

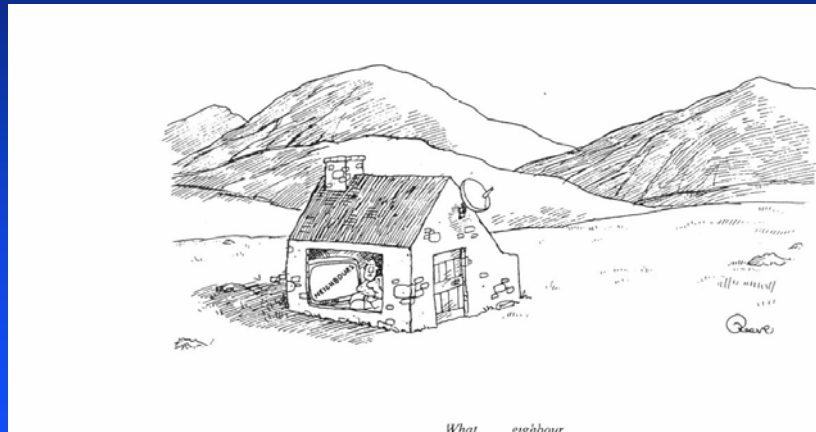
"What's a Neighbourhood?" Poverty in Sparsely Populated Rural Areas of the UK.

Professor Mark Shucksmith

m.shucksmith@ncl.ac.uk



What's a neighbour(hood)?

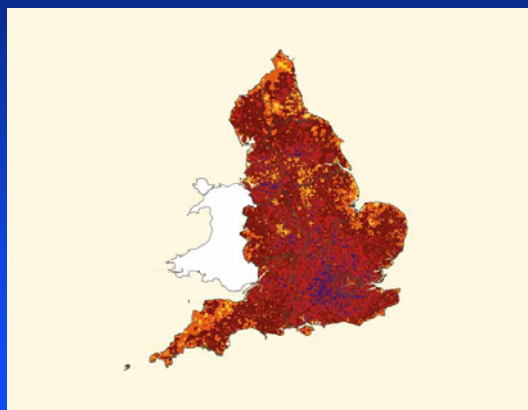


Introduction

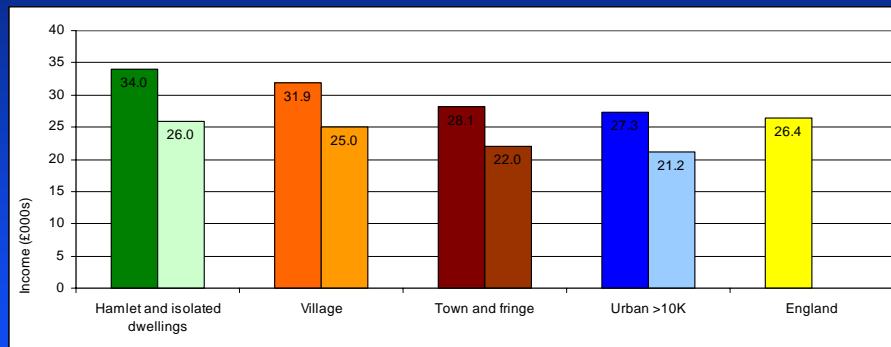
- UK: Most rural areas are accessible and affluent, and rural poverty is scattered amongst general affluence.
- *But* sparsely populated rural peripheries have:
 - Household incomes 30% lower than in less sparse areas
 - 1 in 3 households in income poverty, and poverty is growing!
 - Wage gap of £130/week between most rural and most urban
 - Declining business performance
- How does this impact on people in these remoter areas?

Lower quartile household incomes 2005

- Highest incomes in accessible rural areas (lower quartile is >£25k).
- Lowest incomes in less accessible rural areas and inner cities. (lower quartile <£12.5k)
- By sparsity and settlement size...

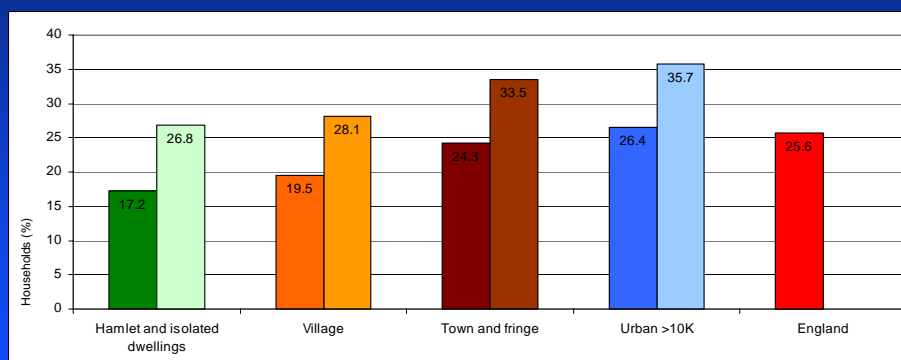


Median household income 2006



Incomes are consistently 30% lower in sparse areas (right hand columns) and higher in smaller settlements.

