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Gerlis Fugmann*

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La littérature scientifique a discuté durant des années du tourisme, en le considérant comme un outil de développement économique des régions périphériques. Cet article examine les succès de cet outil à partir de l'étude de cas du Nunatsiavut (Nord du Labrador). Le secteur privé de la région repose fortement sur l'industrie minière, qui est son principal pilier économique. Mais depuis 2006, le gouvernement du Nunatsiavut valorise de plus en plus d'autres secteurs, tels que le tourisme, pour diversifier l'économie et lui assurer un avenir durable. Cet article se base sur un projet de recherche sur le développement économique ascendant au Nunatsiavut, et explore les premières étapes, les défis, ainsi que les opportunités d'emploi et de revenu que crée l'industrie du tourisme. Bien qu'ils ne jouent encore qu'un rôle mineur dans l'économie locale, les efforts de l'organisme Tourism Nunatsiavut ont posé des fondations prometteuses sur lesquelles la région pourra s'appuyer à l'avenir.

Abstract: Developing a remote region: Tourism as a tool for creating economic diversity in Nunatsiavut

In the academic literature, tourism has long been discussed as a tool for the economic development of peripheral regions. This article examines the success of this tool using Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador) as a case study. Although the region's private sector strongly relies on resource industries as its main economic pillar, the Nunatsiavut Government has since 2006 increasingly promoted other sectors, like tourism, to diversify its economy and create a more sustainable future. The article is based on a research project on bottom-up economic development in Nunatsiavut and will explore the early stages of the tourism industry, its challenges, and the employment and income opportunities it creates. Although currently only playing a minor role in the local economy, the efforts made by Tourism Nunatsiavut in this early phase have laid promising foundations that the region can build on in the future.

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Introduction

Tourism is a means to develop peripheral resource-dependent regions, such as the circumpolar North, and this role has been well documented and discussed for years in the academic literature. In areas where extractive industries are less developed or struggling, there has been varying success in diversifying the economy and creating benefits for communities and residents through regional investment and participation in alternative economic sectors, including tourism (Grenier 2011: 11; Hall 2007: 19; Hull 2011: 196; Johnston 2011: 22; Johnston and Viken 1997: 978; Lemelin and McIntyre 2011: 207; Sharpley 2002a: 12). In particular, the Arctic and sub-Arctic have seen recent growth in the tourism industry (Maher 2012: 55). Outside operators and regional stakeholders have both been attracting more and more visitors by tapping into heightened global interest by scientists, policy makers, the media, the private sector, and the general public in polar issues and especially in “hot topics” such as climate change, geopolitics, the potential wealth of the North’s natural resources, political engagement of Indigenous peoples, and the International Polar Year 2007-2008 (Grenier 2011: 10-11; Maher 2012: 55-56; Maher et al. 2011: 3; Snyder and Stonehouse 2007: 3). They promote the circumpolar North as a place with a beautiful, pristine, and yet vulnerable flora and fauna that appeals to nature lovers, as a place to get away from the hectic lifestyle of large cities in the “South,” as a place with an interesting local Indigenous culture, or as a place for adventurers who want to visit one of the world’s last frontiers (Brown and Hall 2000: 3; Johnston 2011: 17).

So the “last chance” has come to visit these regions and ecosystems before they have changed beyond recognition. This is the marketing tool that tourism operators increasingly use to motivate travel to polar regions (Dawson et al. 2010; Johnston et al. 2012a; Lemelin et al. 2010, 2012). Despite the continuing presence of various “barriers to entry” that make such travel challenging, the Arctic and sub-Arctic have also become more accessible to a broader range of tourists through human-induced changes, like advances in technology and infrastructure, and through natural changes, such as a reduction in sea ice that has lengthened the season for cruise ships (Snyder and Stonehouse 2007: 7-9).

This article uses Nunatsiavut as a case study and is based on a comparison of bottom-up economic development initiatives in Nunavik and Nunatsiavut that the author undertook for her doctoral dissertation (Fugmann 2011). It provides an overview of tourism in Nunatsiavut and a preliminary analysis of current economic benefits for local entrepreneurs and residents. What have been the milestones in the development of this industry in Nunatsiavut? Which attractions are being promoted? Which local stakeholders are participating? What kind of activities are they involved in? How do residents benefit in terms of employment opportunities? Can tourism help diversify the economy? The article includes observations from semi-structured interviews with researchers, members of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Nunatsiavut Government, the Nain Inuit Community Government, and business owners in Nain. In addition, the academic literature and web-based resources have been extensively reviewed and followed up on.

