Placing 'home' and 'family' in rural residential mobilities

Mark Scott, University College Dublin

Enda Murphy, University College Dublin

Menelaos Gkartzios, Newcastle University

Abstract

This paper aims to examine rural population/residential movements through a mobilities perspective to provide an inclusive analysis of the diverse processes of movement that (re)produce rural places beyond the dominant counterurbanisation narrative. We seek to contribute to the literature in two ways. Firstly, we examine a sample of rural residents who have moved house within a 10 year period to examine the full range of actually existing residential mobilities, including counterurbanisation, lateral in-migration and local mobility within an Irish context. We suggest that counterurbanisation provides only a partial explanation of rural mobility accounting for 44% of our recent movers – moreover, within the counterurbanisation group, approximately a half of this group were originally from a rural context suggesting a more nuanced 'return-to-roots' movement rather than a stereotypical urban-rural movement. Secondly, we explore two relatively new dimensions of rural mobilities – the importance of the actual house characteristics to where respondents moved to and the pull of family networks as key mobility factors. In the Irish context explored in this paper, we argue that rather than a search for greenspace and idyllic landscapes, decision-making is often driven by a desire for more private space (internal and external) and the presence of existing family networks.

Introduction

Over the last 30 years, an extensive body of work has emerged to examine rural residential mobilities in diverse spatial contexts. Much of this literature has examined processes of rural in-migration, dominated by counterurbanisation research, with early work in this field initially focused on statistical accounts of the redistribution of national populations in favour of non-metropolitan regions providing evidence of a rural turnaround, particularly in a US and UK context (e.g. Berry, 1976; Champion, 1989; Halliday and Combes, 1995). More recently, the literature has been increasingly characterised by case studies of counterurbanisation, providing in-depth accounts of counterurbanisation processes and impacts (e.g. Guimond and Simard, 2010; Mahon, 2007; Phillips, 2002). Within these studies, emphasis is typically placed on

understanding demand-side (or consumer-led) factors explaining population movements and the motivations of urban to rural movers – termed as *counterurbanisation as practice* by Halfacree (2011). Significantly, within much of this literature, the consumption of rurality, greenspace and amenity value is stressed as an explanatory factor in driving urban to rural movements. For example, typical of this work is Gurran's (2008) study of amenity-based migration to coastal exurban localities in Australia and Van Dam et al.'s (2002) research on the search for rural space in the Netherlands. In a UK context, Smith and Phillips (2001) coin the phrase 'greentrification' to emphasise the allure of greenspace and the rural landscape in driving rural in-migration processes.

In this paper, we seek to contribute to the understanding of rural population/residential movements by adopting a mobilities perspective to embrace more diverse processes of movement (beyond counterurban flows) which produce 'hybrid' places and geographies. Specifically, we seek to develop the literature in two ways. Firstly, while counterurbanisation has been a central theme within rural studies, Milbourne (2007) and Smith (2007) both caution against neglecting other rural movements, with the dominance of counterurbanisation literature masking the importance of local, lateral and international mobility in (re)shaping rural places. These diverse processes or movements also underpin housing markets, housing demands and latent demands for new housing, and competition for rural resources (e.g. land). We address this deficit by responding to Stockdale's (2014) call for greater understanding and reporting of 'messy' rural in-migration processes through examining the extent of different mobilities in an Irish context. In particular, we draw attention to a significant sub-group of our counterurban sample that comprises a 'return-to-roots' movement.

Secondly, we seek to explore the role of two relatively neglected dimensions of rural mobilities – the importance of the actual house characteristics to where respondents moved to and the pull of family networks as key mobility factors. These themes contribute further to recent literature that highlights the role of family in certain contexts (i.e. Bijker and Haartsen, 2012; Bijker et

2

al., 2012; Haartsen and Thissen, 2014) as well as housing characteristics in migration decision-making (i.e. Bullock et al., 2011). More importantly, these characteristics offer distinct contributions to a lifecourse perspective on rural migration. For example, in a thorough review of the literature, Stockdale and Catney (2014) argue that lifecourse studies tend to suggest that the chance of a move to a rural destination is identified to increase around mid-life and retirement. However, Stockdale and Catney suggest that established processes do not always apply to all contexts or localities leading to an under-acknowledgement of local structural factors. In this paper, we specifically demonstrate the importance of house characteristics in driving rural mobilities, in particular a search for more internal and external space. The 'house' is a particularly interesting dimension to explore within a mobilities framework. A house is a fixed entity but is predicated on emergent mobilities of transport, capital, fluid consumer tastes and so on – this is further explored in the next section. However, while housing characteristics are commonly explored as a factor in residential preferences on the urban housing market (e.g. Bramley and Power, 2009; Howley et al., 2009), this has been a neglected dimension of the rural literature, which has placed more emphasis on 'place' characteristics or has only considered house prices as a proxy for housing characteristics in residential choices (i.e. Bijker and Haartsen, 2012; Bijker et al., 2012). In the Irish context explored in this paper, we argue that rather than a search for greenspace or the allure of a 'place in the country', decision-making is often driven by a desire for more private space (internal and external). Furthermore, the presence of existing family networks (overlapping a return-to-roots tendency) appears to be influential in moving to a rural location, particularly when couples begin families. To address these themes, the remainder of the paper is structured as follows: firstly, we review the literature on rural mobilities, emphasising the dominance of counterurbanisation and the weaknesses of a narrow focus on urban to rural movements. Secondly, we outline our research approach based on an interviewer administrated questionnaire survey in five case study areas, before presenting our research findings. These are structured under two headings – mobilities movements and mobilities motivations – to examine the full range of rural mobilities and also key factors behind 'movers' decision to re-locate. Finally, the paper concludes by highlighting the role of the actual

house and family networks in underpinning a diverse range of mobilities, which moves beyond the preoccupation within the counterurbanisation literature of amenity driven movements or the search for idyllic rural landscapes.

Counterurbanisation and other rural mobilities

Over the last decade, an increasing body of work has advocated a mobilities turn in social sciences, reflecting increasing levels and new forms of mobility, thereby placing mobility as a central fact of modern life (e.g. Cresswell, 2010, 2012, 2014; Elliot and Urry, 2010; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007, 2008, 2012; Coulter et al., 2015). As Cresswell (2010) highlights, this literature combines ways of thinking and conceptualising that "foreground mobility (of people, of ideas, of things) as a geographical fact that lies at the centre of constellations of power, the creation of identities and the micro-geographies of everyday life" (p. 551). For Cresswell and others, a mobilities perspective is essentially relational: it moves beyond more narrow fields, such as transport or migration studies, to embrace all forms of movement, from small scale personal movements (including immobility) to the global flows and movements of capital and labour: "understanding these things together adds up to more than a sum of the parts" (Cresswell, 2010, p. 552).

The mobilities literature has penetrated rural studies, particularly as regards migration which has been central to rural restructuring processes (see, for example, special edition in *Sociologia Ruralis*, 2010). Milbourne and Kitchen (2014) position the mobility research in rural studies literature by arguing that:

> '[…] 'the rural' constitutes an extremely interesting case study of contemporary mobilities. Not only are rural places reshaped by complex patterns of movement in similar ways to cities but rural mobilities offer new perspectives on the complex interplay between movement, fixity and place, as well as the everyday problematics of mobility' (p. 327).

