

Perceptions of Rurality and their Implications for the Experience and Impact of Immigrants: Social and Economic Perspectives from Cornwall and Northumberland.

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This paper explores the effect of perceptions of rural life upon the subsequent actions of counterurbanisers. In particular, we assess the impact of their perceptions for rural economic development in the contrasting areas of Cornwall and Northumberland.

Remote rural areas attract high levels of inward migration owing to the perceived quality of life on offer yet they are also associated with high rates of economic deprivation. In-migration can therefore provide an impetus for rural development but in this paper we hypothesise that the effectiveness of in-migrants or counterurbanisers as catalysts for economic development depends upon their attitudes towards the host community.

If the perceived rural idyll consists of a slow pace of life and a step away from the pressures of a more urban lifestyle, these counterurbanisers are less likely to bring the necessary dynamism to rural communities. The contrasts between the “idyll” experienced as a visitor and the daily realities of rural life can also create tensions between indigenous and in-migrant residents. By contrast, counterurbanisers that are able to both understand and engage with the local community are better placed to introduce new forms of human and social capital and provide valuable connections beyond the local area.

Building upon neo-endogenous theories of rural development, the link between counterurbanisers’ perceptions, their subsequent integration and their economic activity in the rural areas provide the focus for this paper. A greater understanding of these issues can influence policy aimed at providing better information and greater opportunities for integration. The research also develops a more nuanced understanding of the significance of different forms and emanations of social capital in a rural development context.

Word count: 8,003 (6,813 excluding reference list)

Introduction

In this paper we examine the effect of in-migrant perceptions on rural development potential in two contrasting rural counties of England. Counterurbanisation is seen by some as a “catalyst” or “pre-requisite” for rural development (Stockdale, 2006) and by others as a damaging force, affecting housing affordability (Taylor, 2008), community cohesion (Bell, 1994; Murdoch et al, 2003) and the viability of local services (Divoudi and Wishardt, 2004). Pahl describes a paradox whereby “middle class people moving into rural areas in search of community, very often, by their very presence, destroy what they are seeking” (2007, p2). As such, this paper accepts Halfacree’s (2008) challenge to revitalise research in the field of counterurbanisation and look beyond, or perhaps beneath, traditional stereotypes.

Our distinct research areas have highlighted different attitudes among in-migrants to Cornwall and Northumberland and this led to the hypothesis that the perceptions and expectations of counterurbanisers have a significant effect on individuals’ subsequent behaviour. Depending upon their engagement with the local economy and local communities, this will in turn influence the rural development potential of receiving localities.

With many rural areas perceived through the lens of the ‘rural idyll’, this can mask poverty, hardship and deprivation (See for example, Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2008). Several of the UK’s 1999/2006 Objective 1 areas¹, the poorest regions in Europe, were places characterised by rurality. Cornwall qualified in 1999 with 69% of average EU GDP and typifies the contradiction of being an attractive place to live, reinforced by its public image as a holiday destination, yet also a place of significant deprivation with some of the most challenging socio-economic conditions in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2008; Nomis 2009; DCLG, 2008). At the opposite end of England, the economy of the North East has lower levels of employment and productivity than most other UK regions (NERIP, 2008) and has some of the most remote and sparse rural areas in England (ONE, 2002).

Counterurbanisation trends continue with less sparse villages and hamlets seeing the fastest growth in population, followed by sparse towns and sparse villages and hamlets (CRC, 2008). Cornwall has experienced greater levels of population growth, especially North Cornwall, but the Castle Morpeth and Alnwick districts of Northumberland have also recorded significant population growth. Looking solely at internal migration data, five of the six districts of Cornwall are in the highest quintile of the UK for net internal migration expressed as a percentage of population (ibid) illustrating the extent of counterurbanisation pressures in this county. For Northumberland, there is net in-migration to most districts although the levels are not as high.

Recent studies have highlighted the job creation potential of entrepreneurial in-migrants in England (Stockdale, 2005) and especially in the North East (One NorthEast, 2006; Bosworth, 2008) although in-migrants to Cornwall tend to be more

¹ Objective 1 structural funding is given to EU NUTS 2 areas with a GDP of less than 75% of the European average.

influenced by notions of the rural idyll, rather than with entrepreneurship. This distinction makes Northumberland and Cornwall ideal case study areas to explore the economic and community engagement of in-migrants.

