

Marginalization, Resilience, Integration: Reconstructing and Globalizing Canada's 'Celtic' Fringe Island Region of Cape Breton¹

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Introduction

Scholarship on 'informal' peripheral regions in Canada is limited, with literature on regional politics tending to privilege provinces and province groupings with 'uber-region' status (Bickerton 2012). In the 20th century, a large portion of 'old' regionalism and regional development scholarship focused on explaining the causes and solutions for regional differences and economic disparities (as opposed to region-building and constructions), pointing to disadvantageous geographical location, lack of natural resources, endogenous entrepreneurial and/or cultural weakness, and lower labour productivity, as main factors determining the socio-economic plight of peripheral regions and cultural groups (Turner 1893, cited in Billington 1977, 1; Weber 1958; Gras 1922 cited in Careless 1979; Lewis 1969; Careless 1979, 110; 1989, 115; Graham 1963; Innis 1930, 1940, 1956; MacIntosh 1923; Parks 1965; Watkins 1977; Draché 1995; Saunders 1984). Although these works provided much value-added material to the study of 'old' regionalism, often in the context of 'national' development, an unfortunate result was the formation and perpetuation of regional stereotypes evinced in some academic studies. Some conclusions from these studies have since been re-evaluated and challenged (Forbes 1979; Clow 1984; Matthews 1983; Bickerton 1990; Hunter 1991; Gerriets and Inwood 1996; Finbow 2001; 2004). Regardless, some authors suggest that a 'culture of dependency' perspective has shaped much regional development discourse in the case of this paper's focus-- Cape Breton Island (deRoche 2003, 227-234). Other theoretical areas in which we find psycho-cultural explanations for the socio-economic plight of peripheral societies and regions include diffusionist thought and modernization theories (promoting the need for cultural and economic 'catch-up' in peripheral regions) (Tarrow 1978; Lewis 1954; Rostow 1960); and fiscal/social transfer dependency and how it can be equilibrated through the application of neo-liberal policy prescriptions (Courchene 1981; Courchene and Melvin 1986; Savoie 2006, 330-339).

Many regional studies have featured entities with formal-legal status and political institutions, exhibiting regionalisms and regionalizations related to economic development challenges and historic grievances rooted in inequitable resource distribution across geographic spaces. They range from Donald Savoie's work (2006) on Canada's Maritime provinces as an economically challenged region, to various compiled articles and book chapters covering the new regionalism (e.g. Breslin et al. 2002). But poorly, or less formally institutionalized regions in a 'soft' informal regionalization framework (inclusive of non-state actors) have been neglected by political scientists whose scholarly focus has been on regions recognized as having sovereign features (Breslin et al., 2002). Most studies relating to the politics of regions in Eastern Canada have been dedicated to provinces as regions (e.g., for Nova Scotia see Bickerton 1990), the Canadian Maritimes (Savoie 2006; Acheson 1977; Clow 1984; Forbes 1979), or

Atlantic Canada (Bickerton and MacNeil 2007; Finbow 2004; Reid and Savoie 2011; Conrad 2003). But outside the Canadian context, Söderbaum has noted that ‘since the late 1990s’, ‘a more pluralistic conceptualisation of regions’ among scholars has led to ‘a more intense focus on soft, informal regionalism’ (2012; *see Bickerton 2012; 2013 for a recent Canadian contribution to this sparse scholarship area).

Some authors more recently have suggested that cultural distinctiveness may actually be a valuable resource that can be used as a tool to build regional economies (Griffin 1996, cited in Pieterse 2001, 15; Keating et al. 2003). This also applies to identity reconstructions, institution-building, and region-building in general (Keating 1999; 1997; Raagmaa 2002). Keating refers to this dynamic as ‘a “useable past” that can be pressed into service’ (1999, 14). Related to this, identity and cultural exploration, as well as general social history overviews, were explored in Morgan’s well-researched works on Cape Breton (2000; 2008; 2009) and historical working class political economic accounts more focused on Industrial Cape Breton (Frank 1985a; 1985b; Donovan 1990a; Muise and Tennyson 1980). This paper builds on these accounts and, in a contemporary setting, explores how this ‘usable past’ dynamic of region-building may be occurring in the case of Cape Breton.

The paper theorizes Cape Breton Island as a relevant nested peripheral region of Nova Scotia and Canada. It probes how institutional and cultural actors attempt to build, maintain, and reconstruct it, and adapt to globalization. Many cultural and political actors of focus for this paper are those identifying with Gaelic culture, as the Gaels in Cape Breton and Canada have been historically marginalized, and are often neglected in scholarship. The interpretive and pluralistic methodological approach utilizes a variety of documentary sources and supplemental semi-structured interviews.² To begin, the paper proposes a synthesized theoretical framework that can be used to study informal regions in Canada and beyond. It follows with brief historical contextualization that reveals how institutions and institutional actors have shaped the regional reconstruction of the economically and socially challenged island.³ More specifically, ensuing sections of the paper focalize on how these actors have embraced and utilized Cape Breton’s Gaelic/cultural identity to reconstruct the region in response to institutional and globalization-related pressures in a post-industrial setting.

A Framework for Studying Informal Regions and Regionalism

Defining region and regionalism is deceptively difficult. As concepts they clearly mean different things in different situations (De Lombaerde 2012; Roth 2007). Regions and regionalisms stem from a variety of institutional, psychological, cultural, economic (read resource-distribution-related), and social forces (Brodie 1989, 1990; Bickerton 1990, 1999, 2012; Thomas 1991; Savoie 2006; Finbow 2004a; 2004b). The paper builds on Bickerton and Gagnon’s definitions of region and regionalism (influenced by Michael Keating). A region is:

A territorial entity distinct from either the local or the nation-state level that constitutes an economic, political, administrative, and/or cultural space, within which different types of human agency interact, and towards which individuals and communities may develop attachments and identities. Regionalism is the

manifestation of values, attitudes, opinions, preferences, claims, behaviours, interests, attachments, and identities that can be associated with a particular region (2014, 253).

‘Old’ regionalism is associated with the industrialization and modernization that occurred in the postwar period and is generally viewed as having stagnated in the mid-1970s (Hettne and Söderbaum 2002). In the context of restructuring of territorial management beginning around this time, three emerging types of regionalism could be distinguished: 1) *defensive* regionalism, whereby economically-stagnant locales and deindustrializing urban areas dependent upon traditional and heavy industries (the so-called rust-belt) resisted change; 2) *integrating* regionalism, whereby modernization of a region for the purposes of reinsertion (while relinquishing claims to cultural promotion or regional distinctness) into its national economy was encouraged; and 3) *autonomist* regionalism, whereby a ‘distinct path to modernization’ is pursued by regions, based on a program combining autonomy, economic modernization, and cultural promotion (Keating 1997, 24).⁴ The turn from old regionalism and the restructuring of territorial management associated with it was linked to the wider geo-political-economic and cultural phenomenon of globalization. The debates surrounding globalization are beyond this paper’s scope (see Scholte 2000; 2; Held et al. 1999). For our purposes globalization embodies ‘a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact—generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power (Held et al. 1999, 16). New regionalism theorizing (NRT) has recognized these globalization processes that have led to a ‘denationalization’ of state-centric patterns of social, political, and economic relations that have now drifted to and intensified at sub-national, supranational, and local scales (Brenner 1999, 52; Keating et al. 2003, 6; Scott et al. 2001, 13). NRT is informed by state-society approaches and points out that state, private, and ‘other-public’ action occurs at *different axes* now (Keating et al. 2003, 6), highlighting possible ‘transformative power’ that local agency can have in approaching rural and regional challenges from an endogenous standpoint (Ortiz-Guerrero 2013, 55).