In this paper, we adopt a mobilities perspective to capture the diverse range of population movements that underpin rural change processes inclusive of and beyond counterurban flows. As discussed above, counterurbanisation has been a dominant narrative within rural in-migration literature for four decades now (Berry, 1976; Champion, 1989; Boyle et al., 1998; Mitchell, 2004) to describe broadly defined urban-to-rural relocations and subsequent socio-economic transformations. The counterurbanisation literature has highlighted class identities of the social groups involved, the drivers behind relocations, diverse representations associated with the rural, as well as the implications of such mobilities on shifting community power relationships, development narratives and on planning issues, particularly rural housing (see examples in: Bosworth and Atterton, 2012; Liu and Roberts, 2013; Halfacree and Rivera, 2011; Scott et al., 2011).

In explaining the motives behind counterurbanisation, much literature has focused on the duality between economic (or job-led) and quality of life (or people-led) considerations of the migrants involved (see for example Halliday and Coombes, 1995; Mitchell, 2004), although some researchers have also warned how such typologies inevitably fail to capture the diversity and complexity of counterurbanisation (Halfacree, 2001; Woods, 2010). In our paper we follow a classification between economic and quality of life characteristics (both social and environmental features) to distinguish between different motives of both counterurban and other migrant populations, recognising also other motivations associated with the migration decision, in particular housing characteristics, family networks and friendships, drawing on emergent literature in the field.

In the counterurbanisation literature there is a significant body of work that focuses on individuals moving to the countryside as consumers of rurality (see for example: van Dam et al., 2002; Benson and O'Reilly, 2009), referring to the consumption of a so-called 'rural idyll' (Halfacree 1994, Bell 2008), which is associated with green space and various elements of rural amenity perceived as offering a better quality of life. Such representations of rurality are

important because, drawing on Cresswell (2006), they demonstrate that these mobilities, and particularly counterurbanisation, are associated with particular constructions, meanings and expectations, which constitute rural mobilities both ideologically and politically. Idyllic representations of the countryside lead to a shifting meaning about places and power relations between 'local' and 'non local' groups, across classes and other identities (see also Cresswell, 2010). In an English context the impact of such mobilities, inclusive of counterurbanisation, on shifting perception of places as well as rural development narratives is often discussed through Murdoch's et al. (2003) conceptual frame of a 'differentiated countryside'. For example the authors argue that 'having moved out of urban areas in search of better quality of life, counterurbanisers strive to protect that quality of life against external threats' (p. 47), creating new tensions and contested meanings about 'what is' and 'who is' rural (see also Satsangi et al., 2010).

Despite these contributions, the dominance of the counterurbanisation narrative in the literature has been criticised, firstly, for overlooking other mobilities beyond counterurbanisation (for example: temporary, non uni-directional movements, beyond the urban and rural spatial taxonomy; see also similar arguments by Milbourne, 2007 and Halfacree, 2001, notwithstanding exceptions: Gkartzios and Scott, 2010; Stockdale, 2014). For this reason we focus not only on counterurban relocations, but other mobilities as well. This reflects Stockdale's (2014) call for a greater recognition of 'messy' rural *in-migration* processes (which compared counterurban and lateral rural migration), to examine all household movements/relocations, including: counterurban; lateral migration (from one rural locality to another); and local movements. Importantly, in addition to drawing on respondents' previous address, we also examined where respondents grew up (up until the age of 12 as a proxy for whether a respondent is originally a rural dweller) to also identify the importance of residential history to explain future movements, such as a 'return-to-roots' movement within the counterurbanisation group.

Secondly, the counterurbanisation literature has been dominated by scholarship where research is contextualised within nations with a significant urban industrial, rather than rural, heritage which over-emphasises the importance of the consumption of rural places in decision-making, relative to national contexts that have a more traditional agrarian past and have experienced urbanisation on a much smaller scale and throughout a longer period. In England for example, counterurbanisation has been a prolonged feature of internal migration patterns for the last four decades (Champion and Brown, 2012). The research on English counterurbanisation is abundant, as is the discussion of particularly selective constructions of an idyllic English rurality, associated with images of pre-industrial rurality (Satsangi et al., 2010). Many researchers have demonstrated not only how the ubiquitous discourse of the rural idyll serves the interests of rural elites and aspiring urban middle classes who wish to move to the countryside and/or consume it in their own terms, but also how such representations construct a dominant discourse in popular culture and public policy, resulting in an increasingly exclusive and gentrified countryside (see for example: Murdoch et al., 2003; Murdoch and Lowe, 2003; Newby, 1979; Shucksmith, 2000). Bunce (1994) discusses how the discourse of an ideal countryside has also found expression in North American culture. How relevant, however, are such constructions of rurality internationally? What is the international relevance of the rural idyll in countries that did not experience similar industrialisation processes? Halfacree (2008), in discussing the internationalisation pitfalls of counterurbanisation research, questions how far such representations travel (see also Grimsund, 2011; Gkartzios, 2013).

Similarly, Lowe (2012) raises concerns over the Anglo-American preoccupations of rural sociology, advocating international comparative approaches, which have been either very limited in counterurbanisation research or they draw on Anglophone contexts (Brown, 2010), despite the growth of European (and non-Anglophone) literature in the field (see for example: Gkartzios, 2013; Herslund, 2012; Bijker et al., 2012; Eimermann et al., 2011). Indeed, unlike the hegemonic pastoral rural discourse observed in England, McDonagh (2001) discusses discourses of rurality in Ireland (particularly in literature and arts) that are far from the pastoral

and idyllic, drawing also on poverty and memories of struggle associated with the Irish famine in the mid-nineteenth century. Similarly, other researchers in Ireland have found little evidence of exclusive countrysides and displacement due to gentrification, given the very pro-housing development ethos of the Irish planning system (see for example Gkartzios and Scott, 2012). Gkartzios and Shucksmith (2015) contrast the differences in the English and Irish planning system as regards representations of rurality, which are usually associated with notions of land ownership and individualism in Ireland, and environmental preservation in England. In this context, values in the countryside are guided by a need for modernisation, instead of a need to preserve an Irish rural idyll; vernacular aesthetics are rejected by local residents (Scott et al., 2013) and physical development in the countryside is seen as inherently positive, a 'health indicator' for rural communities (Scott, 2010).

Thirdly, this literature has been criticised for overlooking factors associated with the migration decision beyond the duality of 'economic considerations' and 'environmental amenities'. Despite recent contributions who view migration as a life-cycle event consisting of diverse (and changing) perceptions that constitute counterurbanisation an open-ended event (see for example Halfacree and Rivera, 2011; Stockdale and Catney, 2014), the dominant narrative within the literature surrounds economic and environmental drivers. We wish to contribute to these debates by exploring the role of immediate family in rural location decision-making, as well as the significance of the dwelling itself (instead of the locality), including issues such as the consumption of private space and house design among other. There is a growing literature on the role of family and family roots in driving residential location decisions from a lifecourse perspective (e.g. Feijten et al., 2008). From a rural lens, Lundholm (2012) for example discusses kinship migration amongst older groups in Sweden highlighting the role of birthplace in relocating to the rural. In the Netherlands, the role of the family in migrating to less popular rural areas is well discussed by Bijker and Haartsen (2012) and in relation to the return migration of young adults (Haartsen and Thissen, 2014). Return migration to the home region is also reported in relation to the mobility of young graduates in Switzerland, suggesting that

mobility reasons are not only guided by the labour market but social and family ties as well (Rérat, 2014). Gkartzios (2013) highlights the contribution of extended family networks in the relocation of urban households to the countryside in a period of crisis through providing property, financial and emotional support as well as helping out with grandchildren. Such strong family ties have been also discussed in relation to rural mobilities in Ireland. Ní Laoire for example demonstrates the importance of family in conceptualising an Irish rural idyll (which does not draw only on environmental features, but, primarily, on social, and in particular on the institution of family) amongst international return migrants:

