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Item Type	event;event
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Download date	2024-08-09 06:03:30
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/49319

Going against the “floe”: Power relations and cruise tourism development at Icy Strait Point

Abstract

Port development has been dominated by complex and often unequal power relations. Drawing on stakeholder theory and blue economy frameworks, this paper explores the tangled relationship between ports, host communities and cruise companies through the case study of Icy Strait Point. Icy Strait Point is a Indigenous tourism enterprise facing challenges emerging from tourism development and pressure from cruise companies to shift power away from the community. Key findings are discussed in relation to issues of access, exclusion, and commodification of Indigenous culture while balancing social and economic opportunities as a cruise destination.

Keywords: Indigenous, stakeholder, power, cruise, tourism

Introduction

Cruise tourism can offer social and economic benefits to a port community such as empowerment, improved education and facilities and promotion of local culture (Dowling & Weeden, 2017). However, development of cruise tourism also has the potential for adverse consequences including loss of community coherence, degradation of local culture, growth in crime, loss of access to facilities for local people (Newsome et al., 2013), unequal distribution of economic impacts and environmental pollution (Römhild-Raviart et al., 2019).

Development of cruise ports in Alaska has been dominated by complex and often unequal power relations between cruise companies and local communities. Cruise companies have a significant impact on a local community by choosing whether to visit or to avoid it (London & Lohrmann, 2014). Small, developing ports often lack the resources to challenge the normative practices of large cruise corporations in coercing small communities into development. Some scholars have noted the complex web of inter-relationships specifically within cruise destination development (Adams, 2010; Cerveny, 2004, 2005; Lester & Weeden, 2004; London & Lohrman, 2014; Weeden, 2015). This includes the power cruise companies can exert as multi-national corporations on small, developing countries (see Johnson, 2002; Lester & Weeden, 2004), including the use of purchasing power, threats to discontinue use of the port, control of access to tourism opportunities (Clancy, 2017; McKee & Chase, 2003) and the unequal distribution of benefits within the destination community (Cerveny et al., 2020; Klein, 2011). Although cruise companies occasionally build and develop port infrastructure (Pallis et al., 2014) and provide

employment and opportunities for entrepreneurial development; there is typically little investment and benefits returning to the local community (see Brida et al., 2012; Larsen et al., 2013; McCaughey et al., 2018). More often power is exerted on a destination to develop and build or expand infrastructure for a new terminal, with the cost borne by local authorities or public-private partnerships and cruise companies rarely participate or assume the risks (Clancy, 2017; London & Lohmann, 2014). Private concessions and agreements between a cruise terminal and cruise lines is common in other regions including the Mediterranean (Gui & Russo, 2011). Ports are also often positioned to compete with each other and to offer more favorable market conditions to cruise lines over other ports. For example, in the early 1980's Haines removed docking fees for cruise ships to be more attractive as a port, and this was successful in drawing at least one cruise company away from Skagway (Lynn Canal News, 1982).

More research is needed on understanding of the power or control exerted by the cruise sector in relation to cruise destinations and how this affects port development. Few studies examine this beyond Cerveny (2004, 2005), Clancy (2017) and London (2014; 2017). Cruise companies own or manage cruise terminals, or seek financial or incentives to call into a port. For example, of the 60 main cruise ports in Europe, four are directly owned by a cruise line, three are partially owned by a cruise line and the remainder are concessions agreed between the ports and cruise lines (London & Lohmann, 2014). A long term concession with a port benefits a cruise line by securing berthing priorities, control costs and increase satisfaction of passengers by not requiring tenders to access the destination (London & Lohmann, 2014). However, some scholars criticize the incentives and argue they are subsidizing the cruise lines (Clancy, 2017; Peisly, 2013).

In Southeast Alaska, as in other regions in the Arctic and Australia, Indigenous communities are looking to tourism to shape and guide the future (see Cerveny et al., 2020; James et al., 2020; Lemelin et al., 2012; Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019). Tourism can foster and sustain cultural heritage, including preserving Indigenous culture, knowledge and traditions (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019) but this presents challenges in relation to the commodification and commercialization of culture and impacts on the community. Several cruise ports in Alaska, including Icy Strait Point [ISP] and nearby Sitka and Skagway, have a rich Indigenous culture and heritage yet there are few studies on how the development of cruise tourism has impacted the indigenous communities who live and work in these ports, and how the influx of visitors has impacted traditions and the sharing of

knowledge. In many ports, the Indigenous perspective is silent and little is known if or how Indigenous communities benefit or are impacted by the cruise industry.

