins;
- Hunger: The spectre of hunger and starvation does not hang over the heads of hunter-gatherers. True it exists but it is isolated and is more common among their agrarian neighbours. Witness the Irish potato famine and so forth;
- Poverty: Poverty is a construct of "civilization" to define relative social status. The hunter-gatherer is an egalitarian society where status is earned through deed and wisdom. The hunter-gatherer seeks the necessaries of life and not the burden of possession;
- Assets: The agrarian based economy is driven by insatiable demand or want. This drives production, GDP, etc. up. The hunter-gatherer society modulates want to fit the environment and desires no more than the necessaries of life. As such the hunter-gatherer life style finds itself with an abundance of assets and no scarcity. Assets are a burden and are eschewed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF WILDLIFE TO ABORIGINALS

The role of wildlife in the aboriginal context is ubiquitous. It permeates their spirit, their health, their economy, their leisure, their culture and their very raison d'être. As will become evident, an aboriginal lifestyle in the absence of wildlife and its utilization is unimaginable. An understanding of the importance of this role is requisite before we can consider, comment upon and comprehend venues for its use.

In Their Psyche

The extent to which wildlife is important to the aboriginal peoples was best summed up by F.G. Speck in 1935 when he noted of the Naskapi:

> "To the Montagnais-Naskapi ... the animals of the forest, the tundra and the waters of the interior and the coast exist in a specific relation. They have become the objects of engrossing magico-religious activity, for to them hunting is a holy occupation."

The "magico-religious" activity manifests itself in (Berkes, pp. 22–23):

- education of the young and transmission of knowledge;
- perpetuation of social values such as sharing and reciprocity. The practice of distribution of subsistence harvests is wide spread. Sharing with up to six families is not uncommon.
- reproduction of culture which is embodied in action.

Usher added that "it is the relations among people that hunting and fishing generate, not simply the relations between man and wildlife, which are important to native people. Despite the continued northward advance of industrial society, most native northerners continue to regard traditional activities as essential to the maintenance of their social structure and institutions, their culture, and the solidarity and cohesion of their community and family lives (Usher, p. 11)." "Finally, native northerners universally understand that their aboriginal right to hunt and fish is the legal and political symbol of their special status in Canadian society. In a history shadowed by lost lands, cultural destruction and broken promises, the assertion of hunting rights is a means of exercising what is left of one's status" (Usher, 1982, p. 35).

Be it for livelihood or leisure, the harvesting of natural resources is the keystone of what it is to be aboriginal. It is inextricably linked with a high quality of life. The capture and utilization of country foods cements the spiritual, cultural and social essence of the Inuit and the First Nations and ensures the transfer of that essence to future generations. The self esteem associated with this activity could never be found in southern venues for economic advancement (Berkes, p. 27; Dragon, p. 35; Conference Board, p. IV; Notzke, p. 112; MacPherson, p. 6).

In Their Health

The consumption of country foods are the epitome of healthy living. They are free range, organic and do not suffer from injections of hormones or antibiotics, genetic modification or a month in the feed lot being fed nutrients of unknown origin. Further wasting diseases such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob are unknown to free ranging caribou populations. They are highly nutritious and safe to eat. Not only are levels of heart disease and diabetes reduced through their consumption but the very physical activity engendered in their harvest augments the health of the harvester. The harvest of wildlife is a matter of health as well as economics (Usher, pp. 10–11; Conference Board, p. IV).

With health comes enhanced ability to carry on the activities of life particularly including those in the economic sphere. A good supply of country foods improves the nutritional status of indigenous populations which in turn leads to increased labour productivity and hence increased wages or other wealth in the non-wage sector. Health and nutrition is an often neglected element of development economics and can be at the root of an aspect of the poverty trap as it can also be a way of breaking out of the poverty trap. Poor nutrition leads to poor health which dampens the ability to earn wages to buy the necessaries of life which in turn leads to poor nutrition and a further decline in health. So by ensuring that a vehicle exists to allow a society to feed themselves well, a strategy is invoked to lead that society out of the poverty trap just mentioned (United Nations 2000, p. 134).