> 'The myth of the dream of return draws on notions of a rural idyll, in particular on the ideal of community, as well as notions of safety, space, and nature. This is bound up with heteronormative values of the nuclear family and the rearing of children in the countryside […] The notion of the family is extremely important in their narratives of return migration, with a strong family/kinship discourse interwoven with idyllic myths of rural life. This reflects the strong emphasis on family and kinship in Irish society generally, but is also a common feature of international return migration' (Ní Laoire, 2007, p. 342)

Similarly, Gkartzios and Scott (2010) discuss the social features of a so-called Irish rural idyll which draws heavily on communitarian features of rural areas, inclusive of family and kin networks, although this study does not offer the nuanced understanding of family and housing motivations we aim to offer in this paper. In a Northern Irish context, Stockdale and Catney (2014) demonstrate the importance of family in counter-urban relocations through for example supporting their older parents:

> 'Not only are young families settling in rural areas but also, importantly, adult children and their families through their close residential proximity to the parental home offer a potential source of future family support for ageing parents' (p. 96)

More importantly, the authors identify a 'unique' Northern Irish effect in which younger households migrate to the countryside (as opposed to older and retired groups), due to the country's strong family farming tradition and 'self-build' housing.

Finally there has been very little work regarding the significance of the dwelling itself in rural mobilities, although in some cases the availability of larger and better quality housing is mentioned in the literature (Gkartzios and Scott, 2010; Hardill, 2006), or house prices are used to infer other housing characteristics such as size and quality (Bijker et al., 2012). We aim to contribute to this literature by investigating specific housing characteristics such as the role of consumption of private space and house design among others in driving (counterurban and wider) relocation. We argue that the importance of the actual house characteristics is an under-reported dimension of rural mobilities, and provides an interesting intersection with a mobilities perspective. For example, a house is a fixed or static entity, but housing choice (particularly in a rural context) is predicated on emergent mobilities including:

- Mobilities relating to population movements inclusive of counterurbanisation flows, international rural to rural migration, lateral migration, and movements involving shorter distances within a locality. A mobilities perspective also recognises the relationship between linked lives and mobility, such as dual earner households seeking compromise regarding location choices in the context of flexible labour markets (Findlay et al., 2015) and households relationships with wider family networks;

- Increasing car ownership, improved transportation infrastructure, flows of commuters and the increasing spatial separation of home and workplace across urban and rural places, has resulted in the increasing integration of rural and urban labour market areas. This has facilitated both urban dwellers to move to rural localities without moving jobs, and those from a rural background to commute to urban places for employment, are no longer dependent on rural based employment opportunities. This includes longer daily commutes, the rise of 'extreme commuting' denoting a one-way commute time of 90 minutes or more

to work (Marion and Horner, 2007), and workers living away from the family home mid-week;

- These extended labour markets and commuter mobilities are also underpinned by new or improving ICT and mobile technologies, which have increasingly penetrated rural space (faster broadband roll-out, WIFI on public transport etc.) enabling more flexible working patterns (such as working in transit or occasional working from home) which in turn facilitates increased spatial separation of home and work;

- Social mobilities, often reflected in moving to a larger house, with perceptions of 'climbing the housing ladder', or potentially gentrification processes leading to displacement of locals by wealthier in-comers. In this context, housing remains central to the overall shaping of opportunity structures in societies in terms of family formation, mobility and asset accumulation (Forest and Hirayama, 2009);

- Increasing capital mobility, such as the financialisation of mortgages and home ownership across national boundaries, has led to a fuelling of house-building booms in rural places or house price bubbles. This includes the linking of mortgage markets and stock markets through so-called securitisation investment vehicles (Gotham, 2009; Wainwright, 2009) and globalisation of mortgage markets as a result of the financialisation of borrowers and markets and a globalisation of mortgage lenders (Aalbers, 2009b; Heijden et al, 2011). The availability of credit across international borders to both developers and consumers has fuelled a building boom in countries with relaxed planning regimes such as Spain and Ireland (e.g. Murphy and Scott, 2015), with countries with more restrictive planning systems witnessing huge increases in rural house prices with implications for displacement as an alternative form of mobility (e.g. Shucksmith, 2011);

- The existence of uneven mobilities *across* places (e.g. due to different planning regimes in restricting or facilitating new rural housing supply, different mortgage practices) and *within* rural localities, which are often dependent on access to capital; access to land, often from

within family networks, for self-build; perceived 'localness' whereby 'locals' are favoured in planning regulations for new-build houses;

- New immobilities (drawing on Coulter et al., 2015) that have resulted from negative equity after the collapse of the housing market.

The result of these mobilities is often hybrid places comprising rural localities and extended urban places, material places and places socially constructed, and material assets overlapping emotional geographies.

Methodology

This overarching objective of the paper is to examine rural population/residential movements through a mobilities perspective in order to provide an more inclusive analysis of the diverse processes of movement that (re)produce rural places beyond the dominant counterurbanisation narrative. In an effort to establish a framework for realising this objective a research design framework was devised. The research design had two overarching components: (1) designing and administering the questionnaire survey; and (2) selecting the case study locations and determining the overall sampling strategy. Given that the focus of the research was on assessing rural household mobilities, a questionnaire survey was designed investigating issues such as previous address, reasons/motivations for moving to current residence, and satisfaction with current dwelling/locality. The surveys were interview administered at selected case study locations between July and August 2010.

Case study locations were selected on the basis of two key criteria. First, rural case study locations were defined to be any county beyond designated cities within the Republic of Ireland. Thus, the major cities and surrounding suburbs of counties Cork, Galway, Waterford, Kilkenny and Limerick were excluded. The entire Greater Dublin Area (comprising the administrative authorities of county Dublin as well as counties Meath, Kildare and Wicklow) was also excluded for similar reasons. Second, locations representing different types of rural places were

selected on a spectrum of near-urban to remote rural localities. The selected case study locations are highlighted cartographically in Figure 1.

<Insert fig. 1 about here>

A sampling strategy was devised to select respondents within each of the five case study locations. Given the time and financial resources available for the study, an ambitious target of achieving 180 responses within each case study location was set – a total of 900 responses. Within each location, it was necessary to ensure that only rural settlements were targeted for analysis and that semi-urban settlements were excluded. Thus rural settlements were stratified according to a rural typology used in recent studies of rural planning in Ireland (see Scott, 2010) and houses were randomly sampled within these strata (see Table1). In addition, our study focused solely on 'recent movers', defined as households that moved to their current property within a 10 year period prior to the survey administration (i.e. from 2000), involving households who changed residence irrespective of location or distance relative to current dwelling. Overall, a total of 728 valid responses were achieved after the data were cleaned. The stratification system and a breakdown of the total number of responses in each rural settlement strata is shown in Table 1 along with a summary of some of the key sample characteristics.

