

Chapter 7

Interregional Place-Branding Concepts: The Role of Amenity Migration in Promoting Place- and People-Centred Development

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Abstract Rural amenity migration is an increasingly important source of economic development. Analysis of population growth in the North American montane west indicates the extent to which high amenities serve to boost an influx of talented migrants. New regionalism theory offers a rural development model which is capable of accommodating efforts to apply place-branding to this form of interregional migration. Its precepts emphasise place and person rather than product, supporting efforts to market the attraction of interregional rural locations to footloose creative professionals seeking congenial surroundings to pursue their careers and raise their families.

This chapter draws on new regionalism theory to assess the role of amenity migration in promoting place- and people-centred rural development strategies through the use of interregional place branding. It begins by offering some brief sketches of the impact of amenity migration in a few locations across different continents. The significance of this source of growth for rural communities is then assessed by triangulating it against interregional models of development focused on the place-branding of high-amenity attractions and congenial lifestyles, as opposed to traditional resource-based drivers of growth. This analysis provides the basis for an appraisal of the potential for using place-branding to stimulate the expansion of rural communities through interregional development strategies. The chapter concludes with a brief review of current interregional place-branding practice. It considers the capacity of this technique to facilitate the ‘territorial attractiveness’ of Europe’s transnational areas and suggests that funding should be sought to this end from the European Commission’s avowedly place-driven cohesion policy.

Keywords Rural interregional place-branding • Rural amenity migration • New rural economy

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Introduction

The academic literature seeking to evaluate the role of place-branding has focused primarily on the capacity of this technique to boost the economic performance of metropolitan areas (see, e.g. Lloyd and Peel 2008; Daramola-Martin 2009; Kavaratzis 2009). This chapter considers its potential for promoting interregional rural, and some cases remote rural, development. Until recently, metropolitan areas have drawn on place-branding predominantly to target inward investment, markets for the area's goods and services or tourism, rather than new residents or workers (Zenker 2009). By contrast, a primary driver of growth in the rural communities of many high-income nations since the 1970s, and thus a key target for place-branding in such areas, has been amenity migration: new residents attracted by the prospect of a congenial lifestyle (Deller et al. 2001; Gude et al. 2006; McGranahan and Wojan 2007).

We begin by offering some brief sketches of the impact of amenity migration in a few locations across different continents. The significance of this source of growth for rural communities is then assessed by triangulating it against recent consumer-based models of development focusing on high-amenity attractions and congenial lifestyles, as opposed to traditional resource-based drivers of growth. This analysis provides the basis for an appraisal of the potential for using place-branding as a means of stimulating the expansion of rural communities through interregional development strategies.

Some Examples of Rural Amenity Migration

As in metropolitan areas, rural communities possess a varied range of assets and deploy these to differing effects according to circumstance. One of the simplest drivers for amenity migration is the decision taken by a rural community to market itself as a cultural attraction. A classic demonstration of the impact of such an approach is provided by the small town of Chemainus, situated on the east coast of Vancouver Island between its two main settlements, Victoria and Nanaimo (Barnes and Hayter 1992). The 3,000 people in this rural settlement previously relied on the work provided by a nineteenth-century sawmill, exemplifying the precarious development strategy pursued in the Province of British Columbia. This was memorably characterised by Innis (1930) as a staples-based economy which supported a periphery of economically vulnerable resource-based communities.

In 1983, the town's antiquated sawmill employing 654 was closed, being replaced by a new mill 2 years later offering employment to only 145 (Hayter 2000, p. 131). The community recognised the need to diversify its economic base and seek additional nonstaple sources of employment. In 1982, inspired by a visit to Rumania and the frescoes in its monasteries, local leaders drew on a small provincial government grant intended to revitalise its downtown main street to fund a series of

giant outdoor murals painted on its main buildings by artists from across North America. The initiative won the 1982 New York Downtown Revitalisation award and led to the planning of a Pacific Rim Artisan Village, which has only partly been realised (Barnes and Hayter 1992, p. 658). Nevertheless, with approaching 50 street murals attracting half-a-million tourists yearly, the town has seen its tourism industry flourish. Its street murals have also broadened the town's economic base, attracted new residents and reversed the decline in its population.

