

**Assessing the tangible and intangible benefits of tourism: Perceptions of economic, social, and cultural impacts in Labrador's Battle Harbour Historic District**

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**ABSTRACT:** Literature on rural and small island tourism critically questions the commodification of culture and landscapes, showing that replacing rural resource based industries with tourism often leads to a mummification of culture and questionable economic payoffs. Using original survey and qualitative data from three communities surrounding Labrador's Battle Harbour Historic District, this paper explores how rural and island communities perceive the benefits of tourism and interactions with tourists. The paper finds that residents value the cultural showcasing of their communities and history, but are ambiguous about the economic rewards of tourism. We conclude by questioning whether the cultural rewards of tourism, around meaning making, outweigh other rewards around promoting economically and socially viable communities.

*Keywords:* Atlantic Canada, Battle Harbour, Battle Island, culture, development, island tourism, Newfoundland, Labrador, rural tourism

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## **Introduction**

With the collapse of the ground fisheries in the 1990s, Atlantic Canada increasingly turned to tourism as a means to offset the economic loss (Baum 1999; Binkley, 2000; Corbett, 2005; George, Mair and Reid, 2009; George and Reid, 2005; Mason, 2002; Overton, 1996, 2007; Sullivan and Mitchell, 2012; Tye and Powers, 1998). Newfoundland and Labrador was no exception and since the introduction of the cod moratorium in 1992 its tourism economy expanded from 264,000 non-resident visitors that year to 518,000 in 2010. The tourism industry in the province, moreover, accounts for over 12,000 jobs and is worth over Can\$800 million in direct and spin-off economic benefits (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 2009).

Much of the focus of the analysis of tourism in Atlantic Canada has been on assessing its economic rewards or costs. Far less research has looked at the more latent social and cultural impacts of the industry on local communities, particularly from the perspectives of

residents. On the one hand, the social and cultural benefits of tourism may include an enriched sense of community identity, an enhanced sense of connection to local environments, and increased social capital from engaging with visitors and developing new skills. On the other, some question whether the tourism industry's commodification of local cultures and histories works to mummify rural societies or distract attention from deeper political economic problems in rural areas (George et al., 2009; George & Reid, 2005; Overton, 2007; Rothman, 1998; Solymosi, 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). From this perspective, tourism is seen to produce a romanticized version of culture that is at odds with current relationships to place and identity (Pocius, 2000; Summerby-Murray, 2001). In this paper, we explore the perceptions of the effects of tourism to better understand how communities relate to the industry.

Our analysis focuses on the Battle Harbour National Historic District (BHHD), which is a site on Battle Island, a small island located in the Labrador Straits region of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, on Canada's Northeastern Atlantic coastline. Analyses of historic sites, such as Battle Harbour, are important because they are dynamic and contested spaces of meaning and place making (Cooke, 2013). Relatedly, Battle Harbour provides an ideal example of a cold water island tourist site, with harsh and pristine natural environments that become contexts for an exceptional and expensive form of adventure and cultural tourism with direct encounters with nature, history, and local culture (Baldacchino, 2006, p. 196). The BHHD builds on the region's past by commemorating the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery and allows tourists to experience the cultural and natural heritage of the region (Applin, 2010). Like the Red Bay National Historic Site, Battle Harbour is a key tourist attraction on the south coast of Labrador and is positioned as a highlight of the Labrador Coastal Drive. We draw on original survey data collected from residents of the communities of Mary's Harbour, Lodge Bay, and St. Lewis, which are located in the St. Lewis Inlet area surrounding Battle Harbour. Through our analysis, we explore how residents perceive the economic, social, and cultural impacts of tourism.

## **Literature review**

According to tourism scholars, there is an increasing interest in alternatives to the large-scale resort developments that bring tourists into ostensibly more "authentic" encounters with local cultures and environments through cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and other "tourisms of body and nature" (Franklin, 2003; also Gurung and Seeland, 2008; Reed and Gill, 1997; Salazar, 2010; Urry and Larsen, 2011). As part of this shift, increasingly urban populations are travelling to rural areas during their vacation time. Within this context, many communities in Atlantic Canada, and throughout the North Atlantic more broadly, have begun to see tourism as an "attractive development" strategy (Luke, 2002), where tourists are enticed to visit and experience the unique culture, history and environment of a destination, instead of mining and exporting its natural resources (Baldacchino, 2006; Overton, 2007). As part of the move towards attractive development, Atlantic Canadian communities rely on anchors like historic sites, museums and National Parks, as well as activities like sea kayaking and hiking, or whale, puffin and iceberg viewing.

Most literature on tourism in Atlantic Canada has focused on the rise of the industry in the wake of the collapse of the ground fisheries and other resource-based industries in rural areas (Baum, 1999; Binkley, 2000; Brown and Geddes, 2007; Corbett, 2005; George et al., 2009; George and Reid, 2005; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012; Ommer,

2007; Overton, 1996, 2007; Palmer, Wolff and Cassidy, 2008; Stoddart and Sodero 2014). Much of this literature takes a political economy approach and focuses on the how the industry is structured, or conversely how a shift from resource extraction to tourism has reshaped rural economies.

