Journal of Marine and Island Cultures (2014) 3, 9–19

Journal of Marine and Island Cultures

www.sciencedirect.com

Social and economic effects of spatial distribution in island communities: Comparing the Isles of Scilly and Isle of Wight, UK

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Received 21 January 2014; accepted 24 March 2014
Available online 10 May 2014

KEYWORDS

Spatial distribution and development;
Peripheral economies;
Subnational island jurisdictions;
Archipelagos;
Isles of Scilly;
Isle of Wight

Abstract There has been increasing awareness that communities based on islands are subject to particular island-related factors (the so-called 'island effect'). This paper sheds empirical light on how the island effect differs in different kinds of island communities, specifically solitary islands on the one hand and archipelagos on the other. It does so by comparing two subnational island jurisdictions (SNIJs) in England: the Isles of Scilly and the Isle of Wight. By analysing census statistics, we show how the spatial distribution in the Isles of Scilly (an archipelago) and the Isle of Wight (a solitary island) is interrelated with patterns of population and employment. Although the Isles of Scilly and the Isle of Wight are both tourism economies, the data indicates that, in social and economic terms, the Isles of Scilly benefits while the Isle of Wight suffers as a result of their different patterns of spatial distribution. We conclude that an island community's spatial distribution has a significant influence on its societal development and that the island effect differs among islands with different patterns of spatial distribution.

Introduction: island spaces

Islands hold special prominence in studies of the role that space plays in societal development. So fundamental is 'the island' to our understanding of societal relationships that we create symbolic and metaphorical islands where no physical islands exist. The popular consciousness even tends to reflect this symbolic sense of 'insularity', 'isolation', and 'peripherality' back upon physical islands, despite ample evidence that actual island communities are usually thoroughly integrated into the outside world (Eriksen, 1993; Christensen and Mertz, 2010). The precise manner in which the attribute of islandness affects islands – the so-called 'island effect' – is very much under debate (Leimgruber, 2013).

Nevertheless, as the research field of island studies has shown, island communities possess a range of general characteristics resulting from their spatial distinctiveness and boundedness. To say that insularity, isolation, and peripherality are

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Peer review under responsibility of Mokpo National University.

2212-6821 © 2014 Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of Institution for Marine and Island Cultures, Mokpo National University.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.imic.2014.03.002

relative (Biagini and Hoyle, 1999) is not to say they are illusory. Even within the geographical category of 'islands', however, differing spatial factors are significant. This is true not only in the obvious sense that some islands are very large (for instance, Greenland and Madagascar) while others are very small. It is also true in that some 'island communities' are, in fact, located on an archipelago (i.e. made up of populations living on multiple islands) while others are located on a solitary island.

This diversity of islands results in a diversity of island ways of life. For instance, tourism planning and practice tend to take place very differently in strongly archipelagic communities than on solitary islands or in archipelagos that are overwhelmingly dominated by one of their constituent islands (Baldacchino and Ferreira, 2013). Similarly, the isolation of island communities – in the sense of their distance from other communities – is not only highly variable but also multifaceted (Spilanis et al., 2012). Physical archipelagos are not always conceived of as archipelagos (Suwa, 2012), and solitary islands are not always thought of as islands (Bożętka, 2013).

These findings are being considered in light of island studies' increasing theoretical sophistication. Within island studies, the emerging explication that islands tend to be intimately related with one another and with various mainlands (Stratford, 2013) represents a reconfirmation – rather than a denial – that islandness matters. Many islands – such as Malta and Malé – are arguably simultaneously highly urbanised, highly isolated, and highly interconnected with the surrounding world. This has tended to complicate discussion of how the island effect – whatever it may be – might relate to oft-cited 'active ingredients of islandness' such as insularity, isolation, and peripherality. Pete Hay (2013: 12) has nevertheless argued that:

> The current 'party line' within island studies is to emphasize connectivity as the antonym of a bounded sensibility and in the process the ocean is lost, reduced to one of two inadequate and opposed stereotypes: hard barrier, or highway to somewhere else.

Hay's phenomenological remedy is to focus on "the bounded sensibility of island engagement" (Hay, 2013: 227), to look at psychologies of islandness. This is a welcome perspective inasmuch as its focus on identity construction on islands permits examination of an area that, as Hay (2013: 214) notes, makes life on islands "qualitatively distinct." In other words, considering things from the islanders' point of view has the advantage of turning such island attributes as insularity, isolation, and peripherality into cultural and emotional truths rather than forcing us to regard them as geographic relativities that require nuancing in the form of discussions of island-mainland interaction.

In recent years, then, the field has produced a rich literature of theoretical correctives to itself. It has, however, been rather poorer at implementing these correctives in studies of actual islands. Instead, theories of the island effect have remained marooned largely in the realm of anecdote even as island studies researchers continue producing excellent comparative studies of actual islands. Exceptions do exist, and some authors have indeed produced research that contributes both to a specific and a general understanding of islands: On the quantitative side of the research spectrum, Pons and Rullan (2013) have shown that island and coastal urbanisation is associated with complex spatial factors, and on the qualitative side, Pugh (2013: 10) has engaged with the concept of the archipelago by calling for a 'denaturalisation' of space, "so that space is more than the mere backcloth for political or ethical debate."

There remains, however, a further need for grounding concepts from island studies theory in the real world. Without such a grounding, any examination of the island effect will necessarily be superficial.

In the present article, we seek to fill a particular gap in this regard by shedding empirical light on the distinction between different kinds of islands (specifically between solitary islands and archipelagos), a distinction that sometimes risks being overlooked in debates concerning 'the island' in abstract. We do so through a comparison of two subnational island jurisdictions (hereafter, SNIJs) in England: 1) a relatively large solitary island (Isle of Wight) in close vicinity to a major population centre and 2) a small archipelago (Isles of Scilly) that is relatively distant from any major population centre. By comparing these two SNIJs, with reference to other European island communities, we can consider how the island effect differs on solitary islands and archipelagos. We will argue not that one type of island is more island-like or insular than another but, rather, that the different kinds of islands result in different kinds of island effects. Although other areas are worthy of research as well, we focus here on how patterns of island spatial distribution relate to patterns of employment and mobility.

