

Development in Place: A View from the Periphery

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INTRODUCTION

Rural and remote regions hold cultural as well as economic and environmental significance for Canada and for the world. Rural workers and ecosystems continue to fuel natural resource and amenity-based economies while rural people and places occupy an important role in contemporary national identities and imaginations. Rural and remote communities throughout Canada and internationally are also hosts of social, cultural, and economic transformation. They are presented with the opportunities and challenges of initiating and maintaining sustainable economic development, often in the face of declining resources and traditional economies, shifting demographics, and the development of transportation, information, and communications technologies that have led to declarations such as the “death of distance” (Cairncross, 1997).

In response to the dynamics outlined by forces such as globalization, competition, and technological change, the current literature increasingly advocates place-based rather than sectoral and/or generic approaches to policy and planning (Goldenburg, 2008; Markey et al., 2008; Cheng and Mattor, 2010). Attention to place-based approaches has in turn led to explorations of representations of place, multiple and changing identities connected to development processes, and the role of cultural norms and social relationships in nurturing creativity, innovation, and resilience (Baeker, 2004; Stathopoulou

et al., 2004; Lagendijk, 2011). The changes and challenges in rural and remote communities that this current literature addresses have shaped the core themes of this volume, in particular its focus on assets of and attachments to place and their implications for community resilience and sustainability.

Place Peripheral examines regional development in rural, island, and remote communities from a place-based approach. This edited volume addresses themes that are receiving considerable attention in Canada and internationally as researchers and public policy analysts alike strive to better understand and apply place and place-based strategies in rural and remote regions (see Barca, 2009; Bachleter, 2010; Bellefontaine and Wisener, 2011). The volume and its contributors examine place-based economic development strategies but move beyond a naive and narrow focus on commodification to recognize the broader and deeper significance, meanings, and attachments often associated with place. The chapters interrogate such relationships as may exist among sense of place, cultural and social development, and environmental stewardship, for example.

This introduction argues for the importance of examining place and its role in development within the contemporary periphery, and thus outlines the timely and important contribution of this volume. It also reviews the organization of the volume and introduces the individual chapters.

THIS VOLUME AND ITS CONTEXT

The contributors to *Place Peripheral* investigate how rural and remote communities can face the challenges presented by globalization through governance, identifying and building upon local capacity in its various forms, and ongoing processes of place-making. Among the conclusions presented are that local governance and enhanced agency can aid in the pursuit of place-based social and economic development and policy formulation. *Place Peripheral* explores place-based development strategies and the conditions, including governance systems, that have led to their implementation, with varying results.

This volume consists of selected and edited chapters drawn from papers presented originally at the 2011 conference, “Culture, Place and Identity at the Heart of Regional Development,” the North Atlantic Forum and Canadian

Rural Revitalization Foundation international event held in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The conference brought together Canadian and international researchers with policy-makers, community/regional development practitioners, industry, and artisans to share research findings and enhance the understanding of the role of place, culture, and identity in sustainable development for rural, remote, and coastal communities. An article by conference attendee and agriculture reporter Nancy Ralph explained, "The conference allowed delegates to create networks, share experiences and strategies and exchange their know-how. . . . Speakers at the conference encouraged delegates to let their community groups know it is important for them to work together to create new identities for their communities" (Ralph, 2011). This volume provides an opportunity for researchers, students, and practitioners to benefit from these lessons and experiences through a comparative and critical approach.