Alaska is the 4th most visited cruise destination globally (Cruise Lines International Association [CLIA], 2019a) with sustained growth over the last two decades. The cruise sector in Alaska is worth an estimated \$1.4 billion and accounts for 22,477 jobs through 5.65 million passenger visits (CLIA, 2019c). Prior to COVID-19 the cruise sector was the fastest growing sector of the global tourism industry (Papathanassis, 2020). New ports are needed to meet increasing demand for varied and new cruise itineraries to retain and attract customers (Rodrigue & Notteboom, 2013), particularly as the cruise industry matures and the highly competitive nature of the sector (Weeden et al., 2011).

Similarly, pre-COVID Southeast Alaska had enjoyed increased demand and development for cruise tourism. In this region in 2019, cruise tourism accounted for 90% of tourist arrivals and 1.33 million visitors. This was an increase of 14% over the previous year (Rain Coast Data, 2020), and notably 28% of these arrivals visited the Tlingit village of ISP (Rain Coast Data, 2019). Prior to the pandemic, projections indicated ISP would see an increase of 114% from 2018 to 2020 in cruise visits with 272,327 passengers visiting, placing it as the fastest growing of all ports in Alaska (Rain Coast Data, 2019). ISP of particular interest as it is privately owned and operated as an Indigenous enterprise.

More research is needed on Southeast Alaska, as it the most significantly affected region by cruise tourism. This paper builds on the work of Cerveny (2004; 2007; et al., 2020); Hillmer-Pegram (2016) and Wanasuk and Thornton (2015), who have highlighted the specific issues facing Icy Strait Point. This paper moves the literature forward by examining the impacts of the pier expansion at Icy Strait Point. The expansion will result in enormous political, social and economic changes for the Tlingit Indigenous community, and this paper illuminates the complex relationship and power struggles between cruise companies and local communities, particularly in relation to the challenges encountered by Indigenous peoples. Indigenous tourism is increasingly being recognized as providing opportunity for Indigenous peoples for empowerment and independence with benefits related to social, cultural political, environmental and economic purposes (Higgins-Desboilles et al., 2014).

Issues of stakeholder relationships in cruise tourism have been explored in relation to the Caribbean (Lester & Weeden, 2004; Weaver & Lawton, 2017), New Zealand (London et al., 2017), the Mediterranean (Brida et al., 2012) and Antarctica (Liggett et al., 2010). However, there is a gap in the research on applying this to Alaska, which has seen sustained growth and development for decades in relation to cruise tourism, but with little critical analysis. Moreover, there is little research exploring the relationship of Indigenous people with cruise tourism in Alaska.

Literature Review

This paper draws on stakeholder theory to assist in unravelling the complex relationship between the many groups affected by activities and development at ISP. Stakeholder theory emerged as a response to understand how capitalism ethics, sustainability and social responsibility influence thinking about development (Freeman, 2010). A stakeholder may be defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Stakeholder theory acknowledges there is a relationship between businesses and the individuals and groups affected by decision-making, and aims to facilitate a process where all voices may be heard in order to minimize problems (Freeman, 2010).

Cragg and Greenbaum (2002) takes this definition further by suggesting stakeholders are individuals and collectivities whose interest can be affected both negatively and positively, although it is rarely so binary in relation to tourism development. For tourism to be successful, all stakeholders must be able to share their voices, opinions and concerns to allow for collaboration and community participation (Eyisi et al., 2020). Ultimately, collaboration between stakeholders increases the likelihood of implementing policies and actions to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism in a community (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999). However, power relations can impact emerging community-based tourism settings, causing conflict when there is a dominant industry (Reed, 1997). At ISP, the process appears to not be collaborative, with power exerted by the cruise industry and port development entities, and this may be explained by political economy frameworks particularly in relation to the blue economy. The blue economy (Smith-Godfrey, 2016) provides a framework for situating the globalized nature and mobility of cruise tourism, and the intersectionality of social, economic and environmental impacts on communities connected with the ocean. Schutter and Hicks (2019) note the triple bottom line within the blue

economy with benefits for a community balanced between economic growth, environmental sustainability and social equity. This framework underpins the discussion of ISP, and serves as a lens through which ISP can be critically analyzed.