Identity is one such transformative factor that contributes to region-building (Raagmaa 2010). Cultural and regional identity are composed of reconcilable individual, group, social, and multiple identities (Fearon 1999; Taylor 1991; Castiñera 2011; Smith 1991; 1995) and play a role in fostering social capital (Putnam et al. 2003; Westlund and Gawell 2012), institutionalization (Amin and Thrift 1994, 15), and *regionality* (Bickerton and Gagnon 2014, 253). Regionality may be interpreted as the degree of agency and consciousness that informs the social construction, maintenance and reinforcement of a region. Regionality begins with the conceptualization of a regional identity involving both the individual subject and the collective group, the establishment of a sense of otherness and a feeling of distinctness, and involving some coincident and correlated measure of agency-driven, region-building process, that occurs within a (re)territorialized space.⁵ To wit, regionality can be utilized ‘to refer to the intensity, distinctiveness, and cohesiveness that distinguishes the regionalist behaviours and practices of a particular regional community, including the possibility of a different degree of regionality at the societal level (think ‘bottom-up’ agency) as opposed to its expression in terms of regional

political institutions’ (Bickerton and Gagnon 2014, 253).⁶

Institutions affect and reflect identities; they affect society *and* are affected by it (Lecours 2000, 502; March and Olsen 1984). New institutionalism enables scholars to analyze actors’ region-building activities at and between various scales and sectors. Historical institutionalism (see Hall and Taylor 1996, 938): **1)** *broadly* conceptualizes relationships between institutions and individual behavior; **2)** emphasizes power asymmetries; **3)** highlights the importance of path dependence in institutional development; and **4)** integrates other factors, notably ideas, as contributors to political outcomes. Sociological institutionalism notes the ‘culturally specific’ nature of institutions and that they encompass a broad ‘organizational field’ (Hall and Taylor 1996, 946-947; DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Institutions and agency are ‘culturally framed’, influenced by a ‘logic of appropriateness’ (Schmidt 2011, 47). Although embedded norms affect institutional paths (and often promote stasis) historical institutionalists say that changes occur at critical junctures (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Harty 2005) *or* through incrementalism (Thelen 2003). Such junctures present ‘windows of opportunity’ whereby actors (often leaders with the will and resources), use and promote economic and other ideas (Harty 2005; Hall and Taylor 1996, 938) to shape new outcomes, strategies, and goals (e.g. changes in cultural policy, strategy, or organizational networking, structure, or funding approaches). Finally, *informal* institutions at the local level – whether they be considered cultural community groups, organizational networks, or unwritten codes of conduct -- affect outcomes and should not be ignored in new institutional analysis if a regional unit of analysis is lacking in formal institutional (e.g. constitutional) endowments (see High et al. 2005; Helmke and Levitsky 2004).

Institutional Path Dependence and (Re)Constructing Cape Breton: Unama’ki/Isle Royale/Diasporic Gaelic Sanctuary/Industrial Cape Breton/Socialist Island

Cape Breton regional identity and construction have been imprinted by the Mi’kmaq, subsequent waves of settlers, and by successive layers of institutional grounding. “Unama’ki” (CBU Mi’kmaq Resource Centre 2015) was forever changed upon the arrival of migrant French fishers and coastal settlers to ‘Cape Breton’. And later, in the aftermath of the Seven Years War, “Isle Royale” was overwhelmed, in a sense, by the influx of Gaelic immigrants who – because of their large numbers, tragic history as an oppressed minority forced into migration, deep loyalty to their own cultural traditions, and strong sense of collective identity – were able to transform the Island into a form of diasporic sanctuary (Hornsby 1992, xxiv; Morgan 2008, 16-18).

In 1820, the region was annexed by order-in-council to the British colony of Nova Scotia. This was reflective of and contributed to separatist sentiments on the Island through the next few decades (Cuthbertson 1994; Morgan 2000, 105; 153-154). The annexation greatly constrained the ability of civil society actors to have an endogenous effect on their community’s development. And the incorporation of Nova Scotia into Confederation forged a path dependent development trajectory. From a historical institutionalism perspective, the Island came under the influence of Westminster-style executive decision-making; party discipline; an ineffectual Senate that amplified the detrimental effects of the representation-by-population electoral system on peripheral regions; and centre-favouring policies (e.g. transportation, tariff, industrial) exercised out

of Ottawa and Halifax (Campbell and MacLean 1974, 104; Savoie 2013, 8; 2006, 27). Regional effects did not take long to be realized. In 1890 Senator Robert MacInnes introduced a bill to make Gaelic (then still widely spoken throughout the country) Canada's third official language. The bill was dismissed, considered 'a time-wasting prank' by many political elites (though some, including John A. Macdonald, spoke it), who perceived Gaelic as having no economic, social, or intellectual value in the public realm. Institutionally excluding Gaelic in this way constituted a denial of the potential significance of the language to the development of the country. Formal recognition of Gaelic language and culture fell outside the dual identity approach that relegated ethnic groups from the British Isles as "British" or else part of the confounding discursive categorization of 'English Canada'. For Gaels, there was 'little or no opportunity for the institutional and professional expression and continued growth of their language' (Kennedy 2004, 38; Jeffrey MacDonald interview 2014).

Education legislation, which actively discouraged Gaelic instruction was a crushing blow to the minority language's preservation, its perceived value as a public form of communication, and its congruence with individual betterment. Indeed the discriminatory and Anglo-centric provincial education system is also widely cited as a main culprit to Gaelic language decline (Dembling 1997; Kennedy 2004; NS Office of Gaelic Affairs Draft Report 2011). And highlighting *integrating regionalism* processes, Kennedy notes that 'educators helped to perpetuate the myth that Gaelic was an inherently "backward" language unsuited to advanced intellectual function and incapable of fulfilling any institutional role' (2004, 49). Some observers have argued that this marginalization of Gaelic negatively affected the cultural and economic prospects for many Cape Breton Gaels (Cox 1994, 37; Kennedy 2004, 52-53). Stigmatization minimized Gaelic participation and identity-related influence on formal institutional apparatuses. An ethno-cultural group once proud of its culture and traditions was forced to bear witness to its language being associated with 'a culture of poverty, laziness and a lack of ambition' (Graham 2006, 51; e-mail correspondence with Dr. Kenneth MacKinnon, 2004). Many came to accept the stigma as reality, leading to active discouragement of familial/community transmission (Dembling 1997; Mertz 1982; McEwan-Fujita 2013). In such an atmosphere, it should be no surprise that by the 1950s, community-wide familial transmission of the language had virtually come to an end (McEwan-Fujita 2013). The economically-linked and institutionally-led psycho-cultural effects on the Island's largest ethnic group and their Gaelic language have lasted up to the present day (NS Office of Gaelic Affairs Draft Report 2011).

In terms of political norms, Cape Breton political actors became active participants in political and other forms of clientelism that became the standard way for politicians and parties to maintain their power base and the electoral support of constituencies and regions. These were yet another set of embedded practices that would affect the manner in which Cape Bretoners came to perceive themselves and their community, and how they envisaged development possibilities (Morgan 2008, 97; Campbell and MacLean 1974; J. Murray Beck 1985; Simpson 1988, 168-184, Stewart 1993; Clancy et al. 2000; Bickerton 2001; various interviewees). For what it lacked in formal institutional endowments, the Island attempted to compensate by engaging in informal, often church-led community-based, institution-building endeavours. Social and cultural institutions from this early period -- formed through an elite-led 'cultural

awakening' in the more urban area (Donovan 1990b), and fostered through Gaelic mediums (e.g. 'ceilidh houses) in the rural locales, indicate the importance that was placed on the informal institutions of the family and cultural community in creating, maintaining and continually revitalizing Cape Breton culture (Graham 2006; MacNeil 1997; Kennedy 2002). The dynamics can be considered precursors to the multi-level and multi-actor institutionalization that would occur in the era of globalization, made necessary by new economic and cultural challenges and opportunities.