This work has often focused on the potential for Atlantic Canadian tourism to act as an economic diversification strategy for struggling rural communities. Several communities have drawn on their resourcefulness and resilience in tough times to reorient their economies around tourism and other light industries (Baum, 1999; Binkley, 2000; Brown and Geddes, 2007; Ommer, 2007; Sullivan and Mitchell, 2012). As local communities connect to global flows of tourists, they also plug into flows of capital from one of the world's largest industries (Urry and Larsen, 2011). The direct economic benefits to tourism operators and employees can have broader spill-over effects for host communities, as has been demonstrated by economic analyses of tourism anchors like the East Coast Trail and the Battle Harbour National Historic District (D.W. Knight Associates Team, 2015; Fennelly, 2011). Some of this literature also explores how 'traditional' culture, which is largely preserved in rural areas, can be used as a resource for economic development through community-based partnerships and cooperatives that promote tourism (MacDonald and Jolliffe, 2003; Sullivan and Mitchell, 2012).

One of the key shortcomings of tourism identified in this literature is the seasonality of employment in tourism in Atlantic Canada, which is characterized by pay scales lower than many resource industries (Jackson, Marshall, Tirone et al., 2006; Jolliffe and Farnsworth, 2003; Ommer, 2007). As such, while tourism may have positive economic impacts on rural communities, as a strategy for increasing community embeddedness, it cannot fully compete with jobs outside the Atlantic region that drive out-migration (MacDonald, Neis and Grzetic, 2006). Furthermore, an over-emphasis on tourism as a panacea for community economic development can distract attention from the ways in which provincial and national governments are downloading the problems created by fiscal cuts to often ill-equipped rural municipalities and service districts (Overton, 2007). Historically, tourism development has taken priority over the wellbeing of local communities, as demonstrated by the relocation of and imposition of restrictions on communities in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia in order to create National Parks in Atlantic Canada (MacEachern, 2001; Overton, 1996). These types of assessments of accrued economic benefits are what we call the tangible impacts of tourism. Because they are manifest markers of the impact of tourism, they are more readily quantified and tend to be the focus of policy concern as well as academic attention.

Beyond research specifically on Atlantic Canada, another theme in the tourism literature focuses on its social and cultural benefits. These include the ability to educate through tourism, and the ability to protect local culture and history, to the benefit of host communities as well as visitors (Cusick, 2009; Lynch, Duinkera, Sheehanb et al., 2009). Because of this, the collective identities of communities can be enriched through the meaning making that is associated with producing tourist destinations. Research on nature-oriented tourism similarly argues that such tourism may enhance a sense of connection to local environments and provide a rationale for environmental protection (Bulbeck, 2005; Hennessy and McCleary, 2011; Gurung and Seeland, 2008; Stoddart, 2012; Waitt and Gordon, 2007). Others argue that tourism increases the social capital of residents of tourist regions through engaging with visitors and developing new skills (MacBeath, Carson and Northcote, 2008; Reid and George, 2005). Essentially, as visitors from other regions of a country and from around the world interact with host communities, social connections can be formed with those

outside the immediate site. This can in turn lead to innovation in a tourist region as new ideas are shared by those visiting. Such socio-cultural impacts of tourism are what we call the intangible benefits. These are harder to observe and measure, compared to the tangible economic benefits of tourism. However, such latent impacts also shape tourism host communities.

While a substantial body of literature points to the socio-cultural benefits associated with tourism, others adopt a more skeptical stance and question whether the industry's commodification of local culture and history mummifies rural societies and culture (George and Reid, 2005; Overton, 1996). The related over-romanticization of the past that comes with mummification produces a version of culture disconnected from contemporary culture and social relationships to place (Palmer et al., 2008; Summerby-Murray, 2001). As Pocius puts it, tourism offers communities the option of "preserving a past that often smacks of cultural voyeurism for the sake of tourists" (Pocius, 2000, pp. 273-274). Tourist sites in Atlantic Canada, as noted above, are often in rural areas and draw upon 'traditional' notions of livelihood and lifestyle, particularly drawing from the fisheries history of the region. The tourism industry's need to commoditize culture risks a reification and a presentation of stereotypes, and these trends can block communities from organically innovating and changing, for fear of negating the patina of 'rural authenticity' that attracts visitors.

If such a mummification or over-romanticization occurs, the intangible impacts of tourism may not be beneficial to communities. As critics of tourism note, the character of host communities often changes to meet the expectations of tourists (George et al., 2009; Overton, 1996; Royle, 2009; Solymosi, 2011). Rothman, for example, concludes his analysis of tourism development in the American west by arguing that tourism represents a "devil's bargain" for host communities, where the benefits are balanced by a process through which communities "evolved into caricatures of their original identities ... in the process making towns that looked the same... but felt different" (Rothman 1998, p. 370). In the context of Newfoundland and Labrador, Overton (2007) similarly argues that, under conditions of neoliberalism, the heritage and culture that is preserved and financially supported is that which is best able to demonstrate its marketability to tourists and potential profitability.