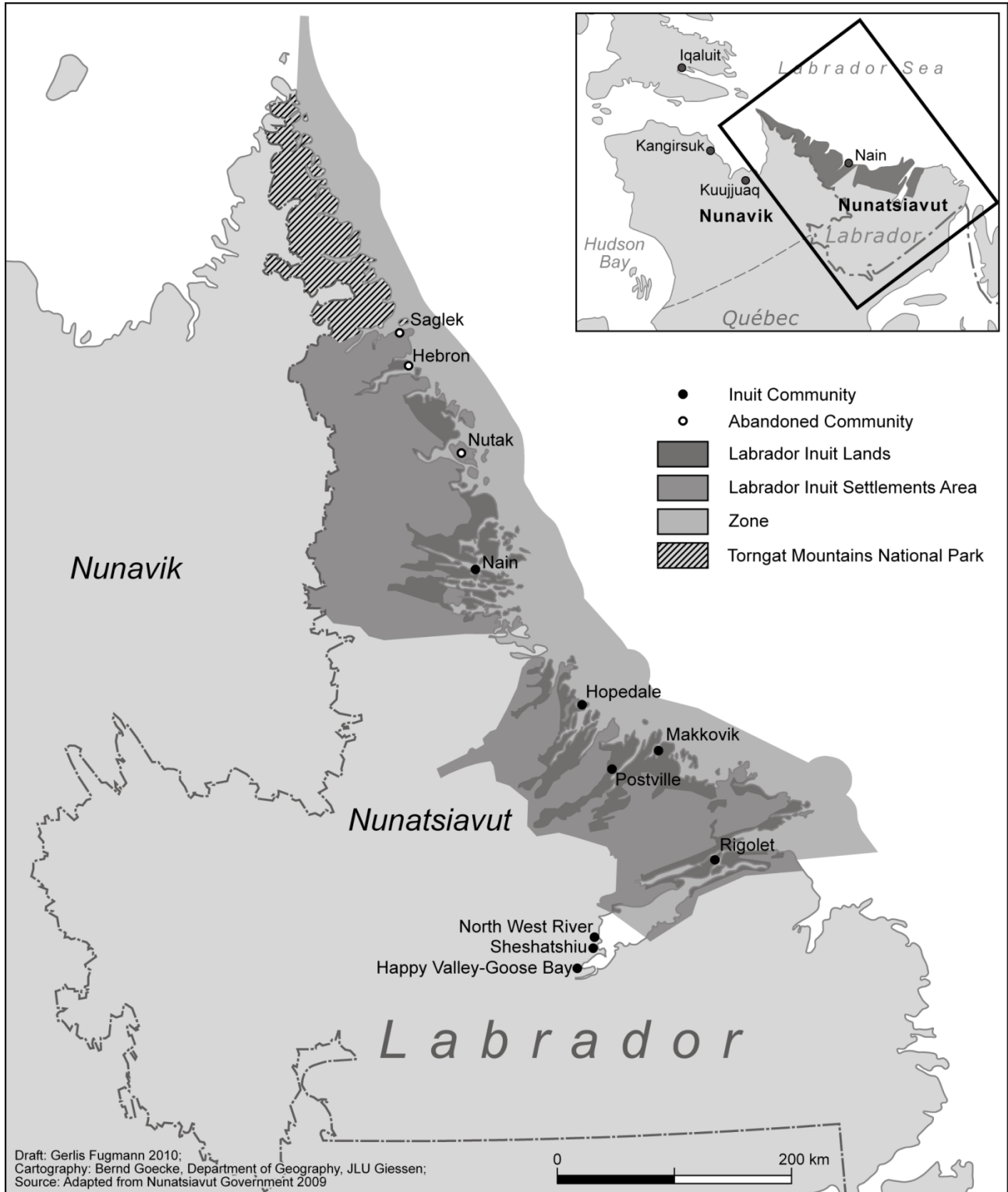


Figure 1. Map of Nunatsiavut (source: Fugmann 2011: 54).