Methodology

In this article, we consider the association between spatial distribution (both within an SNIJ and between an SNIJ and neighbouring landmasses) and some of the factors that are often noted as active ingredients of the island effect, namely insularity, isolation, and peripherality. This association will be analysed primarily through a comparison of various quantitative measures of social and economic health and robustness from the Isle of Wight (hereafter, IOW) and the Isles of Scilly (hereafter, Scilly). The data, presented in Section 5 below, has been considered with reference to individual islands and island districts within IOW and Scilly as well as to England as a whole. The types of data presented concern:

- Table 1. Age of population.
- Table 2. Distance travelled to work.
- Table 3. Method of travel to work.
- Table 4. Types of employment (percentage unemployed, full-time, part-time, etc.).
- Table 5. Level of education of population.

Key to our approach is an understanding that these types of data represent only indirect measures of social and economic health and robustness inasmuch as there can be no 'ideal' figures when regarded in isolation. For instance, the percentage of a population within the 20–29 year age cohort is of very different societal significance for an isolated small island community than it is for an urban community contiguous with other urban communities. Such, at any rate, is the anecdotal, common sense proposition that one would derive from the island studies theory discussed above. However, by looking

Table 1 Population statistics, derived from 2011 Census of England and Wales (Office for National Statistics). Figures in *italics* designate regional totals while figures in **bold** designate the highest figure in a category.

	Total pop.	0–4 yr. (%)	5–9 yr. (%)	10–15 yr. (%)	16–19 yr. (%)	20–29 yr. (%)	30–44 yr. (%)	45–64 yr. (%)	65–74 yr. (%)	75 + yr. (%)	Mean age
England	*53,012,456*	*6.3*	*5.6*	*7.0*	*5.1*	*13.7*	*20.6*	*25.4*	*8.6*	*7.8*	*39.3*
Scilly total	*2,203*	*4.8*	*4.8*	*6.2*	*1.5*	*11.1*	*19.4*	*29.2*	*12.3*	*10.7*	*44.7*
St Mary's	1723	4.2	4.7	6.7	1.6	9.2	18.4	30.2	13.1	11.8	
Tresco	175	5.1	5.1	4.0	2.3	**25.7**	**28.6**	21.1	3.4	4.6	
St Martin's	136	6.6	4.4	4.4	0.7	17.6	19.9	25.7	11.0	9.6	
Bryher/St Agnes	169	**8.3**	5.3	4.1	1.2	11.2	19.5	30.2	14.2	5.9	
IoW total	*138,265*	*4.6*	*4.8*	*7.1*	*4.6*	*9.7*	*16.8*	*28.6*	*12.4*	*11.5*	*44.4*
Ryde	31,516	5.0	5.1	**7.2**	**4.9**	10.2	17.5	27.8	11.7	10.7	
East Wight	28,309	4.2	4.3	7.0	4.8	9.1	14.7	28.9	13.4	13.7	
Newport	25,496	5.4	**5.3**	7.3	**4.9**	13.5	20.0	26.1	9.4	8.2	
Cowes	22,499	5.5	5.2	**7.2**	4.6	9.8	19.0	27.2	11.4	10.1	
South Wight	16,579	3.6	4.9	6.9	4.4	7.2	14.5	**32.9**	14.5	12.0	
Back of Wight	13,866	3.3	4.0	6.1	3.7	6.5	12.5	31.5	**16.3**	**16.1**	

Table 2 Distance travelled to work, derived from 2001 Census of England and Wales (Office for National Statistics). Figures in *italics* designate regional totals while figures in **bold** designate the highest figure in a category.

	All Workers Sampled	Work from Home (%)	< 2 km (%)	2– < 5 km (%)	5– < 10 km (%)	10– < 30 km (%)	> 30 km (%)
England	*22,441,497*	*9.2*	*20.0*	*21.1*	*18.2*	*20.5*	*7.5*
Scilly total	*1269*	*23.2*	*61.4*	*3.5*	*1.2*	*0.0*	*5.0*
St Mary's	917	21.6	61.7	3.9	0.7	0.0	5.4
Tresco	132	9.8	**78.0**	0.0	2.3	0.0	**8.4**
St Martin's	105	33.3	60.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
Bryher/St Agnes	110	**44.5**	42.7	5.5	2.7	0.0	7.8
IoW total	*54,483*	*10.6*	*29.2*	*12.4*	*18.8*	*19.1*	*4.4*
Ryde	12,499	9.4	25.9	11.2	**27.3**	16.1	4.4
East Wight	10,585	12.9	26.8	12.0	12.0	25.6	5.2
Newport	10,199	7.3	46.0	14.1	14.6	10.5	2.9
Cowes*	6279	9.6	31.2	**15.4**	21.9	13.1	3.9
South Wight	6983	13.7	15.3	13.0	19.7	24.7	5.1
Back of Wight**	3379	17.0	16.0	8.8	17.1	**28.5**	5.8

Note: Due to missing data, these figures represent very rough approximations. The figures do not include workers with no fixed workplace.
* Excluding East Cowes Parish.
** Excluding Freshwater Parish.

Table 3 Method of travel to work for residents below the age of 75, derived from 2011 Census of England and Wales (Office for National Statistics). Figures in *italics* designate regional totals while figures in **bold** designate the highest figure in a category.

	Private car/van (%)	Motorcycle/moped/quad bike (%)	Public transport* (Land) (%)	Work from home (%)	Walk (%)	Bicycle (%)	Other (%)	Not in employment (%)
England	***37.7***	*0.5*	***11.2***	*6.9*	*6.3*	*1.8*	*0.3*	*35.3*
Scilly total	*17.6*	***2.1***	*0.7*	***26.7***	***20.8***	***11.5***	***2.5***	*19.2*
IoW total	*34.9*	*1.0*	*3.5*	*7.4*	*9.5*	*1.8*	*1.2*	***40.6***

* Passengers in taxis are listed under 'Public Transport'.

at population data alongside other data as we do here, we are capable of moving beyond anecdote and common sense and seeing how and how the age breakdown of an island's population might be significant.

