

exported hundreds of things and ideas—from haiku to Hondas, swordsmanship to sashimi—of which it can be proud. Hello Kitty . . . is another story.” They titled the essay, “Time for Good-bye Kitty?”

OTHER NATIONS

O Nunavut!

THE SOURCE: “Nunavut at 10,” multiple articles edited by Ailsa Henderson in *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Spring 2009.

THE MASSIVE TERRITORY OF Nunavut lies in the northernmost reaches of Canada. Occupying one-fifth of the country’s land area, it is home to just 31,000 Nunavummiut, who live in 25 communities scattered across the tundra. And it’s in those small towns that Canada is trying to figure out how to bring down sky-high levels of suicide (11 times the national rate), poverty, and illiteracy. About 85 percent of the population is Inuit.

In April 1999 Nunavut became a Canadian territory after a decades-long campaign by Inuit leaders to break off from the Northwest Territories. (Unlike Canada’s 10 provinces, the territories are creatures of the federal government.) The hope was to create a government shaped by Inuit values. Early on, Inuit

elders encouraged the adoption of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ)—literally, “that which has been long known by Inuit”—as the organizing principle of the new government. But, as University of Toronto political scientist Graham White writes, “Allowing flextime for [government] employees to go hunting, clam digging, or berry picking at opportune times, involving elders in policy development, and incorporating cultural ceremonies into bureaucratic activities . . . do not fundamentally alter the nature of government.”

Half of all jobs in Nunavut are in the public sector, and efforts to

hire Inuit to work in the territorial government have been an important part of spreading employment beyond the Qallunaat (non-Inuit) minority. By the end of 2007 some progress had been made, with half of all government jobs held by Inuit, up from 42 percent in 2003. Attempts to use Inuktitut—the language spoken by about 80 percent of the Inuit—in government have been frustrated by low literacy levels. Only 25 percent of students graduate from high school, and those who do receive very limited Inuit-language instruction, due to a shortage of Inuit-speaking teachers.

Government could do more to incorporate Inuit culture, notes Frank Tester, a professor of social work at the University of British Columbia. Consider the problem of homelessness. For pretty obvious reasons, being homeless in Nunavut does not mean sleeping on the street but rather “couch surfing,” which creates severe overcrowding. Ottawa has attempted to address the housing shortage through programs designed to jump-start a private market. But relying on a system of Western-style market economics makes little sense in a society that strongly emphasizes relationships among extended

EXCERPT

The Golden Hour

One of the things that I have lost totally and irremediably—I realized this when I returned to [Spain] after an 11-year absence—is the golden hour of siesta. . . . When we were children, the siesta hour meant freedom, simple and radiant. It was the blessed hour when the grownups slept. The racket from the kitchen was stilled, and the maids too were encased in mysterious silence, as though they had been paralyzed in some shadow: that of their bedrooms, high at the top of the house, or perhaps in the vegetable garden. It was our hour. The hour when the boys from the other side of the river whistled, rhythmically and oh so sweetly, imitating blackbirds or quails, or the wings of the singing dragonfly. It was the hour of the cruel and unpleasant sun, which irritates adults.

—ANA MARÍA MATUTE, author of *Paraíso inhabitado* (2008) and other novels, in *The Drawbridge* (Autumn 2009)

family. It would make more sense for government to create new housing cooperatives designed for large extended families.

In the future, Canada stands to make a lot of money in the north from natural resources and shipping routes that will become newly accessible as Arctic ice melts. The stakes are high for Nunavut's fledgling government, and as more money flows out of Canada's north, they're only going to get higher.

OTHER NATIONS

Mobile Monitoring

THE SOURCE: "Mobile Phone Diffusion and Corruption in Africa" by Catie Snow Bailard, in *Political Communication*, July-Sept. 2009.

THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF BUZZ about how cell phones are making it easier for Africans to do business. A woman who catches and sells fish for a living can take orders by phone, ensuring that she doesn't end up with rotting, unsold fish. Business owners in remote areas can manage bank accounts with text messages.

Catie Snow Bailard, a professor at George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, says cell phones have another, less noted effect—reducing corruption.

From 2000 to 2007, the percentage of Africans with a cell phone ballooned from under two to 30, and demand is still strong. When mobile service providers

were slow to expand coverage in the Congo, villagers built 50-foot-high tree houses in order to get a better signal. But service is rapidly improving; in 2007, nearly two-thirds of all Africans lived in an area with cell phone reception. That could be good news for corruption fighters.

Corruption can flourish when aid dollars flow into a community where there is so little transparency that local officials can siphon off money without detection. One 2004 study found that only 14 percent of funds designated for school fees in Uganda actually got to the schools. Without cell phones, it was difficult for aid donors to communicate to school leaders how much money they should be receiving. Kept in the dark, the educators didn't know when money went missing. Now, equipped with cell phones, school leaders are kept in the loop and middlemen cannot pocket money undetected.

Using data from Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, the United Nations, and the Afrobarometer survey, Bailard finds trends pointing toward lower levels of "perceived corruption" as cell

In Africa, cell phones help reduce corruption by making it easier to spread the word about malfeasance.

phone use increases. (Because corruption is impossible to measure, scholars use data on perceived corruption as a proxy.) In Cameroon, the expansion of cell phone use from almost nothing in 1999 to 24 percent of the population in 2006 correlated with a nationwide drop in perceived corruption of seven-tenths of a point on a 10-point scale. Moreover, Bailard observes a drop not just in perceived corruption, but in experienced corruption as well. In one comparison, residents of Namibia's Oshikoto province, which has very good cell phone reception, were 15 percentage points less likely to pay a bribe for municipal services than people living in Kavango, a neighboring province with terrible cell phone coverage.

Bailard raises a caveat: Corruption that directly and immediately benefits "the masses" may actually increase as a result of cell phone use. For example, at election time, villagers who sell their vote can make quick use of the small amounts of food or cash they receive in return. Such schemes may be easier to orchestrate when more people are reachable by phone.

Of course, cell phones do not by themselves make for cleaner politics. Someone has to be "on the other end of the line committed to the fight against corruption. If there are no concerned citizens, aid agency representatives, reformers, or journalists 'dialing in' in the fight . . . phones alone will likely make little difference," Bailard writes.