Placing Identity: Strategic Considerations for Rebounding Peripheries

Godfrey Baldacchino

INTRODUCTION

One consequence of rampant globalization has been the resurgence, and in some cases invention, of local identity and difference in the face of the threat of glib and anodyne sameness. For small communities in islands and remote rural regions, a failure to undergo such a (re)positioning may initiate a vicious cycle of heavy depopulation, youth out-migration, growing and chronic unemployment, and an overall feeling of malaise and helplessness. This cycle of loss, gloom, and defeat is also a consequence of neo-liberal policies that have championed market forces and under-mined the role and legitimacy of the state in economic development, generally, and in supporting "uncompetitive" and "non-viable" projects, specifically. Economies of scale, and the virtues of urban clusters and ag-glomerations, have shifted interests and investments away from far-flung and non-strategic locales, leaving their local residents with the stark op-tion to either pack up and leave for greener pastures or stay but scramble for effective survival strategies. While circumstances and resources change with time and context, many such communities find themselves in a strug-gle to break out of the downward spiral induced by the "double whammy" of globalization and neo-liberalism, and hopefully succeed in replacing it by a virtuous mix of select visitations, in-migration, economic activities

that generate employment and high local value added, and a general pride in place.

And yet, as noted in Chapters 1 and 2, the impact of globalization is messy and complex: former "centres" get downgraded to peripheries in a regional or international context; and peripheries benefit from a "time/space compression" (Harvey, 1990) that is a consequence of new information and communication technologies — such as satellite phones, global positioning systems, and broadband mobile and Internet communication services — that facilitate access, in spite of physical space constraints. Moreover, increasingly more people find themselves "seagulls," in permanent flux, moving from place to place, or having more than one home: evidence of nomadism, brain/brawn circulation, and cyclical migration patterns (Baldacchino, 2006a; Freeland, 2011; Peters, 1998). Meanwhile, research suggests that opportunities for employment and self-employment, along with the provision of basic and affordable infrastructural services — not just water and electricity, but health care, basic education, inexpensive and efficient transportation to/from economic and population centres, and wireless broadband provision — are critical to stem population decline, and may even contribute to population increase (Barthon, 2007; Royle, 2007).

The responses by various islands and remote rural regions towards "identity re-engineering" — a term long associated with strategic management discourse (Jackson, 1996) — have been diverse, and debates still rage as to the effectiveness of local, bottom-up, and democratic initiatives, as against those that are "top–down," planned and driven by state agencies and technical experts (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Baldacchino et al., 2009). In an era of public retrenchment and divestment of state assets, a more bottom-up governance approach (discussed further by O'Keeffe in Chapter 12) comes across not necessarily as a preferred policy choice but as the default option in the face of the "eclipse of government" (Jordan et al., 2005).

FOUR STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

An attempt at a comparative overview of these responses on the ground suggests some or all of the following four strategic interlocked considerations

for community viability are brought into play. These ideas are drawn from my ongoing interest in, and research on, the economic development challenges of peripheral jurisdictions, with a special focus on small islands (e.g., Baldacchino, 2006c, 2006d). They correspond to development strategies that seek to maximize the multiplier effects of boutique tourism, select in-migration, niche manufacturing, plus the opportunities presented in some instances by a single but significant windfall investment, which often takes over and rejuvenates assets that others may have abandoned.

The first response is to seek to develop an ecologically and culturally friendly tourism industry that appreciates local and small-scale assets, engages with the local community, and respects the cultural and natural ambience of place. As the global tourism industry continues to grow, it is also diversifying rapidly into various niches, and small-scale tourism fits well with what small communities off the beaten track can offer, preserving elements of authenticity, cementing local proprietary control over infrastructure, and avoiding the rampant commodification that tends to follow mass tourism invasions (Smith, 1998; Scheyvens and Russell, 2012).

The second response is to pursue another select tourist market: second-home residents and urban or lifestyle refugees, desirous to escape the "rat race" and the urban hustle and bustle, raise children in safe neighbourhoods, and otherwise avoid facing the raw challenges of life "at the edge." Thanks to electronic connectivity, artists, professionals, and retirees have been seriously considering moving, or moving back, to places where the tempo of life is more natural and human (Baldacchino, 2010; Baldacchino and Pleijel, 2010). Crucial here is the reception afforded by the local inhabitants: welcoming societies register the highest levels of retention and integration of those who come from away, while xenophobia and subtle racism can turn them away (Baldacchino, 2006b, 2012; Marshall, 2008). Fürst discusses these challenges further in Chapter 4.