Thus, generally speaking, our analysis of this data leads us to draw conclusions concerning how spatial factors influence distribution of population, employment, and mobility. By comparing the situations in two quite spatially distinct island communities, we are able to evaluate the extent to which we can speak of an island effect *per se* as opposed to a variety of potential island effects conditioned by the varying spatial distributions of actual islands.

Table 4 Employment statistics for economically active residents and retirees below the age of 75, derived from 2011 Census of England and Wales (Office for National Statistics). Figures in *italics* designate regional totals while figures in **bold** designate the highest figure in a category.

	Aged 16–74	Part-time employed (%)	Full-time employed (%)	Self-employed (%)	Working + 49 h per week (%)	Unem-ployed (%)	Retired (%)
England	*38,881,374*	*13.7*	*38.6*	*9.8*	*8.6*	*4.4*	*13.7*
Scilly total	*1,622*	*13.6*	*40.3*	*26.7*	*15.0*	*1.1*	*12.9*
St Mary's	1,249	14.5	38.1	25.8	12.7	1.2	15.0
Tresco	142	7.7	**83.1**	5.6	19.0	0.7	1.4
St Martin's	102	10.8	27.5	39.2	21.6	1.0	9.8
Bryher/St Agnes	129	12.4	24.0	**48.9**	**28.7**	0.8	7.8
IoW Total	*99,747*	*15.8*	*30.4*	*11.6*	*6.5*	*4.4*	*20.5*
Ryde	22,702	15.9	31.2	10.9	6.1	**5.3**	19.7
East Wight	20,065	15.4	27.9	12.4	11.7	5.2	22.4
Newport	18,815	**16.8**	33.1	8.1	5.0	4.2	14.6
Cowes	16,196	15.7	35.8	11.0	6.7	3.3	19.0
South Wight	12,184	14.8	26.4	15.8	7.9	3.8	24.0
Back of Wight	9,785	15.7	24.7	14.2	6.9	3.2	**28.3**

Table 5 Highest Level of Educational Qualification, derived from 2011 Census of England and Wales (Office for National Statistics). Figures in *italics* designate regional totals while figures in **bold** designate the highest figure in a category.

	Age 16+	No Academic Qualifications (%)	University Degree (%)
England	*42,989,620*	*22.5*	*27.4*
Scilly total	*1,857*	*14.2*	*33.0*
St Mary's	1,453	16.0	32.1
Tresco	150	4.7	34.7
St Martin's	115	8.7	34.8
Bryher/St Agnes	139	10.1	**38.8**
IoW total	*115,589*	*24.3*	*22.6*
Ryde	*26,083*	23.0	*23.0*
East Wight	23,946	**28.1**	19.4
Newport	20,907	24.7	19.2
Cowes	18,471	21.3	26.5
South Wight	14,169	23.7	24.3
Back of Wight	12,013	19.9	26.3

The data used in this article has been derived from the data collected by the Office of National Statistics for the 2001 and 2011 Census of England and Wales. The significant disparity in land area and population size between Scilly and IOW necessitated, for the sake of comparison, the creation of new data sets on the basis of the census data. The tables below thus present statistics on a variety of spatial and jurisdictional scales: They compare data for England as a whole, Scilly as a whole, and IOW as a whole as well as districts within Scilly and IOW. In the case of Scilly, these districts are derived directly from the census statistics, taking the form of the archipelago's five inhabited islands (the main island of St Mary's and the four 'off islands' of Tresco, St Martin's, Bryher, and St Agnes), which the census treat as electoral wards, with Bryher and St Agnes being combined into a single ward.

In the case of IOW, these districts are created by grouping the island's various parishes on the basis of location, major settlements, and local spatial perceptions. These six districts and their constituent parishes are:

- Ryde: Ryde (Parish), Havenstreet and Ashey, Nettlestone and Seaview, Fishbourne, Wootton Bridge.
- East Wight: Sandown, Bembridge, St Helens, Lake, Brading, Shanklin.
- Newport: Newport (Parish).
- Cowes: Gurnard, Cowes (Parish), Whippingham, East Cowes, Northwood.
- South Wight: Newchurch, Chillerton and Gatcombe, Chale, Godshill, Niton and Whitwell, Rookley, Ventnor, Wroxall, Arreton.
- Back of Wight (Southwest Wight): Totland, Freshwater, Yarmouth, Brighstone, Calbourne, Shorwell, and Shalfleet.

Unlike the 'natural' district boundaries in Scilly, various arguments could be forwarded for rearrangements among the created IOW districts, and such rearrangements could significantly alter the results. Because the wards in Scilly and the parishes on IOW are derived directly from the Office of National Statistics' census data, however, the figures given below are capable of further testing as new data becomes available. Indeed, future researchers could easily alter the compositions of the various IOW districts. The data used in this article was retrieved from the Office of National Statistics website (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) in March 2013, with the exception of the data in Table 3, which was retrieved in July 2013.

The small size of the districts under consideration (particularly those in Scilly) means that factors involving a small number of individuals can greatly affect outcomes in individual categories. This does not make the data incorrect (in fact, Scilly's small size ensured exemplary census coverage), but it makes caution necessary when extrapolating conclusions from the data. Furthermore, data is at times lacking due to the Office of National Statistics' efforts to ensure confidentiality in small communities.

Islands of England

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island (hereafter, the UK) is an archipelagic state spatially dominated by its main island (Great Britain). In addition to the portion of

its territory located on the northeast corner of the island of Ireland, the UK includes various smaller islands around its coasts. Further complicating this territorial picture, the Channel Islands (southeast of Great Britain) and the Isle of Man (in the Irish Sea) are dependencies of the British Crown rather than constitutional components of the UK.