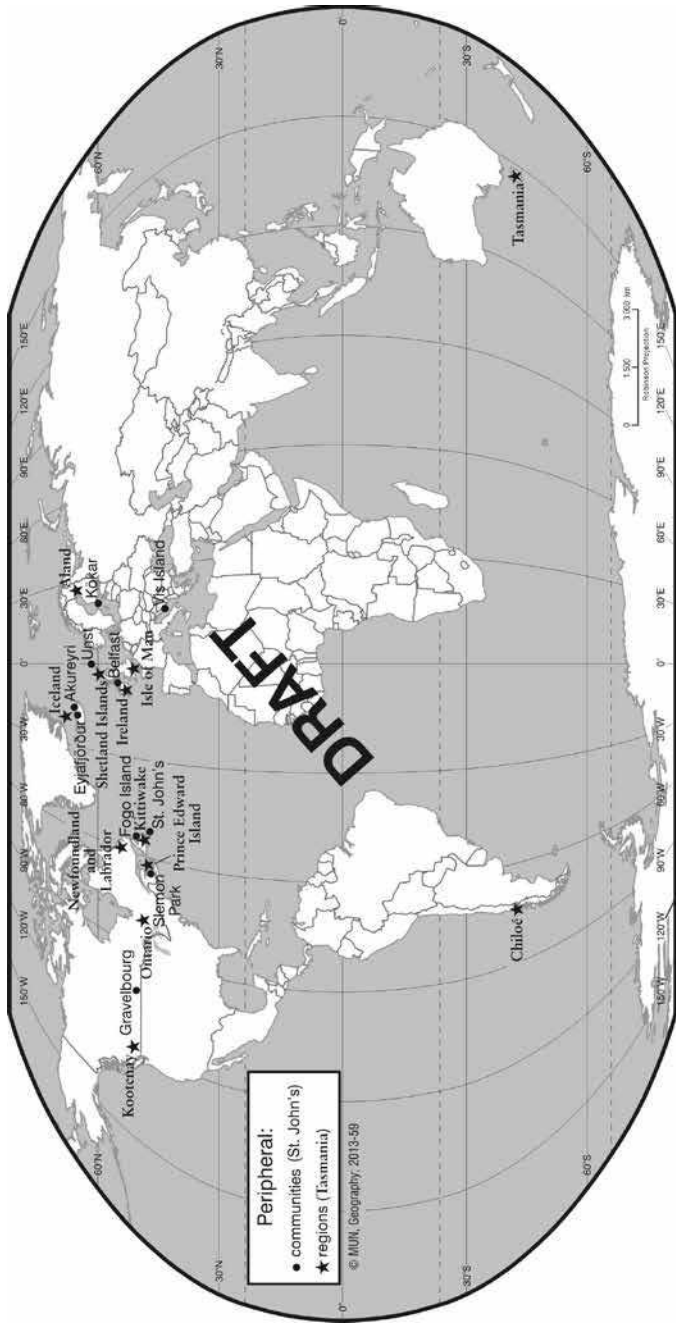
The contributions to this volume are both descriptive and analytical. They represent a carefully selected compendium of ideas and experiences that speak to the importance and value of place-based development, and especially for so-called remote and peripheral island and rural communities. As illustrated in Figure 1, these experiences come primarily from the North Atlantic, including jurisdictions in Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, Finland, and Iceland, but also from the islands of Chiloé (in Chile) and Tasmania (in Australia).

This volume is also a companion text to *Remote Control: Governance Lessons for and from Small, Insular, and Remote Regions* (Baldacchino et al., 2009). Also published by ISER Books, *Remote Control* consists of selected papers from the 2005 North Atlantic Forum and Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation international conference held in Twillingate, Newfoundland and Labrador. Like this complementary volume, *Remote Control* examined the impact of a seemingly borderless knowledge economy and concerns about a resulting cycle of decline for peripheral communities.

PLACING THE PERIPHERY

Increases in mobility and processes of globalization have generated significant interest in place and place-based development. Local cultures are

Figure 1: Case study locations in Place Peripheral.



“threatened by the forces of global political, economic and social change” (Hay, 2006: 31); yet strong attachments to place remain (Lewicka, 2011). This sense of belonging and attachment is often particularly strong in rural and remote communities (Turcotte, 2005) — areas considered peripheries within their countries yet hosting characteristics that take on new meaning amid the onslaught of globalization that has created what Daniels et al. in Chapter 2 refer to as an “incentive to difference.” In some cases, local languages and cultures have become important tools for economic development and political strategies to adapt to the changes associated with globalization (Wilson, 2007). As many of the chapters in this volume illustrate, tourism and the arts are crucial dimensions of the new rural economy (Halseth et al., 2009; Shannon and Mitchell, 2012). In other situations, stunning natural landscapes fuel strong local identities along with amenity-based development opportunities.

Identity politics continue to play themselves out in some of the most remote corners of the world where, for instance, industrial demands for natural resources conflict with long-standing traditions and ways of life and also with alternative visions for sustainable local economies. Dependency thinkers such as Frank (1967) and Allahaar (1995) have long discussed these conflicts and the production of peripherality at multiple spatial scales through processes of exploitation, capital investment and disinvestment, and ensuing uneven economic and political relationships. Peripheral regions, these authors suggest, become dependent on and subservient to core regions. In the process, as Daniels et al. suggest in Chapter 2, peripheries become essentialized as “have-not” regions in need of continued external support and intervention. Centres assume the power to define regions in these terms, harnessing a discourse of difference to assert their own dominant position in contrast to the Other — the marginal, the needy, and the dependent (Corbin and Hunter, 2007; Gregory, 2004). As Brinklow points out in Chapter 10, these descriptors may then contribute to inferiority complexes within peripheral regions, further contributing to underdevelopment.