A third response involves the production and promotion of well-branded, good-quality, high value-added, and locally sourced products, services, and natural assets geared for niche export markets, including the tourists and new residents mentioned above. As Novaczek (Chapter 7), Jennings (Chapter 8), and others in this volume suggest, these goods ideally align

with and reinforce the qualities of a just as well-branded locale that celebrates an enviable quality of life (Punnett and Morrison, 2006; Pounder, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Khamis, 2010).

Fourth, and finally, are responses to the opportunities provided by an injection of new investment: a phoenix-like, resurgent flagship industry, possibly replacing a moribund or redundant one, such as a hotelier or an educational institution taking over defunct or surplus military barracks (see Prince Edward Island and Unst below). Such initiatives, at times, are mired in controversy, given that the stakes are high and the activities involved may hover on the limits of legitimacy (Palan, 2003). They also typically require a major injection of capital and, given their size, are always at risk of being appropriated and driven by non-local owners and interests. And yet, where successful, the transformation in the economic fortunes of the hosting community can be tremendous (see Chapter 8 on the Shetland Islands by Jennings).

This chapter reviews experiences with these four interlocked strategic considerations for sustainable development in relation to five exemplars of peripheral locales that are, at the time of writing, experiencing some sense of revival and growth. These are located on five different island jurisdictions in the North Atlantic, in decreasing population size: Belfast, Northern Ireland; Slemon Park, Prince Edward Island, Canada; Akureyri and the Eyjafjörður region, North Iceland; Unst, Shetland Islands, Scotland; and Kökar, Åland Islands, Finland.

The material presented here, and its ensuing analysis, is derived from my own personal knowledge (I have visited and stayed at all five sites since 2008); my familiarity with projects that have explored rural and regional development in these and other regions (Baldacchino et al., 2009; Dahlström et al., 2006); and other critical sources, including official documents and local informants. Where possible, I have corroborated my analysis with, and tested my observations on, other local resource persons.

The five cases have also been selected because they manifest a range of approaches to regional development: from the classical state-driven injection of massive amounts of public financing and corporate baits like subsidies and tax relief incentives (as in the Belfast case), to the much more

modest and less visible but more finely targeted grants to small businesses in Kökar. They also reflect different shades of peripherality: from the capital of a country within the United Kingdom to the small island periphery of what is itself a small island jurisdiction in the Baltic Sea.

CASE #1: BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

At its peak, Harland & Wolff employed 35,000 people at its shipyard in the city of Belfast (now with a population of 275,000) to make the ships that linked Britain to its empire, as well as the doomed *Titanic*. In 2003, the firm officially registered as a small business, with a staff complement of 135. This shipyard, with its two giant gantry cranes, sits in what is now called Titanic Quarter, in Northern Ireland (land area 13,800 km²; population 1.8 million; sub-national jurisdiction). The Titanic Quarter is a waterfront regeneration project, including apartments, a riverside entertainment district, and a major *Titanic*-themed attraction developed on reclaimed land in Belfast Harbour (www.titanic-quarter.com/). Since 2005, it has also become the home to the Northern Ireland Science Park, a hi-tech science park affiliated closely with Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster, as well as the Paint Hall, now converted into a film studio used during the production of films and television series. This is the biggest property development scheme ever undertaken in Northern Ireland, and was embraced with gusto by all official place promotion agencies in Belfast, including the Belfast Tourist Board and Belfast City Council; the Northern Ireland Executive pitched in with financing in 2008 in the guise of a "counter-recessionary stimulus" (Neill, 2010: 315–19). The shipyard has obtained a new lease of life by building wind turbines; and close by Bombardier is setting up a site to build wings for new aircraft. Offering lower costs and desirable skills, Northern Ireland still depends considerably on public-sector spending; being discussed is a cut in the basic corporation tax rate, from Britain's 26 per cent to something close to the Republic of Ireland's 12.5 per cent. This policy measure could lure foreign direct investment, especially now that the sectarian troubles that plagued Northern Ireland seem to have largely become history (*The Economist*, 2011). The city "has been transformed since the cessation of widespread political violence" (Bairner, 2006: 159). "A sustained reduction

in unemployment, economic growth and house price increases have reflected Belfast's post-conflict renaissance just as readily as the global recession has exposed the fragility of construction-led growth. Rates of segregation have stabilized and new consumption spaces and élite developments further reflect the city's engagement with globalization and economic liberalization" (Murtagh, 2010: 1119).

