

A Reader... what's that?

**Developing a career researching
modern rural economies**

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Outline

- Building from my PhD research through publication and impact
- International Collaboration
- Developing emerging ideas and balancing constraints of time and funding pressures

Entrepreneurial in-migrants & rural development

- PhD and Centre for Rural Economy working paper
- **Owners of non-agricultural rural microbusinesses who have moved at least 30 miles into the area as adults have created a total of 3,176 full-time and 2,642 part time jobs**
- Adding the 87% of owners who are employed full-time in their business, this makes a total of 5,758 full-time jobs
- **This is 6% of the 91,640 full-time jobs in the rural economy of the North East - almost 70% higher than the total full-time employment in agriculture**
- 3,028 part-time jobs - 9.5% of the total for the rural areas of the North East

Moving beyond the PhD

- Value of international conferencing for feedback, contacts and positioning your work
- European Society for Rural Sociology
- Regional Studies Association



Vaasa, Finland



Joanie Willett, Exeter

Pecs, Hungary



Commercial counterurbanisation: an emerging force in rural economic development

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Abstract. After rapid urban growth and industrialisation, the postwar era has seen counterurbanisation become a dominant demographic trend in the UK. Much has been written about the residential patterns of counterurbanisation, but the associated growth of rural business has attracted less attention. The author proposes the term ‘commercial counterurbanisation’ to describe the growth of rural economies stimulated by inward migration. In the North East of England, in-migrants own over half of rural microbusinesses, they are more growth-oriented, and they are responsible for considerably more employment than the whole of the agriculture sector. In arguing that commercial counterurbanisation is more than just a spatial decentralisation of business activity, the author explores the social as well as the economic motivations of ‘counterurbanising’ business owners. Commercial counterurbanisation can be a two-stage process, as the decision to work in a rural area or run a rural business may occur several years after a residential move. Where this time lag exists, in-migrant business owners will be influenced by different factors in different locations. In the context of neoendogenous development, the balance of local and extralocal forces is particularly significant. This leads to the conclusion that in-migrant business owners need to become embedded into the rural community for the wider rural economy to realise the maximum benefits from commercial counterurbanisation.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the growth of rural businesses and the evolving

Commercial Counterurbanisation: An emerging force in Rural Economic Development

- “The growth of rural economies stimulated by inward migration”
 - business creation by rural in-migrants
 - their employment in other rural firms
 - the promotion of other businesses through local trade, knowledge exchange and co-operative working

Mitchell and Madden (2015)

- <http://interpretingrurality.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/2014/10/27/re-re-thinking-commercial-counterurbanisation/>
- CC should refer either to the movement of commercial activity from larger to smaller places (their preference) or the negative relationship between population size and economic growth
- I argue that their preference has already been written about since the 1980s, with literature dating back to Tyler's work on the "urban-rural shift of manufacturing" (e.g, Keeble and Tyler, 1985).
- If we are solely concerned with businesses moving to rural areas, the demographic terminology seems inappropriate.
- If we are examining the relationship between population size and economic activity, which is closer to my initial research objectives, we need to focus on the factors that might strengthen or weaken the negative relationship among rural settlements.

Commercial counterurbanisation and the changing roles of rural businesses (Aveiro, 2015)

- “Everything of importance used to take place within the village. Now everything takes places outside the village” (Mak, 2010, p. 195)
- Commercial counterurbanites are commodifying aspects of rurality – not just to sell to an urban population desiring leisure pursuits (as in earlier tourism literature) but also to enhance other business activities of a new business...
...so rural development impact is more than just new business creation



Recognising the Value of Rural Assets	Capitalising on Rural Assets in the Business
Acoustics of the building	Marketing a unique venue for music studio
“best view in Lincolnshire”	Design accommodation to take in the best features of the view
Good pub down the road	Building relations with the rural community to ensure support for ongoing activities and development plans – social capital development
Not as congested and busy as London	Give flexibility to bands to use the space more freely than in urban studios
Unused apples in a local orchard	Make cider and apple juice through a community-based cooperative
Available land for expansion	Develop new fruit varieties and introduce beehives in a new orchard
A nice house to bring up the family and preferences towards rural landscapes	Local branding of produce, including rural family heritage
Waste wood as a resource	Bringing local crafts into the gallery

