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Placing housing in rural development: exogenous, endogenous and neo-endogenous approaches

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Abstract

This paper aims to address the disconnect between housing and rural development research. We do this by examining models of rural development (exogenous, endogenous and neo-endogenous) in the rural housing context. Drawing on in-depth documentary analysis of planning and rural development policy and research in the Republic of Ireland, we demonstrate a series of policy failures in implementing exogenous and pseudo-endogenous approaches to housing policy in rural areas. Subsequently, we propose a neo-endogenous framework for a more effective integration of housing and rural development theory and practice. In an international context Ireland represents an insightful case for studying the relationship between rural development and housing, due to the emphasis on housing development in rural areas, which in essence has represented a 'quick fix' for development, as evidenced by the country's liberal planning regime during an extraordinary housing boom period until the more recent property crash. While the paper focuses on Ireland as a case study, lessons and a framework for a neo-endogenous model of rural development and housing are also drawn internationally.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, there has been much debate in rural studies concerning (uneven) processes of rural restructuring and its impact on redefining the role of rural areas and in underpinning different development trajectories across rural space. Within this context, accounts of rural change and policy responses have been dominated by two sets of literatures with limited linkages across the two. On the one hand, charting demographic changes has been a longstanding feature of rural studies, and over the last few decades there has been a considerable focus on understanding processes of counterurbanisation within the developed world context (Mitchell 2004; Halfacree 2008; Brown and Champion 2012). On the other hand, theoretical and empirical studies of rural development practice focus on exploring policy responses and community strategies for managing rural change processes, including readjustments to local economies and community change (Moseley 2000; Bryden and Warner 2012). The absence of an established, interlinked perspective is perhaps surprising, given the implications of shifting rural social geographies as a key contextual factor in (re)shaping rural localities (Smith 2007; Marsden 2009; Bell and Osti 2010) as the growing desire for rural living and an extended spatial mobility leads to increased competition for rural resources and to the emergence of competing perspectives among rural populations on rural development outcomes and priorities. However, some recent studies have notably attempted to provide a more integrated perspective to examine rural in-migration processes through the lens of rural development. These studies have explored rural in-migration as an opportunity for rural areas in relation to attracting residents with new skills, entrepreneurial capacity and political capital

(Stockdale, Findlay and Short 2000; Kilpatrick *et al.* 2011; Bosworth and Atterton 2012) – potentially key assets in local development.

In this paper, we seek to extend this analysis by exploring the role of the housing sector within rural development. The rationale is twofold: firstly, the housing sector remains central to the overall shaping of opportunity structures in society in terms of family formation, mobility and asset accumulation (Forest and Hirayama 2009). Secondly, processes of accessing housing resources influence social outcomes within rural localities, leading to inward or outward-looking rural localities, or potentially create inclusive or exclusive spaces. To address these themes, we attempt to place housing within wider rural development debates. Drawing on exogenous, endogenous and neo-endogenous perspectives, we argue that a rural development framework provides valuable insights into the role of housing and planning policy in rural localities. Specifically, drawing on Ireland as a case study, we demonstrate a series of policy failures in implementing exogenous and endogenous approaches to housing policy in rural areas, and propose a neo-endogenous framework for a more effective integration of housing and rural development theory and practice.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to critically advance the dialectic between housing and rural development. We argue that both exogenous and endogenous models of rural housing development have been adopted in Ireland. Despite some successes, to a great extent, both approaches have failed to secure the sustainable development of rural communities and rural economies. The exogenous approach for example, exemplified by tax break provisions as regards housing construction in a marginal rural region in the north-west of the country, has been associated with excess housing supply, high levels of unfinished and unoccupied dwellings and the mismanagement of public expenditure. On the other hand, a seemingly endogenous approach has evolved as well, which is exemplified by housing policies which sought to prioritize 'local' housing need. However, these policies have been criticized for furthering a clientelist system of local governance, for contributing to unsustainable rural settlement patterns with associated environmental, social and economic costs, as well as for introducing inequality of access to rural housing by distinguishing amongst locals and non-locals. For this reason this approach to housing development is termed here as pseudo-endogenous. We observe that these models of housing development operate in parallel, forming overlapping assemblages of rural policy, rather than forming distinct and separate policy approaches. They are also rather unique to the rural context, as similar policies in urban areas were either implemented with significantly enhanced governance mechanisms (in the case of tax credits associated with housing construction) or non-existent (in the case of conceptualizing 'local' housing

needs). Finally, in the discussion and conclusion we reflect on what could constitute a neo-endogenous approach to rural housing, drawing both on the Irish case and international examples as well.

The paper draws on in-depth documentary analysis of planning and rural development policy and research. The paper is structured as follows: first we explore the rural housing and rural development context internationally and in Ireland. We discuss the ways that Ireland is both typical and atypical internationally in its housing and development policies. Secondly, we describe an exogenous approach to housing (drawing on the country's Rural Renewal Scheme) and a pseudo-endogenous model of housing development (drawing on 'rural-generated housing' policies). Finally, we propose what could constitute a neo-endogenous approach in housing development and discuss the application of such an approach to both the national and international context.

