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Population Dynamics from Peripheral Regions: A North Atlantic Perspective

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Abstract: This paper argues for the need to adopt a dynamic approach to demography and migration in the peripheral (often island or remote rural) regions of the North Atlantic. It cautions against the simplified and false dichotomy between gentrification and depopulation, calling rather for a more fluid appreciation of the manner in which people exploit opportunities for mobility as they connect with, and from, peripheral places. In so doing, the paper also identifies the limitations of both data-collection methodologies for demographic purposes, as well as public policy generally, wedded as these are to static categories of time and location. It also reviews qualitative material from Prince Edward Island, a small island province of Canada, which highlights why immigrants may privilege their mobility to 'settling down': some of the reasons given speak to the difficulty of 'fitting into' a tight, albeit friendly, island community. Finally, the paper suggests policies that may facilitate the better integration of geographically remote communities into the wider knowledge economy.

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Introduction

'The challenge for all governments is to balance the factors which make the retention and flow of skills into the economy *dynamic*, and be able to cope with the natural movement of skills away, which is inevitable in a globalized world' (Winston Cox, Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General, in Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2004, my emphasis).

'The reality is that borders are beyond control and little can be done to really cut down on immigration. [...] Thus, there must be a seismic shift in the way migration is addressed: governments must reorient their policies from attempting to curtail migration to coping and working with it to seek benefits for all [...] A realistic response requires abandoning the 'brain drain' approach of trying to keep the highly skilled at home. More likely to succeed is a 'diaspora' model, which integrates present and past citizens into a web of rights and obligations in the extended community defined with the home country as the centre. The diaspora approach is superior from a human rights viewpoint because it builds on the right to emigrate, rather than trying to restrict it. And dual loyalty is increasingly judged to be acceptable rather than reprehensible. This option is also increasingly feasible. Nearly 30 countries now offer dual citizenship' (Bhagwati, 2003: 101).

'Dichotomies are no longer useful, as the world is revealed to be far more *complex*, involving movements in specific colonial, neo-colonial and post-colonial circuits, different diasporas, borderlands, exiles, detours and returns'(Connell, 1995: 276, my emphasis).

Peripheral locations make interesting extreme cases. The accelerating demographic movements the world over are from outlying archipelagos to central island towns and cities, from smaller islands to larger islands, from islands to mainlands, and from low density rural mainlands to high urban concentrations. Policy makers laud the benefits of clusters and mega-cities and question the wisdom of scattered communities (e.g. Courchene, 2005; Porter, 1990). While the affected outlying communities lobby frantically for increased investment in employment, educational services, healthcare or transportation infrastructure to stem the tide of emigrants, the latter tend to vote with their feet: to the 'unemployed, underpaid or under-appreciated', going away just makes 'a lot of sense' (*The Economist*, 2005c).

Peripheral locations – particularly island and remote rural communities – are among the hardest hit by these mobilities, risking outright depopulation. However, and in stark contrast to this scenario, other similarly peripheral locations find themselves attractive to visitors, secondary residents and mainland retirees, resulting in large spikes in their seasonal (typically summer) populations, strained infrastructure, property price increases, and increasingly gentrified communities (e.g. Clark, 2007; Boissevain & Selwyn, 2004).

Consider these stories from the North Atlantic:

The Shetlands are facing the total depopulation of Fetlar and Unst, while the population of Lerwick increases (Community Planning Board, 2006: 3). Within Scotland as a whole, the population increased marginally by 0.5% from 1981-2001; but, for all inhabited Scottish islands, it declined marginally by 0.6% (McQuaid & Greig, 2007: 187).

2

Between 1954 and 1975, some 250 out-ports or fishing villages were abandoned in Newfoundland & Labrador. Moreover, in spite of a booming economy since 1997, the province has actually lost over 60,000 net residents between 1991 and 2006: the net effects of a reduced birth rate plus heavy out-migration and jobless growth (Royte, 2005). The provincial unemployment rate in 2006, at 14.8%, is still by far the highest in Canada (with the next highest being Prince Edward Island with 11%) (Statistics Canada, 2006) and is only marginally lower than in 1991 (16.9%) (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 2004). Even in metropolitan St John's, the capital, where the proportion of working people increased by 9% between 1996 and 2006, the population has remained fairly stable (at 180,000) during these past 15 years.