In Their Security

The presence of a viable population of wildlife which allows Aboriginal peoples to carry on traditional activities of hunting secures not only their culture and raison d'être but also provides for economic security as well. As Usher (p. 11) notes "Wildlife, in their perception (aboriginal peoples'), is also important for some less tangible reasons. One is security. Native people have seen many economic booms and busts, and know that even in the best of times they are the last hired, first fired and get the lowest paid jobs. Consequently, wage employment, even though people may want it, is not considered a permanent or secure source of livelihood. The land, on the other hand, provides exactly that anchor of security because, properly cared for, it will yield food forever". Even after decades of attempts to introduce and enhance the employment portion of a mixed economy, the land based economy continues to be the most reliable portion together with being the cultural stitching in the gusset that holds together the aboriginal society (Berkes). Given the remoteness of Hudson Bay settlements in general, conventional employment is not likely to supplant a land

based economy very quickly. Further the political leadership sees a strong role for the land-based economy.[2] Finally with a rapidly expanding population and a government that has largely levelled off in terms of its expansion, the prospects for a wage-based economy grow dimmer still. Hence, the importance of wildlife to the body as well as the soul.

The northern peoples realize that with wildlife comes security of body, soul and culture but in order for the security to prevail, wildlife needs to be nurtured and husbanded. Thus the sustainability of the resource is at the forefront of any initiative to develop it by either aboriginals or non-aboriginals. This propensity forms the basis for all northern land claims negotiations (Notzke, 1994, p. 111).

In Their Economy

The traditional economy of hunter-gatherer society revolved around the basics of food and shelter. The balance of the time was spent with family and friends and in leisure activities (Sahlins). In the past century and particularly the past fifty years in the north there has been an evolution to a mixed economies (Usher and Weihs, 1990) as successive governments encouraged Inuit and First Nations peoples to centralize their activities in a variety of settlements. In this way the government could more easily provide support services such as medical and education (Berkes & Berkes, p. 21). However, the infrastructure in those communities was relatively modest and did not lend itself to large scale wage based development (ibid.). The predictions that the land-based economy would be supplanted by a wage economy did not materialize (George & Preston, 1987). Wildlife harvesting continues to represent a substantial portion of current economic endeavour, particularly in the smaller more remote communities (Conference Board, p. III). Domestic utilization of their wild resources continues to be "the most reliable sector of the mixed northern economy as well as the main source of cultural satisfaction and social prestige" (Notzke, 2000). It becomes incumbent upon society then to build on what strengths existed in the community. This is in accord with current general theory in economic development (Brown; Porter). A further advantage of building on strengths in the northern context as outlined in the foregoing is that this strategy either displaces expensive imported goods through the capture and consumption of the fruit of the land (Conference Board, p. IV) or it also imports dollars from the outside by selling product externally and attracting outside dollars to the region. So there is a minimal investment in human capital to produce immediate results. Berkes and Berkes (p. 27) put it succinctly as follows:

> "The continuing contribution of traditional wildlife harvesting activities to community income and employment is an objective for both community sustainability and community economic development. Alternative views of development articulated by aboriginal people favour a mixed economy, not as a transition to the ideal of a wage economy, but as an arrangement that can persist in a culturally and environmentally sustainable fashion."

The pursuit of the strategy outlined above has the further advantage of being conducive to small scale non-regimented enterprise which fits nicely within the context of small northern communities.

In the design of economic strategies in the northern context and the assessment of their viability it would be a mistake to overlook the following attributes of the existing economy as identified by the Conference Board of Canada (p. III):

(a) A strong commitment by aboriginal communities to the notion of sustainable development;
(b) A collective approach in the sharing of economic wealth. In the case of harvesting this means that it is expected that harvested food will be shared within the family and community;
(c) A collective approach to socio-economic development. Economic development projects that are seen as "community-owned" tend to be preferred over those that are individually owned;
(d) Respect for traditional knowledge. A considerable amount of knowledge has been handed down from generation to generation. Maintaining elders' knowledge is an important ingredient in the preservation of aboriginal land-based activities;
(e) Harvesting and a connection to the land as a form of leisure or livelihood are strongly associated with a high quality of life;

(f) Harvesting is to be foremost for subsistence purposes not for commercial purposes. Any commercial wild food activity can be pursued upon reassurance that the supply for subsistence purposes is not threatened;
(g) The production of furs should take place in the animals' natural environment. Ranching is not an acceptable alternative to trapping.

