

**Women and tourism in White Harbour, Newfoundland:
Filling the Gap between Tradition, Innovation, and Globalization**

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Rural communities, often called outports, throughout Newfoundland are currently experiencing important socio-economic changes. External forces, such as the ever-growing oil industry in Alberta and provincial planning based upon centralization, are undoubtedly reconfiguring the life and future of people living in small, isolated outports. For many of them, tourism has become a way to secure their present and future by exploiting their rich historical and natural heritage. A highly successful example of a tourism oriented endeavor in rural Newfoundland is the Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows in the Northern Peninsula.

White Harbour is a small community on the Baie Verte Peninsula of Newfoundland and is used here as an example in a study attempting to understand the reasons behind the lack of tourism-related initiatives, particularly on the part of women. White Harbour has it all: an important archeological site, a museum, rich history, traditions, and a wonderful natural setting. Women in White Harbour, most of them aged 30–60, stay home and do not seasonally migrate to Alberta as many men do. They perfectly understand the potentiality of their place but most do not attempt any tourist-related entrepreneurship. As the study will reveal, there are many, often contrasting reasons why women do not become entrepreneurs. These reasons, which may be personal, cultural, or economic are very different in character and constitute a complex web that often discourages women from starting small businesses like coffee shops, art galleries, or bed and breakfasts. This study aims to uncover some of these difficulties and offers a unique opportunity to reflect upon them. The findings are discussed in light of the latest works on rural communities, women, tourism, and globalization.

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To a little angel.

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Introduction

Background

I found myself fascinated by the Rock¹ long before I landed on its shores on June 17, 2008 – using a fast and comfortable airplane rather than a ship like my illustrious predecessors Leif Ericson and John Cabot. In 2004, while taking some anthropology courses at California State University in Los Angeles, I had the opportunity to interview my spouse’s colleague at UCLA who came from St. John’s. He talked passionately about the old Newfoundland tradition of *mumming*. His description of the playful and sometimes wild visits masquerading villagers pay to their family and friends before Christmas fascinated me, awakening in me the curiosity to learn more about Newfoundland, its people and traditions.

I have been always fascinated by isolated places, by places that few consider. When I first decided to go to Newfoundland for my first ethnographic adventure, some colleagues at the University of Waterloo questioned my choice: “Why would you go to Newfoundland? There is nothing there for you. You will be isolated, and people drink a lot!” While I encountered many preconceptions about Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders before I started my fieldwork, I decided that I wanted to judge for myself whether or not there was anything out there. So I packed my things and went.

I became interested in the economic situation in Newfoundland in which tourism, together with the oil industry in Alberta, play a very important role in building the province’s future. I became especially interested in understanding the way women in particular were taking risks in developing a tourism industry and in the management of the rich cultural and natural resources of Newfoundland.

¹ The island of Newfoundland is familiarly called “The Rock” because of its orography.

Scope of this study

Initially, the aim of this thesis was to assess and discuss the economic strategies that women in White Harbour – a pseudonym- have been developing over the last ten years, particularly in the field of tourism and heritage. My intent was to study the ways women in a small fishing community in Newfoundland cope with the chronic agony of a declining fishing industry, whose end was officially declared on July 16, 1992, by a Moratorium² on fishing.

Supported by encouraging statistics and statements about ever-growing tourism in Newfoundland (<http://www.Newfoundlandlabrador.com/TravelTrade/WhiteHarbouratsNew.aspx> and <http://www.hnl.ca/pressreleasedetails.asp?id=480>, electronic documents, accessed 11/17/08) as well as by the fact that the community I was going to study seemed to have developed some sort of economic strategy related to its heritage and natural sites, I thought the community was in a transitional state. My research suggested that it was moving from a traditional economy based primarily on fish and fish processing to a new economy based on the area's natural and cultural heritage. The main idea was thus to study the economic strategies that were already in place and had experienced a certain amount of success in order to develop a possible model of intervention that could help other small communities with similar needs all over the world. The original goal was thus to study the home-based economic strategies related to tourism and heritage developed by women in White Harbour to partly counterbalance the often unstable and seasonal wage work of most of the men in the town. The assumption was that, given the declining situation of the fishing industry along both the Canadian and American Atlantic coasts (Byron 2003), women had limited local economic strategies. It seemed plausible that home-based work would represent an important way to supplement their incomes while also attending to their children and husbands.

² Moratorium: 2. A suspension of an ongoing or planned activity: a moratorium on the deployment of a new weapon. (The American Heritage Dictionary, 4th edition, electronic document 2000).

The International Labour Conference (1994; 5) defines home-based work “as the production of goods or the provision of service for an employer or contractor under an arrangement whereby the work is carried out at a place of the worker’s own choosing, often the worker’s own home”. This definition, however, exclusively describes dependent home-based work, that is, jobs carried out by the worker at home but whose profits go to the employer, whereas I was interested in independent or entrepreneurial home-based work, such as a bed and breakfast or a coffee shop. According to the web sites I found during my initial screening of businesses currently operating in White Harbour, there was a bed and breakfast, a coffee shop, a museum with a gift shop, and an RV campground. I assumed that these tourism-related activities would also contribute to the production and sale of local goods and crafts.

However, immediately after I started my fieldwork, I noticed that the few strategies related to tourism were highly undeveloped and insufficient to ensure economic stability or long-term prospects for further development. Thus a shift in the focus of this study was necessary, a shift that was surprisingly stimulating and revealing. As I discovered, fieldwork does not always go as planned, and many anthropologists³ experience a shift in focus once they arrive in the field. Within my first two weeks in White Harbour, I recognized that my preconceptions did not fit reality. Nonetheless, as a first time fieldworker, I was insecure about letting go of my original focus. However, the situation I found once I stepped into the life of the community was so striking, interesting, surprising, and even controversial that my initial uncertainty about which road to take soon disappeared.

³ Barbara Anderson (1990; 3) had wanted to go to Ghana; however, after she found out she was pregnant she decided to go to Denmark. Likewise, Kahn’s (1986; xi) original study was about indigenous horticultural rituals focusing on the human qualities attributed to taro. Instead, she wrote about the Wamirans’ cultural concepts of food and hunger. Briggs (1970a; 3) also had to change course once in the field. She had initially wanted to look at shamanism but, as she learned once she got there, it was no longer being practiced. Instead, she studied the behavioral patterns of the Utku.

Consequently, the main question underlying my research changed, and I concentrated on the reasons why the tourism industry had not yet picked up in a place abounding in history and natural beauty. Why hadn't the inhabitants of White Harbour taken advantage of their rich heritage and natural resources? What difficulties were women in White Harbour encountering in developing their business strategies? What internal and external, i.e. global, forces were influencing White Harbour and its inhabitants?

I decided to concentrate my research chiefly on women for several reasons:

First, being a woman myself, I thought it would be easier to approach my informants and to build a trustful relationship with them. Secondly, knowing that it was mainly men in White Harbour who were leaving to work in Alberta seasonally, I thought that local entrepreneurial activities would more likely lie in the hands of women. Thirdly, there was a gap to fill in the recent research based on women and tourism-related activities in Newfoundland.

In fact, as soon as I started reviewing the literature to prepare my thesis proposal, I noticed a gap in the feminist research in the last 6-8 years. The most important and recent works about women and the economic strategies they have developed seemed to stop with the year 2000 (e.g., Neis 2000 and Binkley 2000) and did not specifically pertain to tourism. Furthermore, studies related to the history and collapse of the Newfoundland fishing industry (Sider 1986, 2003; Sinclair 1988; Harris 1998) as well as to its cultural and social crisis (Clark 1986; Sinclair 1988), governmental policies, and presentation in the media have generally presented the fishery, its development, and crisis as a male construction. Except for some gender-oriented works (Klein and Davis 1988; Murray 1979; Davis and Gerrard 2000), most studies overlook the fact that the majority of people actually affected by the tragic halt of the fishing industry in Newfoundland were women (Binkley 2000; 324).

Binkley, in quoting Williams' work on women and the fishery crisis (1996; 1), points out that "in Atlantic Canada 50,000 people who worked in the fishing industry and another 47,000 people working in fishery-dependent sectors have been affected by the fishery crisis. Of the 35,000 fishers and plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador, about 12,000 women lost their jobs. (Ibid.). Moreover, more women lost their jobs as unpaid shore crew active in their husbands' fishing enterprises (Neis 1996; 36). Women who used to work for and with their husbands as bookkeepers, as cooks for the crews, and as fish processors suddenly saw both their family incomes and social identities disappearing disintegrate.

The end of the cod fishery industry has, eventually, seen the birth of a province 'that is currently experiencing inequality, poverty, and dependence at two levels--both nationally and within Newfoundland' (Johnstone 1983). Reflecting a view in contemporary feminist theory (Moore 1994; Sachs 1997), this study will, however, not focus narrowly on women. Men's role, opinions, and points of view will also be part of this research as both a contrastive and complementary element, even though, I admit, they will not be central. Indeed, I have chosen to chiefly concentrate on women based on the following factors: as I have already said, as a woman, it was easier for me to engage with other women and I noticed from the beginning that women were generally more available – many of them were either housewives or had a part-time job- and were thus more willing to talk to me. Time constraints also represented an important factor in the informants' selection: two months were barely enough to interview around 20 people and to get acquainted with the social and economic situation in White Harbour. Moreover, I wanted to explain the differences between what I found and what I anticipated in my original research design. I thought, on the basis of such evidence as the town web site, that I was going to find and study a successful tourist sector run by women, and instead I found some lapsed intentions to develop such a sector. As my intention for my further graduate study is to continue on this path, I will certainly give men an equal voice in my future research on these matters.

Moreover, the aim of this study is to go further than the many works related to the social and economic crisis that began in 1992. This is important for two reasons. First, the most relevant works related to women's issues in rural Newfoundland (Porter 1985; Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Davis 2000; Neis 2000; Binkley 2000) focus on the way women were dealing with the crisis of the cod fishery in a time framework that does not go beyond the year 2000, that is, within the first decade after the collapse of the fish industry. Secondly, most women-oriented works have not yet sufficiently studied the active economic and community-building roles of women involved with tourism, heritage, and culturally related occupations. However, their role has become more important, and it is slowly changing the face of their communities. Even though most men in many outports are still employed in fishing related activities (Community Account 2006, electronic document⁴), women's work is no longer defined by fishing-dependent households. It is important to underline the fact that a shift in work also means a shift in livelihood. Thus, work and the broader issue of livelihood must be studied together. Livelihood as an anthropological concept is described (Wallman 1984) as the dynamic interaction between the economics of subsistence (Binkley 2000), that is, "making shelter, transacting money, and preparing food [...] or exchange in the market place" (Binkley 2000; 324 quotes Wallman 1984). Livelihood also encompasses matters related to ownership, circulation and management of skills, knowledge, relationships, and information together with "the affirmation of personal significance and group identity" (Ibid.). Traditionally, a fisherman's wife's livelihood could be separated into three complementary and often overlapping spheres: work within the home, work for the household fishing enterprise, and work outside the home (Binkley 2000).

These are a few of the many issues that, like fog from the sea, began emerging from the very beginning of my fieldwork. Fortunately, the fog soon disappeared and a new horizon opened up a

⁴ Community Account is a database of statistics related to all communities in Canada. It is part of the Census Canada database.

new way of approaching and understanding people and their culture, the natural beauty surrounding them, and the rest of the world in which they are contemporaneously out- and insiders.

Outline and key arguments

As mentioned in the previous section, my original focus changed almost as soon as I started doing fieldwork. The shift went from analyzing successful locally based business related to tourism and heritage and led mainly by women to highlighting the many reasons –both local and global- behind the lack of this kind of entrepreneurship.

The main body of my thesis will discuss the diverse factors that prevent many women in White Harbour from creating local run businesses based upon the place’s rich cultural, historical, and natural heritage. The reader will soon notice that there is actually a very complex intersection between economic factors such as the dying fishing industry and the profitable oil industry in Alberta, the old pluriactive⁵ and locally based economy versus the relatively recent provincial trend towards centralization and historical reasons and consequences such as the effects of the merchant system as well as global politics and economics.

During my fieldwork in White Harbor, Eric Schwimmer’s ideas on the meaning and future of anthropology and anthropological research became an important leitmotiv in my research. He writes that “the way that every material and immaterial context is understood by local subjects should be the principal subject of anthropology. From this point of view, humanity’s future is played out locally” (Schwimmer 1994; 173 quoted by Gagne and Campeau *Anthropologica* 50 2008; 13-22).

Schwimmer’s main concern was that of understanding “what the connections are between subjects and contexts, how local subjects interpret these contexts and how they decode their inherent

⁵ The concept of ‘pluriactive economy’ as an economy based upon the exploitation of more than one resources such as fishing, gardening, and cutting woods will be discussed more in depth on page 87

contradictions and inconsistencies” (Gagne and Campeau 2008; 13). My analysis will particularly focus on local contests rather than on global ones. Nonetheless, in order to truly understand what is happening at the local level my discussion will rely upon a dialogic perspective on the different and often contrastive ways local and global contests mutually influence each other.

The key arguments upon which this work is based are thus the following:

- highlighting and understanding the reasons presented by women in White Harbor for taking few initiatives in starting local businesses based upon the place’s undoubtedly rich historical and natural heritage;

- discussing local, global and, historical factors which have contributed to women’s real difficulties in establishing themselves as entrepreneurs;

It is hoped that this thesis might help span a bridge between the women’s and their community’s particular interests, reasons, and difficulties and those of the provincial government in order to create a political and economic agenda that better responds to the social and economic reality of the myriads of outports scattered along Newfoundland’s coast.

Planning and organizing the study

Fieldnotes; White Harbour, Wednesday 18 June 2008

A thin and persistent fog has welcomed us –my husband and me- this morning, our first day in White Harbour. Our house is simply beautiful: it looks over the harbour and it reflects itself in the algid and dark waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Through tall and narrow windows I see the steep road leading to the museum, the gulls flying low, almost caressing the water, and tiny and colorful houses that interrupt the monochrome of this gloomy, gray day.

In the following sections, I will discuss this study's methodology. As this was my first experience as an ethnographer and given the short time I had available for my fieldwork, methodology is a central part in my discussion. The emphasis on methodology is important in this work because it constitutes a sort of counterpoint to my data analysis. By giving detailed information on how I conducted my fieldwork, with whom I interacted and how, and what the current social and economic situation in White Harbour is, I wanted to create a canvas on which the reader could verify and discuss my data. Nonetheless, my study can also be seen as a contribution to current issues in fieldwork. Doing fieldwork is not just about writing an account of the other, but experiencing the other through one's self. The current epistemological orientation in anthropology (see Moore and Sander 2006 for an historical overview and discussion on epistemology in anthropology) is very interesting and poses many questions about how one creates knowledge through fieldwork. I perfectly agree with Hedicán (2001; 21) when he says that "anyone of us who has conducted fieldwork has a contribution to make to the epistemology of anthropology, to the manner in which knowledge is accumulated and formed". My own contribution, though limited, is offered in the hope that it may become a point of discussion and reflection for others involved in the process of creating knowledge and (perhaps primarily) for me as a future ethnographer.

Choosing the place to spend two months not only doing research but also living with and among strangers is of crucial importance. Given my initial assumptions and interests, the selection criteria were pretty straightforward. The village that was to become the subject of my research had to be

geographically distant from St John's in order to avoid any economic and social gravitation around Newfoundland's capital city. Furthermore, it had to be a small place with fewer than 500 inhabitants. The intention was to be able to interact with as many people as possible in a relatively short period of time. It also had to have developed some kind of economic strategies related to tourism and heritage, such as a museum and some shops. And last, but not least, in a burst of 'fieldworker-centrism,' it had to be beautiful, with stunning views of the sea and the mountains and plenty of hiking opportunities.

The planning process was a very exciting experience, and its strong self-reflexive character gave me the opportunity to, once again, put theory into practice. Having in mind some of Malinowski's lessons, I will try to present an accurate description of the methodology and instruments used during my fieldwork, because, like the great anthropologist, I think that

The results of scientific research in any branch of learning ought to be presented in a manner absolutely candid and above board. No one would dream of making an experimental contribution to physical or chemical science, without giving a detailed account of all the arrangements of the experiments; an exact description of the apparatus used; of the manner in which the observations were conducted; of their number; of the length of time devoted to them, and of the degree of approximation with which each measurement was made" (Malinowski 1984; 2).

The first step was to select a suitable fieldwork location based upon my criteria. The Internet was a fundamental research instrument which helped me plan quickly and efficiently. However, I also learned that not all information found on the Internet is necessarily true or up to date. My initial assumptions were mainly based on information found on the web. But once in the field, I discovered not only the inaccuracies of many of these but also a social and economic situation I could never have imagined from home. Although anthropological research is generally characterized as qualitative research, my own fieldwork experience taught me that quantitative research and data are often indispensable, particularly in the scouting and planning process. In fact, some internet sites such as Census Canada 2006 (<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/index.cfm>, electronic document) and Canada Community Profile 2006, based upon the Census of the same year, (<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census/index.cfm>, electronic document) became valuable and

reliable sources of updated information which made the screening process relatively easy and quick. In October 2007, after I had selected White Harbour as a possible fieldwork location, I wrote an email to the mayor. She seemed interested in my research from the very beginning. She requested additional information. I sent her a power point presentation with the aims and objectives of my research, as well as some requests, for example, help in finding me shelter for a period of two months. The mayor responded enthusiastically and we began exchanging emails regularly. She eventually offered me a room in her own house and all the help I would need for my research.