In the archipelagic Faroes, the islands of Mykines and Hestur have long been threatened by total depopulation; while the population of the capital, Torshavn, remains fairly stable at 12,500.

In Iceland, two-thirds of the population now live in Greater Reykjavik, and the only region outside the capital that is *not* facing depopulation is Akureyri, the country's second city, in the North. Controversial projects, like the Karahnjukar hydro-electric dam in the Eastern fjords, are partly triggered by an attempt to stem rural population decline (Journal of Nordregio, 2007a).

Sweden and Finland, both members of the European Union (EU) since 1995, have extremely sparsely populated areas which benefit from EU Cohesion Funds. But then, the island clusters around Stockholm, Gothenburg and Åbo/Turku are very attractive locations for summer cottages (e.g. Marjavaara, 2007). The Åland Islands, concerned with the risk of 'invasion', have strict residence requirements before any property purchases are allowed.

Turning to Prince Edward Island, the Canadian province is small enough to be spared some of the dramatic rural-to-urban demographics that are affecting larger territories – practically all its 140,000 inhabitants live within an hour's drive of either of the two main urban settlements. However, only Queen's County (which includes the provincial capital, Charlottetown), is showing some population and economic growth (which are self-reinforcing). Meanwhile, PEI is increasingly in the sights of Americans who are priced out of beach houses at home (e.g. Tutelian, 2006). Around 15% of the PEI waterfront is already owned by non-islanders.

Positing the issue as 'depopulation versus gentrification' is however naïve and simplistic (e.g. Royle, 2007). Public sector investment, cultural industries, higher education and a concomitant shift to knowledge intensive industries can all influence the rate, nature and direction of demographic change in the periphery, including the attraction of new settlers and the repatriation of former residents (Journal of Nordregio, 2006; Dahlstrom *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, one of the reasons for suggesting a more complex picture is the realization that some of the people who 'emigrate' from the periphery and those who revisit it under some guise or other – as tourists, as secondary residents, as retirees – are actually one and the same. A major draw of the periphery is to lure its own folk back, but – having spent some time away – this return manifests itself typically on the latter's terms.

The relationship between core and periphery, and between rural and urban centres, is a dynamic one which is very difficult to capture via time-specific, synchronic methodologies. Depopulation and gentrification appear mutually exclusive and contradictory phenomena that may be seen to apply even to the same locations, precisely because they present snapshots of these locales, and their inhabitants, frozen in time.

The objective of this paper then is to contribute to the examination of the complexity of the current demographic challenge being faced by island and remote rural communities in the North Atlantic. While the readiness and disposition of these communities to navigate the world is beyond question, they often face serious medium to long-term challenges when they: (1) adopt policies that seek to impede rather than promote, mobility; (2) embrace policy-enabling research or statistical methodologies that assume the temporal and spatial fixity of individual or household subjects; and (3) fail to acknowledge the difficulties faced by newcomers in their attempts to settle down and integrate into a local social fabric which tends towards cultural homogeneity. The paper reviews these three concerns by first adopting a global perspective supported by a broad literature review, and then using 2006 survey data from Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province, to undertake a context specific analysis. The paper concludes with a clarion call for the appreciation and formulation of appropriate welcoming strategies at the local level.

