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Article abstract

The social conception of isolation in hinterland communities is seen as a manifestation of economic and political dependency, and not merely as a function of physical remoteness. This paper examines how isolation influences local decision-making about population resettlement as a strategy of community development. Based on data from a small Labrador village, the study considers how isolation has been experienced over time, and how it affects the identification of developmental priorities and objectives among local factions.

Isolation and Community Resettlement: a Labrador Example

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The social conception of isolation in hinterland communities is seen as a manifestation of economic and political dependency, and not merely as a function of physical remoteness. This paper examines how isolation influences local decision-making about population resettlement as a strategy of community development. Based on data from a small Labrador village, the study considers how isolation has been experienced over time, and how it affects the identification of developmental priorities and objectives among local factions.

L'isolement des communautés de l'arrière-pays est considéré non seulement comme une réalité géographique mais encore comme une manifestation de leur dépendance politique et économique. Dans le présent rapport, on tentera de déterminer jusqu'à quel point cet isolement est employé comme une stratégie de développement communautaire lorsque sont prises, à l'échelon régional, les décisions de réinstallation de ces communautés. À partir de données provenant d'un petit village du Labrador, on examinera les effets de l'isolement au cours des années et l'influence de l'éloignement sur les priorités et les objectifs de développement de ces collectivités.

Introduction

In the early 1970s, the Government of Newfoundland held a Royal Commission on the current conditions and future prospects of Labrador, the vast mainland portion of the province. The final report of the Commission contained a brief but instructive essay on isolation as a factor of life in the region (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974: 1125-1165). Its author, Geoffrey Stiles, examined the ways in which isolation is experienced by people in two areas of Labrador, the industrial towns of the western interior and the fishing villages of the Atlantic coast, and how it has affected patterns of social, economic and political activity in these communities. He broadly concludes that the nature of felt isolation and its effects vary in each area in relation to differences in physical environment and community history. More important, however, is his assertion that isolation tends to be experienced as a form of (economic) deprivation relative to the 'outside'. This deprivation is not a consequence of physical remoteness, but rather of dependency on external economic and political institutions (*ibid.*: 1166-64).

Shortly after the release of the Commission's report, I undertook a year of field work in Hopedale, a small village situated on Labrador's north coast. In the last weeks of that research (July,

1976) a chain of events began that culminated, in November, 1976, in a public referendum on resettlement. The issue was defeated. Those who advocated relocation saw it as their best hope to obtain improvements in municipal infrastructure—new housing, water and sewer service, landing strip and other amenities – necessary to overcome their felt material deprivation (and so isolation). By contrast, opponents of the move equated resettlement with the loss of customary occupations, mainly hunting and fishing, and of their 'traditional' way of life. This, too, constitutes a response to isolation, but to the roots of isolation in dependency, rather than to its symptomatic manifestations of material deprivation.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, it considers the Hopedale case as an illustration of the ways people in a hinterland settlement have experienced isolation over time. On the other, it examines the problem of isolation in relation to local priorities and decision-making about the means and ends of community development. To accomplish these ends, the paper begins with a brief examination of isolation. It then traces the influence of local environment and social history on the outcome of the resettlement referendum in 1976. Finally, the paper discusses how recent changes in other northern Labrador communities have served to intensify the degree of felt deprivation in Hopedale, and thereby to encourage new efforts to ameliorate the community's isolation.[1]

A Note on the Social Conception of Isolation

As the introductory reference to Stiles' work suggests, isolation entails more than is indicated by its physical connotation alone. While Hopedale is home to its people and therefore, *in theory*, not isolated to them, *in practice* history has intruded upon this idealization a sense of "relative deprivation" (see Aberle, 1972) which bears both economic and political referents in contexts of dependency on influential, externally-based agents and institutions. Stiles writes: "Reduced to its simplest form, a community which is entirely self-sufficient could not, by definition, experience a sense of isolation. As its degree of dependence on the outside became greater, so would the likelihood of its feeling of being deprived of certain economic benefits..." (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974: 1127).