Rural development in Europe

Models of rural development: a review

In the post 2nd world war period in Europe, the early modernist model of rural development was an *exogenous* one (i.e. 'derived from outside'). In this model, rural areas were treated as dependent (technically, culturally and economically) to urban centers, while the main function of rural areas was to provide food for the ever-expanding urban populations (Lowe *et al.* 1998). The key productivist and top-down characteristics of the exogenous model are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 here

Lowe *et al.* (1995) recognize two phases of exogenous models in European rural policy. The first phase refers to the consolidation of farm structures (such as land reforms), land improvement schemes (such as drainage and irrigation) and the development of farm-oriented infrastructure. The second phase suggests a focus on attracting new types of employment in rural areas, through supporting firms to relocate in rural settings and by investing in transportation and communication links between urban and rural areas. Woods (2005) argues that exogenous rural development had its successes, such as increased employment rates in rural areas, improvements in technology, communication and infrastructure as well as combating prolonged rural depopulation in certain cases. However, he criticizes this model on the grounds that, first, exogenous development is

dependent on external investment (and consequently the profits of the development are often exported and not diffused locally) and, secondly, that the non-participatory nature of the model can create a democratic deficit. Similarly, Lowe *et al.* (1998, pp. 9-10) have raised concerns over exogenous approaches to development for being:

- *dependent*, reliant on continued subsidies and the policy decision of distant agencies or boardrooms;
- *distorted*, which boosts single sectors, selected settlements and certain types of business, but leaves others behind and neglects non-economic aspects of rural life;
- *destructive*, as it erases the cultural and environmental differences of rural areas; and
- *dictated*, as it is devised by external experts and planners.

The abovementioned criticisms eventually found expression in rural development policy which sought to address not only the productivist focus of rural policies but also governance and implementation strategies. In particular, a fundamental shift characterizes rural policy in Europe over the last two decades, from sectoral support policies (predominantly on agriculture) to territorial development and spatial approaches (Moseley 1997, 2000; OECD 2006; Shortall and Shucksmith 2001). This policy shift recognizes that territorial approaches and policies can integrate sectoral dimensions to public policy delivery (agriculture, housing, employment creation, transport, etc.) and offer a holistic approach to balancing the economic, social and environmental processes which shape rural areas. Since the 1990s, much of the focus in rural development theory and practice has been on *local* action and *endogenous* ('emerging from within') development approaches, exemplified in Europe by the European Union's LEADER Programme¹, characterized by targeted partnership intervention within new forms of multi-level and multi-scalar governance. The essential elements of this approach to rural development are identified by Moseley (1997) and Ray (2000) and include: a territorial and integrated focus; the use of local resources; and local contextualization through active public participation.

As outlined by Ray (2006), from a policy direction, the local area-based approach to rural development is based on the premise that socio-economic wellbeing can best be achieved by restructuring public intervention away from individual sectors in favor of a 'mosaic' of local action. From this perspective rural development strategies can be viewed as a radical response that seeks to achieve new objectives in relation to the development process by focusing on concepts such as multi-dimensionality, integration, coordination, subsidiarity and sustainability (Walsh 1996). Therefore, local area-based action is not only about changing the scale at which interventions are

made – ‘it is also about finding new approaches to facilitating a broader concept of development’ (Walsh 1996, p. 159). In summary, such a local approach to rural development has three primary characteristics (Ray 1997, p. 345):

- It sets development activity within a territorial rather than sectoral framework, with the scale of territory being smaller than the nation-scale.
- Economic and other development activity is restructured in ways so as to maximize the retention of benefits within the local territory by valorizing and exploiting local resources – both physical and human.
- Development is contextualized by focusing on the needs, capacities and perspectives of local people.

This implies that local rural development not only represents a very different style of policy, but also is dependent on a significant transfer of power away from centrally defined top-down policy, towards participative, community-led action. Lowe *et al.* (1998) summarize the characteristics of the endogenous model of rural development as shown in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 here

While endogenous models have been widely embraced across Europe (Ray 2000), a number of studies have recognized the limitations of this approach (e.g. Barke and Newton 1997). Research for example has highlighted problems of participation and elitism (Shucksmith 2000; Storey 1999). Shucksmith argues that ‘there is a tendency for endogenous development initiatives to favor those who are already powerful and articulate, and who already enjoy a greater capacity to act and to engage with the initiative’ (2000, p. 215). Ward *et al.* (2005, p. 5) also criticize the endogenous model by arguing that:

The notion of local rural areas pursuing socio-economic development autonomously of outside influences (whether globalization, external trade or governmental or EU action) may be an ideal but is not a practical proposition in contemporary Europe.