While sociologists have focused on dependency and world systems theory perspectives, using core–periphery relationships to describe and explain uneven development, economists and economic geographers have

tended to describe peripheral regions in terms of population density, lack of accessibility and economies of scale, and distance from nodes or “cores” where economic benefits and power over economic decisions are concentrated (Crescenzi, 2005; Krugman, 1998). Polese and Shearmur (2003) define the periphery within the Canadian context as all parts of Canada further than a 90-minute drive from a major metropolitan centre. But surely the line between core and periphery is not so clear-cut. In recognizing limitations of the core–periphery dichotomy, others have identified the notion of the semi-periphery, for example (Wallerstein, 1979; Potter, 2001). Still others have questioned the value of such categories given blurred boundaries and changing circumstances, including deindustrialization of former core regions (e.g., Chirot, 1977; Collyer, 2014). Meanwhile, new categories of peripherality continue to be developed. Notably, a series of ultra-peripheral regions have been identified in Europe, mostly islands with “limited possibilities” (Fundo de Maneio, 2006: 11; Hudson, 2006).

In this volume we offer a counterpoint to these common narratives. While not denying the challenges that geography can present or the existence of patterns of wealth and power accumulation, we offer a more critical and current understanding of peripheries and their varied development paths. We pay particular attention to how people of the so-called periphery engage in place-making processes shaped by past trajectories of development and core–periphery relationships, but also by shifting circumstances and perceptions and by relationships between people and their surroundings that are more complex than structural explanations alone can capture. The cases provided in the chapters that follow offer examples of how the global and local come together, as well as insights into the complexity and contested nature of place and place-based identities.

Research on innovation, the knowledge economy, and competitiveness emphasizes the continued importance of qualities of place to economic well-being, while sustainability scholars highlight the importance of local actions and practices for environmental outcomes (Bradford, 2005). Scholars in the 1990s drew our attention to social capital, based on social organization and relationships within and between communities, as an important contributor to development and collective action. More recently, place

characteristics have been shown to influence demographic trends and the decisions made by increasingly mobile workers about whether to leave or stay in certain regions (Florida et al., 2010). Put simply, place still matters — perhaps more than ever.

Much of the literature on the role of place in contemporary development, however, has focused on urban centres as hubs and magnets of innovation and creativity: nodes in a networked world where significant flows of capital, people, ideas, and influence converge. The authors in this volume turn their attention to place in peripheral regions, viewing place from the periphery, especially island places. We do so while being aware that, for many people from rural remote and island locations, their homes are not the periphery at all. We concur with Tuan (1977): the very definition of a place is that it is a centre of meaning. Thus, places peripheral are also places central. This is particularly true when we take into account that experiences of place are both material and mental (Cars et al., 2002). As Gupta and Ferguson (1992) argue, “actual” places may be less important today while the idea of place grows more salient, including notions of home, remembered places, and places in the “near view.”

Moreover, our attention to place and rootedness does not deny mobility or identities that transcend particular places. We see place and placelessness as coexisting, and concur with Squires (2012: 29) that “[i]t is time to move beyond the mobility versus place debate.” Places can be both rooted and connected, dynamic and diverse. They contribute to and are affected by mobilities and by the many, often larger forces that influence our daily lives (Bradford, 2005). Indeed, this volume contributes to a growing body of literature that conceptualizes our world not in terms of bland dichotomies (such as global versus local, rural versus urban, island versus mainland), or even of memorable sound bites (such as the global village), but rather as a globe of villages and place-based globalism (Douglas, 2005; Osterweil, 2005).

The arrival of the information age promises to bring peripheral regions closer both to each other and to centres of economic wealth and decision-making. Yet, as Massey (2006) warns, “time-space compression” is not a ubiquitous reality. Some people and places are more mobile and have

greater access to flows of people, capital, knowledge, and information than others. In the crumpling of space, some locales have become even harder to reach, some people immobilized and further marginalized. A whole new layer of hegemonic “mobility regimes” and communication infrastructures is increasingly brought into play, typically affording more mobility to the rich and powerful and less mobility to the poor (Canzler et al., 2008; Sheller, 2013). The contributing authors to this volume explore the complexities of movement in and out of the periphery, in differing circumstances. Their chapters demonstrate the diverse ways in which place does — and does not — affect development processes in peripheral regions within the context of a more globalized, knowledge-intensive world.