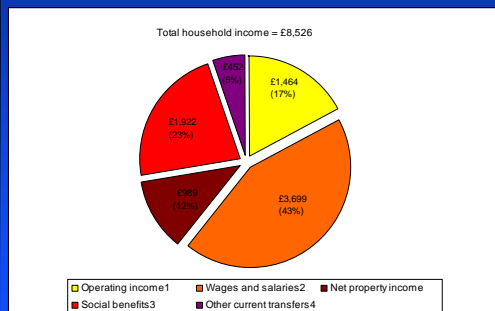
Households in income poverty (<60% median income) 2006



Poverty is much greater in sparse areas (right hand columns)

Rural Incomes and Poverty

Composition of household income
– Cornwall & Scilly Isles



Income composition:

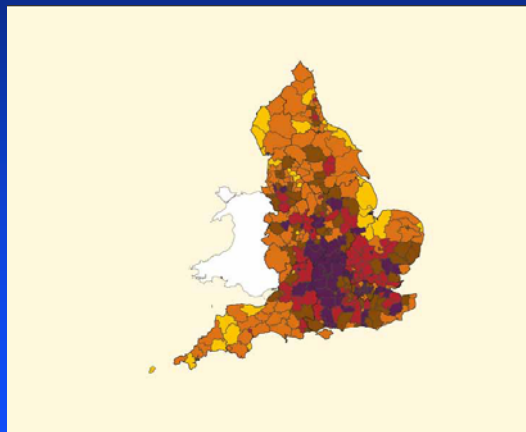
- 43% wages/salaries
- 23% social benefits

Persistent low pay -

Wage gap £130/week
between most rural and
most urban in 2006
(£90 in 1998)

Lower take-up of benefits

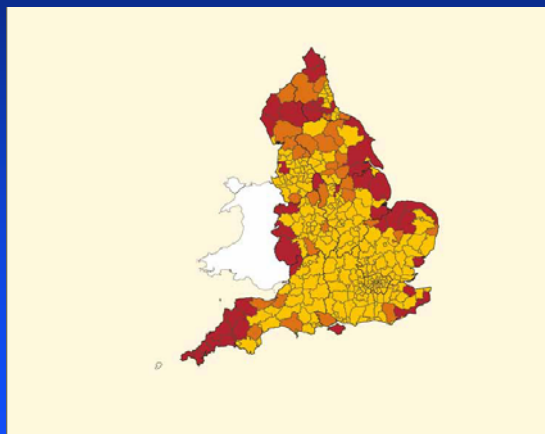
Rural businesses: change in number of businesses 1994-2004



Growth most in
accessible rural
areas (>20%).

Growth least or
absolute decline in
the sparse areas.

Poor economic performance ('PSA' districts) 2006



DEFRA identifies 'lagging' rural districts in terms of economic performance. Most are the sparse areas.

What issues arise?

Persistent Poverty in Old Age

Recent analysis of the BHPS shows persistence of poverty in old age is much greater in remote areas...

Spell length	Remote rural		Accessible rural		Non-rural	
	under 65	65+	under 65	65+	under 65	65+
1	63.6%	56.9%	47.7%	57.9%	52.3%	58.9%
2	44.8%	48.3%	25.3%	48.1%	35.2%	43.8%
3	34.6%	45.0%	19.6%	36.5%	26.0%	33.5%
4	20.9%	39.9%	16.7%	30.7%	20.3%	26.4%
5	19.0%	39.9%	12.7%	25.1%	16.4%	23.8%
6	17.3%	35.8%	10.7%	21.7%	10.4%	18.8%
7	9.6%	31.6%	10.7%	17.9%	5.6%	18.8%
8	9.6%	31.6%	10.7%	17.9%	5.6%	18.8%

Pre-School Education

- Under-provision for under 5s systematically worse with remoteness from urban settlements.
- Accessing pre-school education
 - Issues of transport, time and cost to parents
 - Mothers might have to leave the labour market!
- Issues of quality and choice
 - Do children receive a second class service? (Teacher essential? Composite classes? In their community?)
 - Who decides on what is 'quality'?

Conclusions

- Poverty is high and rising in sparsely populated rural areas of England. This seems to reflect:
 - Persistent low pay and poor quality job opportunities
 - Lower take-up of social benefits
 - Poorly performing economies
- This context also generates complex forms of social exclusion in public service provision.
- Has a UK policy focus on social exclusion in 'neighbourhoods' itself acted as a means of further administrative exclusion by the state?

Some references

- Commission for Rural Communities (2006) *State of the Countryside 2006*.
- Commission for Rural Communities (2006) *Rural Disadvantage: Priorities for Action*.
- Gilbert A, Philip L and Shucksmith M (2006) Rich and Poor in the Countryside, in Lowe P and Speakman L (eds) *The Ageing Countryside*, Age Concern Books, London.
- Milbourne P (2004) *Rural Poverty*, Routledge.
- Shucksmith M, Shucksmith J and Watt J (2006) Rurality and Social Inclusion: A Case of Pre-School Education, *Social Policy and Administration*, 40, 6, 678-691.
- Shucksmith M (2003) Social Exclusion and Poverty in Rural England: A Review of Recent Research, available at www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/research/esrc_rural_seminars.pdf