As the 1900s approached, the more populous Sydney area of the Island underwent industrialization. Development of an integrated coal and steel industry -- dominated by foreign owners granted generous royalties by the Province -- favoured a hegemonic corporate approach to development, nurtured by compliant federal and provincial politicians, that contributed to later economic and class struggles (Higgins 1993; Frank 1985a; MacGillivray 1980; DeMont 2009). The Gaelic identity and culture prominent in rural Cape Breton was carried into its 'urban' area at this time to merge with that of other ethno-cultural immigrant groups seeking to participate in the rapidly expanding industrial economy (Frank 1985a; Bickerton 2012; Muise and Tennyson 1980). Over a relatively brief period, the Island sanctuary of a Gaelic/Celtic folk would witness the 'becoming' of a completely different kind of region: Industrial Cape Breton. Resistant working class agency soon propelled a strong labour movement (Crawley 1990; Frank 1985a; 1985b) and related political party mobilizations (Frank and Reilley 1979; Frank 1990; Beck 1985; MacLean 1977; Earle and Gamberg 1989), later complemented by the Church-led Antigonish movement with its cooperatives, credit unions, and adult education components (Coady 1939; Laidlaw 1961; Bickerton 1990; Alexander 1997; MacAulay 2001; Pluta and Dodaro 2012; MacInnes 2015). Both labour and cooperative movements sought to address the gross inequities of capitalist development of the period. The increased human agency and institution-building that resulted, and the linked growth of social capital, fed into a deepening Island regionality.

Thus for the first half of the last century, a strong labourist culture was ascendant on the Island. At the same time, Gaelic continued to decline due to the lack of either formal or informal institutional support. However, the Gaels' pride and identity were validated and positively affected by a burgeoning and growing commercial music sector (Graham 2006; Doherty 2015), as well as political and cultural leadership evidenced in region-building policies (for instance, those that utilized tartanism and Scottish-symbolist marketing). At the centre of this 'revival' of sorts was one of their 'own': the celebrated, Cape Breton-born, Gaelic-speaking premier, Angus L. Macdonald. During his long tenure, he was both an initiator and emblematic of the defining Celtic character of the region (Henderson 2007; Graham 2006).

By the 1960s, Nova Scotia's political system was modernizing while the foundations of its economy were crumbling. Premier Robert Stanfield was moving away from embedded parochial politics as he and his federal counterparts adopted postwar Keynesian interventionist ideas, redistributive social policies, and a developmental role for the state in the economy (Bickerton 1990; Haddow 2000; Clancy 2015; Clancy et al. 2000). Structural changes in the national and international economy were jeopardizing Cape Breton's coal and steel enterprises (Bowden and Malloy 2002). As multinational, corporate capital suddenly abandoned its aging industrial works on the Island, both the workforce and the region were thrown into crisis mode. Once again, strong, endogenous

political leadership came to the fore. Led by a senior cabinet minister from the Keynesian wing of the governing party (Cape Bretoner Allan J. MacEachen), the extensive coalmining operations on the Island, along with the mandate to diversify the region's economy, were 'scaled up' (as described by region-building theorizations) to the federal government (Johnson 2007). Meanwhile the Province took over the Sydney steel complex (Bickerton 1990; Bishop 1990; Jackson 2003).

This began a substantial region rebuilding exercise at the centre of which was the creation of the federal crown corporation, Devco, which was also given an Industrial Developments Division (IDD) to diversify the Cape Breton economy away from its reliance on coal. But as global competitive pressures mounted through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, both the crown corporation and other regional development agencies and departments (and their various iterations) were increasingly over-matched in their attempts to address regional inequalities and disparities by reviving the local economy (Savoie 2006; Bickerton and McNeil 2007). More recently the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and IDD's reincarnated 'one-stop-shop' for regional development –Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) -- were crucial actors in attempts to diversify the economy, although they had remained a powerful tool for political players to continue old-style clientelist practices (Bickerton 2012; Bickerton and MacNeil 2007; Johnson 2007).

As neo-liberal ideas largely overtook political economic discourse in the Western World, and after further trade liberalization, regional governance and development readjustments, and fiscal restraint measures were brought in by both orders of government (Banting and Myles 2013; Clancy et al. 2000), regional actors such as CBRM and ECBC became important institutional nodes in an ongoing transition to a more pro-active, autonomous regionality throughout the Island. In the vein of NRT, ECBC (which was disbanded by the Harper government in 2014, Usher, 2014) engaged as a leader in multi-level, multi-actor region-building and in its later years, came to be a strong supporter of cultural institutional development undertakings on the Island (ECBC Annual Report 2007; 2010; 2013).

On the cultural front in the 1960s, growing infusion of 'Americanized' popular culture had begun to take its toll on Gaelic cultural components. A 1971 CBC documentary by filmmaker Ron MacInnis cautioned that the Cape Breton fiddling tradition was 'vanishing.' The film prompted community leaders to initiate a successful grass-roots revitalization of the art form which, by the early 1990s had gained international acclaim. It contributed to the economy as a community-building cultural component and a major tourist attraction (Graham 2006, Thompson 2004). Historian Kenneth Donovan asserts that a significant 'cultural revival' was happening in Cape Breton during the last few decades of the 20th century (1990c). Cultural self-awareness, oftentimes aided by a developmental state, nurtured Island-wide cultural initiatives. He argued that cultural revival was 'more concentrated and focused' than broader Canadian developments in the arts. An increasing density of social and cultural institutions was both underlining and reinforcing Cape Breton regionality and provided indication that harnessing a useable cultural past (and present) was one way to rebuild the region.

Globalizing the Celtic Fringe: One Avenue for Re-building Cape Breton

'In Cape Breton, with the collapse of the coal and steel industries, the population, although still primarily of a working-class background, is coming to perceive that a prosperous and stable future may lie in the knowledge and cultural sectors' (Tom Urbaniak 2006).

Cape Breton remains the last living *Gàidhealtachd* (Gaelic cultural community) in North America with thriving cultural components such as its traditional music and a (tenuously) revitalizing language scene (Graham 2006; Doherty 2015; Newton 2013; McEwan-Fujita 2010). There are at least 1275 Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia, with 300 reporting Gaelic as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada 2011). While these numbers may suggest that the prospects for language survival are dire, what *is* promising is that after a long and steady decline in Gaelic speakers, the number of individuals claiming to speak Gaelic languages actually increased by over 40% between 2006-2011. Despite the official figures, the Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs (see below) estimates that there are 2000 speakers in the province (Statistics Canada, 2006; 2011 cited in Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs 2015). From an identity standpoint, 32% of Nova Scotians in the 2006 census claimed they were of Scottish ethnic origin, which reiterates the strong Celtic-inspired identity of Cape Breton. As noted by the community's main lobbying body, the Nova Scotia Gaelic Council, 'thousands of Nova Scotians through family connections, music, dance, humour, ancestry and community residence feel that Gaelic language and culture are aspects of their identity and feel a visceral connection to these (2015a).

These figures suggest there is potential to grow Gaelic-related cultural and economic activity in the more concentrated Gaelic cultural region of Cape Breton. The Province's 2002 *Gaelic Nova Scotia: An Economic, Cultural, and Social Impact Study* confirms this: at the beginning of the 2000s Gaelic-related initiatives and products generated direct revenue of \$23.5 million from '275 Gaelic specific activities. 380,000 people were attending 2070 events per year. By 2014, Cape Breton's 9 day Celtic Colours International Festival was generating \$10.4 million in revenue spent by festival attendees. The festival featured over 40 performances that showcased 20 Celtic/Gaelic music artists, exemplifying the contributions that Gaelic cultural products have been making to the Cape Breton economy (Kennedy 2002; The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia 2015a). Conclusively, not only can it be said that 'culture sells *in* Cape Breton' (Hamilton interview 2015), but also that culture sells Cape Breton as a unique, creative region.