Nunatsiavut: A remote region in Northern Labrador

Nunatsiavut (“our beautiful land”) encompasses the northern tip of the Labrador Peninsula and is part of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada. It includes five coastal communities: Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet (Figure 1). There are currently no roads to and between them. As a result, Nunatsiavut

relies primarily on expensive air and marine transportation for both passengers and goods. According to the 2011 census, Nunatsiavut has 2,617 inhabitants, 45% of whom live in Nain, the largest and northernmost community and the administrative centre of the Nunatsiavut Government (Statistics Canada 2012). A majority, 91%, define themselves as Aboriginal people (mostly Inuit) (*ibid.* 2007).

With the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (LILCA) in 2005, the region acquired a structure for ethnic governance: the Nunatsiavut Government, which has jurisdiction notably over Inuit culture and language (Inuktitut) and administers Labrador Inuit lands, Inuit Community Governments on the community-level, and two Inuit Community Corporations in North West River and Sheshatshiu as well as Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Mud Lake (AANDC 2005b: 283-290; Interview 38, Nain, July 2008; Procter et al. 2012: 6). The LILCA also established the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, which comprises a 48,690-km² offshore area and a 72,520-km² land area that includes 15,799 km² of Labrador Inuit lands. The latter are owned by the Inuit in fee simple and are administered, controlled, and managed by the Nunatsiavut Government (AANDC 2005b: 45) (Figure 1). The Agreement also provided for a monetary compensation of almost \$140 million to be paid out over 14 years and \$152 million in implementation funding (*ibid.*: 301 and 328).

Development in peripheries

When peripheral regions like Nunatsiavut attempt economic development, they face several challenges, often described as “barriers to entry” (Snyder and Stonehouse 2007: 6), that are due to secluded location, distance from larger demographic or economic agglomerations, less favourable natural environments, difficult access, high transportation costs, sparse population, high costs of doing business, and relatively limited political power (Brown and Hall 2000: 2-3; Fugmann 2011: 55-82; Fugmann and Coates n.d.; Hall 2007: 25-26; Huskey 2006: 149-150; Huskey and Morehouse 1992: 128; Müller and Jansson 2007: 7-12). Admittedly, remoteness or peripherality is not static but rather constantly evolving and changing over time, thereby potentially making the region less remote. For example, new transportation technologies can lead to lower travel costs. Communication technologies are likewise evolving at a very fast pace, thus making it easier for remote regions to access information and to connect to the rest of the world. Political and administrative changes like the ones witnessed by Nunatsiavut in recent years can also strengthen a remote region politically (Enzenbacher 2011: 41; Fugmann and Coates n.d.; Hall 2007: 20; Huskey 2006: 148). Finally, remoteness can assist tourism. Some visitors are purposely seeking more isolated and natural areas that contrast with their regular day-to-day urban lives (Brown and Hall 2000: 3).

Peripheral regions are commonly considered to be resource frontiers where extractive industries dominate the private sector (Bone 2009: 14-16; Fugmann and Coates n.d.). For example, in Nunatsiavut the commercial fisheries and the two fish processing plants in Nain and Makkovik have for decades been important sources of

income for residents (Fugmann 2011: 119; Treude 1974: 178-180). In addition, mineral exploration and mining activities have played a significant role in Northern Labrador at various times since the 1950s, the minerals largely being uranium and nickel (Storey 2011: 8-9). Currently, the only large-scale active mine is the Voisey's Bay nickel mine operated by Vale Inco Ltd. near Nain. With the lifting of the 2008 moratorium on uranium extraction in 2011, Nunatsiavut is expecting a mining boom in the coming years (CBC 2011a). Resource development also figures prominently in the Strategic Plan 2012-2015 released by the Nunatsiavut Government (2012: 7).