Key stakeholders in this context are Huna Totem Corporation, Hoonah Indian Association, Hoonah City Council (which represents local businesses and residents), and cruise companies calling in at ISP. Huna Totem Corporation [Huna Totem] is a for-profit entity with 1360 shareholders all of whom have an Indigenous connection to Hoonah and the Glacier Bay region (Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). Native corporations are a legacy from the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 to settle land claims and provide economic opportunity through both village and regional corporations (Yang, 2006). Huna Totem Corporation owns and operates the current cruise port and adjacent land, and make most of their revenue from managed investments including stocks, bonds, real estate and venture capital projects in Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Seattle (Cervený, 2007). The stated mission of Huna Totem is “To advance the economic aspirations and culture of the Xuna Kaawu through business excellence, sustainable economic growth, leadership, and education” (Huna Totem Corporation, 2014, p. 1).

The Hoonah Indian Association [HIA] was chartered in 1939 to acknowledge the Tlingit as a federally recognized tribe (Hoonah City Council, 2020). Managed by a council of seven elected members, the HIA is the tribal government and manage the legal, political and economic affairs for the Tlingit tribe, with the goal to protect, preserve, enhance and promote Tlingit traditional values, culture and subsistence resources (HIA, 2020). The HIA were instrumental in developing the museum and interpretive aspects at the cannery (Cervený, 2007), which is now the main building within the port and houses the museum.

Hoonah City Council represents the local residents and businesses and is comprised of an elected board and mayor (City of Hoonah, 2020). The council is involved with port development through regulatory processes and administration of permits and land leases for activities and development, and also fund or subsidize the infrastructure within the region. The city of Hoonah receives a share of the State of Alaska Commercial Passenger Vessel Excise Tax, which at \$5 per passenger generated \$688,980 in 2016 (Sheinberg Associates, 2016) and receives funding from Huna Totem for an additional \$5 per passenger head tax which in 2017 generated \$722,575. The city also benefits financially in direct contributions from ISP, and in 2017 that amounted to an

additional \$846,946 spent locally (Icy Strait Point, 2018). In 2018 there were 800 residents in Hoonah, with 55.87% of the population identifying as American Indian & Alaska Native (United States Census, 2018). Huna Totem and the ISP enterprise is a major source of employment for city residents. In addition to the lucrative head tax, the city also receives a sales tax which in 2017 was \$606,025, generating a total economic contribution of \$4.3 million (Icy Strait Point, 2018). Cruise tourism has given a much needed boost to Hoonah in terms of investment, employment and tourist spending.

Several cruise companies visit ISP as part of an Alaskan itinerary. There are 16 different cruise lines who regularly visit: Azamara, Carnival, Celebrity, Crystal, Cunard, Disney, Holland America, Hurtigruten, Norwegian, Oceania, Princess, Regent Seven Seas, Royal Caribbean, Seabourn, Viking, and Windstar. There are also several boutique and expedition cruise companies and charters that also visit, but this paper is focused on mass market ocean cruising. The Alaska season is from mid-May until the end of September. As an emerging new destination, ISP is very popular with passengers and provides a competitive edge for cruise companies who include it on their itineraries.

Research context

Icy Strait Point is an Indigenous tourism enterprise which is owned and operated as a subsidiary of Huna Totem as a privately-owned cruise port in Southeast Alaska. The port includes a restored 1912 salmon cannery housing an interactive heritage museum focusing on local fishing and Indigenous history, 12 shops, 3 restaurants featuring locally caught fish, a zip-line, bear viewing platform and a boardwalk trail. Privately-owned cruise ports are rare, and even more unusually, the port is owned and operated by and for the local Indigenous community, the Huna Tlingit. The port is 1.6 miles from Hoonah, which is recognized as the largest Tlingit village in Southeast Alaska (HIA, 2018). The Tlingit was one of several tribes who have lived in this region of the Pacific Northwest prior to European contact (Schurr et al., 2012). Tlingit culture is incorporated in all aspects of the port, and all guides and presenters share Tlingit history and stories (AIANTA, 2018). As part of training, all guides receive two days of cultural training, including Tlingit protocols and introductions, the history of the community, and important aspects for Alaska Natives including the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

(IANATA, 2018). Hoonah is situated on Chichagof Island, which is accessible only by air or by sea, limiting tourism development. Cruise tourism has been developing and in 2015 over 150,000 cruise passengers visited ISP on 76 port calls (Sheinberg Associates, 2016).