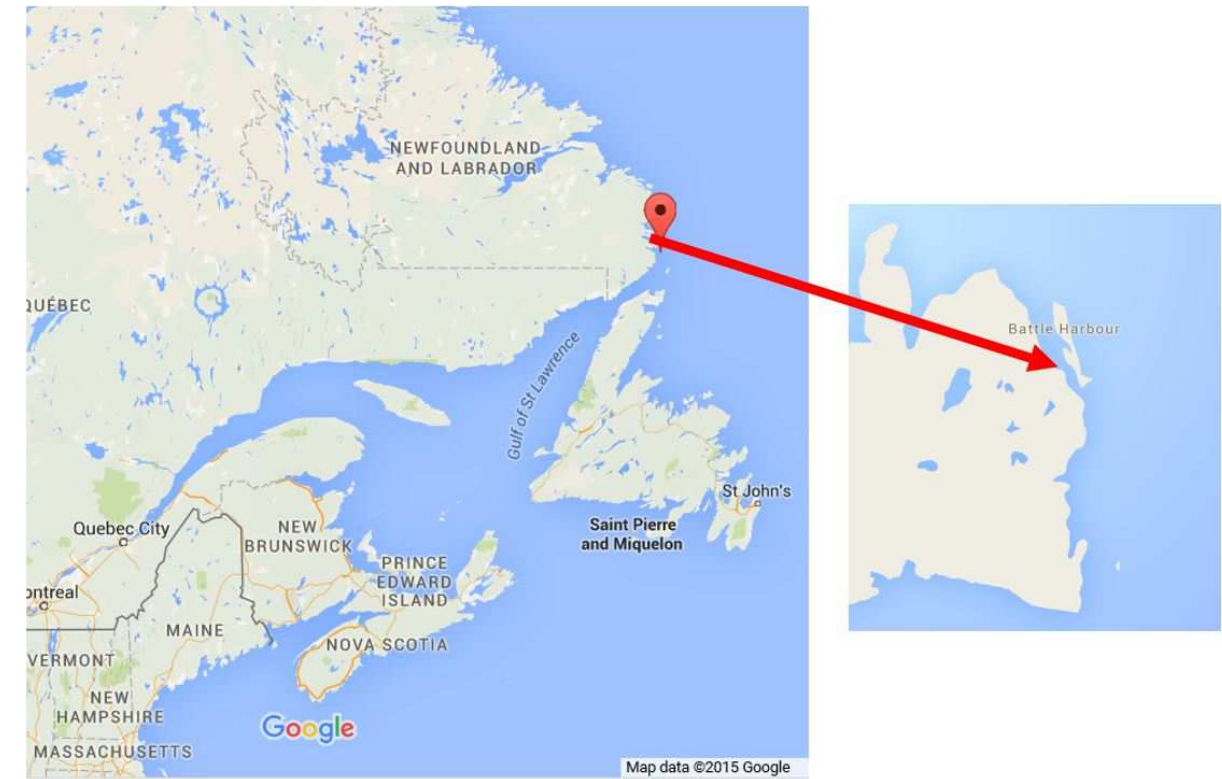
Much of the literature cited thus far has tended to focus on the macro outcomes of tourism, looking at economic impacts of tourism as well as the effects of tourism on local societies and cultures. Most of the literature tends to focus either on economic measures, or on more interpretive forms of analysis, often based on secondary sources such as government reports, historical documents, or media coverage. Less research engages with the views of residents of tourist sites. As such, we address this gap by focusing on residents' perceptions of the economic, social and cultural impacts of the Battle Harbour National Historic District. More specifically, we query residents about their perceptions of the ways in which tourism shapes their lives and communities.

### **The Battle Harbour Historic District**

Although it is unclear when the Battle Harbour settlement was colonized and established by Europeans, records show that fishers were using the site as early as the 1770s and some speculate that it was in use at least two decades earlier (Battle Harbour, 2014). It is a small island settlement along Canada's Northeastern Atlantic coast of Labrador. It is about 1,140 km (or 14 hours) away from the provincial capital of St. John's by car and boat, and is at the

mouth of the Gulf of St Lawrence. It is also just off the coast of Mary's Harbour and is about 71 km away by car and boat from St. Lewis and 10 km away by car and boat from Lodge Bay. Together, these towns comprise the Battle Harbour Historic District (See [Figure 1](#)). As a tourist site, Battle Harbour exemplifies the type of remote and cold water island tourism site that can “deter all but the strong willed ...” due to its distance from major (or even modest) airports, which necessitates long-distance travel by car and ferry (Baldacchino, 2006, p. 188).

**Figure 1: Map of Eastern North America, showing location of Battle Harbour.**



Source: Map data © 2016 Google.

At the height of its history, Battle Harbour was the unofficial capital of the region and was a key port for ships in the cod fishery, including large seasonal flows of fishers from the island of Newfoundland. By the late 1960s, however, the community was targeted by a provincial government program to relocate residents of remote outports to larger settlements. At that time, many of the residents of Battle Harbour were relocated to Mary's Harbour, which is on the Labrador mainland, as well as other larger communities throughout the province. The last year-round residents left in 1968, after the last teacher left the community and the school closed. Battle Harbour then served as a seasonal fishing village with temporary residents during the summer months until the cod fishing moratorium in 1992.