The increased influence of external influences and actors on rural areas has also been recognized by Brunori and Rossi (2007), who highlight the role of capital, consumers and regulatory bodies in shaping rural localities from processes of economic globalization. Similarly, various studies have highlighted the increased significance of neoliberal ideas, policies, and projects to the unfolding of social and spatial life in rural areas, whether the liberalization of agricultural trade at a global level (e.g. Dibden *et al.* 2009), or roll-out or roll back neoliberal ideas at a state level (e.g. Moseley and

Owen 2008; Woods 2012). For Ward *et al.* (2005, p. 5), any rural locality will include a mix of exogenous and endogenous forces, and the local level must interact with the extra-local: “the critical point is how to enhance the capacity of local areas to steer these wider processes, resources and actions to their benefit”.

Within this context, it has been argued that authentic endogenous development is actually rare in rural development practice and therefore there is a need of a hybrid model that goes “beyond endogenous and exogenous modes’, by focusing on the dynamic interactions between local areas and their wider political and other institutional, trading and natural environments’ (Ray 2001, pp. 3-4). Ray (2001) consequently proposed the term *neo-endogenous development* to describe an approach to rural development that is locally rooted, but outward-looking and characterized by dynamic interactions between local areas and their wider environments. Ray (2001, pp.8-9) argues that neo-endogenous development:

requires us to recognize that development based on local resources and local participation can, in fact, be animated from three possible directions, separately or together. First, it can be animated by actors within the local area. Second, it can be animated from above as national governments and/or the EU respond to the logic of contemporary political-administrative ideology. Third it can be animated from the intermediate level, particularly by non-governmental organizations which see in endogenous development the means by which to pursue their particular agendas. The manifestation of neo-endogenous development in any territory will be the result of various combinations of the from the above and intermediate level sources interacting with the local level

This further suggests that not only is rural development concerned with sectoral integration, but also that rural development is a multi-level and multi-scalar activity concerned with institutional integration (local, regional, national and European) and brokering connections between town and country and new urban-rural and local-global relationships (Scott and Murray 2009).

Housing and rural development: a disconnect?

Within the rural studies literature, scant attention has been paid to the connection between housing debates and the wider rural development policy direction, with housing considered in isolation as a sectoral issue. Housing research in rural localities has largely been studied in an English context, where housing policies are often framed by a perceived need to protect the countryside on the basis of landscape preservation. Studies have highlighted the impact of restricting housing supply on rural

housing markets in England where 'locals' often become displaced by counterurbanisation processes (Shucksmith 1981; 1990), leading to acute affordability issues in rural England over recent decades (Satsangi, Gallent and Bevan 2010). Moreover, Owen (1996) contends that restricting rural housing supply often results in rural localities becoming less sustainable and viable places, while Shucksmith (2011) highlights the potential of creating exclusive rural places where 'locals' can no longer compete with incomers within a constrained local housing market. In this context, the dearth of interest in considering the role of housing supply to maintaining balanced and viable rural communities leads to a fragmented approach towards rural development policy.

More recently, research has emerged which has examined the relationship between in-migration processes and rural development in more remote rural contexts. For example, Stockdale *et al.* (2000) highlight the potential positive impacts of in-migration into rural areas, particularly when this is associated with in-migration of middle class residents into areas previously experiencing depopulation – these include the maintenance of local services, employment creation and the prospects for enhanced rural expenditure. Similarly, Kilpatrick *et al.* (2011) examine middle-class rural in-migration in more remote rural localities, drawing on research from Australia and Canada. Rather than leading to the displacement of lower income groups experienced in near-urban localities, an influx of newcomers represents an opportunity for remote rural localities as new residents can add new skills, entrepreneurial capacity and political capital. Both the literature on near-urban and more remote rural localities highlight a complex relationship between processes of in-migration and its implications for rural development: from a process that consolidates socio-spatial exclusion (as in the English example) to one that adds much needed capital and skills to underpin rural regeneration initiatives. In this paper, we argue that housing provides a prism for understanding these processes, whereby physical development in rural localities can be more effectively linked to 'place' and 'community' development.

Housing and Rural Development: the Irish paradox

Rural Ireland has witnessed vast changes over the course of the Celtic Tiger and post-Tiger eras (for a detailed assessment see McDonagh 2002; Walsh 2007). Of particular interest in this paper has been the demographic recovery of many rural areas following over a century of hemorrhaging population to out-migration and emigration. Until the early 1990s, the overriding historical pattern of population change in Ireland over the 20th Century has been one of sustained emigration, resulting in rural areas characterized by higher rates of economically-dependent population groups, gender

imbalances, a loss in ability to create new employment opportunities leading to weakened rural communities (Haase 2009). However, population growth has been experienced over recent decades and between 2002 and 2006, Ireland witnessed a population increase of 8 per cent and the highest recorded population since 1871. Since the mid 1990s, Ireland has experienced high levels of net immigration and the expansion of population growth from the larger urban centers into smaller towns, and indeed into the open countryside (Walsh *et al.* 2007). Gkartzios and Scott (2010) suggest that such movements are associated with a perceived higher quality of life attached to rural areas. According to the last Census in 2006, 40 percent of the State's population live in rural areas, defined as living in settlements of 1,500 people or less.