Chemainus provided the inspiration for similar initiatives in an Australian and a New Zealand setting. In the 1960s and 1970s, the employment base of Sheffield, a rural town of 1,200 located near the Bass Strait in northern Tasmania, became heavily reliant on employment provided by dam construction undertaken through the Tasmanian Hydropower Development Scheme. Following completion of the scheme, Sheffield experienced a steady population decline despite being located near the Cradle Mountain World Heritage Area and having the Mount Roland range as a backdrop.

In 1985, its town revitalisation committee watched a film on Chemainus and decided to follow a similar route (Dunphy 2009). The first of nearly 50 street murals was completed in 1986, and there is now an annual week-long open-air Mural Fest competition which attracts competitors and tourists from across Australia. In 2008, the area hosted a Global Mural Fest and Conference, and the wider municipality is now place branded as Tasmania's Outdoor Art Gallery. Annual visitor numbers approach 130,000, and the revitalised town centre offers an attractive mix of shops, hotels and restaurants, with a healthier employment base, more residents and a growing population.

In 1991, the town of Katikati, located on the Pacific Coast Highway near Tauranga in New Zealand's North Island Bay of Plenty, set up Katikati Open-Air Art Inc. at the instigation of a community group, members of which had visited Chemainus (McClintock 1998). The small community of 3,500 was settled in 1875 by migrants from County Tyrone in Ireland with the assistance of the Orange Institution. Katikati provided the service centre for an area which accounts for the bulk of New Zealand's kiwi fruit output. During the 1980s, it had been hard hit by a slump in global demand for its horticulture produce and was seeking to diversify its employment base.

Following the establishment of Open-Air Art Inc. and its subsequent community fund raising efforts, there are now 47 street murals down its main street, depicting facets of its Ulster and Maori heritage. The resulting boost to tourism has been accompanied by a significant amenity migrant influx, taking advantage of the community's pleasant climate and lifestyle and local recreational activities. Increased prosperity has seen the construction of new restaurant, conference, sports and accommodation facilities, a new council building housing a tourist information centre and several retirement villages. Branding itself 'mural town', Katikati hosts an annual week-long New Zealand Mural Contest and Arts Festival. In 2005, the Keep New Zealand Beautiful Society awarded it the accolade of the country's most beautiful small town.

These straightforward applications of rural place branding through sponsorship of communal art activities serve as an introduction to much broader and more complex phenomena bound up with fundamental structural changes in the spatial, industrial and occupational composition of economic development amongst high-income nations. First observed in North America, these shifts in the territorial determinants of growth have strengthened the appeal of what Heenan (1991) terms 'small' towns over 'big' towns in their efforts to attract mobile businesses and amenity migrants. More than two decades ago, Heenan asserted that major advances in telecommunications were creating 'a footloose economy that permits firms to locate where they want to be, not where the traditional centres of finance dictate they have to be' (Heenan 1991, p. 9). A decade later, Green (2001) examined the success of specifically migrant-targeted 'amenity-led' rural development strategies, pursuit of which has enabled an increasing number of American rural communities to avoid the population decline common to other undiversified resource-based American rural settlements.

Such observations have been deployed to support the tenets of 'new regionalism' development theory. Its proponents claim that traditional commodity-based models of specialisation and location which leave rural communities exposed to the exigencies of world markets are rapidly being replaced by new forms of territorial competition founded on place-based or quality-based (as distinct from price-based) strategies. They conclude that communities wishing to benefit from these changes in the spatial determinants of growth need to offer relocation incentives to workers as well as businesses. Markusen (2004) takes the argument further by contending that structural shifts in the spatial pattern of growth now require physical planners and economic development practitioners to target occupations rather than industries when promoting a location. Tomaney and Bradley (2007, p. 513) advocate a similar spatial development strategy for the United Kingdom, arguing that:

[l]ocal development is increasingly determined by human capital, which is relatively mobile, and whose location is influenced by environmental assets... The ubiquitous character of information and computer technology means that creative professionals can work from remote locations and will search for liveability and residential amenity rather than conventional 'job opportunities' to a greater extent than in the past.

