Rural Transformation and Newfoundland and Labrador Diaspora

Grandparents, Grandparenting, Community and School Relations

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This book is endorsed by Dr. Clar Doyle in his preface to this book. Dr. Doyle is very well known locally.

This book is about the contemporary life of grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador—a geographically isolated and culturally unique rural region of Canada. The book can be used for courses in the areas of critical social work, family studies, gerontology, nursing, rural development, critical pedagogy, and diaspora studies.

Clar Doyle, Professor of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and member of the Founding Scholars Advisory Board, The Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy.

“This book offers a platform not only to look in on the lives of vital grandparents but paints, in broad strokes, a mural of coming, changing, as well as challenging cultural and social settings…. In what the astute editors …call “small nuanced studies” we find telling narratives of generational connections in the face of changing and challenging odds….This book does a great service to the concept of diaspora, as well as to the changing nature of that concept… This book elevates the status of grandparents by positioning them as vital members of a complex and challenging society where their skills, gifts, and sheer presence are most formative…. As is strongly advocated in this book, it is essential that educators, curriculum developers, and teachers appreciate the place of grandparents in their students’ lives.”
Rural Transformation and Newfoundland and Labrador Diaspora
Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education

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This book series is dedicated to the radical love and actions of Paulo Freire, Jesus “Pato” Gomez, and Joe L. Kincheloe.
Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education. The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positionality, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy’s (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity—youth identity in particular—the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them? Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant.

But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an
electronic mediated world demands some “touchy-feely” educational superficiality. What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.

If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education seeks to produce—literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.
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Edited by:

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We have always had a vague sense of the power and the place of grandparents in our lives, family and community. The chapter titles in this telling text spell out for us the wide-ranging scope of that power and place of grandparents.

This book is based on the premise that significant knowledge resides in the local, and in the focused reflection on the local context. When this local reflection and experience is placed in a wider educational perspective valuable intellectual insights are gained and personal information becomes instructive for the wider community. The local becomes global.

This book offers a platform not only to look in on the lives of vital grandparents but paints, in broad strokes, a mural of coming, changing, as well as challenging cultural and social settings. In what the astute editors, Amarjit Singh and Michael Devine, call “small nuanced studies” we find telling narratives of generational connections in the face of changing and challenging odds. The editors write about the “changing patterns of communities” and in the very presentation of the grandparents, who often possess well-honed voices, reinforce the notion that knowledge is local and governed by context. Singh and Devine are very aware of the direct link to and importance of this contextualized production of knowledge. While this linkage can be seen as linear it, in time, becomes embedded in the fabric of our thinking and living. In other words, the voices shared here help produce culture and society. It is, then, part of a moving entity.

This book does a great service to the concept of diaspora, as well as to the changing nature of that concept. We often associate diaspora with the image of hordes of people moving from one land to another in quaint ships, seldom to return to the homeland. The fact that we now live in a jet-hopping, tweet-frenzy world does not lessen the pain of dislocation. The voices and stories in this book attest to that. These voices and stories also show that our views of grandparents are changing: their roles are changing. This book elevates the status of grandparents by positioning them as vital members of a complex and challenging society where their skills, gifts, and sheer presence are most formative. In the book Singh and Devine have given opportunities for many people to express their thoughts and put key aspects of their lives in a context that informs the communities where we live.

Some years ago I wrote a play called Out From Here. It dealt with out-migration from Ireland in the mid nineteenth century, and out-migration from Newfoundland
in the mid twentieth century. While doing the research for that play I was taken by the similarities between the leavings from Ireland and the leavings from Newfoundland. It was sobering to realize that the forces that drove people from Ireland were similar, in kind, to the ones that drove men and women to go to “the Boston states” to make a living and to invent a dream. Like the emigrants from the famine lands many of the emigrants from this place never came back. Many of them, my relatives included, climbed steel and worked on building their individual dreams. That exodus from Ireland is further echoed now as men and women emigrate from Newfoundland and Labrador to do dirty work for great money in Alberta. The diaspora continues.

Nowhere was the reality of outmigration, diaspora if you will, brought home to me as when I did the dedication to that play. It was then that I more clearly saw the raw reality of outmigration: my three children were all gone from here. They left, for other green pastures, between the ages of 18 and 22. Today, they remain away, and like many others I am a long-distance grandparent. Like many others I live the loneliness of the long-distance family.

In the telling and poetic narratives found in this book we probe the meaning of home, place, and belonging. These narratives do not “make fools of writers”. These narratives help us see and articulate what we take for granted around us. The eyes of others, notably visitors to this place, can make the sky clearer and the rocks more rigid in their solid wonder. As one writer here said, “imagine that”. In scholarly tradition Singh and Devine have noted the themes that emerge from the various narratives. Given the variety and scope of the narratives such elaborated themes are most helpful. These narratives speak eloquently to the power and place of grandparents and to the significance of grand-parenting. Some of the narratives found here reflect a tingle of nostalgia. While the grandparents tell of raising large families, being very busy, working hard, there is a sliver of longing for far off days. While this sentiment is not universal in the narratives shared here, it probably speaks to a sense of belonging, of belonging to this place.

The place of respect given to grandparents as well as the expectations laid on people living in given communities is evident in the narratives. We might say, today, that these communal expectations were somewhat rigid and set the norm for acceptable behaviour. Linked in with expectations and generational norms was the reality of “going away”. In time, and maybe always, there was a need for people to move because “you had no choice but to look for employment opportunities elsewhere.” Elsewhere, what a word that is. No matter where it was, “elsewhere” was not here, not home, not this place. As John Munn said in the locally produced movie John and The Missus, “You’re not telling me where to live; you’re telling me where to die.”

The phrase “emotional comfort” is a telling one when we think about the role of grandparents. I see the need for that emotional comfort with my own children, whose long-distance question often begins with, “How is Nan?” The connection is way beyond expectation or sense of responsibility; it is often a matter of the heart and
soul. Another telling aspect found in many of these narratives is how grandparents are able to analyze, reflect on, and articulate their place in the world. Singh and Devine write about “local theorizing”. This is it in action.

Another aspect of the narratives in this book is the significance of the physical house, and the notion of “home” [As the little girl in Yesterday’s Men said, “Yes, we have a home but we don’t have a place to put it”]. Likewise, the idea of being connected in a community where “everybody knew everybody” was often depicted by calling people aunt or uncle, who were not related at all. This adopted kinship speaks to the level of connectedness lived in many communities depicted in the narratives here. The sense of disconnectedness felt by many people after they had been “relocated” from isolated communities into larger towns and cities was akin to what people felt who left here to go to New York or who now leave for Fort McMurray. There is often, always, a missing of the vital connectedness of the lost or left community.

The loneliness of the long-distance family is evident in many of the grandparent narratives here. Many people speak of the effort to stay connected, but in many ways digital hugs just don’t cut it. As my little grandson said, “Granddad, sometime you must come on the plane with us.” When I asked him why, he said, “When I am in England I do not see you.” This was for me a fond existential moment!

The studies in this book show that grandparents can be seen as receptacles of community values and as such are generational conduits for such values and cultural capital. This notion of the place of grandparents in passing on values, mores, as well as cultural and social expectations is significant. Many grandparents clearly see this process as part of their “job”. Very often while grandparents might be telling about the trappings of culture, for example, “Jiggs Dinner every Sunday”, they are in fact sharing more telling and deep-rooted aspects of life having to do with respect, dignity, and responsibility. Gems of foundational wisdom are found in these narratives. So very often the brightest sparks in a grandparent’s life is a grandchild: cherished, coddled, loved, and adored.

The narratives in this book acknowledge the changing role of grandparents. Not even the role of grandparent can remain fixed when the community is spinning. There appears to be, according to narratives here, a more increased role for grandparents.

The reality of out-migration, that tangly relative of diaspora, is often referenced by claims like, “many of the young ones are gone away now.” There is also an expressed sense, in many of these narratives that when people leave a community, “things are lost.” Not least of such loss is the “lack of opportunity for [grandparents] to develop a close relationship and engage in grandparent-grandchild activities.” Family is a key part of so many lives. Many of the grandparents given voice in these studies, “loved talking about their families and grandchildren.” Grandchildren and the process of grandparenting, is a vital force in many people’s lives.
One of the great contributions of the studies presented in this book is the way they help us see grandparents in a positive light. Elizabeth Davis, speaking about elder abuse, claims that helping society change the view of seniors will be a key aspect in curbing such abuse. This book makes a wonderful contribution to such a cause. One other thing this book does is put the whole concept of grandparenting in a historical and social context as well as it reinforces the ideal that “educators should acknowledge the diversity of family structures” that exist today. The whole notion of blended families becomes important when we realize that children from various family clusters are now extending the networks of grandparents. The reality is that children can have many grandparents. This can be both a rewarding and challenging generational reality. As is strongly advocated in this book, it is essential that educators, curriculum developers, and teachers appreciate the place of grandparents in their students’ lives. Curriculum has often seen grandparents as sources of information, but they are so much more than that. It is also important to realize that the types of grandparents can have “different and distinct relationships” with their grandchildren. This book, in the sheer variety of relationships represented, is a most helpful view of the diversity mosaic of grandparents. This book continually puts the stated diversity found in grandparenting models into its larger economic and social context. This is crucial to a better understanding of the changing roles of and expectations placed on grandparents. As noted, “Grandparents are a diverse and vibrant group”, and seldom represent a uniform “grandparenting style.” There are also sobering moments in these narratives. Ones that cover the gamut from ideal grandparenting roles to ones that are tormented by the challenges of their children’s lifes: they are all reflected here.

When I reflect on the contributions that grandparents make to families and communities, I am reminded of an exercise I sometimes use with drama groups I work with. In that exercise I ask people to “take away” what they have contributed to the play. In short time it becomes evident that if individuals were to take away what they have done to produce the play there would be very little left. In similar fashion, if we were to take away what grandparents have contributed to us and our children we would, I believe, see massive gaps in values, mores, enjoyment, comfort, insights, information, knowledge, materials, kindness, and love. In short, we would be less than we are now.

The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Family

I know it is late but I will call anyway.

One distant night on that Green Island the people put their worry to bed. They woke the next morning to see their potato plants smitten by the blue fog of blight. The man-made Famine sneaked into the veins of the land and bled those who walked the soil. The riddle remains of how the people of a green and fertile country came to starve to death.
I Wonder Why They Are Not Answering the Phone

Emigration went on bleeding Ireland as from a wound that would not heal
And they filled its boats with the people who called this place Talam an Eisc.
Dangling between desperation and hope the Atlantic offered a tumultuous line of promise.
In the crucible of the coffin ship, the children of the Green Island rode the Diaspora onto the wicked seas.
Salt of the Atlantic served as bitter balm for the memories of Famine.
Bold people, in tainted ships, came to this place and heard “welcome”.

I Will Let It Ring a Little While More

New people lived the land and mastered the sea.
They fashioned a soul that would soften winters and inject promise.
In time, they became the people of the Rock.
Many of our people saw new horizons and moved from here.
There to build and to grow.
It is said that if my people were to reclaim their building half North America would fall down.

“Is that you Grandad?”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost we want to thank grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador who have never ceased to provide support not only to their family members and grandchildren living near (“non-diasporic” grandparents) and far away from them (“diasporic” grandparents), but also to their communities, generation after generation.

A number of people have contributed to this book. We want to thank the many contributors of chapters who have provided excellent work related to the topics of diaspora, grandparenting, community development, schooling, and listening to the voices of grandparents from the field. We feel it is our pleasant duty to record our debts of gratitude to them.

We want to thank John Hoben, Daniel Reid, Clar Doyle, Allyson Hajek, Kirk Anderson, Gord Ralph, Mary Cornelia Power and Joan Oldford for reading the earlier drafts of many of the chapters included in this book. Our special thanks to Clar Doyle for agreeing to write the Preface to this book. Further, we want to thank Rob Greenwood, Director of the Harris Centre, Memorial University, for having conversations with Amarjit at different times. This conversational engagement informed us of current initiatives that are being taken in the area of rural development in Newfoundland and Labrador in the context of regional, national and global policy making, governing, implementing, and evaluating discourses. The conversations helped us to sharpen our thinking and understanding of what needs to be done to sustain rural communities, families, and the life styles they offer to people in this province, in the context of the tensions that exists between lifestyles that are perceived as local and those that are urban and global.

The Faculty of Education and School of Social Work have been places of constant reflection and renewal for Amarjit and Mike, respectively. Colleagues and friends have contributed their time and their thoughts to this book, and the professionals working in the General Office, Financial and Administrative Services, as always, were most helpful and patient. We thank all of them.

We wish to thank our spouses Mary (Amarjit’s wife) and Pauline (Mike’s wife) for their tireless efforts and support in our completing this work.

I (Amarjit) want to thank my long standing friends Professors Gary and Gerry Gairola in Kentucky, and Ruth Larkin and Mike Hamnett in Hawaii, for encouraging me to continue and complete my various projects. I also want to thank those colleagues and friends who helped me in various ways in my professional and daily life. I know and they know who they are, so I do not need to name them here. I wish to thank Susan Bird and her family, Bowie Hannah, and especially the Power clan (my in-laws in Newfoundland and Labrador) for their help and kindness.

Both of us are grandfathers like many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, whose grandchildren live far away from them. So like many, we are involved in
distant grandparenting. Living in diaspora could be an inspiring experience in a sense that it encourages us all to engage in building and maintaining good, supportive relations with each other.

For me, Amarjit, living in diaspora and doing distant grandparenting has been a good learning process, because my siblings, my deceased parents, my daughter Neera, her husband Mori, and their two daughters - Tala and Uale’a, and my wife Mary C. Power and our son David, have all been a constant source of joy, love and support for me and each other.

For me, Mike, being a grandparent living in diaspora has taught me the value of time and building relationships from afar. My wife, Pauline and I, continually try to ensure connections and relationship development is an ongoing process as we grow with our children (six of them) and our grandchildren (five of them) both in this province and city as well as those in other provinces and other countries - to all of them, our gratitude and love.

Finally, we want to thank our series editor, Dr. Shirley R. Steinberg, http://www.educ.ucalgary.ca/werklund/ Chair and Director, The Werklund Foundation Centre for Youth Leadership Education, Professor of Youth Studies, The University of Calgary, and Project Leader and Director Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy http://freireproject.org. In writing chapters in this book I (Amarjit) I have kept memory of Joe Kincheloe alive in my mind. And we want to thank Michel Lokhorst at SENSE Publishers, for giving us the opportunity to work on this project.
ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

People with a variety of backgrounds, professions and experiences have contributed to this book. They include university professors with doctorate degrees, specializing in different academic disciplines; registered Social Workers with BSW and MSW (Bachelor and Master of Social Work) degrees, and retired and practising teachers with M.Ed. (Masters of Education) degree with many years of teaching experience at different levels in the Public School systems in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia, Canada. Most of them work and live, or have worked and lived in small rural communities and have firsthand, nuanced knowledge and sensitivity to daily lived experiences of people living in those communities, including their own experiences.
INTRODUCTION

Wanting to Voice One’s Own Stories in Unsettling Conditions

ABSTRACT

In the introductory chapter to our book on the contemporary life of Newfoundland and Labrador grandparents, we set forth our agenda in compiling such a collection. Against a backdrop of globalization, we have chosen to examine the changing role of grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador society. Despite historically being a rural community, the age of globalism has ushered in a wave of outmigration from this province that has resulted in many families living in diaspora. As a result, these global forces have changed family dynamics as well as the social identity of individuals, families and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. As ‘organic intellectuals’ – that is, disseminators of local knowledge and emotional work – grandparents have had a vital role in shaping the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador communities for many generations. The nature of that role has been transformed in recent times, however, under disporic family conditions necessitated by the modern global economy. By extension, the means in which they produce, reproduce, and transmit local knowledge to both their families and communities has changed. Thus, in this local/global dynamic situation, voices of grandparents have become a significant source of inspiration for those who want to sustain their communities in the era of globalism. As such, in listening to grandparents in this province, a traditionally overlooked social group, one can start to understand the changing nature and complex nuances of family life in communities in transition in Newfoundland and Labrador. Moreover, their voices can not only shed light on the past but also help address the problems and concerns of the present with an eye on shaping the future, within a global context, not only in this province but in similar places across Canada and the rest of the world.