In planning this fieldwork, I had the opportunity to refine some techniques for building an open and respectful *rapport* with the people I was going to study. Before I began the fieldwork, I asked the mayor to post a letter in the town hall and in the museum stating the purpose of my presence. I did not want the inhabitants of White Harbour to be unprepared for my visit or to feel threatened or judged by me. Within the first week of fieldwork, I also organized a public meeting in which, with the help of a power point presentation and delicious sandwiches provided by the town of White Harbour as well as some cakes my husband and I baked, I introduced myself and my research to everyone. In one of her several emails, the mayor warned me about this initiative: “Now please do not be disappointed if only a few people show up. That's the way we are. Curious in many ways and not so in others” (personal email 05/20/08). To attract people, I increased my marketing campaign by spreading the news of the meeting, by hanging flyers everywhere, and by underlining the fact that there would be free food. This informal meeting took place in the early evening of Monday, June 22, 2008, in the Town Hall. Almost 20 people participated, mostly women, and I can honestly say it was a successful and very enjoyable experience. Later, some women told me they found it important that I introduced myself this way so that they would know what to expect of me and from my presence in White Harbour.

My husband stayed with me for the first week. I think this was of crucial importance because it helped situate me socially within the community; I was an adult, married woman. This factor was not a minor one, as most of my female informants were around my age and either married or living with a stable partner.

During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to practice what I had often read about in famous ethnographies: *participant-observation*. Many of my professors had sympathetically warned all of us about the power of participant observation--- an instrument so powerful that keeping it in balance was probably the most exhausting experience during fieldwork. When I came back from the field and ran immediately to my supervisor to share my experience with her, she looked at me with surprise and exclaimed: “You really did participant observation!” In the field, I did not immediately realize that what I had been doing was actually observing by participating; I rather thought my method was the natural way to get access to some of the most valuable information I needed for my research. Participant observation involves a variety of methods such as formal and informal interviews, direct observation and participation in the life of the group, self-analysis, and life-histories. It is all of these different research approaches that help the ethnographer to complete the puzzle, unveil the mystery, and eventually making sense of the most disparate and apparently disconnected bits of information she is exposed to

During my two months’ fieldwork experience, I recorded 14 interviews with the help of a digital recorder. These interviews were semi-structured. The interviewees were mostly adult women (12), ages 25 to 81, all married with children except for one single woman and two widows. Three women were retired; two were employed full time, and all the other informants were working either seasonally or part-time. I also interviewed two young men under the age of 40. They were both seasonal workers living outside of White Harbour. One of them was also an entrepreneur.

Many other informal conversations also made up my data, most notably several insightful, highly enjoyable and illuminating conversations I had with my host, the mayor, and her husband in their house. These conversations usually took place in the evening, often in front of crackling fire, accompanied by a chilled glass of wine. Some of my chats with the mayor involved one of my beloved specialty British teas and the Swiss chocolate I brought with me from Europe some weeks before, delicacies that soon became the talk of the town. It was especially during these familial conversations with the inhabitants of White Harbour, informal and confidential at the same time, that I had the precious opportunity to ‘experiment’ with my observations and intuitions and to demonstrate their accuracy or fallacy.

In addition to semi-structured and informal conversations, my fieldwork data included observations I made daily while participating in the everyday life of the community. From the beginning of my stay in White Harbour, I freely engaged myself in the museum. Soon my daily morning walk through the village, up the steep road that leads to Downtown and the museum, and my frequent stops to take pictures became a familiar morning ceremony in White Harbour. I was strange not only because I was a stranger and a foreigner but also because I was the only one in town without a car. I would walk everywhere within the town’s boundary, up and down the only paved road and the several bumpy side roads, and on the solitary and enchanting hiking trails that soon became my favorite refuge after a long day of human interaction. Many people were shocked to find out that I would usually walk to the end of one of the trails, lie down on one of the many benches I would find on the path and simply fall asleep, lulled by the sound of the wind and the sea.

My activity in the museum soon became not only valuable for my research, as I would spend many hours interacting with numerous persons and gaining important insights into the life of the community and the way people think and perceive themselves, but also highly satisfying in human terms. The curator of the museum, Rachel, her husband, her kids, her sisters, and some of the local

teenagers working at the museum for the tourist season became my little family. They introduced me to many aspects of their lives, such as fishing and the daily struggle to get money and to improve the social and economic life of White Harbour. My daily responsibilities included working at the reception desk and at the gift shop. At the reception desk, I would greet tourists and give them some information about White Harbour, its museum, hiking opportunities, among other things to do and see, whereas in the gift shop I would not only sell gifts but also give visitors information on the many extraordinary works of art sold there and produced by local artists. Selling local goods, especially the expensive ones such as Caroline's drawings on seal skin and meticulously stitched portraits, became a sort of game for all of us - trying to persuade tourists to own a unique piece of art by all possible means. I also did some little tours of the museum, but this was not my main task there.

Another strategy I employed was that of trying to help the community improve the quality and quantity of the services offered to tourists by interviewing some of the visitors. I wanted to give something back to the community; I knew this kind of feedback was important, but I also realized that people working at the museum did not always have the time and the knowledge to do it. I formally interviewed around 15 tourists and visitors to White Harbour and the museum, and I talked informally to many, many others. My set of questions was aimed at understanding what the community could do in future to attract more tourists and, therefore, to strengthen its position within the tourist market of the Baie Verte Peninsula. The results of these interviews were discussed with Rachel, the mayor, and many other people in White Harbour before I officially sent a summary to the mayor and the other town councilors to provide them with a form of written feedback.

Besides my work at the museum, I also volunteered on some of the locally established committees and helped them with some initiatives. I helped the Recreation Committee prepare the parade for Canada Day's celebration, I sold tickets at the annual White Harbour party, I helped the museum receive a group of almost 50 visitors at once, and I played security guard during the Come Home

Celebration in a nearby town to help the Fire Department raise extra money. I made clear from the beginning, during my introductory presentation, that I was there not to judge people but to understand them and possibly to help them. People got the message immediately and were happy to have found another much-needed volunteer.

Given my keen interest in folklore, which I abundantly shared with most of my informants, I also started another project within my initial one: collecting songs and ghost stories to be put into a booklet to be sold at the museum as a means of support. People in White Harbour responded enthusiastically; they were thrilled that someone was trying to use part of their culture to benefit the entire community. I soon found out that a local woman had already transcribed all the songs that my main informant for this matter, Aunt Emma, knew. As she had already done the most difficult part of the job, I decided that these songs had to be recorded in order not to lose the melodies. It was easy to collect around 12-13 songs in the few weeks that I was there. However, it became very difficult to get people to tell me ghost stories. So far I have collected only 5 or 6, even though I know for sure that there are several individuals in town who know more of these stories. One of the reasons why people, particularly the elderly, might not freely tell ghost stories could be the shame of being considered 'stupidly superstitious' in a world that no longer values this kind of lore. I would need a much longer stay in order to collect more ghost stories. The project has not been completed yet, due to time constraints, and I would like to go back next year to continue collecting both songs and ghost stories. My best photographs of White Harbour will be saved in a CD and donated to the museum which will make postcards of them to be sold in the gift shop. I came up with this idea because I noticed that the postcards sold in the gift shop were old and did not do justice to the beauty of White Harbour. On the other hand, I realized that it would have been too expensive for the museum to pay a professional photographer to take pictures! Naturally, I will not ask for any compensation, but Rachel, the museum curator, and I have agreed that my name will appear on these postcards.

During my two months' fieldwork, I used a wide range of technological devices. To record the interviews, the songs, and the ghost stories, I relied upon a very small digital voice recorder. During my fieldwork I transcribed about five interviews. Interviews have been transcribed respecting the informants' own speech without any editing except where ellipses indicate material that has not been included. The rest of the interviews were transcribed by a native English speaker after I returned home. My digital camera allowed me not only to take pictures but also to record live moments such as the public events I participated in as well as the memorable music and dancing of house parties. Besides my laptop, I also used a capable USB drive to safely store all my data, including pictures and videos.

Situating the fieldwork

White Harbour

White Harbour is located in Central Eastern Newfoundland, at the end of the Baie Verte Peninsula, in White Harbour Bay. According to Census Canada 2006, Community Profile (electronic document), White Harbour has a population of 320, with a percentage change in population in respect to the last Census in 2001 of -8.0 (population in 2001: 348). The median age of the female population is 46.3 years, whereas that of the male population is 51.6. White Harbour's median population age is 49.0, whereas Newfoundland and Labrador's median age is 41.7. These statistics give us a first glimpse into the demographic situation of White Harbour: the majority of the population finds itself in a pre-retirement phase. That means that within the next 10-15 years, most people currently living in White Harbour will retire. There are only 50 individuals under the age of 18 there, less than 25% of the total population. Many informants complained that White Harbour is actually dying because there are no kids around: "There used to be lots of children here in White Harbour. Today... you hardly see any of them on the street!" said Sarah, an elderly woman living in the Downtown.

During my stay, I met some of the women and men who migrate seasonally to work, mainly to Alberta. My work's main goal was not to trace and analyze the statistics of the place and its population; however, I must say that, according to my own experience and the individuals I met, female mobility was higher than its male counterpart. Either together with their spouses or on their own, women were more likely to leave White Harbour for a longer period of time. One must, however, read behind the numbers: female mobility is higher not only because women leave the outport to work, but also because it is mostly women who go to either college or university and, who therefore, leave White Harbour for an extended period of time. In most cases, they never come back again.

Welcome to historic White Harbour

White Harbour has been blessed by nature with a narrow and deep fjord that penetrates the land for about 1 km before it arrives at its sheltered Harbour. For this reason, since the 16th century, the outpost has been used by European fishermen as a perfect base for their seasonal fishing ventures. The presence of the French was particularly strong, even though these fishermen did not actually settle the place because they had no official rights on the land. With the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), France maintained the right to fish on Newfoundland's grounds but was not allowed to establish any permanent settlement that land having become part of the British Empire. Nonetheless, as the French were the first to consistently exploit the rich fishing grounds of White Bay, they called that coast of Terre Neuve Petit Nord, and the shore around the White Harbour and Red Bay became known as the French Shore. The orography of White Harbour is characterized by a rocky shore and coast that do not permit extensive development; houses are now being built on the hills opposite the shore because of a lack of flat ground.

Archeological evidence shows that White Harbour and its sheltered Harbour were first inhabited by the Maritime Archaic Indians approximately 4,500 years ago. The next group to settle the place was the Paleo-Eskimos around 3000 years ago, later replaced by the Middle Dorsets around 2000 years ago. The Dorsets used the soft soapstone found in the community to manufacture cooking pots, bowls and small oil lamps. Since 1915, the large soapstone quarry has been studied by archaeologists, but it was not until 1996 that the site was awarded National Historic Site Status, and the related museum was opened in 1999. This phase of settlement, therefore, provides part of the basis for White Harbour's potential as a tourist attraction.

Until 1964 White Harbour did not have either a road or electricity; the inhabitants would reach other communities by boat, and all goods, tools, and other necessities would also reach the village by sea. Like many other small outposts in Newfoundland, White Harbour's economy was based primarily on

fishing and seasonally supplemented by forestry. This style of life came to an end, an end as much feared as expected, with the Moratorium in 1992.

Today, White Harbour's economic life centers on the seasonal outmigration to Alberta. Men and women usually leave for short periods of time lasting from a few weeks up to four months. The great majority of them travel to Fort McMurray, a boomtown of 65,000, which "is considered the heart of one of Alberta's (and Canada's) major hubs of oil production, located near the Athabasca Oil Sands. Besides the oil sands, the economy also relies on natural gas and oil pipelines, forestry and tourism" (<http://www.fortmcmurrayonline.com/oilsands/welcome.aspx> Fort McMurray oil sands, electronic document, accessed 10/16/08). Fort McMurray represents for most people in White Harbour a sort of damned paradise: It provides a means of economic subsistence but it also requires considerable personal and familial commitments and sacrifices because of the long periods of time spent away. Many of my informants, however, see their work in Fort McMurray as instrumental, for it gives them the opportunity to earn a very high income –several men told me that qualified technicians get up to \$40/h. In addition, all expenses such as flight, accommodation, food and health insurance are taken care of by the company. Very few families have permanently migrated to Alberta; most of them prefer to stay in White Harbour while the husband or wife or both, if they have no children-- goes back and forth from Fort McMurray. Those who have moved wish to come back for their retirement. Jeremy, who moved to Alberta over 30 years ago, has been coming back every summer for many years, and he is now building a new house where, he hopes, he and his family will spend years to come.

White Harbour is divided into three distinct and distinctive neighborhoods: upon entering town, one passes Uptown; that is followed by the heart of the town, Midtown, where one finds most facilities such as the Harbour, the pub, the grocery store, the post office, the fire department within the city hall, and the town park. My favorite part in White Harbour was, however, Downtown; my daily walk

up the steep road leading to the museum would never fail to amaze me with its stunning view of the fjord delimited by imposing, wild mountains, the old, traditional houses, the museum waiting patiently for curious visitors, and the happy and busy children roaming around looking for adventure.

I would like to briefly guide the reader through White Harbour's neighborhoods and features in order to better visualize and understand what this place actually is and what it has to offer. First of all, it must be noted that although the three neighborhoods are part of the same town, they are considered by residents as three separate divisions with their own characteristics, people, and history.

Downtown, for instance, is the most isolated and peculiar of the three sections, with its tourist attractions such as the quarry site and the museum, and its old population. Downtown is still being affected by the fact that the road made it easily accessible to the rest of the town only 45 years ago. Before that, the place could be reached either by sea, from the Harbour, or by a steep and narrow trail up the hill. Even today, this sense of isolation has not yet completely disappeared: children who live in Downtown don't often go over the hill to play with kids living in the other two sections. I often had the distinct impression that the three neighborhoods represent three different and independent social dimensions, each with its own life.

About 1 km before entering town, one finds the new cemetery, a long and difficult trail leading to a stunning view of the town and the sea –the Three Humps trail- and a small, natural pool the youngsters use as their daily fun and refreshment during the summer. Upon entering White Harbour, a huge sign, hand painted by a local artist, welcomes visitors to this historic settlement. Houses are generally small but clean and tidy in appearance, gardens are generally very well taken care of, and the main street is usually clean even though several deep potholes make the journey to and through town a lively one. The Harbour consists of two piers; the smallest one is mainly for inshore boats, whereas the larger one is for offshore boats and vessels. The small pier was the location of many funny conversations I had with the fishermen who had just returned from their fishing trips and the

three women working as food inspectors. They all provided me with important information about the fishing situation in White Harbour and Newfoundland as well as with a deep insight into their lives as workers within the struggling fishing industry. Around the bigger pier, one finds a seal processing plant that processes part of the animal and sends the rest to another plant in LaScie; the daily loading of the trucks in the morning was one of the few, tangible signs of bustling economic activity. Close to this extensive plant another one will be opening its doors before the end of 2009. It will be another seal processing plant; its approach is meant to be holistic, that is, it will specialize in using all parts of the animal without wasting anything. It will employ 15-16 local workers, mostly full time. Besides the processing, it will also foster research by opening a laboratory where students from Memorial University and from Europe can work and do research. The new plant is owned by the family that hosted me during my fieldwork; it was exciting for me to see the development of this new project. The opening of the plant is generally seen as positive, as people in White Harbour hope that it will provide full- time jobs for many in town and, consequently, an opportunity for them to stay, instead of cyclically migrating to Alberta.

Midtown is the economic and social center of White Harbour with its pub, the Captain's Place, Kevin's grocery store, the fire department located in the Town Hall, the post office, and the town park where major events such as *White Harbour Welcome Home* and Canada Day celebrations take place. My house was located on a small, unpaved road overlooking the water and the other side of town with its colorful sheds, numerous houses clinging to the rocks, and the newly-built church in 2006. On top of the hill leading to Downtown is an antenna providing satellite communication.

Downtown's main features--- the quarry site, the museum, the old shed, and the trails--- are the main tourist attractions in town. In addition to hosting 6000 tourists a year, the museum also provides public internet access to both visitors and inhabitants all year round, as part of the government

assisted CAP project⁶. Only a few families live in Downtown, and the houses there are among the oldest in White Harbour.

The outport is guarded in a sinister way by the old cemetery, the Calvary, a rundown place located on the top of the hill overlooking the Harbour. White Harbour's main road is paved, but side roads are just gravel. In the last 8-10 years, White Harbour has made considerable efforts to improve its image and to appeal to tourists by cleaning up its roads, encouraging residents to take care of their gardens, and creating wooden sign panels with the town's symbol indicating street names, local attractions, and services such as the town hall. Most street names are actually surnames belonging to the numerically most frequently represented families living in that street and, therefore, they give a glimpse into the genealogy of the place.