Regarding social development, Gaelic education is easily accessible on the Island with community level youth and adult language learning programs held regularly. Province-wide, over '14 communities have participated in community-based adult Gaelic language learning' (NS Dept. of Communities, Culture, and Heritage 2010). Postsecondary courses relating to Gaelic culture are taught at Cape Breton University (CBU), St. Francis Xavier in Antigonish, Saint Mary's in Halifax, and now the Gaelic College in St. Ann's, Cape Breton. Over 1000 students are enrolled in public school Gaelic language classes. The Gaelic Council cites two major week-long festivals on Cape Breton that widely feature Gaelic content – Celtic Colours and KitchenFest. There are also many smaller community festivals that feature Gaelic cultural content (The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia 2015a). Cape Breton's rural areas, especially Inverness County, have fostered the Island's world-renowned traditional music. There may be more fiddlers per capita found there than anywhere in the world, displaying the cultural distinctness of

the region (Doherty 2015). A number of institutions and initiatives have contributed to Gaelic cultural and arts revitalization in the globalized era. They have been utilized as a catalyst to boost Cape Breton's economy. They would not have been realized without strong and determined leadership guided by a clear vision of a better future. When it comes to positive developmental change in such contexts, such leadership is a major affective variable. The next sections analyze how culture and the arts (with a focus on Gaelic culture) have been utilized as endogenous assets for rebuilding Cape Breton in the globalized era.

Culture, Identity, Regionality in the Current Era of Globalization

As institutional and regionalization-induced changes were occurring on the Island (see Clancy et al. 2000), they combined with cultural revitalization to shape and strengthen Cape Breton regionality. Community and family resilience, guidance, and agency continued to rejuvenate Cape Breton traditional music and by the early 1990s the global music industry was taking note. Indeed, what was once referred to as "Scottish" or "Scotch" fiddling has been re-labeled with a regional marker; it is now generally known and presented as "Cape Breton" fiddling (Graham 2006; Morgan 2009; Doherty 2015). Into the 1990s musicians and bands were signed to major music labels and their popularity led to even further revitalization and fan base expansion of the music. The globalized era made international touring and recording more accessible and regularized video play, artist web presence, eventual music streaming, and more overall professionalization of artists and the industry. It also carved out a new tourist segment and an expanded 'tourist draw' for the Island (Foulds interview 2014; Smith interview 2015). Through the 1990s Cape Breton's cultural revival was in full force. The Island is so rich in musical artistry that it was, and still is, the only non-province region recognized in award competitions for the East Coast Music Awards.

Stage shows such as the Cape Breton Summertime Revue – showcasing regional, and at times politically influenced, humour and music -- and award-winning artists gained international acclaim. The traditional and globally- influenced music, avidly played by Gaels, Acadians, Mi'kmaq, and others, became a symbol of regional pride and solidarity. Songs influenced by the living Gaelic culture became popular regionally, nationally, and internationally. Other songs about Industrial Cape Breton's working class and mining culture invoked regional pride, a sense of deep regionality, and have been played around the world by radio and touring Cape Breton artists. For some of these artists, their successes and promotion of the Island extend not only from individual talent, but from regional attachment, family and community guidance, influence, and agency, and the momentum of this late 20th century cultural revival (Graham 2006; Morgan 2009; Donovan 1990). Their words and works have contributed to Island identity narratives, to cultural and economic region-building, and to the professional careers of other aspiring artists. While the overall impact of arts and culture may not be as great for Cape Breton as it is for Halifax (the province's political, economic and cultural metropole), the unique Gaelic aspect of Cape Breton's arts and culture scene has helped the sector become a promising growth component in Cape Breton's economy (see Lionaise 2011). Arts and culture have arguably replaced coal and steel as prime symbols of regionality in the globalized era.

While in previous decades the local agency of these high-profile artists was a main factor in building professional careers and creating cultural awareness, various institutions and leaders have also been influential in affecting this cultural revitalization. The revitalization of the music was accompanied by revival of the language. Gaelic College CEO (and former provincial premier) Rodney MacDonald notes that agency at the local level is ‘definitely’ evident. There has been more of a utilization and realization of the value of culture, technology, and partnerships to developing Cape Breton. He has observed ‘a more professional attitude’, ‘more discussion’ and ‘more working together...from a marketing perspective’ in rebuilding the Island (Interview 2015). MacDonald provides fitting examples that epitomize the notion of globalizing the ‘Celtic Fringe’ whereby private and civil society actors – some supported by government programming – interact to foster economic activity of international reach. Examples include the renowned Celtic Colours International Festival and the Gaelic College’s KitchenFest, both of which have worked with Marcato, a local technology company, to connect with a global audience:

Marcato really resulted [from] a partnership with Celtic Colours... So we just started using that in our festival... A home-grown festival, talent, and now it’s being exported, but it’s still home. They didn’t have to go and set up shop in Toronto. They’re set up in Sydney (Interview, 2015).

Creative arts and cultural entrepreneurs are utilizing the technological tools of the globalized era and have taken part in projects and awards shows that received support from all levels of government. Studio engineer/musicians have gained skills both on and off-Island and have established and been employed in world-class studio facilities in Cape Breton. These attract award-winning clientele with some receiving career support from federal and provincial government programs (see below). The internet and web presence has enabled artists to start and grow businesses by accessing customers and markets across the world. Many Cape Breton musicians have websites, social media access points, and digital distribution platforms that enable customer interaction, networking, and product sales. Also, the NS Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage has supported web-based marketing presence for artists through its programming (CITE). These developments support the perpetuation and deepening of Island regionality. The following section will trace further what has been happening on the cultural front in Cape Breton in the era of globalization, with a focus on institutions.

Institutions and Cultural Industries

Whether through program funding or ad-hoc measures, municipal, provincial and federal governments have provided culture funding to numerous individuals, groups, and organizations located in Cape Breton. This funding has been crucial to the financial survival of many organizations, not to mention the intangible benefits that accrue from cultural development and maintenance.

Canada Council for the Arts

Between 1998 and 2013 the federal Canada Council for the Arts (the Canada Council) provided funding to 75 recipients in Cape Breton (individuals or groups) in a wide range of programming areas (Canada Council 2015). While the list of recipients is too long to provide here, this funding aided well-known recipients in producing and marketing cultural products accessible to local residents, tourists, and wider global markets. Cape Breton University Press regularly received a block grant for the publishing of award-nominated and winning novels and non-fiction works concerned with various aspects of Cape Breton history and culture. Some well-known Celtic musicians all benefited from modest funding in the areas of specialized music sound recording, music festival travel, music touring, and individual musician grants (Canada Council 2015).

Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage

Provincially, most funding for culture comes from the Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage (CCH), which along with its subsidiary offices of Gaelic Affairs, African Nova Scotian Affairs, and Acadian Affairs, distributes program funding to artists and various community and other organizations. Throughout the era of globalization, organizations across the province have received provincial support. For instance, as of late in 2014, CCH provided operational funding to 55 cultural organizations, 9 of which were located in or based out of Cape Breton (Include Table 1 later?).

There are a number of other cultural organizations that receive funding from CCH, which states on its website that ‘supporting our culture and heritage, while investing in our own creative class, contributes to Nova Scotia's vital creative economy’ (NS Dept. of CCH 2015). Because of space limitations, four of these organizations, as well as the provincial Office of Gaelic Affairs, will be discussed. They are useful examples of multi-scalar institutional agency and institutionalization on/of the ‘Celtic Fringe’ and the new regional context in the global era. They are recognized as key institutions that are preserving, promoting, and commodifying Gaelic culture for the purposes of social and community development. Some points on Gaelic language and culture are presented first.