Context: The External Disposition of Islanders

Even beyond the North Atlantic, small island territories represent quintessential peripheral locations whose inhabitants have a very high propensity towards migration. International migration has long been recognized as heaviest from the world's smallest territories (*e.g.* Ward, 1967: 95; King & Connell, 1999). The highest proportion of non-OECD graduates living in an OECD country in 2005 were from Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad & Tobago, Fiji, Angola, Cyprus and Mauritius – all but two of which are small island states (*The Economist*, 2005b). The ingrained openness of small islands serves to orient their island inhabitants towards the *metropole*, for inspiration, vacation, shopping, education, employment, or simply escape. Emigration is often the only viable 'exit' option to the pervasive and stifling totality, monopoly and intimacy of the local socio-cultural environment (Baldacchino, 1997). Small island citizens (and not just their elites) are more likely to embrace, and be assimilated into, Western culture (Caldwell *et al.*, 1980; Miles, 1985). They are known to have a higher propensity to migrate to developed countries (Connell & King, 1999). High levels of urbanization at home act to dislodge residents from outlying villages or islands (in the case of archipelagos) and render them potentially more mobile regionally and internationally (Bertram & Watters, 1986: 55-57). For various island households, migration becomes a strategic resource, since offspring sent away can be expected to infuse remittances, in cash or in kind, to the home economy: in some instances (such as Cape Verde, the Philippines, Samoa and Tonga), these are significant contributions to the gross national product (Ahlburg & Brown, 1998). At any point in time, a significant percentage of an island population may be away at the respective *metropole/s* (Baldacchino, 1997: 89; Lowenthal, 1987: 41-43).

This broad external disposition facilitates emigration, typically (though not exclusively) by the brightest and ablest. The urgency for these persons to leave home, the attractions of being lured and relocating away, are bound to increase with

the onset of the knowledge economy, along with the falling costs of, or obstacles to, physical mobility. We are thus faced with a basic incongruity in the contemporary world: between the post-Westphalian nexus of states whose power and influence have a territorial fixity, and an increasingly more significant 'world of societies' , characterized by transnational or border-crossing formations, where many people are 'on the move' in different stages of their life course (Faist, 1998; 2000; *also* Rapport & Dawson, 1998; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

Responses to Migration: Impediments or Inducements?

The repertoire of local responses to the emergence of transnationalism varies; but many lobbyists and policy makers continue stubbornly to seek to *impede* mobility, rather than to exploit or facilitate it. Many territories have traditionally sought to stem the exit of their brightest and ablest by seeking to dissuade, prevent or penalize them for seeking education and/or employment abroad. Some island jurisdictions have sought to make it harder for their local citizens to leave: for example, by offering incentives (in the form of tax credits) to those who stay. The Liberal Party of PEI proposed tax relief in its 2003 and 2007 provincial election campaigns to those island-born, University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) graduates who did not leave the island after graduation: a measure supported by the UPEI Student Union[1]. The Population Secretariat of the PEI Provincial Government has 'to *retain* population, especially young people aged 15 to 29 years' as one of its key policy *foci*[2]. A number of South Pacific island states support the view that emigration constitutes a huge net welfare loss to the home country (De Bres & Campbell, 1975; Hughes *et al.*, 1986; House, 2001). Developing countries react to the brain drain as a 'threat' that would 'undermine' their own development prospects. Such strategies however adopt a macro perspective which frustrates the naturally mobile segment of the population and possibly hardens the resolve of those who have decided to leave anyway and possibly never to return. If 'successful', 'brain retention' strategies would also prevent and cheat these same citizens from developing the skills and contacts that simply *cannot* be learned by staying 'at home' and which would eventually have benefited not only themselves but their own community, if properly tapped.

In contrast, other island communities in the developing world actively *encourage* and sometimes *co-finance* their talented youth and experienced, mid-career professionals to seek education and/or employment opportunities overseas. This strategy risks a larger loss of critical human capital, but the benefits and synergies associated with those who <u>do</u> return to their native land, often after a deliberate, difficult and conscious decision, are much larger. Thus, in the case of Samoa:

> 'From a policy point of view, it is in Samoa's best interest and a monitor of the country's economic health that the circulation of its skilled population within the Pacific and beyond continues to takes place. This circulation will also mean continuity of *'aiga'* [extended family] identity' (Liki, 2001: 15).