Recognising the Value of Rural Assets	Capitalising on Rural Assets in the Business
Seeing a woodland property as a facility for embodied cognition in nature	Selling climbing experience in treetops, self-development courses
Convenient infrastructural location close to motorway	Wine production as an exotic crop connecting clients and locals to the place
The countryside as an inspiration and cultural resource for photography, film and art production	Decentralisation of “urban right to culture production” into a rural setting, drawing on local labour, supply chains and rural landscapes and locations for film production
A rented forest cottage within a manor landscape provides the setting for philosophy and art courses	Developing learning opportunities and insights through access to private landscapes

Economic linkages between urban and rural regions – what's in it for the rural?

- A study of rural productivity and skills was funded by the East Midlands Development Agency
- We realised that the research question was wrong – the local relationships were less important than the interconnectivity with other centres of training and employment
- The client didn't want to hear this, but it was perfect for extended academic debates...
- But... Competing priorities and a lack of experience of technical regional economic analysis got in the way

International Collaboration

- Invitation to Groningen – to assist with a project on rural broadband and rural development inequalities
- Make the most of the opportunities – meet Viktor!



Economic linkages between urban and rural regions – what's in it for the rural?

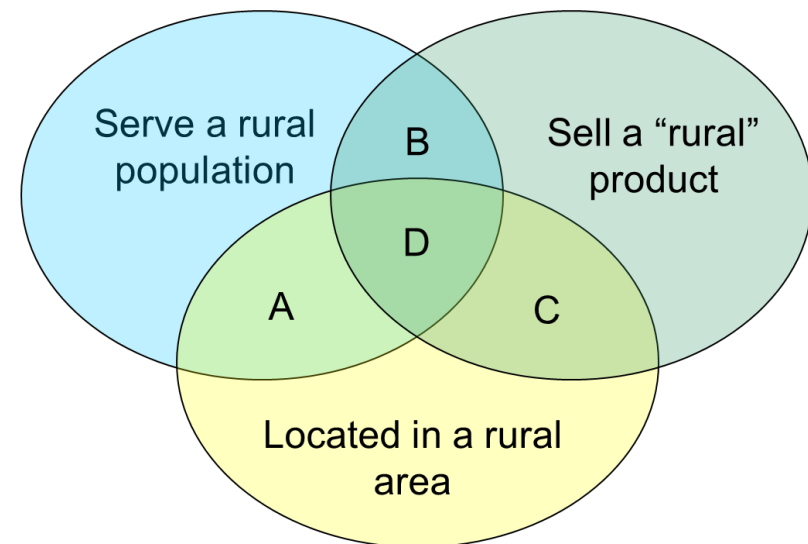
- I had found a theory in *Regional Studies* that I felt could be extended to help us better understand the rural impacts of wider commuting patterns
- Viktor knew New Economic Geography theory and could bring knowledge from outside of the UK
- He's also pretty good at stats!
- Best paper – Piacenza
- Corrections currently under review with *Regional Studies*

What's in it for the Rural?

- Commuting allows more people to work in an urban region before cost of living (house price) effects act as a constraints.
- So, more people can commute out of a rural region before the rural region sees and trickle-down benefits from urban growth
- Rural benefits could emerge from consumption demands, new urban-rural networks, innovation, new rural businesses & infrastructure investment
- Without these – fears of a two-tier rural society with divergent wage levels and productivity rates raising questions over the sustainability of rural communities for the future.
- Longer term – we see potentially detrimental implications for service provision, employment opportunities & economic vitality.

Work in Progress

- Defining a rural business – make it practical!
- Fits with a European Horizon 2020 research call on “business models for modern rural economies”
- Working with Roger Turner, who has access to different case studies and a policy-maker/consultant perspective
- Being a “rural business” is about more than just location
- But the “rural product” dimension is too vague
- Instead, we are exploring the ways in which businesses employ and create forms of rural capital



Thank you, any questions?

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