CASE #2: SLEMON PARK, PRINCE COUNTY, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (PEI), CANADA

The history of Slemon Park originates in 1940 with the decision to open a base in Prince Edward Island (land area 5,700 km²; population 150,000; province) to support the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan during World War II. In 1948, the RCAF Air Navigation School was established to provide pilot and navigator training. Starting in 1949, houses, roads, and a school were built. In 1968, 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron, operating out of what was then renamed Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Summerside, was set up as the prime search and rescue unit on Canada's east coast.

The closure of CFB Summerside was announced by the Canadian government in 1989, and in April 1992 the former CFB Summerside property was transferred to its current owner, Slemon Park Corporation, a commercial and residential property management and development company.

PEI has developed Slemon Park into a "successful tax-free zone for aerospace companies" (Carroll, 2000: 11). It is now the location of various companies and training organizations in aviation, aerospace, police and security training, and other commercial activities. The former Officers' Mess for CFB Summerside serves as the front desk and conference facility for the Slemon Park Hotel and Conference Centre (Slemon Park Corporation, n.d.). Indeed, that the island province has a manufacturing sector at all has been due in no small part to "the aeronautics industry located in Summerside's Slemon Park" (Murphy, 2001: 11). At least nine companies — including Honeywell Engines — currently provide around 900 well-paid jobs (Aerospace PEI, 2013). Because of its earlier history as a Canadian Forces Base, the Slemon Park facility possesses all of the accoutrements needed by a modern aerospace cluster. The 1,500-acre business park includes

a working airport with two runways and numerous well-maintained hangars (Innovation PEI, 2013). The province's higher education college has a facility at Slemon Park and trains graduates in various engineering and aerospace-related skills that are prized and sought by the industry (Holland College, PEI, 2013).

CASE #3: AKUREYRI AND EYJAFJÖRÐUR, NORTH ICELAND

Iceland has become today a highly "urbanized" island state, with only 7.7 per cent of the population classified as rural dwellers by 2012 (Hagstofa Íslands, 2003; Statistics Iceland, 2013). Today, some two-thirds of the entire population of around 318,000 lives in the Reykjavík metropolitan area in the southwest, and only one town — Akureyri in northern Iceland — outside this area has more than 10,000 inhabitants. This rapid urbanization has occurred in spite of four-year regional development plans put into place since 1978 by the national government. Migration from the Icelandic countryside and provincial towns to the capital area is considered to be a very serious problem. Rural Iceland is isolated from other areas by peninsulas, vast areas of wilderness, and often inclement weather; it is far from markets, both within Iceland and abroad, resulting in higher costs for the transportation of people and products; it tends to have shortages of both skilled labour and business know-how; and it suffers from a brain drain because most youth leave to seek education, employment, or just adventure, and often don't return (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006). The amalgamation of various small rural municipalities has been one rational strategy to achieve some economies of scale in community services and thus to help prevent rural depopulation and decline (Eythórsson, 2009).

In 2004, a Regional Growth Agreement (RGA) was established to enhance the Eyjafjörður region, where Akureyri is located (land area 4,300 km^2; population 22,000; region, with nine municipalities) — a rural region of Iceland dependent on crop farming, raising livestock (especially sheep), horse breeding, fishing, commerce, and, increasingly, tourism. To increase its attraction as a popular place to live and to encourage economic growth and competitiveness, four "clusters" were conceived, in line with the doctrine of Michael Porter (1998): food innovation (mainly fishing, but also

agriculture and the processing of agricultural produce); education and research (with elementary schools, two secondary schools, and one university — the University of Akureyri — established in 1987, now with three faculties); health (with the largest hospital in Iceland outside Reykjavik, plus health-related services); and tourism (seasonal, and mainly rural) (Sigursteinsdóttir, 2008).