We examine the precepts of new regionalism in more detail in the next section of the chapter, offering at this stage a few examples of rural locations which illustrate the role of amenity migration in delivering the outcomes predicted by this theory. Although identifiable in many other settings, rural montane communities in the North American west have experienced above-average population growth since the 1970s and provide the clearest demonstration of how the process operates (Nelson 1999; Rudzitis 1999; Vias 1999; Power and Barrett 2001; Moss 2006). One researcher exploring the motivations of amenity migrants settling in these communities found that:

[r]ecent migrants to the rural West increasingly cite both physical and social environmental amenities as reasons why they moved. Job-related reasons are cited by only about 30

per cent of the respondents in two surveys.... The survey results suggest a need to incorporate noneconomic factors more directly into regional development theories and their applications. (Rudzitis 1999, p. 9)

Tumbler Ridge, a small British Columbian community of 2,500 residents nestling in the western slopes of the Canadian Rockies, epitomises such findings (Jackson and Illsley 2006). Originally established as the last of the province's 'instant towns' in 1981 to house the workforce for two new mines exporting steel-making coal to Japan, this extremely remote settlement was built on virgin forest land in accordance with the principles promoted by the architect Christopher Alexander on environmental layout and social behaviour. These saw town planners using an outstanding montane setting to create an attractive townscape with high-amenity buildings and good community facilities (Jackson et al. 2008).

Unlike many similar British Columbian rural settlements reliant on extractive resources, when the Japanese leases expired at the turn of the millennium and its mines closed, causing the population to plummet from a peak of 4,500, the town did not simply die. Instead, the community bought up the mining properties using legacy funds from the mining royalties and offered them on the market at fire-sale prices, attracting global media attention. Despite its remote location and the total loss of its original economic base, the resulting amenity migration to the town kept it alive and thriving, building on pre-existing social capital and creating its own sources of employment.

The share of owner-occupied properties quickly rose from 30 to 80 %, attracting people unable to afford family accommodation in Calgary. Migrants from Ontario and Canada's Maritime Provinces also came to the town, tempted by the cheap excellent housing and community facilities. Some of the amenity migrants opened bed and breakfast accommodation or ran stores for outdoor recreation and organised recreational and artistic activities. A German amenity migrant, who was fortuitously touring North America at the time to identify potential locations for her own outdoor recreation business, typifies the kind of person attracted:

I saw the ad about the housing and I thought that's a price I can afford, I have to go up there. So I drove up, and I drove into town, and I was overwhelmed, cleanness, the beauty, the mountains... and I thought wow, this is beautiful. I didn't really think about the price, the price was the price of a truck at that moment, I thought who can't risk that? (Jackson et al. 2008, p. 37)

Another British Columbian montane community, Smithers, a town of 5,200 situated in the Bulkley Valley along the line of rail between Edmonton and Prince Rupert, has exploited its high-amenity location to the full in diversifying from heavy dependence on public sector employment following major closures of its regional provincial government offices at the start of the millennium. Founded when the railway was built in 1913, its attractive initial layout had already been enhanced in the 1970s by a community decision to promote alpine frontages along its main street to harmonise with its montane setting and skiing facilities. The frontages have subsequently been enhanced by the landscaping of roads and footpaths and

by restricted on-street parking, to create a close-knit, European-style, pedestrian-friendly intimacy for its downtown centre, which offers a contrast to the stark bleakness of nearby company-built settlements constructed around sawmills.

Local residents strongly support the place-brand identity that Smithers has managed to establish for itself, offering comments such as ‘the layout of the town is superb’; ‘that downtown main street creates that sense of community, that sense of place’; ‘Smithers is a community of choice: people don’t end up here; they actively seek out communities like this and make a point of staying here regardless of how they support themselves’; ‘Smithers is as green a community as you’re going to find in the north: just given the nature of people there, it’s a very, very diverse community for a northern community’ (Jackson et al. 2008, p. 37).