One of the main attractions for cruise passengers to Southeast Alaska is Glacier Bay National Park [Glacier Bay]. Significantly, Glacier Bay is the ancestral homeland of the Tlingit and Hoonah is the first recorded permanent settlement in this area (Goldschmidt & Haas, 1998). The park was created through the Antiquities Act in the US in 1925 (Rumore, 2012), when the region was expropriated by the US federal government for conservation. The park was further expanded in the 1980's with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which was bitterly opposed by local communities (Hunn et al., 2003). The federal regulatory nature of Glacier Bay is also interwoven with resentment from some Tlingit and viewed as forced expulsion from their land by colonization (Hunn et al., 2003), with Tlingit prohibited from subsistence activities.

In 1996, Huna Totem purchased land encompassing the port and adjacent Spasski Creek area, with the intention to develop the site for tourism and eventually became Icy Strait Point. Huna Totem sought exclusive partnerships within the cruise industry as early as 1999 (Cervený, 2007), with the first large cruise ship arriving in Icy Strait Point in 2000.

As traditional resource-based employment such as logging and timber jobs started to decline in the early 2000's, tourism was viewed by many as an opportunity to provide economic stability (Cervený, 2007). Prior to 2004, there was very few tourism activities on the island. This is in contrast to nearby busy cruise ports Juneau, Ketchikan and Skagway, which at that time were seeing robust growth and visitor numbers. The prevalence of several cruise lines in the region, and few alternative revenue opportunities for ISP highlights the imbalanced power relationship that tends to favor cruise companies (Weeden, 2015). An example of this is how Haines sought out cruise tourism in the late 1990's. Similar to ISP, the town transitioned towards tourism, focusing on attracting cruise ships and eventually invested \$1.5 million to modify the dock in 1994 to accommodate larger cruise ships (see Cervený, 2004). Haines was seeing substantial increase and dependency for local businesses on cruise visitors and as a result local residents and wildlife were negatively impacted, and eventually protests and demands for dialogue with the cruise lines were led by a coalition of environmental groups (see Cervený, 2004). The town imposed a 4% tax on tours and in 1999 chose to limit the number of cruise ships to what they felt was a manageable

level, which led to several cruise lines dropping Haines in 2000 (Adams, 2010; Cerveny, 2004). This retaliation extended to local tour operators who had publicly supported the tourist tax, and is another example of the unequal power cruise lines can exert over a community, particularly if they become dependent on cruise tourists.

Cerveny's (2007) study found the local community of Hoonah was reticent with concerns about developing cruise tourism. While tourism was promoted as providing economic benefits and opportunities to share and strengthen Indigenous culture and enhance pride, there were concerns about safety and potential societal changes. Destination communities may face challenges arising from cruise ship visitation, which can affect the social fabric of the community, and raise questions about community identity (Klein, 2011; Brida & Zapata, 2010; Cerveny, 2008). These concerns are not unfounded as Wanasuk and Thornton (2015) identified negative impacts as a result of Indigenous tourism can be loss of self-esteem, loss of community character, locals' lives being controlled by tourists' demands, internal conflicts in the community, disrespectful behavior, and loss of Native identity. Additionally, Cerveny (2007) noted concerns over the impact more tourists and large cruise ships would have on the ecology and environment, particularly in relation to fears about being able to access critically important food sources to maintain a subsistence lifestyle.

Icy Strait Point has enjoyed continued growth, with one in three cruise ship tourists in Alaska visiting annually (Resneck, 2019). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was forecast to be the most successful season yet with 500,000 visitors (Huna Totem Corporation, 2020) and there are 161 calls scheduled for 2021, reflecting the continued growth of the port. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic uncertainty remains and Canada's ban on most cruise ships (Transport Canada, 2021), no ships were able to visit in 2020 and it is unclear how many, if any, will visit in 2021.

Since opening in 2004, the port remains the only privately-owned cruise port in Alaska (Huna Totem, 2020b) which is in contrast to other Alaskan ports where multi-national conglomerates own and operate most tours and tourist shops. Several cruise lines have developed extensive strategies of vertical integration where they own or invest in accommodation, transportation, restaurants, gift shops, tour operators, services and are able to operate at a lower cost than local entrepreneurs (see Behnke, 1999; Cerveny, 2004). Carnival Corporation recently acquired the

White Pass Scenic Railway including the railway line, train terminals and retail operations (Carnival Corporation, 2018).