In northern Labrador, such a process began late in the eighteenth century when small, dispersed Inuit bands gradually adopted a semi-settled existence at permanent missions under the tutelage of the Moravian Brethren. The Brethren induced them to surrender their communal autonomy to the authority of church discipline, and to transform their mode of production to accommodate an export trade in fur, whale products and other commodities. The evolution of social isolation in this case proved detrimental in two respects. For one, the Inuit lost control over their own economic and political affairs, becoming clients of successive administrative regimes: first the Moravian mission, then the Hudson's Bay Company, and finally the Government of Newfoundland (Richling, 1978). Second, their conceptualization of who they were as a people was no longer self-defined, but rather influenced by consciousness of life beyond the borders of their once-insulated (i.e. physically isolated) homeland.[2]

The growth of a consciousness of this type, including its self-evaluation of disparity relative to the 'outside', is not a passive process. Rather, it is a by-product of the dominant influence asserted by missionaries, traders, bureaucrats and so forth. The isolating process is a form of what Berger has called "cognitive imperialism", a process in which the intruders seek to "impose their particular modes of perception, evaluation, and action on those who previously had organized their relationship to reality differently" (1976: 128). The transformation itself begins with the local people's 'discovery' of increasingly meaningful and compelling "negative discrepancy" between the circumstances of their own existence and those of the outsiders in their midst. In time, 'home' comes to compare unfavourably with the outside world in terms of both "legitimate expectation" and actuality of material (and perhaps spiritual) rewards (Aberle, 1972: 528). Put more succinctly, the 'hosts' eventually adopt the " 'outside' as a model for their development and a focus for their aspirations" (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974: 1127).

The propensity of influential outsiders to nurture local awareness of the material disparities between centre and periphery, (and thereby to reveal that model for the priorities of change referred to earlier), largely stems from their own felt isolation engendered by life, however temporary, in remote places such as the sub-arctic coast of Labrador. All too frequently, the primary referent they use for making (unfavourable) comparisons between places such as Hopedale and, for instance, cities in mainland Canada, takes its definition from the kinds of qualities of goods, services and other valued tangibles available in each location. As a way to confront the perceived disparities and thereby reduce the discomfort of isolation, it is common for outsiders to import elements of the

more familiar world of home into their temporary postings. The results of this are seen in contemporary northern Canadian communities where enclaves of *Kabloonat*, living in southern-style houses and pursuing southern lifestyles, provide sharp contrast to the lifestyle of northern peoples (e.g., Vallee, 1967; Brody, 1975). Having no other experience of the outside world than exposure to the strangers among them, many local people gradually acquire a sense of deprivation like that defined by outsiders, and also come to value the manner of living of outsiders (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974: 1127; see Briggs, 1971). Vallee (1967) refers to such 'converts' as *Kabloonamiut*, 'people of the white man'.

Feelings of isolation, therefore, feed from the perception of deprivation in social contexts where both the referents of expectation and the criteria for evaluating actuality derive from a physically and cognitively distant, but nevertheless desirable, world. So viewed, the social conception of isolation contains within itself not only a definition of the root cause of itself as a real problem, but also of the preferred path to its solution (i.e. de-isolation).

The Referendum of 1976: Background and Results

Moravians founded Hopedale in 1782 as a nucleus of Inuit residence, trade and conversion. The village remained an Inuit enclave until the mid-twentieth century, but it also served the religious needs of nearby Settler families after 1850.[3] The 'birth' of modern Hopedale, however, stems from two resettlement episodes immediately following Newfoundland and Labrador's confederation with Canada in 1949.

The first began around 1951 when between ten and twelve Settler families moved into the village, attracted from their outlying homesteads by construction work at a nearby radar installation. The second occurred in 1959 with the arrival of about 100 Inuit from Hebron, a village of 210 persons situated several hundred kilometers further north along the Labrador coast. The province involuntarily relocated all of Hebron's people, mainly to Hopedale and nearby Makkovik, to consolidate the region's dispersed population and thereby reduce the costs of providing basic services.[4] (Three years earlier the government had similarly closed Nutak, another Inuit village of 200 just south of Hebron, and resettled its population in Nain, Makkovik and Northwest River.)