Within the context of rural communities in a local-global society grandparents can play an important role in communities in transition. We suggest that to find answers to problems embedded in the voices of grandparents will require us to engage in a learning process that will require re-thinking in five areas: (a) education and schooling, (b) envisioning diverse life styles available that could be sustainable, (c) the existing programs that provide services to seniors as grandparents, (d) grandparents as leaders, organic workers and intellectuals, and (e) the value of
small scale nuanced and community based research and implication of this type of research to the well-being of grandparents, families, communities and schools.

No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local (Henri Lefebvre cited in, Wilson & Dissanayake, 1996, p.1).

…return migrants are often pushed or pulled back by economic factors, although … the pull of personal or family ties is important. (Sinclair & Felt, 1993, p. 21).

…the outport [the small communities in Newfoundland] communities of today are very different…Outport people are…concerned about issues of representation and cultural appropriation…

…outport Newfoundlanders now want to tell their own story. (Kennedy, 1997a, p. 313)

…agency is a central psychological phenomenon that must be accounted for in any explanatory framework of human action. Broadly speaking, psychological agency refers to the human capacity for reflective action, and is based on the potential to imagine and create new ways of being and acting in the world. Further, “the question of agency also relates to how we choose to live our lives and responsibility we have for the decision we make.” (Freie 2008, p. 1).

[all] men are intellectuals…but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971, cited in (Greaves, 2008)

…Intellectuals educate and discipline the entire culture… (p. 16, Ibid)

This book is about the contemporary life of grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador- their families, schools, and communities. It highlights and celebrates their voices as they live their daily lives in what has historically been a rural society which is rapidly going through economic, social, educational and cultural transformation. Newfoundland and Labrador became a province of Canada in 1949, and it continues to have a distinct culture. This introductory chapter elaborates in some ways on themes cited in the epigraphs.

Although our focus in this book is on grandparents’ roles in Newfoundland and Labrador (sometimes referred in this chapter as Newfoundland but is intended to refer to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador), we contend that listening to their voices can shed light on the changing roles of grandparents in many other rural societies going through similar transformation under the influence of the current global economy. The fact is that there are more grandparents living now than before, and in the context of globalization, there is an international trend of grandparents caring for grandchildren. At the same time it is also noted that global forces have profound negative impacts on local rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and in other parts of world. Globalism and other ecological factors have created job losses
in rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, and appear to have accelerated the movement of people who leave this province to make a living. When people anywhere are caught in this sort of movement and psychological disposition – forced to leave their homes and places to go somewhere else to make a living and yet have strong feelings to one day return to their homes – they are said to be living in diaspora. Looking at what is happening around us in Newfoundland and Labrador suggests that many people from this province are now living in diaspora; their relationship with each other in many situations has become diasporic. “This pervasive pressure to leave is often experienced as a painful rupture from home and identity, and this loss is reflected in much Newfoundland literature” (Delisle, 2008a) p. 65.

Anyone who listens to stories of people leaving the province knows that this going away trend has not diminished the strong longing of many people to one day return to Newfoundland and Labrador; that is, their sense of home and place remain strong. In a real sense for many, the ever burning desire to return to Newfoundland and Labrador may never be realized, but their conversations reveal that this nostalgic desire never dies. Delisle (2008, *The Newfoundland Diaspora*) discusses the nostalgia Newfoundlanders feel about “going home”. According to her, this “experiential nostalgia” helps displaced Newfoundlanders to define their social self and their personal identities.

A review of studies of various “local” sociologists by Delisle suggests that “…migrants often maintain connections to Newfoundland and Newfoundland culture by preserving ties with people back home, by maintaining a strong desire to return, by consuming Newfoundland products, and by establishing diasporic communities abroad (Delisle, 2008a, p. 65).” According to Delisle (2008a) this Newfoundland diaspora exists in part because Newfoundlanders often find it difficult to assimilate into their new homes in Ontario or Alberta, “…even though they are migrating to these parts of Canada as Canadian citizens (p. 66).” These trends presumably set by the forces of globalization appear to have changed family dynamics, social self and identities of individuals and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In essence,

Diaspora is both an appropriate and useful term to describe Newfoundland outmigration in that it captures the magnitude of the phenomenon, and connotes what I identify as five main aspects of the migration experience: (1) painful displacement and a condition of loss; (2) the continued connection to homeland; (3) the formation of diaspora communities abroad; (4) the construction of homeland in neo-national rather than regional terms; and (5) a sense of difference and marginalization in the new home. (Delisle, 2008b, *The Newfoundland Diaspora*, p. 8).

Delisle (2008b) indicates that,

A ‘Newfoundland diaspora,’ then connotes… [a] continued attachment to homeland, often accompanied by a strong desire to return” (p. 15), and that diaspora,
… signals this [that Newfoundlanders are like any other immigrants working side by side in a factory in Toronto] (imagined or real) shared experience of displacement between Newfoundland migrants and other immigrants. It also suggests an ongoing sense of group identity, and link between these connections and Newfoundland as an imagined community (p. 17).

THE SCOPE OF THIS BOOK

Unsettling Impact of Globalization

Globalization produces unsettling conditions. However, these unsettling conditions have created opportunities to generate new and culturally sensitive local knowledge everywhere in the world to balance the impact of global knowledge which is often not sensitive to local needs. In the same vein, more than ever before, people in Newfoundland and Labrador now have learned to feel confident in their common sense ability to understand how their local society works and how the forces of globalization influence their everyday lives in many spheres (Baldacchino, Greenwood, & Felt, 2009; Felt, 2009; Galway & Dibbon, 2012; Greenwood, 2010; Kelly & Yeoman, 2010).

In the above local/global dynamic situation,5 voices of grandparents have become a significant source of inspiration for those who want to sustain their communities in the era of globalism. Thus grandparents in Newfoundland communities are a critical and an active force in keeping hope alive in the possibility of the viability and revitalizing of rural communities and the life styles those communities can offer.6 More specifically, grandparents everywhere make up a diverse and vibrant group of people, and as such grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador are playing significant roles in keeping families, communities and schools together. Of more significance is the fact that they are playing this role at a very specific time when an increasingly number of individuals from Newfoundland and Labrador are living in diaspora. Therefore, it is important to listen to their voices and incorporate them into any discussion pertaining to imagining future sustainability of rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and rethinking of balancing of local/global rural interests. The collection of papers in this volume highlights several of these points.

There has to be a multiplicity of cultural, religious, political, economic and socially conducive conditions that would enable the publics (citizenry and non-experts) to have multiple voices, while at the same time enabling those who are the voices of the dominant forces to listen to the voices of the publics (Curry-Stevens, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Goodman, 2001; Hobgood, 2000; Mezirow and Associates, 2000). According to some observers this has not been the typical case of Newfoundland and Labrador culture and society. Historically, in Newfoundland and Labrador “outsiders” and a selected few nominated by the dominant forces of the day have been involved in producing knowledge in this province (Baldacchino et al., 2009; J. C. Kennedy, 1997a). Greenwood (2009, p. 281) states, “unfortunately,
the province’s history and political culture have resulted in a policy environment that limits real participation to very few players.” As Greene (1999, p. 3) points out, “Until the founding of Memorial University in 1949, Newfoundlanders were denied the privilege of a post-secondary institution that could develop local studies.”

Like the publics in many other countries, the publics in this province have generally been discouraged from producing knowledge based on their daily experiences in the public spheres and civil society, and even reprimanded in certain situations for doing so (Hoban, 2011). On the whole, Newfoundlanders feel intimidated in recording and disseminating their experiential and observational knowledge. For example, we noted that one grandparent in one interview was not comfortable with having her story told in print even though no identifying information would be included. In some situations even highly respected local sociologists, with international reputation, felt intimidated while producing local knowledge (personal communication).

Greene (1999, p. 4) writes that, “On the personal level, the individual Newfoundlander, regardless of class, has historically shown an aversion to preserving written records; and the few who were courageous enough to perform the feat have always been denigrated as hoarders.” On the other hand, according to Greene, “an oral tradition has held sway for centuries and remains still the richest source available for gaining an understanding of the everyday lives of the people of Newfoundland’s past.”

This situation has been changing as the number of educated people in this province grows (Galway & Dibbon, 2012; Sheppard, Brown, & Dibbon, 2009). Consequently, more and more people are learning about how “official/state” and “professional” forms of knowledge are socially constructed, preserved and strategically disseminated either to maintain the status quo or to change it (Finlayson, 1994; Neis & Felt, 2000a; A. Singh, 1991). Clar Doyle writes,

“for many years from its foundations as a colony, Newfoundland remained a place in which creative culture was usually expressed verbally or musically, in the form of oral narratives, traditional drama and theatre, and vocal and instrumental music. Cultures in which oral tradition is strong become fertile ground for the development of written work as formal education improves” (2010, p. 117).

The improvement of formal, in-formal, and non-formal education in this province has contributed to the deepening of consciousness of people in Newfoundland and Labrador more than ever before. People in this province now feel confident in their common and good sense ability as intellectuals. As such, we believe, they now, in more complex ways, understand how their society works and how local and global cultures influence their views and behaviors. For example, for us this trend became clear when, under the umbrella of educational reform in this province, the then existing denominational educational system was dismantled in 1997. Based on their understanding of social and cultural processes, parents, students, teachers, families and communities were able to use their agency in contesting the reorganization of the school system in highly sophisticated ways (Fagan, 2004; Galway & Dibbon, 2012;
However, they could not stop the reform that dismantled religious based denominational governance of schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. Never the less, they were able to point out the contradictions and mismatch of the “official” knowledge which guided educational reform (see news items that appeared at that time in the local paper, Telegram). Another more recent example includes the attempt by the provincial government to downgrade and reduce services to the Lewisporte area of the province that met with strong community reaction and had positive results. Also, the Hughes inquiry into the sexual and physical abuse of boys at Mount Cashel Orphanage in 1990 was as a result of the populace speaking out and “not putting up with” what was happening within that orphanage.

This changing cultural and social milieu of Newfoundland and Labrador society at the present time interests us the most. Specifically, for our pedagogical purposes in this book, we are interested in the ideas of common sense and good sense as these two concepts relate to the role of intellectual and intelligentsia as social categories in transforming Newfoundland and Labrador society, specifically, the rural sector of the society. Historically, but more recently much has been written and published about the possibility and sustainability of rural development in Newfoundland and Labrador (Wadel, 1969, 1973; House, 1999, 2001, 2003). However, in our reading of this literature we find that less emphasis has been generally given to the development for rural communities. Development for communities takes into account in robust ways what development means to members of communities in relationship to what it means to those who are perceived by community members as outsiders having more power and resources. Many societies in the world are rural societies and were colonized. It has been noted that after they emerged as politically independent nations, they adopted anti-rural development models. For example in Asia many people advocated self-reliant national development based on self-sufficient village economy. Their voices were ignored and labeled as backward and utopian by those who pushed for development models based on modernization theories in vogue at that that time. Thus, those who argued for anti-rural development perceived themselves as urban based local elites, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and forged dependent networks with the outside world. And in this way they alienated themselves from a great number of people who continued to live in the rural areas.

The anti-rural development models have many components. One of the principle components is the emphasis on central planning, control and coordination of the economy as a top down process. We will have more to say about the notion of modernity, globalization, role of intellectuals and intelligentsia in relation to the discussion of possibility of viable rural development in Newfoundland and Labrador in the last chapter of the book. Suffice to mention here is that many of the principles of Western modernity conceived as the universal project still echo in the thinking of rural policy and development practitioners and scholars in Newfoundland and Labrador and other rural locations in Canada. To be sure Newfoundland and Labrador has gone through the process of “nation-building” using modernization discourse as the main rationalization for doing so, especially after 1949 when it became the tenth province
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of Canada. This is not to say that those who have been engaged in this process have not gone beyond the thinking of modernity and modernization theories that were so prevalent in their dominating forms just after the time most countries became politically independent in Asia and Africa and started the process of nation-building. Historically, Newfoundland and Labrador has had pockets of ‘resistance’ to change and locals have successfully fought against change. Fogo Island is one such example. When the now infamous resettlement model was mostly forced upon rural and remote communities, Fogo Island people clearly and loudly said; “NO”, and the people continue today to reside on this rural and remote island. Most recently (March, 2013), the provincial government increased its “incentives” for rural and remote community residents to relocate by more than doubling the financial packages available to them. The recent engagement of rural policy and development practitioners and scholars in Newfoundland and Labrador attests to this fact. These people are committed to Newfoundland and Labrador as place “… and the identity and social relationships that go with it that make rural communities and small, often islands, jurisdictions desirable and viable places for long term sustainable development” Baldacchino et al., (2009, ix-x). This increase in rural development literature has been, we believe and one can observe this trend, due to the emergence of certain types of intelligentsia and intellectuals in Newfoundland and Labrador in the last three decades.

This recent development mentioned above raises questions relating to functions of emerging intellectuals engaged in the development of society and culture in Newfoundland and Labrador at the present and of those who would function as intellectuals in future. According to many writers, there are many different and specific types of intellectual and intelligentsia in all societies in any given time (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Ball, 1995; Doyle, 2010; Eyerman, 1987; Fuller, 2005; Giroux, 1999; Giroux, 2012; Gramsci, 1971; Llyod, 1983; Wright, 1978). Moreover, these writers claim that specific types of intellectuals and intelligentsia play different roles in transforming a society and culture in a specific direction in a given social-cultural-economic-political context. Thus both these types of people, according to these writers, are involved in the construction of knowledge and identity in their own self-images. Greaves (2008, p. 1) investigates Gramsci’s theory of intellectuals and its relationship to the development of social self, and explains that, “…the concept of self is mediated in historical processes characterized by iniquitous social relations. It is not just a question of ‘who we are’ but also to what we attribute our loss of self?” Further, Greaves points out that” for Gramsci we are ‘makers of ourselves,’ but what have we made? Self-knowledge depends in, turn on gaining knowledge of the historical process in which our identity is constructed.” And for Gramsci “intellectuals have had a vital role in history but this function reaches a zenith of sophistication in the capitalist era” (Greaves 2008, p. 2). Further, aspects of discourse on the social function of various types of intellectuals by these writers implies that citizens need to be alert or adopt an attitude which allows them to be critical or vigilant of the ways professional social science and state knowledge, produced by varieties of experts as intellectuals, is transformed into some kind of higher status knowledge that becomes untouchable
by ordinary citizens. Specifically, in relation to the policy making process, the role of the experts as intellectuals, and their use of scientific rationality in the decision making process often becomes untouchable to the publics. So, it requires that citizens be familiar with at least some aspects of the on-going discourses. In this situation, citizens need to develop abilities and self-concepts that allow them to recognize how social science and professional knowledge can be given some sort of mythical status and how these forms of knowledge could become a source of symbolic violence. Therefore, social science and state knowledge, and social scientists can be and ought to be subjected to moral and ethical judgements without challenging the objectivity of social science research (Sen, 1983). As a category of intellectuals, social scientists, their products (intellectual capital) and the process of intellectual labor (i.e., how they choose questions, the priorities of their research, the selection of findings, and the publicity they give to their conclusions) are often open to normative scrutiny of their peers. But scientific actions — like all other actions, should be open to public scrutiny as well. This means that the work by social scientists is not above the collective social conscience of the larger society, i.e., it is not above the collective insights (amateur theories) ordinary citizens have about their environment and everyday living. These issues related to the production of knowledge by experts should be debated openly and citizens should have opportunities to participate in such debates. The media can play an important role in this effort. Also, public forums in the form of conferences, seminars, etc., could create opportunities for citizens and experts to discuss these matters openly through having dialogues with each other. This process of interaction and communication may make all involved feel empowered, i.e., individuals and groups may end up having some sense of power or control over their lives, by reducing real or perceived power gaps among them (ordinary citizens, professional practitioners and researchers working for the states and other private organizations), or may have potential to do so. It is hoped that under such conditions, any expected social and cultural change becomes meaningful to the publics. Further, participating in group discussions freely, responsibly, with a high degree of social consciousness enhances and strengthens democratic political systems as well as democratic life styles of citizens.

Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) discuss functions of many types of intellectuals in today’s societies. According to them, unlike other intellectuals, transformative intellectuals engage themselves in creating conditions in schools, families and communities where new values and beliefs can be produced. This process in turn, they believe, will provide opportunities for younger generations as citizens in the larger society to become agents of civic courage who will not give up hope of changing institutions of society. By making despair unconvincing, the citizens will engage in activities which will make society more open, equal and just, and produce a democratic society which celebrates human dignity. We will have more to say about the functions of intellectuals in Newfoundland and Labrador in the last chapter in the book.

In our thinking, grandparents in general in all societies and cultures play multiple roles as organic intellectuals. Thus, from the very beginning in our approach to
editing this book, we have seen grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador as organic or transformative intellectuals. As such, this group of people is a reservoir of stories (see John Hoben’s, Pauline Lake’s, Pauline Finlay’s and other articles in this book). If people only listen to grandparents, instead of just hearing them, the listeners will realize that grandparents stories tell us many things: under what conditions we as people in Newfoundland and Labrador grew up, what we have made of ourselves, and what we have lost and are losing in Newfoundland and Labrador – the place we love the most and do not want to leave, and the values and the culture of this land and its people. Their stories tell us what we need to sustain, and how to sustain what we desire having. As editors we are claiming here that, as organic intellectuals, grandparents have had a vital role in the history of development of communities and families in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in the reinforcing of the culture of the time. They continue to play this role even today through story telling. Grandparents as organic intellectuals in this province are vital actors in explaining to the younger generation of today and of the future about the potential of young generations in deciding what type of social self and identity they would want to develop – the social self and identity that would enable them in imagining and in making of Newfoundland and Labrador in that self-image. The readers will find that stories told by grandparents in many chapters in this book document this fact. Here we are also claiming that there is fundamental difference between the notion of listening and hearing. Listening requires paying attention to the voices of those who are speaking without any stereotypes and prejudices (e.g., a sense of empathy). It is trying to understand the deep meaning located in the voice of a person who is speaking, without imposing one’s own interpretations of the speaking person’s voice. Listening is only fully possible when a person feels safe to communicate with others what is in her/his mind. For these and other reasons, the authors in this book highlight the voices of grandparents in their respective chapters and leave interpretation of grandparents’ voices, in large part, to the reader (Fook, 2012; Van Manen, 1997). Thus the voice of each grandparent is valued as it helps illuminate the meanings the grandparents attach to the shared experiences with their family members and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Besides, in their later years of life grandparents play their roles in day to day living within a web of intersecting relations to their family members, who live near to them in varying but mostly rural communities, and also to those family members who live away from them in diaspora. In addition to playing grand parenting roles, one of the other significant intersecting relations grandparents have with their families and communities, entails focusing on their part, on needs and desires concerning their own overall wellbeing in later stages of life. These needs and desires are associated with living and ending one’s life in terms of developing some personal and cultural perspectives on death and dying, and with one’s sense of happiness and evaluation of life-long accomplishments and contribution in all spheres of life-social, political, psychological, spiritual, and economic. Thus the process of listening to stories of grandparents, and for that matter listening to life stories of anyone else, is a very
complex undertaking. Here we are agreeing with ideas of those who research, write, teach and act believing that listening to others always has meaning and makes sense in specific situations and contexts. Through this process of contextual listening the authors in this book have collected more than one hundred and fifty-six direct quotes from grandparents of different backgrounds. Most of these quotes appear in many chapters in this book. These direct quotes represent the voices of grandparents, represent their concerns, and throw light on their grand parenting styles, hopes and suggestions.

Today in Newfoundland and Labrador many grandparents have higher education in a variety of professions and occupations. How these highly educated grandparents function today as intellectuals in relation to their grown up children will have profound impacts on their grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the future when their adult children set up their own households and become grandparents in the next twenty to thirty years. There are many grandparents in this group of intellectuals who have become diasporic grandparents because their children have moved away from this province to find work in other places with their families. These grandparents have become “distant grandparents” and are engaged in grand parenting roles from a distance. Singh and Oldford in the last chapter in this book write about future grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador and what impacts they might have on their children. Many of the young adults of today, who would be grandparents in the next thirty years or so, are still deeply in love with Newfoundland and Labrador as home, place, and its beauty and safety. One can say that the parents and grandparents of these current young adults of today have done a good job in reinforcing Newfoundland and Labrador cultural values and identity among their children and grandchildren as Newfoundlanders. The questions Singh and Oldford raise in the last chapter are: Would these young adult as grandparents become diasporic grandparents, that is, would they end up living in diaspora like many grandparents of immigrant communities in North America do? Would they hold to unique Newfoundland individual identity or expand their “social self”? Would this expanded social self enable them to be “local/global cosmopolitan Newfoundlanders and Labradorians” (LGCLN), as they have tried to imagine them to be in their last chapter? What implications, if any, might this new expanded self concept have on issues related to revitalization of rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador? Would there be possibility of some sort of different forms of return migration and remittance process, different from what exists today? Would these new migration patterns fuel new type of local/global transformation of rural communities as it is happening in some other parts of the world?

Helen Buss (1999) in her book and the chapter in this book, and aspects of the research carried out by Jennifer Bowering Delisle, reviewed in the beginning of this chapter, shed light on the issues raised above. Singh and Oldford engage again with these questions in the last chapter of this book. They discuss the conditions in which it might be possible for future grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador to develop Newfoundland and Labrador local global cosmopolitan social self (NLLGC), and
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thus become “local/global cosmopolitan Newfoundlanders.” They work on this idea based on common sense knowledge and a perspective in social sciences, according to which the individual and society cannot be separated. They are interdependent on each other through a web of relationships. Both the individual and the society have many “social selves”. The social self of a person changes with changes in her/his social experiences, aspirations, and expectations in a society which provides one with new opportunities and rewards. Thus, in turn, equipped with new experiences individuals bring about changes in the “collective social self” of a society, albeit, in many different shades (Aboulafia, 2001; R. Frie, 2008; Giddens, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Kaufman, 2003; Mills, 1971; Odin, 1996; Popkewitz, 2008; Vohs & Finkel, 2006; Zurcher, 1977).

Globalization, Loss, Creativity, Imagination, Hope and New Opportunities

The needs of globalization also trigger interest in creativity, imagination, and room for wonder for adequately responding to new challenges. Kelley and Yeoman (2010, p. 5) write that,

...as the twenty-first century unfolds, citizens worldwide grapple with unprecedented social and cultural changes and the challenging consequences these imply for the future. Locally and globally, many cultural workers – scholars, artists, writers, educators – agree on the importance of reconciling change, both through an estimation of the gains and losses accrued and by contemplating ways to move forward progressively and wisely in their wake. Given such a context, it is not surprising that a scholarship has emerged that investigates the nature of loss and addresses its charged and complex dynamic in productive, hopeful terms.

In this situation the voices of the grandparents and efforts of the contributors to this book in recording the voices of grandparents, and thus producing local knowledge, also celebrate the hope, creativity, imagination, and the possibility of revitalizing of rural communities’ cultural and life styles in the era of increasing “McDonaldization”, “glocalization”, “space war”, and “grobaliztion” of nothing. All the authors in this book discuss some reasons for grandparents’ increased engagement at various sites in enhancing the well-being of all members of their communities and families, as these grandparents also try to optimize their own well-being in the later years of life. Doyle & Hoben (2011, p. 1) remind us that “as the voice of possibility, the imagination reminds us that control is never complete.” As noted in the epigraph, Henri Lefebvre states that “no space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local” cited in Wilson & Dissanayake (1996), p. 1.

Also, the fact that no space completely disappears in the course of globalization and its overwhelming control over the development processes, is perhaps due to the ability of people and their imagination to produce local knowledge, which is unique
to every culture or society: elders and the young possess various types of knowledge; women and men, farmers, fishers and merchants, schooled and not schooled people, all have different kinds of knowledge. In the context of interaction between global/local forces, people all over the world are engaged in simultaneously producing new local knowledge and preserving the local knowledge already possessed by them. They want to do this, among other things, to negotiate the direction of changes ushered by the forces of global modernity and the perceived undesirable impact these forces have on their social self and life styles (Giddens, 1990, 1991). As in other rural communities world-wide, people in rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador want to produce their own version of local/global knowledge (Kennedy, 1997b, p. 313). In the tradition of social science research the work of many local researchers has emphasized the importance of the local (Felt, 2009; Fowler, 2007; Gmelch & Richling, 1988; Hiller & Franz, 2004; House, 1999; Kennedy, 1997a; Marlor, 2004; Mayda, 2004; Mills, 1971; Neis & Felt, 2000b; Neis, ; Newell & Ommer, 1999; Noel, 1971; R. Ommer & Sinclair, 1999a; R. Ommer & Sinclair, 1999b; R. Ommer, 2004; R. E. Ommer, 2002; Overton, 1985; Richling, 1985a, b; G. M. Sider, 2003; G. Sider, 1986; P. Sinclair & Ommer, 2006; Wade, 1973; Wadel, 1969; Welbourn & McGrath, 1996; Hanrahan, 1993; Byron, 2003). Lawrence Felt points out that work of these local researchers cited here “...has revealed a complexity and resiliency in rural communities...” (Felt, 2009, p. 149). This book highlights, in local contexts, the voices and self-images of grandparents and their grand parenting styles in Newfoundland and Labrador. In this sense, we hope it reflects the character of Newfoundland and Labrador’s resilient, innovative, diverse and optimistic people and their longing to stay at the place they call home.

Impetus to Conceive This Book

The impetus to produce this book, in part, comes from our desire as educators to produce “local knowledge” to meet the demands of local people, as well as of our students whom we teach in the contexts of multicultural societies and classrooms. As educators we have been engaged over the years in a larger pedagogical project. We have been interested in the question: How could something that is “local”, perceived “desirable” and “sustainable” be promoted and legitimized in the age of “globalism”? In our teaching and learning we have engaged ourselves and our students with discourses in the following areas: aging, globalization, social gerontology, micro and macro social work practice (with individuals, families, groups and community), Diaspora studies, transnationalization, and school-community-family relationships, social change, and formation of the social self. Our current focus is on the changing patterns of Newfoundland and Labrador communities, especially the changing roles of grandparents and grand parenting practices in the context of globalization, and concomitant processes of “glocalization”. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and bring with them rich social and cultural capital. In many cases they are directly involved in care giving to their own growing children,
aging parents, aunts and uncles, and grandparents. We also teach courses to students who become professional teachers at all levels in the public school system, and who work in the areas of social work, community development, health care delivery systems, and who specialize in other academic disciplines. Many of our students pursue specialized higher education. These students bring with them field-based practical knowledge and experiences. Their field-based practical knowledge enables them to couch their voices in subtle nuances of everyday lived experiences. Students demand that this form of nuance based practical knowledge should be recognized in the development of curriculum at all levels of training and educational institutions.

Thus, in producing this book, the contributors have tried to heed students’ advice and voices in a variety of ways. They recognize the impact of the dynamics of local/global forces on their own daily lives and on the roles grandparents are playing in this province. The authors are also conscious of the importance of local knowledge and local theorizing. With such understanding the contributors to this book have produced local knowledge in the form of small nuanced studies, based on their observations and experiences, while at the same time reflecting on life experiences of people living in small communities who are in constant communication with each other in the age of globalization dominated by the culture-ideology of consumption.

Chapter Outline and Emerging Themes

We have thought of putting this book together within the perspective of reflective and critical pedagogy, and mainly for teaching, reading, and pedagogical purposes. In organizing the material in this book we make use of a number of pedagogical tools. The concept of voice as one of the critical pedagogical tools provides an anchor to various narratives that contributing authors have included in their respective chapters to this book. These authors have listened to grandparents’ stories in the natural contexts of community and family settings. Through this process of contextual listening the authors in this book have collected more than one hundred and fifty-six direct quotes from grandparents of different backgrounds. Most of these quotes appear in many chapters in this book. These direct quotes represent the voices of grandparents, their concerns, and throw light on their grand parenting styles, hopes and suggestions for the well-being of their families and communities.

Finally, in organizing the content of chapters we have identified forty one themes that have emerged from voices of grandparents found in various narratives. We list them in Appendix “A”. We hope that this will give readers a taste of the voices of grandparents scattered throughout different chapters in the book. In this introductory chapter we have discussed some aspects of larger perspectives on globalization and development of rural Newfoundland and Labrador society and drawn comparison to other such rural societies elsewhere in transition. We also hope that readers will enjoy and relish grandparents’ voices more fully when reading them in specific family and community contexts.
One of the underlying ideas in organizing material for this book has been that it is not only for people in small rural communities in Newfoundland, but for people in other rural communities globally who are experiencing rapid change, that the issues of self-representation and cultural appropriation have become very critical. They want to self-represent themselves in areas such as sustainability of their communities, families, lifestyle choices, cultural values, and for their very survival in terms of being a distinct political, social and economic entity in the context of globalization; people all over the world desire, imagine, observe, plan, and act self-consciously, albeit in varying degrees, to sustain and expand some aspects of the local place and space in their own individual and collective self-images. The active, engaged, and entangled voices and practices of grandparents recorded and presented in this book can be seen as testimony to those concerns. Another underlying idea has been that, by listening to the voices of grandparents in Newfoundland, it can also shed light on the changing roles of grandparents in many other rural societies going through similar transformation in other provinces in Canada, and in other parts of the world as well. For this reason, we have included two chapters that include small-scale nuanced studies from Nova Scotia for sensitizing purposes. Further, readers will find that voices of grandparents are embedded in chapter content describing their experiences of school, family, community, and economic activities. The small-scale nuanced studies discussed in each chapter serve to complement and deepen the meaning of other research-based content in each chapter with authentic and personally articulated experiences of grandparents.

In this book we have encouraged contributing authors to write from multiple perspectives in capturing the voices of grandparents in the context of everyday living. The authors have produced narratives that highlight the place of grandparents in families and communities that are transforming rapidly. In producing various narratives the authors have combined relevant multidisciplinary professional knowledge with their common and good sense experiences of everyday life in Newfoundland and Labrador. In this sense they have produced nuanced local knowledge with global implications.

In terms of specific steps taken in organizing this book, as editors we have done the following: first, as we expected, all contributors in their respective chapters provide a relatively extensive list of references, endnotes, relevant statistics taken from various sources and review of research carried out both at micro and macro levels in different areas of interest to them and to the larger publics at national, regional and global levels. Secondly, in today’s society it has become common practice that in everyday discourses on various issues people frequently use such key words (Williams, 1983) as modernity, modernization, progress, globalization, market, consumer culture, information age, post-modern society, diversity, identity, difference, racism, immigrants, multiculturalism, local and global culture, virtual reality, and other key words like these to make their points and arguments to persuade others to see and understand the “real world” from their own personal and collective perspectives (Mullaly, 2010). Thus different people with varied
INTRODUCTION

backgrounds have conversations which vary in levels of complexity and meanings, often ridden with conflicting interests and goals (Brah, 1996; Giddens, 1999). Often, people in their daily lives attribute their own common sense meanings to these key words. To be sure, everyone is not always looking only for differences. Some individuals are also looking for “unity in diversity”, and want to “embrace the local and the global” (Giroux, 1993). For these and other reasons, we have added an extended list of endnotes to this introduction. These endnotes provide definition and meanings of some key concepts from the perspectives of well-known Western researchers and scholars in social sciences. These scholars, along with the general public, are interested in making good sense of common sense knowledge as public intellectuals (see Endnote 8). This they do by offering the public a bigger framework to interpret every day experiences. We suggest that the material provided in the endnotes may be used as a pedagogical resource and guide by those who may want to expand their interests in issues discussed in this book further, and who might find themselves having a desire to know a particular topic in greater depth in a comparative and academic discourse framework. Here we are claiming that individuals will be in a good position to make sense of their surroundings if they feel comfortable communicating with each other by using everyday language and mixing it with the language of the professions, and the state (see Endnote 14). Thirdly, as editors we have encouraged all the contributors to write in a language accessible to all stakeholders and the general publics, such as family members and grandparents themselves who may not relish excessive specialized social science language and the language of the “experts” and “researchers” (Mills, 1971; Smith, 2002; Habermas, 1981, 1985). Those who are interested in the language used by social scientists, and who relish such language may find the material presented in the endnotes of some help. Fourthly, in the end of each chapter as another pedagogical tool, a number of reflection questions are listed. These questions, we hope, will lead readers to further inquiry, reflection and guided observations of grandparents’ role as leaders engaged in mediating process of rural transformation with the goal of sustaining the local.

