

# Belle pêche

LES PLAQUES, NE COMPTEZ PAS  
LES GRANDES MAREES NI  
L'ÉPUISETTE POUR ASSEMBLER  
LES CAPSULES EN TROPHÉE  
DE L'ÎLE AUX TRÉSORS.

\*What's the difference between fish and Tourists? What's the catch?



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# transformation of fishery villages to tourist havens comparatively

- Similar experience (but deeper recession)  
Nova Scotia and Newfoundland (Maritime  
Canada)
- A lot of comparability, Alaska (Cruise Tourism)
- Norway
- Some studies in Caribbean Islands and Latin  
American coastal states.

# Indication of Transformation: Work Culture

- bread to some and pleasure for others

- Work culture in some places can in some case be the recreation of for others!!!!
- An example the “informal economy” of housewives moving into souvenir- handicraft production (closely related to closure of landbased fishing plants)
- I.e retired fishermen transformed to whale watching captains or service providers in sea angling

Can people grasp it?

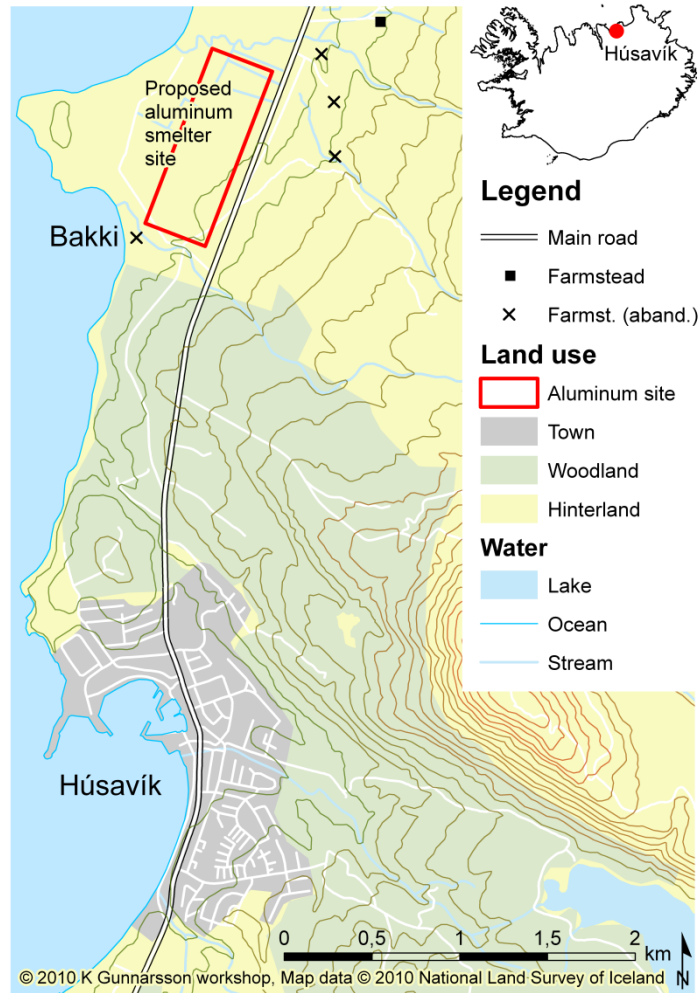
# The transition – from one company towns to small businesses

- Created distinctive cultures because inhabitants were dependent on THE company for a living
- Personal life, family life and work life intertwined
- Icelandic fishery villages characterised by the one company syndrom – fisheries represent industrialisation
- Shifting to emphasis on small businesses in tourism – a question of mentality reorientation
- Life forms and attitudes shaped by hardship in work and tough work conditions feel alien to adapting to service mode (experience from mine towns)

# Transition hard for some villages - others not

- From fisheries to recreational fishing (sea-angling) the case of Suðureyri and Flateyri and Bolungarvík (Westfjords)
- From fisheries to whale watching (Reykjanesbær, Húsavík)
- From fisheries to sea-excursion and/or ferry link, i.e Sæferðir (Stykkishólmur, Grímsey, Vestmannaeyjar).

