TOURISM IN REGIONS OF NATURAL RESOURCE DECLINE; A NEWFOUNDLAND CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is increasingly touted as a development opportunity for coastal and rural areas affected by natural resource decline. As commercial fisheries face depletion the world over, planners and governments look to tourism to help coastal communities recover from economic crisis, but little work has been done to explore if the investment in tourism can ever replace the full human ecological value of the fishery, including its impacts on a region’s culture, economy, and environment. This ethnographic study examines the impact of the 1992 cod moratorium on Newfoundland’s coastal communities over the last 17 years, and particularly how marine heritage tourism has emerged as a model in the province’s revitalization attempts. Because the cod moratorium triggered Newfoundland’s modern tourism industry, the island provides a finite time and space within which to study the impact of the industry on a rural place and its people. This study reports on dozens of interviews with Newfoundlanders involved in tourism and fisheries (including current and former fisherman and fish plant workers, boat captains, tour operators, community development and government representatives, residents, community leaders, academics, and front line staff at tourism destinations, visitor centers and museums). Interviews and first hand observations of marine tourism destinations show that marine heritage, in particular, has contributed to both the revitalization of devastated outports and the rise of tourism in these coastal communities. Though the study shows that tourism will never replace an exhausted natural resource, it can play an important role in the future of coastal and rural areas.

Keywords: Heritage, fisheries, Newfoundland, tourism, coastal.

REFERENCES