A Quick Overview of Changing and Multiple Roles of Grandparents

Like others, grandparents have to interact with different people in their everyday lives. Grandparent roles may include looking after the grandchildren, dealing with their own children and their spouses, in-laws, and school personnel, being aware of the provincial laws and services available and knowing grandchildren’s friends. In addition, grandparents may also have relationships and struggles with their own parents and siblings as well as members of the community; these are not easy and straightforward tasks.

Caring for grandchildren also involves grandparents reflecting on their own later years of life, looking after their own health, spiritual and general well-being needs, wants and desires. Grandparents also struggle with understanding the social, political, cultural and technological changes that are taking place due to globalization and the
impact of these forces on their communities and on the life styles of families, children and grandchildren. It is within the context of these multiple, complex changes that grandparents continue to develop their role throughout this stage in their life.

Grandparents also may have to deal with many conflicting situations involving all those other parties interested in the well-being of their grandchildren. This may be due to the fact that, like any group, grandparents as a group are not homogeneous. There is a great degree of difference and diversity in the opinions and life styles of grandparents. Many of today’s grandparents are relatively young, well-educated, both cosmopolitan and local in outlook, and consumers of a variety of goods and services in their own right.

Some of these conflicts can be seen in the voices of grandparents which the contributing authors have documented in their respective papers. Differences of perceptions, for example, between grandparents and their children about what is nutritious food may cause conflict. How much should grandparents exert their opinions in opposition to grandchildren’s mothers’ opinion when it comes to disciplining the grandchildren? Should children be allowed to sleep when lights are on? Are grandparents spoiling the grandchildren with excessive care and loving them too much? Can grandparents discipline their grandchildren for excessive use of technology at home and at school, for example, use of iPods? Often grandparents express that they want to “be there” for their adult children and grandchildren, if they want or accept their involvement.

Grandparents, in their relationships with others, also need to understand the global context. A number of steps need to be taken to achieve this understanding. All parties need to understand and to contextualize emerging patterns of family structures in Newfoundland and Labrador. Also, they need to be aware of the dynamics of different types of families in Newfoundland and Labrador and the roles of grandparents in them. In addition, they need to imagine creating social and material conditions for further investigating the nature of the contemporary global trends by trying to understand the relevance of past meanings of Newfoundland and Labrador culture and society. Is it possible and relevant to uncritically continue to transmit local skills and knowledge from grandparents to children and grandchildren? Is it possible to persuade grandchildren and parents not to eat fast-food in the age of McDonaldization? To what extent is it desirable to expect grandchildren to accept rural life styles of Newfoundland and Labrador?

Investigating the nature of the contemporary global trends by trying to understand the relevance of past meanings of Newfoundland and Labrador culture and society, we believe, will enable grandparents to negotiate with their families, their grandchildren, and the larger society and culture—both local and global—a meaningful orientation to spend the later years of their lives either in usual, optimal or pathological ways.

The stereotypical negative beliefs about the elderly and grandparents, based on an ideology of ageism, is that, as a group, they are lazy, disengaged, sick, a burden on families and a financial drain to society. However, research and common sense
experience provides ample evidence that this is not always the case. The elderly and the grandparents, both as groups and individuals, are active participants, in their own special ways, in carving out the outcomes of their later years of life; quality of individual aging encompasses both an individual’s orientation to the aging process and her/his definition of the family and community circumstances in which getting older is taking place. For example, Singh and associates (Singh, Kinsey, & Morton, 1991; Singh & Kinsey, 1993) studied lay health and self-care beliefs and practices of the elderly in four communities, including two communities in Newfoundland, and found that “lay persons [the elderly, most of them were also grandparents] are not only consumers of professional care, but are actively involved in the process of providing primary health care (p. 224).”

On the whole, as Singh, and Mehta (2008, pp. 126–127) point out, “…we should be sensitive to the idea that people [in different cultures] attach different meanings to old age; that they experience old age in varying ways depending upon their interactions with other people; and that the interactional context and process can significantly affect the kind of aging process a person will experience”. Further, Singh and Mehta note that, “…old age is experienced in one’s cultural contexts. Therefore, the importance of social context, cultural meanings, and values to the aging process should be kept in mind. All these factors are dynamic rather than universal or unchanging. Disengagement, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction are an outcome of the interpretation and meanings generated in interaction between the aged and others”. Another point to keep in mind, according to Singh and Mehta, is that, “…when dealing with the elderly [grandparents], given that participants vary in their commitments and the importance they attach to different issues and interactions, the diversity of outcomes should be kept in mind. Individuals of different social, economic, ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds have different interests that may affect how they experience and react to aging [grand parenting].”

With regard to relationships with grandchildren, grandparents expressed high commitment to their grandchildren, which was also supported in earlier studies (Devine & Earle, 2011). For their own (adult) children, grandparents were also highly committed. The dynamics of the relationships in a change context were interesting in that adult children express the need for independence but will sometimes “pull in” the grandparents when a crisis arises, for example. It is this distancing and then being pulled in that creates tensions and the potential conflicts in grandparent to adult children relationships.

We hope that these papers will illuminate the importance of taking seriously the role of grandparents in helping Newfoundland and Labrador families, communities and schools in raising grandchildren in the present context in which increasing number of people from Newfoundland are living in diaspora—that is moving back and forth between their communities and places of work away and still maintaining their families intact, in a hope of returning to their communities permanently in near future.21
What Do We Need to Do in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Grandparents’ voices as documented in this book give us, admittedly, partial glimpses of complex aspects of family lives as lived by people in Newfoundland and Labrador. Nevertheless they provide insights that can serve as the basis for us to raise several questions about the future of rural communities in transition in Newfoundland and Labrador. We suggest that to find answers to problems embedded in the voices of grandparents will require us to engage in a learning process that will require re-thinking in five areas: (a) the education system, (b) envisioning diverse life styles available that could be sustainable, (c) the existing programs that provide services to seniors as grandparents, (d) grandparents as leaders, and (e) the value of small scale nuanced and community based research and implication of this type of research to the wellbeing of grandparents, families, communities and schools.

(a) The education system

The education system seems mostly geared to socializing the younger generation as individuals to participate in the economic system mostly as consumers, and not so much as citizens who are equipped with conceptual tools and with moral and ethical predispositions to ask: Are the contemporary consumption oriented life styles sustainable? (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006). What is the future of family and community relations in a consumer oriented society and culture? Are we simply consumers of social services or do we have a voice in the levels of services as well as their accessibility, particularly within a rural context?

Newfoundland and Labrador society is seen as a rural society in transition. Therefore, it is important to re-think the dominant model of a consumption oriented educational system if we want to preserve the positive aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador society and culture, and at the same time reduce the possibility of the number of young adults who are forced to leave Newfoundland as home and live in diaspora, perceived as loss. Kelly (2009) writes that,

...a reconceptualization of loss as a central and explicit component of an education that addresses the concerns of rurality enhances our understanding of what is possible. While it is important to understand the sociological conditions that frame the physical mobility of rural people, it is just as important to consider its affective, even psychic, dimensions as mobility relates to attachment, to belonging, to transience – and to loss. For whether one stays in or leaves a rural area (and the oscillations of mobility and transience are rarely so simply demarcated), indeed, regardless of geographical place attention to such affective dimensions, what William Pinar (1991) calls ‘a social psychoanalysis of place’ (p. 165), can reap rich insights into both the challenges and possibilities for education and /in rurality (p. 1).

Further, she states that
...an education that might begin to address the needs of places must first of all resist simplistic binaries of identity and locale, and ask broader questions about loss, vulnerability, and difference, and what these suggest for a new project of conviviality and sustainability within rurality. Such an education asks students to consider the responsibilities and challenges of staying and leaving and to understand the condition of citizenships and attachment (pp. 1–2).

We may add that such an education would also encourage educated people to reflect on the meaning of functioning both as public intellectuals and intelligentsia in different situations creatively and imaginatively (See endnotes 5, 6, 8 & 17).

(b) *Envisioning diverse life styles available that could be sustainable*

There are many other learning models of encountering different and diverse life styles available that could be sustainable. Those learning models suggest, by implication, that new visions of local and cosmopolitan values and beliefs can be incorporated into reformulating social policy and programs for the young and aging population, and into implementing and evaluating those policies and programs. There seems to be spaces that are in-between the consumer society and sustainable life styles that could be realized through new ways of re-learning. For example, as a province Newfoundland and Labrador is becoming an “aging society”, while at the same time it is experiencing labor shortages. Taking these two facts and other factors such as the prevalence of out-migration into account, businesses, educational institutions, professional and non-professional, non-governmental, and governmental agencies are taking new initiatives to attract locals and immigrants to participate in the labor market at the local level. In this context retired people, those who are preparing to retire, and their families are re-learning the meaning of retirement and the aging process in general. Specifically, they appear to be increasingly becoming aware of various perspectives on the aging process. We have already alluded to some aspects of this process in this chapter (see endnote 12) and elsewhere (Singh & Martin, 1982; Singh, 1982a; Singh, 1982b). Various initiatives are basically directed to an older workforce (50 to 70 plus). The goal is to explain to them that life does not end with retirement, and that there are businesses and organizations out there in Newfoundland and Labrador ready to re-hire them after retirement, many offering flexible work environments. In this sense, the basic idea behind these initiatives is to inform people that there are many alternatives to stereotypical ideas of aging. For example, to optimize one’s aging process, one could learn to aspire and prepare oneself to find another occupation after retirement. These initiatives are new in this province (MacEachern, 2012). The trend to re-hire workers from an older workforce is well entrenched in many other countries and provinces. The flip side of this trend is that businesses are often looking for cheap labor in a global economy dominated by neo-liberal ideology to maximize their profits, usually disregarding issues pertaining to social justice (Noddings, 2005). From our perspective, the success of these initiatives would depend upon to the extent to which re-hiring policy of
various stakeholders remain sensitive to the vexing issues surrounding the notion of social justice as it relates to the aged population in particular. In the absence of such sensitivity we imagine these initiatives could pit the young against the old Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans, and locals against the immigrants.

(c) The existing programs that provide services to the seniors

As editors of this book we believe that to begin this learning process, the existing programs that are designed to provide services to the seniors (the elderly) in Newfoundland and Labrador may consider creating such in-between spaces (spaces between local and global contexts, see endnotes 5, 7, 8 & 11) within them, where the focus could be exclusively given to those seniors who are also grandparents, and whose families live in diaspora. Grandparents play a significant role by providing crucial and needed services to their families, especially to their diasporic ones. It is good to note global trends when considering the roles grandparents play in families that are going through rapid transformation. For example, grandparents in different countries are now advocating that they should be paid for the services they provide to grandchildren and their own adult children in the tough economic times, and that they should offer themselves for rent to families, schools, communities, and to the state and non-government organizations for valuable services they can provide based on their experience and knowledge. They believe these services have economic values which should be openly acknowledged publicly and taken into economic planning and policy making processes. Their services should not be seen as a source of cheap labor similar to those that immigrants provide, and to “un-paid” labor provided by women all over the world to sustained the global economy – the economy that has still to figure out how to respond to issues related to social justice. Lest we forget, there is an increased prevalence of elder abuse- locally, nationally, and globally. Many grandparents are abused and exploited all over the world for various reasons.

The issue of grandparents as a ‘resource’ is one that has a particular history in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. In situations where adult children have been unable to provide care to their own children, the state has historically provided programs and services for the children to reside with their grandparents. The historical context and underlying values have been those of providing ‘free’ care; the state providing minimal supports to the grandparents intended to cover only basic costs – the notion of providing care for altruistic reasons or being viewed as a family responsibility – global neoliberal ideology. Recently, the province has increased its support to such grandparents (and other relatives) which is more reflective of an acknowledgement of the value of the care provided, but also, possibly reflecting the realities of the challenges to provide out of home placements for children.

Meanwhile, consideration may be given to designing other new programs that aim just to create safe spaces where friends and family members could listen sympathetically to the voices of the seniors, both grandparents and those who are
not grandparents. For we witnessed not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but also elsewhere, that listening to the voices of seniors, as opposed to merely hearing their voices, in their later years of life, enhances their physical health, along with their spiritual and general well-being. This viewpoint is also supported by research in social gerontology. (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, Buchanan, Flouri, & Griggs, 2009; Devine & Earle, 2011; Singh, Amarjit and Mehta, Kalyani., 2008; Thiele & Whelan, 2008; Turvett, 2006).

(d) Grandparents as Leaders

Policy makers in this province may consider designing leadership programs for grandparents. Besides the lingering prevalence of ageism, grandparents all over the globe are engaged in lifelong learning. Grandparents are not a homogeneous group of people and as such exhibit a great degree of difference and diversity in their opinions and life styles. Many of today’s grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador are relatively young, well-educated, both cosmopolitan and local in outlook, and consumers of a variety of goods and services in their own right. They appear motivated to engage in conversations about how to envision various aspects of change that are taking place in Newfoundland and Labrador society and culture. Some of them are relatively more committed to envisioning actions and practices that contribute to the sustainability of rural communities and lifestyles in this province in the age of globalism. In valuing grandparents, we need to be careful that they are not regarded by government leaders as commodities or merely a resource to be used to engage them in ways that they are seen as “free resources” to exploit.

(e) The value of small scale nuanced and community based research and implication of this type of research to the wellbeing of grandparents, families, communities and schools

Following Smith’s (2002) observations (see Endnote 17) about the value of small scale nuanced and community based research, we have tried to highlight the idea that “everyone” – and not only the designated highly funded “experts” and “researchers” – can have the ability and desire to produce, and in fact can produce relevant and local knowledge in contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador society to make sense of their everyday lives. Expert knowledge with its technical rationality often leads to the increasing “colonization of the lifeworld” (Habermas, 1987, The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2, p. 355.).

Considering the tensions produced by the capitalist/corporate form of modernity between local and global interests (see endnote 4&.5) we suggest a systematic re-thinking may be an alternative option in Newfoundland and Labrador to ask questions such as: What sort of knowledge is being produced in Newfoundland and Labrador as a place? Does this knowledge support the desired commitment, love, and attachment to Newfoundland as a place to live and provide imaginative alternative life style options to citizens to invest in their communities for the future? What
type of intellectuals is our education system producing? Do they function as local organic intellectuals or as intelligentsia? This last question is related to production of knowledge. Henry Giroux in his book *Border Crossing* (1993b) and Derlik (1996), provides some suggestions as to how the local organic intellectuals can function as a committed group of people dedicated to softening the strong and often harsh impact of capitalist globalization on their community members and surrounding environment in the future.

We hope, albeit in small ways, local nuanced knowledge produced by grandparents as amplified in their voices, and represented in many chapters in this book, becomes a pedagogical resource that can be used by teachers, students, social workers, health services providers, community development workers, policy makers, and by the common citizens to contribute to the decolonization of the life world in Newfoundland and Labrador, and also in other parts of the world.

