

Rural Society in Transition: Planning for 21st Century Rural Potentials and Challenges

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Rural Potential and Challenges in the 21st Century



REPORT

POVERTY AND ETHNICITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND AN EVIDENCE REVIEW

Alison Wallace, Ruth McAreavey and Karl Adkin

This report provides an overview of the research evidence on the relationship between poverty and ethnicity in Northern Ireland.

After a period of increasing ethnic diversity, the review was concerned with understanding how issues of poverty affect people from different minority ethnic communities and their ability to access and secure good outcomes from key services. A comprehensive literature review and focus groups with people from the Roma, Somali, Chinese and Polish communities, and with local stakeholders, provide the basis for this report.



After Brexit:

10 key questions

for rural policy in Northern Ireland



Stimulating debate

- Not about providing answers
 - Following from 10 Key Questions for Policymakers in Northern Ireland following Brexit.
 - Uncertainty around future scenarios.
- ...but contemporary rural society is well understood...

How is rural society changing?

POLICY NOTE



RURAL 3.0.

A FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mega-trends

- Mobility and immobility: migration and ageing
- Climate change, environmental pressures
- Technological innovations
- Global shifts – production, centre of gravity
- Urbanisation



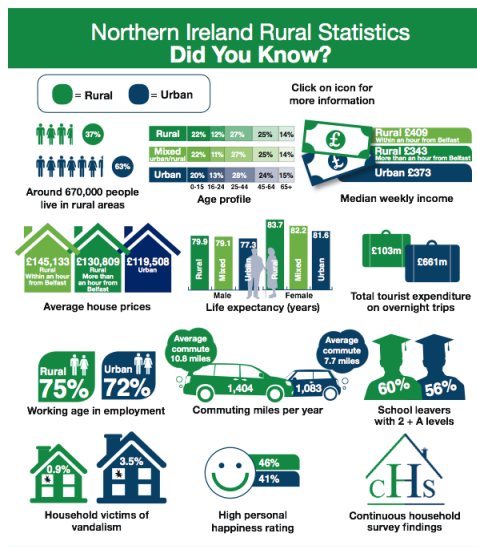
Rural Economy: Northern Ireland

A reminder....

- Agriculture and food processing account for 3.25% of GVA (£1.1bn)
- Across the UK, NI is most reliant on agriculture vis-à-vis GVA and percentage share of employment.

Brief farming profile

- 3.2% of workforce employed in agriculture.
- 58% of farms are cattle and sheep (in Less Favoured Areas)
- 70% of total agriculture area farmed is defined as Less Favoured.
- Average farm size 40ha



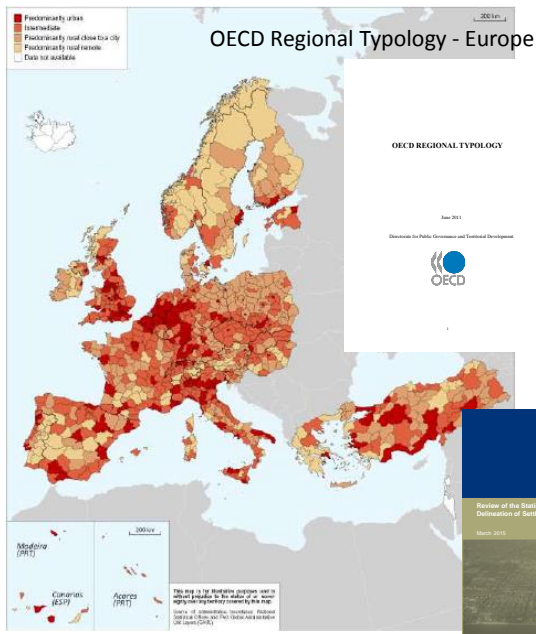
- Quality of Life

- Prosperity

- Satisfaction

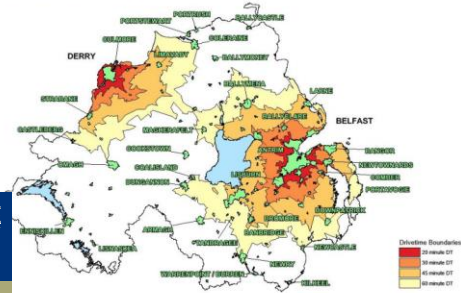
- Education

...all fare better in 'rural' Northern Ireland



- Rural settlements: 93% of NI's population live within 30 minutes drive-time to towns with 10,000 population (NISRA 2015). According to OECD definition, NI has no remote rural categories

Map 7: Comparison of 20, 30, 45 and 60 minute drive-time boundaries for Belfast and Derry



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Relations with urban areas

- How are rural and urban areas connected and governed?
- Are rural areas deprived in comparison to urban centres or is deprivation a separate issue?
- Should we be looking at inequalities in a wider context that goes beyond rural and urban?
- Does rural proofing and the Rural Needs Act 'cover' rural?

