



NORDIC RURALITIES  
*- thriving and declining communities*

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# Tending to tourism

Tourism's role in thriving and declining communities



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# Regions of the EU Northern Periphery Programme

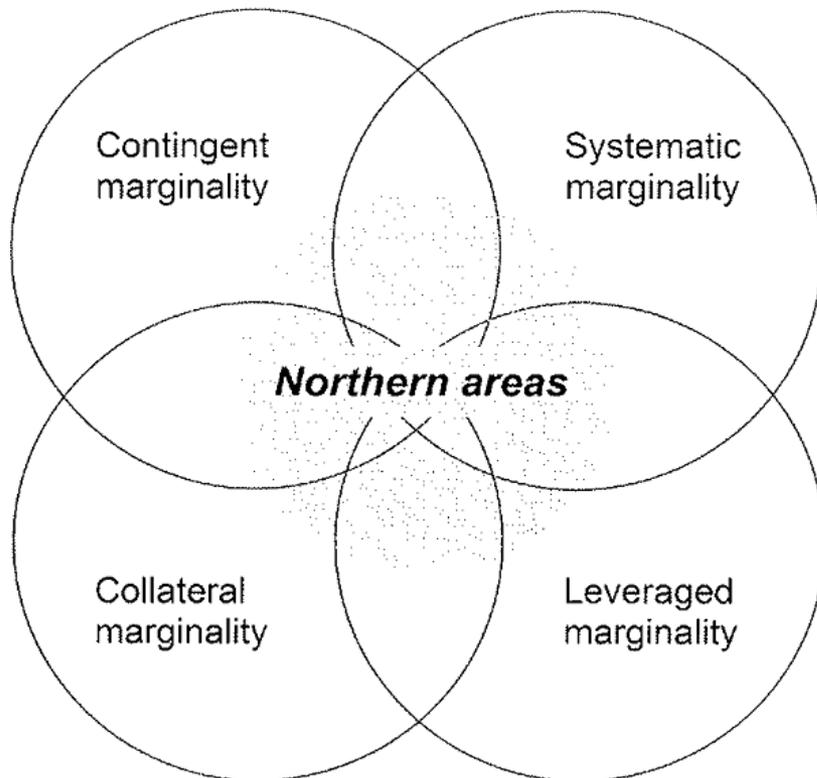


“Sparseness of population, rurality, insularity, harsh climate and peripherality” (NPP, 2011)

# What is the rural?

... a historically specific construction composed of the discourses and realms of social relations, meanings and nature in a specific space

Saarinen, 2004: 'Destinations in Change': The Transformation Process of Tourist Destinations, p. 174.



Müller, 2011: Tourism Development in Europe's Last Wilderness  
In: *Polar Tourism. A tool for Regional Development*, p. 133

**Table 2. Characteristics of Peripheral Areas for Tourism**

Geographical remoteness	Peripheral areas are geographically remote from mass markets. This not only implies increased transportation costs to and from the core areas but also increased communication costs with suppliers and customers
Lack of effective political and economic control over major decisions affecting well-being	They are particularly susceptible to the impacts of economic globalisation and restructuring through the removal of tariffs and the development of free trade regimes; as well as the political and economic decisions of non-local political institutions and firms
Economic linkages	Internal economic linkages tend to be weaker at the periphery than at the core thereby potentially limiting the ability to achieve high multiplier effects because of the substantial degree of importation of goods and services
Migration flows	Migration flows tend to be from the periphery to the core. This can impact not only the absolute population of a given area but its intangible (social and intellectual) capital as well.
Innovation	Botterill et al. (1997) argued that peripheries tend to be characterised by a comparative lack of innovation as new products tend to be imported rather than developed locally. However, there has been little empirical examination of this issue and even evidence to the contrary (Hall and Williams 2008).
State intervention	Because of the economic difficulties experienced by peripheral regions the national and local state may play a relatively greater interventionist role than in core regions
Information flows	Information flows within the periphery and from the periphery to the core are weaker than those from the core to the periphery. Such information flows may have implications for political and economic decision-making undertaken in core regions as well as broader perceptions of place
Aesthetic values	Peripheral regions often retain high aesthetic amenity values because of being relatively underdeveloped in relation to core areas. Such high natural values may not only serve as a basis for the development of nature-based tourism but may also be significant for other types of tourism and leisure developments, such as that associated with second homes