**NOTES**

1 We realize that voice is not something that someone gives to others. It is something to be engaged and critically understood. Voice is often problematic, yet it is central to any sense of personal action and power, that is agency. While a great deal has been written on voice as critical pedagogical category, no attempt is made here to review the literature on this category. However, it suffices to mention that the exercise of listening to the voices of both the diasporic and the non-diasporic grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to all the stakeholders who are interested in their well-being, enables us to realize what forms of knowledge and cultures those groups bring in the form of cultural and social capital. It is important to know what sorts of cultural and social capital get produced and reproduced when different voices are engaged in real life situations. Once the grandparents come to realize that their voices are liberating, they can build on that freedom. They can feel confident in solving real and perceived problems pertaining to their daily lives in their own specific ways. We should remind ourselves that in this process of prioritizing the voices of the grandparents all parties involved are simultaneously teachers and learners. Part of the struggle for voice, in pedagogy, is to help the grandparents to develop a language that can serve as a means to empower them to socially transform their lives. Further, we should remember that lived experiences and language are linked together. We speak out of our lived experiences, for in fact there is no other way to speak. Therefore, if we do not have freedom to speak out our experiences, we might become voiceless. If the individual is voiceless, does it mean that the individual is negated? Silenced? Our orientation is that if grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador, with the help of other stakeholders, can use their voices to produce “local knowledge” and “local theories” about their own aging process in relation to the larger debate in society about aging and grand parenting, they might be able to speak to their own specific reality with confidence. They could self-consciously reflect on their own construction of old age and on their own transformation. In writing this book we are claiming that integrating case studies presented in this book into pedagogical practices give us a site to engage the voices of grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador and other stakeholders. For this way of looking at the struggle for voice, in pedagogy, see Doyle, Clar & Singh, Amarjit (2006). *Reading and teaching Henry Giroux*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., Giroux, H.A. (1989). *Schooling for democracy*. London: Routledge, Giroux, H.A. (2003). *The abandoned generation: democracy beyond the culture of fear*. New York: Plaggrave Macmillian, Giroux, H. A. (1993). *Living dangerously: multiculturalism and politics of difference*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, Giroux, H.A. (1993). *Border crossing: cultural workers and the politics of education*. New York: Routledge.

2 Globalization, and related terms such as globalism, globality and the like are defined in many different ways. Ritzer (2007) defines globalization as “the spread of worldwide practices, relations, consciousness and organization of social life.” He defines globalism as “the monocausal and unilinear
view that the world is dominated by economics and that we are witnessing the emergence of the hegemony of the capitalist world market and the neoliberal ideology that underpins it.” He defines Globality as “the view that closed spaces, especially those associated with nations, are growing increasingly illusory in the era of globalization.” (p. 292)

Many grandparents are retiring at younger ages and they have more energy and enthusiasm to take on an active role in their grandchildren’s lives. In the context of globalization there is an international trend of grandparents caring for grandchildren. There are more grandparents living now than in the past. According to Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2001, for all children age 0–14 in Canada: 3.3% of the grandchildren shared a home with at least one grandparent, 2.9% of grandchildren lived in a multigenerational household, and 0.4% of grandchildren lived in a skip-generation household. For the population of children aged 0–14 years, Newfoundland and Labrador ranked number three in Canada with regard to the percentage of grandchildren sharing a home with at least one grandparent. In the case of Newfoundland and Labrador, these numbers were 5.3%, 4.6%, and 0.7%, respectively. Comparable numbers in the Northwest Territories were 5.4%, 4.1%, and 1.3%. In Nunavut these numbers were 9.7%, 7.4%, and 2.3 (Milan, Anne and Brian Hamm, 2003).

Further according to this trend, there was an increase in the number of grandchildren being raised by grandparents in Canada; between 1991 and 2001 there was a 20% increase in the number of Canadian children under 18 who were living with grandparents with no parent present in the home. Statistics Canada (2006) data indicate that there were 65,135 children living with their grandparents, and where the grandparents were their primary caregivers. The 2001 data for the same population was 56,790! These numbers show that the practice of grandparents raising their grandchildren is on the rise. This phenomenon is even more evident in the United States. According to the National Census Bureau, in 1996 over 1.4 million children were being raised by grandparents without the help of parents (Casper & Bryson, 1999). This was an increase of 37 percent from the 1993 census (American Association of Retired Persons [AARP], 1998)! In Australia in 2003, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that there were 25,000 grandparent families with children aged 0 to 17 years, and there are many Australian organizations that feel that this number is much higher! The same phenomenon was also witnessed in South Africa recently by two Newfoundland social workers. In the latest Social Work news letter entitled Connecting Voices, Green & Haley (2009) recount the following: “We marveled at the resilience and strength of the South African people... Approximately six and a half million people are living with HIV/AIDS in this country – that means one in four people. While it is difficult to imagine the impact on families, we witnessed it each day as we went into the townships. We saw grandmothers carrying children, cleaning clothes, gathering food and cooking. In 2005 there were over 2 million children orphaned because of AIDS – a number expected to grow to 5.7 million by 2015. The middle generation is dying, leaving a large and visible gap between the young and old. Grandmothers are filling this gap after burying their own children. As the Stephen Lewis Foundation says, ‘grandmothers are the unsung heroes of South Africa’ (p. 12).” While there is an increase in South Africa, it is sparked more by the health issues related to HIV/AIDS than in other countries

Kelly (2009), in another context, writes about Newfoundland and Labrador: “In the past three decades the province [Newfoundland and Labrador], has been culturally reconfigured by the ecological crisis of the world’s ocean, resulting in the collapse and closure of the province’s historical raisond’etre, a five hundred years old cod fishery. The depopulation that followed – 12% of the total population in a 15 years period-resulted in a radical decline of community infrastructure. Schools, churches, fire halls, and medical facilities closed as a profound cultural disorientation grew. This orientation is still felt province-wide, but reverberates most profoundly in rural and ‘outport’ [small rural communities] places. Coincident with this demise the rise of an oil and gas industry, also fueled by global greed, overproduction, and disregarded for the finitude of planetary resource. Such circumstances of profound cultural (and ecological) crisis, loss, reorientations, and change drastically increase the stakes of leaving and staying [in rural areas]. They also heighten the need for more complex approaches to any efforts designed to ensure the viability and suitability of places.” (p. 2) “Learning to Lose: Reality, Transience, and Belonging (A Companion to Michael Corbett), Journal of Research in Rural Studies, 2009, 24(11). In the same vein, the final report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Government’s Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, released in 2003, states that “with job losses in many parts of the province being so severe, and without sufficient growth in...
employment opportunities elsewhere in the provincial economy, people have been forced to choose between unemployment and out-migration” (35).

5 Arif Dirlik points out that “the meaning of the local in contemporary discussion is uncertain” (p. 42) and any undertaking to define it “must of necessity be highly speculative.” Benjamin Barber believes that the “local” is a politically contested concept. Dirlik claims that the local “is both a site of promise and predicament”. He explains “what the local implies in different contexts is highly uncertain. Suffice it to say here that a concern for the local seems to appear in the foreground in connection with certain social movement (chief among them ecological, women’s, ethnic, and indigenous people’s movements) and the intellectual repudiation of past ideologies (primarily the intellectual development associated with postmodernism)” (p. 23). He further asks “why there should be a connection between the repudiation of past ideologies and the reemergence of the local as a concern is not very mysterious. Localism as an orientation in either a ‘traditional’ or a modern sense has never disappeared, but rather has been suppressed or, at best, marginalized in various ideologies of modernity. Localism does not speak of an incurable social disease that must sooner or later bring about its natural demise; and there is nothing about it that is inherently undesirable. What makes it [localism] seem so is a historical consciousness that identifies civilization and progress with political, social, and cultural homogenization and justifies the supersession of the local in the name of the general and the universal. Modernist teleology has gone the farthest of all in stamping upon the local its derogatory image: as enclave of backwardness left out of progress, as the realm of rural stagnation against the dynamism of the urban, industrial civilization of capitalism, as the realm of particularistic culture against universal scientific rationality, and, perhaps most importantly, as the obstacle to full realization of that political form of modernity, the nation-state” (p. 23). Henri Lefebvre writes that “no space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local” (p. 1, cited in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanake, 1996). The small scale studies that we have included in this book document how grandparents, families, and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador are attempting to come to terms with ongoing processes and forces of globalization as a contemporary manifestation of modernity. This manifestation is disrupting local communities and regions in this province into something else, whether nightmarish or the location for imagining alternative possibilities for the future. (see Endnote, 4).


Introduction

Society: An Answer to War (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003: 1–12) describes five meanings of global civil society. She proposes “to set out five different versions of the concept of civil society in common usage and to say something about what they imply in a global context” (p. 158). These five versions are: Societas Civilis, Bourgeois Society (Bürgerliche Gesellschaft), The Activist Version, The Neoliberal Version, and The Postmodern Version. Her book is subtitled an ‘answer to war’. She says “This is because the concept of civil society has always been linked to the notion of minimizing violence in social relations, to the public use of reason as a way of managing human affairs in place of submission based on fear and insecurity, or ideology and superstition” (p.155). According to her, “The terms ‘global’ and ‘civil society’ became the new buzzwords of the 1990s. In this book, I want to suggest that the two terms are interconnected and reflect a new reality, however imperfectly understood.” (p. 153). She says, “All versions of civil society are both normative and descriptive. They describe a political project i.e., a goal, and at the same time an actually existing reality, which may not measure up to the goal. Societas civilis expressed the goal of public security, of a civilized, i.e., non-violent, society. Bürgerliche Gesellschaft was about the rise of market society as a condition for individual freedom, and the balance between the state and the market.” (pp.161–162). According to Kaldor (2010), “The neoliberal version is about the benefits of Western, especially American, society; thus the goal is the spread of this type of society to the rest of the world. Globalization, the spread of global capitalism, is viewed as a positive development, the vehicle, supplemented by global civil society, for achieving global Westernization or ‘the end of history’.” (p. 162).

Further, “This version might be described as ‘laissez-faire politics’, a kind of market in politics. According to this definition, civil society consists of associational life—a non-profit, voluntary ‘third sector’—that not only restrains state power but also actually provides a substitute for many of the functions performed by the state. Funding for democracy-building and human rights NGOs is somehow supposed to help establish a rule of law and respect for human rights.” (p. 161)

According to Kaldor (2010), “The postmodern definition of civil society departs from the universalism of the activist and neoliberal versions, although even this version requires one universal principle—that of tolerance. Civil society is an arena of pluralism and contestation, a source of incivility as well as civility. Some postmodernists criticize the concept of civil society as Eurocentric, a product of a specific Western culture that is imposed on the rest of the world. Others suggest a reformulation so as to encompass other more communalist understandings of political culture. In particular, it is argued that classic Islamic society represented a form of civil society in the balance between religion, the bazaar and the ruler.” (p. 160).

According to Kaldor (2010), “…for the activist version, the inhabitants of civil society can be roughly equated with civic-minded or public-spirited groups. Those active in civil society would be those concerned about public affairs and public debate. For the postmodernists, civic-minded groups are only one component of civil society. In particular, postmodernists emphasize the importance of national and religious identities as well as multiple identities as a precondition for civil society, whereas for the activists, a shared cosmopolitanism is more important.” And, from the postmodernist perspective, “… it is possible to talk about global civil society in the sense of the global spread of fields of contestation. Indeed, one might talk about a plurality of global civil societies through different globally organized networks. These might include Islam, nationalist Diaspora networks, as well as human rights networks, etc. Further she writes that “The postmodern version has to be related to the break with modernity of which a key component was the nation-state.” (160–161).

She explains, “The activist perspective…is a radicalization of democracy and an extension of participation and autonomy. On this definition, civil society refers to active citizenship, to growing self-organization outside formal political circles, and expanded. It is space in which individual citizens can influence the conditions in which they live both directly through self-organization and through political pressure”. (pp. 159–160)

Further, “The activist version is about political emancipation. It is about the empowerment of individuals and the extension of democracy. For activists, globalization is not an unqualified benefit. It offers possibilities for emancipation on a global scale. But in practice, it involves growing inequality and insecurity and new forms of violence. Global civil society, for the activists, therefore, is about ‘civilizing’ or democratizing globalization, about the process through which groups, movements and individuals can demand a global rule of law, global justice and global empowerment. “The
contemporary versions of civil society all have normative goals, which can only be fully explained in the context of globalization.” (p. 162).

"Common sense, as described by Merriam-Webster, is defined as beliefs or propositions that most people consider prudent and of sound judgment, without reliance on esoteric knowledge or study or research, but based upon what they see as knowledge held by people “in common”. Thus “common sense” (in this view) equates to the knowledge and experience which most people already have, or which the person using the term believes that they do or should have. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the phrase is good sense and sound judgment in practical matters (“the basic level of practical knowledge and judgment that we all need to help us live in a reasonable and safe way”). Whichever definition is used “…common sense remains a perennial topic in epistemology and many philosophers make wide use of the concept or at least refer to it. Some related concepts include intuition, pre-theoretic belief, ordinary language, the frame problem, foundational beliefs, good sense, endoxa, axioms, wisdom, folk wisdom, folklore and public opinion.”

"Gramsci gave much thought to the question of the role of intellectuals in society and stated that all men are intellectuals, in that all have intellectual and rational faculties, but not all men have the social function of intellectuals. …Furthermore, he distinguished between a “traditional” intelligentsia which sees itself as a class apart from society, and the thinking groups which every class produces from its own ranks “organically”. Such “organic” intellectuals do not simply describe social life in accordance with scientific rules, but rather articulate, through the language of culture, the feelings and experiences which the masses could not express for themselves. As educators Gramsci’s ideas are important for us because his ideas about the education system correspond “with the notion of critical pedagogy and popular education as theorized and practiced in later decades by Paulo Freire in Brazil, and have much in common with the thought of Frantz Fanon and with ideas of Henry Giroux. Greaves explains that for Gramsci (1971, p. 344; Gramsci 1995, p. 386), it is social activity that unites philosophy with the mass (Greaves, 2008, p. 11). Greaves writes “Gramsci contrasts ‘common sense’ with what he calls ‘good sense.’ He [Gramsci] conceives of good sense as a latent critical faculty in all humans, but it is one that suffers from underdevelopment and becomes choked in a bewildering superstructural babble created by the class opponent. The most important feature of good sense is the critical relationship it bears to practical activity.” (Greaves, 2008; p. 12). In Gramsci’s words good sense depends upon “overcoming bestial and elemental passions through a conception of necessity which gives a conscious direction to one’s activity. This is the healthy nucleus that exists in ‘common sense,’ the part of it which can be called ‘good sense’ and which deserves to be made more unitary and coherent.” (Gramsci 1971, p. 328, cited in Greaves, p. 12). Greaves explains that “Gramsci’s overall point is that when one becomes conscious of the class function of ideas it is indeed possible to extricate good sense from common sense. Good sense exploits the faculties employed by formal philosophy, such as the ability to structure the mind logically and coherently, to think hygienically, interpret empirical data, and so forth. This does not mean everyone can become a great philosopher, but everyone can certainly come to a more systematic assessment of his or her social position in the world. Good sense is therefore loaded with historical potential” (pp. 12–13).

In Gramsci’s words “[i]n acquiring one’s conception of the world one always belongs to a particular grouping which is that of all the social elements which share the same mode of thinking and acting.” (Gramsci 1971, p. 324, cited in Greaves, p. 13). In this sense Gramsci writes that “…although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectual do not exist” (Gramsci 1971, p. 9, cited in Greaves, p. 14). For Gramsci, then, “… intellectual must be ‘studied concretely’ in the context of living social reality.” (Gramsci 1971, p. 6, cited in Greaves, p. 13.) Gramsci writes that “[a]ll men are intellectuals . . . but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals” (Gramsci 1971, p. 9, cited in Greaves p. 14). Greaves explains that for Gramsci (1971, p. 8) “in terms of the generic human organism, the notion of non-intellectual labour is false. Everyone does it; any mental activity that involves the stringing together of thoughts in an organised way is an intellectual process, and the productive sphere involves such cognition at all levels.” (Greaves, p. 14). Thus Greaves explains that the word intellectual in the modern world is tied “…to productive specialism and supporting cadres created by an extremely complex division of labour” (p. 15), and
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“the function of intellectuals can be set apart from other workers in two closely related senses: the disciplinary and the educational. Intellectuals educate and discipline the entire culture in which the conflictual labour process operates by projecting the specific realities of production as though these are trans-historical certainties common to all, and are therefore indisputable, moral, just and so on. In other words, intellectuals are defined according to hegemonic function.” (p. 16).