<Insert table 1 about here>

In terms of analysis, we chose a quantitative approach primarily because we wanted to undertake inference testing to examine the relationships between key variables but also because this approach allowed us to generalise more broadly about the nature of the results emerging. More specifically, a chi-square test was utilised to examine the relationship between variables by comparing frequencies in sub-categories to what one might expect under the assumption that variables are independent of each other and thus unrelated. Given that the data are categorical in nature, the chi-square test was appropriate to test associations for the current study. Thus, in

all cases where p-values are cited, the Pearson chi-square test was used to test for statistically significant relationships between variables. We only considered relationships to be significant at an alpha level of 0.05, as is standard for inference testing in the social sciences (see Sterne and Davey-Smith, 2001). In this sense, we use a bivariate rather than a multivariate analysis so there exists some possibility of interaction effects.

Results

Types of mobilities

The respondents were asked about the location of their previous residence in an effort to cover all possible residential rural movements that take place in a settlement pattern (see also Mitchell, 2004; Milbourne, 2007). Migrant households that relocated in the study areas from bigger size settlements were classified under counterurbanisation movements. This distinction is based on Mitchell's (2004) conceptual approach of counterurbanisation; however, as Stockdale (20114) notes, this approach based on a 'cascade' notion of counterurbanisation (see Champion, 2005), also includes movements not only from large metropolitan centres to rural localities, but also those moving (for example) from rural market towns down the settlement hierarchy in a counterurbanisation direction. Migrant households from other similar size settlements, i.e. rural, were classified under lateral migration movements. It was also important to cover local residential movements where previous residence was in the same area, or even movements to the study areas from 'more' rural areas. The latter ones are usually characterised, along with lateral migration, as rural-to-rural migration movements (i.e. Halfacree, 1994). However, since counterurbanisation in this paper is defined in a relative way (movements from bigger size settlements to the current rural locality), it was important to see if the opposite has been the case as well.

Overall, the results illustrated the diversity of mobilities underpinning rural places in an Irish context. In broad terms, counterurban movements accounted for 44% of our recent movers with lateral movements comprising 55%. While counterurban movements are clearly important, the

dominance of the counterurbanisation narrative mask the significance of other types of movements that shape rural places, underscoring Stockdale's notion of 'messy' in-migration. Within the lateral mobilities group, lateral *in-migration* accounted for 26%, which included almost 8% who had moved from a similar rural area outside of the locality and 18.5% who moved from a less populated rural area to their current location. Significantly, local mobilities (moving within the same locality) comprised almost 30% of our recent mover sample, a group that is under-reported in the literature.

We also asked respondents where they lived up until the age of 12 years old. Of our counterurban sample, 57.2% of this group were originally from a rural area. Therefore, rather than a uni-directional urban-to-rural movement, we witnessed significant 'return-to-roots', inclusive of at least one member of the household returning to the actual locality from where they grew up or moving to a similar type of environment, but perhaps in a different location. This finding is not in line with the stereotypical narrative of a counterurban migrant, but instead represents a more nuanced account of rural mobilities – from rural to urban and back again over a person's lifecourse – and demonstrates the value of examining counterurbanisation in different spatial contexts, in this case a more agrarian national context than appears in the dominant UK-US literature. This also potentially has implications for rural politics and conflicts. Often newcomers are viewed as having different values than the existing population, leading to conflicts surrounding environmental values and development in the countryside (see for example, Murdoch et al., 2003). However, in this case many counterurban movers have rural backgrounds, suggesting that a significant proportion of urban-to-rural migrants may share similar cultural backgrounds with the 'local' population. Moreover, the presence of a return-to-roots movement is particularly revealing when we examine the motivations behind various rural mobilities, discussed in the next section.

Motivations for moving and the role of the dwelling

In this section, we examine the motivations underpinning rural residential mobilities, particularly differences between counterurbanisers and non-counterurbanisers. We amalgamated the different movements within rural localities into a non-counterurbaniser category – i.e. respondents whose previous residence was located in the same area as where they are now currently living, respondents whose previous residence was located in an area with a similar population, and respondents whose previous residence was located in a less populated area. The reason for this this approach is to reflect the differences in experience between those respondents who had moved directly from an urban location vis-à-vis respondents who had moved to their current property from within a rural context, given that this group of respondents had already been living in a rural environment, thus sharing similar experiences (e.g. previous house in a rural location, not moving from an urban location due to so-called push factors etc.). Table 2 shows the most important reasons cited by respondents with regard to choosing their current residential location. These categories draw on common classifications on counterurbanisation motives that seek to differentiate between 'quality of life' motives (associated with both physical/natural and social features of rural living) and economic considerations (see Mitchell, 2004). As identified earlier, much of the literature surrounding counterurbanisation identifies place characteristics as key drivers of rural in-migration, specifically the search for greenspace, landscape values and amenity. However, within an Irish context, the physical features of the countryside (scenery, greenspace etc.) appear less significant accounting for only 8.6% of responses across all groups, and acting as the primary motivation for only 9.1% of the counterurban group.

Drawing on descriptive statistics, it can be seen that the general trend is for social issues to play a key role in decision-making for counterurbanisers with 35% of respondents citing them as the most important reason for moving. These include the location being a 'better area for bringing up children' and 'being closer to family' among others, indicating also the importance of family in such relocations, and perhaps reflective of a return-to-roots tendency identified above. Economic issues are also important (16%) and this includes factors such as 'employment

opportunities' and 'cheaper housing'. For the counterurban group, housing characteristics are identified as a primary motivation for 22%.

By way of contrast, housing characteristics are most important for non-counterurban respondents and these issues include 'obtaining a larger dwelling', 'a better house/apartment' as well as a desire to 'move out of the family home'. For those moving within a locality, housing was the most important factor for 51% and for those moving from a similar type of rural area, 58% reported housing as the primary factor behind the move. In these cases, given that respondents already lived in a rural location, perhaps the benefits associated with living in a rural environment were taken for granted, so the key focus in the residential search was on the actual house – however, as discussed below, this move also reflects other dimensions of mobility in terms of social mobility as households generally moved 'up the housing ladder' to larger properties. Thereafter, economic issues are most important for the non-counterurbanisers.

<Insert table 2 about here>

The significance of the actual house for both counterurbanisers and non-counterurbanisers is also revealed in relation to the nature of the house purchase. For all movers, 82% of households moved into a newly built house, including 30% of households involved in a self-build, enabling these households to be fully involved in the house design process. This also reflects local contextual factors in that Ireland experienced a house-building boom in both urban and rural areas during the so-called Celtic Tiger era (from the mid 1990s until 2007), fuelled by the availability of credit to developers and consumers and facilitated by lax planning controls (see Murphy and Scott, 2013, 2014; O'Callaghan et al., 2014). Self-build housing has also been a longstanding feature of housing supply in rural Ireland: i.e. houses that are not ready-built by a speculative builder or bought on the second hand market (Clapham et al., 1993). Often this process takes place whereby an owner-occupier would gain access to a site for a single rural

house, often through the open market but also more often from a family relation (usually a farmer), and develop the property through the investment of 'sweat equity' and inhabit it after completion.

Table 3 presents the features of a location/home that were most frequently cited as being most appealing to respondents when deciding on moving to their current location. It can be seen that the two most appealing features when deciding to move are the availability of external and internal space associated with the dwelling. These features form representations of rurality too, demonstrating that rural living values revolve around housing comfort instead of environmental amenities. In an Irish context, given the 'self-build' culture, rural areas offer an opportunity to exercise these choices perhaps more freely with greater input in the design and organisation of internal/external spaces. Donovan and Gkartzios (2014) for example argue how (one-off) self-build housing, popularised in the past as 'bungalow bliss', might represent Ireland's own version of a rural idyll given its popular appeal and dominance in the Irish countryside and linked with values surrounding land and private homeownership.