During my stay, White Harbour's recreational committee proudly participated in the province's *Tidy Town Contest* for the second year. The week before the committee's arrival, the town looked like a busy and industrious ants' nest; almost everyone was busy cleaning up, cutting grass, and painting. Inhabitants took pride in improving their town and were looking forward to having the town listed among the tidiest towns in Newfoundland. At present, I don't know if White Harbour received the coveted recognition; the results should come before the end of 2009.

White Harbour is a place with great potential for economic development related to tourism.

However, as I will be showing in the section dedicated to the analysis of the data, several factors---local, national, and global---have put a stop to the growth of tourist activities.

⁶ The Community Access Program (CAP) is a initiative by the Government of Canada and administered by Industry Canada, whose aim is to provide Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills they need to use it effectively. (<http://cap-pac.ic.gc.ca/pub/aboutus/WhiteHarbouraticap.html>, Government of Canada web site, electronic document accessed 10/16/08).

Situating the fieldworker

Fieldwork notes, 23th June 2008

Even hanging your laundry could be the start for a discussion; people could come to you after noticing your new bedspread and asking where you bought it. That would drive me crazy! Being continuously observed, scrutinized, and x-rayed. Again, I have this foolish idea I am observing people whereas the truth is that I am being observed, and probably judged, by them!

I came to White Harbour as a stranger and I left as a friend. Before I began my fieldwork, the only contact I had was with the mayor, with whom I had exchanged emails for eight months prior to my arrival but whom I did not know personally. The other 319 inhabitants were unknown to me. They did not have names, personalities, or histories. With time, however, they gained definition and their opinions, stories, and attitudes towards life and its manifestations helped me to build, stone after stone, the castle that is my research.

During my ethnography, I stayed at the mayor's house where I was provided with my own room and plenty of freedom, as the mayor, a full time schoolteacher, and her husband, a business man, were very busy. On this subject, the mayor was clear from the beginning:

You can stay with us in our home but I am being very upfront when I say that you will have your own room and from there you can do as you please. My kitchen will be yours. I do not want any stress from having to feel like I have to entertain people ... (I have done a lot of this and I am burnt out from it). But however I do enjoy company and I do drink wine and enjoy just talking about life and sitting around. Your husband can stay here with you of course during his time. (Personal email 01/22/08)

After I had left White Harbour, the mayor told me that she and her husband often commented on the fact that it was like I was not there and that they felt I had been part of the family. This was a wonderful compliment to me because it meant I had created a trustful rapport with them. Even though the mayor and her husband were very busy, I would often sit with her and chat. Our conversations soon became my daily occasion to verify my data and to exchange ideas and to share

my thoughts and feelings. These conversations were intellectually exciting, heartwarming, hard and light, at the same time. I am infinitely grateful to the mayor for her time and insights; they enriched my research and provided valuable information that helped me to elaborate my thoughts.

I was perfectly aware of my social position within the village right from the beginning: I was not only a stranger and a foreigner, but also a researcher, and I was there to do research about people living there. However, I made clear from the start that I was not there to judge anyone but that I wanted to understand their way of life in order to be able to help other small fishing communities around the world. Everyone soon understood that my goal was neither to preach nor to change things, and that neither Greenpeace nor the government had sent me there to spy on them. Most people were very nice and polite with me from the beginning and would engage in informal conversations.

However, a few fishermen were afraid that I had been sent by some eco-oriented groups to stop the seal industry. In the second week of my residence, while I was spending some time on the pier chatting with some fishermen and asking about the way they hunt and process seals, one man in his 50s abruptly asked me: “Are you from Greenpeace?”

My answer was as candid as it was honest: “No, I am not part of Greenpeace. I don’t like animals to be killed but I understand your point of view, and if you are doing it the right way – i.e. without slaughtering the seals indiscriminately but killing them humanely by shooting them - and want to use everything that belongs to the animal, well, then that’s different.” The man looked deeply into my eyes; for a moment I felt like my thoughts were being passed through a powerful scanner. I felt judged. Nonetheless, the answer apparently satisfied him: from that moment on, nobody challenged me on such a matter again. I had passed my first test. It is hard to imagine my own position within the village and the rest of my fieldwork if my answer had been very different, that is, clearly opposed to what people in White Harbour do with seals. I spoke the truth when I said that I had not been sent by Greenpeace, and I shared my general opinion on such a controversial issue. Should an

anthropologist share personal opinions on controversial issues? My answer is that it depends. It depends upon the context. In my case, I was expressly asked to openly share my opinion. I could not possibly have answered with a general statement such as “I understand but the poor seals!” In other cases, I openly asserted my dislike for fish; no one was either offended or tried to convert me. And in cases where I had my own opinion but I also felt that I was not sufficiently informed about the issue, I would listen and admit my ignorance.

Building a rapport with one’s informants is always ‘risky business’: it involves lots of energy and it can be ruined very easily. Because of the close and often intimate relationship I built with some of my informants, my ethnography soon became ‘our ethnography,’ that is, a collaborative ethnography. I was lucky that nothing tragic happened during my residence in White Harbour that could compromise my relationship with the inhabitants. We had many lively and intelligent conversations, and I was often asked my opinion, which I gave because I felt that this was also a part of building a trusting relationship between us. Nonetheless, even though everything went pretty smoothly, this experience made me question a few things about collaborative and activist ethnography and anthropology.

In the *Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography* (2005), Lassiter introduces us to a compelling discussion on the nature and validity of collaborative and activist ethnography in which the center has shifted from the omniscient researcher to a relationship of mutual collaboration between the ethnographer and his subject, who becomes a consultant rather than an informant.

Even though throughout my fieldwork I tried to be open minded, collaborative, and democratic, I also noticed that collaborative ethnography has some hidden limitations, “not the least of which is its emergence as a very, although not exclusively, U.S.-centered project endowed with ethnocentrism about the construction of equity, democracy, and social justice” (Lassiter 2005; xii). Were my efforts to create a dialogue, to ‘read alongside the natives’ as prominent anthropologists such as James

Clifford, George E. Marcus, and Renato Rosaldo would say, another form, although unconscious, of domination? My main concern throughout my fieldwork was that of power and the politics of representation: Who has the right to represent whom and in what way? Certainly, my epistemological issues were not new in the anthropological panorama; thanks to the self-reflective discussion on the role of anthropology and its relationship to colonialism that has been going on for at least the past three decades (see, e.g. Asad 1973; Hymes 1972), things have changed noticeably. Nonetheless, I still felt that the fact that I was a researcher from the university (a socially recognized institution that notably produces individuals that will likely be running the economic and political scenario of the country in the future), that I spoke many languages, and that I was European ---all were elements that converged to create my many roles and personalities in White Harbour. Fortunately for me, most informants would say that Newfoundland's history and culture is closer to that of Europe rather than to that of Canada. At times, I was 'the professor,' an educated individual to show off when there were guests of importance – as in the case of the Tidy Town committee -- or when it was necessary to strongly assert the significance of White Harbour as both an historical and tourist destination to attract more visitors. At other times, I was simply the guest in need of protection and pampering. Moreover, I was also the worker and co-worker, the confessor, the new friend, and, I am sure, the weird, peculiar lady with a strange accent, notebook in one hand and camera in the other, walking up and down the village asking strange and often incomprehensible questions.

Shortly before leaving for White Harbour, I had been reading Barbara Anderson's (1990) account of her first fieldwork in a small fishing village in Denmark. During the academic year, while taking my Masters course in theory and methodology, we talked about the way ethnographers are perceived, tolerated, integrated, and sometimes refused by the people they aim to study. Behind Barbara Anderson's often goofy and entertaining attempts to master the language and culture of her informants, there is a truth that is grounded in ethics. Independently from one's theoretical orientation and approach, whether feminist, symbolic, interpretative, post-modern, or critical, a

genuine concern with ethics, that is, with “the moral responsibilities engendered by the ethically bound relationships between ethnographers and their interlocutors [...]” (Lassiter 2005; 75) should always accompany the entire ethnographic experience. Seen in this light, my ethnography became “a moral enterprise, and subsequently a political one; it is not an enterprise in search of knowledge alone” (Lassiter 2005; 79). These considerations soon raised concerns related to objectivity and anthropological activism. Despite the feminist and post-modern revolution that have contributed to reshaping anthropology (Barnard 2000; Bourdieu 1980; Knauff 1996; Moore 1988), many social scientists –and, I argue, particularly young and inexperienced social scientists like me! -- often still agonize over the legitimacy of their work as ‘science’, and consequently emphasize the importance of detachment, objectivity, abstraction, and quantifiability in their work. Boas’ ideas of context-based rather than absolute ethnographic truths often echoed in my mind and literally became my theoretical companions throughout my journey as an ethnographer. However, it must also be said that the presence of a hypothesis and commitment to a theoretical orientation may lead the researcher to selectively collect information that is consistent with his/her preconceptions and to ignore any counter evidence. The interview process in itself may include leading questions that could influence the character of the informant's answer.

I became conscious of these personal biases immediately after I started my fieldwork. In White Harbour, I was an ethnographer but at the same time I was also an individual with her own life history and theoretical approaches and views. I confess it was not always easy to pass over my own ideas and worldviews: I often found that the main problem was that of neutrality. Because I am who I am, I could not pretend to be objective in absolute terms.

Discussion: Women's Struggles—caught between past and present

In the following sections I will present and discuss some of the data collected during my two months' fieldwork in White Harbour. The purpose is to understand the various factors that keep women from taking advantage of the historical and natural heritage of White Harbour in order to establish a tourism-related business that could, at least seasonally, improve their often unstable economic situation.

The merchant system: a ghost of the past

At the beginning it was the fish

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has been inhabited for at least 5,000 years. Nonetheless, it was not until an Italian merchant turned Englishman, John Cabot, visited in 1497 that the rich Grand Banks became the favorite fishing ground for fishers coming from Portugal and the Basque region of Spain. The Portuguese and Spanish fishery, however, did not keep up with that of France, whose potent vessels setting out from Brittany and Normandy soon took the lead in the lucrative codfish-based business.

By the end of the sixteenth century, England came to value Newfoundland and the codfishery as never before; the latter as good food for its navy, the former as an excellent sea training facility, "turning green men and boys into potential recruits" (Mayor 2001; 68). The fishery remained migratory, though: the venturers would sail every March and April from the ports of the West Country in England and would spend the summer fishing on the island. Soon, the competition between French, English, and Spanish fishermen to assure the best section of shoreline—or 'fishing room'—became fiercely intense, and fishing rights pertaining to both the right of every ship to show up in the Harbour and the section of shoreline each one could claim were established and constantly

enforced: “[...] the captain of the first boat to arrive in a harbour took the title ‘admiral’, and the second to show up in the harbour, through officially ‘vice-admiral,’ was dubbed the ‘lady’. In later years, the third in line was accorded the title of ‘rear-admiral;’ [...] (Mayor 2001; 69).

Before Newfoundland became a part of the British Empire, most fishermen found on the island were French. French vessels roamed the rugged coast of what is still called today *Le Petit Nord*, an area comprising the coast of southern Labrador, the peak of the Northern Peninsula, and the Baie Verte Peninsula. The French were particularly interested in the seal fishery as well as in permanent settlements in the Avalon Peninsula, where the English had already established some outports. Soon the conflicting interests – fish and land -- of these two European Powers brought them to an open encounter.

Weakened by a long conflict with France, England increased the size of its navy by utilizing the ships and men usually active in the Newfoundland fishing trade. Immediately, a handful of entrepreneurs and opportunistic citizens, mainly from St. John’s and Conception Bay, exploited the situation and took over by that time absent migratory trade and started to collect fish and send it to the European markets desperate for cod. This action marked the rise of a new breed of merchants whose profits would stay and be re-invested in Newfoundland. The original migratory character of the Newfoundland fishery was undoubtedly changing, and “in more and more places it became family-based and self-sufficient” (Mayor 2001; 185). The stationary settlement of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as the evolution of a new economy saw the rise of a new method of conducting the fish trade: the credit or ‘truck’ system.

The ‘truck system’: exploiting the outports

The ‘truck system’ or merchant system remained the only way of fish trading in Newfoundland and Labrador well until into the twentieth century. Sider (2003; 20), however, notes that the truck system

was “outlawed in Britain in the early nineteenth century”. The system itself was relatively simple; in the spring and throughout the fishing season, the merchant would supply the fishermen and their families with the goods they needed in credit against the “cod landed and cured over the months ahead” (Mayor 2001; 186). Furthermore, the fact that the merchants actually never paid the fishermen,

prevented the fishers from expanding and developing their fishery much beyond what their merchant would allow –bigger boats, more nets, a more developed fishery capable of working further offshore and handling larger catches for longer seasons [...]. A more developed fishery could scarcely have been so tightly controlled by merchants as was the small-boat, near-shore fishery. (Sider 2003; 20)

My older informants often recalled the times when the truck system was the only way of making a living and how hard it was to survive. Aunt Gert, now in her early 80s, commented as follows on her past life under the merchant system:

I: Ja. And, well, I suppose, I guess the merchants...like you were bargaining? You gave a fish to the merchants and they gave you food, out of it.

C: Was it enough for you and your kids and your husband?

I: Oh Ja! Yes, I mean...we get flour the year they chipped a fish, and 7-8 boxes of butter and 10-15 sacks of sugar and...

C: So, that would be for one year or just for the winter?

I: Before the winter.

The truck system’s economic impact upon fishing families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador was very heavy: “a lifetime of debt was little incentive to delivering quality fish, especially when the culler who graded it was employed by the merchant. [...] As a result, much of the Island’s fishing industry languished in the backwoods of the world’s markets” (Mayor 2001; 186). The truck system not only created a static and cashless economy in which the merchant was the only member active in setting the prices, both for the fish caught and the goods supplied to the fishermen, but it also “imposed poverty, suffering, and hardship upon Newfoundland fisher families –in ways that were, in sum, extraordinarily destructive of people’s lives” (Sider 2003; 23). Isolated, uneducated, chronically

impoverished, and insufficient in number to see any buyer competition for their catch, these people became economically immobile and constantly at the mercy of both the merchants and the fluctuating European markets. The real and constantly threatening problem in each outport was that of subsistence. The truck system showed itself to be a valuable instrument of economic and social control, for

families remained totally dependent upon “their” merchant, who controlled access to crucial fishing supplies, including salt, twine, building supplies, and eventually nets, and similarly controlled access to key consumption items, including flour, tea, salt, pork, and lamp oil (Sider 2003; 26).

Thus the ‘traditional’ Newfoundland inshore, village and family-based fishery was substantially constrained by both the merchants and the political elite in St. John’s from the early 1850s up to the 1870s. This system also created the social geography of Newfoundland, that is, a myriad of small and separate communities scattered along the island’s rugged coastline. This happened chiefly because the truck system was a closed system, a system whose survival and success was dependent upon the exploitation and control of a basically static and backward fishery. I agree with Sider when he claims that

a more productive fishery, bringing in a constantly larger supply of fish, would have necessitated a fundamental transformation of the family-based, shore-curing process [...] a widespread development of mechanical drying factories and the proliferation of wage labor to process the fish [...] as well as the development of roads to move fish quickly from landing to processing locales (Sider 2003; 27).

Given these economic dynamics, fisher families and villages had to constantly push most of their grown children out of their communities by sending them “further north and east to settle less populated bays, where life was much harsher and necessarily more hard-working, [...] pursuing a fishery that was ...organized in essentially the same constrained style” (Sider 2003; 28).

From the early 1870s through the early 1890s, the Great Depression invested and changed forever the economic history of the western world: “the trends in the international economy since the 1870s saw a drawing-back from relatively free trade and stable international exchange payments [...]

(Alexander 1977; 15). Newfoundland stingily failed to develop its maritime economy: the shipbuilding sector declined, the quality of fish products could no longer compete with competitors, and its export trade was unable to adapt to new trading conditions.

In 1949, Newfoundland joined Canada. But things seemed not to improve, and it soon became clear that the island could not meet European competition in the salt fish trade. Alexander notes that

the pattern which had begun to establish itself about the turn of the century was continued after the war despite Newfoundland's inter-war reforms; Scandinavia and France were squeezing Newfoundland out of Europe [...] and the Europeans began entering the Western Hemisphere as Newfoundland's overall position weakened (1977;48).

It comes as no surprise that when, in the mid-1970s, Newfoundland finally got into the highly capitalized and technologically modernized offshore trawler fishery, the whole structure represented by a system that was localized, intrinsically weak, and technologically outmoded easily crumbled into dust, leaving rural Newfoundland in a terrible economic and social state.

An era comes to end; a new one never begins

I could not imagine life in White Harbour without the only paved road that, like a snake, goes through the village, easily climbs the steep hill, and finishes its course with a large island overlooking the entrance to the Harbour. Even though most inhabitants and tourists alike would often complain about the terrible state of that road whose potholes get bigger every year, it is really difficult to believe that up to the early 1960s, the only way to reach another community in most of Newfoundland's outports was by boat. Again, it is my oldest informants who helped me visualize life before and after the advent of the road. The road meant a huge technological advance for the outports' peoples; along with a paved road came electricity and telephone, and Newfoundland's isolation came to an end. At the same time, however, the island came in contact with an outside world whose high competitiveness she could not match in any way. Newfoundland's fishery was still inshore, whereas the Scandinavian, French, and Japanese trawlers would use their new technology to

get big catches offshore. The Lilliputian Newfoundland had no chance against the international capital-hungry, offshore fishery.