# Húsavík



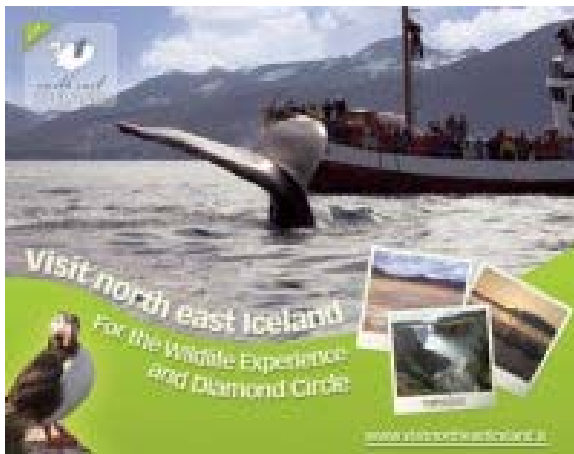


From a fishery village and centre of the cooperative movement to Tourist haven



40 Thousand whale watching guests visited Húsavík for that purpose in 2007 (104 th)

# North East Iceland - Edge of the Arctic



Categories	1994	2000	2005
Accomodation	4	3	3
Restaurants	3	2	1
Recreation/Leisure	0	3	4
Transport/Car rentals	2	3	2
Travel agencies	1	0	0

## Number of Jobs in Húsavík in Tourism related Activities over a decade



Source: (Guðmundsdóttir and Ívarsson; 2008)

# Attitudes in Iceland reflected in Húsavík

- Tourism is not serious work! What is play is not work
- The spectrum of attitude
- sceptical \_\_\_\_\_ embracing

# Expectation and experience on jobs

“ My friend is from Mývatn area and she got job over there at a hotel. She quit her job in the local restaurant here. Then another friend is working In the lagoon, but that is through family connection. Not many kids go there though.” (20 year old informant)

“I sense significant change in the work life here from earlier times. It is hard To find a job unless you create it yourself. Not everybody has the capacity or Skill to do that. Some people are able to do it, like the boys in the knowledge Centre. They had the initiative and power. Not everybody can do that.” (60 year old informant)

“ There are many possibilities that have opened up in the tourism by virtue of Educational offers that were not available earlier. Now there are courses offered In guiding etc. through the continous education centers. They motivate and give People new ideas. Many people have been dreaming of establishing family Companies and some courses have been the needed input to encourage people To realise their dreams” (32 year old informant)

# Not articulated

“These small companies are great, they are nourishing for the energy among us and for the mind. They help us believing that we can survive here.

There are so many others, they are so small, so few individuals involved. There Are in fact quite few that can make a living from those small companies and The tourism.” (43 year old informant)

We are changing from a fishery village to becoming a tourism society and that is fun But it is only in the summers, the winter is much harder (to get jobs;edit) than the Summers. Then I experience that my friends who have got educated they are not Returning. The same with the relatives in the South, they have no possibilities here.” (28 year old informant).

“If we don’t get more occupational possibilites (referring to discussion on Alcoa) then This town will be a tourist town and only lively during those few summer months. Things are falling apart here little by little. I am saying this trying not to be pessimistic Or negative. In the summertime this town is lively but during winter nothing is happening. The fact is it is hard to make a living from an activity only making returns 3-4 months a year.” (45 year old informant).

# Embraising

The whale watching company was established in 1995 by my father, my uncle and brother. It started as an experiment renovating and refurbishing old oakboat to own. This was part of protecting heritage values. It was expensive though and to raise money they started sailing out with people for money. It happened to be a success... Now there are 4 vessels that sail with tourists and two more have been bought to start sailing next season. Total fairy tale! No one realized then what the possibilities were. Whale watching in Iceland was simply non existing at the time. New tourist product entered the market and became a success.” (31 year old informant)

“I sense that especially in tourism the companies are truly socially responsible. They are securing that the returns are benefitting the local community.” (30 year old informant)

“There are more occupational possibilities for us in the tourism than in other branches. We have seen guesthouse been established and private accomodation. The tourism season is also being extended. Now we even see tourists in early May and also in August. Before June and July were the main months. But now we are still busy.” (56 year old informant)