Research reported by Chipeniuk (2006, p. 228) indicates that ‘over 12 % of the residents in the Bulkley Valley are amenity migrants by strong definition, having immigrated not for a job or business opportunity, but for such amenities as clear rivers and lakes, opportunities to ski and a good community’. One of those interviewed by Jackson et al. (2008, p. 44) picked up on the same point:

Amenity migration has become the key driver. People still don’t recognise amenity migration for what it is. But we have had a nice chunk of folks coming to this town, who are operating out of their homes, doing work that is nothing to do with being here. Also, you’ve got people retiring here for lifestyle results, which is kind of neat. This world class architect that came to Smithers to retire, he had no family here, nothing, he just saw the place the one time he’d been through here and liked it and decided this was where he was going to live once he retired.

The growth of amenity migration across the whole of the North American montane west displays many of the features of an unplanned form of interregional place branding. In Canada, it has caught the attention of developers and conservationists (The Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia et al. 2009). Across the border, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem attracts increasing numbers of amenity migrants, widening the area’s traditional offering of dude ranches affording tourists an ephemeral opportunity to live the life of a cowboy (Johnson and Rasker 1995; Rasker and Hansen 2000; Gude et al. 2006).

Research on factors determining the locations of businesses operating in the Greater Yellowstone area indicates ‘that scenic beauty, a quality environment, a sense of ruralness and recreational opportunity dominate the decision’ (Johnson and Rasker 1995, p. 414). The character of these businesses is also changing:

the economy of the Greater Yellowstone is diverse and growing, with the bulk – over 95 % – of the existing and new jobs in industries other than resource extraction. The ‘base’ has broadened to include employment in a variety of business and producer services, such as finance, insurance, real estate, telecommunications, software development, research, and management consulting. Many of these are ‘footloose’, in the sense that the owners of these businesses are often not tied to a particular locale and therefore able to locate to areas with a desirable lifestyle. (Rasker and Hansen 2000:31)

Similar factors influence the relocation choices of amenity migrants themselves: between 1970 and 1999, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem ‘experienced a 58 %

increase in population and a 350 % increase in the area of rural lands supporting exurban housing densities. By 1999, one third of exurban developments were distributed in remote rural locations' (Gude et al. 2006, p. 131).

The expansion of service centres in this ecosystem demonstrates the economic impact of footloose businesses and amenity migrants exercising their locational preferences. Jackson, Wyoming, with a population of 10,000 and its own airport, now claims to have the highest per capita income in the USA, as its main streets replete with upmarket art galleries and fashion shops appear to confirm. The town hosts annual meetings of the Federal Reserve banking system and provides its residents and visitors with outstanding recreational and conservation opportunities throughout the year. Other communities surrounding the two national parks that sustain the unique environmental appeal of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, such as Cody and Bozeman, share in this growth of local businesses and residents as well as benefitting from high levels of upmarket tourism. As one researcher observes:

[in] the rural west, and probably elsewhere, employment alone is insufficient to explain why people move and live where they do. Often the amenities of places single them out as desirable living environments. Any rural development strategy should honour the simple notion of place and social/physical environments. We need to consider how and where people want to live the 'good' life. (Rudzitis 1999, p. 13)

Before considering the contribution that interregional place-branding can make in fulfilling such an ambition, the next section triangulates amenity migration against the shifting models of rural development, exploring in the process the relevant facets of some of the precepts of the new regionalism literature.

Tying Amenity Migration into the New Regionalism

Traditional models of economic development are aspatial in nature, accounting for the lack of interest shown by neoclassical economists in the factors determining the location of economic enterprises or the resulting pattern of settlements. Based on the Heckscher-Ohlin premise that factor prices reflect relative resource endowments, they assume trade and development will be governed by the laws of comparative productive advantage (Knapp and Graves 1989). When applied to 'open frontier' regions such as northern British Columbia, these assumptions provide the rationale for precarious staple-led patterns of rural development.

This neoclassical model has come under sustained attack from new economic geography critiques (Krugman 1998). These draw a distinction between technology 'embodied' in the process of capital goods investment, which by definition is spatially exogenous since it is available to any region that invests in the relevant capital goods, and 'disembodied' technological progress, which remains independent of the capital stock with which it is combined in production. Whereas embodied technology in combination with efficient factor markets is seen to reinforce the

processes of spatial convergence via exogenous neoclassical growth processes which bring factor prices and incomes into balance regardless of location, the disembodied variety is by definition endogenous and inherently spatially immobile, being the preserve of knowledge-rich, creative and congenial environments.