The Isles of Scilly and the Isle of Wight are located off the southwest and the south coast of England respectively (see Fig. 1).

These two SNIJs are exceptional within the UK for a number of reasons. Scilly is the smallest administrative area in all of the UK in terms of population (2,203 residents) and the second smallest in terms of land area (16 km^2). In contrast, IOW has the largest population (138,265) of any UK parliamentary constituency and is the largest island in England in terms of land area (385 km^2). Although this makes IOW the fourth most populous island in the British Isles (after Great Britain, Ireland, and Portsea Island), it is only the 12th largest in terms of land area. In addition, whereas Scilly is located 45 km from a peripheral corner of Great Britain, IOW is separated from populous Portsmouth only by the narrow Solent Channel.

With the exception of the city of Portsmouth on Portsea Island, Scilly and IOW are the only of England's 85 subnational jurisdictions (counties, the Greater London administrative area, and the Scilly *sui generis* unitary authority) to be wholly or primarily insular.

Fig. 1 Location of the Isles of Scilly and the Isle of Wight relative to Great Britain and Ireland. (Source: adapted from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ALocation_Sealand.PNG)

Tourism economies

Before beginning our analysis, we will briefly place Scilly and IOW in an economic-historical context.

Unlike Scotland's archipelagic SNIJs (Western Isles, Orkney, and Shetland), Scilly and IOW have not developed reputations for ruggedness and isolation but are instead often perceived as playgrounds for the wealthy and sites for seaside tourism in somewhat the same manner as are the British crown dependencies (Isle of Man, Guernsey, and Jersey). This is the result of historical circumstance in terms of the development of tourism in these islands as well as of a more recent tendency for them to be marketed in very similar ways (Johnson, 2012).

IOW became a site for large-scale tourism at an early date, enjoying royal patronage first through King George IV's involvement in the Royal Yacht Club (later, Royal Yacht Squadron), resulting in the establishment of an annual sailing regatta in 1826. The regatta, which continues to this day, became a regular attraction for the British aristocracy. Queen Victoria had a house built on the island in the 1840s and remained a frequent visitor until her death on IOW in 1901. This royal attachment seems to have increased the island's popular appeal, prompting entertainment and transport infrastructure improvements by the mid-1850s (Grydehøj & Hayward, 2011).

For its part, Scilly was visited by intrepid travellers during the Victorian period (for instance, Whitfield, 1852). The introduction of rail services from London to Penzance in Cornwall in 1867 delivered travellers to a port from which they could gain passage to Hugh Town on the island of St Mary's, which is still Scilly's largest settlement. In 1920, the Isles of Scilly Steamship Company began a regular passenger and cargo service between Penzance and St Mary's, a service that remains Scilly's lifeline to the mainland today. In the mid-1930s, plane flights to St Mary's began operating out of St Just (near Land's End, Cornwall) before being replaced by Europe's first regular helicopter route in 1964 (Lo Bao and Hutchinson, 2002). Regular air services now connect the islands to a range of towns in Cornwall and southern England.

The British media has played a major role in attracting tourists to Scilly, most significantly in the 1960s, when UK Prime Minister Harold Wilson had a predilection for going on holiday to Scilly and holding press conferences on the islands. More recently, the BBC2 documentary TV series *An Island Parish* (2007) and an accompanying book (Farrell, 2008) alerted many mainlanders to the islands' beauty.

Although both Scilly and IOW are today widely regarded as desirable places to visit and live, they also feature local discourses of impoverishment. The two SNIJs are highly dependent on domestic tourism. In 2005, IOW's tourism industry was estimated as generating £360 million in direct expenditure, £25 million in yachting income, and £150 million through the multiplier effect, supporting over 20% of the island's jobs (Isle of Wight Council, 2005, 3). Tourism-related income accounts for at least 70% of Scilly's economy (Council of the Isles of Scilly, 2012, 19). Despite similarities in the tourism experiences on offer and the ways in which these are marketed (natural heritage, warm weather, beaches, flowers, etc.), the two SNIJs attract somewhat different markets. IOW features much more family tourism, focused on the beach *per se* and seaside amusements and attractions. Nevertheless, both SNIJs depend significantly on older tourists, with over 80% of visitors to Scilly being above the age of 45 (Council of the Isles of Scilly, 2012, 21). Both SNIJs are highly seasonal destinations, though in Scilly, the difference between the late-summer peak season

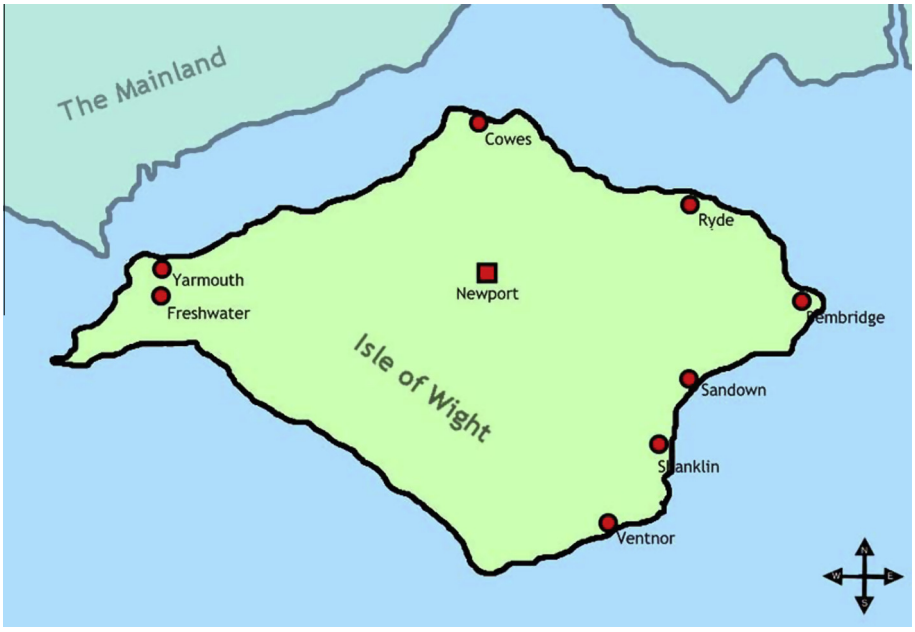

Fig. 2 Map of the Isle of Wight, showing major settlements. (Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isle_of_Wight_Map.png)

and the shoulder season is levelling off (Council of the Isles of Scilly, 2012, 22), perhaps partially due to a decline among the younger demographics, the holiday planning of which is more likely to be influenced by school and work holidays.