# Problematic

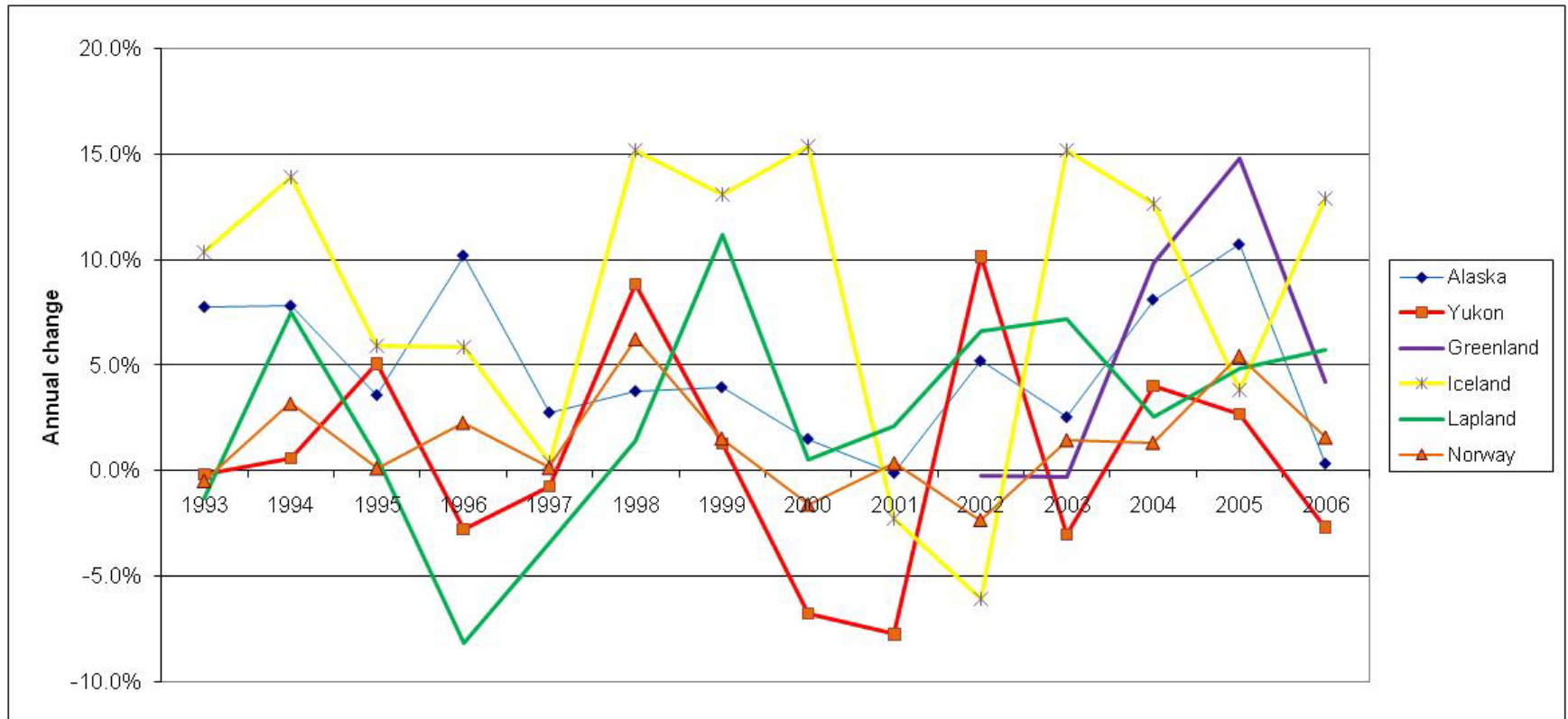
Many foreigners come here every summer and I know that many foreign volunteers are also coming. They are working on projects or they are simply adventurers. They are not coming for the salary but they get free housing and in fact food. They are just volunteers. It is hard to compete on that basis. I see a lot of these people every summer. They live together in a flat and work during the day. In weekends and nights they party. They are here in the summer but then they just leave. I feel it is excessive.” (28 year old informant)

“I don’t know about other companies but ours has always emphasised hiring local inhabitants or especially young people. It does matter because every company here has proportionally larger impact than in more populated areas.” (31 year old informant)

# Conclusive remarks

**Still thinking! ;)**

# Fluctuations in visitor numbers in the Arctic



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Discussion on tourism became the main topic at the National Assembly held around the country winter 2009

A discourse analysis of the minutes from the main meeting in the Sport Hall Laugardagshöll found following three examples characteristic for the future visions expressed by participant

The employment policies should be based on human capital perspectives, creativity, fisheries, agriculture and **tourism**.

We should use the human capital to secure economic and occupational development and innovation in **more diversified tourism supply**, food production, geothermally heated greenhouses and end-processed manufacture.

The vision for an environmental policy should be: Environmental conservation that protects Icelandic agriculture and **enforces sustainable eco-tourism** where the use of electrical cars for transportation is dominant.

# ...in rhetorics tourists are treated as fish – they are dynamic and not an easy prey

- As tourists arrive and bring more and more tourist dollars the state begins to formalize the new tourist economy
- Growth strategies/expectations in tourism dwell on the assumption that we need to catch those tourists –
- Their attention
- Their physical being for a moment
- Instead of sending the vessels and gear the bait is flight connections and marketing.

# Chair of Icelandic Tourism stakeholder organisation SAF, Árni Gunnarsson:

- *“It is hard to gain from tourists that are not coming...”*
- *“The recession causing downturn in tourism in Europe urges to increased marketing”.*
- *The planned pax implementation will clearly ruin the trust we have built with our customers and Iceland tourism will suffer loss of recognition with unforeseen consequences.”*
- *“The Icelandic tourism is determined that we are not playing in the defensive team, it is not an option unless the government kicks all energy out of people. We want to be offensive in the belief that Icelandic future is tourism.”*

(Tekjur af Ferðapjónustu, Fréttablaðið 16.Nov.2009)