Source: After Hall and Boyd 2005b; Hall 2007; Müller and Jansson 2007

# Tourism assets

Somewhere deep down in the early twenty-first century psyche there seem to remain a long-standing, handed-down precepts about rural areas, marking them as spaces enabled by nature, offering opportunities for living and lifestyle which are socially cohesive, happy, healthy, and presenting a pace and quality of life that differs from that in the city.

Cloke, 2003: *Country Visions*, p. 1

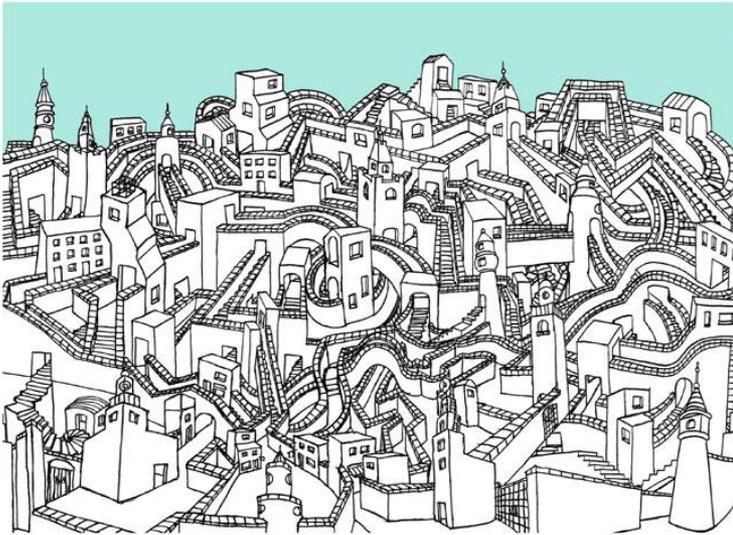


Country dwellers live longer, report on 'rural idyll' shows  
Guardian, May 2010

# Relations of the rural

In Ersilia, to establish the relationships that sustain the city's life, the inhabitants stretch strings from the corners of the houses, white or black or gray or black-and-white according to whether they mark a relationships of blood, of trade, authority, agency.

Calvino, 1976: *Invisible Cities*, p. 76



Neither space nor place can provide a haven from the world. If time presents us with the opportunities of change and (as some would see it) the terror of death, then space presents us with the social in the widest sense: the challenge of our constitutive interrelatedness – and thus our collective implication in the outcomes of that interrelatedness; the radical contemporaneity of an ongoing multiplicity of others, human and non-human; and the ongoing and ever-specific project of the practices through which that sociability is to be configured.