The fostering of a 'transnational corporation of kin' among South Pacific islanders (Bertram & Watters, 1986; Marcus, 1981) facilitates a *cyclical* migration model where mobility is a deliberate household/kinship group strategy: those who are 'groomed' to leave are expected to return after a sojourn abroad and then, in turn, to help support a fresh wave of emigrants (*e.g.* James, 1991). In the Caribbean, in

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[1] http://smartpei.typepad.com/pei_election_watch/2003/week37/.
[2] http://www.gov.pe.ca/development/ps-info/index.php3. My emphasis.

spite of the fractured political map, islands have been recognized as non-self-contained units since there is much rotational migration in the region (*e.g.* Philpott, 1973; Frucht, 1968; Fog Olwig, 1993; Foner, 1979). This is hardly a steady, net and uni-directional transfer from the island periphery to the metropolitan heartlands of, say, Amsterdam, London, Boston, New York, Toronto or Miami. The specific cultural and economic circumstances of an island home (including strong family ties, durable friendship networks, hefty doses of social capital, the opportunity of faster social mobility and the thought of making a bigger difference in one's small country) may entice some of its mobile citizens to return after a spell abroad, bringing back along with them both experiential and informational knowledge, including potential business contacts (*e.g. The Economist*, 2003; Baldacchino, 2005c). One's diaspora abroad can serve as a target for the lobbying of specific fundraising and foreign direct investment, a focus for targeting exported island manufactures (especially nostalgic food[3] and handicraft products), a prime candidate for long-stay and repeat-stay culture-friendly tourism, and a ready pool for locating and sourcing qualified or experienced personnel for demanding and specialized positions at home (Newland, 2003: 7): a strategy, of course, not restricted to small islands[4].

A look at *entrepreneurship* in small islands and remote rural regions reveals a similar negotiating between home and away, the edge and the centre. In a study of small, successful export-oriented manufacturing firms from five European island regions (http://www.nissos.net), 8 out of 10 showcased firms had entrepreneurs who (1) spent long stretches of time living and working away from their island home – in places like Helsinki, London and Stockholm – choosing to return after they had amassed the contacts, education and experience which allowed them a much better chance of being successful in business; or (2) developed and nurtured innovative business ideas after accumulating skill and contacts working with large, multi-national, companies; or (3) got their own local business going after a successful transfer from a dependence on a key international supplier, client or partner. In other cases, the entrepreneur had been lured to the island and its 'way of life' from away: a case of migrating from the core to the periphery (Baldacchino, 1999, 2002, 2005a, 2005b; *also* Journal of Nordregio, 2006).

From Time/Space Absolutes to Mobilities

The paradigmatic perspective for analyzing demographic movements remains that of Newtonian physics, where time and space remain taken-for-granted absolutes. This is why one continues to refer to a *brain drain* or *brain gain*, to urban and rural dwellers, to emigrants and immigrants, to exile and return. We should instead however increasingly refer to *brain / brawn rotation* or *circulation* (Baldacchino, 2006a; European Commission, 2006: 26; Johnson & Regets, 1998; Saxenian, 2002; *The Economist*, 2005a). That suburban dwellers live most of their working day in a larger city; that big city dwellers spend their summers in remote cottages (Journal of Nordregio, 2007b); and that successful dwellers in the periphery habitually refresh themselves – professionally, educationally, materially and culturally – in much bigger towns or cities, does not seem to count much. The focus in migration analysis desperately needs to shift more assertively from *place* to *movement*. The periphery as a finite *place* must give way to the periphery as a *platform* for sorties into the

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[3] Thus, 'ethnic food producer' *Purity Factories Ltd*., based in St John's NL, is doing well, thanks mainly to its exports – *The Telegram*, (St John's NL) July 28, 2007.

[4] For example, in 2000, the UK Government and the *Wolfson Foundation* launched a £20 million scheme to attract the return of Britain's leading expatriate scientists (Cervantes & Guellec, 2002)**.**

wider world if it is to survive. As with many contemporary knowledge professionals who move around wherever their work may take them (*e.g.* Ó Riain, 2000), mobility is not equivalent to a rootlessness or an uprooting that is invariably construed or constructed as a tragic loss. As in Newfoundland and Labrador:

> 'With the call of big money jobs in Alberta, thousands of workers from the province have taken to commuting back and forth across the country, for weeks or months at a time' Porter (2007).

Shuttling between locations, shifting between identities, and tapping into diasporas provides privileged perspectives to life which call for a critical analysis which goes beyond the mere issue of remittances.