1992 *Annus Terribilis*: the Moratorium

Jenna, a single woman in her late 60s, was still upset when she told me about the dramatic moments that led up to the Moratorium. People desperately tried to fight back, and Tom, who was back then the fish plant's manager, went to several meetings in St. John's to try to reopen the plant. Plant workers in White Harbour also tried to demonstrate peacefully, but the police came. As one person described it to me: "You are not allowed to, you know,... you are not allowed to like stop trucks and stuff like that, I mean we were just letting them know that we cared enough and they came... [...] We just gave up..." A wounded economy, if not healed on time, will eventually die. This is precisely what happened on the July 16, 1992, when the already exhausted government of Newfoundland decided to call for a Moratorium on fishing. The agony leading up the Moratorium had been a long one. Alexander writes:

The industry had been in trouble from at least the end of World War I, and despite appearances to the contrary, its underlying trading position in the years immediately after was not strong. Once the post-war food shortages began to ease, in a climate of continuing scarcity of hard currency in Europe, Newfoundland's weak competitive position rapidly emerged as a major economic crisis for the new province (1977; 128).

Besides Newfoundland's inability to adapt adequately to a new way of fishing, it soon became clear that the huge trawlers, with their immense catches, were irremediably depleting the island's primary resource. The same codfish that earlier settlers described as so abundant as to slow down their boats was quickly disappearing. The small inshore boats would now return empty.

Many of the older inhabitants of White Harbour nostalgically recall the times when the boats returned to the Harbour so loaded with fish that they would lay on one side and their crew would not have any other place to stand than proudly towering above the abundant catch of the day. On that summer day back in 1992, that era came to end. What had seemed to be a precautionary, time-limited

measure to help the codfish to restore itself became a perpetual state. The economic and social consequences for each and every one of the outports were devastating.

Caught in between: Women and politics — the impossible dialogue?

The series of questions that emerged from my fieldwork experience have led me into a complex socio-economic system whose constituent parts often clash one against the other. White Harbour has it all: beautiful setting, friendly people, and historical and cultural treasures such as the quarry site and the French Shore. However, the tourist industry has not taken off in White Harbour. People in general and women in particular do not seem interested in pursuing this opportunity to secure their often unstable economic situation.

How could people there not see the place's potential? Why would they not invest some of their energy in building an economy, even with a seasonal character, based upon adventure and cultural tourism? Why have the few attempts towards this goal failed miserably? And what is stopping young women in particular from taking advantage of the many possibilities that the tourism industry can offer?

Since the Cod Moratorium in 1992, the world economy has changed dramatically and global influences upon isolated communities have started to become an important field of study (Byron 2003; Byron and Hutson 2001; Jussila et al. 2001; Narotzky and Smith 2006; Reining and Lenkerd 1980). Tourism in general and cultural tourism in particular have become a global phenomenon embraced by local, national, international, and transnational bodies: "UNESCO promotes cultural tourism as a means of preserving world heritage, the European Commission supports cultural tourism as a major industry, and the newly emerging nation-states of Africa and Central Europe see it as a support for national identity" (Richards 2007; 1).

Besides several studies on the nature and impact of tourism on marginal places (Williams and Shaw 1991; Richards 2007; World Tourism Organization 2006), there are not many accounts of the reasons why a place with potential for tourism- related economy like White Harbour has so far failed to develop. I think that it is crucial to understand the many reasons behind the underdevelopment of tourism in White Harbour as evidence for the different ways internal and global forces influence marginal places and their economic development.

“They want us to die!” Marginality versus Centralization

Most of my informants would consider White Harbour an isolated place, that is, a place far from the rest of the world.

However, many outports in Newfoundland are actually marginal rather than isolated places. The idea of marginality is an interesting and often misunderstood one. It comprises history, geographical space, socio-economic development, and power. According to Andreoli

Marginality is the situation of an area that is located ‘at the margin’ of a system as regards its socio-economic features. Thus, even when most of the economic and cultural power is concentrated in the centre, there are still some linkages, although sometimes very weak ones, between the margin and the other components of the systems (1992; 24 as cited in Jussila et al. 2001; 10).

Thus, White Harbour is not marginal because it is far away from St. John’s and the rest of the world, but because “it simply receives fewer benefits from it than other regions” (Jussila 2001; 11).

For example, I often heard people in White Harbour complaining about the fact that both the provincial and national government had been cutting primary services such as the school. Sarah summarizes well most inhabitants’ feelings about the school’s closure: “And then they closed the school. It was very sad, no more children around!”

For many in White Harbour, losing the school was like losing the opportunity to thrive in the future and a clear warning for all the inhabitants: the community is getting smaller and, therefore, it

represents an economic burden for the province that has to provide for its subsistence. However, services such as schools, post offices, and clinics are not only becoming expensive for the provincial government but also for those who remain in White Harbour and in any other rural areas. According to Sider the program started by the provincial government in 1954 and called the “Centralization Program”

had two motivations, both of which the government attempted to conceal: first, to close out smaller communities, which were very expensive to service (with mail, medical visits, schools, etc.) or were regarded as obstacles to the development of tourist parks (R. Matthews 1973; 53ff), and which paid no direct taxes: and second, to create a factory labor force (2003; 280).

Thus, it is generally expensive for a government to provide small and geographically isolated communities with basic services such as schools and clinics because (1) the number of outports scattered along Newfoundland’s coast is considerable - hundreds of outports with, often, fewer than 500 inhabitants; (2) transportation, installation, and general maintenance become expensive as a consequence of geographical isolation or inaccessibility; and (3) most outports are no longer ‘economically viable’, that is, they do not produce any form of wealth in loco as the fishery did in the past.

Another sign of marginality in White Harbour is the fact that the town, like many other outports in rural Newfoundland, no longer has its own priest in loco. The current Catholic priest resides in Baie Verte and serves four rural communities. He comes on Sunday and Tuesday, and to officiate at funerals, baptisms, and marriages. But he does not live in White Harbour; he is not part of it.

The quality of medical services is also declining overall in rural areas in Newfoundland. White Harbour, for instance, does not have a clinic. People have to drive for at least half an hour on a rough road to reach the nearest clinic in Baie Verte. Emergency services are provided, but they come from Baie Verte over the same road.

If, as Andreoli claims, a place becomes marginal due to lack of services and linkages to the main centre of socio-economic power, in our case the provincial capital St. John's, I can assert that White Harbour is, indeed, a marginal place. The phenomenon happening in rural areas everywhere in the world and defined as *deregulation* (deregulation today in politics and economics refers to reduction of services on the part of a government) "takes us into the domain of politics and stands for the current tendency of the State to back out of certain tasks or services, which it used to provide" (Jussila et al. 2001; 9). Central to this discussion is the question of what the primary tasks of the State are: should it provide security for the individual or general welfare for all? The resettlement program that started in Newfoundland in the 1960s and that followed the Centralization Program was the first official step towards the second solution: sacrificing the individual – in this case represented by small, isolated communities that were no longer able to provide for their economic subsistence -- for the benefit of an urbanized society. "They want us to die!" was the often desperate cry of many elderly in White Harbour. "We are becoming too expensive for the government; they want us to leave".

Before my stay in White Harbour, I had never lived in a place without any schools and medical services. During my stay in White Harbour there were no medical emergencies, luckily enough. Nonetheless, I sometimes found myself wondering what would have happened if I had a medical emergency. Thinking about the fact that the ambulance would have taken longer than half an hour to reach me truly scared me.

Marginality also comprises a situation of power and inequality. In order to avoid inequality the state "ought to induce the economic system to bring some sacrifice and renounce maximum profit in order to promote social equality" (Jussila et al. 2001; 11). If that was the way to go, then the economic system could play a vital role in guaranteeing a more reliable and loyalty-inducing rapport between the legislative and political system. However, power relations usually run quite differently: "the

political system depends on the economic system for its material survival (fiscal policy) and tends to favor asymmetrical relations” (Ibid.). The case of rural Newfoundland is emblematic. The needs of marginal communities are often overlooked by the central government. For example, Sue, one of my informants, could not understand the reason why the road leading to White Harbour looks like the moon, that is, full of craters. And, indeed, the only road that stretches from Baie Verte to White Harbour does not provide a pleasant ride at all. Sue, who works seasonally in Alberta, finds this particularly disturbing because she is sure that there are plenty of revenues coming from workers going to Alberta. These people pay taxes, and spend and invest money in their outport of origin by buying or renovating a house. Sue is not the only one in White Harbour who has noticed an increased influx of liquidity to the Baie Verte Peninsula in the last years. Sabrina, the customer service manager in the only bank in Baie Verte, has a good idea of what is happening in the region:

C: What about the new money, I call it new money, coming from Fort McMurray and Alberta?

I: We see a fair amount of that, you know, we have a fair amount of people, here in White Harbour where their husbands go away to work.”

Krista, the town clerk, says that one can see that there is more money in the way people care for their homes as well as from the fact that there are more SUVs and ATVS in town:

C: Do you see a big change when it comes to town finances? Do they invest more money in properties?

I: I see a difference in like people’s homes. People are doing their homes up more, stuff like that.

The main problem with rural areas in Newfoundland is, I believe, the objectification of marginality as a phenomenon on the part of most political forces. Marginality, however, is not an objective phenomenon, as “it is tied to the spatial and temporal scale of observation” [...] It is not simply a static situation but subject to dynamics, according to the ongoing processes in the respective system (Jussila et al. 2001; 12). Thus, marginality was seen as necessary by political forces and merchants in order to maintain their political and economic hegemony through a system based upon local

exploitation. Today, however, marginality is seen as an obstacle to a free, agile, and constantly evolving economy in which mobility and centralization are essential elements for success.

In the last ten years, the provincial government has launched an aggressive campaign to transform rural areas into tourism destinations based upon the fact that many outports have a long and diverse history, unique traditions and beautiful natural attractions. The city of Deer Lake is a good example of how case-sensitive marginality is. The town (2006 pop.4,827) has recently become the gateway to the Great Northern Peninsula, owing to an important highway interchange on the Trans-Canada Highway. It is the closest major community to Gros Morne National Park and is home to the Deer Lake Airport. Because of its ideal position between the famous Gros Morne National Park and the Northern Peninsula with its Viking settlement (UNESCO Site), Deer Lake has seen a boom in tourist development in the last ten years, culminating in the building of the exclusive Humber River Estate Resort, a luxury year- round vacation resort that attracts not only North American tourists but also Europeans looking for unspoiled and breathtaking scenery and first class golf courses. Informally, some people in White Harbour told me that many stars have bought villas near Deer Lake, among them the famous Oprah! However, the city of Deer Lake or the more famous Bonavista and Avalon regions on the Eastern part of the island are relatively isolated examples of successful strategies related to tourism and heritage. The great majority of Newfoundland's rural centers are still floating, just like modern castaways in the *mare magnum* of a local and global economy that does not consider their potential on a long term basis. The marginality of the outports, centralization on the part of the provincial government, and the loss or lack of basic services such as schools or clinics are some of the factors that can compromise the development of a tourist industry in many outports. These same factors appear to be tangible obstacles for most people in White Harbour too. However, there are additional factors that, together with these, can give us a more complete picture of the situation in White Harbour and, in particular, what the real difficulties for women are.

The politics of underdevelopment

The merchant system, whose power was based upon the exploitation of marginal communities and a mono-economy, and the Central Program whose aim was to concentrate people and resources in a few urbanized centers in order to limit expenses, created Newfoundland's *politics of underdevelopment*.

The politics of underdevelopment (see Summer 1994; Heeger 1974) occurs when the power relation between a particular, often peripheral group such as the myriads of outports scattered along Newfoundland's coast, and the central power –the provincial government in this case- is misshaped. The distance between these two social, political, and economic realities increases and, as a consequence, the peripheral group begins to fight against the central, external power in order to survive. The theory of the politics of underdevelopment helped me to partly understand some of the reasons why the inhabitants of White Harbour would consider themselves to be 'survivors'. Heeger (1974) believes that the politics of underdevelopment can be better understood as a struggle to maintain a certain amount of power on the part of particular groups with few illusions and ideas about the future. In this scenario, survival becomes the main aim. The politics of underdevelopment is characterized by two aspects: external dependency and dualism. In the case of Newfoundland, external dependency has historically been represented by the colonial system: "Britain, during the period of colonial government and even after the attainment of responsible government in 1855, had a direct influence on Newfoundland politics and policy" (Summer 1994; 17).

After Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, its governments became vulnerable to narrow interests and foreign-owned enterprises in the name of centralization, urbanization, industrialization, and diversification. Extensive studies (Byron 2003; Clark 1986; Overton 2007; Sider 1986; 2003) have shown how the collapse of the fishing industry and inappropriate political decisions based on the

centralization, urbanization, and industrialization of rural Newfoundland have had only limited success in restoring the economic and social life of this otherwise resource-rich region. Dualism is thus a consequence of the way external and international forces, such as the current and past governmental policies and international staple markets, affect Newfoundland's outports. In the case of Newfoundland, "dualism is both a spatial-economic division and a socio-political one" whose core was the political and commercial capital of St. John's (Summers 1994; 19).

In order to resolve the distance between the center and the periphery, since the end of the 19th century, diversification has been the magic word related to economy in Newfoundland. In a poignant and critical article, Schrank gives a brief, yet dramatic, historical overview of the multiple causes underlying the end of the fishing industry in Newfoundland. With the emergence of a large government sector, crucial changes in the educational and health systems, and the construction of infrastructures, "fisheries sank as the dominant economic activity in Newfoundland, although it remained virtually the sole economic activity in most of rural Newfoundland and accounted for more than 10% of Newfoundland's labor force" (Schrank 2004; 2). The political shift towards neo-liberalism of both the federal and provincial government also contributed to the crises of the 1990s. By limiting the interference of the state in economic and social affairs, the new policies sought to "make individuals and communities more responsible for providing for themselves. The call was for self-reliance and self-help as a new localism in social and economic development [...]" (Overton 2007; 60). Neo-liberal ideology, as Overton points out, "was justified ideologically by the need to fight deficits, but also to combat dependency, which was seen as the root of what the Fraser Institute's Michael Walker termed the 'Newfoundland problem' and create a positive climate for entrepreneurial activity" (Overton 2007; 61). Consequently, the decentralization of services, privatization, and cuts in funding in the 1990s continued to have negative effects on Newfoundland's economic and social life.

External dependency, in turn, produces domestic social dualism characterized by an apparently incurable gap between the external system (at both national and global level) and the domestic system (here represented by the myriad of outports scattered along Newfoundland's coast whose main means of support –fishing- has shaped their economic and social life from the beginning). Despite the fact that Newfoundland today is oriented towards a politic of centralization and economic investments that are no longer related to fishing, my data suggest that the majority of people currently living in White Harbour still think of themselves as a fishing community. I vividly recall the first week of August during my fieldwork: it was capelin time! The entire town was excited: the humpback whales had arrived and, therefore, so had the capelin that represents their staple food. It was time for the few licensed fishermen to go out and fish. I would sit on the museum's bridge (local term for porch) together with other locals of all ages and patiently wait for the boats to appear in the fjord. Usually, the first one who spotted a boat would jump up and scream "They are coming home! They are full!" And, indeed, the boat was so full of capelin that she was laying on her side and the proud crew was crowing over their catch like victorious kings. During that busy week everyone in town was talking about fish and fish- related matters; even the youngsters would get all excited and run to the pier to witness the unloading of the precious, small, silver fish. "We are a fishing community," the mayor told me several times proudly. "Fishing is still important to us. It shaped the way we are."

As we have seen, the politics of underdevelopment, the idea of dependency and the cultural attachment to a time that is slowly but inevitably disappearing still characterizes rural Newfoundland, whereas the central government is leaning towards an economic politics of centralization and mega industrial developments such as offshore oil extraction.

The current economic situation is, undoubtedly, affecting everyone, particularly young women. The most tragic consequence of the end of the fishing era for thousands of families in hundreds of

outports scattered along the rugged coasts of Newfoundland was the economic crisis in the form of increased unemployment for fish plant workers and fishermen alike, according to Overton

by the end of the 1990s over half of 221 fish plants active earlier in Newfoundland and Labrador had been closed. Employment in fish processing, equivalent to 13,500 full-time jobs in the late 1980s, had fallen to less than half by 2000. And the situation has not stabilized (2007; 61).

Studies related to the history and collapse of the Newfoundland fishing industry (Sider 1986; 2003; Porter 1988; Harris 1998) as well as to its cultural and social crisis (Clark 1986; Sinclair 1988), governmental policies, and its presentation in the media have generally presented the fishery, its development and crisis, as a male domain. Except for some gender-oriented works (Klein and Davis 1988; Murray 1979; Davis and Gerrard 2000), most studies overlook the fact that the majority of people actually affected by the tragic halt of the fishing industry in Newfoundland were women (Binkley 20003; 24).