Massey, 2005: *For Space*, p. 195

# Rural Topology?

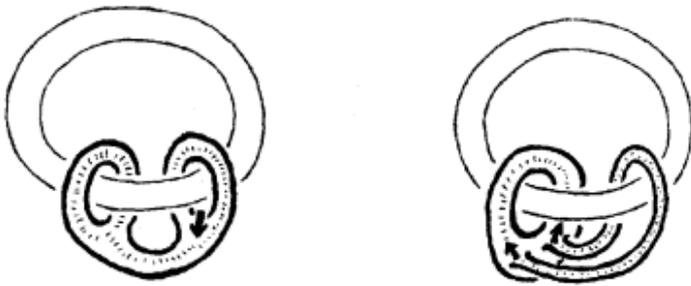


FIGURE 1.6

1.3. See Figure 1.7.

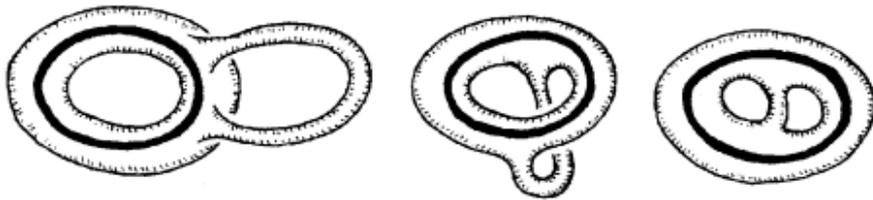
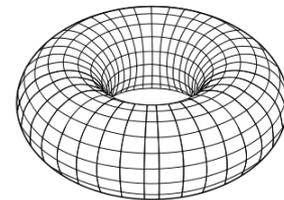
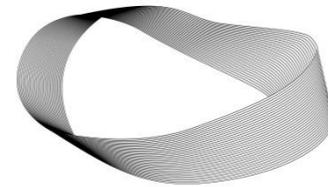
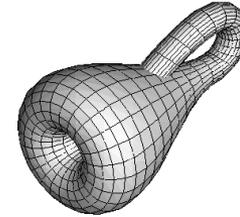