ISP is exceptionally rare in how Huna Totem negotiated with the cruise lines to limit the number of ship visits per day, per week and per season as a way to reduce impact on the community and to better manage visitor numbers. This is different from other ports where cruise ships are rarely turned away and economic gain is prioritized. The site provides opportunities for the Indigenous community through jobs, training, and encourages younger members of the community to stay in the community rather than go elsewhere in search of work. As a tourism enterprise, ISP provides nearly 300 jobs in Hoonah generating \$2.1 million in local wages (Icy Strait, 2018). When it opened, 94% of the jobs were held by local residents (Alaska Coastal Management Program, 2005), which dropped to 65% local hires in 2015 (City of Hoonah, 2016). Huna Totem notes in 2020 at least 85% are local (Huna Totem, 2020). The opportunity of employment in the summer season was seen as complementary to the subsistence lifestyle of many in the community. Huna Totem also encourage local artisans and independent businesses to lease space at the cannery, and even houses the Hoonah School Store, which benefits the local school children not only by profits being returned to the school, but also the store is run by students which provides education and work experience (Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015).

As a larger pier for cruise ships was deemed to be necessary to meet and capitalize on the increasing demand for new and unique ports in Southeast Alaska, Huna Totem partnered with Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings in 2018 [NCLH] (CLIA, 2019b). The partnership agreed to expand the port development by adding a 2nd purpose-built cruise dock, restaurants, welcome center, tour departure lounge, expanded hiking trails, suspension bridge and gondola (cable car) system. In 2016 the first phase of development was completed, with the opening of a 2nd pier which could accommodate the largest cruise ships in Alaska. Until the partnership with NCLH for the pier expansion, Huna Totem managed and operated the port and facilities (Huna Totem, 2020b) and exercised total control over their own pier, deciding how many ships to allow in at any one time to avoid overcapacity. This is in direct contrast to many other Alaskan ports, which maximize revenue by having as many ships as possible. However, this can be fraught with difficulty due to the power that different stakeholders hold within the process. The next section examines the stakeholder relationships in relation to three key issues the community is facing.

Methodology

This project employed a case study approach to explore the relationships between the cruise companies, Huna Totem and community of Hoonah. Case studies are useful as a research method to investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships (Zainal, 2007). Yin (1984, p. 23) defines the case study research method “as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”

Case studies are useful in this context of seeking to understand the context of the new pier development, and this paper presents a critical analysis of the potential impacts. Multiple sources of information were gathered including documents from the state of Alaska and government development agencies, published media interviews with ISP employees, correspondence between the Hoonah city council and cruise companies, council documents, news and industry reports, and previous studies on tourism development in Hoonah and Southeast Alaska (see Cervený 2007; et al., 2020; Hillmer-Pegram, 2016; Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). A content analysis was used to search for data related to the pier, ISP, Huna Totem, IHA and Hoonah and followed guidelines for analyzing qualitative data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) by looking for emergent patterns about the relationship between development of cruise tourism, the pier and the local community. The iterative process allowed patterns in the data to emerge, and three key findings were identified.

Findings

Three key issues emerging from the pier expansion are 1) power relations in site selection, 2) exclusion and access and 3) loss of indigenous focus.

Power relations in site selection

In spite of COVID-19, a 3rd pier was scheduled to open in 2020, and is financed through \$15million from Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority [AIDEA] loan and Huna Totem paying the balance on the total cost of \$23.7million (AIDEA, 2019; Isenbek, 2014). Notably, no cruise company is investing in the infrastructure costs, and terms of the partnership between Huna Totem and NCLH unsurprisingly have not been publicly disclosed. NCLH (and associated brands Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises) will have preferential berthing rights and the partnership will be in place until 2029 (Seatrade Cruise News, 2019). The partnership highlights the power of the cruise lines in negotiating agreements for shared ownership and preferential access of cruise terminals. The expansion of the 3rd pier will create and additional 60 new seasonal jobs at ISP (AIDEA).

The site of the pier was controversial as there were three options. The first was to expand the original existing cannery dock at Icy Strait Point, but this was deemed impractical due to the shallow depth of the water and other structural constraints. This original dock did not allow cruise ships to dock and required passengers to use tenders to come ashore. The new pier needed to accommodate both cruise and cargo ships to better benefit the community. Hoonah City Council preferred the second option with the new pier to be on city land at Shaman Point as this had existing roads and services and was nearest to the city and would benefit local businesses more. However, the council faced external pressure from cruise companies and Huna Totem to move it to the third option at Outer Point. The site selection also caused tension and conflict between two specific cruise companies who were competing for access. Prior to the new arrangement with NCLH, Huna Totem had a deal with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines [RCCL] where more than 80% of the cruise ships allotted access were either RCCL or associated brand Celebrity (Kelly, 2012). During the negotiations, a Royal Caribbean executive wrote to the city council expressing concerns over Shaman Point (S. Ruby, RCCL, 2012). The executive went as far as to say that if Shaman Point was selected, RCCL and Celebrity would be unwilling to use the new pier and would continue to use the existing tender pier at the cannery as the cruise lines want “Direct, immediate access to Icy Strait Point” (C. Milan, RCCL, 2012). In other correspondence it was revealed RCCL rejected Shaman Point because of the additional cost to run a shuttle bus to the cannery site (City of Hoonah, 2012). This refusal is significant as the ongoing costs for the pier would be financed through