<Insert table 3 about here>

More detailed questioning of respondents with regard to the role of internal and external space in influencing their decisions revealed interesting results. Within this context, Table 4 shows the relationship between counterurbanisers and whether their move to their current residence involved moving to a larger or smaller dwelling inside and outside the house. In both cases there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables (p=0.000). It can be seen that a larger percentage of counterurbanisers moved to a residence with larger inside space (78.8%) than the 'non-counterurbanisers' category (56.7%). The statistical tests also reveal that more respondents than expected in the 'counterurbanisers' category sought a larger house inside for the current residence compared to their previous residence while a smaller number than expected sought a smaller residence. A similar, and indeed even more pronounced, trend is

visible when outside space is considered: a much larger percentage of counterurbanisers have moved to a home with a larger amount of outside space (80.4%) than non-counterurbanisers (47.9%). Thus, the evidence supports the assertion that a greater amount of private space (internal and external) is an important consideration in the home choices of counterurbanisers when compared to non-counterurbanisers and this relationship is statistically significant.

The desire for more space may indicate a change in household composition and potentially overlaps with a lifecourse perspective. However, evidence from Census data suggests that while average family size in rural areas has fallen significantly in recent years, the size of new rural housing units is increasing (Keaveney, 2007). Although houses with five rooms account for the largest proportion of rural dwellings in 2002 at over a quarter of all housing stock, the number of dwellings with eight rooms or more had the strongest growth over the period 1991 to 2002, accounting for under a third of all new rural dwellings. This suggests that the search for more internal and external space may have been driven by other factors than simply the arrival of additional family members, and again suggests that the availability of credit, lax bank lending practices and the relationship between housing choice and self-identity, may all be at play.

<Insert table 4 about here>

Table 5 shows the additional features associated with the current rural residence that were unavailable at the previous residence. In this case respondents were asked to rank the most important additional feature of their current property that was previously unavailable. For counterurbanisers, it can be seen that the most important additional features of their current residence are those associated with the physical characteristics of the dwelling. These include additional bedrooms (23.5%), bathrooms (21.7%), living rooms (11.3%), and a utility room (9.6%). Once again, this suggests that the primary motivation for counterurbanisers when moving to rural areas is in search of house attributes. It can be seen also from Table 5 that factors relating to the 'rural idlyll' do indeed play a role in decision making: 9.1% of

counterurbanisers cited 'A view of the countryside' as an additional feature of living in their rural residence but it is clearly a secondary consideration for respondents. It is also interesting to note that non-counterurbanisers tend to place a high premium on the physical characteristics of the dwelling (as indicated in Table 5), suggesting that internal physical attributes of a dwelling constitutes a desirable characteristic for the population in general.

<Insert table 5 about here>

We also asked respondents to rank the most important factor behind deciding on their current home and location. The top ranked factors for counterurbanisers include house price (29.5%), being close to family (17.4%), being closer to a rural environment (7.5%), and having roots in the area (6.2%). It seems that traditional factors associated with housing choice such as the cost of housing and the availability of family, either due to the raising of children or parents needing assistance later in life, are the most prominent factors in individuals deciding to locate in rural locations. For movers outside of the counterurban group, the most important factors behind deciding on home and location included similar factors: house price (35.4%), being close to family (13.3%), to obtain a bigger house (7.2%) and having roots in the local area (6.4%).

In placing emphasis on the home in the decision-making process of counterurbanisers, we hypothesised that this group would tend to have higher levels of home satisfaction after their move to the countryside vis-à-vis non-counterurbanisers. Table 6 shows the results of a chi-square test which demonstrates that we do not have enough evidence to suggest that this is the case (p=0.093). It can be seen that the percentage of respondents in the counter urban (90.3%) and non-counter urban (89.6%) respondents that are satisfied with their existing dwelling are more or less the same and roughly in line with what would be expected under conditions of variable independence. Using an identical approach, we also investigated whether there was a significant relationship between subjective views of life satisfaction and being a counterurbaniser. Rather interestingly, this also proved to be statistically insignificant

(X^2=3.08; p=0.214). Overall, this suggests that while the motivations among counterurbanisers for moving are considerably different from their counterparts, this does not translate into greater levels of dwelling or life satisfaction among the two sets of respondents.

<Insert table 6 about here>

Table 7 shows the relationship between counterurbanisation and respondents' views of the availability of close friends relative to their previous residential location. It can be seen that a larger percentage of counterurbanisers (49.5%) cited having more friends in their previous location than non-counterurbanisers coort (20.9%). At the same time, Table 7 shows a similar relationship of respondents' views of family relatives to their previous residence. A considerably larger percentage of the counterurbanisers (35.5%) cited having more family in their current location when compared with the non-counterurbanisers (11.7%). What these results suggest is that counterurbanisers show signs of swapping friends for family in the decision to relocate to the countryside. This is likely to be related to lifecourse issues (see Lawton et al, 2013) and, in particular, to decisions to start a family, which in some cases is linked with counterurban mobility (Kulu, 2008; Lindgren, 2003; Stockdale and Catney, 2014). Mulder and Lauster (2010) review an extensive literature on how family events (for example: marriage, childbirth, bereavement, divorce) affect housing choices (change of dwelling, tenure, mobility). There is evidence in the literature (particularly in the European South: Barban and Dalla-Zuanna, 2010; Mulder and Lauster, 2010) showing that couples tend to place a higher premium on the proximity of family, particularly during the early stages of child rearing and these issues are likely to be reflected in the decision of counterurbanisers to move to a rural location. Gkartzios (2013) for example reports counterurban mobilities in Greece to places of (parental) origin where young couples could count on the support of their parents in rearing kids. In the Netherlands also Smits (2010) suggests that the birth of children (as well as other factors resulting in household change) results in movements close to immediate family and

Feijten et al. (2008) point that such households changes are often linked with a relocation outside the city.

<Insert table 7 about here>

Conclusion

In this paper, we attempt to offer a broader perspective of rural mobilities beyond the stereotypical counterurbanisation narrative that dominates the literature, reflecting calls by Milbourne (2007), Smith (2007) and Stockdale (2014) to recognise the importance of a fuller range of movements in rural localities. By adopting a mobilities perspective, our analysis was inclusive of all household/residential movements among a group of 'recent movers' while intersecting residential movements with the influence of networks (particularly family networks rather than friendships) and housing as a spatially fixed asset. This approach also recognises recent thinking in mobility research that residential mobility is not only influenced by housing/location preferences, but is structured by wider, relational and contextual factors, ranging from mortgage lending practices and credit availability to the role of the state in regulation of land-use and new house-building, which in turn shapes household formation and asset accumulation.

By including all types of household movements, our analysis suggest that a diversity of mobilities shape rural places, so while counterurbanisation accounted for 44% of our recent movers, lateral movements (including lateral in-migration and local mobility) comprised 55% of the sample – however, these lateral movements are often neglected within the literature. The paper also demonstrates the importance of examining counterurbanisation within different geographical contexts, specifically beyond the US-UK studies which dominate the field. In the case of Ireland – a more agrarian society compared to the UK, for example – almost 60% of our sample that could be classified as counterurban, were originally from a rural background. This suggests a 'return-to-roots' movement rather than a uni-directional or stereotypical urban

to rural movement. The importance of a return-to-roots movement was also evident in understanding the motives for moving among our counterurban sample, which included the importance of being near to family networks and moving to raise children (in a locality similar to where respondents grew up and close to family support). This finding contributes further to a lifecourse perspective of rural mobility and in-migration. As reported in other studies (e.g. Haartsen and Thissen, 2014), moving closer to family networks was an important factor behind both counterurban and lateral migration, particularly among households with young families, while there was a strong tendency among the counterurbanisers to 'swap friends for family' in their re-location decision. Future qualitative studies beyond the dominant US-UK studies would be beneficial to move beyond identifying differences found in other geographical contexts to enhance our in-depth contextual understanding of these differences.