Discussing Specifics from a Canadian Island Province

> '… I am of the school that believes our young people should be encouraged to see more of their world – it changes one's perspective and permits those who return to look at local issues with fresh eyes, and hopefully bring novel and new solutions to the table. In our own household, I graduated from the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI), then went on to Ontario to complete a Master's Degree, then to Toronto to work, and then to the University of Toronto for a professional degree, before returning to PEI. My spouse moved west for the last oil patch boom after graduating from UPEI, returned to PEI after the bust, and then moved with me to Toronto, working there for almost a decade. We only moved 'home' after the kids were born and were reaching the age that they would start formal schooling …' (Prince Edward Islander, e-mail correspondence, July 21, 2006).

A longitudinal, life cycle approach is better able to capture the shifting opportunistic and strategic movements of individuals or households which seek to exploit the best of what both core and periphery have to offer.

In the autumn of 2005, a qualitative survey of recent settlers to Prince Edward Iceland was constructed: 'recent' meaning those who had moved to the province with a view to settling there since 1998 and before 2003. The survey's main objective was to move beyond faceless statistics, identifying the real-life stories and narratives of why people had chosen to move to PEI, had chosen to stay, or else were planning to leave. Within three months, a snowballing strategy had identified 320 respondents who agreed to complete a questionnaire (either web-based or in hard copy) or else consented to being interviewed by trained graduate students (Baldacchino, 2006b).

'Settlers' is not, however, the best way to describe the survey respondents. A fair amount of 'messiness' was lurking in the survey database.

Official statistics present one, fairly neat, picture:

Table 1: Immigrants to/from Prince Edward Island: Population aged 5 years & over

	1991-1996	1996-2001	2001-2004
External (Foreign) Migrants to PEI (+)	792	765	496

External (Foreign) Migrants from PEI (-)	281	373	100
Inter-Provincial Migrants to PEI (+)	13,670	13,072	8,987
Inter-Provincial Migrants from PEI (-)	11,644	12,890	8,461
Net Change	+2,537	+574	+922

Sources: Statistics Canada; PEI 31st Annual Statistical Review (2004). (*From* Baldacchino, 2006b:17).

Upon further scrutiny, however, it becomes obvious that various individuals are stubbornly appearing more than once in the tabulated statistics. Immigrants, to the frustration and chagrin of the social scientist, tend to constitute a *fluid, mobile category*. Some had come to Prince Edward Island, left, and decided to come back. Some, especially the more affluent or entrepreneurial, were living for one, two, four or eight months in the province, mainly in summer, every year. Just over 11% of the 320 respondents to the 2005 study claimed to be 'actively planning to leave PEI' (Baldacchino, 2006b: 7). (Indeed, PEI has the second lowest retention rate for non-Canadian immigrants per province: 51% of these immigrants leave PEI within 2 years of getting there. This proportion is estimated to swell up to 75% in the case of refugees (Smith Green & Associates, 2001: 6). Other settlers reveal a willingness to consider moving to other destinations, but only if the right opportunity presented itself. Moreover, with the bulk of settlers to PEI forthcoming from other Canadian provinces and territories[5], rather than other countries, there is not, and perhaps cannot be, a proper database of immigrants to, or emigrants from, PEI, since the majority are involved in intra-national (that is, inter-provincial) mobility. Here, tracking is less rigorous, and data is much scantier.

Now, the resort to longitudinal studies can help address some of the shortfalls of time-specific census research. Thus, for example, the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) is designed to study the process of adaptation of new immigrants to Canadian society: this creates a template for tracking, and studying, the internal migration of immigrants within the country (e.g. Houlé, 2007). Nevertheless, the methodology can still fail to grasp the full complexity of immigrant mobilities, especially of the circulatory kind. Moreover, since each and every individual is likely to have a unique longitudinal mobility profile, a proper comparative data assessment is more difficult to accomplish.