Carl Boggs (1993, p. 3) states that intellectuals are both technocrats and social critics. The important thing is to note that in the production process each social group creates its own organic intellectuals. Gramsci writes “[e]very social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.” (Gramsci 1971, p. 5, cited in Greaves, p. 16).

While writing in another context, Doyle and Hoben (2011) explore the relationship between imagination within the nexus of critical pedagogy and philosophy. They write that “we sometimes believe that creativity has to do with enduring characteristics or talent that is limited to certain people while others believe all people are creative” (p. 115). In a similar vein Maxine Greene is interested in transformations, openings, and possibilities. She claims that “one must have an awareness of leaving something behind while reaching towards something new, and this kind of awareness must be linked to imagination” (1995, p. 20, cited in Greaves, p. 16). The imagination is, then”, according to Doyle and Hoben, “a staging ground for the conflicts and struggles of human existence in which identity and ideology contend…. The imagination allows us to break with hegemony by making accessible those realms and modes of existence which the monolithic voice of repressive power wishes to hide for our preview…. The imagination is the unseen hand which provides the impetus to go in reach of new horizons. Quite often wonder startles us with the unexpected beauty of our daily lives, a haunting place where we can hear the lonely songs of consciousness, moving outwards, seeking, searching through the endless possibilities to be claimed among love, and as-yet-unknown yearnings” (p. 124).

George Ritzer (2007) defines, “glocalization”, “space war”, and “grobaliztion” of nothing in these ways: McDonaldization is “The process by which the principle of the fast-food restaurant coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society, as well as the rest of the world; in the later sense, a form of cultural imperialism.” (p. 263). Glocalization is “the interpenetration of the global and the local resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas.” (p. 292) Ritzer (2007) writes that “to Bauman, what defines the global world is a ‘space war’ between those who have and those who do not have mobility. However, even those with mobility face grave problems.” (p. 282) Grobalization of nothing is “the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, and the like and their desire, indeed need, to impose themselves on various geographic areas.” (p. 292) By nothing, Ritzer means “…. (largely) empty forms; forms largely devoid of distinctive content. Conversely, something would be defined as (largely) full forms; forms rich in distinctive content.….. A good example of nothing in these terms is the shopping mall (e.g., any of the malls owned by the Mills Corporation-Potomac Mills, Swagrass Mills, etc.), which is an empty (largely) structure that is easily replicated around the world. These malls could be filled with an endless array of specific content (e.g., local shops, local foods etc.-something)! that could vary enormously from one location to another. However, increasingly they are filled with chain stores of various types- nothing! Since more and more countries in the world have these malls, this is an example of the glocalization of nothing and of increasing global homogenization.” (p. 267)

where intricate representational forms are worked out and produced. It is a place where multiplicity of forces (determinations and effects) are at work to produce a particular practice. Different things can and do happen at a specific site at a particular time. A site is a place where different possibilities of uses and effects interact.” A site is a contested terrain. According to Simon it is a place where, “the past is traversed to competing and contradictory construction.” Further, he suggests that ‘cultural workers intending to initiate pedagogies of historical reformation need an understanding of topography on which these struggles are taking place.” (Simon, 1994:128) To struggle at a site means taking into account the specificity of the particular context in which one is located in relations to others. There could be many sites of production for a particular struggle. Simon (1994:128–129) provides a simple list of the sites of popular memory production…). See, Simon, I.R. (1993) Teaching against the grain: Text for a pedagogy of possibility. New York: Bergin & Garvey. Simon. I.R. (1994). “Forms of insurgency in the production of popular memories; The Columbus quincentenary, and the pedagogy of counter commemoration” in H.A. Giroux and P. McLaren (1994) (Eds). Between borders: pedagogy and politics of cultural studies. New York: Routledge.

Following Simon, one can see how aging and getting old as sites could be taken up (e.g., integrated) by grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador where they could engage themselves in various forms of struggles and negotiations with others. Occupying a specific location and doing grand parenting in the overall family structure in one’s life course, old age and specific issues surrounding this location could be taken as sites at myriad places (e.g., in households and public venues, such as sports arenas, schools, business forums, embassies, airline counters, hotel lobbies, governmental offices, shopping centers, bus and train terminals, international trade centers, the information highway, movie theaters, temples, birthday parties, marriage ceremonies, religious festivals, national day celebrations, cultural parades, fashion shows, funerals, child birth celebrations and eating places). The contributors to this book, to some extent, show how grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador use these places as sites. These sites can also be seen as expansions of the public spheres in which grandparents in province could have opportunities to voice their concerns. The concept of “the public sphere” was originally developed by Habermas (1962), The Structural transformation of the Public Sphere. According to Fraser (1994:75) “the idea of the ‘public sphere’ in Habermas’ sense is a conceptual resource… it designates a theater in modern society in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction.” She explains, “…this arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourse that can in principle be critical of the state.” Further, she asserts that “the public sphere in Habermas’ sense is also conceptually distinct from the official economy; it is not an arena of market relation but rather one of discursive relations, a theater for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling. ” She states, thus this concept of the public sphere permits us to keep in view the distinction between the state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory.” Fraser has expanded this concept with respect to theorizing the limits of democracy in late capitalist societies. (See, Fraser, N. (1994), “Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy,” in H.A. Giroux and P. MacLaren (1994) (Eds.), pp. 74–98, Op. Cit). For further discussions of concepts discussed above to the socialization of future grandparents in this province, who are at present students attending schools at different levels, see, Doyle, C (2006. , Singh, A.). Reading and teaching Henry A. Giroux, New York: Peter Lang Publishers, Inc., and Paulo Freire (2005). Teachers as cultural workers, letters to those who dare teach. Boulder: Westview Press.

What does growing older mean if it is not simply the passage of time, having another birthday? In gerontology “increasingly, scholars argue that chronological age is a relatively meaningless variable … Age is only a way of marking human events and experiences; those events and experiences are what matters, not time itself”… Time’s passing is of concern only because it is connected, however loosely, with other changes: physical, psychological, and social.” (p. 4 – see reference below) In gerontology “in the past, researchers searched for the “normal changes that accompanied aging; a most important part of this research was to distinguish normal age changes from pathological or disease processes that become more prevalent with age but were not caused by aging. With the growing knowledge about the modifiability and variability of physical aging processes, the distinctions among usual, optimal, and pathological aging emerged … ‘optimal’ aging is characterized by minimal loss of
physical function and a healthy, vigorous body; ‘pathological’ aging is aging accompanied by multiple chronic diseases and negative environment influences. ‘Usual’ aging refers to the typical or average experience – somewhat in between pathological and optimal”… “Psychological aging processes include changes in personality, mental functioning, and sense of self during our adult years.” (p. 5)

Gerontologists make many generalizations in this area: “First, personality does not undergo profound changes in later life… For example … the grumpy old man was very likely a grumpy young man. Although the developmental challenges and opportunities we encounter do vary through our lives, the strategy we use to adapt to change, to refine and reinforce our sense of self, to work towards realizing our full human potential are practiced throughout our adult lives.” (p. 6) “Social aging is a multidimensional and dynamic force. It includes the transitions into and out of roles, expectations about behavior, societal allocation of resources and opportunities, negotiations about the meaning and implications of chronological age, and the experience of individuals traveling the life course and negotiating life stages.” (p. 7) See, Morgan, L. & Kunkel, S. (2001) (2nd Edition). Aging: the social context. California: Pine Forge Press.


14 The 1970s saw the rise of critical pedagogy. It rose in resistance to so-called transmission approaches to education and curriculum. Therefore, in our reading we find that in critical pedagogy a distinction is often made between the pedagogical goals and curriculum goals of teaching and learning. Curriculum goals generally entail providing students the opportunities to learn the already existing forms of knowledge produced within the framework of dominant paradigms. Pedagogical goals require more than this. They are framed to bring about progressive social change. See endnote 7. Based on our research (see Doyle, C. and Singh, A., 2006, op. cit.) in the “field”, we have developed the RCIT (Reflective and Critical Internship Teaching model), a model of teacher education designed to engage students with curriculum that aims at achieving both the curriculum and pedagogical goals. In this model we envision that generally there are three forms of knowledge production that dominate our daily conversations and lived experiences. We label these forms of knowledge as common sense knowledge, professional knowledge, official knowledge, and defined them as follow: common sense knowledge is taken for granted dominant cultural norms, values, attitudes, self-concepts, behavior patterns, and overall orientations which we have acquired through socialization in cultures and societies. It constitutes more of our personal opinions and idiosyncrasies. Professional knowledge is produced by various professionals, such as sociologists, psychologists, and so on, and their respective professional organizations. Official knowledge is produced by the state, i.e., various government apparatuses, such as the department or ministries of education, health, economic development, and so on. In building the RCIT model we find ourselves more inclined to accept the assertion that it is the ongoing conversations we have with others that makes it possible for us to live together and solve our problems. Therefore, the model encourages students to self-consciously combine the three forms of knowledge described herein when they engage in communication with others. We have found that when students do that, they feel more empowered. They are more likely to make sense of their environment (personal and social predicaments in which they find themselves due to their specific locations in general social structure) with more confidence. Empowerment also entails prefigurative politics and living. Kaufman (2003:277–8) writes that “prefigurative politics is based on the belief that we are creating the new world we are advocating as we go, and so we should try to build in the present, the institutions and social patterns of the society we are working toward.” And “in prefigurative movements, we are reweaving the social fabric. We are creating an alternative social world, and the relations we create along the way lay the foundations for the relations we will have after we achieve our goals.” See, Kaufman, C. (2003). Ideas for actions: relevant theory for radical change. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press. Also see, Schon 1987, 1983.

15 See the “Special Issue: The Morning Watch Books Winter 2006 Vol. 33, Nos. 3–4 to Fall 2007 Vol. 35, Nos. 1–2 “. Amarjit Singh et. al. edited four books. These books contain efforts by many authors to produce local knowledge in Newfoundland and Labrador.

16 Giroux is one of the leading voices within the discourse of critical pedagogy. One of the important tenets of Giroux’s thought about curriculum is that teachers and professors need to take seriously those cultural experiences and meanings “that students bring to the day-to-day process of schooling itself.
If we take the experiences of our students as a starting point for dialogue and analysis, we give them the opportunity to validate themselves, to use their own voices" (1981, p. 123). This suggestion does not fit well to "a predetermined and hierarchically arranged body of knowledge [that] is taken as the cultural currency to be dispensed to all children regardless of their diversity and interests" (p. 123). He further explains that the concept of hidden curriculum allows us to make "linkages between schools and the social, economic, and political landscape that make up the wider society, the hidden curriculum theorists provided a theoretical impetus for breaking out of the methodological quagmire in which schools were merely viewed as black boxes" (1983, p. 45). Giroux maintains that curriculum must not be limited to the domain of the few and the privileged, but it must center on the "particular forms of life, culture, and interaction that students bring to school" (2005, p. 104). He writes "critical pedagogy always strives to incorporate student experience as official curriculum content. While articulating such experience can both be empowering and a form of critique against relations that silence, such experience is not an unproblematic form of knowledge" (Giroux and Simon, 1989. p. 231). Giroux suggests, “instead of stressing the individualistic and competitive approaches to learning, students are encouraged to work together on projects, both in terms of their production and evaluation” (2005, p. 104). Like Giroux, we realize that that curriculum should go beyond the experience of students’ lives. It should expand their boundaries and borders “while constantly pushing them to test what it means to resist oppression, work collectively, and exercise authority from the position of an ever-developing sense of knowledge, expertise, and commitment” (p. 104). According to Giroux and Aronowitz what we need is “really useful knowledge that draws from popular education, knowledge that challenges and critically appropriates dominant ideologies, and knowledge that points to more human and democratic social relations and cultural forms” (1994, p. 153). See, Giroux, H.A. (1981), Giroux, H. A. (1983). Ideology, culture, and process of schooling. Philadelphia: Temple University Press; London: Farmer Press, Theory and resistance in education: a pedagogy for the opposition. London: Hienemann Educational Book, Giroux, H.A. and Simon, R.I. (1989). Popular culture, schooling, and everyday life. Granby, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey, Giroux, H.A. (2005) (2nd.Ed.). Schooling and the struggle for public life: democracy’s promise and education’s challenge. Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, Giroux, H. A. and Aronowitz (1994). Education still under siege. Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, Doyle, C. and Singh, A. (2006), op. cit.

Many writers recognize the importance of local knowledge and local theorizing (Geertz, 1983; Schibeci & Grundy, 1987; Tripp, 1987; Smyth, 1989). This form of knowledge and theorizing helps people to enhance their well-being in the concrete context in which they work and live. We have found that in the Newfoundland and Labrador context of school-family-community relations, local knowledge and theories produced by teachers, parents, student and others help them to focus on the concrete relationship on which their daily lives depend (Singh, et. al., 1999).

Local knowledge and theories are discussed and defined in multiple ways and at different levels (FAO Corporate Document Repository, Title: What is Local Knowledge? United Nations): “Local knowledge is the knowledge that people in a given community have developed over time, and continue to develop. It is based on experience, often tested over centuries of use, adapted to the local culture and environment, embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals, held by individuals or communities, and is dynamic and changing. It is important to note that “local knowledge is not confined to tribal groups or to the original inhabitants of an area. It is not even confined to rural people. Rather, all communities possess local knowledge – rural and urban, settled and nomadic, original inhabitants and migrants. There are other terms, such as traditional knowledge or indigenous knowledge, which are closely related, partly overlapping, or even synonymous with local knowledge. The term local knowledge seems least biased in terms of its contents or origin. As it embraces a larger body of knowledge systems, it includes those classified as traditional and indigenous.”

“Knowledge systems are dynamic, people adapt to changes in their environment and absorb and assimilate ideas from a variety of sources. However, knowledge and access to knowledge are not spread evenly throughout a community or between communities. People may have different objectives, interests, perceptions, beliefs and access to information and resources. Knowledge is generated and transmitted through interactions within specific social and agro-ecological contexts. It is linked to access and control over power. Differences in social status can affect perceptions,
access to knowledge and, crucially, the importance and credibility attached to what someone knows. Common knowledge is held by most people in a community; e.g. almost everyone knows how to cook rice (or the local staple food). Shared knowledge is held by many, but not all, community members; e.g. villagers who raise livestock will know more about basic animal husbandry than those without livestock. Specialized knowledge is held by a few people who might have had special training or an apprenticeship; e.g. only few villagers will become healers, midwives, or blacksmiths.”

And “The type of knowledge people have is related to their age, gender, occupation, labour division within the family, enterprise or community, socio-economic status, experience, environment, history and so on. This has significant implications for research and development work. To find out what people know, the right people must be identified. For example, if boys do the herding they may know, better than their fathers (e.g., where the best grazing sites are located). If we ask the fathers to show us good pastures, we might only get partial information. Development professionals sometimes think villagers know very little, when in fact the wrong people have been interviewed.” Further, “It is important to realize that local knowledge – as with other types of knowledge – is dynamic and constantly changing, as it adapts to a changing environment. Because local knowledge changes over time, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a technology or practice is local, adopted from outside, or a blend of local and introduced components. In most cases the latter situation is most likely. For a development project, however, it does not matter whether a practice is really local or already mixed with introduced knowledge. What is important before looking outside the community for technologies and solutions is to look first at what is available within the community.”