Through renewable and non-renewable resources, the periphery contributes to the wealth of the core, which is the engine for development and innovation (Fugmann and Coates n.d.). The circumpolar world is driven by core regions commonly located in the South. Many theories of economic development reflect this core-periphery model, the development gap between the two, and the "underdevelopment" of areas far from the "developed world" or the "industrial cores" (e.g., Anderson et al. 2005; Bone 2009: 14-15; Botterill et al. 2000: 8; Friedmann 1966: 76-98; Potter et al. 1999; Wallerstein 1979). Using top-down approaches and mostly focusing on the Third World, dependency and modernisation theories dominated discussion during the 1950s and 1960s (Anderson et al. 2005: 110-111; Huskey and Morehouse 1992: 129). These theoretical perspectives and concepts soon influenced research on the development of other peripheral regions, such as the circumpolar North, which were developing along similar lines (Huskey and Morehouse 1992: 129). In the 1970s and 1980s several authors introduced the term "Fourth World" as a way to describe remote regions that were not separate entities but part of larger nation states (e.g., Manuel and Posluns 1974; Müller-Wille and Pelto 1979; Weissling 1989). Since the 1980s, alternative approaches have called for bottom-up or grassroots development where local communities, as opposed to outsiders, control the economy with a view to building capacity and becoming more self-sufficient (Potter 1999: 68; Weissling 1989: 209). Land claim agreements in Canada have been seen as tools to enhance endogenous development, despite the ongoing heavy reliance on outside public (e.g., federal and provincial governments) and private stakeholders (e.g., mining companies investing in the regions) (Saku and Bone 2000: 264).

In the last few decades, the discrepancy between the core and the periphery has grown with the core's increase in wealth and capital, which has forced peripheral regions to develop new ways to compete in the globalised economy (Hall 2007: 21). Concern has grown in the periphery over the reliability of resource extraction as a source of income because success is vulnerable to changes in the world market and in resource availability, quality, and quantity. The risk of a boom-and-bust cycle has been discussed extensively in the academic literature (e.g., Bone 1998). Alternatives have to be found to diversify the regional economy and thereby ensure a sustainable economic future. To this end, tourism has been promoted for decades as one strategy—but not the sole one (Christaller 1963: 96; Hall 2007: 19; Müller 2011: 130; Müller and Jansson 2007: 6; Sharpley 2002a). On the other hand, tourism does not always deliver on its promises (Hall 2007: 19; Müller and Jansson 2007: 3) and, like the resource sector, "is often depicted as an unstable industry, one that is susceptible to high levels of change

and volatility in tourist demand and subject to crises in social, political, economic and natural resource realms” (Lemelin et al. 2012: 42-43).

Nunatsiavut as a tourist destination

Since its inception in 2006, the Nunatsiavut Government has increasingly invested in tourism by marketing the region’s rich Inuit culture, history, and natural beauty, while seeking to ensure maximum participation, control, and benefits by and for local residents (Interview 35: Nain, July 2008). Before the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (LILCA), the Labrador Inuit Association was more focused on settling the land claim and meeting the basic health and social needs of residents. According to the Director of Tourism of the Nunatsiavut Government, “tourism is sort of a luxury to think about when you’re trying to go for the basic need. And the basic need was to have authority over the land and to make sure that the general health and social requirements of the people were met. Not necessarily encourage other people to come in before we could establish our own sort of well-being” (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008).

Milestones in tourism development

With the signing of the LILCA and the establishment of Torngat Mountains National Park (TMNP) at the northern tip of the Québec-Labrador Peninsula as part of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, there was now momentum for a conscious effort to develop tourism. In 2005, the *Labrador Inuit Park Impacts and Benefits Agreement for the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada* was signed between the Labrador Inuit Association and Parks Canada to ensure that the Labrador Inuit would benefit from the new national park and to preserve and strengthen their traditional use of the area (AANDC 2005a; Parks Canada 2010a). Tourism development had first been discussed in 2004, at a “Round Table to Establish a Vision and Framework for Tourism,” and in January 2006 the new Nunatsiavut Government, Parks Canada, and other tourism stakeholders created Tourism Nunatsiavut (Nunatsiavut Government 2006: 3, 2008a). Funding came initially from the Impacts and Benefits Agreement for the new TMNP. The Nunatsiavut Government hired a Director for Tourism in 2007, and first steps were taken to devise a strategy to develop tourism “by the people of Nunatsiavut in ways that are culturally sensitive, economically viable and sustainable” (Nunatsiavut Government n.d.; Interview 35, Nain, July 2008). In 2007, a series of community-based workshops focused on experiential tourism, i.e., providing visitors with learning experiences about culture, history, and landscapes (*ibid.*). The strategy was released in February 2008 as the *Tourism Nunatsiavut Final Strategic Plan*, whereby the region would “emerge as one of the world’s most in-demand circumpolar travel destinations” (Nunatsiavut Government 2008a: 3).