A distinctive feature of rural Ireland is its highly dispersed geography of settlement, characterized by a mosaic of small towns, villages and single detached dwellings 'scattered' (Aalen 1997) in the open countryside (see figures 1 and 2 for examples). Single houses built in the open countryside (commonly referred to as 'one-off housing'), have been a longstanding feature of rural Ireland, and for many commentators this pattern of development represents the traditional form of Irish rural settlement (Brunt 1998). The origins of this settlement pattern initially relate to widespread and dispersed small farm holdings, encouraged through various land reforms in the late 19th and 20th centuries as part of wider political reforms in pre- and post-independence Ireland (Dooley, 2004). These reform measures laid the basis for a strong attachment to dispersed rural living as small-holdings were increasingly used to provide sites for housing for extended family members throughout much of the 20th Century. The role of family and social bonds has therefore been historically central, and continues to be important, in housing provision in rural Ireland, as rural dwellers gain access to a site through family or social connections and develop an individual house on a self-build basis.

However, as far back as the 1970s concern was expressed about housing pressures on the Irish landscape. In 1977, *An Foras Forbartha* (the then National Institute for Physical Planning and Construction Research) published "*Housing in rural Ireland: an alternative to sprawl*" which raised issues about urban generated housing demand in rural localities, including the environmental implications and cost inefficiencies of dispersed housing development. Despite these concerns, rural housing issues operated in a national and regional policy vacuum until a series of major planning reforms in the 2000s (see Gkartzios and Scott 2009 for a detailed assessment). Moreover, during the Celtic Tiger period the dispersed pattern of housing development intensified further (Spatial Planning Unit 2001), and by the mid-2000s approximately 70 percent of the rural population live in

single, dispersed houses built in the open countryside (i.e. outside of towns and villages) (Keaveney and Walsh 2005).

Another characteristic of the Irish rural housing system is its tenure system. Aggregate census data reveal that 86 per cent of rural households in Ireland own the property they are living in (with or without a mortgage), while the concurrent number of owner-occupier households in urban areas is 66 per cent (CSO 2006). More importantly, only 5 per cent of households live in social rented housing in rural areas, while the corresponding figure in urban areas is much higher, i.e. 14 per cent (CSO 2006). Finnerty *et al.* (2003) too note that in rural Ireland there is an almost exclusive attachment to homeownership, with few rental (private or public) options, resulting in a vulnerability of rural dwellers to rises in property prices and possible displacement from local housing markets. These historical factors have led to a tradition of informal processes of housing supply, characterized by self-build and self-developed housing, often on land owned by family networks. This method of housing supply enabled many people to enjoy homeownership who, perhaps, would not be able to access it, given the house price inflation of the Celtic Tiger years. Therefore the role of family and social/community bonds have been in housing practices in rural Ireland, particularly in relation to gaining access to land for a self-build development; however, at the same time this creates a dual system of rural housing provision, with those with more limited social connections or without family land resources excluded from self-build practices. Moreover, the availability of or access to land emerges as a major driver of household location decisions, rather than more conventional factors such as closeness to amenities, distance to schools and employment.

In a European context, the regulation of house-building in rural areas, both traditionally and in a contemporary context, has been weak with national and local political discourses generally supportive of housing construction in rural areas. The permissive attitude to rural housing development indicates that practice norms in Ireland are atypical in north Western Europe. For example, Gallent, Shucksmith and Tewdwr-Jones (2003) classify Irish rural planning, along with much of southern Europe, as 'laissez-faire' policy regimes. Such regimes are characterized by informal regulatory arrangements and actual contraventions of planning law; the family is prioritized over the state in welfare provision and housing production; the state is an ineffective regulator of housing produced, and private interests are emphasized. In this context, rural housing in Ireland has traditionally been treated in a 'relaxed' fashion by the planning system, particularly in areas experiencing rural depopulation or when it involves the housing needs of members of the rural community, as discussed later in the paper.

In more recent years, housing supply in rural areas has become more diversified, particularly in relation to an increase in speculative housing developments in rural areas during the Celtic Tiger property boom. Aside from housing for local consumption, the supply of rural housing has been distinguished in the following categories (Gkartzios and Scott 2012):

- Self-build of single rural dwellings by non-locals, with sites purchased on the open market or through direct negotiation with land-owner/farmer, often in competition with local residents.
- Developer-led speculative housing developments, generally small scale suburban style housing estates in rural towns and villages or a small cluster of houses in the open countryside. Research by Mahon (2007) suggests that, although residential development in these fringe locations is often driven by nearby urban centers, the representation of rurality is central in the conceptualization of place by home-owners, who largely interpret and experience fringe areas as broadly rural places.
- Developer-led speculative apartment developments in rural locations, urban style apartments involving both new build and (less commonly) through the conversion of former industrial buildings into apartments.

