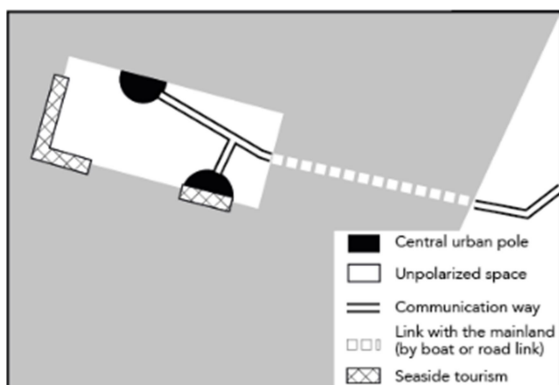


ARCHETYPE 6 Insular system



Islands matching this archetype:
Ile de Ré, Brittany islands, Corse

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARCHETYPE

Spatial configuration

This archetype comprises low islands with sandy or rocky coastlines, and small cliffs. The island setting means that little space remains available to accommodate new activities or housing. Sea-walls were built in the past to provide sea defences, but they have been neglected, given the low frequency of storms and the conversion of the productive economy towards an *in-place* economy.

Territorial economy

The progressive conversion of the rural economy means that the distinctive feature of these islands is now an *in-place* and tourist-based economy. Given that the few available building plots are very attractive, land prices are high which restricts the number of arrivals on the island especially among the young and active. However, these emblematic islands, with their strong insular identities, have a great ability to obtain national and European subsidies to preserve their identity and their quality of life. They have therefore sufficient financial resources for their needs.

Socio-demographic characteristics

The population has a robust insular identity, resulting in strong solidarity and social cohesion, especially in the native population. High land prices and the few new arrivals hinder the renewal of the population which tends to be old and ageing. As a result, there is little social mixing, which is not helped by the enduring close-knit nature of the community.

Innovation pathways

The desire to live in a close-knit community and maintain their quality of life makes these islands extremely resistant to change. They have suffered a few storms and inundations, their coastline is eroded in places but, so far, they have been able to protect themselves and continue to live in harmony with the sea.

Governance

Relationships with the State and with Europe are carefully nurtured. Organised in networks and stressing the identity, the heritage and the emblematic character of their islands, the elected representatives show a great capacity to secure funding to maintain their quality of life. Furthermore, local projects are sometimes supported by wealthy second-home owners who are close to the highest political levels. Social commitment is also significant in maintaining the lifestyle in this society which is rather closed to newcomers.

Psycho-social characteristics

As a result of the spatial setting, attachment to the place is strong and the whole population wishes to stay on the island as long as possible. Property passes from one generation to the next and risks and climate change are of no real concern.

ADAPTATION PATHWAYS

Adaptation pathway (slow progression): Floating Island

With the support of the State and Europe (G1), local politics strongly aims to preserve these emblematic islands. Residents receive subsidies (ET1) designed to help them stay on the island and adapt their homes. Land prices (G7) are controlled to prevent substantial increases and avoid property becoming accessible only to the well-off. At the same time, a robust policy is implemented by the local authorities to make the island attractive (ET3) (retain the young) and promote a slight renewal of the island population.

Adaptation techniques (TI1) are developed for urban development to confront hazards (houses on stilts, taller dwellings...). Only a few very vulnerable areas with significant value are protected by sea walls (G8) whilst others are abandoned to the sea (G8). This strategy may help to keep people on the island but it leads to some inequalities and unfairness as the less valuable assets are usually the ones that are removed and relocated.

Local authorities put the conditions in place to revive entrepreneurship and promote a return towards a productive economy (ET2). The increase in the number of newcomers with a neo-rural profile (SD2) goes hand in hand with a reduction in social cohesion. A divide emerges between, on one side, main-homeowners and primary sector workers attached to their insular identity and, on the other side, these newcomers. The relationship with the place is undermined (PS1) and well-off people end up leaving the island as they no longer feel part of this new society. As the population decreases so does the tax income and in the longer term so do property prices.

Gradually, the island returns to an insular productive system, focussing on green tourism and making room for entrepreneurs and producers. This system may last until too much land has been lost and people and property have become too vulnerable.

Adaptation pathway (fast progression): Fortress Island

Policies are focussed solely on maintaining defences against marine hazards (G8). The protection of people and property is guaranteed by a significant seawall system on the island, seawalls that need constant repair or rising.

This project is underpinned by enduring social cohesion and insular identity. Quality of life is maintained and property prices remain high with an *in-place* economy. However, very quickly the strong local political power runs up against national and European guidelines (G1). Indebtedness (ET1) soon becomes unbearable and the limits of the model, based on a defence strategy with solid structures, are quickly reached.

Initially, only the better off can adapt rapidly to these radical changes (TI1); the less well-off have to leave the island (SD1). The result is to strengthen the close-knit nature of the community and its social cohesion.

Subsequently, the defence structures increase the erosion process (EX3) in some areas and land is lost as a consequence. Adaptation capacities are limited: there is no room to manoeuvre and vulnerability increases. Faced with these problems, properties are put up for sale, areas are abandoned and wastelands appear.

The number of properties put on the market drives prices down (ET3). Owners are more affected than tenants which increases social inequalities. The population is not renewed as the risk is such that the island is no longer attractive. The tourist and *in-place* economy eventually collapses with no economic alternative to replace it.