Analysis of spatial distributions in archipelago and solitary island communities

As the figures in Table 1 below demonstrate, the populations of both Scilly and IOW are considerably older than the population of England as a whole.

Although both Scilly and IOW possess economies dependent largely on older tourists, IOW possesses considerably more retirees than does Scilly, as will be evident in Table 4 below. No part of Scilly possesses such concentrations of residents 65 years or older as do IOW's rural districts, though this may largely be due to the impediments to purchasing retirement homes outside of Hugh Town because the Duchy of Cornwall owns most of the housing stock elsewhere in the archipelago. We can partially associate Scilly's exceptionally high mean age with its lack of 16–19 year olds (local youths must move to the mainland for upper secondary school). Both Scilly and IOW possess high proportions of residents over the age of 65 and between 45 and 64 years old. Unlike IOW, however, Scilly also has many 20–29 and 30–44 year old residents, particularly on the off islands. Tresco is a special case due to the structure of its economy (discussed below).

Table 1 also indicates that the shared reputation of Scilly and IOW as rural idylls is not entirely accurate. Although Scilly is resolutely rural despite its tiny size (population density of 137.7 per km^2), IOW's population density of 359.1 residents per km^2 means that, like the Channel Islands, its reputation for rurality is not fully deserved. As noted elsewhere (Grydehøj & Hayward, 2011: 195), this comes down in part to IOW's unusually multi-nodal settlement pattern: Whereas most Northern European SNIJs possess one major population centre accompanied by numerous smaller settlements, IOW has no primary focal point for social, economic, or cultural activity. Besides the inland administrative centre of Newport, there are a number of other significant urban clusters, such as Ryde, Cowes, East Cowes, Shanklin, Sandown, Ventnor, and Freshwater. This is a result of IOW's historical development, both in terms of the emergence of the tourism industry (which favours coastal locations) and in terms of the variety of other economic activities that were traditionally – and to some extent, still are – undertaken on the island. Only the area known locally as the 'Back of Wight' (the southwest corner of the island) is comprehensively rural (see Fig. 2).

In contrast, Scilly possesses a definite population centre, namely Hugh Town, which is home to nearly half of the archipelago's total population, with the remainder of the island of St Mary's accounting for a further quarter of Scilly's total number of residents. Whereas 77.2% of IOW's population lives outside of the island's most-populous region (Ryde and its surroundings), just 21.8% of Scilly's population lives on the off islands (see Fig. 3).

The differing spatial distributions of populations in Scilly and IOW have some interesting – and at times unexpected – effects on how the SNIJs' societies function. As shown in Table 2, IOW residents who are employed are significantly more likely to live within 2 km of their workplaces than are residents of England as a whole but are only marginally more likely to live within 5 km of their workplaces. Over 43% of them do not work in their own communities at all, with most of these evidently travelling to other parts of the island to work. IOW's most rural districts (South Wight and Back of Wight) feature both the highest proportions of workers working from home and the highest proportions of workers travelling over 5 km to work: This reflects the high rate of self-employment in these districts, including primary sector agriculture and family-run tourism businesses (see Table 4 below), combined with the relative lack of jobs in the secondary and tertiary sectors, which causes residents to travel to

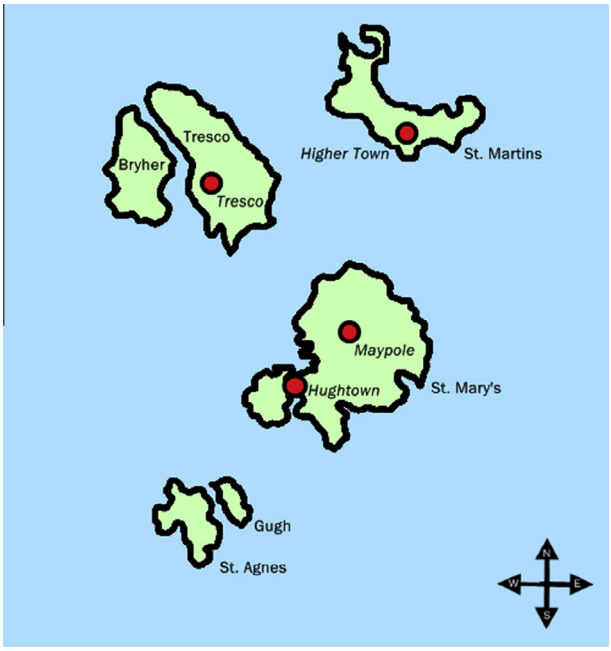

Fig. 3 Map of the Isles of Scilly, showing major settlements. (Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scilly_Islands_map.png)

work in IOW's major towns. That said, Ryde, the island's most urbanised district, also features rates of travel to work between 5 and 10 km (a figure excluding those who commute by ferry to the mainland) that is significantly in excess of the national average. In other words, workers from IOW's rural districts are commuting to the island's towns, but workers from the towns are likewise commuting to other sites on the island. That said, significantly fewer individuals are commuting long distances (in IOW's case, to locations on the mainland a considerable distance from the ferry ports) than in England as a whole.