Embedded Newcomers

Much recent literature over how to tackle regional inequalities and achieve convergence between rich and poor areas has emphasised the importance of endogenous development. From this perspective, economic growth is best achieved from 'within' or from 'below' through supporting existing businesses, improving infrastructure (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000), and using decentralised governance mechanisms, enabling development to be responsive to local needs and conditions (Roberts, 2003). Tools such as regional 'branding' are used to better position the area and its enterprises within the wider market place, alongside growing the level of skills, social and human capital available within the local labour market (Shucksmith 2000; Lee et al, 2005; Ray, 1999; Ray, 1998). Local culture has a double benefit: as a means of differentiating a locality from others within an increasingly globalised economy, and as a 'container' for existing social and human capital which can assist regeneration. However, and echoing concerns over the portrayal of the 'rural idyll', issues have been raised regarding the degree to which the image that a region portrays and in-migrants anticipate, coheres with that understood and experienced by the existing population (Munkejord, 2006; Lee et al, 2005; Munasinghe, 2005; Turnpenny, 2004). These differences in perception between locals and in-migrants may have important implications for the level of embeddedness that newcomers to a region have.

Granovetter's work is a key starting point for understanding the development of embeddedness as a socio-economic concept. He claims "*The argument that the behavior and institutions to be analyzed are so constrained by ongoing social relations that to construe them as independent is a grievous misunderstanding*" (Granovetter, 1985, pp481-482). However, in a dynamic spatial study, we need to move away from this fixed sociological concept to understand the process of local embedding. Jack and Anderson describe "embedding" as "the mechanism whereby an entrepreneur becomes part of the local structure" (2002, p467). Johannisson et al (2002) explain that factors associated with local embeddedness form a complex system that is difficult to imitate and this enhances regional competitiveness.

Using and developing social and human capital, defined as knowledges, networks and skills (Putnam, 2000; Shucksmith, 2000; Casey, 2004; Casey and Christ, 2005; Evans and Synett, 2007; Lee et al, 2005) is of increasing importance as European economic strategy positions itself as seeking sustainable growth and social cohesion through engaging with the 'knowledge economy' (Kok, 2004). Technology and knowledge acts as a driver in improving an economy (Cooke, 2002; Crone and Roper, 2001; Marz, Friedrich-Nishio and Grupp; 2006), is measured through productivity and Gross Value Added (GVA) and regional failure to find ways of engaging within the skilled knowledge economy is likely to lead to further social and economic decline (See also Hartshorn and Sear, 2005; Appleby and Bathmaker, 2006; Danson, 2005; Healy and Slowly, 2006). However, there is some concern that this definition of

'knowledge' is more urban in character, and does not include or value existing local knowledge forms embodied within rural enterprises and ways of life themselves (Bruckmeier and Tovey, 2008; Csurgo, Kovach and Kucerov, 2008; Dargan and Shucksmith, 2008). This raises the question that perhaps perception of rural areas is overdetermined by an 'urban' perspective, which characterises the urban as 'modern' and progressive, and the rural as encompassing a pastoral way of life which is 'outside' of, or behind modernity.

On the one hand, it may appear that the solution to improving local contributions to the UK knowledge economy might be an exogenous, 'add knowledge and stir' approach, encouraging high technology companies and industries to relocate to 'underperforming' rural locations. However, in practice, 'knowledge' involves a two way interaction between the existing socio-economic conditions and in-migrating industries (Ray 1999). The area in question needs to have an institutional environment which is capable of absorbing and assimilating the new ideas into its system, transforming them into economic growth (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000, Rodriguez-Pose and Crescenzi, 2008; Casey and Christ, 2005; Beenstock and Felsenstein, 2008; Aula and Harmaakorpi, 2008). In other words, new industries need to be able to be embedded into a locality if they are to have a beneficial impact on the regional economy. Further, embeddedness helps to prevent leakage as a greater proportion of local resources are utilised (Courtney, Lepicier and Schmitt, 2007; Armstrong and Taylor, 2000). This recalls more evolutionary ideas about the economic system, whereby economies grow and businesses prosper through incremental adaptation to existing conditions (see Boulding, 1981), and illustrates that in-migration of 'knowledges' requires a two way engagement between in-migrant and community.