Observations "b" and "c" are particularly relevant as we search to draw a conclusion about the best venue to launch an economic initiative.

Further the Northern Eden (p. 34) project made the following observations to support those of the Conference Board of Canada:

(i) Commercial use of wildlife provides a venue for economic development while honouring the traditional aboriginal way of living;
(ii) The occupation of hunting and gathering already plays a major role in the lives of northern residents;
(iii) Renewable resources already form the economic base for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal northerners and this dependence determines the fate of many of their remote communities;
(iv) Commercial hunting is a strategy that is at one with northern culture, the existing economy and sustainability.

Finally the strategic role of the commercial hunting has been seen as bulwark against the collapse of sealing together with the decline in the fur industry (Notzke, p. 136) although that collapse and decline appears to have reversed recently.

In developing a strategy to augment the commercial utilization of the land and its bounty, care needs to be taken to ensure that a process of "overcapitalization" does not occur. It would be politically tempting to build a meat plant in every community. Such a foolhardy policy would result in untenable exploitation of the resource until it no longer became viable. The cry about jobs would weaken the political will to halt the commercial hunts before it was too late. Witness the collapse of the East coast fishery in the face of compelling scientific evidence that it should have been dampened much earlier. Capital investment should only be made where it makes sense and with low enough capacity which would not threaten the resource (Dragon, pp. 37–38).

A final word about the northern economy and the potential for the commercial endeavour. An investment in the commercial arena might well also act in a secondary role of moving to break the classic poverty trap, i.e., the people are poor so there is no reason to invest. There is no investment, therefore people are poor. An investment in, say, a commercial harvest is likely in some humble way to stimulate other sorts of investment which in and of themselves will spin off future employment and further future investment. For example with an extra 50 people in a community of 800 working, even for only four to six weeks a year it might provide the critical mass for, say, a coffee shop or a small engine repair shop and so forth. Humble as this may be its impact would not be insignificant in a small isolated northern community.

In The Ecology

The aboriginal view on the role of caribou and by extension wildlife and their environment in general can best be summed up with the words of Peter Green:

> "Conservation is ensuring that if we take caribou, there will be caribou the next year and the year after that. The same for anything else. This applies to all uses of the land: if it is used and enjoyed now, it must be left and preserved so that it will be there for the next year and for future years."

This is not just rhetoric but transcends the psyche of aboriginal peoples as has been alluded to previously. The concern expressed here is further clarified through the work of Claudia Notzke when she noted that "the sustainability of wildlife and its habitat is one of the most important determinants of the manner in which aboriginal people would like to see other renewable and non-renewable resources developed, by both native and non-native interests. This concern is also at the core of all northern land claims negotiations (p. 111)."

It needs to be understood that the actual translation into action of these sentiments in terms of the actual resource management tends to cause discomfort among aboriginals, particularly the elders. Resource management implies superiority over the resource which is at odds of the tradition of partnership with the environment which is at the heart of aboriginal culture (Notzke, p. 2). This discomfort is further com-

plicated by early experience on Southampton Island as alluded to in the following passage by Fikret Berkes:

> ...the commercialization of a subsistence hunt is probably one of the better documented mechanisms by which resources come to be over harvested. Incentive to create surplus breaks down the self-limiting principle of a subsistence operations, and together with it, the customary laws that regulate hunter-prey relations.... Commercialization of caribou hunting to serve the needs of over-wintering whalers at the turn of the (last) century and commercialization of musk-ox hunting have been linked to the near-disappearance of various populations (Berkes, 1981, p. 171).