In Nova Scotia, a historic institutional and arts and culture community exclusion of Gaelic *may* in some regards be waning. The 2010 summary report of the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Consultation for the Culture Division of CCH has sections dealing with regional and ethno-cultural issues. It reports that in 8 of 11 consultation sessions, ‘participants discussed the importance of support for Gaelic culture in the province, including support through mentorship, funding, and the development of an Advisory Council’. However, 9 of 11 consultation sessions revealed that ‘more could currently be done to increase equity and support diversity in the province’ (Horizons Community Development Associates Inc. 2015, 56). The following section will provide brief overviews of the state of Gaelic in the economic and social life of the province and Cape Breton, and of mainly Gaelic-focused institutions and institutionalization associated with the ‘Celtic Fringe’.

Office of Gaelic Affairs

The Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs was established in 2006. However the government was increasing focus on Gaelic culture previous to this. The Progressive Conservative Hamm government released the Gaelic economic impact study by Dr. Michael Kennedy in 2002. That same year the Province signed an MOU with Scotland's Highland Council that recognized Gaelic cultural links between Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland and Nova Scotia (The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia 2015). The MOU has three focus areas: education, cultural development, and tourism and encourages joint ventures between and among private and public sector, as well as community and volunteer organizations. The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia states that activities arising from the MOU included a number of exchanges. Examples included bringing students to the Celtic Colours International Festival from Plockton's Centre for Excellence in Traditional Music (Scotland), and supporting Nova Scotia Gaelic instructors by sending them to Scotland for professional training and development of (The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, 2015). CCH under Minister Rodney MacDonald also began a Gaelic Cultural Activities Program and soon hired a Gaelic Coordinator, locating that office in Cape Breton. MacDonald relates that 'I got a very hard time. I got a lot of push back within my own department about *hiring* someone, first of all, and secondly I got a very difficult time about the fact it [the job] would be in Cape Breton Island. They thought it should be in Halifax. And we disagreed on that point but we ended up putting it on the Island' (Interview 2015). This push back by bureaucrats was indicative of institutional stigma against Gaelic language and culture, witnessed as high up as the Executive Director level of the public service (MacMaster Interview 2014); centre-periphery power relations; and how regionalism can stem in part from formal institutional actors' attitudes and related policy choices.

But the move to initiate formal institutionalization of Gaelic culture -- 'to give a voice at the [cabinet] table for Gaelic' -- continued in CCH with the creation of the Office of Gaelic Affairs in 2006 (Rodney MacDonald Interview 2015). The intention was to give Gaelic a voice in the public both provincially and internationally. As of Spring, 2015, the Office has three Gaelic speaking employees in the positions of Executive Director and two Gaelic field officers. The Office of Gaelic Affairs seems to work as a multi-level governance facilitator, envisioning its main role as Gaelic language renewal, 'so that it remains a vital part of Nova Scotia' (Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs 2015). As facilitator it tries to: Promote Gaelic's contribution and value throughout the province; support language and cultural programs that address the Gaelic community's needs; facilitate dialogue with community partners and government regarding policies affecting Gaelic development; create learning materials for Gaelic language learners and instructors; provide training for instructors; support and assist community projects and initiatives; provide translation services; and collaborate with international partners to increase Gaelic learning and encourage cultural exchange (NS Office of Gaelic Affairs 2015). The Office of Gaelic Affairs is allotted a modest annual programming budget of \$68,000 and currently provides three main programs in the areas of not-for-profit support, language mentoring, and immersion outreach (NS Office of Gaelic Affairs 2015).

Highland Village Museum (the Highland Village)

The Highland Village, located at Iona, Cape Breton exemplifies the benefits of increased formal institutionalization. The ‘replica’ Gaelic Highland Village operation includes a museum and cultural facility consisting of the Highland Village Living History Museum and Gaelic Folklife Centre, the Highland Village Gift Shop, the Roots Cape Breton Genealogy & Family History Centre, and an outdoor entertainment/theatre complex (NS Highland Village Annual Report 2013-14, 2). From a new regionalism standpoint, the Highland Village exemplifies how vertical and horizontal multi-scalar actors have worked together on a project designed to celebrate, preserve, and promote regional culture. One of its Annual Reports states that it is committed to ‘community partnerships and outreach’ and works ‘with other local community groups to support community economic and cultural development’ and to market the facility as a Gaelic cultural destination and international Gaelic heritage centre (NS Highland Village Annual Report 2013-14). One partnership is with the Goat Island/Eskasoni First Nation Cultural Journey. The two sites have collaborated by celebrating the ‘natural linkages’ between Mi’kmaw and Gaelic culture. The Highland Village also partners with Celtic Colours International Festival, remaining open for visitors during the festival each year. Technology associated with globalization has also enabled the Highland Village to expand its outreach through growing its presence on Facebook and Instagram (NS Highland Village Annual Report 2013-14). The Highland Village’s Vision and Mission statements also reflect new regionalism’s culture-for-development dynamics whereby they recognize economic and social benefits attached to the preservation of distinct minority cultures (NS Highland Village Annual Report 2013-14, 4).

Multiscalar interactions for development purposes are depicted in The Highland Village’s Annual Report, which recognizes the importance of support from the CCH department, and other departments and agencies such as the Office of Gaelic Affairs, Economic and Rural Development, and Internal Services. It has been supported by all three levels of government (ECBC/ACOA and Service Canada federally) and partners with other organizations and communities (2013-14, 4).⁷

The Gaelic College/ Colaisde na Gàidhlig

The Gaelic College of Arts and Crafts (Colaisde na Gàidhlig, or, the Gaelic College) was founded by the local community of St. Ann’s in 1938 (Gaelic College 2015; Newton 2014; Graham 2006, 89). In 1939 its first building was constructed after a Gaelic College foundation and committee was established to raise funds for its realization (Gaelic College 2015). Early on its classes included Gaelic grammar, Gaelic language, Gaelic song, social economics, and the history of Gaelic. However, historians and scholars have noted that the ‘symbolic Gaelic College’ promoted a mandate that presented the College as a ‘tartanistic tourist centre’ with a weak commitment to reviving the language (Graham 2006, 89; Newton 2014; Dembling 2006). It became known for providing instruction in art forms not typically associated with the vernacular cultural practices of Cape Breton’s Gaels.⁸

A major shift in direction for the College occurred with the 2011 hiring of former premier, Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Heritage, and Inverness MLA Rodney MacDonald as the College’s CEO. A Gaelic learner, musician, and business owner, he prioritized setting the organization on a stronger financial footing, addressing accumulated debt by selling a large parcel of land to the Province (Rodney MacDonald

interview 2015). The other priority (in line with identity and regionality) was to ensure that the College ‘reflected the Island and the culture of the area’ and not a culture or language ‘that was not our own.’ With emphasis, MacDonald stated that ‘we were the *Gaelic* College, Colaisde na Gàidhlig, and we were going to *act* like that...to make sure that everything we did, we tied in to Gaelic.’ The College changed its branding by referring to itself as ‘Colaisde na Gàidhlig’, creating a new logo and, for local and global marketing aims, revamping its website (Gaelic College 2015a; Rodney MacDonald interview 2015). It introduced new Gaelic language and culture mentorship programs for youth and prioritized local Gaelic-informed music and dance styles as educational course offerings. This decision was congruent with identity re-construction and re-claiming that had been occurring within the Gaelic cultural community (Graham 2013).⁹

Other initiatives and goals pursued under MacDonald’s leadership included developing a strategic plan focused on implementing a governance charter and updating/creating new provincial legislation for the College; implementing a Gaelic policy that prioritized language knowledge as an asset for employment positions; actively pursuing marketing, capital improvements/facility enhancements and excellence in education and all activities; and building partnerships that would enable the College to increase its educational capacity (Rodney MacDonald interview 2015). On the last initiative, MacDonald cites a recent partnership with Cape Breton University that has led to an MOU, the creation of online programs with the university, and a 6-credit course offering in Gaelic language training. The organization plans to sign more MOUs with other educational institutions, offer more courses, increase enrolment, grow its presence across the Island, and explore ‘new ways of reaching out to people’ (e.g. offering more ‘in-person’ lessons throughout the region as well as 180 online lessons in different disciplines). The institution is ‘transitioning’ in the area of employment as more youth with Gaelic language background are being hired. ‘There are young people getting jobs there [at the College] because they speak Gaelic’ (Jeffrey MacDonald interview 2014). One of its most recent development initiatives is KitchenFest, which holds over 100 Island-wide events featuring more than 150 musicians (Gaelic College KitchenFest 2015).