We also contribute to the literature by exploring the allure of the actual house in underpinning rural mobilities. This is an under-researched factor in explaining both counterurbanisation and other types of rural mobility, suggesting that further work is needed, beyond looking at house prices, at the intersection of residential preferences and rural demography. The counterurbanisation literature in particular has tended to focus on the enduring appeal of 'the rural' and notions of the rural idyll (often based on landscape, scenery, tranquillity etc.) as underpinning migration decisions. For all our different mover groups, the consumption of private space appears to be a key driver, including the appeal of larger properties with additional rooms and additional external space. A housing perspective is also revealing in terms of explaining local contextual factors that shape residential decision-making and mobility, including state regulation, developers, land-owners and the availability of capital. For example, in the case of Ireland, rural mobilities have been inextricably linked to a house-building boom from the mid 1990s until the financial crisis of 2008 (Murphy and Scott, 2014), underpinned by lax planning controls of new housing in rural locations (often leading to oversupply) and by the availability of credit through neoliberalised banking practices and the international flow of capital and financialisation of home ownership. These practices led not only to a speculative

building boom in rural localities, but also fuelled the desire for larger properties with increasing credit availability to consumers. These factors are neglected features of residential mobilities but importantly frame household decision-making behind a re-location, suggesting that mobility decisions are structured by wider processes shaping society, linked to markets, institutions and networks (Findlay et al., 2015). In this context, access to housing, and therefore the ability to relocate or move, is shaped by structural factors relating to finance/capital, access to land (for self-build group) and the wider governance context for the planning and development sector.

Acknowledgements

References

Aalbers, M. (2009) The globalization and Europeanization of mortgage markets, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 33, pp. 389-410.

Barban, N. and Dalla-Zuanna, G. (2010) A portrait of immigrant children's housing experiences in Italy, Housing Studies, 25(4), pp. 559–584.

Bell, M. and Osti, G. (2010) Mobilities and ruralities: An introduction, Sociologia Ruralis, 50, pp. 199-204.

Benson, M., O'Reilly, K., 2009. Migration and the search for a better way of life: a critical exploration of lifestyle migration. The Sociological Review 57, 608-625.

Bell, D., 2008. Variations on the rural idyll. In: Cloke, P.J., Marsden, T., Mooney, P.(Eds.), Handbook of Rural Studies. Sage, London, pp. 149–160.

Berry, B., 1976. Urbanisation and Counterurbanisation. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills.

Bijker, R.A. and Haartsen, T. (2012) More than Counter-urbanisation: Migration to Popular and Less-popular Rural Areas in the Netherlands. Population, Space & Place, 18, 643–657.

Bijker, R.A., Haartsen, T and Strijker, D (2012) Migration to less-popular rural areas in the Netherlands: Exploring the motivations. Journal of Rural Studies, 28, 4, 490–498.

Bramley, G. and Power, S. (2009) Urban form and social sustainability: the role of density and housing type. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design,* 36**,** 30-48.

Brown, D., 2010. Rethinking the OECD's New Rural Demography Centre for Rural Economy Discussion Paper Series No. 26. Newcastle University. Available on: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cre/publish/discussionpapers/pdfs/dp26%20Brown.pdf

Bosworth G, Atterton J. 2012. Entrepreneurial inmigration and neoendogenous rural development. Rural Sociology 77: 254–279

Boyle, P., Halfacree, K., Robinson, V., 1998. Exploring Contemporary Migration. Longman, Essex.

Bunce, M., 1994. The Countryside Ideal. Routledge, London.

Bullock C., Scott M. and Gkartzios M. (2011) Rural residential preferences for house design and location: insights from a discrete choice experiment applied to Ireland, Journal of Environmental Planning and Management 54, 685–706.

Champion, A.G. (1989), Counterurbanization: The Changing Pace and Nature of Population Deconcentration, London, Edward Arnold.

Champion, T., Brown, D.L., 2012. Migration and urbanerural population redistribution in the UK and US. In: Shucksmith, M., Brown, D.L., Shortall, S., Vergunst, J.,Warner, M.E. (Eds.), Rural Transformations and Rural Policies in the US and UK. Routledge, New York.

Clapham, D, Kintrea, K. & McAdam, G. (1993) Individual Self Provision and the Scottish Housing System, Urban Studies, 30 pp. 1355 -1369.

Coulter, R., van Ham, M. and Findlay, A.M. (2015) Re-thinking residential mobility: Linking lives through time and space, Progress in Human Geography, DOI: 10.1177/0309132515575417

Cresswell T. (2006) On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World. Routledge: New York.

Cresswell T (2010) Towards a politics of mobility, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 28, pp. 17-31.

Cresswell, T. (2012) Mobilities II: Still, Progress in Human Geography, 36, pp. 645-653.

Cresswell, T. (2014) Mobilities III: Moving On, Progress in Human Geography, 38, pp. 712-721.

Champion, A.G. (Ed.), 1989. Counterurbanization: The changing pace and nature of population deconcentration. Edward Arnold: London.

Champion, A.G. (2005) The counterurbanisation cascade in England and Wales since 1991: the evidence of a new migration dataset, Revue Belge de Geographie, 1-2, pp. 85-101.

Donovan K, Gkartzios M. Architecture and rural planning: 'Claiming the vernacular'. Land Use Policy 2014, 41, 334-343.

Eimermann, M., Lundmark, M. and Muller, D.K. (2012) Exploring Dutch migration to rural Sweden: international counterurbanisation in the EU Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie 103, 3, 330–346

Elliot, A. and Urry, J. (2010) Mobile Lives, Routledge, Oxford

Feijten, P., Hooimeijer, P. and Mulder, C.H (2008) Residential Experience and Residential Environment Choice over the Life-course, Urban Studies, 45(1), 141–162,

Findlay, A., McCollum, D., Coulter, R. and Gayle, V. (2015) New Mobilities Across the Life Course: a Framework for Analysing Demographically Linked Drivers of Migration, Population, Space and Place, 21, 390–402.

Forrest, R. and Hirayama, Y. (2009) The uneven impact of neoliberalism on housing opportunities, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 33, pp. 998-1013.

Gkartzios, M. (2013) 'Leaving Athens': narratives of counterurbanisation in times of crisis, Journal of Rural Studies 32, 158–167.

Gkartzios, M., Scott, M., 2010. Residential mobilities and house building in rural Ireland: evidence from three case studies. Sociologia Ruralis 50, 64-84.

Gkartzios, M., Scott, M., 2012. Gentrifying the rural? Planning and market processesin rural Ireland. Int. Plan. Studies 17, 253–276.

Gkartzios M. and Shucksmith M. (2015) 'Spatial anarchy' versus 'spatial apartheid': rural housing ironies in Ireland and England. Town Planning Review 2015, 86(1), 53-72.