Today, Settlers comprise 25 percent of Hopedale's permanent population of 450; Hebron Inuit make up 35 percent of the total, Hopedale Inuit the remaining 40 percent. On average, the number of outsiders temporarily posted here ranges between 20 and 25, including the dependent families of government personnel and other functionaries.

Social isolation in post-confederation Hopedale derives from two prominent changes: 1) the bureaucratization of local affairs following the establishment of Newfoundland's provincial status; 2) the realignment of occupational-economic patterns in the village in the wake of the Hebron and Settler resettlements. These changes affected each of the community's three ethnic groups in different ways. Nevertheless, is it useful to consider them here as a single transformative process which dichotomized the village economy into 'traditional' (i.e. hunting and fishing) and 'modern' (wage labour and welfare) spheres, and forged distinct perceptions of the nature of deprivation (i.e. isolation) and the path to its elimination (de-isolation, or development). The case of Hopedale's resettlement referendum in 1976 provides instructive insight into the results of this transformation.

The issue of resettlement was first raised by people in Hopedale at meetings of the Royal Commission on Labrador early in the 1970s. Advocates saw relocation as the only way to redress two increasingly difficult problems: Hopedale's dwindling resource base, including potable water, firewood, and space for building new housing; and its lack of modern (southern-style) community infrastructure: an all-season water and sewer system, landing strip, new houses and so forth. Because of Hopedale's long history of occupation and its situation on virtually barren pre-Cambrian rock, the shortage of resources and rough terrain would render the provision of desired improvements either impossible or prohibitively expensive.[5] To its supporters, then, resettlement was a workable option for obtaining a satisfactory level of needed amenities, much like that enjoyed by the teachers, RCMP officers and other outsiders in their midst.[6] In 1976, the renewed movement for relocation was led by the chairman of the community council who, not surprising to note, was an 'outsider' married to a local woman.

Events began to unfold in July, 1976 when a representative of Newfoundland's Department of Rural Development visited the village and informed residents that resettlement was possible under joint provincial and federal (Department of Regional Economic Expansion) authority. He advised them to choose between staying and leaving, and cautioned that electing to stay would not rule out the eventual provision of modern services and facilities at Hopedale. (Indeed, improvements of a similar sort were already

planned or underway at the neighboring villages of Nain and Makkovik at the time: see below.) However, it was to be expected that the timetable for modernizing the present location would be prolonged owing to the costs and engineering difficulties such a project would entail. No details for moving Hopedale were discussed, but a common rumour held that families could expect to be in their new homes within two years.

The community council organized a referendum on November 15, 1976. Preliminary indications pointed to widespread popular support for the plan, but the results of balloting proved otherwise. Eighty-five percent of voters were required to give assent before the plan could be adopted; only 75 percent of eligible voters even participated in the referendum, and of these only 52.5 percent voted yes.

A follow-up study indicated that the referendum results reflected the two prevalent economic-occupational patterns in the community (Richling, 1977). In the main, those who opposed the move relied on harvesting fish and game resources, and secondarily on occasional wage labour and/or transfers such as unemployment insurance. Counted among them was a high proportion of Settlers, especially those over the age of thirty-five, and older (40+) Hopedale Inuit. (Hebron Inuit also were among those in opposition, though for distinct reasons discussed separately below.)

Supporters were mainly younger (18-35) villagers, Hopedale Inuit prominent among them. By contrast with the 'opposition', these were people who depended on wage work, mainly in service jobs (e.g., store clerks, nurse's aides, hydro operatives), or else occasional, usually seasonal, employment (e.g., on make-work projects) and recurrent reliance on unearned income, including welfare. This 'modern' adaptation began to appear in Hopedale once construction at the radar base ended around 1958. It became widespread, however, when the labour-intensive inshore cod fishery collapsed and was replaced by a more capital-intensive salmon and char fishery late in the 1960s. Unlike the 'traditional' mode of adaptation, the new pattern makes only casual use of wildlife resources as a supplement to household income.