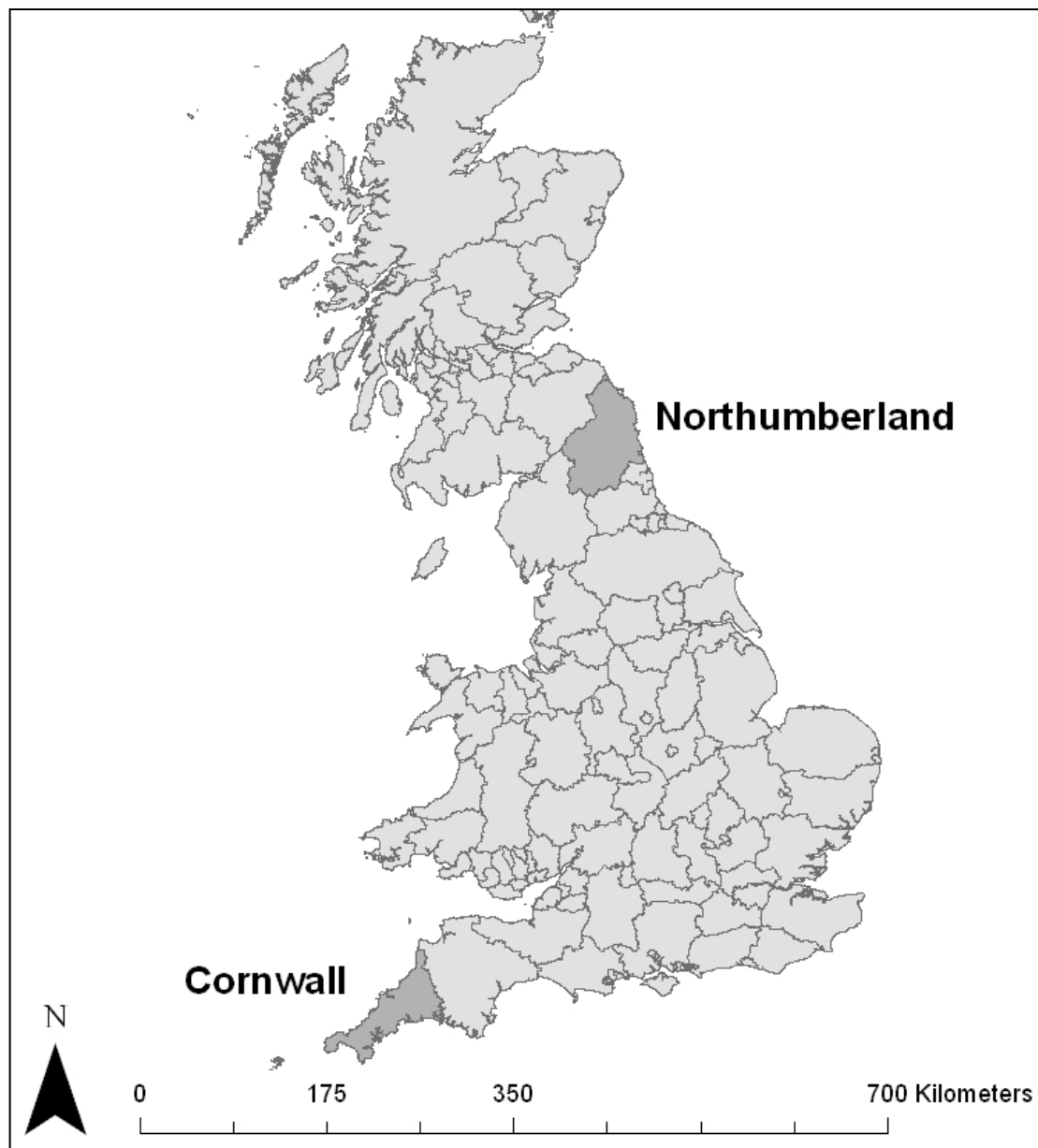
Whilst there are doubts raised about the efficacy of straightforward knowledge transfer as a development mechanism, there is more support for encouraging the inward migration of small businesses (Countryside Agency, 2003). This tends to be associated with challenging local practices which are unhelpful for innovation (Atterton 2007) and redressing the problem of out-migration of young people to acquire skills, who subsequently fail to return (Stockdale 2006). In this latter instance, most skilled labour in a given region tends to be provided by in-migrants, who frequently set up small businesses. There is a crossover here with the Creative Industries discourse, which argues that in-migrants tend to be 'dynamic' entrepreneurs who need to be attracted to the region by the 'quality of life' that may be experienced there (Florida 2002, Stam, DeJong and Marlet 2008, Houston, Findlay, Harrison and Mason, 2008, Miller 2009). Here again though are concerns that simply encouraging individuals and their enterprises with high levels of social capital may not, in practice, improve rural economic performance (Gibson and Klockler 2004, Miller 2009). Moreover, it may be contributing to a continuation of a narrative which locates rural areas as 'outside' of modernity and economic 'basket cases', and where progressive knowledge has to come from elsewhere. Once again, this raises the issue of how rural areas and their populations are perceived in terms of their role within the British economy.

The literature indicates that counterurbanisation has a role in regional regeneration, but the crucial factor for rural areas to improve their contributions to the global knowledge economy lies in the degree to which in-migrating businesses are

embedded within the local area. This may also extend to an understanding of ‘local values’, free from notions of the ‘rural idyll’. The following study explores the attitudes and understandings of in-migrants in two case study areas, Cornwall and Northumberland, to try to understand the degree to which in-migrants are embedded into the area, the attitudes which they carry with them, and the effect this has on local economic performance.