Gotham, K. (2009) Creating liquidity out of spatial fixity: the secondary circuit of capital and the subprime mortgage crisis, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 33, pp. 355-371.

Grimsrud GM. 2011. How well does the 'counterurbanisation story' travel to other countries? The case of Norway. Population, Space and Place 17: 642–655.

Guimond, L. & Simard, M., 2010. Gentrification and neo-rural populations in the Quebec countryside: representations of various actors. Journal of Rural Studies 26, 449-464.

Gurran, N. (2008) The Turning Tide: Amenity Migration in Coastal Australia, International Planning Studies 13, 391-414.

Haartson, T. and Thissen, F. (2014) The success-failure dichotomy revisited: young adults' motives to return to their rural home region, Children's Geographies, 12, pp. 87-101.

Halfacree, K. (1994) The importance of the 'rural' in the constitution of counter-urbanisation: evidence from England in the 1980s. Sociologia Ruralis 34 (2–3) pp. 164–189

Halfacree K. (2001) Constructing the object: taxonomic practices, 'counterurbanisation' and positioning marginal rural settlement. International Journal of Population Geography 7, pp. 395–411.

Halfacree K. (2008) To revitalise counterurbanisation research? Recognising an international and fuller picture. Population, Space and Place, 14, pp. 479–495.

Halfacree, K. (2011) Heterolocal Identities? Counter-Urbanisation, Second Homes, and Rural Consumption in the Era of Mobilities, Population, Space and Place, DOI: 10.1002/psp

Halfacree K, Rivera MJ. (2011) Moving to the countryside … and staying: lives beyond representations, Sociologia Ruralis, 52, pp. 92–114.

Haartsen, T. and Thissen, F. (2014) The success–failure dichotomy revisited: young adults' motives to return to their rural home region, Children's Geographies, 12(1), pp. 87-101.

Halliday, J. and Coombes, M. (1995) 'In search of counterurbanisation: some evidence from Devon on the relationships between patterns of migration and motivation', Journal of Rural Studies, 11, 433–46.

Hardill, I. (2006) 'A place in the countryside' – migration and the construction of rural living. In P. Lowe and L. Speakman (Eds) *The Ageing Countryside. The growing older population of rural England*. Age Concern England: London (pp. 51-68).

Herslund L. (2012) The rural creative class: counterurbanisation and entrepreneurship in the Danish countryside, Sociologia Ruralis, 52, pp. 235–255.

Howley, P., Scott, M. and Redmond, D. (2009) An Examination of Residential Preferences for Less Sustainable Housing: Exploring Future Mobility among Dublin Central City Residents, Cities, 26 (1), pp. 1-8

Keaveney, K. (2007) Contested Ruralities: Housing in the Irish Countryside, Athenrey: Teagasc.

Kulu, H. 2008. Fertility and spatial mobility in the life course: evidence from Austria. Environment and Planning A 2008, volume 40, pages 632-652

Liu, N. and Roberts, D. (2013) Counter-urbanisation, planning and house prices: an analysis of the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, 1984-2010. Town Planning Review, 84 (1), 81-105.

Lindgren U, 2003, ``Who is the counter-urban mover? Evidence from the Swedish urban system'' International Journal of Population Geography 9 399 ^ 418

Lowe, P., 2012. The agency of rural research in comparative context. In: Shucksmith,M., Brown, D.L., Shortall, S., Vergunst, J., Warner, M.E. (Eds.), Rural Transforma-tions and Rural Policies in the US and UK. Routledge, New York, pp. 18–38.

Lundholm, E. (2012) Returning home? Migration to birthplace among migrants after age 55 Population, Space and Place, 18 (1) 74–84,

Mahon, M. (2007) New populations; shifting expectations: The changing experience of Irish rural space and place, Journal of Rural Studies, 23, pp. 345-356.

Marion, B. and Horner, M. (2007) A comparison of the socioeconomic and demographic profiles of 'extreme' commuters in several US metropolitan statistical areas, Transportation Research Record, 2013, pp. 38-45.

McDonagh, J., 2001. Renegotiating Rural Development in Ireland. Ashgate, Aldershot

Milbourne, P., 2007. Re-populating rural studies: migrations, movements and mobilities. Journal of Rural Studies 23, 381-386.

Milbourne P, Kitchen L. 2014. Rural mobilities: connecting movement and fixity in rural places. Journal of Rural Studies 34: 326–336.

Mitchell CJA. 2004. Making sense of counterurbanization. Journal of Rural Studies 20: 15–34.

Mulder, C.H. and Lauster, N.T. (2010) Housing and Family: An Introduction, Housing Studies, 25:4, 433-440

Murdoch, J., Lowe, P., 2003. The preservationist paradox: modernism, environmentalism and the politics of spatial division. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 28 (3), 318–322.

Murdoch, J., Lowe, P., Ward, N., Marsden, T., 2003. The Differentiated Countryside.London, Routledge.

Murphy, E. and Scott, M. (2013) Mortgage-related issues in a crisis economy: evidence from rural households in Ireland, Geoforum, 46, pp. 34-44.

Murphy, E. and Scott, M. (2014) 'After the crash': life satisfaction and everyday financial practices and rural households in post Celtic Tiger Ireland, Journal of Rural Studies, 34, pp. 37-49.

Newby, H., 1979. Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England. Penguin,Harmondsworth.

Ní Laoire, C. (2007) The 'green green grass of home'? Return migration to rural Ireland. Journal of Rural Studies, 23, 3, 332–344.

O'Callaghan, C, Boyle, M, Kitchin, R (2014) 'Post-politics, crisis, and Ireland's 'ghost estates". *Political Geography*, 42:121 - 133.

Phillips, M., (2002) The production, symbolization and socialization of gentrification: impressions from two Berkshire villages, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 27, pp. 282–308.

Phillips, M. (2010) Counterurbanisation and rural gentrification: an exploration of the terms, Population, Space and Place, 16, pp. 539-558.

Rérat, P. (2014) Highly qualified rural youth: why do young graduates return to their home region? *Children's Geographies*, 12, 1, 70–86

Satsangi, M., Gallent, N., Bevan, M., 2010. The Rural Housing Question: Communitiesand Planning in Britain's Countrysides. Policy Press, Bristol.

Scott, M. (Ed), 2010. Sustainable Rural Development: Managing Housing in the Irish Countryside, STRIVE Report. Environmental Protection Agency, Wexford.

Scott, M. (2012) Uses and abuses of postcolonial politics: rural housing conflicts in Ireland, Landscape Research, 37 (1), pp. 91-114

Scott, M., Foley, K. and Bullock, C. (2013) Design matters: Understanding professional, community and consumer preferences for rural housing in the Irish landscape, Town Planning Review, doi:10.3828/tpr.2013.19

Scott, M., Smith, D., Shucksmith, M., Gallent, N., Halfacree, K., Kilpatrick, S., Johns, S., Vitartas, P., Homisan, M. and Cherrett, T. (2011) Exclusive countrysides? Rural gentrification, consumer preferences and planning, Planning Theory & Practice, 12 (4), pp. 593-625

Sheller, M. and Urry, J. (2006) The new mobilities paradigm, Environment and Planning A 2006, 38, pp. 207-226.

Shucksmith, M., 2000. Exclusive Countryside? Social Inclusion and Regeneration in Rural Britain. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Shucksmith, M. (2011) Exclusive rurality: planners as agents of gentrification, Planning Theory and Practice, 12, pp. 605-611.