FIGURE 1.7

1.4. First we perform the deformations shown in Figure 1.8.



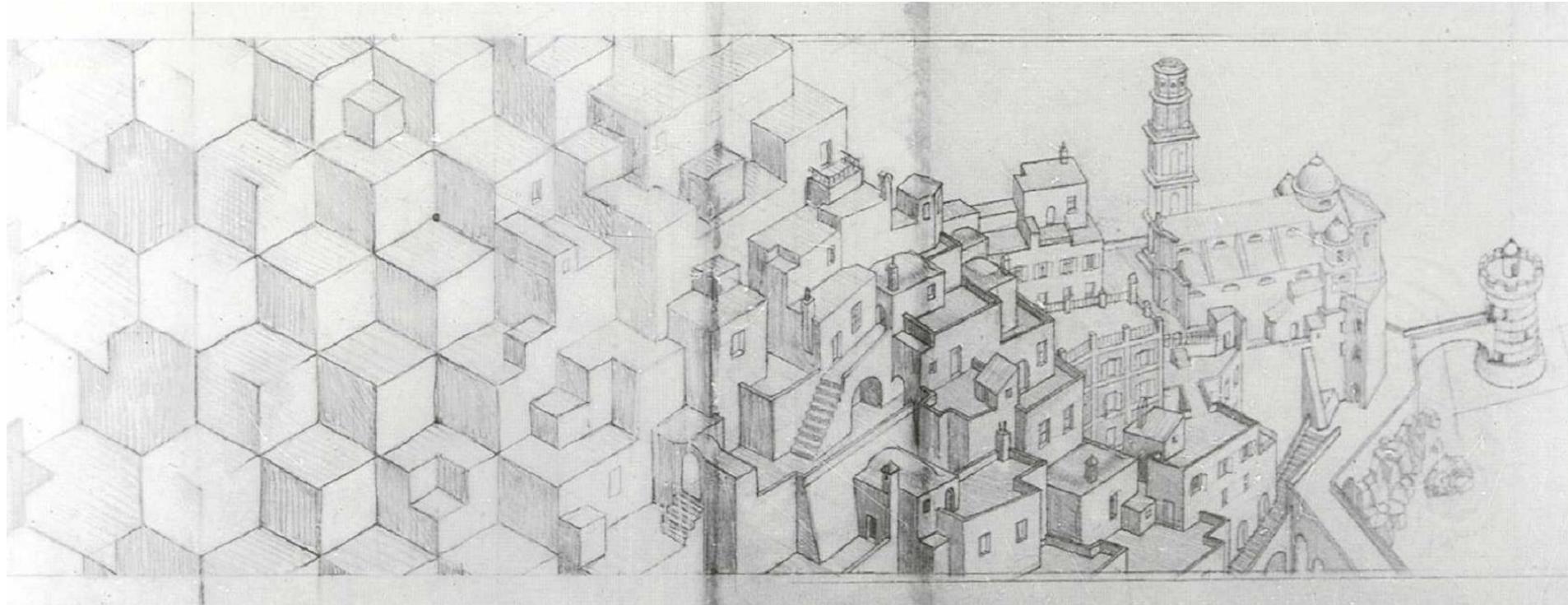
FIGURE 1.8



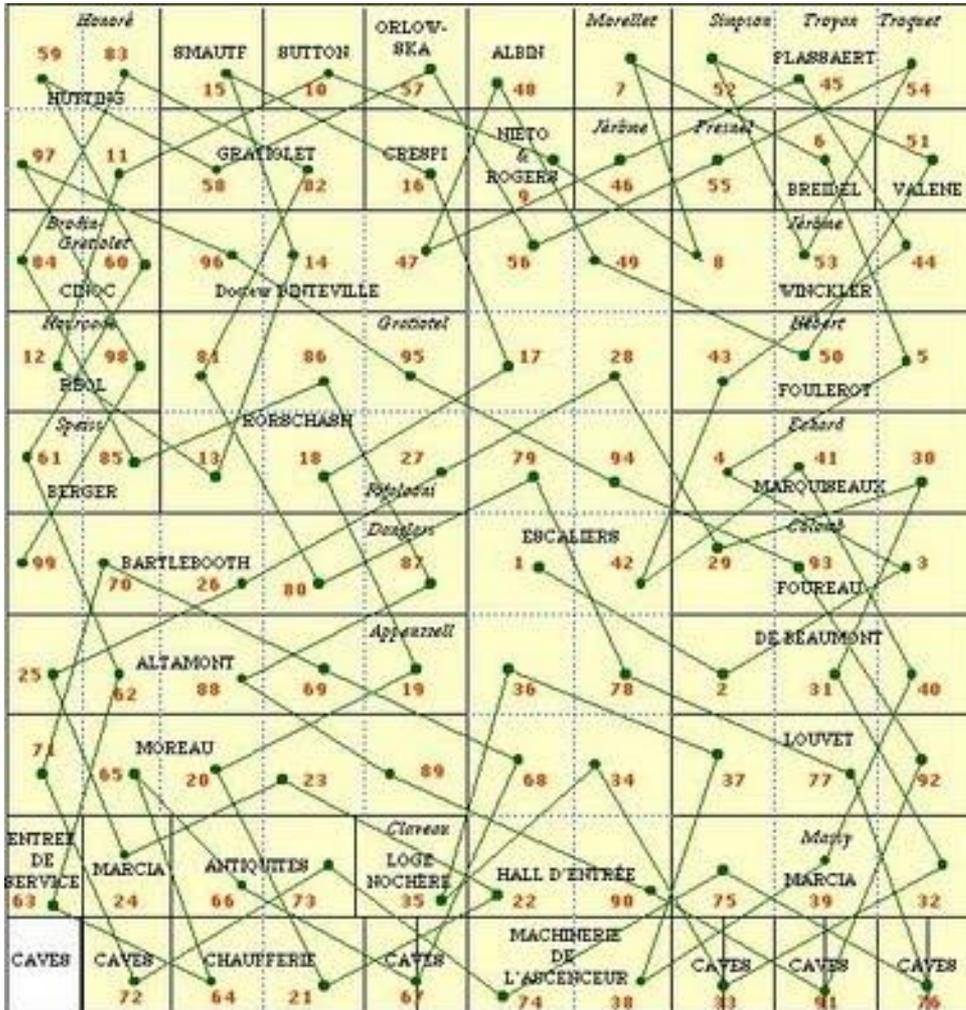
# Emergent ruralities

“Topologica,’ replied the Space Hopper, ‘the Rubber-sheet Continent, which doesn’t so much drift as stretch ... We have entered the realm of topology, from which rigidity was long ago banished and only continuity holds sway. The land of topological transformations, which can bend-and-stretch-and-compress-and-distort-and-deform’ (he said this all in one breath) “but not tear or break”

Stewart, 2001: *Flatterland*, p.89.