But, let us take a closer look at the conditions which 35 of the surveyed recent immigrants to PEI have articulated as reasons why they are actively considering leaving the island. (No pre-selected categories were made available in this exercise.) The data below provides some interesting insights as to the 'welcoming' capacity of island communities and what it takes for a periphery to hold on better, or longer, to those who do try and make the move to settle there:

Table 2: Reasons for actively planning to leave PEI (Respondents = 35). (*Answers to Question 22: Are you actively planning to leave PEI? If YES, why are you planning to leave PEI? (Various respondents offered more than one reason) (Baldacchino, 2006b: 40-41).*

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[5] Just as the bulk of *out*-migration *from* the province is to other Canadian provinces and territories.

Social Reasons (1): The *close-mindedness of islanders* and their attitude with regards to 'Come From Aways': 20 responses.

Economic Reasons (1): Limited job prospects, impossibility to specialize and other career limitations: 11 responses.

Economic Reasons (2): High Taxes and more expensive cost of living (including bridge toll): 6 responses

Economic Reasons (3): Unsuitable (e.g.: seasonal) employment: 5 responses.

Economic Reasons (4): Relatively Low wages and Salaries: 5 responses.

Social Reasons (2): Family matters: 3 responses.

Cultural Reasons: Limited cultural programme and absence of multiculturalism: 3 responses.

It may come as a surprise that, while a variety of economic reasons are the most numerous inducers towards likely out-migration, it is the alleged close-mindedness of islanders that is identified as the most common explanation for the desire to relocate. PEI society is seen as a patronage driven, conservative society where 'who's your father' is more important than objective and certifiable skill and merit, where privacy is eroded and where gossip is rife. By virtue of not being part of this intricately webbed community – part of the survival package of islanders in the face of globalization - immigrants cannot, or are not allowed to, fit in. (Is this also one of the reasons why they are forced into self-employment?) They feel that they are distrusted and discriminated against; and that they are welcome only as long as they are seen as 'temps', temporarily servicing the local labour market:

> PEI is too 'closed' a society: fundamentalist ideologies and a distrust of people from away. (Respondent #019).

> I feel that, unless one is from PEI, he or she is looked down on. I have felt this while trying to gain and maintain employment. I have had employers tell me that they have received calls complaining about the hiring of someone 'from away' in positions. (Respondent #100).

> PEI doesn't treat people as persons who have potential or ability; they treat people as 'sub-categories', such as a daughter of this politician or important member of this party, etc… So, people who came from outside have no possibility to get jobs, benefits or social trust. (Respondent #134).

> Social life here is nearly non-existent; people are casually friendly, but most don't want you to 'invade their space'. I have made one friend from amongst Islanders; all the others are from away. (Respondent #166).

> Living in a smaller population means that circles of people with similar interests and activities know and are involved with each other. This can have some

positive effects but can also mean that it is hard to keep your personal affairs private. Also, this atmosphere appears to encourage gossip and 'behind the scenes' and 'behind your back' social interaction (while maintaining superficial cordial relationships). Is this situation inevitable in a smaller, rural environment? Related to this is the difficulty of remaining anonymous, even temporarily. (Respondent #214).

On a personal level, it has taken almost the eight years that I have spent on the island to be accepted by islanders. I don't know what it is or why, but for the first three years here on the island, the main people that I socialized with were people from away. Islanders seem to welcome people who come to visit for a short time and then leave with open arms, but are very guarded about people who come to stay. (Respondent #215).

I have found my extra education and skills of no value here. It is a case of not 'what you know' but 'who's your Daddy' in who gets what position in health care on PEI. I have also found that Islanders are superficially friendly and welcoming. There is great prejudice to people 'from away' that grows increasingly wearing as time goes on. I also miss a more multicultural society, and a more tolerant society. Perhaps because every one is closely interrelated I find there is - particularly in rural areas - a lack of boundaries to personal privacy: people will enter your home at will and are intrusively curious about you and your family's activities. (Respondent #269).

This social issue apart, the main inducer to leave PEI is finance-related. Low wages, high taxes, bridge tolls, and absence of all-round employment are readily quoted:

Wages here, even for trades, are completely ridiculous. What's with the crazy car insurance rates? It's only five times what I paid in Manitoba. Oh, and I don't want a seasonal job. (Respondent #062).

Business is not ready to pay the appropriate salary for the skill-sets required. Companies are still trying to recruit under the guise of a cheaper cost of living when in fact it is more expensive to live on PEI than in most of the rest of Canada. (Respondent #133).