It follows that spatial lumpiness in the distribution of endogenously disembodied capital can provide an explanation for non-convergent regional performance. Much of the focus of regional analysis has therefore switched to investigating the potential sources of this form of spatial lumpiness, applying the term 'new regionalism' to the task. Sources of spatial lumpiness in the distribution of disembodied technology can be found in the unequal allocation of human capital caused by market imperfections and inequalities (Lucas 1993). However, because labour mobility increases with educational attainment, most analyses incorporating new regionalism precepts reinforce this explanation by identifying other processes that attach disembodied technology to specific locations.

Porter (1998) emphasises the effects of regional business networks and clustering, which allow the realisation of agglomeration and location-specific external economies of scale. Florida (2002) analyses regional data on occupational patterns to identify equivalent locational clusters of professional excellence. These formulations combine to constitute a nodal model of spatial development, in which innovative, knowledge-rich, creative centres of learning stimulate and diffuse technology, through the types of forward and backward linkages identified in high-tech campus spin-offs such as California's Silicon Valley (Vázquez-Barquero 2003).

Apedaile (2004) draws on these precepts to outline the characteristics of a 'new rural economy' for North America, which encompasses many of the processes driving amenity migration in rural areas. He suggests that communities adopting new rural economy precepts bound up with the new regionalism can switch from resource-based systems of extraction and processing towards provision of knowledge-based services. In contrast to commodity-based models of specialisation, new regionalism theory argues that place rather than product counts, allowing locations to use their endogenous high-amenity environmental assets to attract people working in knowledge-intensive occupations (Knapp and Graves 1989).

On this basis, Apedaile (2004) argues that rural settlements intent on pursuing the precepts of new regionalism in order to acquire location-specific competitive advantages need forms of local governance offering wider access to knowledge-based tools and skills. This requires their councils to extend their provision of public services from basic utilities into promoting, facilitating and participating in the acquisition of knowledge. He points to the danger of not responding to such opportunities and leaving the field clear for metropolitan areas to garner the crop of creative classes:

Place does matter (...) talent concentrates in larger areas... because of ease of entry and place amenities. Specifically ease of entry is defined as acceptance of diversity, or as a 'plug and play' community. The pattern of vital spaces develops through competition for talent, even if unknowingly, by autonomous agents (...) such that places gain and lose ground. The process, part of the general argument around economies of agglomeration, leaves rural

places in catch-up status, losing ground to urban places, unless they can out-compete larger population densities for talent (. . .) The evidence points to talent for organising knowledge as the real heartbeat of the leading edge new rural economies. (Apedaile 2004, p. 119)

McGranahan and Wojan (2007, p. 199) suggest that ‘the appeal of natural amenities and associated recreational opportunities is sufficiently strong for many in the creative class to locate in rural areas rich in outdoor amenities’. Their research offers a rationale for the findings of Gude et al. (2006) reporting high rates of population growth in the Greater Yellowstone catchment:

The creative class is growing most rapidly in areas that are mountainous, with a mix of forest and open area (but with relatively little cropland), and where winters are sunny. All of the landscape coefficients are stronger in the creative class equation than in the net migration equation, suggesting this class is drawn more than others to high-amenity areas. (McGranahan and Wojan 2007, pp. 209–210)

Favoured rural communities in locations other than the montane American west can also realise Apedaile’s aspirations for the new rural economy by exploiting an obvious source of spatially fixed, lumpy disembodied capital assets. This involves the place-branding and marketing of high-amenity environmental attractions to footloose creative professionals seeking congenial locations to pursue their business. Given the resource limitations facing small rural municipalities and the cross-jurisdictional nature of many of these amenities, interregional place-branding is an obvious option to explore. On this basis, the next section of the paper considers the extent to which amenity-rich interregional areas are currently exploiting their place-brand equity by appealing to footloose creative professional amenity migrants.