Eyjafjörður is well known in Iceland for relatively milder and better weather and is renowned for good-quality food. The region has the best ski resort in Iceland, and is generally conceived as a good place to live. Compared to other rural regions in Iceland, a much higher ratio of people who move away do return to live in the Eyjafjörður region. There are frequent daily flights to and from the capital region, which is 385 km to the south: this facilitates business trips and meetings, and makes it possible for part of the workforce to commute between regions on a weekly basis (Jóhannesson, 2006; Dahlström et al., 2006).

While Akureyri was the manufacturing town of Iceland, this sector was heavily downsized when firms belonging to a large employer — Sambandið (Cooperative Union) — were sold or went bankrupt. Various important markets in Eastern Europe were lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and stronger competition from cheaper imports resulted after Iceland's decision to join the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area in 1993 squeezed out local products. However, Samherji, a vertically integrated fishing company, has grown rapidly: based in Akureyri since 1983, it is now by far the largest fishing company in Iceland with operations in nine countries, a fishing fleet of nine ships, and 790 employees, many (such as crew members) well paid (Samherji HF, 2013).

While the RGA was concluded in 2007, it generated sufficient momentum to enable the Eyjafjörður region to persevere with private-sector funding and support (Sigursteindottir,2008). Meanwhile, the steep hill that runs down from the Akureyri thermal swimming pools to the city centre is "Arts' Alley": it includes various art galleries, the Akureyri School of Visual Arts, design and handcraft shops, workshops, the Akureyri Art Museum, and the Akureyri Cultural Centre (*Icelandic Times*, 2010; Visit Akureyri, 2013).

CASE #4: UNST, SHETLAND ISLANDS, SCOTLAND

RAF Saxa Vord was an early-warning radar station operated by the Royal Air Force. It was located on the island of <u>Unst</u> (land area 121km^2; population around 650; part of municipality), the most northerly of the Shetland Islands, in the north of Scotland. It served as a vital part of Britain's air defence network during the Cold War, and was closed by the UK Ministry of Defence in 2006, when it employed 100 locals, in spite of requests to postpone the closure (BBC, 2005). Then, it was expected that "the departure of service personnel and their families will see the island's population drop by a quarter to 500" (BBC, 2006). (The population was 1,067 in the 1991 census, and 720 at the 2001 census). Unst airport had also closed in the year 2000. Job loss between 1999 and 2007 was estimated at 175, or 42 per cent of all employment (Unst Community Plan Consultation, 2010: 1).

The radar facility was bought the following year by Military Asset Management (MAM), a private company owned by the Scottish Highland entrepreneur, Frank Strang. Recognizing that military bases tend to be situated in remote rural areas, and that their closure could have devastating socio-economic consequences for local communities, MAM was set up to transform closing bases into self-sustaining, profitable enterprises, encouraging and fostering economic regeneration in the process. Saxa Vord is being redeveloped into what is being hailed as Britain's first "residential natural and cultural heritage activity centre" (Saxa Vord, n.d.). The facility currently includes a hotel, 20 self-catering holiday houses, a 16-bedroom bunkhouse, leisure facilities, a restaurant, bar, and a guided walks/evening talks program. Locals are employed whenever possible, and there is direct local involvement in the business. For example, Sonny Priest, owner of Unst's Valhalla Brewery, manages and supplies the bar at Saxa Vord, and has relocated the brewery to the site (Valhalla Brewery, n.d.).

The Shetland Island Council is one of 32 councils that organize local government in Scotland. It is now the major employer in Unst; however, the 600 plus island residents are resourceful, as witnessed by other entrepreneurial ventures. The island is the home of PURE, an operational community-owned renewable hydrogen energy system (Pure Energy Centre, n.d.). A mussel farm started harvesting mussels in 2009 (Fishupdate.com, 2007) and farmed

salmon is thriving (*Shetland Times*, 2011), having also survived an ownership transfer of late (Bevington, 2013). And there is Steven Spence, Unst's fiddler, who exports fiddles and other instruments from Unst, and who accepts commissions to compose fiddle tunes for special occasions (Spencies Tunes, 2013).

Among Unst's recent incoming population, consider Mike Smith, who "escaped" to Unst to retrain after a career with the Royal Air Force. He has since completed a degree in Environment and Heritage Studies and built a house. He is passionate about renewable energy systems and energy saving, and has incorporated these into his house design. Mike is the Community Powerdown Officer with the Unst Partnership, the community development trust (The Unst Partnership, 2013). Unst comes across as "one of the few remaining places in Scotland which still has a real community spirit. The schools on Unst offer an outstanding level of education, crime is a rarity, leisure facilities are second to none, and people live and work in a safe and clean environment." There is, one could argue, no better place to escape the debilitating rush and stress of modern life (Unst.org, 2013).