“Local and indigenous knowledge refers to the cumulative and complex bodies of knowledge, know-how, practices and representations that are maintained and developed by peoples with extended histories of interactions with the natural environment. These cognitive systems are part of a complex that also includes language, attachment to place, spirituality and worldview. Many different terms are used to refer to this knowledge, these include: traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), indigenous knowledge (IK), local knowledge, rural people’s/farmers’ knowledge, ethnobiology/ethnobotany/ethnozoology, ethnoscience, folk science, and indigenous science.” The reason “these many terms coexist [is] because the wide range of social, political and scientific contexts have made it all but impossible to for a single term to be suitable in all circumstances. The LINKS project promotes an all-encompassing approach to local & indigenous knowledge. For in many cultures, the ‘rational’ or ‘objective’ cannot be separated from the ‘sacred’ or ‘intuitive’. Nature and culture are not opposed and circumscribed by sharp boundaries. Knowledge, practice and representations are intertwined and mutually dependent.” (See: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems LINKs)

18 The usefulness of small scale, community and neighborhood based studies is well recognized by the social science community. Smith’s (2002) comments on small scale research projects involving Maori communities are useful here, and so are presented in some detail. Smith writes about the concerns of Maori researchers in New Zealand and the challenges they face in articulating indigenous research agenda in the context of a highly institutionalized world of research. Her observations may throw some light on how to appreciate the place of small scale research done by local people who are deeply involved in the well-being of their communities. She points out that “…research is highly institutionalized through disciplines and fields of knowledge, through communities and interest groups of scholars, and through the academy.” She reminds us that research is a political process since it “is also an integral part of political structures: governments funded research directly and indirectly through tertiary education, national science organizations, development programmes and policies.” Further, like governments “corporations and industries fund their own research. Their research programmes can involve large amounts of money and resources, and their activities take place across several parts of the globe. Others like “non-government organizations and local community groups also carry out research and involve themselves in the analysis and critique of research. All of these research activities are carried out by people who in some form or another have been trained and socialized into ways of thinking, of defining and making sense of the known and unknown. It seems rather difficult to conceive an articulation of an indigenous research agenda on such a large scale.” This is so, she explains, because “to imagine self-determination, however, is also to, imagine a world in which indigenous peoples become active participants, and to prepare for the possibilities and
challenges that lie ahead.” (p. 124) She goes on to say that “... in addition to reasons outlined earlier ... about the general regard for research by indigenous peoples, there is another reason for a reticence in naming an activity or project as research. Research is also regarded as being the domain of experts who have advanced educational qualifications and have access to highly specialized language and skills.” The diasporic grandparents in Newfoundland and Labrador are interested in producing their own culturally relevant knowledge in the context of their own communities. But it is not easy to do so in real life situation, because they have to constantly engage the so called ‘research experts’. Smith explains, “communities carrying out what they may regard as a very humble little project are reluctant to name it as research in case it provokes the scorn and outrage of ‘real’ researchers. Furthermore, indigenous communities as part of the self-determination agenda do engage quite deliberately in naming the world according to an indigenous world view.” (p. 125) In this context one could appreciate the usefulness of the small scale studies. Theodoratus (1984–1989) also endorses the usefulness of small scale studies, and his 1984–1989 series compiles research on the presence of small ethnic communities in the United States and Canada that might otherwise not have been noticed by larger group projects.

Ritzer (2007) defines Culture – ideology of consumption as “an ideology that affects people scattered widely throughout the globe with the greater reach and sophistication of advertising, the media, and consumer goods. Ultimately, a global mood to consume is created that benefits transnational corporations, as well as the advertising and media corporation.”

According to Thomas West (2002, p. 20) “the guiding problem of negotiation ... is how to balance optimism with critique, how to remain hopeful about the possibility of doing more than simple expressing our differences while avoiding and resisting the colonizing strategies of negotiation that are disguised as civil discourse. Clearly, what is needed is to supplement these stances with a theory of ‘critical negotiation,’ an idea that comes to resemble more a borderland dialogical process or an ethics of social and political engagement and less a mere ‘dealing’.” Further, West points out that this theory of critical negotiation is supposed to do four things: 1. “recognize the role and effect of emotion during negotiation …, 2. understand that negotiation is a co-constitutive process ..., 3. realize that how power relations are perceived before negotiation affects what is happening during negotiation …, and 4. insist on situating negotiation within its larger social and historical contexts ...”

Kelly (2009) reminds us that “the meaning of home, place and belonging have never been more highly contested than in these times of unprecedented migration, displacement, and exile, shifting national borders and identities, and multiple diasporas.” (op.cit., p. 1) Further she points out that, like the fishing outports of Newfoundland and Labrador, “rural places now more than at any other point in history, are places of great loss—of people, natural resources, and, often as a result, of any vision of long term viability. In such places, loss as a persistent condition of life is vividly felt. Yet, what is often misrepresented in such circumstances as an acceptance of disadvantage is more often an intricate and, on many fronts, satisfying negotiation of abiding attachments, longing, and hopes set against a background of ecological and economic insecurity.” (p. 2. Also see endnote 4)

Information on elder abuse all levels is readily available on the Internet. Here we cite only few references that are relevant to the point we want to make. Missing Voices: views of older persons on elder abuse. World Health Organization, Geneva, 2002. International Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse, WHO/NMH/VIP/02.1, WHO/NMH/02.2. Also see, Strategic Plan to Address Elder Abuse in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Five Year Plan for 2005–2010. Developed by the Seniors Resource Centre Association of Newfoundland and Labrador; Abuse of Older Adults: Department of Justice Canada Overview Paper, June 2009, Department of Justice Canada.


“Habermas, whose social theory is grounded in communication, focuses linguistic meanings. It is the lived realm of informal, culturally-grounded understandings and mutual accommodations. Rationalization and colonization of the lifeworld by the instrumental rationality of bureaucracies and market-forces is a primary concern of Habermas’s two-volume Theory of Communicative Action. For Habermas, communicative action is governed by practical rationality – ideas of social importance are mediated through the process of linguistic communication according to the rules of practical rationality. By contrast, technical rationality governs systems of instrumentality, like industries, or on a larger scale, the capitalist economy or the democratic political government. Ideas
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of instrumental importance to a system are mediated according to the rules of that system (the most obvious example is the capitalist economy’s use of currency). Self-deception, and thus systematically distorted communication, is possible only when the lifeworld has been ‘colonized’ by instrumental rationality, so some social norm comes into existence and enjoys legitimate power even though it is not justifiable. This occurs when means of mediating instrumental ideas gains communicative power – like if someone pays a group of people to stay quiet during a public debate, or if financial or administrative resources are used to advertise some social viewpoint. When people take the resulting consensus as normatively relevant, the lifeworld has been colonized and communication has been systematically distorted. The ‘colonization’ metaphor is used because the use of steering media to arrive at social consensus is not native to the lifeworld—the decision-making processes of the systems world must encroach on the lifeworld in a way that is in a sense imperialistic”. George Ritzer (2007, p. 287) explains colonization of the lifeworld in this way: “As the system and its structures grow increasingly differentiated, complex, and self-sufficient, their power grows and with it their ability to direct and control what transpires in the lifeworld (Habermas).”

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RURAL NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

The Personal and the Political in Sustaining Choices and Sustaining Communities

The Canadian Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a history and geography that has forged a people with a strong sense of shared identity, yet who demonstrate many differences and contradictions, individually and collectively. They routinely identify themselves as distinct from other Canadians, yet they have migrated across the country in search of work for generations. They have a strong shared political commitment to place when dealing with the federal government in Ottawa or foreign multi-nationals, but they have many internal divisions: Labrador’s sense of grievance versus “the Island;” “baymen” versus “townies;” the second city of Corner Brook versus St. John’s. They pride themselves on their English and Irish roots – the first colony of the British Empire – yet the Aboriginal people native to the island are extinct, and the first Europeans to settle the province, the Vikings, did not maintain a permanent presence. There is even intense dispute over terms like Newf and Newfy; for many they are derogatory terms while for others – especially for those who have moved to the mainland and who celebrate their Newfoundland and Labrador heritage, – they are used with pride. (See Chapters one and thirty-eight)

Much of the mentality of the English and Irish who settled the province can be linked to the industry that attracted them in the first place – the fishery. Cod, in particular, was the basis of a rural economy, which resulted in hundreds of small fishing outports strung around bays and peninsulas and on islands, close to the fishing grounds. Merchants in St. John’s and a few larger communities controlled access to markets, provided supplies on credit in return for exclusive rights to the dried salt cod. Local democracy was very slow to develop, and settlers who operated in a cashless economy feared the property taxes that local government would demand. The opening up of the interior of the island with logging and paper mills, as well as the gradual development of mining on the island and in Labrador, introduced additional employment and a cash economy. Employment on Canadian and American military bases in World War II, followed by the extension of the welfare state when Newfoundland voted (after two hard-fought ballots) to join Canada, resulted in newfound wealth (Alexander, 1983; Royal Commission, 1986).

Compared to the rest of Canada, economic statistics in the newest Canadian province lagged national averages for decades. Seasonal fishing and forestry industries, and a large seasonal construction industry tied to major resource
developments and the push to establish roads throughout the province, meant that many workers depended on unemployment insurance for part of the year. While earned incomes remained low compared to elsewhere in the country, the province maintained the highest rate of home ownership in North America. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians had adapted their ability to survive through self-provisioning (building their own homes, heating with fire wood, hunting and fishing), with the cash economy. Many commuted seasonally to jobs on the mainland, or worked around the world in the marine industry, while maintaining their homes in rural communities. Large extended families and strong social capital in tight-knit communities accommodated modernization without sacrificing rural lifestyles and traditions (Royal Commission, 1986).

The collapse of the cod fishery and the declaration of a moratorium in 1992 brought this lifestyle largely to an end. Years of declining stocks, combined with increased mechanization in the forest industry and repeated efforts by the Federal Government to diminish dependence on unemployment insurance had placed increased pressure on rural communities. The moratorium, however, represented the largest layoff in Canadian history, and perhaps even more significant, a psychological blow to a culture and society founded on cod. From a total population of about 522,000 in 2001, the province’s population dropped to approximately 506,000 in 2007. At the same time, the composition of population within the province was changing dramatically. Rural communities suffered out-migration, not only to the mainland, but also to urban centres within the province. The population was also aging significantly, partly due to out-migration of young families, but also due to a significant drop in fertility rates, as those families that remained had far fewer children than in the past. In 2007, for the first time in the province’s history, more people were leaving the workforce than were entering it (Locke, 2011; Lynch, 2008/9; Clair, 2008).

Newfoundland and Labrador has changed a lot in recent decades and it’s going to change a lot more. Remote commuting, where people keep their home in the province but commute for varying periods to earn wages on the mainland, is increasingly prevalent. In addition to the cod moratorium, the closure of two of the province’s three paper mills removed entire workforces in the mills and in the regions that produced the pulp wood. Mining and mineral explorations continue to generate significant wealth and employment, but seldom is it located in established communities. Labrador West has become the province’s very own Fort McMurray, and while some families re-locate, many workers commute within the province. New mines in Labrador and on the Island avoid the creation of communities dependent on non-renewable resources, and establish work camps for employees to live at home and commute for weeks or months at a time.

Meanwhile, the North-east Avalon region, including and surrounding the capital city of St. John’s, is booming. The oil and gas industry has led to high paid jobs in the offices that manage the fields and in the broad supply chain that services the industry. Some workers in rural areas commute to jobs on the offshore vessels and platforms, but the bulk of activity is in the capital region. The provincial government is in the
unique position of having significant growth in revenues thanks to the taxes and royalties paid by the oil companies. Expenditures have also grown rapidly, however, with significant infrastructure development in health, education and transportation around the province, but the bulk of permanent employment is concentrated in St. John’s, further enhancing the North-east Avalon economic dominance. Rather than a two-track provincial economy, with the St. John’s region versus the rest, there is more of a three-track economy of the dominant St. John’s region, followed by regional centres enjoying relative population growth, with a third track of rural and remote communities suffering unprecedented decline.

The demographic trends reflecting and reinforcing these regional variations are multiple and complex. There is an overall aging of the population in all but a few communities. Even the booming St. John’s region and the urban regional centres around the province have population pyramids that are not sustainable in the long term. Aboriginal communities in Labrador have the healthiest youth cohorts, but persistent educational and employment challenges will mitigate the opportunities for these young populations if the challenges are not met.

The aging populations in the urban centres of the province are enjoying the best of times. Provincial spending is fuelling stable or growing employment in public administration, health care and education. The provincial college system is targeted with substantial funds to meet the increasing skills shortages for oil, mining, mineral processing and potential hydroelectric development. Rural families are abandoning their home communities and moving into the urban centres, to be close to service sector employment and to services and amenities, especially health care. Little empirical evidence is available, but there are indications that workers commuting to mining employment and the Alberta oil sands are re-locating to the urban centres across the province for the same reasons – access to public and private services and service sector jobs for spouses. There are even reports of owners of fishing enterprises moving to urban centres, while operating their vessels out of rural communities during the fishing season.

The signs of prosperity are abundant throughout these urban centres. New shopping complexes, housing developments and rapidly rising housing prices, vehicle sales, recreational equipment sales, the list goes on. For people without the education, skills or employment to take advantage of these opportunities, rising housing costs are making affordable housing a new social challenge in a province long reputed to have the highest rate of home ownership in North America. For single parents, the prosperity around them can be out of reach without public supports for child care. And greater prosperity, combined with remote commuting and disrupted families, is leading to reports of greater alcohol and drug problems.

Finally, at the community level, outmigration of families from rural towns, and significant levels of remote commuting, diminish the pool of volunteers available for local government, volunteer fire departments and social organizations. Neighbouring communities, long protective of their independence, are finally exploring how to share services. For communities too distant from their neighbours for this to be
viable, basic services and social supports are disappearing (Freshwater, Simms and Voddan, 2011).

There have been many innovative approaches to community and regional development in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the absence of strong local government, a vestige of the province’s fishing history and concomitant lack of local democratic efficacy, a network of voluntary Rural Development Associations (RDAs) were established starting in the 1960s. Based on local community committees, with representation at the regional level, these community-based organizations were initially organized in opposition to government resettlement efforts. The Memorial University Extension Service played a key role in this process, and gradually the federal and provincial governments provided financial support for these organizations to employ a coordinator and implement community development projects. By the 1980s, the RDAs were no longer the only community-based organizations in their areas, as municipal government evolved, the Federal Government supported a nation-wide network of Community Futures committees, and a plethora of social and fraternal organizations made up a maturing civil society (Task Force, 1994; Baldacchino, Greenwood and Felt, eds., 2009).

By the 1990s, the federal and provincial governments demanded a more coordinated use of their community and rural development supports. The Task Force on Community Economic Development was established in 1994, in the midst of the fishery moratorium, to determine a new approach to community and regional development in the province. Significantly, the Task Force was not asked to consider how government’s own departments and agencies were to better coordinate their efforts. The product was a network of 20 Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) in Economic Zones covering all areas of the province. The REDBs were to develop strategic economic plans for their zone and negotiate a performance contract with the federal and provincial governments to coordinate supports for development. Many RDAs have continued to operate without direct government operational support, and municipalities have played an increasing role in community development, while REDBs have had less than consistent support from the federal and provincial governments (Douglas and O’Keeffe, 2009; Voddan, 2009; Freshwater, Simms and Voddan, 2011). In 2012 the Federal Government announced that they would end funding to REDBs, and their counterparts in the Maritimes, and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador responded by cutting their support to REDBs. There are numerous other non-governmental organizations throughout the province, with social, environmental and fraternal mandates, but other than those in the St. John’s region benefitting from support under the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, community-based organizations are crying out for more resources (Greenwood and Pike, 2011).