Cornwall and Northumberland

Figure 1. Locating Cornwall and Northumberland



Cornwall is a peninsula in the far South West of the UK, characterised by what Cloke and Edwards (2006) describe as 'Peripheral rurality', and only five conurbations have more than 20,000 inhabitants (Cornwall County Council, 2008). A leader of the industrial revolution, Cornwall was also one of the first industrial regions to experience decline following the collapse of its heavy industry, dominated by metals mining. Almost continued economic decline was a constant throughout the latter 20th century, accompanied by high rates of outward migration (Perry, 1993). At the same time, and assisted by a growing tourism industry, from about the 1960s to the present day the population has grown steadily through what has been termed a 'population exchange' of young Cornish people leaving for better training and employment prospects, and families and older people moving in to the region, often with, or to start small businesses (Williams and Harrison, 1995; Williams, 2003). The puzzle for Cornwall is that despite policies of sustained inward migration over several decades, economic difficulties have continued and deepened to the point where the region ranks at the bottom of UK lists of many socio-economic measures of wellbeing. Moreover, research in the 1990's found that whilst in-migrants were better off than the existing local population when they made their initial move (Perry, 2002) their socio-economic position declined over the duration of their stay (Williams and Harrison, 1995). In contrast, in-migrants to the economic 'escalator' region of Wiltshire became better off financially over time (Williams and Champion, 1998). This raises the question over whether the visitor image of Cornwall as a peripheral rural idyll has any implications for the apparent lack of dynamism of in-migrants over past decades.

Northumberland is England's northernmost county. It had a population of just over 300,000 at the last census and covers an area of 5,013 sq km, making it the most sparsely populated county in England. The heritage coastline, Hadrian's Wall and Northumberland National Park make it a destination for tourism although the climate makes it less attractive when compared to southern regions. The south of the County previously relied on coal-mining while the remaining areas have been dominated by upland farming. With coal-mining almost non-existent and upland farming facing many challenges in recent years, not least BSE and foot and mouth disease, the economic base of the county is changing with growing numbers of small businesses and self-employed people. This reflects the national picture where the spread of businesses in rural economies increasingly mirrors the sectoral split in more urban areas (Taylor 2008). Despite the potential growth from this restructuring, a focus on city regions (Ward, 2006) leaves rural counties like Northumberland marginalised in both national and regional policy circles with the result that new vehicles for rural development are required.

Method

The remainder of this paper is based on qualitative interview data gathered in Cornwall and Northumberland. The Cornish interviews followed a grounded theory, methodology with the initial aim to understand why Cornwall remains so poor. With regard to regional branding exercises, the answer to this question was sought through exploring the linkages between identity and the economy, looking in particular at how Cornwall is perceived by people living in the area. The final sample included 32 interviews with a range of in-migrants and longer term residents, business owners and

employees and ‘decision makers’ including elected politicians and persons working at a very senior level in a range of economic development organisations. Respondents were recruited through a mixture of opportunity sampling, the identification of key organisations and political figures, advertisements. The process began with a core ‘batch’ of interviews, adding more as an understanding of the issues deepened. Most interviews took place on a one-to-one basis and lasted about 45 minutes, following a general question template. A transcription of the interview was created, and analysed for how Cornwall as the ‘discursive object’ was described, and the language and power relationships involved. Codes and categories were developed from the material and refined as the analytical process progressed and care was taken to avoid imposing meanings (Straus and Corbin 1990, Charmaz 2006).

The Northumberland interviews were conducted as part of a wider PhD study in 2006-07 (Bosworth 2009a). This research sought to compare the businesses of local and in-migrant owners and provided a wealth of insight into their business motivations as well as their social and community activities. Interviews were biographical with semi-structured questions designed to encourage business owners to tell their own stories. While this approach can lead to some elements of memory decay, hindsight bias, or rationalisation after the event (Davidsson & Honig 2003), the focus on perceptions in this paper makes the individuals’ interpretations most valuable in terms of analysing their motivations for subsequent actions.

In combining these strands of research, we developed the hypothesis that migrants who run businesses, elsewhere described as “commercial counterurbanisers” (Bosworth, 2010), are expected to have a more positive outlook compared to migrants that are attracted by idyllic, anti-modern perceptions of rurality. Both counties have less favourable agricultural conditions providing significant opportunities for diversification of their rural economies but while tourism is viewed by some to hold back the development of Cornwall (Willett, 2009), tourism in Northumberland is just one component of a growing and diversifying rural economy, stimulated by the activity of in-migrants. This observation is further explored in the following sections.