Binkley, in quoting Williams' work on women and the fishery crisis (1996; 1), points out that: "in Atlantic Canada 50,000 people who worked in the fishing industry and another 47,000 people working in fishery-dependent sectors have been affected by the fishery crisis. Of the 35,000 fishers and plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador, about 12,000 women lost their jobs." (Ibid.). Moreover, more women lost their jobs as unpaid shore crew active in their husbands' fishing enterprises (Neis 1996; 36). Women who used to work for and with their husbands as bookkeepers, cooks for the crew, and fish processors suddenly saw both their family incomes and social characterization disappearing and disintegrating.

The end of the cod fishery industry has, eventually, seen the birth of a 'new Newfoundland' that is currently experiencing inequality, poverty, and dependence at two levels: nationally and within Newfoundland (Johnstone 1983). Traditionally, a fisherman's wife's livelihood could be separated in three complementary and often overlapping spheres: work within the home, work for the household

fishing enterprise, and work outside the home (Binkley 2000). However, since 1992, the lives of most women in hundreds of fishing communities along Newfoundland's coasts have radically changed: today those wives are less involved in the fishing enterprise, and their domestic roles have changed as well. Apart from household tasks, many women have been compelled to put more emphasis on their work outside home or, even if their work takes place in the house –i.e. crafts production-, what is produced goes outside, where it is commercialized. External economic and social trends today demand survival strategies that are different from those based on a fishing-oriented subsistence. The exploitation of cultural and natural resources is one of those trends, and it is slowly changing the very ideas associated with a traditional way of life in a fishing community. Some scholars have already begun deconstructing the idea of fishing community (Brookfield et al. 2005; Clay and Olson 2007) by more profoundly linking cultural and economic interactions between places and markets on a global scale.

Women entrepreneurs in the tourism business: will this opportunity ever become reality?

In the previous section I have highlighted how external dependency, dualism, and marginality can affect a peripheral society – in our case Newfoundland’s outports --- and concretely contribute to shape its socio-economic destiny. Moreover, one cannot forget that the pressure of external dependency and dualism also shapes a peripheral society and gives it its own peculiar character. In the following paragraph, I am going to analyze how, according to my data, some of these peculiarities are partly compromising further economic developments related to tourism, particularly for women.

One of the most difficult factors for me to understand during my fieldwork was the huge discrepancy between personal initiative and the economic potential related to historical and natural attractions in White Harbour. I could not fully understand the reasons why young women who stay home most of the time do not take the situation in hand and open a seasonal bed and breakfast, for instance. As an outsider, I could see potential everywhere: for a coffee shop, a bed and breakfast, a boat tour company. As time passed, however, I began to get acquainted with some of the factors that prevent women from becoming entrepreneurs. Interestingly enough, there was a fusion of personal, local, historical, and global forces at play in White Harbour.

At first glance, women in White Harbour seem to be the category that more than any other (men, older men, and youngsters) poses the most resistance to opportunities that could arise by exploiting the area’s natural and cultural resources. My data and some literature (see Clover 2007 and Women in the Fishery 1994) suggest that women’s initiative and success in economic enterprises are limited mainly by education, accessibility of both funding and networks, and a traditional sense of attachment to their family.

My older informants largely confirmed this view and, if I look back to the stories of hard work, suffering, and poverty that were shared with me, I vividly remember their languid, sometimes tired eyes, their smiling but resigned faces, and their worn hands that, better than any language, revealed many things about their past lives. In just a few sentences, Aunt Josephine, 81 years old, summarized the life of most women in White Harbour 40 to 50 years ago:

I: And you know, just about every year, within 18-19 months, I had youngsters. I had a baby born. I mean we had to do all our own work, we had no...fridges and stoves, only wood stoves or something like that and a wash tub and a wash board. I washed all the clothes of the youngsters. We had to bring in the water, for doing our washing and heating and cooking and everything else and we had no toilets, so we had to use a pail. And every morning that pail had to be brought out the water and emptied out and washed out and brought back and you know, for 19 people in the house there had to be a lot of work done then but...you know in the springtime...fisherman, fisherman, they had four fishermen in one boat, he was a skipper and he went out with the others and their traps and came in with this fish even though we had all those youngsters I had to pull down in the stage (an old wooden construction by the water where the fish was cured) with him to help him. My sister just lived across the road at that time. She was the one that used to take the head out of the fish and I was the one that used to salt...and the two of us pregnant at one time ... and still we worked there and come up to get something to eat and we had to light our stove, pick up a few chips, rounded...dry and come in and...down the stove and get the fire gone and thenand get something to eat, something to cook before he get back with another load of fish.

C: So your day started at what time?

I: I'd say...my day started around 5 to 6 o'clock lots of times...

C: Ok... and it finished at...

I: It could be 11 o'clock in the night and it could be 4 o'clock in the morning. We could still be down in our stage and cure the fish in summer.

Have women in White Harbour changed today? Not surprisingly, elderly and younger women have different opinions. The only thing they all agree upon is that women in White Harbour are different from those living in nearby communities. The mayor enthusiastically told me what makes women in White Harbour special:

Women here in White Harbour usually stand beside their men. They work as hard as men. But they are also very independent. If they have something in mind you won't be able to stop them! Look at my mother; she is 82 and still goes trout fishing and berry picking and she has such a sharp mind!

My data suggest that things have changed very little from one generation to the next for women. I think, however, that my own background has influenced the data interpretation, and I am aware of my bias. Women of all ages in White Harbour see a remarkable difference between life in the past and life in 2008. From my point of view, though, these differences are not as striking. This is probably because I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s in Western Europe, where the new economic conditions, together with a fierce and very active women's movement, brought many young women, and among them my mother, out of the house and into the work force. I often found myself struggling with the definition of a working woman. Because of my personal and cultural attitudes, the only definition of a working woman I can think of is that related to productivity related to the market, that is, someone who earns money from her own labor. My ideas and opinions often clashed with the local women's ideas and opinions of what a working woman is. In retrospect, I find the following excerpt from my interview with Eveline, an elderly woman, enlightening.

C: And what did you do? Did you work or did you stay home?

I: Nooo, I worked, I had a lot of work, we had to scrub with the white board and ...we used to bring water, that's before we got the water, then I got a gas washer. I used to have to pull on a cord and ... and then I got an electric washer, so... and I had 12 kids.

Despite some inevitable limitations on my part as a fieldworker, every effort has been made to understand and discuss the following topics and issues with an open mind.

The true meaning of education

Census Canada 2006⁷ gives us some interesting indication of the education level of adults in White Harbour. In a total population of 245, 15 years and older, 75 men have neither a diploma or degree nor a certificate, as against 40 women who do. Women appear to be the better educated: 30 possess a college, CEGEP, or other non-university certificate diploma against only 20 men. Twenty women in White Harbour have a university certificate or diploma below the bachelor level, whereas no men can

⁷ Community Profiles, electronic document, accessed 11/11/08, (the exact link is not given to protect the community's anonymity).

claim the same achievement. Krista went to school in order to learn the basics of public administration:

C: Ok. So have you been trained as a clerk? Did you go to school?

I: I went to school for 2 years for office administration.

C: So you know something about it, you didn't have to learn from scratch?

I: No, I had the lady, the past clerk, come in for 2 days and just showed me the ins and outs.

Census Canada claims that neither women nor men over the age of 15 currently living in White Harbour have a university degree. My fieldwork experience tells me that at least one man and one woman have, respectively, a Bachelors and a Masters degree. Despite this inaccuracy, my data and those from Census Canada generally agree that the education level in White Harbour is below the provincial and national average. The only aspect that coincides with both the provincial and national statistics is that usually women are better educated than men. In White Harbour, this is particularly true within the age range 34-64. Not only have women in this age range a higher compulsory education level (20 against 15 men) but the number of women not having a school degree at all is lower than that of men (20 women against 50 men). However, those numbers do not fully explain the difficulties women in White Harbour are experiencing when they are looking for employment. In theory, they should be better prepared for a career than men, as their education level is higher. However, it must be said that their education levels and success in establishing careers are not very strong by provincial and national standards. Women elsewhere in Canada are more likely to earn at least a Bachelors degree than women in White Harbour and in Newfoundland. During my fieldwork, I felt that education played an important role in defining women's future and opportunities in two different ways: for those not having any kind of degree or vocational certificate, chances of a better employment were highly reduced, while those who did possess a degree or certificate often limited their hopes, initiatives, and dreams. I will return to discuss some of these reasons later in the thesis.

Most of my contacts and interviewees were adult women between the age of 30 and 65. Numerically, they are the most represented in White Harbour. Furthermore, they belong to the labor force age range, and the number of women in that age range who are employed is higher than that of men -- 60 against 50. The nature of the employment for those who stay permanently in White Harbour is, however, chiefly part time or seasonal, as in the case of Erin, the homecare giver, and Rachel, the museum's curator. A few women are employed fulltime in the nearby town as either teachers or clerks. Moreover, there are seasonal migrants, like Sue, who go to Fort McMurray for a few months each year. At least five women are seasonally employed in the fishing and seal industry either as inspectors or as part of the working force. Krista, the town clerk, and Laura, the post mistress, are the only women in town with more stable employment:

I am the post mistress here and I think I am the only one here with a government job. I work from home [the post office is on the lower floor of Laura's house] every day till 5 pm with a break for lunch.

Krista also works every day but her job is not full time:

C: So, you're full time?

I: No, that's another thing. I am not working full time. Well, I work every day but it's not 40 hours a week. Well, 30 hours, it's half decent, it only started out at 20 hours per week.

C: Ok, and it's seasonal, or do you work all year round?

I: I work all year round.

Most women, however, stay at home.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I assumed that education would be all that women needed in order to start tourism. Sabrina, who has a full time job as manager in the only bank in the nearby town, is also convinced that education can make the difference:

I: Education is probably a big factor, you know, you've been exposed.

But later in the interview she casts a new light on her previous statement:

I: [...] they don't have real idea of what it's like on the outside.

Most women in their thirties and forties have completed some kind of certificate or degree, which means that they left White Harbour for some period of time in order to pursue that degree. They saw the world outside; they experienced it through their study and work experience. Nevertheless, one account dating back to the moratorium period is interesting, as it shows that things have not changed much for women in rural Newfoundland—even though the fishing industry is no longer the economic basis upon which rural Newfoundland bases its subsistence. In 1994, the Provincial Advisory Council published a study on the status of women of the fishery: “In this book you’ll read about the fishery crisis and its current and potential impact on the lives of rural women” (Women of the Fishery 1994; i). The stories in the booklet witness a time of profound crisis immediately after the moratorium; everyone was discouraged, and communities were torn apart by envy, jealousy, and lack of support mainly due to a situation where one person might be eligible for a compensation package whereas another might not.

However, one thing that women in rural Newfoundland in the early 1990s have in common with women in White Harbour today is a certain suspicion about trade-oriented education. The closure of the fishing industry opened the doors to a vast retraining program supported by the provincial government. The aim of this program⁸ was to reduce the number of people dependent on the fishery in rural communities by retraining them and by absorbing them into professions other than the fishery. Consequently, many women went back to school; however, this opportunity did not work for everyone.

⁸ Northern Cod Adjustment and Rehabilitation Program (NCARP) and subsequent programs began on August 2, 1992, and were replaced by The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy or TAGS on May 15, 1994. NCARP provided weekly payments to out-of-work fishing people based on their average unemployment insurance earnings between 1989 and 1991, often ranging from \$225 to \$406 a week. NCARP participants were also required to enroll in training programs for work in other areas or accept early retirement packages. Approximately 28,000 of the province's fishers and plant workers received income support benefits under the program. CARP ended in May 1994 and was immediately replaced by a second relief program known as TAGS. Like NCARP, TAGS tried to reduce the number of people dependent on the fishery in rural communities (http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/moratorium_impacts.html), electronic document, accessed 01/25/09).

According to the story told by Mary in *Women in the Fishery* (1994):

Like many people, Mary has gone back to school. But while she sees education as providing option for younger people, she wonders what it will do for her at this time in her life. She wants to work, and she doesn't see the benefit of getting Grade 12 if it doesn't help her get back to work. (page 1).

Bride Jenkinson, a then 55 years-old plant worker in Marystown, provides the link to the women in White Harbour today. She is quoted as follows:

[...] How many hairdressers can a community have? Women are getting retrained in low-paying jobs like home-care givers. Women are being ignored, and their concerns are not being addressed properly. First we should be creating jobs, and then we can retrain people. (*Women in the Fishery* 1994; 5).

Today, the situation has definitely changed; new provincial programs such as Women Entrepreneurs have started supporting women more concretely. Nonetheless, my informants did not see education as a way to improve their situation. Their argument usually was this: Why study if there will be no future prospects in White Harbour?

The question could be partly legitimate, given the objective difficulties women encounter when they want to start a tourist-oriented business. However, this attitude can also be a sort of devil's circle, as a lack of education could limit some women's vision of what might be possible in the future.

However, one has also to admit that education does not always pay in rural Newfoundland. For example, Caroline, a textile artist in her thirties with remarkable talent, spent three years studying in St. John's. One of her works has been bought by the provincial government and is now exhibited in the Crafts Guild in the provincial capital. She tried, unsuccessfully, to open a gallery in White Harbour. Despite her talent and willingness to establish a business in her town, and also despite that fact that she knows what it takes, at least in theory, to establish it, she continues to struggle as is evident by her comments, as follows:

C: And now that you are outside in the real world, what are the difficulties or struggles for a young artist like you?

I: Funding is very difficult.

C: What do you mean by “very difficult”?

I: The only funding I’ve really been involved in was like the self employment benefit program.

C: What’s that?

I: It’s where if you are on unemployment and you want to develop your own business, they will give you a \$3,000 loan to help start your business. It was about a year’s worth of paperwork, that was crazy. Just getting to their offices to do the paperwork, and it’s 15 minutes away, so that’s a half hour to 40 minutes worth of driving every day.

C: Every day?

I: Well, yah. The phone calls are long distance; um, just getting it rolling is very difficult.

C: And what happened at the end?

I: The loan was approved.

C: Oh good!

I: But it didn’t turn out the way we thought because you have to spend the money first, and then they will reimburse you the money. So, it was kind of like a kick in the butt. We thought we would have this amount of money to start, but you have to spend it first so in the long run you had to have the money to spend first to get reimbursed, and then you had to pay back the loan when you’re done, so it would put you \$3,000 dollars in the hole right off the bat, when you could have spent the money on something. If I needed a computer that was two thousand dollars, I didn’t have the \$2,000 and I couldn’t get it from them, I would have to borrow it from somebody to spend it, to get it back from them. It was just a very strange system.

Interestingly, women in the 1990s used to complain about the same problems, that is, a lack of funding and of the basic knowledge on how to start a business. Donna’s story is as follows. She was then 35 years old and she

[had] finished her ABE in two years and completed a 16-week course in adventure tourism. She developed a business plan and applied to run a trailer park but [...] she had no success as someone else got it. She also developed a business plan to open a clothing store, but was turned down because she didn’t have the few thousand dollars she needed to get started (Women of the Fishery 1994; 7).

Similarly, the artist Caroline did not have the amount of money needed to start up. During our conversations, she often complained that the government does not educate people on how to do things, on how to open a bed and breakfast or a coffee shop, for instance. She also feels isolated. The isolation factors for Caroline and other women who are thinking about opening a tourism- related

business are several. Accessibility to resources and mobility are the main factors. Many women have no idea how and where to apply for a provincial loan or how and from whom to get any other kind of help. Ray, a young entrepreneur, tells a similar story:

I: Basically, the problem is money, because I mean, they don't get enough funding or support like my parents have trying to run a business for years, they get so far, they get no support, then they stop...

C: What kind of business?

I: Ah... the first one they started up was a tannery; they tried to start a tannery. They had all approvals for a tannery then when you went and get some funding to bring it up to next level they couldn't get any ah...and then they started running the business for themselves, and then they had no marketing money. With myself, I am up to a stage now, I am getting orders, we ...support up to now, but now I mean we get to the next level, but instead of being waiting for the government, which I know it never helped anyone else before as such, I am doing it on my own and we are raising money....

Sue, Ray's mother, told me about her attempt, together with her husband, to open a seal tannery in White Harbour. They wanted to take some trading courses to start the business, but the government did not support them in opening the plant because it did not give them the necessary funding to buy the raw material, that is, the seal pelts. Sue knows exactly how it feels for young people who want to open a business:

The government wants young people to come back and work and live in Newfoundland but coming back for what? Industry in Newfoundland is getting worse because of the high prices and many think there are no advantages in finding a full or even part-time job here in Newfoundland!

Caroline, Sue and many other women in White Harbour feel they are cut off from the main economic stream. Caroline is convinced that the government should extend help to the outports; it is the government that should come to people and teach them how to start a business because it is not always possible for them to go to a bigger centre and spend money to stay overnight and attend a course. Caroline knows that these courses are around, and she could get some help too from organizations such as NLOWE -The Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs (<http://www.nlowe.org/> electronic document, accessed 11/23/08), but they are mainly

in St John's and her financial and personal situation does not allow her to go away for several days and cover all related expenses.