Shortly after the fishing moratorium, several buildings were donated to the Battle Harbour Historic Trust. Restoration work began in 1993, which marked the beginning of re-orienting Battle Harbour towards the related projects of historical preservation and tourism development. Islands or parts of islands have often been listed as UN World Heritage Sites,

including Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland and Labrador. These sites work to create a “common, global history which transcends political, spatial, temporal, and other boundaries” (Baldacchino, 2010, p. 178). By designating Battle Harbour as a National Historic District, this small island was no longer a local community or regional hub, but was similarly reconfigured as an important part of Canadian history. The move from fishing to tourism helped protect the communities surrounding Battle Harbour against the economic decline and collapse typical of other resettled communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The historic tourism development project also promoted the protection and practice of the heritage of the region.

The most recent economic impact assessment of the Battle Harbour site was carried out in 2010 through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. While this report is now a few years old, it provides valuable context (Fennelly, 2011). Using visitor surveys and site registration information, the report concludes that some 2,590 tourists visited Battle Harbour in 2010, and most visitors come as part of a larger trip to coastal Labrador. Most visitors are from within Canada (55 percent). A significant number of Canadian visitors (65 percent) are from within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, while the majority of the other Canadian visitors are from Ontario or Quebec. In terms of the economic impact of the site, the report concludes,

the total GDP impact of Battle Harbour on the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2010 based on this level of expenditure was \$634,398. This included \$426,648 in wages and salaries, helping to hire or sustain 12 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs (Fenelly, 2011, p. 15).

Within the context of the small, rural communities of the St. Lewis inlet, this ‘income effect’ represents a significant economic benefit for the region. However, another report on Battle Harbour highlights several ongoing challenges to the economic sustainability of the site, which include its isolated location and challenges of ferry travel, ongoing impacts of the harsh climate on the site’s historical buildings and artifacts, lack of resources compared with historic sites run by Parks Canada, and short operating season (Applin, 2010). The report did not focus on the social and cultural impacts of the industry, nor did it explicitly explore how residents perceive the benefits, and or pitfalls, of tourism.

## **Methods**

To engage our questions on the impacts of tourism, we adopted a sequential mixed-method design, combining a telephone survey of area residents with field work at the Battle Harbour National Historic District. This mixed-method approach used different types of data to provide a more complex understanding of the cultural and social impacts of tourism for the region. In this paper, we focus on the data generated through a telephone survey we designed to specifically analyse questions about the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of tourism in the Battle Harbour Historic District.

The telephone survey enumerated residents of the communities surrounding Battle Harbour: Mary’s Harbour (population: 385), St. Lewis (population: 205), and Lodge Bay (population: 76): (Community Accounts, 2015; Southern Labrador, 2015). As noted above, these communities are close to the BHHD and many of the residents that were relocated from

Battle Harbour were settled in these towns. The survey was administered during May and June 2013, with a sampling frame of 237 phone numbers for the three communities that was purchased from ASDE survey sampler. Due to the size of the sampling frame, a comprehensive approach to sampling was taken. Every household was contacted, with up to three attempts made to contact each household. If a “no” response was received during any point of contact, no additional attempts were made to contact that household. Telephone surveys lasted approximately 15 minutes and the final response rate was 40% (or a sample of 95 participants).

Most survey participants (62 percent) hailed from Mary's Harbour, which hosts the ferry to the Battle Harbour site and is its closest location. This was followed by participants from St. Lewis, who accounted for just over a quarter of respondents. Participants from Lodge Bay, which is the smallest community in the study, made up about 12 percent of those responding. With respect to other demographics of the participants, about two-thirds were women, about half were middle aged, more than two-thirds of the participants had a high school certificate or less education, almost a quarter of the participants were retired and the top three occupations reported were office and related, sales and services, and processing and manufacturing. Our question on household income was met with a degree of apprehension. Over a third either did not specify their income or reported that they didn't know their income. Almost a fifth reported household incomes over \$100,000.

The survey consisted of 29 open and closed questions focusing on four themes: 1) resident perceptions of the Battle Harbour National Historic District, including its importance for community identity and culture; 2) the importance of resident interactions with tourists to Battle Harbour; 3) resident views about the role Battle Harbour plays in developing social sustainability and community resilience; and 4) basic demographic information on age, gender, education, occupation, and household income.