Celtic Colours International Festival

The genesis of this festival points to multi-scalar, region-building actors attempting to reap the benefits of economic and cultural globalization. The festival was the brainchild of two musicians, cultural entrepreneurs, and Cape Breton residents Max MacDonald and Joella Foulds. In the early 1990s Cape Breton artists were gaining national and international prominence ‘taking the culture of the Island and actually turning it into something economically viable for themselves, and ultimately as a great promotion of the Island’ (Foulds interview 2014). Foulds and MacDonald saw the opportunity to ‘develop some more infrastructure that was going to help people to get their music out, get the world to see it. That’s where the festival came in’ (Foulds interview 2014).

At the time of Celtic Colours’ conception, two Cape Breton politicians were influential players in their governments. Cape Breton MP Dave Dingwall was the federal minister responsible for ACOA while Richmond MLA Richie Mann was the provincial minister responsible for economic development. Much of the original funding for Celtic

Colours came from a \$188 million federal-provincial diversification agreement signed between Mann and Dingwall.¹⁰ In a Halifax boardroom with Foulds present, an agreement to fund the Celtic Colours International Festival was signed. Mann reflected that ‘there were all kinds of ideas to do things that would have been like a one time event...but it's [Celtic Colours that] withstood the test of time and it's a great boost for Cape Breton now’ (Interview 2014). Statistics regarding Celtic Colours’ economic impact show that the organization is successfully harnessing internal cultural strengths to create economic opportunities on the Island. It has attracted global audiences. In 2012 the festival drew 55% of its audience from off-Island with reported visitors of 7,371 [RECHECK FIGURE- HIGHER?], while 9 live streamed concerts drew an international audience of 13,854 viewers, indicating how (along with its multi-level and multi-actor interactions) the organization negotiates integration (ECBC Annual Report 2012).

The Celtic Music Interpretive Centre

The Celtic Music Interpretive Centre (CMIC) is located in the community of Judique in Inverness County. The CMIC can be understood in the context of points made about region-building in Keating et al. (2003) and Pieterse (2001, 17): It is an example of a community capitalizing on regional strengths for the purposes of development in a globalizing and new regional context. The CMIC is the brainchild of community leaders who recognized that creative solutions were required in the face of rural community decline. Aware that Judique was widely known as a hotbed of traditional music, they also recognized that there was a development opportunity in the region for an organization specializing in interpreting the musical culture. A community group was organized to carry out conceptual and construction plans for a musical interpretive complex. The committee utilized its various members’ strengths and political connections to undertake a multi-scalar/sectoral solicitation process to secure funding for the proposed project. The committee also worked closely with ECBC in accessing available funding for the project. Led by the committee, the community privately raised \$250,000 to contribute to a multi-level funding scheme that saw the CMIC realized.

The new facility and organization was established as a not-for-profit society with a mandate ‘to collect, preserve and promote the traditional Celtic music of Cape Breton Island through education, research and performance’ (Graham interview 2015; Celtic Music Interpretive Centre 2015a). The CMIC presents the living musical tradition as it is traditionally practiced and transmitted. It hosts year round cultural performances (ceilidhs); provides one-on-one historical/cultural/music demonstrations; and holds musical workshops, Gaelic language events, seniors’ events, and private functions. It also stages the annual Buddy MacMaster School of Fiddling, which draws top instructors and international students. Additionally it engages in internet marketing, selling products online, and providing online streamed and archived performances (CMIC 2015a; Smith interview 2015).¹¹

The CMIC also spearheaded a region-wide Féis (Gaelic festival/cultural) Movement. Partnering with the Celtic Colours International Festival and other stakeholders, the new initiative emulates the successful Féis Movement in Scotland, which approaches cultural learning holistically, incorporating and emphasizing common linkages between cultural components such as the Gaelic language, dance, song, and instrumental music (Smith interview 2015). The Féis focus is to ‘reignite the passion for

traditional Celtic music and culture by developing skills, fostering development in a natural way, reflecting on tradition, providing opportunity to connect with community at cultural events, providing opportunities for more self-directed learning and providing an outlet for playing and performance, ensuring it remains a vibrant and living tradition for generations to come' (Celtic Music Interpretive Centre 2015b).

The CMIC receives an ongoing support from volunteers and now receives operational funding from occasional private and philanthropic donations. The board created an endowment fund with the help of ECBC, reflecting the organization's goal to be self-sustaining, as government operating grants and other supports are not expected to continue in the long term in the present fiscal environment. The CMIC serves as a good case illustration of ECBC's impact on the region (Smith interview 2015). CMIC Projects would not have been realized without ECBC support. Indeed, trust ties between the organizations yielded capital and consultancy grants, as well as equipment and technology upgrades. At the time of writing, there were worries that the disbanding of ECBC and the transferal of services and programming to ACOA could result in a withdrawal of support for 'small' and unique place-based Cape Breton initiatives that had needs and characteristics understood by ECBC programmers (Smith interview 2015).

With regard to other multi-level funding, a contribution from CCH remained fixed at \$25,000 between 2006 and 2014, although it was increased to \$29,000 in 2015. The CMIC is usually able to secure one 14-week student position through the provincial Student Career Skills Development grant program. On the federal end, the CMIC applies for two or three 14 week Canada Summer Jobs Student Grants and usually receives an 8-week grant to hire one student. Since 2012 the Municipality of Inverness has provided operational funding to the CMIC and other cultural organizations in the county. Although resources are limited for the municipality, it has been considered quite supportive of cultural organizations attempting to build the Island's tourism and culture sectors (Smith interview 2015), having recently invested in a branding and marketing campaign labeling Inverness County as 'Canada's Musical Coast' (Municipality of Inverness 2015).

These kinds of initiatives foster regionality and reinforce the notion that cultural capital and institutions on Cape Breton are continuously 'thickening'. Institutions are cooperating and regionalizing (both formally and informally) toward common cultural and economic development goals (Smith interview 2015). They are illustrative also of the growing importance of accessing the technological tools of globalization to attract potential participants, travellers, consumers and investors to the Cape Breton culture and tourism sectors.

Political Leadership on the Celtic Fringe

Dissertation interviewees (e.g. Joella Foulds, Jeffrey MacDonald, Richard MacKinnon) recognized the importance and value of the Gaelic initiatives, the Office of Gaelic Affairs, and specifically the leadership of Rodney MacDonald to the revitalization of Gaelic language and culture in the province in the early 2000s. As a minister and premier, MacDonald enabled institutional changes through determined leadership and his embrace of program ideas that related identity and culture to economic development. His institutional changes, like those influenced by Hon. Allan J. MacEachen and Premier

Angus L. Macdonald many years before, were critical to cultural and economic development for Cape Breton Island. As minister for CCH MacDonald also undertook the controversial move of disbanding the arms-length Nova Scotia Arts Council and replacing it with a Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council, which would have ministerial oversight. While some artists feared the politicization of funding allotments, the new council had a rigorous peer-review jury and committee process that did not involve politicians (Rodney MacDonald interview 2015; Foulds interview 2014). One goal of the restructuring was to redirect the high administration costs of the top-heavy Arts Council back to the artists who needed the money. Another goal was to rectify, as community arts leaders point out, a regional bias – towards Halifax recipients -- in funding awards (MacDonald interview 2015; Graham 2006; Doherty 2015; Foulds interview 2014). After the MacDonald-initiated restructuring, ‘you could probably trace that there was quite an improvement in the Cape Breton participation and levels of funding’ (Foulds interview 2014).