Local viewpoints for and against resettlement provide clear indication of how changes in the preceding twenty-five years shaped perceptions of isolation among Hopedale's people, and influenced identification of priorities for a process of 'de-isolation'. A brief summation of these views follows.

The sentiments of community members favouring resettlement correspond in great measure to Vallee's *Kabloonamiut* model. Their livelihoods are independent of place, but dependent on the multi-faceted presence of (provincial) government bureaucracy. In consequence, they have aspired toward improvement of living conditions without concern for the loss of a way of life (i.e. hunting and fishing) they had either given up years earlier, or else had never participated in at all. We may argue, therefore, that their path to de-isolation conforms to Stiles' point about the prominence of metropolitan values: isolation (i.e. deprivation) is overcome by seeking more and better services, facilities and the like.

Advocates of resettlement spoke of water and sewer services as necessary not only to public health, but to their self-worth and dignity. They cast their arguments for new housing, a larger, better-stocked store, a landing strip and other improvements in much the same terms. 'Movers' also saw resettlement creating much-needed employment, both during the construction phase of the relocation and afterward in new but unspecified projects. Apart from its commitment to employ local labour in building the new town site, the government did not outline any additional plans to assist with the economic development of the village in the post-move period. Rumours about the potential for such developments did circulate in the months preceding the referendum: a boat building shop, a mill for manufacturing pre-fabricated doors and windows. Speculation failed to mention future projects using wildlife resources.

Villagers who voted against moving were not opposed to improvements such as running water, public sanitation and new housing, but they were opposed to paying what they saw as the 'real' costs of resettlement: disruption of their customary occupations and household economy, and eventual dislocation from the area's natural resource base. Several expressed fears that the move would also mean an irreparable break with past traditions, particularly the culturally preferable 'life on the land and sea'. These fears anticipate what Scudder and Colson have termed 'socio-cultural stress', a sense of alienation from the inventory of essential cultural meanings and practices defining a customary way of life, suffered by many involuntary relocatees (1982: 269).

At the time of the referendum, the general consensus was that Hopedale would be moved about 40 kilometers southwest to a site in Adlotok Bay. Fishermen worried that relocating here would add considerably to the costs in time and fuel of reaching their usual fishing places, and thereby reduce the profitability (and efficiency) of their work. Similar problems were foreseen for winter

hunting and trapping. Their intimate knowledge of this bay and its surroundings strengthened resolve on the issue. They considered local wildlife far too limited to support intensive commercial harvesting, particularly since fish and game would also be subject to non-commercial (mainly recreational) exploitation by casual hunters and fishermen. Most regular hunters and fishermen reasoned that despite resettlement, they would still have to use old Hopedale as a base for earning a living. 'Shifting up the bay' was seen as a sure path to universal welfare, a future few were willing to accept.

As noted briefly above, Hebron Inuit had special reasons for opposing resettlement. These stemmed from their earlier experiences with involuntary relocation and from the debilitating stresses associated with that event (see Richling nd). Their actual level of participation in the referendum was low, a manifestation of the general apathy toward participation in local secular institutions characteristic of northerners as a whole. But in interviews in the winter of 1977, many voiced strong sentiments about the loss of hunting and fishing, costs, of course, borne by them once already. At the same time they raised the issue of their own long-standing demands for resettlement back to the north. The Royal Commission on Labrador formally advocated such a move for compassionate and economic (i.e. exploitation of northern char stocks) reasons (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974: 1216). As of yet, no action has been taken to satisfy their demands.