It is also very expensive to live here and wages are dreadful - particularly if you're single and like to live in a nice neighbourhood. The cost of everything is more than in any of the neighbouring provinces: higher taxes, higher costs for food, electricity, insurance (car & house), restaurant meals & alcohol. (Respondent #166).

Interestingly, 'family' comes up rarely (only 3 times) as a catalyst for packing one's bags. It appears that, as one grows older, the urge to spend time with parents or grand/children, and the need to resort to the support provided by an extended family, become stronger:

Newfoundland will always be closest to my heart and I will always plan to move back there eventually. We are expecting our first child this December and after that I think the pull to be near family will be even stronger. (Respondent #171).

> When we were transferred here, we left two grown children and two grandkids in Saskatchewan; the island is just too far from family and friends. (Respondent #174).

> My wife's and my families both live in Ontario and we plan to be closer to them. (Respondent #255).

While some of these reactions are to be expected, the extent to which the clannishness of the host community acts as an obstacle to integration and an inducement to leave for those who do not belong is probably surprising. Those who 'come from away' and settle best in peripheral areas may be actually those who were born and/or bred in those regions anyway – even though they may find somewhat frustrating the 'parochial attitude' and the 'unwillingness to embrace change' amongst the locals who stayed. Thus, even though they may come 'without a history', they may find themselves easily dragged into that sterile, partisan pettiness that may have been one of the reasons for their departure in the first place (*The Economist*, 2003).

> Finally, the survey results demonstrate the critical role played by institutions such as local churches, local employers or local friendship groups, that allow newcomers a social space where they may feel sufficiently welcome and at ease: these tend to be contexts where newcomers play a more significant role, are active or involved in greater numbers, and meet locals in non-threatening environments:

> > The 'closed society' would have been a major concern as I believe that it is true that Islanders are really not interested in making friends with people 'from away'. (They are very 'friendly' at first glance; but, after seven years here, my husband and I have never been invited inside an Islander's home, even though we have opened up our home for Christmas parties for our church choir and the Women's Institute, etc.) Luckily, we discovered a group of 'newcomers' who were in the same boat, and have made a number of wonderful friends in that group. (Respondent #156).

> > Prince Edward Island is an incredibly beautiful island, with great, friendly people. There is a wealth of talent here; however, if it were not for the great church community and the friendship club that I joined …, I would probably be actively planning to move back West. (Respondent #260).

> > It would be beneficial to have support groups (informal) for people 'from away' to gather and socialize in an environment free from prejudices. (Respondent #103).

Discussion and Implications

The life-histories of small islanders, where meticulously documented, reveal a complex juggling of the 'pros and cons' of home and away. They constitute early examples of what today are called 'transnationals', a specific pattern of de-territorialized and cross-boundary migration that challenges the concept of the temporality and spatiality of 'home*ness*' (Baldacchino, 2004; Duval, 2004; Hatziprokopiou, 2004; Vertovec, 2001). A series of strategies for the retention, development or reclamation of human resources have been and are being developed by enterprising, *glocal* individuals (Robertson, 1995) or families in order to nurture and exploit the advantages of 'off-shoring' and 'cross-bordering'. Yet, any such

strategies remain often subdued, unarticulated except possibly within households, and typically do not connect with ongoing public policy processes: education policy, economic policy, labour policy, taxation policy, proprietary rights, citizenship [...] all such policies continue largely to assume that individuals – including cross-border commuters' or 'accidental expats' – have, or should have, *one* home, somewhere (*e.g. The Economist*, 2005d). Perhaps it is because such mobility, or 'nomadism', threatens the very core of state control, which remains territorially based. In the words of Deleuze & Guattari (1983, 1986, *passim*), the nomad, in being free to roam, is well equipped to resist the controlling influences of state institutions.