Hayter et al. (2003) suggest that globalized resource peripheries warrant particular attention because they are “deeply contested spaces” with economic, cultural, environmental, and geopolitical dimensions different from those of core regions. Only through the examination of these intersecting dimensions in particular peripheral contexts can we begin to understand the nature and implications of these dynamics. Critical to this understanding is a willingness to look beyond a discourse of peripheries as victims to explore how people at the edge articulate place for themselves and deploy it critically in shaping their own futures.

Peripheral regions remain important as targets of interventions designed to fix “the regional problem.” By examining differing ways in which place is incorporated into development policy and practice, the contributors to this volume compare and contrast approaches from various contexts and allow readers to reflect on how these policies and practices have influenced the development trajectories of peripheral regions across the North Atlantic and beyond.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

This volume is organized in two major parts. In Part I, “Understanding and Negotiating Place,” we examine the notion of place as the foundation upon which place-based development efforts are conceived, built, interpreted, and negotiated. Part II, “Place-based Development in Practice,” considers the ideas and lessons learned from specific places for creating more sustainable,

livable communities and regions, and also explores some dangers and pitfalls observed from past experiences.

Part I: Understanding and Negotiating Place

Jennifer Daniels, Godfrey Baldacchino, and Kelly Vodden, in Chapter 2, continue setting the stage and tone by examining notions of place from various theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. They explore the reasons why place and place-making maintain currency among fears of homogenization under such forces as globalization, urbanization, and commodification, as well as the social and political ramifications of how place is defined and used. Even more critically, they examine the intellectual and material implications of not carefully considering the role of an expanded and nuanced notion of place that reaches beyond understandings of place as locale. Finally, the authors interrogate how identity is involved in place-making and in creating individual and collective sense(s) of place; they also explore how place is implicated and deployed in identity-making (including nation-building).

In Chapter 3, Godfrey Baldacchino further tackles the meanings embedded in two central concepts tackled by this volume: place and periphery. He outlines how advances in information and communication technologies have altered notions of core and periphery and forced a reconceptualization of the role and meaning of “place” as well as associated terms such as mobility, space, settlement, attractiveness, and even quality of life. He does so through a discussion of recent developments in five North Atlantic island jurisdictions. This critical, comparative review allows for description and discussion of different regional development strategies, challenges, and results.

Core–periphery is but one continuum across which place can be viewed. In the following three chapters, the authors illustrate this by examining place from the point of view of newcomers and long-time residents, of musicians and artists as well as the audiences for these artistic endeavours, and of residents of different age groups. Bojan Fürst, in Chapter 4, delves into the tensions that can arise in a rural or small island settlement with a relatively sudden influx of outsiders whose previous connections to their new communities and landscapes are often limited. He examines

relationships between the seasonal and permanent residents and between residents and their landscapes. Drawing from literature in geography, folklore, and architecture, together with photographs and interviews from Newfoundland and Labrador, he explores how the meanings of terms such as “place,” “space,” and “landscape” change and manifest themselves in the context of small islands.

Again drawing from experiences in Newfoundland and Labrador, Deatra Walsh, in Chapter 5, illustrates the changing nature of place and place expression through the story of Hey Rosetta!, an indie-rock band that has risen to the top of Canadian and international stardom. The group’s music and songs do not explicitly reflect their home province; yet, they connect music to place in other ways. In this chapter, Walsh critically analyzes television and music video to understand how new music and visual representations of Newfoundland and Labrador are contributing to “renovated” place associations and fuelling socio-cultural and economic development in the “New” Newfoundland.

In Chapter 6, Gordon Cooke, Sara Mann, and Jennifer Burns conclude Part I by discussing how characteristics and perceptions of place affect the education, location, and employment decisions made by young adults in rural settings within Ireland, Ontario, and Newfoundland. Their findings demonstrate differing perspectives on place within groups of young adults. Some young adults are highly motivated to acquire post-secondary education and subsequent related employment, even though it may require relocation to an urban centre. Among those who chose to remain in their hometowns, some were willing to accept lower levels of education and a higher level of occupational uncertainty as a result, while yet another group were adamantly career-focused. Policy implications are also discussed; these include an appeal for increased local education and training options for rural young adults, meant to entice them to remain in their communities.