In Tourism

The connection between wildlife and tourism is underlined to a reasonable degree by several "exit survey" studies which have been performed in the last decade. They universally conclude that wildlife viewing ranks tops among tourists to North America (Notzke, 2000, p. 42). This interest coupled with the special knowledge and rapport which the Inuit and First Nations peoples have developed with the wildlife over the past 10,000 years would suggest significant economical potential in developing the tourism potential of wildlife. Of course, there are two rather contradictory venues in this regard and these include viewing and sports hunts. Some operators claim that there is as much money to be made with simply viewing wildlife as there is in harvesting the same for sport and it is unintrusive and sustainable. This assertion is questionable, however, as one caribou hunt will generate $5,000 plus the attendant expenses, accommodation, et al and a polar bear hunt $25,000 plus similar attendant expenses. And so on for other species. With wildlife viewing, there is only the attendant expenses which are left behind not the big ticket fees. Further sports hunts tend to target males whose removal have little impact on population.

The interest in the sports hunt is also driven by the decline in available hunts in other parts of the world. The money spent directly on the hunt tends to stay in the communities while expenditures on more passive forms of tourism tend to gravitate to southern based concerns and so the money doesn't stick to the north to the same extent.

Finally, tourism can be a double edged sword. The complaint is often made that tourism encourages spectacle, fly-in entrepreneurs, and low paid servitude by the employees of the tourism industry with no opportunity for real personal advancement. On the other hand, with minimal training, most First Nations and Inuit in the north can adapt to this industry which is so close to their lifestyle in terms of demand on time and knowledge of the product.

Sports hunts are generally contracted out through local hunters' and trappers' organizations (HTO). They are the ones that control the resource which they issue in the form of tags. Wildlife viewing, on the other hand, tends to be run by non-natives and the income generated often moves southward.

In Subsistence Harvesting

As has already been underlined, the act of the pursuit of game provides more to the hunter and his/her family than nourishment for the body. It also nourishes the soul and the use of the word subsistence harvesting is meant in the broader sense of an act the ministers to the whole person and not just his or her bodily requirements. It should also be noted that a subsistence lifestyle implies no negative connotations. It in fact suggests a high quality of life if we consider an abundance of time spent with family, friends and leisure activities to be relevant to social good (Shalins).

Subsistence harvesting remains important if not central to most northern communities and particularly to those ones which are smaller and more isolated (Treseder, p. 60). Further, given the mixed nature of our economy, subsistence has come to include harvesting activities surplus to an individual's needs which are then used to barter for needed commodities. It is perhaps useful in this context to look at an aboriginal definition of subsistence:

> Subsistence in our interpretation means we eat and we take for our own purposes. At the same time, subsistence could be interpreted as that which you take but you then exchange to survive. Does that conflict with harvesting for commercial purposes? I don't think so, though your interpretation is different from ours. (Charlie Watt, Senate of Canada, address-

> ing a panel of the National Symposium on the North, quoted in Keith and Saunders 1989, p. 78)

The subsistence harvest raises the question as to its long-term viability given a significantly expanding population in Aboriginal communities in general and in Nunavut, second only to Alberta. It would be profitable in this instance to examine the study of Berkes and Fast who concluded that it is possible to have a stable resource base in communities with high population growth. This stability is occasioned by a stable or declining number of direct participants in the harvest (Berkes & Fast, 1996).

The subsistence harvest then is more than eking out an existence. It represents a holistic activity which contributes socially to the esprit de corps of the individual and his/her family unit. Further it can include generating a surplus to immediate requirements so as to allow the consumption of other economic goods made necessary by modern society.

In Commercial Harvesting

When the activity of harvesting wildlife transcends the broader definition of the subsistence harvest as discussed above a certain amount of cautious discussion emerges. As has already been alluded to, many in the aboriginal community, particularly the elders, are uncomfortable with the notion of resource management which must necessarily accompany any harvest but particularly a commercial harvest. The range of views on harvesting begins to diverge at this juncture.