CASE STUDY #5: KÖKAR, ÅLAND ISLANDS, FINLAND

The Åland archipelago is a home-ruled, demilitarized, and Swedish-speaking jurisdiction located in the northern Baltic Sea, enjoying political autonomy within the state of Finland. It consists of a main island surrounded by various smaller islands, of which around 60 are inhabited. The population is around 27,000, 90 per cent of whom live on the main island and around its capital city, Mariehamn. The remaining 10 per cent are scattered among six municipalities — Brändö, Föglö, Kökar, Kumlinge, Sottunga, and Vårdö — situated in the archipelago region and not connected to the main island by road or bridge; their links with the main island and the world depend on a network of car ferries (Alandstrafiken, 2010). The proportion of archipelago-to-main island dwellers has fallen from 10.8 per cent in 1980 to 7.8 per cent in 2011. But the introduction of regular, all-year-round ferry services (capable of vehicle transportation) in the early 1970s — free of charge to residents of the archipelago — has coincided with a significant "brake" in the rate of population out-migration from the archipelago (ÅSUB, 2012; Baldacchino and Pleijel, 2010).

Kökar (land area: 58 km², 263 inhabitants; municipality) consists of several small islands, is Åland's second smallest municipality by population size, and is the one furthest away from the jurisdictional hub of Mariehamn. Yet, Kökar is doing well by most counts. In-migration is almost as high as out-migration, and births are only just trailing behind deaths. Moreover, only 5 out of the 150 economically active residents are reported as unemployed; people keep busy and earn a living by exploiting the short but busy tourist, second-home, and pleasure craft season, and by engaging in other activities for the rest of the year. Indeed, there are 254 weekend cottages for about 500 summer residents, so the resident population triples during the busy summer. There are also some 45,000 tourist visitations annually, one fourth of whom come with their own pleasure craft. The Kökar commune is a major year-round, and the largest, employer, providing community work for 23 employees who in turn provide a basic but decent suite of social services: a library with 8,800 volumes, daycare (20 places), school (with six teachers for 31 students from grades 1–9, aged 7 to 15) (Kökar Åland, 2013), senior care, a health care clinic with a full-time nurse, and a physician who visits once a month. Private-sector economic activities include shipping, a bank branch, and the provision of supplies. Most economic activity is locality based. The Kökar commune website (Kökar Åland, 2013) refers to some 30 local, and locally owned, businesses, most of which wholeheartedly practise "portfolio diversification," providing more than one key activity or service. These businesses include: a hotel and restaurant, grocery, supermarket, museum (Kokar Museum, 2013), bicycle rental, kayak rental, room rental, camping ground, tour guides, and an apple orchard with 1,000 trees plus farm shop whose local produce includes cider, salsa and chutney. The "core" (full-time and part-time) economically active population is around 100 persons, with some 40–50 others added on during the peak summer months, taking care of the needs of thousands of hotel guests, guest-house residents, cottage renters, campers, and hikers. The informal economy is strong and vibrant — the locals fish and hunt birds and moose; they practise reciprocity and co-operation; and those employed as seamen/women bring back from their working trips many useful goods. Local people have been able to plug into EU structural

funding to co-finance small infrastructural works (like extending a jetty or restaurant). Only short-term and seasonal jobs have been thus created, but this is not surprising: only four or five persons are officially registered as "unemployed." Both residents and business people identify the absence of "training opportunities" on the island as a most serious obstacle to the further advancement of local economic development (Baldacchino and Pleijel, 2010: 104).

The island already hosts an "Artist Residence" facility. This connects readily with its vibrant culture. Apart from five resident landscape-inspired artists (such as Satu Kiljunen), there have been various musicians (old and young), a choir, and rock bands such as Skrå. Almost everybody on Kökar has been reported as "doing music" in some form (Karlsson, 2007). The artist-in-residence facility already welcomes some 20 artists a year; and some 20,000 students have visited the facility over the last decade (Kokar Kultur, 2013). Some urban refugees — such as architects Jens Karmert and Marina Karlman and their two children (Ålandstidningen, 2009) — have been tempted to settle on Kökar, restoring one of its empty old houses.