To develop new ideas, to learn about best practices in ecotourism, cultural tourism, and sustainable tourism, and to get professional training to “facilitate the development

of business skills, leadership capacity and ideas for tourism entrepreneurship that can be implemented in Nunatsiavut” (Nunatsiavut Government 2008b), a group of tourism, business, and community leaders went on a “Tourism Leadership Voyage” to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands in late spring 2008 (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008). A Nunatsiavut tourism website was finally launched in 2011 (OKalaKatiget Society 2011). In spring 2012, the 3rd International Polar Tourism Research Network (IPTRN) conference was held in Nain, drawing tourism researchers from around the world (CBC 2012).

The first steps are being taken to reach the strategy’s goals. No regulations are yet in place for tourism development, which some see as a challenge and others as an opportunity to design them with a view to the current needs of the region (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008; Interview 36, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, August 2008). Future development will require sustainable tourism that promotes both the natural beauty of the landscape and the experiences in Nunatsiavut communities without disrupting and disturbing the environment and the daily lives of residents. For example, geotourism is targeted in the Draft Land Use Plan for the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (Labrador Inuit Settlement Area Regional Planning Authority 2010). The document defines it as “tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical characters of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents” (*ibid.*: 23). Another possibility is cruise tourism, which exists in other regions of the Canadian Arctic and involves smaller expedition-style ships with no more than 140 passengers (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008; Johnston et al. 2012b: 71). Tourists are offered an easy and convenient way to visit without some of the challenges of individual travel, e.g., limited availability and high costs of transportation and accommodation. Hardly any community infrastructure investments are needed, as the tourists mostly eat and sleep on board. By focusing on small cruise ships, one can minimise the feared negative impacts resulting from a large group of passengers disembarking at the same time in a small community. On the other hand, relatively little money is spent in the communities because the tourists mostly rely on services aboard the ships and make only brief visits ashore (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008).

Tourist attractions

To draw tourists into the region and to develop a successful tourism industry, it is essential to market the uniqueness of key attractions in Nunatsiavut. Tourist preferences are constantly changing and there is competition from other remote northern regions that, to an outsider, seem just as attractive. Nunatsiavut offers a wild landscape, particularly in Torngat Mountains National Park (TMNP), and several communities and historic sites are rich in Inuit and Moravian history and traditions. The exact number of visitors is hard to determine. In 2011 TMNP received 619 visitors, but it is unclear how many of them visited Nunatsiavut communities as well or how many travelled to other parts of Nunatsiavut without stopping in the park (Parks Canada 2011: 49).

Torngat Mountains National Park (TMNP)

Torngait KakKasuangita SilakKijapvinga/Torngat Mountains National Park (TMNP) covers about 9,700 km² and has a special spiritual meaning for local Inuit as well as those of neighbouring Nunavik (Maher and Lemelin 2011: 40; Parks Canada 2010b: xi). Together with the adjacent Parc National Kuururjuaq du Québec created in 2009, this park not only provides visitors with attractions but also offers opportunities for traditional use and cooperation between the Inuit of both regions as well as between regional and local communities and businesses. For example, Nain is one of the gateway communities to the park and serves as its central administration centre (Lemelin and Baikie 2012: 174). The park is today run by a cooperative management board that has representatives from the Nunatsiavut Government, Makivik Corporation (Nunavik), and Parks Canada (Maher and Lemelin 2011: 40; Parks Canada 2010a).

Besides the beautiful natural environment, the park “is a testament to an ancient and living Inuit culture, containing hundreds of archaeological sites including tent circles, sod houses, food caches, burial sites, and *aullâsimauet* (‘Inuit settlement camps’)” (Lemelin and Baikie 2012: 174). Historic Moravian missions, Hudson’s Bay Company posts, and military installations provide additional attractions (*ibid.*). From 2006 to 2011, the number of visitors to the Torngat Mountains fluctuated between 272 and 629 (Parks Canada 2011: 49). Of the 619 visitors who came in 2011, 43.3% were cruise ship passengers, and 13.7% guided and non-guided visitors. The rest fell into the following categories: recreational boating, researchers, contractors, park staff, base camp guests not included above, and others (*ibid.*: 49). As the TMNP co-management board wishes to preserve the environment and use the park in a non-commercial and non-invasive way, no infrastructure is currently being set up within park boundaries (Interview 36, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, August 2008). To provide visitors and researchers with an access point, a base camp has been available since 2006 for a few weeks every summer in Saglek Bay just outside the southern park boundary.