Rural Services

- Agreement that they are important
 - Disagreement on parameters of delivery
 - What is an essential service?
- Functions of services
 - Primary
 - Economic
 - Social
 - Symbolic

(Been 2012, Smith and Sparks 2012)

Delivering Rural Services

- What are the priorities?
- What is rural 'need'?
- How to deliver equitable access to services
- Rural proofing: what is it trying to achieve? How is it monitored?
- Evidence-informed policy? (Shortall 2010) Fairness in a context of urban deprivation?

What measures are needed to ensure essential services in rural areas are not compromised?

- Can key partnerships between organisations be maintained or even initiated to ensure continuity of services?
- Can cross-border agreements be made in order to continue to exploit economies of scale in supplying essential services and how might this be achieved?
- What part can local government play in developing these services and ensuring access? Are they able to provide a locally focused perspective in a way that national government cannot?
- Are there lessons to be learnt from other countries that share a border with the European Union? What service sharing arrangements might exist in such situations?

A Global Rural (Northern) Ireland?

- Woods' (2007) 'global countryside' sought to rectify the notion of the rural and stagnant backwater, cut-off from global forces.
- Heterogenous community
- Transnational connections
- Mobilities – fixidity and fluidity
- Shifting aspirations

Outside of the EU...



Borders and boundaries

- Currently 275 border crossings between NI and ROI, along a border spanning 300 miles
- The vast majority of NI / ROI border crossings are small, minor roads and tracks, which make their 'policing' unrealistic and unfeasible
- Importance of shared space
- Importance of localities and territorial identity
- Good (community) relations
- Consistent environmental standards
- Misaligned ecosystem boundaries versus administrative boundaries

How will Brexit affect the agricultural industry and what needs to change?

- What support could or should be made available to farmers investing in technology or re-structuring? How can it be targeted effectively?
- What opportunities might there be to encourage and support new entrants into farming and innovation amongst new and existing land-based businesses?
- What will the consequences be, not only for farmers leaving the industry, but for farming families, and what training, employment creation or other support might be necessary to ease their transition into other sectors?
- To what extent are other industries such as tourism dependent on access to the farmed landscape, and what would be the ecological and economic consequences of rural areas, particularly those in the hills, either being maintained in alternative management systems or being taken out of production entirely?

Regulation and agri-food sector

- 'proportionate, informed approach'
- Concerns 'that the industry continues to be impacted heavily by overly bureaucratic regulatory obligations, especially in planning' (GfG Strategy)



Migrant Labour

- Ageing farm population
- Unprecedented change to agri-food labour markets - over-reliance on migrant labour
- Return of Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme?
- What type of agri-food labour market do we want?



Rural Policy

What key elements need to be included in a place-based rural development programme to avoid communities missing out on economic and social progress?

Who?

- Is DAERA best placed to lead on rural development or should responsibility be shared more widely?
- Role of local government
- Role of other actors – private sector, social innovators and entrepreneurs, third sector?
- Externally
 - who are the extra-local influences and what is their role?
 - Different scales – local, regional, national, European, etc.
- Rural proofing, rural champion, mainstreaming – who is holding authorities to account?

What does the loss of EU funding mean? What are the risks and opportunities for rural areas?

- Should there be a deliberate policy to replace specific funding streams, and if so should these come via the devolved government, where should they be targeted and who will administer them? How will it link to a national policy framework?
- As local government takes up new responsibilities what part should they play; and if Local Action Groups continue to operate do they work best when embedded in local government as they function at the moment?
- How can fairness and equity be applied in funding allocations across different communities?
- How can we ensure that evaluation is carried out in a way that measures both economic and social benefits, rather than a simple measure based on job creation?

Rural Ireland: a society in transition. What do we want?

- Questions of justice, equality and quality.
- Issues of multi-functional transitions.
- Decisions about being proactive or reactive; perhaps a time to change the narrative?
- We **cannot** avoid change, we need to embrace it.