Isolation, however, takes other forms. Caroline told me that there are many other artists in the Baie Verte Peninsula, but there are neither contacts nor collaborations among them. There are no common networks among artists in the peninsula, and each one works independently. The reasons for this, according to her, are lack of time, money, and mobility. I would add to that list, an historical legacy based on a sense of isolation and independence, as follows:

I: A lot of artists do work in outports, and they don't have a lot of contact with other artists. It's not like every outport has ten artists where they can get together and discuss things, and talk about what are you working on and what's your best seller and what's your worst seller, and what do you think people are looking for, just ordinary conversation about what you're doing.

C: So even in the outports, you don't have contact with people?

I: To me the closest that I know of is a lady in Kingspoint, she's a potter. She does wonderful work. Now she's probably the closest person to me, but still I don't see her very often. There are potters in Westport as well. If I do a trade show, that's usually when I do most of my talking correspondence.

C: Are the others you see around showing most women or men?

I: Women mostly.

C: And why do you think out here in the Baie Verte Peninsula you don't get together, you and the other artists?

I: I don't know what it is. Like I would love to have at least once a month to get together for a cup of coffee

C: Have you tried?

I: It's difficult corresponding with everybody. People have certain things on the go, plus there are people with children, travel. It's tough to get together to work it out where everybody can do it at the one time.

As this interview with Caroline shows, there is still a certain cultural and personal resistance to possible improvements or possibilities.

In a world that is largely globalized, where millions of individuals exchange ideas and capital through the web, women in White Harbour look at technology with both fear and amazement. A good number of them can use the computer and the internet at a basic level. However, one needs other, more specific skills to create and maintain a web site or to establish a business through the net. It must be said, however, that the fact that internet connection in White Harbour is, in comparison to the bigger centers, very slow can compromise one's business and enthusiasm. The interview with Caroline reveals the problem:

I: I think if we had high speed internet, I know it would give me a boost because I cannot receive a lot of photography from people. They can only send me like one at a time, and I can only send out a little bit, 'cause for me to put so many attachments to it, I can't do it. It's too difficult for me to get my work out there. When someone calls me and says email me some pictures of your work, that's a day's worth of work for me.

C: That should take like 5 seconds.

I: To send like 10 photos, that's like a day's worth of work for me to do that.

C: So you need better technology here?

I: Absolutely. High speed would go a long, long way.

C: And could help you make contact with the other women, and artists, without meeting and everything?

I: Absolutely, 'cause it would be nothing for me to say this is what I'm working on, what do you think of it, what do you think I should change? Being in an outpost wouldn't matter as much then. I can sit here, and I can work here and I can bring money back here, if I could reach people a hundred miles away from here.

C: Even in Canada, the States, Europe, with the internet it's possible. Distance is not a problem any more.

I: For me, just reaching a hundred miles away sounds really good, and you speak about Europe and I'm thinking being so isolated you think smaller, I don't know why. I would love to think huge.

C: You have to "think global" nowadays.

I: But you have to keep making yourself think that because you're constantly being told and shown you live in a small isolated community. So you have to force yourself to think globally.

C: But you are still part of the world, you're not on a different planet!

I: For me to get thread, I have to place an order and have it shipped here. If I need computer paper, I use a specific type of computer paper, and I have to travel 2 ½ hours to get computer paper. So those are the things that are constant, you know....

C: So if you had high speed internet it would be easier on you, at least to get clients? And you have more clients driving 2 ½ hours to Springdale wouldn't be that much, ok I'm getting money for this, it's part of my job.

Caroline's concerns are representative of most young women's concerns in White Harbour. It is true that they lack the high technology to either start or improve their business. Nonetheless, I have also noticed that they are very weary of getting involved with the government in getting funding and permits, and that their fear of failure is greater than their will to start anything new. The above excerpt clearly highlights the differences in attitudes between me, the stranger and foreigner fieldworker, and local women: thinking about advertising White Harbour in Europe was for me a very natural thing, whereas for Caroline it would have been enough to sell her stuff in the nearest town centre. Women in White Harbour thus understand that "communicating with others is a key component of true convergence" (Clover 2007; 77); however, they feel they don't have the instruments to successfully cross that bridge.

My data are supported by some other, more specific studies. Clover and other colleagues, for instance, spent years in five communities in Newfoundland teaching women how to use ICT and studying their reactions: "In spite of all concerns and problems, we noted and particularly as time went on, that women had alacrity to learn, to move forward by taking on the challenge as well as control of ICT" (Clover 2007; 83). I did not see this alacrity to learn and to move forward in most women in White Harbour because they seemed not to know how to go about it. They need someone to spend time with them and to teach them how to profitably use the internet; how to create and maintain a personal web site, how to look for funding opportunities, and how to get in touch with the outside world in ways more sophisticated than simply writing emails and buying from the Sears catalogue. The town itself does not yet have a website, and this might well represent a check on the development of tourist-related activities in White Harbour. The mayor is pushing in this direction;

she wants White Harbour to be easily found on the web, and she wants a web site with all the latest news to serve both tourists and locals. Rachel and her husband Robert, who is responsible for the CAP site (Community Access Program), hope that the web site will be ready for 2008-09 when the new tourist season opens. In fact, Krista was not even sure whether the town already had a web site. She notes:

“We can get on and do a web site. Well that’s probably done already down at the museum.”

Rachel, the museum’s curator, is probably one of the few women in town who has a better knowledge of what it takes to open a bed and breakfast or to start a coffee shop because her job involves dealing with provincial matters such as regulations and grants.

I spent uncountable hours talking with several women about the opportunities White Harbour could offer to European visitors. Some Europeans visited the town and the museum, and during our interviews they were enthusiastic; they loved the scenery, the museum, the friendly people, and the quiet atmosphere. Despite the positive perspective of visitors to the town, most women in White Harbour are scared of the fact that tourist- oriented enterprises are only seasonal and will not provide them with a constant income.

Nevertheless, some recognize that tourism has potential, as Sabrina claims:

From my perspective I think that there’s a lot of potential here for tourism, and I think that tourism is probably going to be one of the things that’s going to sustain White Harbour.

Caroline goes a step further in her vision that also involves educating the younger generations in tourism- related activities. She tells me:

Needs such as we need someone to run theatre groups. To me it’s tourism, and adventure tourism, and if we just change our focus a little bit where these kids can learn, that you can learn a business doing this, maybe they can use their imaginations and say well now maybe I can take it a step further and do that [...] And I think if more kids learn that and look at their community, every community in this province has its own personality, something unique, and if they focus on that, each community has something that will support.

These opinions are echoed not only by many locals but also by all the tourists I interviewed: many visitors are looking for nature and the authenticity of an old way of living, unspoiled by modern civilization. This trend is global. Several recent studies (Richards 1996 and Richards 2007; Nijman 1999; Walle 1998 among others) show how cultural globalization in the form of tourism can lead to important changes in local popular culture, identities, and economies. There is increasing attention to 'cultural globalization', which Nijman (1999; 148) defines as "acceleration in the exchange of cultural symbols among people around the world, to such an extent that it leads to changes in local popular cultures and identities" (Richards 2007; 3).

Despite all the obstacles, some women in White Harbour are still thinking about developing tourist attractions as both an ancillary means of subsistence and as a way to keep youngsters at home.

Rachel, for instance, would like to offer more exhibitions at the museum and maybe create a salt fish aquarium as a form of family entertainment. The mayor believes in reconstructing the French Shore as an historical site and expanding hiking opportunities throughout town. Caroline would like to open an art gallery with her own and other artists' works displayed and sold. Krista is thinking about taking over her sister's pub. Another woman I did not meet personally and who currently lives in Ontario is renovating her old house in White Harbour as a bed and breakfast.

In addition to the real difficulties of getting funding, knowing how to advertise efficiently and attracting enough tourists for business to be profitable, resistance comes from a lack of confidence, which is related to the role women today play in White Harbour. What elderly and younger women have in common, even though they usually express it differently, is the idea that, mainly, "women ...are homemakers, a lot of them. [...] They're home with their kids, and raising their kids, and most of the time their husbands are out working." That was Krista speaking, who is in her early thirties.

Here is Caroline on women today in White Harbour:

I think they keep it together. They keep it flowing. They keep everything moving. The men come and go. Even when they were fishing and seal hunting they were gone for months at a time. It was the women who raised the kids, kept the household, kept the community. To me they're the glue, even today. Even though the men are going to Alberta now, it's the same process, they're still home with their children, and they still have the households to take care of, and they still have the community to take care of. And they're the ones that are here day in day out, all the time. So to me, they're the ones that shape the personality of the community. And they're the ones shaping the future of the community because they're the ones raising the children. And if we want these kids to stay and feel like they have something that they can focus on for 15 years down the road, that yes you can live here and support yourself, it's the mothers that are going to instill that in their kids. I've seen some women come from Ontario and talk to their nephew and say, "Well, when you grow up you're going to leave too", and that really bothered me 'cause I know that he'll never forget that.

And here is the opinion of an elderly woman like Lisa:

I: Ja, he used to go away to the lumber woods, and he'd be gone for a month before he'd come home. I'd have to do like cutting up the wood and tend to the animals, and bring water, and I had to do all of that. Stay here by myself...

C: So, do you think it's different now? Why do you think it's different?

I: I don't know, it seems like a lot of them –women- are more at home.

Today, it is the Alberta oil market that takes men away, while in the past it was the lumber or fishing industry within Newfoundland. Today, men stay away for several months, while in the past, it was for some weeks. Nonetheless, the patterns are very similar: men go away to work and women and children stay at home. It must be said, however, that this pattern does not usually apply in the case of older women whose children are grown up; they usually join their husbands in their Alberta ventures. Erika might do the same in the future when both her kids are grown and out of the house.

Together with a lack of knowledge on how to start a business, how to access financial support -, and how to run a coffee shop or a bed and breakfast, there is also a lack of confidence which, I think, is related to the idea many women still have about their social role. Rachel sometimes gets very upset when it comes to dealing with the government:

For things like that people know they have to deal with the government to do things. There's always permits, safety regulations, all this stuff that they have to go through. If you don't

want it bad enough you're not going to go through the hassle of it. With a private boat, a tourist can say I'll give you \$20.00 if you take me out. You know what I mean? So they don't actually set up a business you know, it's more like you do it as a favor if you want a ride. But to set up an actual business, it's just so frustrating. There's so much red tape, so much paperwork. It's almost like the government puts up so many walls. If you don't want it bad enough you're not going to try and break them down, or find a way around it. It's a lot to deal with. I wish it was easier for someone to say I'm going to have this little business. And yes, I understand the safety precautions for food, that sort of thing, but it's just so difficult. I mean if you have to involve the government for funding then it's a big deal. And that's not even promising you're going to get it in the end.

Sabrina is also convinced that lack of confidence is behind the lack of entrepreneurship on the part of the younger women:

I: I think probably part of it is maybe confidence. [...] You know with regards to like, you know, do they think that the work is good enough. [...].

C: Why do you think their self-esteem is so low? Do you know any reasons, or can you imagine why?

I: One of the things I think about is probably their lack of, you know, a lot of them are here and they don't have real idea of what it's like on the outside. I think that would be part of it. The lack of knowledge I guess and probably not knowing how to go out and ask or speak. Maybe it's ambition, I don't know, maybe they're content to do what they do.

Experience in dealing with the bureaucratic universe, lack of technological knowledge and confidence, reduced accessibility to resources, and geographical isolation are all elements that bring us to the conclusion that most women in White Harbour are missing what Pierre Bourdieu called 'cultural and social capital'. In his theory of practice and production of culture, Bourdieu defines "cultural capital as a form of knowledge, an internalized code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artifacts" (Bourdieu 1993; 7). Bourdieu suggests that

the possession of this code, or cultural capital, is accumulated through a long process of acquisition or inculcation which includes the pedagogical action of the family or group members (family education), educated members of the social formation (diffuse education) and social institutions (institutionalized education) (Ibid.) .

Women in White Harbour thus do not have the cultural capital to succeed in the tourism enterprise.

They are lacking forms of cultural knowledge, competencies, dispositions, and the ability to

successfully manage in different realities such as that of government and business. Women in White Harbour are outside the system of cultural and economic production. This situation is due mainly to their cultural heritage, which was based upon the merchant system to which the fishers and their families were firmly attached. Within the closed system ruled by the merchants, there was no space for personal initiative or willingness to improve. The fact that fishers were never paid with currency also widely impeded their economic and social improvements, as they did not have any capital to invest.

The reasons why women in White Harbour do not really believe in the tourism industry as a viable economic way of subsistence are thus very diverse and mainly entail three factors. First, there is the current global economic situation with the profitable Alberta market, increasing gas prices, and the advance of technology that requires constant updating, which is not always possible in remote outports. Secondly, there are national factors such as the government's centralization plans and consequent disregard for outports. Thirdly, there are the local and personal causes, such as the lack of education, confidence, initiative, technological access, as well as the role that women in White Harbour still play today. Data and observations suggest that the potential for tourism development is there. For example, Caroline got a grant –even though she did not actually receive the money because she did not have the necessary amount to start things up. The town also received some government grants to renovate the fishing stage, showing that money is available if accessed properly. However, many women still feel so insecure that they give up all hope even before enquiring.

Another consideration that emerged from my data is that of necessity. Last year, Erika took on a boarder into her house:

Ja, now I actually took on a boarder last year... Ja, last year I think for one week. Gary came and stayed here, I cooked his meals. Now, that's something I wouldn't get into either because then you are stuck here, like if I wanna get out now and go to...I take the kids and

go on, right? But he was here for a full week and I did his laundry, I cooked every evening, I made his lunch to take to work, he worked up at.

She wouldn't do it again unless she had to. She tells me:

I know. I never, ever thought about it...I guess if I was down and out to the point that...I've got to do something...

As Sabrina, the bank clerk, and Krista, the town clerk, told me, there are no real poor people in White Harbour. There might be some young families in economic difficulties but mainly because they are unable to manage their income, not because they do not earn enough money. In the case of women in White Harbour, there might be a relation between the outmigration to Alberta and the lack of tourist business in town. Fort McMurray is probably not paradise on earth, but the money and the benefits are usually very good. So why sacrifice one's free time, house, and family for a seasonal business in White Harbour that does not promise to be profitable? Rachel noticed that, since 2000, fewer tourists, particularly those coming with RVs, visit the town. She thinks it is because of the high oil prices as well as the poor road conditions. Consequently, some economic opportunities may have been missed.

The aging factor

Another factor that could discourage women in White Harbour from initiating tourism enterprises is age. According to Census Canada 2006 Community Profile (electronic document, accessed 10/23/08), White Harbour's median age of population is 49.0 years against the 41.7 of Newfoundland. 84.4% of the population of White Harbour is over the age of 15, and most residents in White Harbour are between the age of 50 and 59 (75 individuals of both sexes out of 320, circa ¼ of the entire population). The median age in Canada, although lower, has, according to Census Canada 2006, "been rising steadily since 1966, reaching 39.5 years in 2006. That is an increase of 1.9 from 2001, the third largest increase in the last 50 years [...]" (<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/agesex/NatlPortrait3.cfm> Census Canada 2006, electronic document, accessed 11/13/08).

These statistics clearly show that White Harbour is an aging town. The mortality is higher than the natality, and most young people under the age of 25 prefer to go away to look for stable jobs and a more rewarding social life. Thus, an aging population brings with it several factors that inevitably influence the current and future life of the town.

In White Harbour, for instance, I learned that aging individuals provide both an input to as well as a restraint on the economic and social development of the town. Elderly individuals are an input to the economy because they employ women as homecare givers. In White Harbour, at least 5 women work part-time as homecare givers. At present, home care has yet to receive a clear definition, as it remains an ambiguous sub-sector of health care (Shapiro; 2002). Home care is usually broken into two segments: professional services offered by trained individuals such as nurses, physiotherapists, dieticians, physicians, and social workers, and home support services. Given the fact that there are no health care professional services in White Harbour, the nature of homecare in White Harbour is that of home support services such as light home cleaning, meal preparation, and personal grooming.

A government document, *Home care in the Atlantic Provinces: Structure and Expenditures* (<http://dsp-psd.tpsgc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/BP/prb0230-e.htm#Introduction>, electronic document, accessed 10/25/08) states that

Between 1980-1981 and 2000-2001, home care expenditures as a percentage of overall health care spending in Canada rose from 1.2% to 3.5%. This rapid growth can be attributed in large part to a number of significant changes affecting health care in Canada and Canadian society in general, in particular to the aging of the population.

Given the increased expenditures related to health care in Canada, in the case of small outports it is probably cheaper for the provincial government to have individuals receive care at home than at a hospital or other publically-funded institutions. While all this might sound positive, as the government gets to reduce its bills, the individual stays home, and employment is provided in situ for residents, but there are complications too. Erin, 43 years old, has been working as a homecare giver

for 15 years. She spent many years living all over Canada, in British Columbia and Ontario. She attended a school for homecare givers but she could not complete her certification because she moved back. In White Harbour, she takes care of an invalid elderly woman. Erin gets paid \$9 per hour, and her job is very demanding physically. She tells me: “The lady I take care of is very heavy and so I had some shoulder pains some time ago”

Her job is part-time –she shares shifts with other caregivers, as the patient needs constant assistance - - and not stable. She might stop working for her current client in September if the lady’s daughter comes back to take care of her mother, and consequently, Erin will no longer be able to count on her usual income for a long time. She says:

I will be unemployed for one year. Fishermen can claim unemployment for 6 or 9 months but I can do it for one year because I have collected enough stamps. If I need more stamps I usually work on some town projects such as cutting grass, painting...