DISCUSSION: SIX THEMES

Some key themes emerge in this comparative case study that help us to identify what may be important insights into strategies for sustainable development. The themes follow from a close examination of each of the cases discussed, in light of inspiration from the select scholarship reviewed above but also framed by this author's experience and views of sustainable development options for, and by, the periphery.

In such analysis, one must remember that it is certainly difficult to apply the regional development policies of larger and more populated locales to remote and sparsely populated regions. Trying to do so can easily end in frustration. Such an outcome may appear self-evident; nevertheless, it remains a tempting proposition to consider models that have proven themselves elsewhere and apply them religiously, hoping to secure a similar positive effect. Cluster strategies, for example, even though they are predicated on scale economies, have become popular and trendy options in various settings, as seen in the case of North Iceland. But, beyond the

fine-sounding rhetoric, a cluster in such cases may often refer loosely to the collaboration and networking of stakeholders (Huijbens et al., 2014).

Here, then, is a review of six interlocking and interdependent policy themes whose significance materializes from the analysis of the previous cases. Together, these themes propose a suite of initiatives that can be taken by state actors, private businesses, and individuals, and at different scales, to craft and maintain a sustainable identity-in-place. None of these themes is new; and none should come as a surprise to the informed reader. Perhaps the novelty here lies mainly in their appearing together as a mutually reinforcing and co-dependent set of measures.

1. *Social capital and social networks* clearly play an important role in terms of people's ability to make a living in remote island regions: for example, often these are the routes by which people find out about, and land, jobs; or find suitable schools for their children; or find out about housing (typically more affordable than in larger urban centres) available for sale or rent. Hence, the critical need to be able to fit into a local community, something that tends to be done well by returning migrants and less so by newcomers with no history of association with the place. These networks and interrelationships facilitate a broad measure of odd jobs, temporary contracts, barter, self-employment, and other forms of informal sector entrepreneurship that can be important for economic survival or for supplementing one's income from other, regular or semi-regular sources. This is all the more critical in seasonal economies where economic activity could be restricted to a few summer months. Different forms of art and culture are themselves components of these small-scale but socially well-integrated enterprising activities. These activities are also democratically run and locally inspired, not dependent on state-driven measures and top-down funding programs.

2. An *institution of higher learning*, such as a university or technical college, can deliver a very strong contribution to local development. The facility provides opportunities to the many local youth for further education or training, preventing early departure to the metropole; its academic staff can support research and development activities in the region; and other practitioners (especially from the private sector) can contribute to

the teaching and research effort on campus. Such an institution is typically also one of the largest local employers and a magnet for luring well-qualified personnel and their families to the region: all the more successfully when spouses are also offered suitable employment. Today, as the Northern Ireland, PEI, and North Iceland examples testify, it is no longer necessary to justify economies of scale in institutions of higher learning: various small island communities operate colleges or universities (including, in the North Atlantic, the Faroe Islands and Greenland), or branch campuses thereof (as in Shetland).

3. A *relatively large private-sector venture* usually becomes a dominant employer quite easily in these small labour markets. (And, effectively, in the absence of a dominant private employer, the state takes over that just-as-dominant role.) Such a venture typically will take over some of the assets remaining from a previous investment, usually moving it in a different commercial direction but still maintaining some connection with the locale's economic history and labour skill set. Service and new processing industries are more likely to emerge as competitive opportunities in lieu of traditional manufacturing activities. A flagship corporate player — as with Samherji in Akureyri or Military Asset Management in Unst — also helps to make a locale visible and better known. Dominant positions within the local economy are risky, however, since they engender high levels of dependency on what could be a quasi-monopoly provider of employment. Local communities are often concerned about this, as demonstrated by the cases of resistance to large-scale development in Chiloé and Prince Edward Island presented in Chapter 7 of this volume, and may wish to exercise some local influence on the venture (for example, via part shareholding or through local state pressure), but this is not always possible. The employer may rise to the occasion by becoming a model local firm, proudly employing local personnel as a policy priority (which also leads to low staff turnover), but such human resource policies may not fly if the company is not, or is no longer, locally controlled. Turmoil can result when and if such an employer decides to relocate or downsize in the inevitable search for profit. Perhaps this is a risk and dependency that small island or remote rural communities need to live with; the alternative is not to have such significant

investment at all. While a large private-sector venture can be a boon and a foundation for a local economy, the importance of small and medium-sized business ventures in these communities also warrants recognition and is highlighted by other chapters in this volume.