landing and port fees, meaning there would be more financial burden on Huna Totem and the City Council if several cruise lines refused to use it. Clancy (2017) notes cruise companies regularly threaten to exit a port to get favorable market conditions.

Ultimately, an agreement was made between Huna Totem and NCLH for the development of a new pier, and this will have wide impacts on the community by more than doubling the current number of cruise passengers visiting the port. The enormous political, social and economic change by the development of the second pier cannot be overstated. This arrangement also changes the power dynamics between Huna Totem and the cruise lines with more power allotted to NCLH. Even before this partnership and increased capacity, residents worried about the control cruise lines have over communities (Cervený, 2007), and now with the costs to build and maintain reflect the growing dependency on cruise companies. Cruise lines also often exert power implicitly through community projects in port communities through corporate philanthropy to deflect criticism (see Weeden, 2015), and RCCL recently donated to the city of Hoonah to help keep the gymnasium open through the 2020 pandemic (Huna Totem Indian Association, 2021). NCLH does not appear to be contributing resources for the building of the pier but are promising ship visits as a way to wield leverage and in return for preferential access.

The new dock also changes the nature of the port experience. Not only are more ships calling in at the same time going to significantly change the on-shore passenger experience, but there is a move away from the cultural and authentic Indigenous experience. The new pier will be much busier and crowded with a very different atmosphere. Potentially high number of cruise ship visitors can put pressure on local resources, infrastructure and facilities and result in congestion (Brida & Zapata, 2010; James, Olsen, & Karlsdóttir, 2020) and lack of privacy for residents and other negative social impacts (Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). This is a concern many ports face, with cruise lines not funding infrastructure (Cervený, Miller, & Gende, 2020; Clancy, 2017).

Communities need to fund maintenance and infrastructure costs, often through additional taxes but the cruise lines can exert pressure to avoid paying them. For example, in 2008 the state of Alaska tried to impose a \$46 pp head tax on cruise passengers, and at the time the cruise industry responded by repositioning ships away from Alaska to exercise power and avoid paying the tax (Bohrer, 2010). After the tax had been removed, several cruise lines returned and expanded operations within Alaska. Even between ports increased costs can cause competition. In 2016,

Hoonah imposed their own port head tax of \$5pp on cruise passengers to help cover infrastructure costs, and as a result five cruise ships modified their itineraries for the following year to include Sitka instead of Icy Strait Point (City of Hoonah, 2016). This threat of exit has been noted by Clancy (2017) as the cruise ships are easily moved to manage market conditions and avoid additional costs a destination may try to impose. This demonstrates the power cruise lines can exert over destinations to secure the most profit (London & Lohrman, 2014), and especially in Northern communities that are forced to adapt to the demands of cruise companies (Sletvold, 2014).

Exclusion and Access

A second key issue are concerns of the local community feeling excluded or having difficulty accessing culturally significant places. In Indigenous northern communities, culture and social structure are tied to the natural environment with recreation, economic and family activities dependent upon access to resources (Notzke, 1999). Increased cruise tourism activities in Glacier Bay has resulted in limitations placed on nearby residents (Cervený, 2007) and cruise ships are given priority to permits to access Glacier Bay. When speaking with Hoonah residents, Cervený (2007) found they feel displaced by the tourism activities and felt they had been ““pushed out of Glacier Bay by the government...Glacier Bay was taken away from them by the federal government and given to the tourists”” (p. 48). Indigenous peoples share a history of displacement, marginalization and are disadvantaged by colonial systems of occupation, colonization and settlement (Higgins-Desboilles et al., 2014), and the US as a settler-colonial state includes this narrative. The US also notably voted against Article 26 of the United Nations declaration which asserts that Indigenous Peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired, (United Nations, 2007). The refusal to support this declaration by the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada impacts the ability of Indigenous peoples to manage and control their traditionally held territories (Weaver, 2010).