Increased housing supply during the property boom mirrors also the growth of second holiday homes, particularly in rural and coastal parts of the country (Norris and Winston 2009). Holiday homes transformed from modest detached houses to speculative group developments in many rural areas (Quinn 2004) and Norris and Winston (2010) attribute this increased level of second home ownership to rising affluence and investment plans, rather than idyllic constructions of rurality and lifecycle decisions such as retirement.

The scale of growth and scattered geography of housing development became one of the most contested political, environmental and planning issues in the country, with regular coverage in national media and the press (see also McDonald and Nix 2005). Scott (2007) argues that the rural housing debate is characterized by conflicting constructions of rurality: on the one hand conservation interests and many planning officials favor restrictive policies in order to, *inter alia*, address the impact on the landscape and groundwater pollution (due to septic tanks), reduce car dependency, contain ribbon development and urban sprawl, address the decline of smaller towns and clustered villages and manage public spending on providing infrastructure in rural areas. On the other side of the rural housing debate, are community development interests and many elected

local councilors who favor more lax policies to enable greater social vitality, economic activity (based on the construction industry) and to protect the further loss of rural services. However, while the debate has been framed in terms of environmental and social costs and benefits, there has been limited connection between housing debates with a rural development perspective: for example, what is the relationship between housing development and local sustainable livelihoods? who benefits from new house-building? how does new housing construction lead to support for local services?

The Republic of Ireland provides an insightful but also a contradictory case for studying the relationship between rural development and housing provision. Culturally, rural areas have been central to national identity since the formation of the Irish state (McDonagh 2002) and rural communities remain a politically important constituency. Furthermore, during the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' era of economic growth, rural Ireland was characterized by both a growing population and a rapid increase in house-building, both self-build and increasingly speculative, developer-led housing development. However, the Irish case also provides a rather contradictory example of the perceived relationship of housing development within wider processes of rural development. On one hand, Ireland represents a case of (formal) institutional and policy disconnect between housing and rural development (see for example Scott and Murray 2009). On the other hand, housing supply, or rather a 'light touch' approach to the regulation of new house-building, was always seen as a method of sustaining rural populations, as evident in its very liberal rural housing regime, particularly within a northern Europe context (Gallent *et al.* 2003).

Paradoxically, although housing policy has limited links with mainstream rural development policies (for example with LEADER programmes), housing construction invariably represents, culturally and economically, a 'health' indicator for rural economies (Scott 2012), and, in many cases, rural local government authorities have exhibited very pro-housing development attitudes throughout the planning history of the State. More importantly, during the 'Celtic Tiger' period, housing provision increasingly represented a 'quick-fix' rural development approach, which increasingly monopolized wider notions of rural development. The key features of this 'quick-fix' approach included:

- The recent housing boom during the mid 1990s to mid 2000s fuelled sharp increases in land values for housing, with rapid increases in land prices even in more peripheral areas less affected by surges in demand close to the main urban centers (Williams *et al.* 2010). While farm incomes have been decreasing, for some farmers the selling of sites or small parcels of land for new housing proved a useful source of additional income (Finnerty *et al.* 2003). Farmers'

organizations have fiercely defended farmers' private property rights, including vocally campaigning for relaxed planning controls for new housing in the open countryside (Scott 2008). However, while providing additional farm household income, the selling of parcels of agricultural land for housing provides a 'one-off' harvest for farmers.

- House-building has been facilitated by an increasingly facilitative planning system, whereby the central and local state may be viewed as an active supporter and enabler of development interests (Scott *et al.* 2012). At a national level, Fox-Rodgers *et al.* (2011), for example, have illustrated the gradual 'entrepreneurial shift' in the legislative framework for Irish planning, leading to an increasingly overt facilitation of development interests. Furthermore, at the local scale, a number of authors have also traced the emergence and entrenchment of an entrepreneurial approach to local planning in Ireland since the mid 1980s, especially as it relates to residential development processes (McGuirk 1994, 1995, 2000; McGuirk and MacLaran 2001; MacLaran and Williams 2003). Consequently, local development plans have become more flexible and pro-development. While domestic rates (local residential taxes) have only been introduced in 2012, during the house-building boom local authorities increasingly facilitated development to lever developer contributions to generate financial revenue and additional resources for local development.
- The house-building boom led to an increasing reliance on construction related employment in the Irish economy; however, the property crash in 2007 exposed the wider weaknesses in the 'real' economy of many rural localities. At a national level, by 2007, construction accounted for 13.3 per cent of all employment in Ireland, the highest share in the OECD, and the Irish exchequer had become increasingly reliant on housing related tax revenues throughout the 2000s, with revenues from stamp duty and capital gains rising from 2 per cent of tax revenues in 1988 to 12 per cent in 2006 (Whelan 2010). From a rural perspective, the construction boom had enabled rural economies to absorb the decline in the primary sectors of agriculture and fisheries (Kinsella and O'Connor, 2009) and mask a deeper readjustment of many rural economies.
- Up until the 1990s, rural Ireland was characterized by sustained emigration and depopulation, which provides an important 'collective memory' within many rural places (Scott 2012). In this context, house-building in rural areas provides a positive indicator of rural change.