Perceptions of the rural economy among Incomers to Northumberland

In-migrant business owners in Northumberland fall into two categories: those who started a business at the time of moving (including those moving with an existing business) and those for whom self-employment was a subsequent decision. In previous work these have been described as “planned” and “un-planned” start-ups, with the latter category displaying more characteristics associated with local firms (Bosworth, 2009b). We therefore start by focusing on the aspirations, attitudes and experiences of owners of planned start-ups.

A common theme to this group of business owners is the perception that the local economy is disadvantaged, individuals are less skilled and the communities are somehow ‘behind the times’. In Cornwall, this sense of anti-modernity was an attraction but among entrepreneurial in-migrants in Northumberland it was viewed as a problem to be overcome.

The owner of an exporting firm explained how they are introducing knowledge to the area, commenting that the bank is not set up to support exporters and the local accountants are not very good. He seemed resigned to this state of affairs saying, *“that’s rural life for you, you tend to get a rural look out, if you ask them a question that’s different to what can a farm do or what can a shop do, they’re stuffed a bit.”*

Other businesses admitted that if they were looking to recruit at a higher skilled or managerial level, they would not expect to find that person in the local area. One company was relying on contacts in the South of England, another said that they would look to the Newcastle labour market and a third expressly indicated that he did not expect to find a qualified person locally and this was restricting his growth plans. Some businesses explicitly recruit low-skilled workers from the local area because of the lower wages and desire to be accepted by the local community but still look further afield for higher skilled positions. Staffing was an issue for a couple who purchased a local business too: *“We inherited all the staff who very quickly left again. I need to be quite diplomatic here, I think my husband and I are quite professional caterers and with all due respect our predecessors weren’t...When we came we started running this place quite professionally, so that included the wages, PAYE, it all kicked in and I think that put quite a lot of staff off, I think things were run quite casually before we came.”*

When employing contractors or tradesmen, however, in-migrants recognise the value of building trusting relations in the local community. One commented, *“You don’t think of them as being important but ...it is very important knowing the tradespeople ... To be able to pick up the phone and know you’re speaking to a plumber and say ‘it’s not urgent come when you can’, or ‘there’s water everywhere, can you come right away?’, that’s very important.”* Another spoke of the added value that local contractors offer through their “after service”, adding, *“I would say we use locals services 100% of the time.”* A similar sentiment is expressed with local suppliers as businesses tend to express a preference to source locally wherever possible. The difference with in-migrants is that they tend to look for higher standards and take time to discover all of the local suppliers. This is particularly evident in the hospitality trades where local business owners are actively promoting their region’s food while in-migrants are basing their decisions on value and quality as well as local branding.

While the employment examples suggest that in-migration is reinforcing the urban-rural wages and skills gap, the trading patterns of in-migrants’ businesses is stimulating greater competition in the local economy and a greater awareness of wider quality standards and expectations. In this sense in-migration is having a positive economic effect (see Bosworth 2010 for further statistical evidence) but personal and social differences, different expectations and different attitudes towards running a business can create tensions.

One way that the human capital attached to in-migrants can benefit the wider rural economy is through engagement in business networks but once again the two groups have different perceptions of local networks. At the less formal level, many business groups and organised networks were criticised as being “talking shops” with one business owner saying, *“they squabble about and don’t get on with what they should be getting on with, they talk about how they should be running the meeting.”*

Where the two groups come together, the results can be mutually beneficial. A village business network that is now run by an in-migrant is a good, if somewhat unique, example. The in-migrant was motivated principally by a desire to be accepted in a small community but also recognised the importance of developing local knowledge and contacts within the local visitor economy. In return, the other local businesses have benefited by increased exposure on the Internet, access to regional business support schemes and knowledge of regional tourism activities largely drawn from the group leader attending external courses and meetings. Previously, the local business owners had been over-embedded, focusing too much on the dynamics of the village but an enterprising new member with extra-local contacts has introduced a new dimension to their activities.

For many business owners, the lack of similar businesses in their sector was often a disincentive for local networking. Nevertheless, the innate desire for in-migrants to become accepted in their new localities was still a factor in community-focused activities. For some there may be a direct business advantage too, such as a local brewery sponsoring the village cricket team, but for many the decision is not specifically about economic imperatives. For example, a professional services firm who carries out the majority of business outside the local area chooses to sponsor the village fair and the local agricultural show. The owner said, *“It’s supporting the local community, it has to be part and parcel of any rural business because a lot of those people are actually working for us as well...and they like to see that their company is helping and supporting people in the local community.”*

While Granovetter’s concept of embeddedness states that economic and social influences cannot be analysed independently, some distinctions can be drawn. A couple who moved to a small village to run a bed and breakfast described a sense of backwardness in the community saying that *“sexism is totally rife (and) racism is horrendous”*. They also felt uncomfortable participating in too many village organisations feeling that local residents would question their motives. At the same, they made a concerted effort to integrate with the local bed and breakfast owners, initiating an informal network where they pass on recommendations if their property is fully booked. This is a good example of new business owners changing the status quo and introducing a degree of dynamism to local economies. In the social sense, it helps them to be accepted as a part of the community rather than a threat.