The opposing viewpoints aired in Hopedale's resettlement debate reflect two important dimensions of isolation, and two corresponding courses toward the goal of de-isolation. On the one hand, the position in support of resettlement is predicated on a sense of deprivation relative to a standard of satisfaction whose primary referents lie beyond the borders of the local community, and indeed of northern Labrador. Eliminating isolation in this case equates with remedying disparities in material living conditions. By contrast, the resistence to resettlement is consistent with a priority of economic self-sufficiency modeled on historic (i.e. pre-confederation) experience. Either course confronts the perceived isolation, but when viewed in the light of how 'stayers' and 'movers' conceptualize the benefits and liabilities of their respective choices, only the former appear to address the underlying source of social isolation itself—economic and political dependency on government administration.

Responses to Isolation: 1983-84

The purpose of my field trip to Hopedale in 1983 was to observe how people were coping with the problems left unresolved by the defeat of the resettlement referendum seven years earlier. I found that much of what had been accomplished in the intervening period was of a superficial nature: the construction of some new housing, a small addition to the government-run store. Important changes had occurred, however, in peoples' attitudes toward the declining state of their community, and in their deepening sense of isolation. But unlike the situation in 1976 when the primary referent for perceptions of deprivation has been the 'outside', it had now become other villages in northern Labrador, especially Nain and Makkovik. What is more, the focus of this deprivation encompassed not only the lack of community infrastructure, the main stimulus behind the original resettlement referendum, but conditions affecting the viability of traditional economic-occupational adaptations (i.e. hunting and fishing) as well. Finally, at the heart of most perceptions of the situation lay a well-defined notion of the government's neglect of Hopedale and of its intransigence on the question of modernizing the village. Each of these dimensions of isolation in contemporary Hopedale is examined here in turn.

In recent years, the villages of Nain, north of Hopedale and Makkovik, to the south, have benefitted from improvements in municipal services and development of the resource sector of their economies. At each place, landing strips, new housing sub-divisions and water and sewer systems are either in place or well on the way to completion. Nain, the region's largest village (c. 900 population) is now serviced by two air lines, one going south along the coast and into Lake Melville, the other north to northern Quebec. It is also the headquarters of the Labrador Inuit Association, and thus a centre for cultural and ethno-political activities linking it with Inuit elsewhere in the north and with the seats of power in the south. At Makkovik, living conditions have been upgraded considerably. Though smaller than Hopedale (c. 310 population) and less constrained by its resource base, a new, fully serviced sub-division has been built to house Inuit families resettled from the north years before. This is a significant change since resettlement-era houses were built to minimal standards, were small and usually overcrowded, and structurally unsuited to the installation of washroom facilities.

On the whole, the situation in Hopedale provides a sharp contrast to the record of com-

munity modernization seen in Nain and Makkovik. Since 1976, Hopesale has had a net increase of twelve houses. But of the eighty-five houses currently occupied by permanent residents, nearly 60 percent are in poor condition, needing major repairs; another 24 percent are only in fair condition, while the remainder, all built since 1976, are in good or excellent repair. Hebron resettlement-vintage houses are, on the whole, in the poorest condition (B.F.L. Consultants, 1983). With the largest average household size (5.76 persons) of Hopedale's three ethnic constituencies and the smallest average living space per household (50 square meters), crowding is a special problem for northerners. Over 80 percent of the entire housing stock in Hopedale do not have facilities for the installation of water and sewer service; improvements in as much as a third of these houses would prove costly since, in lieu of basements or insulated crawl-spaces, expensive electrified "utilidors" would be required to complete and maintain all-season hook-ups. The replacement of these houses is likely a more economical solution to the problem.

Data from the 1981 Canadian census give further indication of the degree of disparity in housing between Hopedale and its two neighbours. Of particular interest in this respect are the proportion of houses in each village built after 1971, and the extent of housing replacement as evident in the number of older (pre-1960) houses still occupied (see Table I).

Fresh water, too, presents a major difficulty in Hopedale. In the winter of 1982-83 the community's main supply, dammed ground run-off, became polluted. In consequence, families were forced to rely through most of the winter and spring on a small brook inconveniently located about a kilometer away. Under these conditions, households without snowmobiles met with considerable difficulty and expense in obtaining water supplies. For the summer of 1983, with provincial assistance, water was piped into the village from a pond once used to supply the radar base; but the return to cold weather in early fall meant that people had to revert to the brook, or else risk the health hazards of using water from the old dam.