She has a husband who works as a fisherman and two children to take care of. She is sometimes very concerned about her future, and for this reason she is studying to get a certificate to open a pet-oriented business in town.

Brenda, the post mistress, told me that White Harbour needs a retirement home where elderly people could move in and be taken care of. This could be an excellent idea; having all people in need under the same roof would simplify life for their families, the visiting health care professionals as well as the home support care givers. However, one must also consider the fact that not all elderly people might want to leave their house and familiar environment and move to such a facility. Another problem with a retirement home might be that homecare givers who work in a retirement home may be required to have some sort of certification, whereas today many homecare givers do not need specific qualifications. Currently, as I understand the situation in White Harbour, homecare is a sort of unofficial “black market”. Homecare workers are paid and their earnings go towards their pension, but the government does not seem to regulate this sector. That means that anyone can do the job.

The aging population is a factor affects not only the economic life of White Harbour but also its social life and planning for the future. Several young women complained that many elderly people see any change as dangerous and, therefore, either try to stop them or do not support them.

One striking example of a possible economic development that is in limbo: In the Downtown, one not only finds the famous quarry site and the museum but also an old stage –locals told me it could be 100 years old- where the fish curing process used to take place. This wooden house is unsafely placed above several big rocks in the water facing the beach; only poles are still sustaining it. Its structure is crumbling; one side has been completely gutted, and each winter the ice that surrounds it inevitably weakens the structure further. Locals are waiting for the moment when they will hear a deafening rumble, and the stage will collapse and disappear for good. The stage belongs to a local family, once among the most powerful fishing clans in White Harbour, whose members are not interested in saving the historical stage. The town built a stairway leading down to the stage so that visitors can enjoy this piece of local history, but the owners did not get permission to restore the stage, even though they could quite easily have received government grants. If the family is not going to change its mind, the stage will inevitably collapse and an important remnant of the past when fishing still regulated everyday life will disappear forever into the cold Atlantic waters.

Although I do not think that it is the elderly who are preventing economic growth in White Harbour. I am rather inclined to consider the situation as unbalanced; as statistics show, White Harbour is literally ‘getting old’. What it is really missing is a contrasting and balancing demographic force.

Fatalism and historical individualism

The consequences of earlier economic organization must be considered in order to fully understand fatalism and historical individualism which still pervades rural Newfoundland today. I argue these characteristics are directly linked to the merchant system.

Because of the selective nature of the merchant system –the better and more malleable fishermen were given more credit than those who were ‘lazier’ or tried to oppose the system by resisting or protesting- a perhaps paradoxical lack of individual initiative in the interest of individual survival was developed. Many fishermen and their families were surely convinced that they were living in a state of semi-slavery, but very few would start a revolution to change things. Most of them could have not afforded a revolution; they had to survive and to feed their children every single day.

Several young women complained that people in White Harbour are sometimes very individualistic:

We organize a lot of events for both kids –Christmas parade, soccer games, etc...- and for the elderly but many others do not do anything for the community, they don’t care!

Kathy, a mother of two, told me about a similar situation with the new church:

Everyone wanted the new church, but very few people gave donations to build it and now, after two years, the community is still struggling to pay it off!

At the beginning, I could not believe that the mentality related to the merchant system was still alive in White Harbour’s inhabitants’ way of life. However, I came to see that some effects still lingered. For example, the merchant system had also created a hierarchy within the same community; usually there were men or families within each community that would deal directly with the merchant. Those families were often in a better economic situation than the rest of the village. Those men would collect the fish and sell it to the merchant but they would also keep an eye on the workers and check on them for the merchant. For these reasons they were often viewed by other locals with suspicion, sort of as spies among them. Even today, most people in White Harbour talk quite negatively about a family in town that used to work for the merchant and was wealthier than others. Sometimes it was difficult for me to understand the real role of such individuals or families, as they were often spoken of as if they were the merchants.

Moreover, under the merchant system, one had to watch over one’s shoulders with regard to competition or betrayal by friends and family members. These threats, in addition to periodic reductions in demand caused by external forces such as wars, economic crises, changes in trends, and

more hardened and technologically competent competitors, made the average fisherman feel as if his own destiny was out of his control.

Aunt Antoinette, a sharp- minded older woman living in Downtown, recalls the old days in high spirits and with critical insight:

I: Ja. Well, I mean, the house, his father... He was a fisherman and the merchant and he went in [...]. Couldn't pay for it, so the merchant was going to take the house and the land and everything...

C: Oh...I mean, that was the deal! If you don't give me enough fish I take everything.

I: Ja...ja. But anyway, the time got fixed up and the merchant, he paid off.

C: So, you were constantly afraid that the merchant would take everything you had, in a way...

I: Ja...ja, ja. If it wasn't paid off, so ... I worked side by side with John [her husband]at the fish net and everything.

C: In order to pay off everything.

I: To pay if it wasn't paid, so I got papers and all this...I was, this is mine.

She also talks about the merchants:

C: Oh yes, and they were rich. You could see?

I: Ja! (both laughing) They had to be, I mean, they took everything from the fishermen! And give them nothing! They took their fish and just fool enough to...

These few sentences clearly summarize the life conditions of the fishermen and their families under the merchant system: chronic poverty, isolation, financial insecurity, and exploitation.

However, I do not want to give the impression that life in White Harbour and in many other outports around Newfoundland was entirely based upon suspicion and egoism. People did and still do help each other in moments of crisis. When tragedy strikes, people usually stick together and support each other. White Harbour has been hit by much tragedy, even in recent years. In the face of these, most people still care about their fellow villagers, and help each other often.

William, a young carpenter, speaks about people helping each other:

I: Even today. If somebody wants his roof shingled, you ask people and they get together and do it.

C: So, let's say you are starting your home tomorrow, building your house, would people help you?

I: Oh, definitely!

C: Do you have to ask them or to pay them?

I: No! A few beers...

C: Ok! They would simply come because you need? Would you knock on each door and would they come?

I: No, they'd hear the hammer and come to see White Harbour going on...

C: Elderly people or people your age?

I: All, I mean if they are available they could come.

C: Why do you think you are that way?

I: Because they realize all need a hand...

C: And you are ready to help the other in the same way.

I: Yes, yes.

C: To sacrifice your time, your money in a way.

I: Yes, yes. That's a thing we got here; lots of time.

In spite of the spirit of mutual help, I encountered in White Harbour a great deal of fatalism concerning the future. A feeling of impotence, resignation, and suffocated anger against "the new merchant"--, the provincial and federal government---pervades everyday life in White Harbour. Below are some of the answers to one of my main questions: How do you see the future of White Harbour?

Sue is convinced that there is lots of negativity in White Harbour; that there is not enough support from people of all generations, and that the most negative of all are elderly women.

"I don't think there is any future in White Harbour," Brenda, 67 years old, told me with a sad smile.

“There will be no White Harbour in the next 20-30 years!” was the usual answer, and even the younger generation thinks the same way. For example:

“Ah...I see this place it’s eventually gonna be just for retirement.[...]” William told me. Then I asked him what people in White Harbour would do if, suddenly, the oil industry in Alberta were to collapse. “There will be another industry somewhere else!” he answered.

The only one who thinks this situation will benefit her is, understandably, Erin:

In the next 10-15 years people who are now in their 50s and 60s will be coming home to retire. For me it will be good because I will have many clients to take care of!

The Oil Industry in Alberta

In the last 10-12 years, seasonal migration to Fort McMurray in Alberta has become a habit for many families in White Harbour and throughout rural Newfoundland in general. This new migration is bringing with it not only economic but also social changes. In the following section I will discuss how the oil industry is affecting White Harbour women’s entrepreneurship in the tourism business.

Thirty years ago, the Albertan oil industry and the flourishing employment opportunities in other provinces, such as Ontario, created a permanent or long-term migration in which Newfoundland’s workers and their families would move to the new place for considerable amounts of time and, often, for good. Jenna, for instance, together with many other people over the age of 40, stayed away for at least 5 years before finally returning to White Harbour. Today, however, the face of Newfoundland’s migration is changing again, and it is taking the form of long-term commuting. As Sinclair and Felt (1993) have shown in their study, at least 30 percent of people living in the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland are returning migrants. What is changing today in the migration process in rural

Newfoundland is that the time frame of that migration has become shorter. People go away more often but for shorter periods of time, usually ranging from a couple of weeks to just a few months.

I came in contact with at least 30 adult residents of White Harbour of both sexes who had left and still are leaving the outpost on a regular basis, mainly to go to Fort McMurray in Alberta. Fort McMurray is omnipresent in everyday conversations. Indeed, it seems that life in White Harbour gravitates around Fort McMurray.

On Fort McMurray

The discrepancy between the town's official web sites, in which Fort McMurray is advertised as a prosperous city immersed in nature and with a vibrant employment market (<http://www.fortmcmurrayonline.com/>, electronic document, accessed 11/04/08 and <http://www.fortmcmurraytourism.com/>, electronic document, accessed 11/04/08), and what my informants told me about life and work conditions there is striking.

Fort McMurray is considered the heart of one of Alberta's (and Canada's) major hubs of oil production. The first plant was opened in 1967 by the Great Canadian Oil Sands (now Suncor). From that moment on, Fort McMurray's growth took off. Besides the oil sands, the economy also relies on natural gas and oil pipelines, forestry and tourism. The two largest oil sand mining companies are Syncrude and Suncor Energy.

According to many informants of all ages, the extraction possibilities in Fort McMurray are virtually endless. One of the teenagers working at the museum once explained to me how much petroleum still to be extracted exists in Fort McMurray, in response to my prediction that this feast might well end very soon. He stood beside a large mural drawn by a local artist that is about 1x3 meters and pointed to a tiny corner on the bottom left side:

See? The mural represents the oil sands and this little corner is where we are extracting now. There is still so much to do! No danger of losing your job! (Private conversation).

The high number of temporary migrants in White Harbour reflects a broader situation related to the ever growing request for both specialized and general workers in Fort McMurray. The oil market in Fort McMurray is currently one of the most lucrative industries in Canada

(<http://www.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/ogt-ipg.nsf/en/dk00090e.html>, electronic document, accessed 11/04/08). There is a job for everyone there, with both skilled and unskilled workers welcome. A qualified technician can get up to \$40 per hour or even more, according to William, who also worked as a laborer in Fort McMurray:

I: It's a different atmosphere. Everybody's got money, big money.

C: Ah ya, I heard about it. People get 40 bucks a hour.

I: Easy... [...] My buddy gets 140 bucks an hour.

C: Because he is certified...skilled or whatever?

I: Certified and he has got his own truck and vehicle stuff.

Today's migration pattern from White Harbour is organized in cycles. There are different cycles, but mainly, men stay away for few weeks then come back for one week or so and after that they are off again to Fort McMurray. In 2009, however, and in the midst of a world economic crisis, many workers are losing their jobs in Alberta

(<http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/PrintArticle.aspx?e=1402397>, electronic document, accessed 02/07/09). In White Harbour, so far, only a few people have actually lost their jobs. Nonetheless, the danger of being suddenly unemployed is worrying many families in White Harbour (Private conversation with the mayor, end of January 2009).

However, in the long term, the migration to Alberta might well influence the social and economic life and probably the future of White Harbour. Leaving one's family behind for weeks or managing family life at home without one's partner is not easy task. I talked to several women whose husbands

go away on a regular basis. Erika's man stayed away for 3-4 months last winter, and it was very hard for her:

C: How do you manage your life without your husband for 3-6-8 months? For a couple of months?

I: Very hard! It was the first time ever we did and My God, it was in the winter months, the snow. Now, do you see the length of my driveway? I would have to go out and shovel that, I don't have a snow blower!

C: You don't have!

I: No, my dad does, he would come over but like there is mornings when I got up at 6 to shovel a path for the kids to walk out, 'cause they walk to the school bus, right? At 6 o'clock in the morning I would shovel a path just enough for them to walk until dad would come with the snow blower, then I start shoveling and dad will eventually come.

C: Did you manage everything here in the house or your bills or whatever?

I: Ja, ja.

C: So, you are independent?

I: Ja, and I have to bring in the wood, myself, keep the fire going, and clean the banners...

C: You played the "man's role" for 3-4 months.

I: Ja, I have kids to hockey, 4 times a week I was in Baie Verte for hockey.

C: During winter?

I: Ja, very hard I hope he won't go that time of year again, 'cause it was very hard.

Krista once joined her husband and spent one year in Fort McMurray. However, the money was not worth the sacrifice, and they both decided to return to White Harbour about five years ago:

It was too hard. I had to work night time, he worked day time, and we didn't see each other, and it was too hard.

Sue, a vibrant and artistic woman in her 60s, is planning to go back to Fort McMurray with her husband for the last time next fall for about 11 months. There, they will be doing a variety of jobs such as janitors or security control. They are trying to save enough money for their retirement years.

"We can always go back if we need money," Sue adds. The economic factor is the real motive behind migration to Fort McMurray. Many men and women could find another job closer to home

but it would be less remunerative. The employer, that is, one of the numerous oil industries operating in Fort McMurray, usually pays very well, and all expenses such as flight and accommodation expenses are covered. Moreover, as Fiona told me, her husband gets bonus money every month which may be spent freely by his family, and he is also given a comprehensive health insurance that covers the whole family. She does not like her husband to be away; however, she is happy he has a good job and that they are no longer facing financial difficulties.

All conversations about Fort McMurray were actually about money: making money and spending money. Eveline, with her life experience and insightfulness, put it beautifully:

I: Lot of people, young people coming back ja...but there is a lot of people that go away too like they go away to Fort McMurray for a couple of weeks and then they come home for a week. There is a lot of people working like that.

C: What do you think about that? Do you think it's good or not good?

I: I don't know...I don't know how they feel. I guess if you wanna make a few, fast, quick dollars it's ok. It's a means to an end, that's how it is. I don't know if they enjoy it being away for so long.

Men and women working in Fort McMurray are usually not very enthusiastic about life there and cannot wait to fly back home. Fort McMurray was often described by my informants as a modern Gomorra: a town of criminality and corruption where there is no space for family values:

Ja, I have seen a lot of people up there in January...end of January he went and came back home in April...and the stories! [...] A husband said he was staying with his cousin, he went out on the patio and one across kids there, 10-11-12 years old and they were smoking, looked over him and thought was funny! Like...I can't believe that, he said they were no more than 12 years old, one of them 12 years old, in the middle of the day! [...] It was normal! He was looking at them and they were saying like, it's something wrong? This is what we do, this is what we do to pass away time! So, I said, I cannot...I can't imagine! And my son, he is likely, he is very outgoing; he would speak to anybody, so he would very easily fall into that crowd, right? He would very easily fit, he would fit in just fine! So, I said, no way...in the world! Now, I don't know what the future is going to bring for him. He might be the worst...I don't know, I can't control that. But right now I can...

Is this new migration pattern changing people in White Harbour?

The mayor and other women often told me that one can see the difference: there are young people going to Fort McMurray making a lot of money, and coming back with a new truck, an ATV, or a skidoo. I myself saw some of these young people driving expensive all-terrain vehicles through the town (a new ATV can cost up to \$30,000) and thinking that with all my university degrees and a part-time, well paid job as a lecturer at the university, I could not afford such luxury! However, Krista does not agree with that:

C: Are people changing?

I: No, not a big lot. I don't think so. Someone else might say yes, but I don't think so. No. They come back, they did go away, they come back with their money but I don't see a big change in them. [...]

C: Do you see a big change when it comes to town finances? Do they invest more money in properties?

I: I see a difference in, like, people's homes. People are doing their homes up more, stuff like that.

Interestingly enough, however, when I later asked Krista about the average economic situation of most families in White Harbour, she told me that some young couples are having financial troubles because they are not able to manage their finances wisely, even though their income are sufficient.

There is no really rich people here. A lot of older people here, like seniors, are good with their money, they budget good. [...] But there are some younger couples here that are having trouble. Not a big lot. I mean everybody is pretty good.

This view is confirmed by Sue who goes to Fort McMurray every year together with her husband.

For her, Fort McMurray is in a constant boom and people will never settle there. For this reason, she thinks, there can be no social stability there. She claims that many people working in Fort McMurray have no value for money; they spend huge amounts of money and many families will come home as poor as they left. In her words, "money is dirt".

Helen, Erika, Sue and all the other women involved in the various committees in White Harbour lament that many people who now have a stable and flourishing economic situation don't give a

penny to help the community. For example, a new playground for children is needed, and Helen, the museum's curator, is trying to collect some money, but people, she admits, don't care. Many of the elderly see the new migration pattern and the easy money that comes from it as a factor endangering White Harbour's traditional social web based upon mutual help and the centrality of the community as an organism.