Other business owners described this sense of “backwardness” in rural communities. For some this was related to the close-knit and in-penetrable nature of local communities. One described the town as *“one of those places where you get people who’ve lived here all their lives and probably very rarely left the boundaries,”* adding, *“you’re never going to impregnate that but really I don’t want to.”* Another commented that to be a local, *“you have to be here at least 30 years or have relatives in the graveyard”*, adding, *“there always will be (conflict)...it’s just that some people don’t want to see things change. I don’t want the village to change hugely but it needs to change and it needs more new people coming into it otherwise it will die. Without new people and kids going to the school everything will change, but they don’t understand that.”*

The last quote illustrates the different attitude among Northumberland in-migrants as they recognise a need for change. This might be skewed by focusing on business

owners but it reflects the appetite to contribute to rural development. No-one is advocating development that is insensitive to the rural environment or rural communities but equally there is a realisation that preservation of the status quo is not a sustainable option. Where in-migrants have a positive attitude and a positive perception of the local area, there is a desire to ensure that this can continue. For example, one in-migrant had no problem settling in the community, commenting that *“The people are so much more friendly, it was a breath of fresh air”* and *“Everyone was very helpful...and it’s good for bringing up the children”*. When people have this outlook on their local community, it not only influences their desire to integrate further but it is also reflected in their business activities. This person now carries out almost all of his trade in the local towns having initially relied on former contacts based in the larger metropolitan area.

Where business owners fail to make these connections, the potential for economic development attached to in-migrant businesses is diminished and the spill-over of human and social capital among other local businesses is reduced. Where these local business linkages develop, the added value for businesses can be very significant. A strong culture of support among local SMEs was cited as a real advantage of rural locations. One in-migrant owner said, *“I’m working more with very small companies and sole practitioners, I find that brings the cost down and also you can build up the personal bit and you’ve got somebody that will work all weekend for you if its necessary to get a job finished.”* This co-operative spirit added to their competitive advantage where the business was able to outsell larger competitors because they are *“very fast on our feet, we’re able to be very flexible”*.

In summary, we see in-migrants bringing a range of advantages for Northumberland’s rural economy and, moreover, we can identify broader social and community benefits. Whether developing local social networks, creating employment, supporting rural services or raising the aspirations and skills among other local businesses, the outcome is dependent upon the attitude of the business owners in question. If they are looking to support local development and become embedded in the local economy, the potential for human and social capital exchange is increased and this can itself become a valuable resource for the local area. In the next section, we set out the findings from Cornwall to enable subsequent comparisons to be drawn.

Cornish perceptions and experiences

The problem for Cornwall is that counter-urbanisers have been encouraged by notions of the rural idyll, but not necessarily the needs, expertise and requirements of the local economy. What this means is that attempts to improve the knowledge economy in Cornwall do not draw on local social and human capital, and so are not firmly embedded in the local area. Instead, they produce and reproduce narratives of rural areas as idyllic lifestyle destinations which operate outside of the progress of modernity.

The response of planners for improving the very low GVA compared to the rest of the UK has been to encourage ‘knowledge economy’ industries to relocate to the area, and business owners have been enticed through an emphasis on the quality of life that they may be able to expect following their move. A lot of work has gone in to

developing a perception that 'doing business' in a rural region with a high quality of life is a viable option. This is articulated by one regional development employee who was involved in this process. *"A lot of projects have been putting in a lot of work in terms of PR and stuff. Cornwall's actually a sexy location now. Whereas before you might have said 'I'm moving my business to Cornwall and people would have laughed at you, now they're like 'wow' that's amazing, its such a beautiful place and you can work from there as well"*.

This is echoed in the comments of some business owners, who were clearly attracted to Cornwall for the type of lifestyle that they thought that they might be able to have. The two separate persons here articulate this ideal. *"I always smile because we've got clients in London that will start at 10 and finish at 6, well, we can go for a surf in the morning, and walk the kids around the beach or whatever like that, so its that balance in doing stuff"*. And, *"we finish work at 3, and then we are a family until around 7, and the children go off to bed and then we work again, and that time we're out walking, and it sounds so idyllic but its true, we're making jam and surfing and all of that sort of jazz."* These business moves were motivated by notions of the particular rural idyll that Cornwall held for them, rather than because they believed that by moving their company to the area that they would be able to participate in any kind of innovative milieu. What this also seems to show is an inherent lack of dynamism within the narratives of inward migrants. In keeping with the findings of Williams and Harrison (1995), inward migrants are not enthused by ideas of developing their businesses or economic position, but rather their own, personal, individual happiness. This moves around the notion of the rural idyll which constructs the region as being outside of the progress of modernity, and attracts migrating businesses equally happy to trade off 'progress' for lifestyle.