Nunatsiavut communities and Moravian missions

The five communities in Nunatsiavut are another attraction. Visitors can savour Inuit culture, history, stories, arts and crafts, and traditional country foods. To present local attractions and heritage, communities have set up committees that organise activities for cruise ship passengers, including cultural performances and community tours (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008).

Visitors are drawn not only to Labrador Inuit culture, but also to Moravian history, churches, and mission buildings in current Nunatsiavut communities (Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik) as well as the abandoned mission sites of Okak, Ramah, and Hebron. The Moravians first arrived in Nunatsiavut in the 18th century and established several missions that have influenced and still are influencing Inuit history and culture (Brice-Bennett 1977: 101; Treude 1979: 77). For example, the old Hebron mission, which was closed in 1959, has been renovated, and as part of the Hebron Ambassador Program a family is paid to live in Hebron during the summer to watch over the site and welcome

visitors (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008; Lemelin and Baikie 2012: 177). Other attractions include several small museums, like the White Elephant Museum in Makkovik, the Net Loft Museum (an old Hudson's Bay Company building), and the Lord Strathcona House, which display artefacts and information about the history of the Northern Labrador coast (Town of Makkovik 2012; Town of Rigolet 2012), and trails like the boardwalk in Rigolet, which direct visitors to attractive scenery and nearby vistas and help guide them through the local area.

Regional participation in Nunatsiavut tourism

To diversify the regional economy, tourism has to create positive backward linkages. These linkages are formed not only by tourist spending, fees, and taxes, but also by direct and indirect spin-offs for regional stakeholders, e.g., opportunities for local entrepreneurs in accommodation, transportation and other services as well as employment for regional residents (Enzenbacher 2011: 43, 47; Sharpley 2002a: 14-15, 2002b: 234). An analysis of these spin-offs and jobs can be only very preliminary at this point. While the Nunatsiavut Government is promoting active participation on the local and regional level, tourism is still at a very early stage and Nunatsiavut is only starting to build a reputation as a tourist destination.

Additionally, there is a lack of specific statistical data on the number of visitors who travel to the communities, stay there, and use local businesses and services. The 2010 hotel occupancy rate was 37% for the whole of Economic Zone 1 (Rigolet to Nain including the Innu community of Natuashish) (Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency 2010: 3). Only a very small fraction of them came for recreational purposes. The vast majority were business travellers, including provincial and federal government officials, Aboriginal and regional organisation representatives, service company employees who work on contract, and conference participants (e.g., 3rd International Polar Tourism Research Network conference in 2012) (Interview 3, Nain, July 2008). Because the number of visitors is still small and because the overall size of the tourism industry is still limited, the visible benefits are currently minimal. Still, regionally and locally, a few key stakeholders are creating some local job opportunities.

In the public sector, they are 1) the Nunatsiavut Government, mainly through its Division of Tourism in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism and 2) Parks Canada with its TMNP headquarters in Nain. Currently, neither provides residents with many jobs. The tourism division of the Nunatsiavut Government was for the longest time a one-employee operation (Interview 35, Nain, 26 July 2008).

In the private sector, tourism stakeholders include the business arm of the Nunatsiavut Government through the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies (successor of the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation), as well as local entrepreneurs. It was hoped that the creation of TMNP would generate a number of economic spin-offs. Under the *Park Impacts and Benefits Agreement*, initial funding was provided "to identify and develop a plan for Labrador Inuit businesses to take advantage of

economic opportunities associated with the national park reserve, and to create a fund to help Labrador Inuit and Labrador Inuit businesses to take advantage of those opportunities” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2005: online). The Nunatsiavut Group of Companies (NGC) is involved in the tourism industry through several of its subsidiaries. One of them, NGC Nunatsiavut Solutions Inc., operates the Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station for about two summer months (Nunatsiavut Group of Companies 2012a). It took over the operation from Parks Canada in 2010 and employs regional residents to run the camp and to work as guides or bear monitors. The kANGIDLUASUK base camp is a “pilot project to explore new and better ways of increasing Inuit presence in the park, and to support summer operational programs” (Parks Canada 2010b: 14). It provides “a dining facility, commercial kitchen, tent accommodation in various forms, green technology with the largest solar panel array in Labrador, a planned green waste disposal and grey water filtering system, flush toilets, showers, electrically alarmed fencing for protection from polar and black bears, and armed bear guards on 24-hour watch” and can accommodate 80 people at a time (Tourism Nunatsiavut 2012a). Several packages are now offered for visits of various lengths of time to the base camp and the park at prices ranging from \$1,700 for a 3-day package to \$6,500 for a 7-night luxury package (*ibid.* 2012b). During the 2011 season, 222 people stayed at the Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station (Parks Canada 2011: 49).