The chapters in Part I show that places are created, interpreted, and reinvented by those who are part of them: the young and elderly, the new and old, the musician and the fisher, the municipal leader and the state decision-maker, the long-time resident and the recent immigrant. The contributors to this volume, together with other authors, argue that deliberate

attention to place-making by residents, community groups, and institutions that influence the future of communities can enhance the value and qualities of place and, in doing so, foster a dynamic and resilient sense of place and identity (Baeker, 2004; Imbroscio, 2004). Place-based approaches to local development draw from local actors, knowledge, and resources, often in collaboration with non-local actors, to create locally relevant responses to socio-economic and environmental policy challenges. Typically, these challenges are complex and of long term, and therefore are more appropriately addressed through a holistic approach involving the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders than through top-down and/or sector-specific, siloed interventions (Policy Horizons Canada, 2011a, 2011b).

Part II: Place-based Development in Practice

Part II focuses on how place-making and place-based development move from theory into practice and policy. Examples of place-based initiatives at the local level include the celebration of local histories, traditions, distinctive foods and festivals, and co-operative ventures in response to such concerns as cultural homogenization, competition from international food supply chains, and related environmental impacts (Douglas, 2005). These ideas can also be incorporated into planning and policy interventions that draw from a deep and intimate knowledge of particular local circumstances and from the identity, meanings, and images of places and that carefully account for the impacts of various alternatives on those who use and care about a place in the design of future strategies and management of local resources (Kruger and Williams, 2007).

The authors in this section draw on ideas and experiences, primarily from the North Atlantic, to illustrate the importance and value of place-based development, especially for so-called remote and peripheral island and rural communities. Moreover, they shed light on how place-based strategies have been employed and the policies, processes, and partnerships that have supported their implementation.

Through a comparative analysis of Chiloé (Chile) and Prince Edward Island (Canada), Irene Novaczek argues in Chapter 7 that much is to be learned from islands and their communities' attempts to develop more

human-scaled, place-based local economies that provide a rich quality of life without compromising the integrity of local ecosystems — both important elements of place. In particular, she suggests that we look to “under-developed” islands of the global South for such lessons, while pointing out that analogous options are also available in countries dominated by globalized, industrial scale-economies. Her contribution demonstrates a diverse range of strategies that contribute to alternative, socially and ecologically sustainable modes of development, based on cultural and natural heritage and a highly developed sense of place. These include subsistence and artisanal food production, arts, culture, and carefully managed tourism industries organized as small and micro-enterprises, co-operatives, and non-profit organizations. In the face of damaged cultures and ecosystems and powerful industrial interests, Novaczek acknowledges, however, that the road to a diverse, alternative local economy is not an easy one.

In Chapters 8 and 9, Andrew Jennings and Christopher Fullerton respectively address an identified gap in the development literature regarding the contributions that arts and culture-based initiatives can make to rural revitalization. Jennings offers an example of how a small, apparently isolated community can use its unique assets and attractions to enrich life for locals and visitors. The chapter describes the distinctiveness of Shetland — an archipelago off the northeast Scottish coast, and how this is protected and promoted by Shetland Islands Council and in the work and ambitions of Shetland’s cultural bodies, Shetland Arts and the Shetland Amenity Trust. Fullerton provides a case study of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, where local residents have pursued a wide range of arts and culture-related projects as part of a broader revitalization strategy. His research shows that these initiatives have strengthened the town’s quality of place and improved its long-term attractiveness and viability as somewhere to live and work.

Laurie Brinklow continues to make connections between culture, identity, and place-based development in Chapter 10. She tells the tale of Tasmania’s biennial Ten Days on the Island festival and its showcase of island cultures from around the world within the context of place-specific artistic and tourism development. In examining the 2011 festival, she considers the specific instance of a theatre piece created by island youth from

opposite sides of the globe: Tasmania and Newfoundland. These youth, at antipodean extremes, collaborated to celebrate place, and contribute to our knowledge of “islandness” and to their own. Brinklow describes how the parallel cultural renaissances on both islands have capitalized on peripherality and pride of place to create rich cultures that are distinctive because of the very isolation previously used in negative portrayals of provincial backwaters. Local assets, strong leadership, and governance models that recognize the role of culture in reframing self-image in a positive light, as well as global connections, have had a role to play in these successes.

In Chapter 11, Gary Wilson examines place branding, a key component of many place-based development strategies. This chapter focuses on the Isle of Man, a small island jurisdiction in the British Isles and its “Freedom to Flourish” branding project. The case study challenges the assertion often made in the literature on place branding: that brand messages tend to be generic in nature and do not adequately capture the cultural characteristics of the places they seek to represent. Instead, Wilson argues, the “Freedom to Flourish” brand strikes a balance between recognizing the Isle of Man’s indigenous culture and heritage and the needs of its dynamic, post-industrial economy and changing demographics.