For the purposes of this paper, we focus on the perceived benefits of the BHHD by residents of Mary's Harbour, Lodge Bay and St. Lewis as a proxy of the impacts of tourism in the region. We specifically focus on questions that solicit views on the perceived benefits of the BHHD. We first examine a dichotomous yes/no question that asks if participants felt they had *benefited* from interactions with tourists to the BHHD. We then explore this question further by asking an open question that probed the perception of that benefit by asking participants what they felt were the *main benefits* that they experienced through interactions with tourists to the BHHD. This is followed by an analysis of five questions using a 5-point Likert-scale, asking about *quality of life, training and skill development, staying in the community, economic benefits, and cultural and social benefits*. We believe that these questions match the economic, social, and cultural impacts of tourism. For each of the scale questions, 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 ‘strongly agree.’ Each of these questions is examined by looking at univariate analysis. We probe the scale questions further by cross-tabulating them with demographic measures, including: *town* where the participant lives, *gender, age, education, occupation* and how often the participant *interacts* with tourists. We also probe results with open-ended questions.<sup>1</sup>

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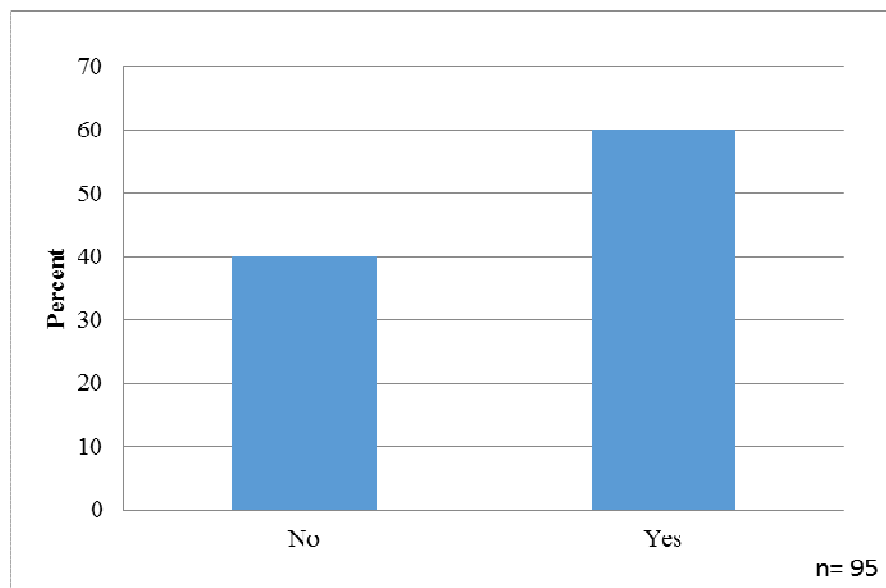
<sup>1</sup> Additional analysis is available upon request or at: [https://www.academia.edu/5788952/The\\_Intangible\\_Impacts\\_of\\_Tourism\\_The\\_Battle\\_Harbour\\_National\\_Historic\\_District\\_as\\_a\\_Tourism\\_Anchor](https://www.academia.edu/5788952/The_Intangible_Impacts_of_Tourism_The_Battle_Harbour_National_Historic_District_as_a_Tourism_Anchor)

The goals of our analysis are exploratory and thus we do not have formal hypotheses. However, we are interested in assessing participant perceptions of the economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism. We believe that, by exploring these potential impacts, we can get a better sense of whether the benefits associated with tourism are also shared by those on the ground experiencing the industry.

## Analysis

In general, almost all of the participants in the survey had visited the Battle Harbour Historic site, with just 5% saying they had not visited the site. When we asked the participants in the survey about whether they benefited from interactions with tourists to the BHHD, a clear majority felt they had, as indicated in [Figure 2](#).

**Figure 2: Have you benefited from your interactions with tourists to Battle Harbour?**



We followed this question with an open-ended probe, asking those who had interacted with tourists and felt they had benefited from it what was the main benefit from their experience. On this front, 56 participants offered further comment. Several main themes were identified in the analysis of this question.

A frequent theme is that participants appreciate being able to *share their culture and history with visitors*. Another prevalent theme is that interactions with tourists *enhance participants' sense of pride in the community and place*. Less prevalent themes include: *gaining new perspectives on aspects of the local culture and landscape* that could otherwise be taken for granted; *learning about other places around the world* through interacting with visitors; and *making connections with new people*. For many community members, interactions with tourists were felt to produce a positive social impact, which is distinct from the economic value of tourism.

Few participants prioritized the economic benefits of interacting with tourists and instead focused on opportunities to share knowledge, learn from one another, and showcase



Newfoundland and Labrador culture. Many participants in the survey stated that a benefit of interacting with tourists was to share their culture, life, and knowledge. Participants also expressed appreciation for tourists who show gratitude to local residents and recognize their friendliness and hospitality. Tourists also made participants feel good about themselves and the place where they lived, fostering pride in their communities. It appears that cultural and social benefits of the BHHD site were seen to be among the top benefits. Economic benefits were also valued; however, the tangible outcomes of those benefits are more ambiguous.

Perceived benefits of the BHHD were further explored with a battery of Likert-scale questions. We asked participants if the BHHD contributes to the region's quality of life, offers training and skill development opportunities to its residents, allows people to stay in their communities, brings economic benefits and offers cultural and social benefits to the region. The results are summarized in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1: Benefits of the Battle Harbour District.**

<i>The Battle Harbour site...</i>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
...contributes to the quality of life in this region		11%	2%	48%	39%
...provides useful training and skill-development for people in the community		12%	22%	39%	27%
...allows more people to stay in this community instead of going elsewhere to work and live	1%	17%	14%	48%	20%
...brings economic benefits to this region	1%	3%	4%	55%	37%
...brings cultural and social benefits to this region		4%	2%	53%	41%

n= 95

As reflected in the open question asking people to identify perceived benefits, the scale questions show a very large proportion of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that BHHD brings cultural and social benefits (94% of participants) as well as the statement that it contributes to quality of life (87% of participants). These were the first and third most agreed upon items in the series of scale questions on benefits.