Consequently, there may be benefits for citizens to be *outfitted for* (rather than precluded or dissuaded from) the opportunity to experience living elsewhere. There is already pressure in various jurisdictions to provide courses and qualifications for the purpose of admission to metropolitan or overseas institutions. Metropolitan/urban models of schooling may exercise significant influence on domestic policy formulation, elbowing out locally relevant curricula in the process, precisely because they facilitate the upward mobility (*read* emigration) of the politically powerful local elite (Brock & Smawfield, 1988: 229). The challenge then becomes that of developing *glocally* relevant school programmes where the periphery 'knows itself' and is valued (Brock, 1988: 177), albeit not in a naïvely narcissistic fashion: the lure of 'the great beyond' is very real and cannot hope to be quashed by romantic tropes surrounding the absolutism of home and family.

There is also a need to devise appropriate policy strategies for attracting mobile citizens back – the skilled, higher educated and entrepreneurial in particular – not necessarily permanently, but more likely on a selective, temporary, virtual or intermittent basis, to their erstwhile 'home'. These strategies include: (1) the development of 'scientific diasporas', which are self-organized communities of expatriate scientists and engineers (*e.g.* European Commission, 2003); (2) the nurturing of a local University or Polytechnic *alumni* network to facilitate investment, exchange and cooperation in research and higher education, propelling geographical peripheries into the knowledge economy; and (3) the resort to flying labour in and out for intensive working periods, especially on oil and gas exploration platforms and in place-sensitive resource-based industries, rather than the wholesale setting up of isolated 'mining towns' – a strategy which, by the way, also reduces the ability of workers to form or properly organize unions (*e.g.* McAllister, 2007: 81).

Meanwhile, for those who *do* take the risk and try and come over to settle in the periphery – including a growing swathe of 'urban refugees' (Forsythe, 1980) – what is necessary is a better 'coming to terms' with the intricate and *a*scriptive social network and *gemeinschaft* (community) type societies (*after* Tönnies, 2001), in which those who live on islands and remote rural communities often grow up without much choice or notice, and which create serious difficulties of integration for those who are 'not from here'. This condition can also lead to tensions and conflicts in local politics (*e.g.* Cohen, 1987; Marshall, 2003), but is more likely to lead to exasperated newcomers, sooner or later, packing their bags and moving on, and thus reinforcing the uniformity of the local cultural space. Indeed, peripheral communities tend to be more mono-ethnic and mono-cultural than mainstream ones, making 'outsiders' stand out even more. While such communities may be very friendly to visitors – and especially so if they develop a tourism industry – they may also find it quite problematic to relate to them if these visitors decide to extend their stay … indefinitely.

This observation may prove to be a vital lesson for the enisled and remote rural communities of the North Atlantic. Events like warming temperatures, melting ice and the discovery of commercially exploitable mineral resources in their localities are all likely to fuel a vigorous wave of unprecedented migration into the region. But, moving with a view to settle is not equivalent to settling. The PEI 2005 survey has certainly alerted local policy makers on the island as to the vital role played by 'welcoming communities': what takes place 'on the ground' – in the neighbourhood, at work, at school, in the church, at the gym – will impact critically on the integration experience of new settlers, seriously affecting their disposition to stay or otherwise. In such a case, it is households and individuals who carry the main responsibility for facilitating integration; at best, only the lowest (that is, municipal) levels of government can – and should – be effectively involved.

Conclusion

Terms such as 'home' and 'away' need to be problematized and reconstructed in recognition of a more fluid, dynamic and pluri-directional migratory environment (e.g. Gmelch, 1980), which even the insular or remote rural periphery could exploit to its advantage. This, however, is *not* likely to happen as long as such communities do not proactively seek to facilitate the integration of newcomers into their societies. A 'strong cultural norm of sameness' (Government of PEI, 1999: 56), while rightfully celebrating distinctive identity, history and culture, becomes less open and attractive to those who are, are seen to be, and/or are made to feel, different. While bonding social capital is alive and well in such communities, bridging social capital – other than with their own kith and kin living elsewhere – may be dramatically underdeveloped (*after* Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Part of the manner in which island and remote rural communities in the broad North Atlantic will maintain, or even grow, their populations will ultimately depend on their ability to find a happy balance between, on one hand, a home-grown, ethnic or proto-ethnic affiliation; and, on the other hand, a comfortable accommodation with, and assimilation of, elements of cultural diversity.

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