In the following sections we examine rural housing policies through the lens of rural development theory. In particular, first, we view the country's Rural Renewal Scheme as an exogenous approach to rural development and, secondly, we examine the potential of housing policies prioritizing local

need as a mechanism for endogenous rural development. Finally, we explore the neo-endogenous approach and offer some suggestions for such interpretations in the housing context.

Exogenous rural housing: the Rural Renewal Scheme

As discussed above, exogenous models of rural development usually refer to early post war top-down policies. In an Irish context, examples include efforts to modernize the agricultural sector and, particularly in the 1960s, national industrial policy (promoted by Ireland's Industrial Development Authority) sought to stimulate rural development by site acquisition and factory building in western Ireland, based on a growth centre approach (Woods 2005). While such approaches were heavily criticized by the 1970s (Lowe *et al.* 1995), they have not become altogether obsolete. In the housing context for example, we argue in this paper, the Rural Renewal Scheme (RSS) represents a contemporary exogenous model of rural development, characterized by top-down policy-making with minimal local contextualization.

The RRS was established in June 1998 and introduced a package of tax credits which enable owner-occupiers and private landlords to write-off the construction or refurbishment costs of residential or commercial development against taxes on employment or rental income for a 10-year period (DOF 1999). Similar tax break policies had already operated in Ireland in selective designated urban areas in the context of regeneration policies that aimed to attract private investment and promote housing development in derelict urban districts. In particular, the first Urban Renewal Scheme was introduced in 1986 after a lengthy period of recession and economic stagnation in the country (for a review of the Urban Renewal Schemes see Adair *et al.* 2003; Williams 2006; Norris and Gkartzios 2011). Additionally, a programme offering similar tax breaks for housing construction was implemented in 2000, involving 100 small and medium size towns across the country, called the Town Renewal Scheme (see an analysis of the impacts of all these schemes in Norris *et al.* 2013).

The RRS applied to a central government designated region in the rural north-west of Ireland, consisting of five Local Authorities (two complete and three only in part). The aim of the RRS was not just to address physical housing dereliction, but, more widely, to stimulate population and economic growth in the rural region which had experienced prolonged depopulation. For example, according to the finance ministry, which was responsible for the designation and implementation of the scheme, the aims of the RRS are as follows:

It has long been recognized that the area designated has suffered long term population decline and less than average economic growth. It is also an area that is without significant urban centers that elsewhere have acted as focuses for economic growth and inward investment. In an effort to address these problems ... a tax incentive scheme along the lines of the urban renewal schemes [has been introduced] for this area, both to encourage people to reside in the area and to promote new economic activity (DOF 1999:6).

The RRS was not innovative within the context of state sponsored property-led regeneration schemes internationally (Jones and Evans 2008). However, such fiscal incentives are novel as an approach to rural development, as property-led regenerations policies have seldom been implemented elsewhere in a rural context. It is clear from the above extract the imposition of an urban model in devising the RRS. Provisions for tax breaks under the RRS were identical to the ones provided under the other programmes (i.e. the Urban and Town and Rural Renewal Schemes). However, Gkartzios and Norris (2011) and Grist (2003) demonstrate the peculiarities surrounding the selection of the rural target areas as well as the implementation and monitoring mechanisms regarding the RRS. For example, in order to include participatory decision making in the selection of the target areas qualifying for the tax relief, the Urban Renewal Scheme was significantly reformed in 1998 to incorporate the obligation of preparing Integrated Area Plans (IAPs). These sought to propose specific sites that could be entitled to the tax relief, instead of entire districts, as it was the case with earlier versions of the Scheme. While these reforms applied to the Town Renewal Scheme, there was no requirement under the RRS to engage in IAPs. Gkartzios and Norris (2011) highlight the lack of consultation between central and local government regarding the districts designated under its auspices. This top-down approach of the RRS is surprising for two reasons: first, because rural development policy in Ireland and in particular the vehicles for its implementation which originated in EU sponsored initiatives, are expressly committed to partnership governance arrangements, involving rural community groups in programme design and implementation; and secondly, because inclusive governance arrangements were the norm when these fiscal incentive were implemented in more urban contexts through the Urban and Town Renewal Schemes.

Analysis by Gkartzios and Norris (2011) exhibits some of the positive impacts of the RRS, such as the population recovery of the area, the rising levels of housing and homeownership in the area, as well as the impact of the scheme in employment (albeit, only in the short term), particularly in the construction sector. Keane and Garvey (2006) too highlight the positive effects that the Rural Renewal Scheme had on employment in the rural area. Such positive impacts are not unknown in

the exogenous development model, particularly in creating jobs in peripheral regions (Lowe *et al.* 1998).