Using Interregional Place-Branding to Promote Knowledge-Based Forms of Amenity Migration

Chipeniuk (2004) notes that few if any of the small municipal planning authorities in the Canadian montane west consider the impact of their policies on actual and potential in-migrants. Rather than attempting to secure this source of development, many of their community plans conflate it with tourism promotion, failing to realise that trade-offs are often involved in securing investments in tourism facilities that might reduce the appeal of the area to amenity migrants. This suggests the need for some professionally crafted interregional branding to assist rural communities in helping to realise the place-brand equity associated with such amenity migration. Examples of this approach are hard to find.

Jacobsen (2009, p. 76) defines place-brand equity as encompassing real or perceived assets and liabilities that are associated with a place and distinguishes it from others. In terms of amenity migration, such equity resides in the perception of places by actual or potential in-migrants and the extent to which such perceptions match the intrinsic values being sought by them when choosing places of residence.

Kadirov and Triveni (2010) explore the interregional factors influencing migrant groups within New Zealand who relocated to the Hawke's Bay region on the east coast of North Island. This area possesses high-quality environmental amenities, including a good climate, attractive beaches and many boutique vineyards, plus the architectural heritage of its main town, Napier, marketed as the Art Deco capital of the world.

Factor analysis of survey responses identified social conditions, the natural environment and business opportunities as the three principal elements influencing the relocation decisions made by migrants moving into the region from other parts of New Zealand. Cluster analysis was then applied to sort in-migrants into four distinct groups according to their expressed preferences: material success seekers, community/environment folk, apathetics and all-rounders (Kadirov and Triveni 2010, pp. 171–173). The material success seekers looked to regional business opportunities and appeared indifferent to social and natural resources. Community/environment folk emphasised social and natural resources and were indifferent to business opportunities. The final two groups saw no trade-offs in these attributes: all-rounders considered all three to be important, whereas apathetics found none of interest.

As Kadirov and Triveni (2010) acknowledge, these conflicting value frames complicate the branding and marketing of any location to potential internal migrants. However, the authors go on to argue that this type of research is crucial in providing the analytical frame necessary for effective interregional place-branding targeted at amenity migration, since it identifies the range of perceptions about the place held by recent migrants and facilitates the creation and marketing of a suitable place brand. The regional, district and city councils of the area, they argue, can shape the offer placed before prospective internal migrants 'by recognising the cultural dynamics of migrant collectivity formation' (Kadirov and Triveni 2010, p. 179).

Niedomysl (2004) investigates the actual impact of place-marketing campaigns on interregional migration within Sweden. Swedish municipalities have made greater efforts to attract new residents in recent decades than local authorities in most comparable economies, and his research reveals growing competition amongst them for in-migrants. In analysing the returns from a survey on municipal place-marketing expenditure undertaken in 2002, Sweden's 289 municipalities were grouped into nine clusters on the basis of their size, employment structure and population density. This indicated that the 29 low-density rural municipalities spent by far the most per head overall: €14.1 compared with an average of €3.9 for all Swedish municipalities (Niedomysl 2004, p. 1996). The share of total place-marketing outlays they specifically targeted towards in-migrants was similar to that allocated by all Swedish municipalities, running at €3.2 (22.7 %) per head against an overall average of €0.8 per head (25 %).

In determining the priorities for their place-marketing campaigns, the survey revealed that all the Swedish municipality clusters regarded targeting in-migration to be almost equal in importance as securing additional inward industrial investment. Both of these objectives were placed above boosting tourism, even though much of the published literature focuses on the impact of destination branding on tourist

flows (Niedomysl 2004, p. 1997). Less surprisingly, municipalities with declining populations placed greater importance on efforts to attract in-migrants than those with growing populations (Niedomysl 2004, p. 1998). Forty-nine percent of all Swedish municipalities surveyed indicated that they had undertaken a marketing campaign to attract in-migrants over the 2 years prior to the survey, which Niedomysl (2004, p. 1999) considers a 'remarkably high figure'.