Economic life in Nain and Makkovik has benefitted from recent government efforts to develop their fisheries, the mainstay of the whole northern Labrador economy. In the 1970s both acquired plants for processing fresh-frozen fish. These plants, provincially owned and operated by the Department of Fisheries, have improved the efficiency of fishing and the quality of the local product, and have also provided seasonal employment for male and female workers which otherwise would not exist. The Torngak Fishermen's Co-Operative, the region's first such co-op founded in 1981, has proposed to take over their operation, and to expand the regional fishery. At the present time this transfer is still pending, but its eventual completion would be consistent with provincial government intentions to curtail its role in coastal economic affairs generally.

Other changes affecting Nain and Makkovik's fisheries include the increasing use of longliners and other, larger craft, and the addition of species such as turbot and shrimp to the staple harvests of salmon, char and cod. As noted earlier, cod fishing was interrupted in the late 1960s by widespread depletions of stock. A return to its exploitation, particularly at Makkovik, began around 1980. Nain has become the home port for a char fishery in waters from Okak Bay (Nutak) northward. This development is of particular benefit to formerly relocated northerners at Nain who had continued to make sporadic use of this resource after 1959 (Richling nd.). The known potential of char in the Nutak-Hebron region has figured prominently in proposals for resettlement of the northern coast, a move endorsed by the Royal Commission on Labrador in 1974, and since by the Labrador Inuit Association and the Labrador Resources Advisory Council (e.g., Labrador Resources Advisory Council, 1977). Another innovation is over-the-side sales of cod to Portugese factory ships which began

TABLE I
A Comparison of Housing: Hopedale, Makkovik, Nain*

	HOPEDALE	MAKKOVIK	NAIN
Number of Houses	85	75	185
Average Rooms/HSE	4.7	5.2	4.9
% Built 1971-81	35.3	46.66	56.75
Average Persons/RM	1.1	0.9	1.0
Average Value	$10,390	$25,148	$14,890

* Data compiled from the Census of Canada, 1981.

visiting Makkovik in 1982. Local longlinermen, delivering their catch gutted only, are reported to receive a few cents more per kilogram from the Portugese than they would receive from the government buyer ashore.

Sharp disparities set off Hopedale's fishery (and indeed its entire economy) from those at nearby communities. With only an ice house for temporary storage, local fishermen must rely on a twice-weekly collector boat to carry fresh salmon and char to the Makkovik plant. This holding facility employs four men during the short fishing season (late June to September), as compared to the sizeable work forces of men (av. 25) and women (av. 30) at the Nain and Makkovik processing plants. Escalating fuel prices (up 185 percent between 1975 and 1983) and only modest rises in the value of fish (about 27 percent for salmon over the same period), have made it desirable for men to fish from small camps scattered along the coast up to 65 kilometers from the village. This kind of summer settlement pattern had been common during the era of salt fish production in northern Labrador, but declined late in the 1960s with the switch to fresh fish production and the use of powerful outboard engines. In 1975-76, only five men fished away from Hopedale; in 1983, about half of the village's 30 fishermen moved to outlying camps for all or most of the season. While the collector boat visits these camps, storage of fish between pick-ups is a cumbersome task. Fish must be packed in boxes and preserved with snow collected from the surrounding hills and sheltered places. It is not unusual for the savings generated by fishing from camps to be offset by spoilage or having poorly-stored fish culled at lower grades.

Hopedale's inshore fishery, once its economic mainstay, is becoming increasingly incapable of supporting any more than a few families. This is due to the government's failure to encourage a more diversified harvest, (salmon and char are still the primary catch at Hopedale), the introduction of longlining and other, more efficient technologies, or even over-the-side sales. Moreover, with the loss of markets for seal pelts brought on by organized protests against Newfoundland's annual hunt, what once had been an important, supplementary form of income for fishermen is now virtually lost.