However, the RRS has also been associated with negative implications for the area. Most notably, Kitchin *et al.* (2010) observe that there is a strong correlation between the designated RRS region and the emergence of unoccupied, vacant and unfinished dwellings, while Norris and Winston (2009) draw attention to the growth of second and holiday homes in the area. Two more factors discussed in the literature further undermine the rationale of operating a policy such as the RRS. First, an independent evaluation of the scheme estimates that 46.4% of the housing development it subsidized would have gone ahead in its absence, given the national housing and construction boom within the wider economy (Goodbody Economic Consultants 2005). Second, the total tax expenditure (i.e. tax revenue forgone) under the RRS significantly exceeds direct public investment in the other principal contemporary rural development programmes, such as LEADER (see also Fitzpatrick Economic Consultants, 2005). For all the abovementioned reasons, drawing on Lowe *et al.* (1998), the RRS, as an exogenous attempt to local development, can be characterized as:

- *dependent*, reliant on central control and implementation, with limited input from the local authorities and/or local communities;
- *distorted*, as it boosts single sectors (i.e. housing), selected settlements (the designated areas), and neglects to link housing supply with other aspects of rural development policy;
- *destructive*, given the amount of deadweight and vacant dwellings in the area; and
- *dictated*, as it was devised by external experts in the Finance Ministry in Dublin.

Endogenous rural housing? The ‘rural-generated housing’ policy

Endogenous approaches to development (or ‘participatory’, ‘community’, ‘bottom-up’) break from the top-down model, and highlight, *inter alia*, the importance of active participation of local groups in the decision-making processes regarding the development of their locality. In the Irish housing context, a policy that can be seen to represent at least one of Ray’s (1997) conditions of endogenous development (i.e. development that focuses on the needs of local people) is the ‘rural-generated housing’ policy, which sought to ensure that local people in rural communities will be able to accommodate their housing needs.

‘Rural-generated housing’ is a policy term which was supported in the country’s first national spatial framework, the *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) (DOELG 2002). The strategy developed a rural

housing policy prescription with a distinction made between rural-generated and urban-generated (rural) housing, defined as (2002:106):

- Urban-generated rural housing: development driven by urban centers, with housing sought in rural areas by people living and working in urban areas, including second homes;
- Rural-generated housing: housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by people working in rural areas or in nearby urban areas who are an intrinsic part of the rural community by way of background or employment.

The NSS outlined that housing development driven by urban areas should take place within built-up areas or land identified in the development plan process and that rural-generated housing needs should be accommodated in the areas where they arise. Further strengthening of some of these ideas in housing policy came with the 2005 Ministerial Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing (GOI 2005). The guidelines stated that people who are 'part of the rural community' should be facilitated by the planning system in all rural areas and that housing needs in rural areas suffering persistent population decline should be accommodated. These guidelines were subsequently applied by local government authorities and provisions were made at the local level on who can be considered a member of the local community. 'Local need' criteria refer to a set of residency, employment, language (in some areas this relates to an ability to speak Irish-Gaelic), bloodline, origin criteria as well as occupancy requirements to safeguard that the house for which a planning permission is requested, is a permanent residence rather than a holiday home (for a detailed discussion on what and how 'local need' criteria have been interpreted across all Local Authorities, see Gkartzios and Scott 2009). This policy prescription is important for two reasons. First, because it placed an emphasis on the people (and lifestyle) behind housing development, calling for different responses based on an urban/rural (and essentially a local/non local) distinction, therefore adopting some endogenous characteristics. As an example, a Local Authority, the Kildare County Council, in its County Development Plan (2007-2011), states that (2005:86):

The council recognizes and supports two major types of demand for one-off housing in rural areas where a genuine housing need has been demonstrated as follows:

- Housing necessary for those who are indigenous or established members of the rural community.
- Housing necessary for those whose employment is intrinsically linked to a rural resource based activity, which requires them to live in the immediate vicinity of their employment.'

Secondly, this policy is important because it adopted and promoted a particular narrative of managing counterurbanisation, whereby these urban-to-rural movements and the housing needs of the people they are associated with, are dismissed as 'unsustainable' or 'at odds with the common good', as seen for example in the Kildare County Development Plan (2005:86):

It is also recognized that there is a strong demand for one-off housing in rural areas by people living and working in urban areas both within and outside the county and for speculative development. The resources of the county are limited and it is considered that the capacity of the county to absorb additional one-off housing for these categories is not sustainable and is fundamentally at odds with the common good. The focus of the rural strategy is to facilitate the legitimate needs of native rural Kildare people and those who, by their occupation or employment, can make a significant contribution to community life in the county.

The unsustainability of urban-generated housing development draws on the urban sprawl rhetoric, associated with issues of environmental and landscape degradation as well as economic concerns in providing services for non clustered settlements (see also Scott 2007; An Taisce 2012). While the 'rural-generated housing' policy has been developed to ensure that local people will be able to build rural houses, it has also been successful in resisting phenomena such as rural gentrification and the displacement of local people caused by an influx of more prosperous newcomers or second home owners (Gkartzios and Scott 2012). This is significant because these trends are particularly evident in international contexts (Darling 2005; Best and Shucksmith 2006; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones 2007; Stockdale 2010), a fact which would suggest that Ireland's pro rural housing policy ensures an inclusive countryside, further supporting the endogenous hypothesis. However, rural-generated housing policies were never part of a territorial rural policy framework (Scott and Murray 2010) and research has questioned the political processes in devising such criteria (Gkartzios and Scott 2009).