Brendan O’Keeffe’s Chapter 12 provides both an example of what is possible in implementing place-based policy and a sobering reminder of the challenges proponents of place-based development face, particularly in a time of austerity. O’Keeffe describes the well-known and much-lauded model of rural development through locally based partnership bodies in the Republic of Ireland. With dedicated support from the European Union for rural development partnerships and multi-sectoral planning, local partnerships delivered local development and implemented national policies and programs. O’Keeffe explains how, despite (and perhaps even in part because of) this growing and notable capacity, the state-funded (and thus, at least to some extent, state-driven) system began to impose increasing levels of formalism, standardization, and bureaucratization. Sadly, this is an all-too-familiar script, where central governments are willing to share the work of program and policy delivery but, as O’Keeffe points out, less so the power and decision-making. The Irish story has not ended, however,

and O’Keeffe leaves us with some optimism in the current resistance to re-centralization and mobilization of a civil society that has been strengthened by 25 years of experience in taking control of development.

Sarah Breen, Sean Markey, Jennifer Daniels, and Kelly Vodden return to the Canadian context in Chapter 13 to conclude Part II by examining the extent and ways in which the notion of place-based development has been put into practice in British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Like Novaczek, Breen et al. discuss a wide range of place-based initiatives: in arts, culture, and tourism but also in environmental stewardship, the creation of wealth from industrial by-products, branding, and buy-local campaigns. This chapter pays particular attention to the delineation of territorial boundaries and how these boundaries affect regional identities and perceptions of place, which in turn are translated and mobilized for the purposes of regional collaboration and development. The authors conclude with policy insights regarding the potential of well-thought-out, place-responsive development approaches but also the very real challenges of adopting such approaches. These include, for example, traditions of individualism, sector-focused institutional structures, and economic restructuring, as well as the complexity and definitional obscurity associated with the very concepts, such as place and identity, the authors throughout this volume have engaged with.

CONCLUSION

The authors in this volume, through their rich comparative analysis and case studies from Chile to Iceland, and from Tasmania to the Isle of Man, demonstrate that sense of place and place attachment continue to flourish, and even to be renewed, in many peripheral areas. They also demonstrate that these ties can be a valuable resource that can be harnessed to improve quality of life for residents, to create and sustain vibrant cultures, and to boost socially and environmentally resilient local economies. The unique qualities of place within the cases presented in this volume have fostered a multitude of artistic, tourism, niche production, marketing, heritage, and environmental protection initiatives that have captured the attention of scholars, policy-makers, consumers, visitors, and potential residents within these supposed peripheries, as well as across the globe. As Brinklow suggests, citing *The Mercury*, a

Tasmanian newspaper (2011: 22), Tasmania and other locales discussed can be considered to be “no longer at the end of the earth but at the centre.”

As with any resource, however, place — and more specifically, place-based identities and sense of place — can be squandered and mismanaged. The chapters in this volume offer examples of concrete and successful place-based development strategies, but also cautionary tales of conflicts over romanticized and invented traditions, of commodification of place for the benefit of the few, of place branding that silences the voices and overrides the emotions and attachments of already marginalized citizens. Place remains problematic. A key challenge for place-based development raised in this volume, then, is the need to remain critical and careful about notions of the local and place-focused approaches as necessarily superior.

Place-based development relies on capacity and a degree of authority at the local level. In *Remote Control*, the preceding companion volume, Baldacchino et al. (2009) conclude that inhabitants of rural communities and peripheral regions located within larger jurisdictions often lack the capacity to pursue their desired development paths. Public policy and institutions at all levels have a role to play in addressing these gaps and in capitalizing on the significant promise of place-based development. Shifts towards governance and sharing of power with local actors can reignite discussions of place, enhance local confidence, and energize the capacity and the role of “place” in local decision-making. But in many jurisdictions we observe a retreat from rural and from decentralized, collaborative, integrated governance approaches.

Along with the authors in this volume, we must continue to ask probing questions about who and what is local, to acknowledge the multiplicity and dynamic nature of local identities and senses of place, and to focus not only on places in and of themselves, but also on connections between and within places, and between particular places and larger forces of change. How we define and answer each of these queries influences the processes and outcomes of place-based development in the periphery. If we do not engage with these questions and with place-based approaches to development, surely we put at risk the many distinctive and important contributions and futures that *places peripheral* have to offer.

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