Comparative data on individual and family income in each of the three main villages of northern Labrador serve to demonstrate further the relatively weak state of the Hopedale economy (see Table II). Much of this disparity is owing to problems affecting fishery production in general, including employment opportunities in fish processing ashore.

After 1976, the general improvements in social and economic conditions in Nain and Makkovik gave rise to high expectations among Hopedale people for similar developments in their community. But these expectations have been repeatedly frustrated by the province's failure to implement changes, principally in the area of infrastructure modernization, promised after the defeat of the resettlement referendum years before. The result of this has been to increase local suspicions that the province has unaccountably abrogated its responsibilities to serve the interests and needs of the community, and consequently, has left open to doubt Hopedale's continuing social and economic viability. Such doubts are readily understandable in view of the province's virtual monopolitistic control of local affairs, exercised through the agency of the Labrador Development Division (and its various predecessors) since 1942, and the degree of dependence this administration has fostered among Inuit and Settlers over that time. For many, well-being is synonymous with the government's multi-faceted role in northern Labrador—providing housing and retailing services, operating the fisheries, buying furs and seal skins, coordinating funding allocations from two levels of government, and so forth. The extent of capital investments and fisheries-related developments in neighbouring communities at a time when people in Hopedale were confronting mounting problems could only have served to deepen their felt deprivation. In the face of intensifying isolation, a

TABLE II
Comparison of Income: Hopedale, Makkovik, Nain*

	HOPEDALE	MAKKOVIK	NAIN
Average Male Income	$6682	$9548	$7908
Average Female Income	5459	5966	5148
Average Household Income	16,445	20,515	17,545

* Data compiled from the Census of Canada, 1981.

general redirection of local priorities for its amelioration began to take shape.

The resettlement issue resurfaced at Hopedale in the spring of 1983, largely on the initiative of community councillors, frustrated by their inability to win a firm commitment from the province on the commencement of a municipal works programme in the village. The latest indication that such a programme was at hand had come in the form of a "municipal plan" commissioned by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 1980. The plan detailed the kinds of improvements needed and their projected costs, thus giving local residents what was taken to be an official plan of action to rectify longstanding problems. Intending to bypass the usual channels and perhaps prod the government into action, the council hired an independent consultant to assess the feasibility of relocating the village to a site in Big Bay (Jack Lane's Bay), 60 kilometers north of Hopedale. The consultant's report proved sufficiently optimistic as to encourage a second public referendum on resettlement to be called. Held late in the summer of 1983, the vote resulted in a 90 percent majority in favour.

Based on interviews conducted earlier that summer, it is safe to conclude that the overwhelming support for the resettlement issue reflected changed attitudes among those who resisted relocation in 1976 because it posed a threat to hunting and fishing, and so to economic self-sufficiency. A number of informants who had earlier voted against the move expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the way the Government was operating the fishery at Hopedale, and complained that whatever benefits were to be had went to those at Makkovik and Nain. They considered moving to Big Bay potentially beneficial to their prospects since it afforded access to richer fishing (and hunting) grounds than were found nearer to Hopedale. While not openly advocating relocation, their former, adamant resistence to it had waned. One fisherman observed that "things couldn't get much worse if we stayed..."; another remarked: "'tis how they [Government] serve us... we look after our families the best we can."

The response to the second referendum suggests that the treatment afforded Hopedale over the seven years since the first vote has tended to cloud the once-distinct priorities of those wanting to stay, and those intent on relocation. The ideal of economic self-sufficiency has proved no less a manifestation of provincial patronage than have the comforts of southern-style housing, running water and other services. In this respect, the results of balloting appear to indicate an "all-or-nothing" approach to de-isolation, using resettlement as a way at least to insure improvements in living conditions, and possibly in economic conditions as well.