In addition, efforts have been made since 2011 to increase regional benefits and ownership in the major transport operations servicing the region. CAI Nunatsiavut Marine Inc., a joint venture between CAI Investments and the Labrador Inuit Capital Strategy Trust, has taken over operations of the MV Northern Ranger and the MV Sir Robert Bond, which is mostly used for marine transportation to Nunatsiavut communities (CBC 2011b). In 2012, the NGC became a 51% shareholder of Air Labrador (Nunatsiavut Group of Companies 2012b). NGC Nunatsiavut Marine Inc. and Air Labrador are among the main marine and air travel services that tourists use to reach Nunatsiavut communities and TMNP, and both provide residents with a few jobs through their operations.

Local entrepreneurs are also involved in tourism. Nunatsiavut communities have small hotels (sometimes associated with a restaurant and bar), boarding houses, and small bed & breakfasts that put up or cater to tourists who do not come by cruise ship (e.g., Atsanik Lodge in Nain, Adlavik Inn in Makkovik, Amaguk Inn in Hopedale, Blakes Units and Sinittavik B&B in Rigolet). These types of businesses create the most jobs. The Atsanik Lodge in Nain, for example, employed 25 people in 2008 (Interview 3, Nain, July 2008). There are also transportation services like boat charters to Torngat Mountains National Park (e.g., Webb Services Ltd., and CJ Webb Inc. in Nain). Other local businesses, like grocery stores, benefit from visitor spending during community visits. This same spending helps self-employed local artists and craft shops. Arts and crafts, including soapstone sculptures and traditional clothing, have provided local artists with a source of income for decades. Northern Labrador had first supported this kind of work in the 1970s by establishing arts and craft councils in the communities and handicraft centres for display of the products (Brice-Bennett 1986: 56). Today

there are several independent carvers, as well as arts and craft producers in all communities of the region. In addition, some communities have craft shops that help local artists sell their products. In Nain, Torngat Arts and Crafts Inc. was created in 2009 to improve marketing and to centralise buying and selling. A store has been opened there for this purpose. It includes a workshop area where artists can make their products (OKalaKatiget Society 2009). Rigolet also has a community-run craft shop, and Makkovik received funding in 2011 to rebuild a craft centre that had originally closed in 2007 (CBC 2011c; Town of Rigolet 2012).

In addition to these regional participants, Nunatsiavut residents also find limited work with outside tourism operators or cruise ships that come to the region. In the 2008 season, five residents worked as guides for Cruise North Expeditions (AANDC 2009). It is unknown how many jobs were created for residents in all regional tourism-related operations and services. Overall, the total number is still very low and so their effects on the regional economy must be limited.

Nunatsiavut needs more jobs. It has a very young population with a median age of 30, about 14 years younger than the provincial average of 44 (Statistics Canada 2012). As a result, many young people are and will be entering the labour force. The current job shortage in the region is reflected in a high unemployment rate, 31.5% in 2006¹ (Statistics Canada 2007). This figure, however, provides only a snapshot of labour force activity in the week prior to census day and is thus of limited value. In Nunatsiavut, many jobs, especially those in the resource industries, vary not only with the availability of resources and prices on the world market but also on a seasonal basis, being limited to the summer months. Residents rely on Employment Insurance benefits in the winter. In 2005, only 35% of the labour force worked year-round and 58% of those working part-year were employed for less than 20 weeks (Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency 2009a-e). Other residents might not be looking for work because none is available at the time. All of this causes the unemployment rate to fluctuate significantly throughout the year, making it hard to describe the actual situation with one statistic (Fugmann 2011: 63). Furthermore, the 2006 unemployment figures do not reflect changes that occurred in the public and private sectors with the coming into effect of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and the start-up of the Voisey's Bay nickel mine (*ibid.*: 59).