I have been fortunate to play a role in community and regional development policy in the 1990s, and in researching and writing about it since then. As founding Director of the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development (the Harris Centre) at Memorial University, I have also been able to collaborate closely with
community, industry and government organizations throughout the province. I also have lived through many of the developments in Newfoundland and Labrador’s evolution since the 1960s. Indeed, I have been one of the many who moved away to attend university and returned home (twice in my case) and my young family and I moved to Saskatchewan for five years, and like many, returned “home” (to take up the job at the Harris Centre) the first chance I got. I also have enjoyed the benefits of knowing both sets of my Grandparents, and my children have had the opportunity to know their Grandmothers as integral parts of their lives.

How do grandparents fit into this mix of prosperity, dislocation and restructuring? In part, they are a driver of some of these changes. Again, data is lacking, but there is evidence of many Newfoundlanders and Labradores returning to the province after working on the mainland throughout their careers. They are bringing pensions and savings and for the fortunate ones, windfalls from houses sold for many times what they were purchased for in Toronto, Calgary, Fort McMurray, Vancouver or elsewhere. They may wish to return to their home community, but if that is a rural town distant from health care, they will purchase or build a house in the nearest regional centre or in the St. John’s region. In the title of his last book on regional development, Donald Savoix captured a driving force in this trend: *Visiting Grandchildren* (2006). Savoix’ primary meaning was that grandparents in the Maritimes would have to travel outside the region to visit their grandchildren in Ontario or the west. Much of that is no doubt happening in Newfoundland and Labrador also, but many grandparents are also moving to regional centres and to the St. John’s region to be close to their grandchildren – and to health care and other services.

For parents and children living hectic lives in these prosperous regions, these supportive grandparents are often the difference between assimilation into the North American consumerism-dominated sameness that is discussed in Chapter one in this book, and the continuation of some vestige of Newfoundland and Labrador’s rural identity with its ties to the resource sector, outdoor recreation and community culture and connections. For families living on the margins of the prosperity in low-wage, insecure employment, or long-term unemployment, the presence of these grandparents may be all that separates them from extreme poverty.

My own family has benefitted enormously from my mother and my wife’s mother, who have been available to babysit and support us as we went to university and built our careers. My mother-in-law has maintained her home in rural Newfoundland, providing a place for affordable summer holidays and a re-connection with family stories and connections, logging history and outdoor recreation. When I studied in England, and my wife was working, “Nan” stayed with us twice for extended periods to child mind. We could not have maintained a desirable standard of living and I may not have finished my Ph.D. without her. My mother lives in St. John’s, and she has provided a window for our children into an extended family of fifty-four first cousins, seasonal visits to Old Perlican to pick berries, and a reliable source of cooked dinners.
A great unknown is how these economic and cultural benefits will continue into the future. Fertility rates in Newfoundland and Labrador are no longer at replacement level. The average child in the future will not have a brother or a sister, and their children will not have an uncle or an aunt. In the social history of Newfoundland and Labrador that lack of extended family is inconceivable. Literally. As the baby boom generation dies off, the children born in mainland Canada will not have the links back to this province. This province will hold some curious attraction in the diet and music of the diaspora, but the absence of those tradition bearers with a direct connection in their life experience with the province will be a difficult void to fill. Singh and Oldford in the last chapter discuss the conditions in which it might be possible for the future Newfoundland and Labrador grandparents to keep the links back to this province alive.

What of the life and life style of future Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and what place will grand parents have? Recent research on regional interaction in the province points to the emergence of “functional regions” where the majority of the population lives in communities that are within daily interactive proximity to one another. People live in one community, work in another and shop in another. The North-east Avalon and the province’s regional centres all enjoy a greater critical mass than their individual populations would indicate. And the smaller communities which surround them are integrated into larger labour market and service areas than their historical conception of community would have conceived. With the continuing viability of the province’s resource industries, at higher levels of productivity and with fewer people employed, these functional regions will continue to have propulsive economic activity. Emerging industries such as aquaculture in some areas, increased agriculture, pockets of small and large-scale manufacturing, and public and private sector services, will employ people for decades to come. For many, these functional regions will present an ideal combination of access to urban services and amenities while maintaining easy access to outdoor recreation and rural lifestyles. For rural communities too distant to be part of such functional regions, the prospects are much bleaker. A restructured fish processing sector, with opportunities for longer employment periods during the year would enable some sustainable functional regions based on the fishery. Tourism will continue to offer seasonal opportunities to supplement other employment but tourism-dependent regions will resemble the original fishing communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. A small population of year-round “livyers” will maintain the community over the winter, until the population swells in the summer and fall with tourists and people with summer homes. This could be a very attractive lifestyle for retired and semi-retired people, but it is not consistent with the traditional rural community we picture in the province.

The potential for increased immigration is another uncertain prospect for the province. There is not a shortage of people in the world, and many would like to come to Canada. The experience to date, however, is that immigrants are attracted to locations that already have a lot of immigrants. The provincial government
has advanced an immigration strategy and many municipal governments are implementing welcoming communities programs. As resource developments continue, particularly in mining and mineral processing, and possibly in hydro-electric development, significant demand for skilled labour is being generated. Temporary worker programs are being used increasingly to meet these demands, but this is not the sustainable population growth most communities hope development will generate.

What will the Newfoundland and Labrador family look like in fifty years? In one hundred years? The Celtic roots of the West Country English and the Irish who formed 98 percent of the settler population will no doubt persist to some degree. The stoic rural mentality that allowed poverty and deprivation to be endured with close family and community supports and good humor may continue to resonate. The attitude of “what odds” seems to be dissipating, though, as a more self-confident, better educated, wealthier population is not willing to “put up” with what they get. The unprecedented popularity of Premier Danny Williams was rooted in the confidence and pride of a millionaire Premier who was unwilling to settle for second best for anything. Whether you shared in this approach, its appeal to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians cannot be denied. What will today’s parents pass on to their grandchildren? It certainly won’t be the same as today’s grandparents.

What grandparents pass on depends a lot on how they critically engage in the forces around them. Chapters one and thirty-eight in this book highlight how grandparents can be conceived of as organic intellectuals who combine formal and informal education and who can bring critical literacy to understanding the context of this province and society in flux. While many of the economic and demographic forces around us are beyond our control, how we engage them and make our own life decisions is influenced by our understanding and our values.

If we cede this critical engagement to outside intellectuals and ideas rooted in notions of modernity, consumerism and sameness, the result will be predictable. But places and people are not all the same, and it is how they assert their understanding and values within the forces they confront that determines the mediated outcomes that create the in-between accommodations Chapters and thirty-eight call for.

My own life, influenced by my grandparents and my parents, and my wife’s mother – who was widowed when my wife was five years of age – have provided a grounding and countering to the values that dominated post-war Canada.

My mother was the youngest of ten, in a family that originated in the rural Newfoundland fishing industry. My grandfather, William Joseph Bursey – Will-Joe – was ambitious and entrepreneurial and like many Newfoundlanders of the day, he left his home town of Old Perlican in rural Newfoundland and travelled not to Canada, but to the “Boston States” where he learned the machinist trade. He fit in a trip to the “wild west” where he carried a six gun, helped with the wheat harvest, and returned to Chelsea, Massachusetts where he married my Grandmother, another Newfoundland who had moved to the Boston States to seek a better life. Julia Colbourne had been sent to work as a domestic servant with a wealthy family
after her mother and siblings were wiped out by TB in Carbonear – a disease that ravaged many Newfoundland and Labrador families prior to Newfoundland joining Confederation with Canada.

Will-Joe and Julia returned to Old Perlican with their first child, born in the US, and went on to have eight more children before they moved to the South Side of St. John’s harbor, where my mother was born. Will-Joe had built up a fish processing and retail business and locating in St. John’s made business sense. The family maintained close connections to Old Perlican and Will-Joe’s parent’s house stayed in the family as a summer home. The six brothers all started out working in the business and several continued in Will-Joe’s company or branched out on their own. After my mother married a Canadian sailor, they settled in Toronto where my brother and I were born. My father was from downtown Toronto, but his parents longed for a rural lifestyle outside the city and by the time I was born my dad’s father, Frank Greenwood, had taken early retirement from Bell Telephone and he and his wife Ethel purchased a small mixed farm near the Holland Marsh north of Toronto. My parents settled in a suburban neighbourhood, with my father commuting to downtown Toronto where he was in furniture sales.

It was a typical mix of rural and urban in post-war Canada. Most urban Canadians had rural roots. The growing suburbs were home to ambitious couples wanting all the “good things” for their families – new cars, washing machines, nice furniture, etc., etc. But people also complained about the “rat race,” where working for wages, getting into debt, commuting to jobs in the city, all dominated daily life. Frank and Ethel were early contrarians, chasing their dream of a quieter life on a farm. When my father, Gary, grew tired of the rat race, with the daily commute in growing volumes of traffic into Toronto, my mother, Mona’s, origins in Newfoundland presented the promise of an alternative lifestyle. When I was seven and my brother twelve, we made the move from the centre of the Canadian universe to the “slower pace” of Newfoundland. For the first seven years we lived with my mother’s parents in their large house in the heart of the city – no commute, with the harbor in view, and a different world from Toronto. Uncles and Aunts and cousins came and went from the large house and a sense of extended family became normal. “Excursions around the bay” to Old Perlican were part of the seasonal cycle, to pick berries, catch trout, and learn family history through osmosis – mostly the uncles arguing over what really happened in various stages of community or family history.

My wife’s family was more rural, but not without migrations. My mother-in-law, Madelaine Mercer, moved from the very remote, very small coastal community of Victoria Cove, to one of the new booming in-land communities that were part of the attempted industrialization of Newfoundland and Labrador. Millertown, on the shores of Red Indian Lake, was a magnate for workers seeking wage income as loggers. The paper mill in Grand Falls was downriver and the forests around Red Indian Lake fed log booms which emptied into the Exploits River. Millertown had grocery and hardware stores, a hotel and a rail line. Madeline, like my Grandmother and so many young women of the time, was sent to do domestic work for a family,
and in Millertown she met Horace Lane and they started their own family. Like his father and one of his brothers, Horace died young of a heart attack and my wife grew up surrounded by strong women who watched out for each other. Mechanization of the logging industry eroded jobs over time, and Millertown entered a long, slow period of decline. My wife, like one of her sisters, finished high school and left home at sixteen to study to be a lab and x-ray technician. She landed her first job at the children’s hospital in St. John’s, where we met and started our family.

Mona and Madelaine became good friends and our children have learned about Old Perlican and Millertown; they have had many visits, and they have enjoyed many family gatherings where the stories and values are shared. “Nan” and “Mama” have been ever-present in our children’s lives, even when we lived in England and in Saskatchewan, coming for long visits and helping with babysitting. More importantly, they embody the histories and values and sense of place that they were raised with. For my wife and I, combining work and education while we raised our family, we are exposed to the academy with its peer reviewed research for international journals where theory is abstracted from context, while living in a particular context that is interpreted daily through the lens of the past and the present, rural and urban.

The notion of grandparents as organic intellectuals flies in the face of academic specialization and privileged access to “expert” opinion. Indeed, even within the academy the scholarship of engagement is frowned upon by most promotion and tenure committees. Collaborating with individuals and organizations outside the university takes time and presents risk in generating peer reviewed articles. Tier 1 or Tier 2 journals cater to academic disciplines on an international scale. Theory and evidence must be generalized to be transferrable and place-specific context may provide interesting case studies, but the focus must be on the universal – as if it exists anywhere outside of place and context.

My own career choices and academic pursuits have been influenced by these tensions. These tensions are discussed in Chapters one and thirty-eight in this book from the perspective of importance and necessity of doing small-scale local studies by “non-academics” and “non-experts”, and from the perspective of colonization of knowledge, lifeworld, and decolonization of highly funded and institutionalized social science research. I did my Ph.D. at the Warwick Business School, one of the top-ranked business programs in the world, but I compared Newfoundland and Northern Norway in my thesis. I’ve always maintained links with university research during my career, most of which was in government policy roles, but I have been unwilling to focus on academic research that is not driven by local or regional issues or applications. I have worked in the university for almost a decade now, but it has been in the bridging role of outreach and engagement. There is an increasing interest in universities world-wide for this, largely due to government and community demands for more direct benefits from public expenditures on universities.

Individuals and institutions are constantly torn between these demands. We are inundated by the media, by specialized publications, and by peer pressure, to seek the “good life” of material possessions, international travel and urban cosmopolitanism.
But, if we are fortunate enough to have grandparents with alternate conceptions of what constitutes a good life, we are forced to consider what else is possible. Seldom is there a choice between all of one way and all of another. As noted in Chapters one and thirty-eight, we must mediate “in between” places. I have had to make several career choices where the balancing of values was integral to what I would do and where I would live. I have developed a simple schema to help with these situations, and I think it has evolved from my balancing of family history and values with professional and material aspirations.

The schema is quite straightforward. My wife and I moved to Saskatchewan when our children were young and my wife had just completed her education degree, after changing careers working in the hospital (with a gap of three years living in England and having two children). The job market for teachers in St. John’s was very tight, and I was ready for a change in my job in the Provincial Government. I was offered a great position in the Saskatchewan Government, and while we would miss our families, a few years away while the children were young would advance our careers and be an adventure.

When it came time to consider returning to Newfoundland, five years later, our daughter was about to start high school and if we did not leave then it would have been difficult to uproot the kids. I was by then working as a consultant – I left the Government position to escape a dominating Minister, and a position with a Crown Corporation was eliminated in a restructuring that eliminated all the Vice Presidents. I had an offer with a Crown Corporation in New Brunswick, and there was an evolving possibility of a position at Memorial University.

Weighing the options led me to break them down by three primary criteria: fulfillment, family and money. Fulfillment related primarily to the nature of the job – how much it related to my professional interests, my training and the opportunity to grow professionally. Family is where the demands of the job in terms of hours and travel come in, and their impact on time with your spouse and children. Based on the importance of extended family, and location, resulting from the family influences I have outlined, family also took into account where the job required me to live and would it be close to our mothers, siblings and cousins. And money does matter. How much would you make? What was the growth potential? What were the benefits? Job security can also factor in under this.

Each job option presents a different mix on each of these criteria. Make enough money and you can probably take a little less fulfillment and a little more demand on your time away from family. If you don’t have any options, you take what you can get: you have to live. At different stages of your life, different factors carry more weight. It is harder to be away from your children when they are young. It is harder to be away from your parents when they are very old.

This schema provides a simple tool for individuals and families to balance the conflicting demands of career, family and material well-being. The three are all linked, but when you assess different career or job options it allows you to do so with a conscious, deliberate consideration of what matters most, or what are the trade-offs.
There are in between spaces. Every individual has their personal values, and they are influenced by their relationships and the demands they place on them. Having the grandparents I have had, and the influence of mine and my wife’s parents on our children, has had a tangible impact on the choices we have made. Grandparents as intellectuals highlights that their influence is about ideas and interpreting reality, and pointing out to the current generation, who at one point in their life course will become grandparents, that there are many in between spaces available to them and to their own children to choose.

Reflection Questions

1. The “long commute” of many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians has resulted in a new model of commuting or living away for lengthy periods of time. In the past, people in the province often went to the Labrador fishery in the summer and worked as loggers in the winter and would be gone for several months, returning in the fall. Later, men working on offshore draggers would be gone from home for 10 days and home for two days. The new model, the long commute, is slightly different than in the past. How might this different model affect families and communities differently?

2. The oil boom and increased centralization of people in the province to larger centres is juxtaposed to the decline of rural and remote communities. How does the loss (and closure) of rural and remote communities impact those who are ‘forced’ to move to larger ‘more prosperous’ centres? What are the continued links between rural and urban communities?

3. Grandparents are discussed in this chapter as a tremendous support to their families in providing many types of care, not the least of which is child care. What are the concerns that may arise from a social policy perspective as grandparents are being viewed more as a resource to families and to community, given the neoliberal ideology of government often attempting to offload programs, services and care to the community’s informal network such as grandparents?

4. The author describes his sense of place in Newfoundland and Labrador and ‘reconnecting’ with his roots. Choose another chapter in the text that describes the experience of diaspora and compare and contrast this author’s experience with another author in this text.

REFERENCES