In addition to Glacier bay, the Tlingit people have limited or no access to the cannery site, beach and Spasski Point. The cannery site is fenced off and local community members are not allowed to access the beach area for recreation or ceremonial uses, and this use of fencing to create an enclave only the cruise tourists can access is seen at other cruise ports (see Dowling & Weeden, 2017). This is in part due to port maritime security requirements in accordance with the

International Ship and Port facility Security Code [ISPS] (International Maritime Organization, 2003). Fencing around ports was required as part of the ISPS code for safety and security implemented in 2004 to prevent unauthorized access to port facilities or ships and minimizes risk of potential terror activities or use of weapons or explosives.

However, the cannery is an important site for the community for recreation and family gatherings as well as of historical and cultural significance and there could be ways to accommodate both the port security requirements and the community needs. In this way, community concerns could be addressed through greater collaboration. This restrictive access illuminates the competing and unreconcilable differing views of land ownership, and demonstrates the complexity of stakeholder relationships in port areas. The Tlingit view land ownership as land and resources are not owned by an individual, but use is assigned based on tribal and clan affiliation (Cervený, 2007). The Tlingit people see the land as communal and for all to share, and the use of fences and barriers to exclude them from areas used for recreation, hunting and places of meaning is significant and contributes to feeling excluded and impacts survival if unable to access critical food sources.

The pier expansion creates even more of an enclavic setting designed to keep the cruise passengers and spending on site, in what Clancy (2017) describes as revenue capture. The port area at Icy Strait Point, similar to others, is deliberately designed to discourage and prevent cruise passengers from leaving. Cervený (2007) noted Hoonah was removed from maps given out onboard to cruise passengers to discourage passengers leaving the port area and spending money in the city instead of the port-owned shops, restaurants and onboard. This went as far as the cruise ships avoiding anchorages where the city is visible from the ship so the passengers would be less likely to see the city from the ship and see it is closer enough to walk to.

Further evidence of exclusion is cultural items were moved from the community onto the port site, ostensibly to make the port look more 'authentic'. A carved wooden canoe was moved from the school to the port, totem poles were moved from in front of the tribal offices and relocated to the performance center at the cannery, and the clan house was built at Icy Strait Point (Cervený, 2007). Local Hoonah residents no longer have access to these important cultural artefacts that are now on display for the tourists. As community members are not able to access the cannery and port site unless they work there, these important places and symbolic items are inaccessible.

Loss of Indigenous focus

A third key issue is the loss of Indigenous focus evidenced specifically in the shore excursions, museum and employment. When the port first began operating in 2004, the focus was on culture and Icy Strait Point has been recognized for sharing traditions and culture of the Huna throughout the visitor experience, the come through. In many Alaskan ports, the Indigenous narrative is silent and there is little in the way of ‘authentic’ experiences between the local Indigenous community and cruise ship tourists. Icy Strait Point was positioned to “allow visitors to see a living Native community, to learn about Native lifestyle and the impacts of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act on Tlingit people” (Cervený, 2007, p. 55). The elders in the community share tribal dancing and story telling with the tourists which provides opportunities for the younger community members to gain knowledge and training about cultural values and heritage (Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). The sharing of this culture through story is important to the Tlingit as a way to share knowledge across generations and is assisting in cultural recovery (Shorty, 2016). Notably, Tlingit tourism employees receive cultural and Tlingit language training (Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). The partnership with NCLH and Huna Totem extends to a Cultural Heritage Guide sailing on each ship cruising to Glacier Bay. In this way, Icy Strait Point has benefited and strengthened the community, reflecting how tourism can act as both an agent of change and an agent of preservation (Notzke, 1999).

While Huna Totem demonstrates commitment to recognizing the cultural voice of the Tlingit, there have been subtle shifts where the Indigenous focus has been decreased to earn more profit. When the development opened in 2004, several shore excursions focused on sharing the Tlingit history and culture through the museum and interpretive programs. While the port opened with these intentions, there has been a move to offering less tours which focus on Tlingit culture, such that in 2020, very few of the 29 tours offered by a major cruise line focus on Indigenous social or culture aspects. The majority of the tours now offered are wildlife and ‘adventure’ tours.

At time of opening, the HIA managed the cultural programs, but this was eventually taken over by Huna Totem. The gift shop originally sold items created by local Indigenous artisans. Interestingly, the port appeared to move away from cultural products as a focus, to now sell non-local products the tourists expect and want to buy such as items without a native motif (Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). Indeed, the curator of the cultural museum advised that not long after opening,

the museum was relocated to a smaller room in the cannery to make more room for the gift shop (Cervený, 2007). However, this strategy seems to have shifted back to an emphasis on native products as the majority of gift shop products in 2021 featured Indigenous motifs and ‘authentic’ Alaskan or locally made items (Icy Strait Point, 2021).