Those in favour of the commercial harvest of wildlife harvest point to several features of these activities which lend themselves to northern environs as follows:

- The commercial harvest is really just an evolution of the subsistence harvest and therefore, fits within the four corners of the traditional activities of aboriginal peoples and enhances all of the intangible features which augment lifestyles such as self-esteem, cultural promotion, role modelling within families, maintenance of traditional land skills and so forth. Commercial activity also subtly introduces certain western disciplines such as "good" business practices which encourage some respect for the bottom line. It may be argued that "respect for the bottom line" may be a bad thing in that it might encourage over-capitalization, undue pressure on the resource, short term thinking and so on. Certainly the current dose of Enronitis in the world capital market is testimony to this criticism along with a host of other examples. On the other hand it could be argued that the ancestral ties of the Inuit and First Nations to the land and its bounty mitigates against the short-term thinking of capitalism and introduces at least a medium term view of resource exploitation. Perhaps there is a reciprocal exchange of values. Both aboriginal practice and western practice might both be enhanced through this synergy.
- A second factor invoked in favour of the commercial harvest is its provision of cash income to support a lifestyle that has come to rely on imported goods, be they only fuel for heat and transport, shelter, electricity capital equipment and supplies to pursue the subsistence hunt.
- The commercial harvest fits within the seasonal cycle of the aboriginal lifestyle. It is an extension of what has been going on for time immemorial and thus does not invoke a wrenching break with the past.
- Wildlife management is another mantra cited in support of this activity and has particular relevance to the people of Coral Harbour, as an example. One of the dangers faced by this very successful population of caribou is that it will over-populate and "crash". The residents of Coral Harbour are very sensitive to this possibility as they are to the possibility of over-harvest as expressed by their continuing interest in population survey. So there is found a certain schizophrenic divide in the attitude of the Salimmiut[3] who both are reluctant to over-harvest and yet recognize the need to harvest at a commercial scale to maintain the herd so that it is available for the subsistence harvest.
- Finally the prosecution of the commercial harvest results in the bringing into traditional aboriginal areas export dollars. In a land suffering a substantial "trade deficit" this is an important factor to be borne in mind.

As can be expected in any activity of human endeavour, there is always opposing opinion. An appreciation of both sides of any question allows movement forward in a productive fashion while at the same time allowing education to take place on both sides of the argument. Following

are the more salient features of the argument which casts some shadow over any commercial harvest of wildlife.

- From a traditional perspective among aboriginal peoples it is simply wrong to take more of a resource than is needed to provide for one's own well being together with that of the immediate family and community.
- Pressure is increased on a resource which is needed for subsistence hunting. To a certain extent this is obviated through good monitoring but all the same it is an important element in opposing thinking.
- Commercialization of any renewable resource can lead to over capitalization which in turn leads to greater pressure on the resource with obvious negative impact. One needs to look no further than the east coast fishery in Canada to determine the negative effects of (government led) over-capitalization.
- The resource is not reliable and natural cycles may intervene to shut the harvest down. This would disrupt established markets which would be difficult to rebuild as consumers, especially high end consumers, want stability of supply. The question is raised, then, should there be any investment in an industry with known cyclical deficiencies.
- The animal rights lobby can never be discounted from any discussion on matters of concerning wildlife utilization in any venue. Almost forty years of a collapsed sealing industry pursuant to the actions of the lobby should be a sobering reminder that public relations and humane, respectful treatment of the resource need to be high on any agenda in pursuing a commercial harvest of this ilk.

A review of both sides of the question allows the proponents in the harvest and those that support the same via indirect means to modulate their activities so as to steer a middle course. In this manner it is hoped that the resource will be best utilized. The foregoing underlines the comments of Sadie Popovitch-Penny who noted that "the most vital ingredient of the commercial enterprise is that it is both based in and controlled by the community ... local control over the commercial hunt is an important principle which must be maintained if the hunt is to succeed" (quoted in Keith and Saunders, 1989, p. 61). Such a participatory approach allows a broader range of views to reach the stage of discussion and thus a more viable pursuit of a commercial hunt is likely.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, an economic development effort in the Western Hudson Bay drainage basin needs to first consider the needs of the indigenous peoples of this vast area. This means a clear and deep understanding of the cultural morass of both Inuit and First Nations people. Through this understanding and with the full participation of all effected parties, economic development policies can be developed that will truly develop the region in a holistic sense.

NOTES

1. Agrarian which progressed to industrial, technological and so forth.
2. Supported by opening remarks of Paul Kaludjak at the June 2002 Economic Conference in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut.
3. Residents of Coral Harbour.

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