Outmigration in rural Newfoundland is often related to the disappearance of what is usually called the "traditional way of life" based upon different, often seasonal activities to support the fishermen's families all year around. Some of my older informants told me how they would survive in the past by fishing, cutting wood, and gardening. Byron defines this subsistence way as pluriactive, that is, relying "on the seasonal exploitation of a range of natural resources and craft activities" (2003; 7). The modernization of the fishery that started in the 1960 and the relative prosperity that followed—at least until the Moratorium in 1992-- transformed the homespun, pluriactive strategies of the outports into "much more specialized and narrowly focused ways of making a living" (Ibid.) as fishermen and their families began investing all they had in the fishery and "had no significant sources of income or use value from other productive activities" (Ibid.). My own experience as a fieldworker, as well as all the literature I read about the fishing industry in Newfoundland and its traditional and locally based pluriactive livelihoods showed that such a way of life was not very romantic. As my informants of all ages stated clearly several times, "We are survivors!"

The traditional way of life in rural Newfoundland was not paradise on earth; it was simply a way to survive from one year to the next and nothing more. The important point in this discussion is that a unifocal livelihood or economy can be detrimental. This is one of these cases when my results show a relationship between the dead merchant system and the new subsistence mode represented by the oil industry in Alberta. Many important studies on the collapse of the fishing industry (Sider 2003; Summers 1994; Byron 2003) claim that the real problem was actually that the economy of

Newfoundland was exclusively based upon fish. Its character was thus unifocal. Naturally, once the fish started disappearing due to overfishing, rural Newfoundlanders could not do anything other than migrate or starve.

I believe the same problems with a unifocal economy are still there, only they have taken a different form: in the past it was the fishery, now it is the oil industry in Alberta and in Newfoundland. Will the natural and socio-economic tragedies that occurred years ago recur with the oil industry? Is Newfoundland heading toward a one-way economy dependent on the oil industry? And what is the role of Newfoundlanders and of women in particular in all this? As Byron (2003; 13) points out, "People in rural Newfoundland are far more than just economic agents, of course. They are also social and cultural actors with all sorts of attachments and aspirations."

The oil industry and outmigration

The Star, Aug 22, 2007 11:49 AM ST. JOHN'S, N.L. – The Newfoundland and Labrador government, on the eve of the provincial election campaign, officially approved a tentative deal today to develop the \$5-billion Hebron offshore oil project, a venture that could prove to be the province's most lucrative oilfield. "Today marks a historic day in Newfoundland and Labrador as we enter into a new era of offshore oil development," Premier Danny Williams told a news conference in St. John's (<http://www.thestar.com/Business/article/248736>, electronic document, accessed 10/30/08).

I left Newfoundland a few days before the deal between the provincial government and the oil industries (Exxon Mobil Canada, Chevron, and Petro-Canada, among others) that proposed the Hebron offshore oil project was completed. Many in town showed signs of faith in Premier Danny Williams and in his achievements: "Williams is primarily a business man, he knows about business. I really hope the deal will bring prosperity to Newfoundland and that people will stay here near home instead of going to Alberta," said the mayor enthusiastically (Private conversation). The deal promises over 3000 jobs directly and indirectly related to the offshore industry. The platform will be located offshore, about 350 kilometers southeast of St. John's in the Jeanne d'Arc Basin and will join Newfoundland's three current offshore oil operations. In his speech, Williams largely underlined the fact that the deal will not only bring money (total revenues from Hebron are expected to exceed \$16 billion over the 25-year lifespan of the project) and jobs back to Newfoundland but also that this new economic venture will represent an important moment of self-re-appropriation for the people of Newfoundland: "Step by step, we are becoming masters of our own house," he said. "We firmly believe that having a meaningful and real ownership of our resources will help us to achieve long-term prosperity." (The Star. 22 August 2008, electronic document).

People's euphoria in White Harbour was palpable, and hope was raised high. Again.

Oil affairs are not new for Newfoundland, and studies related to their economic and social impacts are not either. It is not my intention here to discuss the validity of any economic projects, past and present, related to the exploitations of petroleum. My aim is to bring to the table the various elements that constitute the oil industry and particularly its impact on the social web in White Harbour. In fact, this is not the first time that the oil industry has held promise for Newfoundland's future.

Newfoundland's economy and social life was based on the cod fishery for more than four centuries. Because of a rather uncertain and hard life based upon a harsh environment and climate and the specter of starvation during lean seasons, merchant capital and public relief (welfare programs) "had to be employed frequently in the outports to carry the fishers and their families through periods of distress. The non-cash, subsistence spheres of outport economies exploited every available resource. People were, perforce, as opportunistic and as self-sufficient as possible" (Byron 2003; 4). Their living strategies were thus pluriactive or multiple (Byron 2003). Their survival was based on a combination of natural and social resources: in order to survive in such an inhospitable environment, the fishers and their families had to make use of what they could find around them –wood to build their boats and houses, fishing and hunting, planting gardens during the short growing season- but also being able to effectively collaborate with each other in the everyday battle against poverty and starvation. The oil industry and the outmigration phenomenon, with their unipolar ways of subsistence, soon took the place of "homespun, pluriactive strategies of household provisioning that relied on the seasonal exploitation of a range of natural resources and craft activities" (Byron 2003; 7). This is not a nostalgic and romantic defense of the old way of life. There is nothing romantic in living a precarious existence, constantly on the edge of starvation and economic insecurity. Even though many of my older informants would 'sing' the unspoiled beauty and the genuine fun that

characterized their life before the end of the merchant system, no one would like to turn back time.

Here is what Eveline, a widow in her late 70s, told me:

Better? I don't think it was better, it was a lot of hard work and you didn't have any time you know, for ...stuff.

Nonetheless, the oil industry has and will probably change the life of rural Newfoundland. Let me go back in time for a moment and see what happened in the political and economic panorama of

Newfoundland more than twenty years ago. In an enlightening and critical essay on oil, politics, and social changes brought about by the expansion of the oil industry in Alberta and the promise of the same kind in Newfoundland in the 1980s, William Hynd aimed to answer some burning questions:

What will the oil mean to Newfoundland? Does oil offer a bright, new future for the province? Will the oil revenues mean better roads, better schools, an improved health care system? And if the economy is bound to improve what effects will this have on the province's unique social and cultural heritage? (Hynd 1986; 103).

In the 1980s, Newfoundland's premier, A. Brian Peckford, was interested in possible oil revenues so that Newfoundland could become more self-reliant and finally be independent from the central government. This vision, however, did not consider the fact that Newfoundland's dependency was not exclusively a geopolitical problem in which the federal government was the only one that played against a free and independent Newfoundland. Its economic health also relied on the, political, and economic power of a few giant multinationals as well as on "those finance capitalists to whom the provincial government is grossly indebted" (Hynd 1986; 111). The promise of a better future based on the exploitation of Newfoundland's offshore oil resources has yet to be fulfilled.

People in White Harbour don't know what the future will bring. They only know that good jobs related to the oil industry are in Alberta and not in Newfoundland. Women in particular are anxious and ask themselves when the day will come when their husbands will go away for weeks but within Newfoundland and not far West to Alberta. They hope this not only for their husbands but also for

their children. Getting youngsters to stay in Newfoundland would mean the possibility of a future for the province.

Despite all promises and hopes, however, the only sure destiny people in White Harbour know today is that of outmigration. In my conclusions, I will discuss the current face of outmigration in White Harbour and the economic and social consequences related to it.

Conclusions

During the fieldwork period in White Harbour, Eric Schwimmer's ideas on the meaning and future of anthropology and anthropological research became an important leitmotiv. Schwimmer's main concern was that of understanding "what the connections are between subjects and contexts, how local subjects interpret these contexts and how they decode their inherent contradictions and inconsistencies" (Gagne and Campeau 2008; 13).

My findings have highlighted both the heteroglossia (plurality of voices) as well as the multi-layered identity that individuals create by interacting within different *systems*. Echoing and extending some of the basic concepts in cognitive anthropology, systems are a complex of interrelated and interdependent units "in which no element can change without precipitating change in all the others; it is made up of 'differences that make a difference'" (Ibid.).

Even though my fieldwork took place in a small outpost in rural Newfoundland, I have tried from the beginning to consider the results of my work as contextualized and systemic. In the introductory sections I discussed the historical, cultural, and economic context that has seen the rise, formation, and partial decline of the fishing industry and way of living in Newfoundland. However, one cannot forget that rural Newfoundland, and White Harbour in particular, are part of a global economic and social system whose parts influence each other.

As I have stated, my approach during my fieldwork had to change to adapt to the new situation I found once in White Harbour. Instead of uncovering and discussing the reasons why a tourism-related industry in a rural area can flourish and often represent an important means of subsistence, I was forced to seek the personal, historical, cultural, and economic motives behind the lack of tourism-related entrepreneurship on the part of women in White Harbour. Caroline the artist, Rachel the museum's curator, Sue the aspiring business woman and all the other informants I interviewed in

my two months' field experience cast some light on all the difficulties that prevent young women from establishing themselves in an industry that is developing quite quickly in other parts of Newfoundland.

In this thesis, I have examined several failed attempts to develop tourism in White Harbour: the art gallery opened by Caroline and a friend of hers, Sue's tannery, an RV camp that actually never saw the light, the town's difficulties not only in getting financial assistance for projects such as the French Shore and the Shed but also in overcoming forms of resistance on the part of some of the local residents. Among the many reasons that prevent women in White Harbour from creating a tourism-oriented economy, some are historical and cultural, that is, endemic to the way people perceive themselves in the current social and economic situation. Even though the merchant system no longer exists, most people in White Harbour still think of themselves as survivors and victims. They realize perfectly that White Harbour and Newfoundland in general has stopped being an economy based upon fishing. Nonetheless, most inhabitants of White Harbour think that there are "new merchants" setting up obstacles to individual and community success; the government has in fact become the incarnation of the new merchant. "They want us to die" or "The government won't help us!" were the desperate words of many people. One of the goals of my work is to make the provincial government in particular aware of the often underestimated discrepancy between people's dreams and attitudes and official plans purportedly designed to benefit the average citizen. Moreover, this work also represents an attempt on my part to understand the several, complex reasons that constitute the socio-economic universe in White Harbour today. As a researcher I fully acknowledge the fact that, often, it is difficult to understand other people's behaviors. Indeed, the brief period of time I spent in White Harbour did not give me the opportunity to deeply come in contact and grasp all the circumstances that have shaped the life of the town. Therefore, I am fully aware that White Harbour's inhabitants know more about their own personal circumstances and the way they interact with all the global forces that surround them than I have been able to discover during my fieldwork.

People in White Harbour are not lacking material means; the great majority owns a house, a car, a boat, often a snowmobile, a computer, a cell phone, and other means of connecting with the rest of the world. Besides, White Harbour has much in its favor in terms of becoming an important tourist attraction: the quarry site, location, a relaxed style of life, a rich history. What is missing then? Is it the money? Not really, as I have previously noted that there are several agencies and grants available to women entrepreneurs. Most people are not sufficiently prepared to start a business; they often lack education and the knowledge of how bureaucracy works. An interesting parallel can be drawn between women in White Harbour and some of Bourgois' crack dealers in New York City. Both groups, although widely different, have failed to fit into the current system of power. Women in White Harbour seem unable to take advantage of the several opportunities the government and other agencies can offer, while Primo and other crack dealers continuously fail any attempt to 'work honestly'. Both groups are trapped in a labor-based economy that has been rapidly replaced by service industry in New York City and by outmigration in Newfoundland.

What these two groups have in common is the lack of what Bourdieu called "symbolic capital". They do not possess those resources such as education, age, race, language skills that the current system consider as culturally validating in order to be recognized and valued as part of the system itself. The following extract from Primo's interview reveals what this young man is missing in order to successfully be integrated in the 'American society':

Primo: You know why I don't fly to work real quickly? I am twenty-six years old, and if I go to fly out of my way and get a McDonald's job and not no union job, it just shows that you're flying to get a McDonald's to cover your ass. [...] Every time you see someone that's older, it's probably because they don't have no education; no high school; no nothing. They don't speak English. I mean my English is very bad, but I can go further than at Burger King (Bourgois 1995; 116).

In fact, I often had the feeling, during my interviews, that many young women did not ‘speak the language’. They did not know how to effectively use the internet to access provincial funding or to ask for help and information, how to write an official letter, or how to approach prospective clients. However, they had many of the resources they needed to succeed: the internet, the Emerald Corporation office in Baie Verte, the mayor who is always open to new initiatives, and, although distant and often frightening, the provincial government as well.

An attitude that all forces were arrayed against them was widespread among young women in White Harbour, and I frequently found this attitude saddening, even if also understandable. We would often spend hours talking about future possibilities and then, towards the end of our conversation, most women would simply raise their shoulders and smile before commenting as follows: It is too difficult; I do not have the time, or the money; What if I fail; As long as the oil industry in Alberta is providing us with good money....why should I risk it?

The outmigration patterns in rural Newfoundland have changed since the boom of the oil industry in Alberta. Recent research in rural areas has found that women leave rural communities at a higher rate than men (Corbett 2007 and McCann 1994). In the case of White Harbour, the situation is different. According to my data, there are more men migrating than women. However, as Corbett points out in his introduction (2007; 53), “several recent studies of migration and mobility have suggested that the traditional structural adjustment and push-pull models of migration decision making are less than adequate for understanding why, when, and how people move from one place to another “(Jones 1999a, 1999b, Papastergiadis 2000, Settles 2001). Short-term migration to Fort McMurray in Alberta not only presents a new panorama in the migration process of rural Newfoundland but it is also changing its communities. In a not too distant past, gender played a central role in migration patterns in family-based fishing operations: because young women had limited employment opportunities in their communities, they would face more pressure to migrate. As my data suggests, this is no longer

the case. Many young women migrated in the past mostly accompanied by their partners, but later returned to establish a family. Today, the oil industry in Alberta is providing their families with a good income and secure benefits even though they have to sacrifice their personal and familial relationships when their men go away for a few months. The situation is often described as not easy, but it also brings with it a good level of prosperity. How is the short-term migration to Alberta affecting women's entrepreneurship? Erika, in her late 30's, tells it all:

Well, I never thought of it (opening a bed and breakfast). I guess if I need money....I would do it.

Necessity appears to be the missing link for women in order to start their own business. Why should they risk failing if it is not necessary? Why should they compromise their family and free time for such an uncertain adventure? After listening to all of my informants, I came to the conclusion that they are probably right. However, this attitude is rooted in a past in which the best that could be hoped for was survival. This attitude, probably realistic during the merchant period, may be compromising economic development today.

The results of my research so far confirm some of the aspects of retrenchment and often spurious and extremely difficult regeneration that has been occurring in rural Newfoundland in the last two decades and that has been analyzed in many studies (see Byron 2003, Neis 2000, Sinclair and Ommer 2006, among others). Cadigan (Byron 2003) in particular writes of a 'moral economy of retrenchment' in Newfoundland's history and he introduces one of the main problems in rural Newfoundland today, that of private capitalization and centralization. People in rural Newfoundland have lost their traditional rights to the fishery and the forestry, and nothing else has yet been provided to ensure the future of rural Newfoundland. Instead, since the Smallwood government in the 1950, the state has supported centralization –mainly in the provincial capital St. John's – as well as the privatization of capital and resources. However, the most interesting aspect of this change is the fact that the merchant system in the past and the urbanization and capitalization process today both

represent mono economies. The current government has signed an astronomically large contract to drill oil off the coast of Newfoundland; the future of the province, according to the premier, has been assured.

An important focus of my research was the limit placed on development by an economy exclusively based upon one resource, either fish or oil. A mono-economy reflects, I claim, a monopoly in political decisions and policy making that not only hinders endeavors at local levels, such as tourism, but also reinforces that sense of the top-down approach that characterized the merchant system. My data suggest that there is often a discrepancy between availability and ‘reachability’ of governmental programs directed to women. The programs do exist but they are not widely known by those individuals who would benefit from them. For this reason, women in White Harbour often feel like the government is doing nothing to truly help them succeed.

My focus on tourism as a possible economic adventure was not intended as a substitute to all the other possibilities. As I have said, what characterized Newfoundland’s fishing communities in the past was a plurality of livelihood activities such as fishing, cutting wood, occasional wage work. The intention was to underline the importance of supporting economic strategies at a local level together with other strategies at national and international level. In other fishing communities elsewhere (see Hetland’s study on Norwegian fishing communities, 2008), pluriactivity is still an important part of rural livelihood, but the combinations have changed, giving birth to new forms of pluriactivity that have provided a basis for adaptation of commercial fishing in changing conditions.

My research experience with women in White Harbour, with their daily struggles, fears, and difficulties in building their own future, as well as that of their families and communities, has taught me an important lesson. The main problem for women in White Harbour, and probably in most outports, is that of communication at multiple levels. They have difficulties in communicating with women in other outports to exchange ideas, as in the case of Caroline the artist, but they have also

difficulties in communicating with those who are in power at the local and national level to let them know what they need and want for their future. Interestingly, similar findings appear in several published government studies at least a decade ago (see, for example, *Women in the Fishery* 1994). Ways must be found for local women, men, and outsiders with a stake in the success of communities like White Harbour to speak meaningfully to each other. Such communication, of course, will not be effective unless the goals of government and the corporate world are truly in the interest of local residents, something which may not be known until effective communication begins to take place.

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