The main factors Swedish municipalities considered important in branding their locational attractions to in-migrants were predominantly 'soft' values, such as the local living environment, quality of life and outdoor recreation opportunities. None of the clusters identified employment or education opportunities as important marketing considerations, although these have traditionally been viewed as significant inducements to in-migrants. Exhibitions, websites, brochures and press advertisements were the most common forms of place marketing used, with the principal targets being families with children (mentioned by 52 % of municipalities) and highly educated or qualified labour (mentioned by 30 %). A third of the municipalities were specifically undertaking marketing campaigns aimed at the capital region, Stockholm (Niedomysl 2004, p. 2000).

Despite rising outlays on this form of expenditure and continued belief by Swedish municipalities in the effectiveness of their place marketing, Niedomysl (2004) noted that hardly any formal evaluation of their campaigns had been undertaken. In his own analysis of interregional Swedish migration rates, he could find no statistical support for the contention that this expenditure was boosting actual migration flows. One plausible explanation for these findings is that Swedish municipal place-marketing campaigns have made little prior effort to identify the factors influencing the potential relocation motives of their targets or to use such factors to construct effective interregional place-branding concepts designed to appeal to those segments of population most susceptible to relocation inducements.

Conclusions

Rural amenity migration is an increasingly important source of economic development. Analysis of population growth in the North American montane west indicates the extent to which high amenities serve to boost an influx of talented migrants. New regionalism theory offers a rural development model which is capable of accommodating efforts to apply interregional place-branding to this form of in-migration. Its precepts emphasise place and person rather than product, supporting interregional efforts to market the attraction of rural locations to footloose creative professionals seeking congenial surroundings to pursue their careers and raise their families.

The concept of 'Cascadia' stands as an example of co-operative rather than competitive interregional place-branding of the North American montane west, spanning the international border between Washington State and British Columbia. Proponents of Cascadia have articulated the place brand largely on environmental

premises, drawing on the development opportunities offered by the North American Free Trade Agreement (Smith 2008). The European Union, set up to ensure the free flow of goods and services, capital and labour between its member states, should be equally well positioned to facilitate this type of place marketing. Within Europe, there are many attractive cross-border interregional locations offering high-amenity lifestyles which individual national governments, local councils, businesses and footloose migrants have not previously sought to develop because of frontier barriers.

Unfortunately, despite the pioneering work undertaken by Jacobsen (2012) in this respect, there is as yet little evidence of robust evaluation of the economic impact of interregional place-branding exercises. This weakness applies even to those place-marketing campaigns being undertaken within the boundaries of individual member states, as the research undertaken by Niedomysl (2004) and Kadirov and Triveni (2010) confirms. As a result, attempts to secure European Commission funding for collaborative cross-border interregional branding initiatives are being impeded by gaps in knowledge about good practice.

Some efforts to close these gaps are starting to emerge. Zenker et al. (2013) have recently developed an analytical framework for comparative evaluation of individual city place-branding within a reunified Germany. Researchers are also beginning to assess the potential of interregional place-branding in cross-border areas of the European Union benefitting from major infrastructure investments. Although little enthusiasm has been shown for developing a place brand to exploit the interregional linkages between the Pas-de-Calais and Kent created by the Channel Tunnel, the recently constructed bridge across the Oresund linking Denmark and Sweden has prompted what appears to be an effective interregional branding initiative. As Hospers (2004) notes, while this exercise has yet to convince all the local residents of the virtues of flaunting their transnational regional characteristics, the creation of the Oresund brand provides the framework for a series of national projects designed to exploit new cross-border opportunities for integrated promotion and development of this densely populated area.

Setting aside any administrative inconveniences, there is no logical reason for the European Union to confine its cohesion policy projects to those that can be executed solely within the boundaries of its member states. European spatial policymakers should welcome the opportunity to explore what Servillo et al. (2011) term the 'territorial attractiveness' of Europe's transnational areas and should be keen to apply their policy instruments to these locations. As the Commission acknowledges in its Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion:

the regional diversity in the European Union, where regions have vastly different characteristics, opportunities and needs, requires going beyond 'one-size-fits-all' policies, towards an approach that gives regions the ability to design and the means to deliver policies that meet their needs. This is what Cohesion Policy provides through its place-based approach. (CEC 2010, p. 13)

Given the application of a sufficiently robust analytical framework, transnational interregional place-branding projects such as Oresund offer a fruitful area for exploring the application of European Union cross-border cohesion instruments.

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