This stands in sharp contrast to the situation in Scilly, where distance travelled to work rates are absolutely unlike the national averages. Due to Scilly's distance from the mainland, it is impossible to commute 10–30 km, yet Scilly's proportion of workers commuting over 30 km is not significantly elevated relative to that of England. Combined with the small numbers of IOW residents commuting long distances, this reinforces the important argument by Spilanis et al. (2012, 210) that 'accessibility' is not measurable by distance in kilometres alone when it comes to islands that are dependent on slow and/or expensive ferries for transport.

It is striking that a full 84.6% of Scilly workers hardly commute at all and instead work less than 2 km from where they live: In other words, they work on their own islands. Furthermore, it is evidently not the case that the urban centre of Hugh Town on St Mary's is skewing the average distance travelled downward and that large numbers of workers from the off islands are commuting to St Mary's.

What is intriguing when we compare the figures from Scilly and IOW is how they compare with trends in island commuting elsewhere. As noted above, most European SNIJs possess a single definite centre of population (as in Scilly). There is, furthermore, often a process of urbanisation and centralisation underway, with the population centre drawing both residents and commuters from the rural districts over time. This is evident not only on many solitary islands but also perhaps even more strongly in archipelagos such as Shetland in Scotland, where the more populous zone in the centre of the main island has gradually accrued residents (Shetland Islands Council, 2012: 10) and commuters at the expense of the peripheral islands. Such is not the case in Scilly, which has experienced an overall decline in population over time without St Mary's growing relative to the off islands.

In contrast, IOW has experienced more or less steady population growth since the start of the 1800s, but it has similarly resisted centralisation despite processes of urbanisation, with the island's population growing as tourism and geographically dispersed heavy industries emerged as dominant economic activities. Although the inland location of Newport helps explain why Newport has not disproportionately increased in size, it does not explain why the coastal settlements have not done so. By comparison, the similarly seaside tourism-dominated crown dependencies (Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey) have all developed definite population centres, despite their high population densities.

In other words, regardless of their actual population distributions at this time, both centralised-yet-archipelagic Scilly and decentralised-yet-solitary island IOW have resisted trends toward further centralisation. Not all decentralisation is the same, however, and as Table 2 above showed, both urban and rural IOW residents are considerably more dependent on transport for their work than are urban or rural Scilly residents.

Research elsewhere has shown that ease of and general access to private transport in rural communities can exacerbate social divides: As car use increases, provision of local services tends to decrease relative to provision of services in general, with consumers driving to larger settlements for their shopping and other needs. This further enhances the importance – and thus the frequency – of car ownership, leading to a loss of public transport provision. The result is a 'poverty of access' for those who lack the resources or ability to use private transport (Gray et al., 2006).

With this mind, we can consider in Table 3 the Office of National Statistics' data on method of travel to work, which uses different computations than those used for the data in Table 2.

We can perhaps see the development of a 'poverty of access' process on IOW, where few people use public transport relative to the national average. IOW has, in fact, a decent bus system, with relatively frequent travel between the major towns and occasional travel through the rural districts, but there is no doubt that lack of a car restricts freedom of mobility in practice. We saw in Table 2 above that individuals in the countryside *and* individuals in the towns are commuting to work, but we can see in Table 3 that the shortfall in private car and public transport use is made up for by a surplus of people without employment. It is unsurprising that an SNIJ without major rail lines and with a large number of retirees also has few people who use public transport and a low employment rate. It is, however, startling that there is no correlation between low public transport use and high car use, which is usually the case in rural English communities, even those with very high proportions of retirees (for example, in Dorset, Somerset, and Devon) and even when measuring only method

of travel to work. In the absence of a more direct means of measuring access to transport in general, the implication thus seems to be that there is an overall lack of mobility among IOW residents. The fact that this lack of mobility is elevated relative to other favoured English retirement areas does not necessarily prove that it is an effect of islandness, but it does mean that it is not an effect of rurality alone.

In Scilly, on the other hand, the small size of the individual islands and the nature of the boats that serve as inter-island ferries mean that car ownership in the SNIJ is very limited, and although private boat ownership is not uncommon, this has not emerged as a dominant replacement for inter-island transport by ferries. In terms of methods of travel to work, compared with all 348 subnational jurisdictions in England and Wales, Scilly has the highest percentage of people working from home, the highest percentage of people riding small motorised vehicles (in this case, primarily quad bikes), the second-highest percentage of walkers, the second-highest percentage cyclists, and the highest percentage of people getting to work by other methods (in this case, primarily by boat). Scilly also has the lowest percentage of people not in employment and the lowest percentage of people taking overland public transport. In other words, the data indicates that Scilly's highly archipelagic nature may reduce the extent to which relative poverty of access plays a role in social cohesion and equality within the community.

IOW's unemployment rate among economically active individuals between the ages of 16 and 74 is at the national average. Thus, whatever special problems IOW may face, there is not a general problem of unemployment *per se*, and although rates of part-time employment are in excess of those in England as a whole, they are not remarkably so. If IOW is in economic trouble, it is because the tourist jobs in which so many people are employed tend to be seasonal and poorly paid, like tourism jobs in many other locations (Zampoukos and Ioannides, 2011), because there are many people below the retirement age who are not economically active, and because unlike in Scilly, there is no labour shortage to boost employee benefits.

As the figures in Table 2 suggested, IOW's rural districts feature the highest rates of self-employment on the island, but they also feature the lowest rates of full-time employment, primarily due to their large proportions of retirees. This pattern is not replicated within Scilly. Scilly has the highest rate of self-employment of any subnational jurisdiction in England, which is probably related to Scilly likewise featuring the highest rate of individuals working more than 49 h per week (presumably largely on a seasonal basis). Despite Scilly's small size, its various islands possess quite distinct economic structures: For instance, in terms of tourism accommodation businesses, St Mary's features a mix of small and larger businesses that could be compared with that of a town on IOW; Tresco is operated as a monolithic business enterprise by the island's leaseholder; Bryher combines a luxury hotel resort, B&Bs, camping, and self-catering cottages; and St Agnes and (following a hotel closure) St Martin's feature only B&Bs, camping, and self-catering. We can thus see exceptional rates of full-time employment on Tresco and self-employment on St Agnes/Bryher and St Martin's. Combining low unemployment rates, few children, and relatively low rates of retirees under the age of 75, Scilly possesses an extremely high proportion of economically active individuals.