So is tourism a solution to unemployment? Keep in mind that this industry is still small, that the demand for tourism and especially the number of tourists is very low, and that most tourism jobs are currently part-time (Interview 3, Nain, July 2008; Interview 11, Nain, July 2008). Other opportunities are confined to volunteer positions (e.g., on community welcome committees). In addition, employers are unable to pay high wages while keeping their businesses profitable (Interview 3, Nain, July 2008; Interview 11, Nain 2008). Low-paying service jobs in tourism cannot compete with relatively high-paying jobs in mining (e.g., at the Voisey's Bay nickel mine) or the

¹ Employment data from the 2011 census had not been released yet at the time of writing.

public sector (in the Nunatsiavut Government and other public entities) (Interview 3, Nain, July 2008).

In this competitive market, tourism-related businesses find it difficult to hire qualified employees, since better-educated residents are drawn to jobs in other sectors (Fugmann 2011: 66-67; Müller and Jansson 2007: 10). Tourism jobs are commonly entry-level service employment with relatively low education requirements and are therefore accessible to a wide range of working people (e.g., Müller and Jansson 2007: 4), although some specialised training is needed to learn how to deal with visitors. Such training is not always available yet, but the Director of Tourism of the Nunatsiavut Government has made it a priority for Tourism Nunatsiavut (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008).

Last but not least, as with some activities in mining or fisheries, tourism is seasonal with most tourists arriving in the summer between July and September. Thus, the tourism industry does not provide job opportunities during the off-season but does so during the months when more jobs are available anyway. Nevertheless, the dominant resource sector can be very unstable in Nunatsiavut, as seen in recent developments in the fisheries (e.g., through layoffs in fish processing plants in Nain) and in other resource industries (e.g., the reduction in quarry operations of NGC Nunatsiavut Construction Inc.) (Fugmann 2011: 178 and 180). During these downturns, tourism can create alternative employment opportunities for laid-off workers. Conversely, when resource industries are strong, tourism employers may find it hard to compete with the higher wages.

Conclusion

Can tourism diversify the regional economy and provide an alternative to the more established resource and public sectors? In Nunatsiavut, tourism has been formally developed and marketed by regional stakeholders only since 2006. Tourism Nunatsiavut, despite its small size and brief existence, has worked hard to get tourism off the ground and has initiated many projects that have room to grow and can be built on in the future with a view to increasing both the contribution of tourism to the regional economy and the benefits to residents. In particular, Torngat Mountains National Park is increasingly showing its potential to attract nature-lovers from around the world. Its beauty has been featured in several popular magazines like *National Geographic*. Cruise tourism, which mainly benefits outside operators, currently contributes the most to the Nunatsiavut tourism industry, as is the case in other coastal Arctic regions. Tourism in this remote region will, however, continue to depend on outside factors, such as the state of the global economy and, especially, tourist preferences. Because of the high cost of living, success will depend on attracting enough visitors who can afford the travel costs, and this region will always be in competition with other remote northern regions that, to the outside visitor, are just as interesting. Promoting its uniqueness in the global tourism market will therefore be an ongoing task for Tourism Nunatsiavut.

As with other remote regions that are trying to use tourism to develop and diversify their economies, success is not guaranteed—as numerous examples worldwide have shown (Hall 2007: 19). As a very young economic sector, it still has little impact on residents and communities in terms of creating business and employment opportunities. The tourism industry is still very small, the numbers of visitors still very low (especially those visiting Nunatsiavut communities), and the resulting economic spin-offs for the region still very minor. Like any other economic sector in a remote northern location, several “barriers to entry” have to be overcome. At present, Nunatsiavut has several priorities: develop the necessary infrastructure and accommodations; put up signage in the communities; help artists; teach residents how to deal with tourists and how to be good hosts; and advertise the region to the outside world (Interview 35, Nain, July 2008; Interview 36, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, August 2008). Yet, despite the direct and indirect opportunities it may create for residents in the form of entry-level jobs and business opportunities, it will likely remain seasonal while facing strong competition from higher-paying and often more stable jobs in the resource and public sectors. Overall, tourism has certainly the potential to contribute to a more diversified economy in Nunatsiavut and will create limited additional employment and business opportunities for residents. For the foreseeable future, however, it will not have a large impact on the regional economy. Nor will it be a competitive alternative to more established industries.

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