Interestingly, 92% of participants also agreed or strongly agreed with the general statement that the BHHD brings economic benefits. This was the second-most agreed upon item in the series of scale questions on benefits. There was less agreement, however, on items that explored the more specific economic benefits. Some two-thirds (68%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the site allows people to stay in their communities. Similarly, 66% felt that it offers skills and training. Overall, it appears that the participants have a strong consensus on their views of the BHHD offering them pride of community and that they most value the social and cultural aspects of the site. On this front, there is strong evidence that tourism offers many intangible outcomes and that the fear of a mummification of culture observed by Reid and George (2005), Overton (1996) and others, is not dominant within the interpretive frameworks of members of the site's host communities. Residents of the

communities around the BHHD appear to embrace and value their ‘traditional’ culture rather than fear its mummification and the disruption of their contemporary lives.

There is less consensus among participants on the tangible economic outcomes of tourism in the BHHD, and for this reason we explore the two scale questions with diverging views on the tangible impacts in more detail through cross tabulations of participants’ opinions and demographic and social characteristics. We do this first in [Table 2](#), which explores how tourism at Battle Harbour contributes to community embeddedness by allowing people to stay in their communities. We begin by looking at perceptions based on the communities of residence of the participants. Mary’s Harbour, which is the community that hosts the ferry to the BHHD, had the greatest proportion of participants (81%) who agree or strongly agree that the BHHD allows people to remain in their communities, compared to 48% of respondents from St. Lewis and 45% from Lodge Bay. St. Lewis had the highest proportion of participants who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

When gender is examined, the differences appear to be marginal, with no more than 4 percentage points of difference in levels of sentiment. Younger participants showed a higher level of agreement with respect to the BHHD allowing people to stay in the community, with most of those 40 years of age and under agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement (79%), compared to 56% of those between the ages of 61 and 80 years, and 50% of those over 80 years of age. This may reflect a sense of optimism that counters the prevailing trends of outmigration from rural areas in the province. It should be noted, however, that only two people are in the oldest category of participants.

In terms of levels of education, those with high school or college and non-university qualifications are most in agreement with the statement, with 79 and 77% respectively agreeing or strongly agreeing. By contrast, only 9 percent of those with the highest level of education and 14% of those with the lowest level of education strongly agreed with the statement. All participants who worked in management occupations and the lone university student respondent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The lowest levels of agreement and strong agreement came from those who were retired and those working in health-related occupations.

[Table 2](#) also summarizes responses pertaining to interactions with tourists and shows a large degree of variance on that question. Those who most frequently interacted with tourists responded with the highest percentages of agreement or strong agreement with the statement that the BHHD allows people to stay in their communities. The highest level of disagreement with that statement was by those who do not interact with tourists.

Generally, [Table 2](#) shows that people who live close to the BHHD, who are younger, who have a middle range of education, who work in managerial positions, and who frequently interact with tourists, largely agree with the notion that the BHHD allows people to stay in their communities.

**Table 2: Benefit of the Battle Harbour site, allowing people to stay in their community.**

<i>Town*</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Lodge Bay		27%	27%	36%	9%	100%
Mary's Harbour		8%	10%	54%	27%	100%
St. Lewis	4%	32%	16%	40%	8%	100%
<i>Gender*</i>						
Female	2%	16%	13%	48%	22%	100%
Male		19%	16%	50%	16%	100%
<i>Age**</i>						
Under 40			21%	58%	21%	100%
41 to 60		18%	8%	51%	22%	100%
61 to 80	4%	26%	13%	43%	13%	100%
Over 80			50%		50%	100%
<i>Education**</i>						
Without high school certificate		22%	17%	47%	14%	100%
High school certificate only	4%	13%	4%	50%	29%	100%
College, CEGEP, non-university		9%	14%	50%	27%	100%
University certificate, diploma or degree		18%	18%	55%	9%	100%
<i>Occupation**</i>						
Construction and Related		25%		38%	38%	100%
Education			25%	75%		100%
Health		50%	0%	50%		100%
Management				100%		100%
Office and Related		18%	6%	41%	35%	100%
Primary Industries			25%	63%	13%	100%
Processing and Manufacturing		10%	10%	50%	30%	100%
Retired	5%	32%	23%	27%	14%	100%
Sales and Service		7%	13%	60%	20%	100%
University Student				100%		100%
<i>How often do you interact with tourists to the Battle Harbour National Historic District?*</i>						
Never	4%	31%	19%	31%	15%	100%
Occasionally (i.e. once or twice a year)		15%	15%	56%	15%	100%
Frequently (i.e. several times a year)		10%	10%	55%	26%	100%

\*n= 95

\*\* n= 93

Next, in [Table 3](#), we examine perceptions on the benefit of the BHHD in providing useful skills and training with the same demographic and social variables. As with the findings of [Table 2](#), more participants from the host community of Mary's Harbour than from the other communities were in agreement with the statement that the site offers useful skills and training, with 75 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing. Lodge Bay had the greatest proportion of participants who disagreed with, or had no opinion on, the statement.