Prior to the development of Icy Strait Point, there were concerns from some in the community about being ‘the other’ and becoming a product sold to the tourists. There were fears tourists would look down on the community and subsistence lifestyle (see Cervený, 2007; Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). This was also found in Northern communities considering developing cruise tourism (see Stewart et al., 2015), with fears about different interpretations of culture. Cervený (2007) identified competing cultural frameworks between the Tlingit people and their relationship with Glacier Bay, and how this contrasts with the John Muir narrative often promoted in Alaskan tourism. She notes in her study of Hoonah that some of the Huna Tlingit elders shared they felt that the interpretive programs offered by park officials is “‘selling white history’” (Cervený, 2007, p. 50). Indeed, the National Park Service interpreters are not always Indigenous and the ‘white’/John Muir version of Glacier Bay history is being marketed and promoted onboard as likely this sells better than acknowledging the injustice of residential schools, village relocations and oppression the Tlingit faced as a result of government policy (Shorty, 2016). An examination of the port description given to passengers by seven major cruise lines reveals few mention Tlingit history focusing instead on describing the physical landscape.

Final evidence of the loss of Indigenous focus relates to how recently, Huna Totem has been bringing in ‘outsiders’ (as the community calls them) for management roles (see Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015). One of the benefits to the community in developing this port was the opportunity for local youth and members of the community to have access to training and jobs with career potential. This was seen as a way to entice younger members to return and stay in the community, as previously there were not many opportunities outside of resource extraction. Hillmer-Pengram (2016) notes the importance of the process of developing tourism should be Indigenous controlled for Indigenous benefit. Others have also noted the increasing local control and self-governance improves socio-economic conditions for host communities particularly for the Indigenous in the Arctic (Lemelin et al., 2012).

The challenge for the Huna Tlingit is similar to that of other communities who are exploring developing cruise tourism for its' perceived economic and cultural benefits. However, if community participation in decision-making is essential for successful tourism destinations, there are questions of where that leaves Hoonah and the Indigenous community whose lives have been transformed by the development of Icy Strait Point. It would appear the voices of the Tlingit and Hoonah residents were not listened to in the pier expansion as the new development is much larger than originally envisaged, and yet the economic and social benefits have strengthened the culture and provided much needed employment and opportunity.

This paper has identifies the complexities surrounding the pier expansion and the transition of power away from the community to the cruise companies and in doing so highlights the power cruise lines can exert. Hoonah could try to wrestle power back by seeking greater access for local businesses to share in profits by having access to the port land or entrance to offer additional or complementary services, experiences or products. There could also be a way to allow local residents access to the site when cruise ships are not in, and provide the community with opportunities for recreation and community use of the beach and fishing.

Icy Strait Point also reveals how often in Indigenous tourism, community-based development implies community control but as is also the case in other cruise destinations, the reality is the community ends up only involved but with little actual power in decision-making (see Notzke, 1999). As one Tlingit employee stated, "We own this place but we had no power to say or change things" (in Wanasuk & Thornton, 2015, p. 22). The discussion of Hoonah and Icy Strait Point has revealed the critical balance between competing stakeholder groups and the need for collaboration between all to manage challenges. The blue economy framework acknowledges the globalized nature and mobility of cruise tourism, and the intersectionality of social, economic and environmental impacts on communities connected with the ocean, but also identifies the unequal power relationships. ISP strives to benefit the community and balances economic growth, environmental sustainability and social equity through the Indigenous narrative. This paper contributes by

However, although ISP is a successful Indigenous tourism enterprise with economic stability and strong recognition of cultural heritage, there are still issues of access, exclusion and equity in decision-making. Icy Strait Point, with it's rich Indigenous culture, has the opportunity to continue

to go against the ‘floe’ and serve as an example of how small Indigenous communities can go against industry pressure to conform and not only offer a unique cruise visitor experience and tourism product, but also be able to direct more profits and benefits back into the local community. However, with the new partnership with NCLH and the move away from a focus on Indigenous culture, Icy Strait Point appears to be following the same path as many other cruise destinations by allowing cruise companies to exert power over the community to achieve profits that benefit few.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the reviewers for giving their time and providing feedback, Jacob Resneck of Coast Alaska, and especially Dr. Lee Cerveny for sharing her expertise and knowledge.

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