Moreover the efforts to move away from low skilled, badly paid employment opportunities which has characterised recent Cornish economic history, has tended to lead to a kind of 'add knowledge and stir' approach. The emphasis has been on what are considered to be 'high technology' companies. So a regeneration employee working with small businesses comments that *"I think at the moment there is far too much emphasis if you like on innovation and intellectual capital, being seen as making things that are new and different. You know, the sort of widget with wings."* He goes on to add that this overlooks the actual productivity drivers of the Cornish economy. Another regeneration employee takes this a little further into the human aspects of the labour market, noting that current policy ignores existing social and human capital through emphasising required skills sets that don't exist within the local economy and workforce. *"Like you've got Tripos up in Bude ... It created about 50 jobs, 45 of which went to people from outside of the county because they all had to be top notch scientists, and the place folded after about a year."* The dis-embedded nature of the interpretation of what 'knowledge' is, means migrating businesses are not embedded within the local area, and consequently, are not that sustainable in the long term.

This disengagement between the types of industries encouraged to Cornwall and the existing economy also means that they often do not end up meeting the needs of businesses already in the area, but may well find that their largest client base is much further afield. This business person states that *"our work comes from outside of the county, so it's more like a 75% split, or even a 73% split, and of that some of that*

comes from a European base as well.” Ironically, having a wide geographical spread of clients is seen as useful when making the move to Cornwall because it means that moving out of the home area does not take the business further away from its customers, as the next respondent relates. *“We travel quite a lot, because we have a lot of clients in a lot of different places and we’d get that really if we were still located in London, we’d have to travel quite a lot anyway. We could be in Leeds, or even in Texas, but we don’t see it as a problem, and a lot of our clients are heavily internet based anyway.”* The long term sustainability of these kinds of claims are disputed by a business support worker who cautions that *“So there is occasionally a misunderstanding I think between what is possible and what is likely, and it is unlikely that you’re going to attract and retain the same customer base that you did when you were working in the city if you end up in Penzance. You can technically do all the things, you could do when you were there, but your customers aren’t necessarily going to see it in the same way.”* What seems to be developing here, is that the lack of embeddedness in the area contributes to a tension between perception and reality, and what the owners of relocating businesses would like to find, and what may actually be possible.

One of the key arguments for encouraging this type of business migration has been that it will provide better paid jobs for what is one of the UK’s poorest paid regions (NOMIS, 2009). However even so, it is acknowledged that much recruitment takes place outside of the region. This is a highly contentious issue in Cornwall, and so frequently when discussed businesses and regeneration workers stress that this provides an opportunity for Cornish people that have moved away, to return. The regeneration worker here tries to emphasise that the businesses that she works with may be owned by Cornish expats, but has to include them amongst a larger picture of individuals attracted by the regions’ holiday image. *“The majority of the ones that we work with already have some affinity with the county, they haven’t just pulled a name out of the bag. Maybe they holidayed here as a child and have always loved the place, and wondered if they could ever get back here and run a business from here, or make a living from here, or maybe they grew up here and left to study elsewhere, or got a job elsewhere, and now they’re hankering to get back”.* This is echoed in the recruitment policy of a businessman who himself was a returning Cornish emigrant. *“And of those relocators there are some that have had their reasons that have left Cornwall and gone away, and they’re really thankful that we’re giving them the opportunity to get back down and do what they wanted to do.”* He goes on to discuss the structure of his workforce. *“Our staff are made up of a mixture of home grown Cornish talent and relocators as well so I’d say it’s probably a 50/50 split between the two.”*

What also seems to have happened is that the promotion of an escape to the rural idyll of Cornwall has not only encourage business relocation, but also high levels of other inward migration. So a business owner relates *“I personally get at least once a day, people emailing me who are wanting to relocate and have a young family”.* A regeneration worker attributes this directly to the anticipation of a high quality of life. *“Because Cornwall’s such a fantastic place to live and work, population here has grown.”* However, this perception of place is a double edged sword, as one local businessman discusses regarding a networking event with colleagues in London. *“The original impression when we started the meeting or this networking, was that we closed shop at one o clock, that we don’t really do ‘proper’ business, we just muck*

around a bit ...they thought that we worked very hard but then would go surfing for the rest of the day. Afterwards it became clear to them that we were working possibly harder than some of them up there.” A regeneration worker expands on this, discussing how Cornish people are often considered in a very negative light. *“And there is still the perception that Cornish people are educationally challenged, shall we say. And a lot of people whether they’re here on business or as leisure visitors, still harbour the idea that they’re being ripped off, that ... the quality of the product is poor, the people are unintelligible and unintelligent.”*