**Table 3: Benefit of the Battle Harbour site in providing skills and training.**

<i>Town*</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Lodge Bay		18%	27%	55%		100%
Mary's Harbour		10%	15%	39%	36%	100%
St. Lewis		12%	36%	32%	20%	100%
<b><i>Gender*</i></b>						
Female		13%	22%	37%	29%	100%
Male		9%	22%	44%	25%	100%
<b><i>Age**</i></b>						
Under 40		11%	32%	26%	32%	100%
41 to 60		8%	16%	51%	24%	100%
61 to 80		17%	30%	26%	26%	100%
Over 80					100%	100%
<b><i>Education**</i></b>						
Without high school certificate		11%	19%	33%	36%	100%
High school certificate only		17%	13%	46%	25%	100%
College, CEGEP, non-university		5%	36%	36%	23%	100%
University certificate, diploma or degree		9%	27%	45%	18%	100%
<b><i>Occupation**</i></b>						
Construction and Related			25%	38%	38%	100%
Education			50%	50%		100%
Health		50%		50%		100%
Management		33%	17%	33%	17%	100%
Office and Related		6%	18%	47%	29%	100%
Primary Industries			38%	38%	25%	100%
Processing and Manufacturing				60%	40%	100%
Retired		14%	36%	32%	18%	100%
Sales and Service		13%	13%	27%	47%	100%
University Student		100%				100%
<b><i>How often do you interact with tourists to the Battle Harbour National Historic District?*</i></b>						
Never		19%	35%	35%	12%	100%
Occasionally (i.e. once or twice a year)		11%	22%	52%	15%	100%
Frequently (i.e. several times a year)		7%	14%	33%	45%	100%

\*n= 95

\*\* n= 93

With respect to gender, again there are only small differences in the levels of agreement between men and women, with 66 percent of women and 69 percent of men agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Middle-aged participants (41-60) and those over 80 were the most likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement that the BHHD provides useful skills and training. Those aged 61-80, as well as those under 40 years of age, were less likely to see this as one of the social benefits of the site. There is a difference of 14-18 percentage points in the proportion of those between 41 to 60 years old and the other age categories with respect to agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

Participants with only a high school certificate were most likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement, while those with a college or non-university degree were least likely to agree or strongly agree. All participants working in processing and manufacturing agreed or strongly agreed with the notion that the BHHD offers useful training and skills. Those working in education, health, management, retirees, and the lone university student showed the lowest levels of agreement with the statement.

The final factor examined in [Table 3](#) is the level of interaction with tourists and views on whether the site provides useful training and skills. Those with the highest levels of interactions with tourists were most likely to perceive this benefit. About 78% of those who frequently interacted with tourists to the BHHD agree or strongly agreed with the statement, compared to 47% of those who never interacted with tourists.

Generally, [Table 3](#) shows that the highest levels of agreement with the statement that the BHHD provides useful skills and training were reported by participants that were residents of Mary's Harbour; middle-aged; with a high school education; working in processing and manufacturing; and frequently interacting with tourists.

There appears to be a strong consensus that the site provides benefits of cultural pride, fosters a sense of self, and promotes knowledge of the environment. Differences in perceived benefits, however, seem to be centred on the specific tangible economic impacts of the site, which include allowing people to stay in their communities and providing skills and training. When those differences are explored, we find a greater proportion of those in Mary's Harbour than in any other community who perceive these benefits, as well as those who interact with tourists more frequently. Though all three communities are in close proximity to Battle Harbour, our results indicate an uneven terrain in terms of which communities claim to enjoy the social benefits of tourism development. Younger people who have a middle range of education and who work in management agree most with the notion that the site allows people to stay in their communities. In contrast, middle-aged people who have a high school education and who work in processing and manufacturing were those who mostly agreed or strongly agreed that the BHHD provides useful skills and training.

In addition to asking closed-ended questions about the benefits of the Battle Harbour site for surrounding communities, we asked one additional open-ended question on what participants considered the most important cultural or social impacts of the BHHD for surrounding communities. This allowed participants more flexibility and freedom to identify the most significant features of the site. The open-ended responses were analysed in order to identify main themes.

Two themes dominated the responses to this question. The most common theme, noted by 27 participants, was that the BHHD is *valuable because it preserves the history and culture* of the region. The next most prevalent theme, noted by 21 participants, was that the BHHD provides *positive economic impacts*, which was often intertwined with references to the cultural and historical value of the site. Other much less prevalent statements included those on *making local communities visible to the rest of the world*, *providing a sense of pride in the region*, and *providing amenities and events for community members*, as well as *servicing tourists*.