Smith, D., 2007. The changing faces of rural populations: '"(re) fixing" the gaze' or 'eyes wide shut'? Journal of Rural Studies 23, 275-282.

Smith, D. & Phillips, M. (2001) Socio-cultural representations of greenified penninerurality, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 17, pp. 457–469.

Smits, A. (2010). Moving close to parents and adult children in the Netherlands: The influence of support needs. Demographic Research, 22, 31, 985-1014

Sociologia Ruralis. 2010. Special issue on mobilities and ruralities. Sociologia Ruralis 50: 199–204.

Sterne, J.A.C., Davey-Smith, G. (2001) Sifting the evidence – what's wrong with significance tests? British Medical Journal, 322, 226–231.

Stockdale, A. (2014) Contemporary and 'Messy' Rural In-migration Processes: Comparing Counterurban and Lateral Rural Migration, Population, Space and Place, DOI: 10.1002/psp.1947

Stockdale, A., A. Findlay and D. Short (2000) The repopulation of rural Scotland: opportunity and threat. Journal of Rural Studies 16 (2) pp. 243–257

Stockdale, A. and Gatney, G. (2004) A Life Course Perspective on Urban–Rural Migration: the Importance of the Local Context, Population, Space and Place, 20, pp. 83–98

Urry, J. (2007) Mobilities, Polity Press: Cambridge

Urry, J. (2008) Governance, flows and the end of the car system, Global Environmental Change, 18, pp. 343-349.

van Dam F, Heins S, Elbersen BS. 2002. Lay discourses of the rural and stated and revealed preferences for rural living: some evidence of the existence of a rural idyll in the Netherlands. Journal of Rural Studies 18: 461–476.

Van der Heijden, H., Dol, K. and Oxley, M. (2011) Western European housing systems and the impact of the international financial crisis, Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, 26, pp. 277-293.

Wainwright, T. (2009) Laying the foundations for a crisis: mapping the historico-geographical construction of residential mortgage backed securitization in the UK, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 33, pp. 372-388.

Woods M. (2006) Redefining the 'rural question': The new 'politics of the rural' and social policy, Social Policy & Administration, 40, pp. 579-595.

Woods, M. 2010. Rural. Routledge: Oxford.

Table 1. Settlement types and key sample characteristics

Settlement type		N	% Sample
Single rural house in the open countryside (one-off house)		112	14.8
House in open countryside (part of a cluster of <=10)		85	11.3
In a village (< 1,500 residents)		187	24.8
In a town (1,500-5,000 residents)		176	23.4
In a town (5,001-10,000 residents)		165	21.9
Total		**753**	100
Sample Characteristic			
Gender	Male	274	37.6
	Female	454	62.4
	Total	728	100
Age	<24	43	5.9
	25-34	271	37.2
	35-44	230	31.6
	45-54	98	13.5
	55+	77	10.6
	Declined to answer	9	1.2
	Total	728	100
HH Income (Gross €)	<20000	40	5.5
	20000-30000	46	6.3
	30000-40000	40	5.5
	40000-50000	36	4.9
	50000-60000	40	5.5
	60000-80000	65	8.9
	80000-100000	34	4.7
	>100000	24	3.3
	Did not wish to reveal	403	55.4
	Total	728	100

Table 2.   **Most important reason for moving to current property**

Most important reason for moving to current property?	Describes current residence in relation to previous				Total (%)	Total (N)
	Previous residence was located in the same area as where I am currently loving – *non counter-urbaniser*	Previous residence was located in a more heavily populated area – *counter-urbaniser*	Previous residence was located in an area with a similar population – *non counter-urbaniser*	Previous residence was located in a less populated area – *non counter-urbaniser*		
Economic factors	7.5%	16%	13.3%	12.2%	12.2%	88
Social features	12.8%	35.3%	7.5%	13.9%	22.9%	165
Physical features	7.1%	9.1%	1.9%	12.5%	8.6%	62
Housing characteristics	51%	22%	57.9%	28.9%	34.5%	248
Other	20.8	16.9%	22.2%	31.9%	21.2%	153
None responses	0.9%	0.6%	0%	1.5%	0.8%	5
Total (N) **Total %**	**212** **100%**	**320** **100%**	**54** **100%**	**135** **100%**	**721** **100%**	

Table 3.   **Features of location/ home most appealing when deciding to move to rural**

areas (most frequent responses recorded)

Counterurbanisers			Non-Counterurbanisers		
	%	Total (N)		%	Total (N)
1. Amount of internal space	20.1	65	1. Amount of internal space	23.1	93
2. Amount of external space	19.5	63	2. Amount of external space	15.4	62
3. Views of the countryside	7.2	23	3. No. of bedrooms	8.6	35
4. Layout of internal space	6.6	21	4. Privacy	7.5	30
5. External appearance	6.3	20	5. Layout of internal space	7.0	28
Other[1]	40.3	129	Other	38.4	155
Total	100	321	Total	100	403

---

[1] A wide range of responses were recorded with other appealing features cited by respondents including: traditional apperance, modern design

Table 4. Size of current property compared to previous dwelling (internal and external space)

	Counterurbanisers (%)	Non-Counterurbanisers (%)	Total (N)
Larger or smaller <u>inside</u> than your previous residence?			
Smaller	11.2	28.7	152
Larger	78.8	56.7	482
About the same	10.0	14.6	91
Total (N)	321 (100%)	404 (100%)	725
X^2=42.36; p=0.000			
Larger or smaller <u>outside</u> than your previous residence?			
Smaller	11.8	35.7	182
Larger	80.4	47.9	451
About the same	7.8	16.4	91
Total	321 (100%)	403 (100%)	724
X^2=81.33; p=0.000			

Table 5.   **Most important additional features of respondents' current residence that were not available in their previous residence (single response recorded)**

Feature	Counterurbanisers		Non-Counterurbanisers	
	%	Total N	%	Total N
Additional bedrooms	23.5%	69	31.8%	94
Additional bathrooms	21.7%	64	24.9%	74
Additional living rooms	11.3%	34	8.2%	24
A utility room	9.6%	29	10.2%	30
A view of the countryside	9.1%	27	3.6%	11
Fewer neighbouring houses	8.1%	24	2.2%	7
A separate kitchen	3.7%	11	3.2%	9
A front garden	3.4%	10	2.7%	8
A back garden	3.4%	10	4.1%	12
A garage	3.1%	9	2.1%	6
Off street parking	2.1%	6	2.1%	6
Other	1.0%	3	4.9%	16
Total	100%	296	100%	297

Table 6. **Home satisfaction among counterurbanisers and Non-Counterurbanisers**

	Counterurbanisers (%)	Non-Counterurbanisers (%)	Total (N)
Unsatisfied	6.0	3.7	34
Neither	3.8	6.7	39
Satisfied	90.2	89.6	648
Total (N)	319 (100%)	402 (100%)	721
X^2=4.75; p=0.093			

Table 7. Comparing close friends and family networks in previous and current location

	Counterurbanisers (%)	Non-Counterurbanisers (%)	Total (N)
Close Friends			
More in previous location	49.5	20.9	242
More in current location	25.7	15.7	145
About the same	24.8	63.4	334
Total (N)	319 (100%)	402 (100%)	721
Family Networks			
More in previous location	36.2	21.1	200
More in current location	35.5	11.7	160
About the same	28.3	67.2	360
Total (N)	318 (100%)	402 (100%)	720

Fig. 1. Case study locations