Despite Scilly's isolation and the fact that nearly all of its young residents leave the archipelago to continue their studies, the SNIJ has an extremely well-educated population. St Mary's, the least educated of Scilly's islands, has a 10% higher rate of residents with university degrees than does IOW as a whole. In contrast, even the best-educated district on IOW is below the national average. This is surprising given the large number of immigrant retirees from elsewhere in the UK living in rural IOW, and it points either to IOW attracting a variety of retirees who have lower educational attainments or to the indigenous population of rural IOW possessing sufficiently low levels of education to drag down the figures for these districts regardless of the large numbers of retirees. Another noteworthy element here is the East Wight district, which includes the seaside tourism towns of Sandown and Shanklin as well as St Helens and Bembridge (two villages that are home to large numbers of relatively wealthy retirees) yet which is by far the least-educated district on the island and has a relatively high unemployment rate (see Table 4).

The figures above show that, despite a similar dependence on seaside tourism, Scilly and IOW have developed very different societal structures. Both SNIJs feature internal geographic differences, but Scilly has more positive social and economic indicators than IOW in nearly every respect, both on the level of the SNIJ as a whole and on the level of individual districts (whether urban or rural).

Discussion of the effect of archipelago status

As Baldacchino (2008) has noted, the factors involved in inter-island and intra-island population distribution are complex. Table 2 above suggests that most residents of Scilly's off islands are relatively infrequent visitors to St Mary's. Many visit Hugh Town to do their shopping at the Co-op, but even this (Scilly's only supermarket) is a smaller store than are most supermarkets in other European small island communities, particularly those that, like Scilly, rely on tourism. In contrast, the local shops and grocers on Scilly's off islands are simply phenomenal by usual UK island village standards. From the upmarket luxury goods-focused Tresco Stores, to the local produce-focused St Agnes Post Office Stores, to the spacious Bryher Shop, Scilly's off islanders possess exceptional retail opportunities considering the size of their islands' populations relative to that of St Mary's.

The fact that Scilly is an archipelago is, however, only part of the story. Not all archipelagos cope with their archipelago status in the same way. From a UK perspective, it is striking that Scilly lacks a sophisticated system of inter-island ferries comparable to those in place in the Scottish archipelagos. Outside of the tourist season, regularly scheduled transport – supplied by private providers – between the islands is relatively infrequent. Although it is possible for individuals to regularly commute to work between islands, the infrastructure is not in place to make this an attractive option. In contrast, commuting between islands is much more common in the Scottish SNIJs of Orkney and Shetland, where many peripheral island residents commute to the archipelagos' major towns (Grydehøj, 2008). In this sense, Scilly residents appear to be disadvantaged relative to IOW residents inasmuch as the latter have little difficulty travelling elsewhere overland within the SNIJ for work, leisure, and shopping.

Given the enhanced mobility and greater industrial diversity within IOW relative to Scilly, we would expect IOW's economy to possess better opportunities for self-correction and to be less prone to downturns affecting any one district or economic sector. While this is probably true, the data in Tables 4 and 5 indicates that even if both Scilly and IOW are largely dependent on tourism and possess discourses of impoverishment, the archipelago is significantly better off than is the solitary island in terms of educational qualifications and employment. This is despite IOW possessing a greater percentage of retirees (i.e. individuals who contribute to demand without depressing terms of employment by expanding the labour market).

The Council of the Isles of Scilly has argued that the SNIJ's wealth is illusory and, in fact, that the islands are the *poorest* part of the UK given that local wages are far below the national average while commodity and housing prices are considerably above the national average (Dugan, 2008). We do not wish to underplay the challenges facing the Council, yet its analysis skirts around some important issues. The Council neglects the existence of a considerable informal economy (involving exchange of services, payment in kind, and unregistered payments) (cf. Dávila, 2003; Baldacchino, 2010) as well as the fact that accommodation is provided for many of the islands' tourism workers.

Furthermore, the high average house price is misleading inasmuch as the SNIJ's unusual land ownership structure, with the Duchy of Cornwall owning most properties outside of Hugh Town, means that, relative to figures elsewhere, a far greater proportion of Scilly residents rent their accommodation rather than own it outright (Council of the Isles of Scilly, 2012: 17). Lack of housing is a real problem in Scilly, with many young people in particular worrying that they will be forced to leave the archipelago as a result. However, such complaints surface not only in Hugh Town, where much of the privately owned housing stock and hence – as indicated in Tables 3 and 4 above – many of the archipelago's immigrant retirees are located but also on islands such as St Agnes, where there is a lack of housing because houses are scarce, not because many houses are being occupied by retirees as the Council seems to suggest. Scilly thus faces different – and perhaps less socially detrimental – problems involving lack of housing than do other island communities that attract wealthy immigrants and retirees, such as the Isle of Man (Canavan, 2011) and IOW. Island status itself exacerbates the seriousness of lack of housing in coastal tourism communities inasmuch as it reduces the availability of inland areas into which indigenous residents can move when pushed away from the coast by rising prices. We can furthermore note that, when confronted with legal, ownership, and environmental obstacles, housing is not a policy area conducive to easy answers (Falleth and Hofstad, 2008).

Keenly aware of its status as an archipelagic SNIJ, the Council of Isles of Scilly (2012) is seeking funding to improve its transport system by highlighting how poorly equipped Scilly is relative to the Scottish archipelagos. Both travel to and from the British mainland (by plane or ferry) and between the various islands (by small boat) is unpredictable, expensive, and infrequent, particularly outside of the tourist season. Return fares to and from the mainland range between £85 and £190 (Council of the Isles of Scilly, 2012: 53).