After the defeat of the MacDonald-led PC government in 2009, the Dexter NDP government essentially maintained the status quo at Gaelic Affairs. Under the NDP’s watch the Gaelic Affairs office maintained its MOU relationship with the Scottish government, with a bursary program announced in 2011 to support Gaelic students travelling to Scotland for instruction (NS Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage 2011a). The Dexter government, through Gaelic Affairs, also introduced the community-based ‘Bun is Bàrr’ (Root and Branch) master-apprentice program, which enables learners to ‘participate in immersion activities with a Gaelic elder’ (NS Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage 2011b).

The McNeil Liberal government has maintained program funding for Gaelic Affairs, although the Office was affected by the 2015 budget (The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia. 2015a). The austerity budget included a 40 per cent staffing cut (two of five positions) that was applied to the Office of Gaelic Affairs. Two positions were lost in one of its field offices. Immediately after the budget was made public, rumours also circulated about the possible shuttering of the Cape Breton branch office in Mabou, Inverness County (Rankin 2015). Political activists and leaders from Cape Breton and across the province expressed resistance to the initiatives. Organizations and community/political leaders such as Comhairle na Gàidhlig/The Nova Scotia Gaelic Council, Mabou Development’s David Greenwell, Inverness MLA Allan MacMaster, and Gaelic College CEO Rodney MacDonald expressed publicly, in the legislature, and at meetings with government, their disappointment with the cuts (Rankin 2015a; Rodney MacDonald interview 2015; Greenwell Facebook Post, April 22, 2015; Hansard Nova Scotia House of Assembly Debates, April 10, 2015).¹² From a region-building standpoint, MacDonald and MacMaster were using leadership influence and public pressure to *resist* a provincial cabinet decision adversely affecting Cape Breton’s cultural autonomy, and *negotiate* for the maintenance of both the Office of Gaelic Affairs and the community branch office in Mabou. MacDonald publicly stated, ‘It sends a very strong message, if that office should close...it would make a statement. It’s an office, it’s a community where the Gaelic language is a living language for not just seniors but people in the working world and youth.’ He added that one ‘can’t underestimate the contribution that the Gaelic Affairs Office has made to growing the culture on this Island and throughout the province. These cuts have weakened our community profoundly’ (Rankin 2015). The

Nova Scotia Gaelic Council requested and was granted a meeting with Ministers Delorey (Gaelic Affairs) and Ince (CCH) to discuss and clarify the cuts and direction planned for Gaelic. It seems resistance from Gaelic community leaders had an effect, as the Cape Breton office remains open.¹³

Multi-scalar leadership interactions were also important to securing support for a Celtic Music Interpretive Centre in Judique. Its planning committee members (one of which was a former local Liberal MLA) lobbied then local MLA Rodney MacDonald, MP Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton-Canso), and ACOA Minister Joe McGuire (PEI), all of whom were helpful in the realization of the project (Graham interview 2014). And new governance relationships are being established at the local level – The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia has been well received at meetings with municipal representatives, fostering social capital and receiving some financial commitments for Gaelic initiatives (The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia 2015b). Related to this, municipal leaders in Cape Breton have also acknowledged the importance of fostering culture for region-building. Examples include the hiring of community development officers in the rural counties, Inverness Municipality's 'Musical Coast Initiative' and support of cultural institutions. And under Cape Breton Regional Municipality's (CBRM) Mayor Cecil Clarke's leadership, CBRM seems to be paying more attention to the role that culture plays in economic development. In June 2014 a report that reviewed CBRM performance venues was tabled. It was prepared by Vibe Creative Group, in collaboration with a partnered steering committee including representatives from CBRM, the Province of Nova Scotia, and ECBC (Vibe Creative Group 2014). Also, in 2014 Joella Foulds of Celtic Colours chaired a mayor's roundtable to formulate the 'next steps' for growing 'the creative economy and how the municipality can assist' with region-building supports (CBRM 2014).

Conclusion

Although Gaelic was Canada's third most spoken language at Confederation, it was institutionally stigmatized, the Gaels marginalized. However, the Gaelic or 'Celtic Fringe' identity has been an element of continuity across regional constructions and remains prominent as the region redefines and rebuilds itself while moving away from its previous iteration as 'Industrial Cape Breton/Socialist Island'. Industrialization, social modernization, attempted cultural homogenization, and transition in a post-industrial setting, have set the Gaels and their 'final bastion' cultural region on a challenging development path. There has been a general move from defensive and integrating regionalisms to a more autonomist one, albeit with elements of each of these regionalism types intermingling with or transitioning into another.

Focusing on the era of globalization, the examination of institutions and institutionalization affecting (and affected by) Cape Breton's pursuit of cultural, social, and economic development signals that, to some degree, regional cultures and political and institutional actors can resist, accommodate and offset globalization-related pressures and, through incorporating regional preferences, identities, institution-building, and cultural revitalization, have an 'indigenizing' effect on region-building and development.

Globalization and the accompanying new regional and post-industrial settings created daunting challenges for Cape Breton. But globalization also brought opportunities. Accelerated technological innovations enabled regional cultural leaders,

institutions, and actors to 'globalize' the Celtic Fringe by accessing global markets through fostering social and cultural capital, quite often with the click of a computer mouse. In the performing arts scene, musicians became more professionalized and made an impact internationally, setting precedents for other culture bearers to take part in the creative economy. Their varied accomplishments and successes increased regional pride and strengthened Island identity. Institution-building, endogenous community-based agency, multi-level governance, and leadership at the centre of government helped regional actors to increasingly incorporate culture into development planning.

At federal, provincial, and municipal scales, institutional actors have played a part in globalizing the Celtic Fringe and building the Island through various supports and initiatives. Multi-level governmental and institutions have provided financial backing for cultural artists, projects, and day-to-day operations of cultural organizations. The workings and very creation of a number of these institutions reveal how distinctive regional cultural attributes are now being utilized for region-building purposes.

The revamping of provincial program funding and creation of the Office of Gaelic Affairs was indicative of a) how political leadership (in this instance Inverness MLA Rodney MacDonald working as minister and premier) at the government executive level can harness regional development ideas (as depicted in Keating et al. 2003). This was facilitated by a window of opportunity (attaining provincial government mandates at a time of cultural revitalization in Cape Breton) which effected the initiation of formal institutional change; and secondly by a 'scaling up' of responsibility for Gaelic culture, whereby jurisdiction and resources to affect Gaelic cultural preservation and promotion was moved from the under-resourced and underpowered informal community and civil society sector (encompassed largely by the 'informal' region of Cape Breton), to the well-resourced and empowered (though fiscally-challenged) institutional realm of the provincial government. MacDonald was also instrumental in bringing the Nova Scotia Highland Village into the Nova Scotia Museum family, providing one of the province's (and Island's) most vital culture-promoting and preserving institutions with greater financial capacity and security to carry out its operations (Interview 2015). As Minister of CCH, MacDonald also made the controversial decision to scrap and replace the Nova Scotia Arts Council. This initiative saw the creation of a new body that was still able to provide an arms-length jury process for funding allotment, but weakened 'the centre's' (the capital of Halifax) hold on decision-making power in terms of jury member composition and funding distribution. The move created more fairness in the sense that organizations and artists in regions outside of Halifax, such as Cape Breton, could have a better chance for accessing funding and other supports.