4. *Tourism* is no panacea for regional development; it is, however, a clear economic opportunity for remote regions with significant natural and cultural assets. Small-scale, locally owned tourism services — modest accommodation units, restaurants, travel agents, car rentals, property rentals — can provide significant monetary injections, and to a broad local constituency. And members of the extensive locale's diaspora are likely to visit, often and for long periods. But small places are very fragile to a tourism industry driven by profit and growth: remoteness needs to be looked at strategically as a factor that can permit a small-scale yet sustainable tourist operation. So-called local tourism "products" need to be nested comfortably within the existing cultural mesh of the place, rather than superimposed as alien implants.

5. Other increasingly important infrastructural assets for livable peripheral communities in the twenty-first century are *transport and communication technologies*. These include: regular, reliable, safe, and affordable ferry and/or air communications to metropolitan centres, as well as fast broadband speed to connect to the Internet. The former also makes it possible for most potential visitors to experience and participate in the local service economy as tourists. The latter makes distance education and tele-working a possibility (among other things), and thus not obliging resident students or workers to relocate or to spend as much time travelling.

6. While social capital, education, employment, transport, and connectivity are all critical features for livelihood, quality of life and quality of place (concepts elaborated on by Novaczek in Chapter 7 and Fullerton in Chapter 9) extend beyond these. As the examples above and others provided throughout this volume demonstrate, livable communities offer opportunities for creativity, fun, entertainment, relaxation, and other activities, for children, youth, adults, and seniors. *Artistic endeavours* — music, sculpture, drama, painting, singing, ceramics, food preparation, theatre, dance — as well as sport, provide a depth and meaning to life and energize communities,

contributing to their lure as attractive places to live. Gardens, swimming pools, saunas, community halls, churches, family reunions in their different ways bring people together and help them to celebrate, live, and replenish their pride in place.

CONCLUSION

Our understanding of not just the meaning of place but also how we wish to experience it has changed dramatically, even within one generation. Of course, as material beings, we still need to be somewhere — "everything takes place" (Hubbard et al., 2002), even though highly skilled personnel and those who are considered of "high net worth" could perhaps today be citizens anywhere. Our engagement with the specific draws in ever wider contexts and different scapes that are fluid, irregular, and ultra-territorial (Appadurai, 1996). Modern media and technology, for instance, allow for an "augmented relationality" (Thrift, 2005: 9) that makes "glocalization" (Robertson, 1995) not just a distinct possibility but often an expectation, even for "bare life" (Agamben, 1988). A multitude of both specific, place-based engagements and across-place mobilities continues to contour the core rubric of our lives.

Place, of course, remains a problematic resource: peripheral rural and island communities cannot lift themselves out of their specific geographic entanglements. But such a materiality is always nuanced by individual and social constructions of place, built on experiences, impressions, expectations, and relationalities that form, and are in turn formed by, emotional geographies that can resonate as livable, vibrant communities. This is why such communities craft and reinforce their self-identities as they seek to maximize local benefits and characteristics, while strategically enhancing and expanding connectivities. This spurt is not new, and there is considerable hype surrounding these endeavours: after all, migration has been synonymous with the histories of most island and other remote settlements (Connell, 2007), and corporate hyperbole seems to suggest that every grand "place branding" project simply cannot but succeed.

For those working for, in, and with peripheral communities, one key objective would be to position and align their locales on the life-cycle,

recreational, artistic, or professional trajectories of many who would consider visiting, but not necessarily stay. These places can serve as ports of call, refuelling stations, "entrepôts" (Warrington and Milne, 2007), and "spaces of flows" (Castells, 1989: 146), offering their "betweenity" to many more than would want, or be able, to settle there (Baldacchino, 2010a: 170). A vibrant cultural mix can be created between residents and visitors of various stripes: tourists, contract employees, itinerant artists, diaspora returnees, second-home residents, incoming entrepreneurs, urban refugees (e.g., Baldacchino, 2010b). There remain significant opportunities for an identity-in-place in an unsettled yet connected world.

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