The challenges presented by Scilly's lack of housing and poor transport system are undoubtedly serious. Compared, however, with the situation on IOW, we can see a number of potential advantages as well. The lack of housing for sale on the open market not only limits the ability of Scilly residents to purchase homes; it also limits the potential influx of retirees. Scilly residents generally feel that the Duchy of Cornwall's property ownership and stewardship over the islands prevents locals from being priced out of the substantial rental housing market since the Duchy often – though not always – opts to rent to individuals already living in Scilly. The high price of transport to and from the mainland and the peripheral location (relative to IOW's situation) of the mainland towns to which this transport is linked also contributes to Scilly hosting significantly wealthier tourists, who stay on the islands longer and spend more money per day during their visits.

Furthermore, although the Council of the Isles of Scilly (2012: 15) may be concerned that "32% of islands [*sic*] businesses work from home as a result of insufficient workspace" and that "businesses choose location based on availability of workspace not what's best for business," this combination of lack of space and poor inter-island transport means that Scilly has resisted further movement of employment and services from the off islands to Hugh Town and that the off islands have retained active business communities (tourist accommodation, retail, agriculture, and small-scale production). This is in marked contrast to many other archipelagic SNIJs, in which the flow of power to the centre can sometimes appear irresistible, with some peripheral islands largely becoming commuter communities or risking outright depopulation.

Conclusions

Baldacchino and Bertram (2009: 142) note in relation to economic vulnerability in small states that:

> Many of the statistical measures paraded before international agencies as signs of vulnerability and special needs are in fact the *outcomes* of purposive and rational strategic behaviour [. . .]. Successful small countries actively increase their trade ratios, narrow their economic diversification, increase their reliance on financial transfers from larger metropolitan powers, explore alternatives to industrialization, and embark on high-volatility activities while making due provision to retain windfall gains to offset losses.
> Statistical indices made up of weighted averages of these indicators do not serve as proof of vulnerability; rather, they presume it.

The same is true for Scilly: Precisely because the SNIJ's economic and social structure differs radically from that of the majority of the UK, its various indicators of social and economic robustness diverge significantly from the UK average. For instance, if the private car and public transport use statistics in Table 3 above were subjected to a mainland-centred analysis, it would appear that Scilly residents suffered from an astonishing poverty of access in terms of their basic needs and employment. However, a careful look at how these figures relate to other measures indicates that this is not the case and that, instead, mobility in Scilly simply takes on an island function instead of the function that it does in rural mainland communities.

Or rather, mobility in Scilly takes on a *particular type* of island function, for as we have also seen, there are different

patterns of mobility on IOW, an SNIJ with clear external boundaries to movement (the sea) but minimal internal boundaries. On IOW, there are indications that, in the absence of mass transit, lack of private transport is correlated with lack of employment. Although poverty of access is a rural issue more than it is an island issue *per se*, the precise manner in which it and other signs of social and economic weakness (high age, long commutes, and low education) play out on IOW are specifically affected by IOW's island status. It is simply that the island effect on this relatively large solitary island is different than the island effect in the small archipelago.

With reference to Aegean islands, Spilanis et al. (2012: 212) argue:

> Geographical distance only partially determines accessibility for small islands. The choice of transport is anyway limited to public transport at determined frequencies with much higher transport time (and cost). Moreover, different services are located at different destinations. Combined with the inability to return overnight from many of these destinations, many days may be required to go and return from a trip. The geography for these residents of smaller islands seems therefore very different from that of a 'conventional' map; space contracts or subtracts according to these factors.

Insularity, isolation, and peripherality are often discussed as negative factors in the social and cultural development of island communities, but echoing the conclusions of the above authors, the comparison between Scilly and IOW shows that such factors produce no simple chain of consequences.

In our globalised world, as localities compete and trade with distant destinations as well as near neighbours, a certain measure of insularity could be advantageous. IOW – dependent on ferry services for access to large towns and subject to spatial limitations in terms of the educational, industrial, and residential potential it can offer – is subject to a particular set of island disadvantages. However, the relative ease of transport to and from and within the island means that IOW misses out on some of the protective attributes that Scilly has acquired as a result of its status as a remote archipelago—and arguably, as a relatively underfunded remote archipelago with a poor transport system: It may not be such a bad thing if tourists are forced to spend the night instead of enabled to make the kind of daytrip visits that add little to the local economy yet place strain on the local infrastructure. Similarly, insularity makes a positive impact when locals are forced to shop in the community instead of enabled to do their shopping elsewhere (cf. Grydehøj, 2008: 68; Baldacchino and Ferreira, 2013).

It could thus be argued that Scilly's lack of financial resources to implement infrastructure policies has paradoxically led to social and economic benefits for individual island communities in the archipelago, even if it has also had negative impacts. This is the case even if one can conceive of alternative paths to community wellbeing, along the lines of the far better-funded – and as a result, more comprehensively planned – development in some of the Scottish SNIJs (Grydehøj, 2012, 2013). Improving mobility through transport infrastructure is just one potential path toward strengthening communities (cf. Hansen, 2013), and the impact of spatial distribution cannot be separated from economic realities: The tiny public sector in Scilly (large though it may be relative to the SNIJ's population) has a limited range of policy options from which to choose compared with the wealthier and/or better centrally funded Scottish SNIJs.

Just as islandness can affect communities in different ways, different types of islands encourage different types of communities. Though small in spatial extent, Scilly is exceptionally conditioned by its archipelago status, which has helped produce socially and economically strong local communities relative to those on IOW. Local economic development is influenced not only by population distribution and a generalisable rurality but also by the spatial characteristics that have historically affected settlement and industry patterns and continue to do so. IOW is differently – but no less – spatially conditioned. There is, however, no direct determinism involved, for though spatial distribution may be implicated in development patterns, its precise effects are themselves dependent on issues such as the human and economic resources that a community has at its disposal.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and assistance in improving this article through its various drafts.

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