Other cultural institutions have also been involved in collaboration, partnerships, and regionalization processes in attempts to globalize the Celtic Fringe and build the region. The Gaelic College made more extensive changes in programming to better reflect the institution's mandate and the region's Gaelic culture. The College also partnered with CBU to provide higher education offerings and created online platforms for teaching language and music to a global clientele. An example of new regionalism dynamics at play, Celtic Colours International Festival -- the creation of community leaders and entrepreneurs Joella Foulds and Max MacDonald -- came about because of a federal-provincial diversification agreement signed by a provincial and federal ministers representing Cape Breton constituencies. The festival has utilized cutting-edge

technology to market music and culture around the world and extend the Island's tourism season by drawing thousands of festival goers for the week-long event. The Celtic Music Interpretive Centre (CMIC) was created to preserve and promote the region's Celtic music and serves as an example of how community agency and multi-level governance interactions can create an institution that utilizes endogenous cultural strengths for region-building purposes. It has struck a balance between preserving and commodifying culture, making the Island's music accessible to a global audience. It has also partnered with other like-minded institutions on the Island and accessed municipal support to commence a regionalized *Féis* Movement. The CMIC depended on guidance and financial support from ECBC, further indication of the Island-based, federal crown corporation's value to the economic diversification of the Cape Breton region.

The Island has unique cultural attributes, now conjoined with the corresponding cultural institutions required for development. Agency and leadership at the local, provincial, and federal levels, along with a more regionalized vision, are important (as noted by neo-institutionalists) for making these institutions more salient and effective.

I believe people think of a culturally rich community when they think of Cape Breton. We have a number of institutions which have played a key role in maintaining and expanding that cultural identity... But leadership is always the key. Having committed local people on the ground available to commit long-term to the building of the Island will make the difference. If we can find a vision that all sectors and corners of the Island can buy into, it would be a great start (MacEachern interview 2014).

While opportunities for development in a new regional and globalized setting through harnessing culture are important for regional reconstruction, depending solely on culture to promote growth and development does not appear to be enough (Whalley interview 2014). Economic benefits have accrued from formal and grass-roots institution-building, developing cultural products, as well as intrinsic, often intangible identity-related value that can bolster community confidence. The cultural industries have become an important cog in the economic development wheel, but throughout the period of cultural revitalization of the 'Celtic Fringe' – years that have coincided with the onset of globalization – the Island's population has continued to skid downwards. This shrinking population has become the main challenge that the community is facing, one mentioned by most of this paper's interviewees. The last two decades have seen continuous outmigration. Recently, over a 15-year period, Cape Breton's population declined by an alarming 14 percent (NS Highland Village Annual Report 2013-14 citing Statistics Canada 1996, 2006, 2011). From a development perspective, the Island could also benefit from looking to some of its own First Nations communities for inspiration, as some have managed to counter and reverse not only negative population trends, but also development barriers that have persisted for two centuries. That impressive turnaround is certainly worthy of further research. Looking at the present and future, it is rather early in the latest iteration of the region to know for certain what kind of region Cape Breton is 'becoming', even as we mark the 150th year of Confederation.

¹ Though a multicultural region, representations of the Island's culture and identity have tended to emphasize its predominant Celtic/Gaelic element. This is not to deny the importance of the other ethno-cultural groups that have intermingled and cooperated with each other. While not covered in this paper, the Island's Acadians – and how they have responded to globalization – deserve a study of their own. The same holds true of the Mi'kmaw community, the subject of another related forthcoming paper from the author. It should be emphasized that although *components* of the Celtic/Gaelic culture have brought the 'Celtic Fringe' to international attention, the Gaelic language remains in a precarious position, even more so than the Island's other 'historic' minority languages, Acadian French and Mi'kmaq (see Newton 2013). From a new institutionalism standpoint, formal institutional and economic power (and stereotyping attitudes accompanying it) – with regard to the capacity to maintain the Gaelic language in Cape Breton – was located elsewhere, *not* within the Gaelic community itself (The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia 2015a). That the Gaels were politically and culturally marginalized in this sense, despite their relatively large numbers, provides justification for giving them close attention in this work.

² The methodological approach is mainly qualitative, being inductive, holistic, and interpretive (see Creswell 2007, 38-41), and triangulated (see della Porta and Keating 2008). A literature review and document analysis of a variety of primary, secondary and online sources has been completed; semi-structured 'elite' interviews with various political, bureaucratic, and community-level cultural leaders, artists, and business people were undertaken to increase the contextual and interpretive breadth of the findings. Interviewees were chosen through non-probability sampling, mainly through purposive and selective snowball sampling (see King 2004).

³ Cape Breton University political scientist and many observers point to chronic double digit unemployment, outmigration, high rates of poverty, and comparatively dire social situations that Island residents experience in the face of a changing economy (2007).

⁴ This is not to suggest that regionalism types need be compartmentalized as one or another of the above. A regionalism may be found to be in transition from one type to another, or be a combination of types.

⁵ Regionality somewhat mirrors, without a typologizing approach, Hettne and Söderbaum's concept of 'regionness' (2002) and the degree to which a territorialized community may exhibit this, depending on its agency-related level of *regionalization*, as depicted later in this text. Regionality is used essentially to express the idea of 'regionness', which suggests that regions are unlike not only in their particularities, but also because they can be placed on a continuum of regionness, for example, ranging from 'deep/substantive' to 'shallow/superficial'. "Regionalism" in this construction becomes a manifestation of regionness or regionality, manifesting itself in political, cultural or economic ways, or all of these simultaneously (as regionality grows or deepens).

⁶ The concept of regionality is similar to Burgess's use of the term 'federality' which he uses to evaluate the *quality* and *societal embeddedness* of federalism practices in different federal settings. Since Cape Breton is a region that clearly exhibits a form of stateless regionality, the ensuing analysis of regional reconstruction and development would be wanting without an examination of such agency at the societal level (2011, 11).

⁷ These partners include Cape Breton University, St. FX University, NSCAD University, Celtic Heart of North America Cooperative, Sgoil Mhic Fhraing a' Chaolais/Rankin School of the Narrows, Eskasoni First Nation, Glenora Distillery, Silver Dart Hotel, Castle Moffet, Cabot Trail Motel, Cape Breton B&Bs, and Destination Cape Breton. The Highland Village is also affiliated with various tourism associations and museum organizations, as well as the Island's Chambers of Commerce (NS Highland Village Annual Report 2013-14, 4).

⁸ It was not until the last couple of decades that programming began to change and be more reflective of the cultural components practiced in the Island's Gaelic communities (Graham 2006; Shears 2008).

⁹ This stance which countered the more homogenous and hegemonic symbolic ‘tartanized’ interpretations of art forms associated with Scotland. Some who continued to identify primarily with Clan Societies, tartanism, and the competitive musical arts associated with Highland Games were not receptive to such mandate reconstruction, reclamation of the Gaelic arts, and re-emphasis on the language.

¹⁰ Indicative of the move away from supporting footloose industrial initiatives, Mann said that the government wanted to fund sustainable projects, ‘things that would withstand the test of time’ (Richie Mann interview, 2014).

¹¹ Coined the ‘Dean’ and ‘Master’ of Cape Breton fiddling, Buddy MacMaster was awarded the Order of Canada and inducted into the American Folk Music Hall of Fame.

¹² The 40 per cent staff cut, at a crucial time of cultural revitalization, ‘blindsided’ MacDonald and other stakeholders. These leaders also pointed out that the Gaelic Affairs office was hit harder, in terms of the percentage in staffing cut, than were similar offices like Acadian Affairs and African-Nova Scotian Affairs.

¹³ Of note, former NDP finance minister Graham Steele suggested that Gaelic Affairs would have been a sensible place to make funding cuts while he was in government, but the government ultimately maintained the status quo. Ironically he was formally responsible for Acadian Affairs but somehow reasoned that the Gaels of the Celtic Fringe were just *that* -- a fringe group having a few vocal renegades who would create too much controversy for the government, should the Gaelic Affairs office be hit with cuts (Steele 2014).

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