# Sorting, listing, naming ...



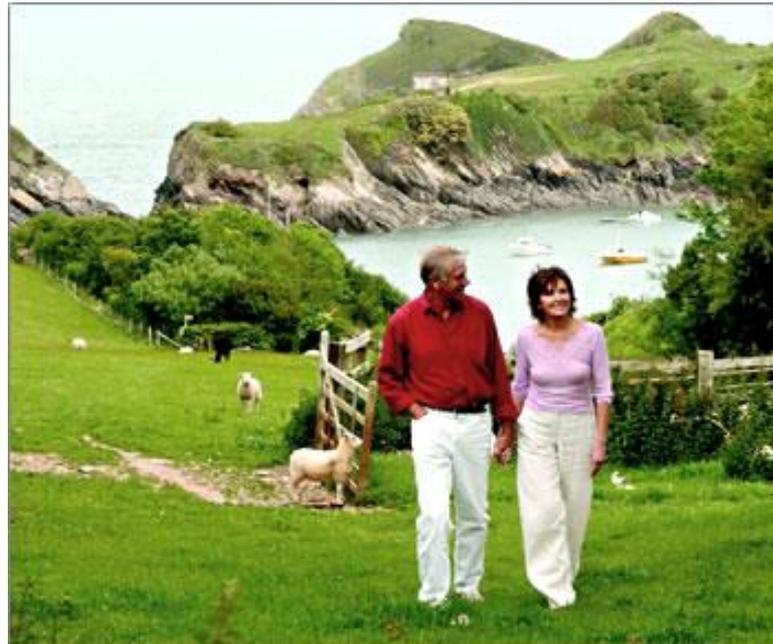
... the element's existence does not precede the existence of the whole, it comes neither before nor after it, for the parts do not determine the pattern, but the pattern determines the parts: ...

Perec, 1987[1978]: *Life A User's Manual*, preamble

# A function of relations

It is possible to identify those general characteristics which facilitate tacit knowledge transfer, such as multiple networks, across space and sectors, openness and cosmopolitanism. These, however, need to be translated into business strategies and specific practices such as recruitment, human resource management, supplier chain management, and customer relationships

Shaw and Williams, 2009: Knowledge Transfer and Management in Tourism Organisations, p. 333.



# Hyping relationality

So, growth derives from creativity and therefore it is creative that make growth; growth can only occur if the creative come, and the creatives will only come if they get what they want; what the creative want is tolerance and openness, and if they find it, they will come; and if they come, growth will follow ...

Rather than 'civilising' urban [regional] economic development by 'bringing in culture', creativity strategies do the opposite: they commodify the arts and cultural resources, even social tolerance itself, suturing them as putative economic assets to evolving regimes of urban [place based] competition

Peck, 2005: *Struggling with the Creative Class*, p. 757 and 763



# Ordering tourism – weaving the rural

Tourism orders both the spaces of tourism, including the sites that are visited and the spaces of mobility that get them there but also, the tourists themselves. They become self-ordering, self-directed tourists constantly interpellated by, and curious for the places that have been opened up in their name and which become relevant to them.

Franklin, 2004: Tourism as an ordering: Towards a new ontology of tourism, p.280



# Countering forcefulness

We are our technologies, our tastes, our lifestyles and brands, our literal spaces. These are constantly under deformation, always a different figure showing, yet having their topological equivalent the structures of meaning comprise us as singular 'rings of string'. Further, like foam, these are fragile and always threatening to burst...This is an imaginary in excess of function that drives media culture, consumer culture, and the knowledge and information society

Lash, 2012: Deforming the Figure: Topology and the Social Imaginary, p.271