A small minority of participants (seven) responded to this open-ended question with critical comments about the BHHD. While these critical responses are not prevalent, they shed light on the social dynamics of Battle Harbour within surrounding communities. A recurring theme was that the *financial resources going to Battle Harbour benefit a small number of*

*people* and fail to reach surrounding communities. Another critical theme was that recent *price increases at Battle Harbour have made it less accessible to members of local communities*. A few respondents also noted that the *cost and travel infrastructure*, including the ferry, as well as the poor condition of the Labrador Highway from Red Bay to Mary's Harbour, make the BHHD challenging to access, which in turn makes it difficult to attract tourists to the site. Despite some critical comments, we again find that the overall tone of the responses to this question emphasized that the BHHD is felt to provide a great deal of social and cultural value to surrounding communities, but there is somewhat more complexity among views about the economic impacts of tourism development.

## Conclusion

After exploring the impacts of tourism in the BHHD, we find that the residents of the region see both tangible economic and intangible social and cultural impacts of tourism in their lives. There was an overwhelming consensus around the importance of the social and cultural benefits of tourism over the economic ones, and participants were largely very supportive of tourism in their communities. This contrasts with the view of critical tourism scholars, who view tourism as an industry that commodifies culture and produces mainly negative social impacts for host communities (e.g. George et al., 2009; Overton, 1996; 2007; Rothman, 1998; Royal, 2009; Solymosi, 2011). While the insights provided by such critical analysis of tourism are valuable, it is important to attend to the perceptions of residents of tourism host communities. The overall picture that emerges from our analysis is that members of the communities surrounding Battle Harbour largely do *not* perceive their incorporation into tourism networks through a critical lens. This suggests that the critical lens may primarily be the provenance of academics, whereas many residents of rural or marginal communities value tourism as an important source of employment and revenue, despite its potential drawbacks. Thus, our results are consistent with research by Cusick (2009), Lynch et al. (2009) and Sullivan and Mitchell (2012), who argue that tourism can work to benefit host communities by providing a useful framework for protecting local history and culture, even in a context of austerity and economic hardship for rural communities.

If, as Cooke suggests, National Historic Sites work to physically embody “national-cultural guiding fictions,” then our results indicate that many residents of the St. Lewis Inlet are invested in the stories told through the Battle Harbour site (Cooke, 2013, p. 234). Survey results showed that residents believe that the Battle Harbour site tells important stories about the history of the region, supports and offers an accurate reflection of its culture, and allows visitors to appreciate its splendid natural environment. Participants also overwhelmingly felt that they benefited from interacting with tourists. In many respects, our findings show that the Battle Harbour site allows residents of the St. Lewis Inlet to revisit and valorize their past as they make meaning of Battle Harbour's role as a tourism site. This is an action that appears to bear much importance for them; concerns over the potential commodification of their culture were not raised. This is either a sign that it is not occurring or that residents of the region are failing to recognize negative consequences that come with historical and cultural tourism.

We believe that the high level of consensus on the positive social and cultural impacts of tourism expressed by the community is tied to the fact the Labrador Straits region is less saturated by tourism than other regions of the province, such as Gros Morne or the Bonavista

peninsula. Relatedly, members of these communities likely see tourism as a relatively new lifeline that can offset the reduced labour requirements of the modernization of the local crab industry, or labour mobility to Labrador City and elsewhere.

Interestingly, however, although participants in our study generally agreed with broad statements about the economic benefits of Battle Harbour for the region, when probed on specific economic benefits there was less consensus. Some even lamented that the economic benefits of the Battle Harbour site are not distributed widely across the communities of the region. On this front, those that live in the communities furthest away from the site and interact least with tourists were most sceptical. Residents differed by age, education, and occupation in how they perceived that the site allowed them to stay in their community or that it offered useful skills and training. These results indicate that, while the cultural benefits of tourism are widely shared, there is an uneven terrain as to which communities and social groups benefit the most from the economic impacts of tourism development. Battle Harbour is contributing to the economic wellbeing of some community members, but the tangible benefits of tourism are also localized and unequally distributed. In comparison to the cultural dimensions of tourism development, our findings provide more of a mixed picture of the economic impacts of tourism development. This is consistent with other research on tourism development in Atlantic Canada that points to the challenges inherent to tourism economies as tools for economic diversification and community embeddedness (Jackson et al., 2005; Joliffe and Farnsworth, 2003; Ommer, 2007; Overton, 2007).

The lack of recognition of the negative impacts of social and cultural meaning making of tourism, along with mixed results over its economic benefits, warrant further investigation. The ill-effects of tourism identified by Overton (2007), Reid and George (2005), Summerby-Murray (2002) and others are not articulated by residents. This does not, however, mean that they are not present. Rather, they point to the benefit of simultaneously recognizing that tourism development in the region needs to consider the interplay of economic, social and cultural benefits of tourism for host communities and how residents of those communities perceive the industry: that is, the need to recognize both the tangible and intangible benefits of the industry. These benefits may be disproportionately important for small, remote island communities. Clearly, the residents who shared their perceptions with us have gained social and cultural benefits missed by more traditional macro-focused analysis of external outcomes and benefits.

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