In late winter, 1984, the council met with the deputy ministers of Newfoundland's departments of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, and Municipal Affairs to discuss the proposed resettlement, and to push for its immediate implementation. The deputy ministers offered a less optimistic assessment of the project's costs than had the consultant. They indicated that the move might cost the federal and provincial governments as much as $30 million (as opposed to an earlier figure of $20 million) and take upwards of five years to complete (versus two). Other problems they foresaw included the possible effect of site selection on the Labrador Inuit Association's pending comprehensive land claim in northern Labrador, and the impact of population resettlement on the resource base of Big Bay. Finally, the government's representatives advised council that the province was not opposed to carrying out modernization of the old site. However, if the people opted for resettlement and its long schedule for completion, no interim expenditures for local improvements would be forthcoming.

Within days of the meeting the council reversed itself, endorsing a motion to abandon resettlement and again to pursue immediate improvements at the old site. The councillors' position received some measure of support in the community: yet a third resettlement vote was held in mid spring, and the level of approval fell back to about 60 percent. Analysis of the last vote awaits completion. Yet, the relatively strong representation of resettlement supporters suggests that the impetus for change has indeed taken new direction from Hopedale's declining social and economic position relative to its neighbours, and that the means of meeting the disparate priorities of the two factions which emerged in 1976 are no longer irreconcilable.

Summary

In his discussion of the effect of isolation on the people of coastal Labrador, Stiles concluded that "it is precisely those people who experience the greatest sense of isolation... 'outsiders'... who are apt to compare the coast indiviously with the 'outside'" (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974: 1137). Consequently, it is ordinarily these same people who either become the chief advocates of changes, such as those entailed in community resettlement, or else serve as models for identifying the most desirable ends of a developmental process.

The Hopedale case is not an exception in this regard. It was noted earlier, for example, that the council chairman and chief spokesman for relocation in 1976 was an outsider living permanently in the village. By the same token, the provincial government's failure to encourage resettlement actively in 1976, and again in the spring of 1984, likely contributed to the final result of voting, as well as to the high proportion of voters who did not participate at all (Richling, 1977).

As the foregoing discussion has shown, the sense of isolation many now feel in Hopedale has deepened. Isolation is no longer an acquired disposition borrowed from influential visitors trying to cope with their own culture shock. Instead, it has become a grassroots conception whose focus of felt deprivation now encompasses disparities in the kinds of amenities available in nearby villages, in the conditions affecting livelihood and community self-sufficiency, and in the treatment afforded by the provincial government. It is ironic that at a time when northern Labrador as a whole is becoming less marginal to the rest of Canada, Hopedale is undergoing a form of re-marginalization in relation to its neighbours.

NOTES

1. The findings reported here are based on three field trips to northern Labrador: August 1975 — August, 1976, January-February, 1977, and July, 1983. Additional information on recent events was collected in St. John's, Newfoundland in July, 1984. 1975-1977 field work was supported by a fellowship from the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland; research in 1983-1984 by research grants from Mount Saint Vincent University.

2. An interesting illustration of this occurred during field work in 1975-76. I asked several Inuit to tell me about the people who lived in Labrador before the missionaries arrived. Anticipating that they would explain about *inumarit*, "real people" (i.e. those who live in the manner of real or genuine people—see Brody, 1975: 125), I was instead told about *nalujut*, "heathens".

3. Settlers are the descendants of a "mixed" population of "fur trade families" with roots in northern Labrador extending back to the late eighteenth century (Richling, 1978).

4. The Government of Newfoundland has provided economic and social services in northern Labrador since 1942. Of special importance has been its operation of trade (in furs, fish, seal products) and retail outlets. At present these functions fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, through a branch known as the Labrador Development Division.

5. In 1983, the estimated cost of a landing strip for Hopedale was $10 million. Similar facilities in other communities along the Labrador coast have averaged $1. to $1.5 million. Water and sewer service in Hopedale could cost as much as $6. million, twice the average cost of installations in other villages in the region.

6. Outsiders in Hopedale live in typical, southern-style houses with forced air furnaces, full bathrooms, hot water tanks, and the usual array of appliances and other amenities. These houses are serviced by private, all-season wells.

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