What seems to be happening is that the presentation of Cornwall as a place as being ‘outside’ of the forward movement of modernity, means that people in Cornwall are also considered to have these attributes. However, what is deemed attractive in the place, is considered to be very unattractive in the local population. Interestingly too, characteristics that may be ignored brushed off in an urban area, are considered to be markers of Cornish ‘backwardness’. What this does though, is sharpen the divide between newcomers and the existing population, and develops into a widespread belief that local people are discriminated against in the labour market and that is articulated here by a member of the public. *“We have very few actual quality jobs in Cornwall, and most of them are grabbed by up-country people anyway.”*

What seems to be happening here, is that the promotion of the area to relocating businesses and inward migrants through the mechanism of the rural idyll does two things. Firstly it encourages relocating businesses that do not service local economic strengths or needs, and so are not embedded into the local economy, skills, and social capital. In the process, it neglects existing forms of knowledge and the actual drivers of the economy. Secondly, it produces and reproduces the set of ideas about the countryside which whilst providing attractive images of place, also creates unattractive images of the people, which may be reinforced by the need to recruit from further afield required because migrating businesses are not embedded, and so don’t play to the regional skills strengths.

Discussion

The perceptions of rurality in the two study areas raise some interesting questions. In both areas rural traditions are associated with a sense of backwardness, especially from a business perspective. The big difference is that in Cornwall this has become bound up with attractive characteristics such as a slower pace of life, quietness, picturesque countryside and an escape from the less attractive aspects of modernity. In Northumberland, however, development is a requirement for local communities and the sense of backwardness is something that businesses must overcome.

In these contrasting contexts, the roles of in-migrants, especially entrepreneurial in-migrants, become quite different. For Northumberland, they provide vitality and can be seen as an influence towards modernity, bringing with them their urban experiences and network connections. Entrepreneurs attracted to Northumberland are aware that they will face challenges based on remoteness and small local markets but they are prepared to tackle these disadvantages. In Cornwall, the nature of the attraction as an escape from the trappings of modernity results in a different type of migrant. While some engage in businesses, the findings illustrate that these

businesses are less embedded, still operating in the same external markets and choosing the location based largely on individualistic quality of life factors.

For Cornwall this can lead to divisions within local communities as the development needs of locals are being crowded out by affluent incomers with an aversion to change. As incomers develop greater influence in local politics and local branding, the likelihood of continuing restrictions on local development will increase the reliance on in-migration and tourism rather than building local capacity and opportunities for local people. By contrast, in many parts of Northumberland, incomers recognise the need for local development in order to improve both their quality of life and their business opportunities. Engaging with local communities and supporting development at the local level is creating more positive outcomes.

Based on these observations, we can see that the pressures of counterurbanisation are far from consistent. The expectations of counterurbanites influences their subsequent behaviour, and the perception of a destination will influence the likelihood of entrepreneurial in-migration. This helps us to re-think the notion of embeddedness and supports views that when we refer to local embeddedness, there is a clear purposive component and the degree of embeddedness among in-migrants depends on their varying aspirations and perceptions. As some of these perceptions will be shaped by visitor experiences and local marketing or branding, this research has implications for economic development policies.

In Cornwall, those attracted to move to the area are more influenced by an anticipated holiday lifestyle, and so may have problems dealing with the local lived reality. This may impact on their willingness to support local development and therefore become less embedded within local communities. In a business sense, in-migrants seeking an escape from modernity are unlikely to be catalysts for the turnaround of the county's economic fortunes and our findings illustrate that successful new businesses are not creating the trickle down effects for the rest of the local economy.

In Northumberland, however, the “passionate people, passionate places” slogan perhaps sums up the essential overlap between people and place. A perception based wholly on the qualities of “place” can lead to preservationist attitudes as the place is perceived as a more fixed image. People and communities are ever changing and the aspiration of the in-migrant is to be a part of that process creates stronger embeddedness. This can incorporate a shared sense of identity which is strongly attached to “place” but it does not lead to contestation over the territory itself.

The contrasts identified in this research can be paralleled with those in Murdoch et al's “Differentiated Countryside” but rather than seeking a complete typology of rural areas, our emphasis is on economic development implications associated specifically with counterurbanisation. Where this study supports Murdoch et al's work is in calls for rural development policy to recognise the importance of social factors so that embeddedness, and the resultant social capital that can be generated, become better defined policy objectives. As such, we have built upon Granovetter's assertion that social and economic imperatives cannot be treated separately but, moreover, we have highlighted a more nuanced interrelationship, especially where individuals have moved into rural communities with different expectations and motivations.

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