For example, the range of various 'local need' criteria as defined from one local authority to another, raises questions regarding the coordination of managing rural housing across the State, while also undermining the ability of rural areas to attract new residents endowed with financial, political or cultural capital and new skill sets beneficial to developing the rural economy. Additionally, the legitimacy of local authorities to distinguish between locals and non-locals (essentially privileged and non-privileged) in granting planning permissions has been disputed on legal grounds. The Law Society of Ireland (LSI 2005) for example considers these criteria discriminatory and has highlighted that they are in breach of national and international law as well as the European Convention on

Human Rights. As regards occupancy conditions that aim to avoid the growth of second holiday homes, these, as all local need criteria, apply only to people who are looking for a planning permission to build in a rural area. These conditions do not apply to consumers who seek to buy existing property in the open market. The effectiveness of the planning system therefore to monitor and implement these conditions in a transparent fashion is questioned. Furthermore, decision-making is, at best, characterized by a 'muddling through' and incremental process, rather than guided by wider policy priorities or an understanding of rural housing needs. This incremental process is routinely open to clientelism and susceptible to manipulation in addressing spatial policy outcomes, particularly in a system characterized by political opportunism and intense localism (Commins and O' Hara 1991; Laffan 1996). For example, a recent review of the planning system by *An Taisce*, the Irish National Trust, has raised concerns over the levels of fraudulent 'local' applications for rural housing development (An Taisce 2012). For this reason, we view 'rural-generated housing' not as authentic endogenous development, but as an example of pseudo-endogenous development.

A neo-endogenous approach to rural housing

The neo-endogenous approach has been explored in different contexts within rural studies. High and Nemes (2007) for example in researching the evaluation procedures of the LEADER programme, suggest a hybrid form of evaluation that accommodates both endogenous and exogenous values. Bosworth and Atterton (2012) explore the potential of local and extralocal networks of rural in-migrant entrepreneurs as agents of neo-endogenous rural development based on a comparative study in the UK. Shucksmith (2009) too explores the neo-endogenous hypothesis in the context of planning, particularly surrounding ideas well situated in planning theory, such as place-making and capacity-building. In a neo-endogenous context, he highlights the need and challenge of mobilizing local actors (particularly the least powerful) beyond horizontal relations of area-based partnerships. Drawing on Scottish rural development experiences, a neo-endogenous approach is discussed in which local mobilization is encouraged by the generative power of the state and other actors, through horizontal and vertical governance which continuously challenges and transforms governance itself. In the remainder of this paper, we offer some ideas in relation to placing housing within a neo-endogenous perspective on rural development. We identify three key themes as follows: (1) balancing local needs while competing for extralocal resources; (2) housing and multi-scalar and multi-sectoral governance arrangements; and (3) exploring inclusive storylines of sustainable rural development – each of these themes are explored briefly below.

Firstly, placing housing within a neo-endogenous approach to rural development suggests the need to balance local needs, while competing for extralocal resources, particularly human resources, skills and capital (social, political and financial) that provide key resources for rural development. Rural housing policies are often shaped by wider political landscapes; for example, in the UK rural housing supply is often constrained on the basis of protecting the rural landscape or to preserve an exclusive residential space, whereas in Ireland the emphasis on 'local need' aims to satisfy local politicians ability to 'service' local constituents seeking to build a new house. However, placing housing within a rural development framework attempts to move beyond short-term politics towards developing an appropriate model of housing supply in rural areas. This would comprise an approach whereby top-down programmes meet bottom-up approaches. In this regard, within a neo-endogenous rural housing model, state intervention would be encouraged in the provision of housing, particularly in remote or marginal rural areas such as in the case of RRS, but it would highlight the need for inclusive governance mechanisms for local authorities to guide the scale and geography of housing development based on local contextualization. A neo-endogenous housing approach should also move beyond housing policy that sets and constructs locals against non-locals, recognizing that outward-looking rural communities should not only facilitate the needs of the local population, but also require open communities to develop entrepreneurial and risk-taking capacity critical for local economic development (Courtney and Moseley 2008). In contrast, Irish rural housing policy remains largely unregulated for locals and more restrictive for non-locals. Neo-endogenous housing development requires to address local needs in a regulatory fashion, but also to attract extralocal residents, resources, skills and capital. Urban-generated rural housing is often portrayed 'at odds' with the common good and policy casts these residents' housing consumptive patterns in rural areas as unsustainable, as suggested in national and local policy discourse (i.e. NSS, Kildare County Development Plan). Sustainability in that regards is framed in terms of locality and a set of criteria that construct, sometimes arbitrary, who is and who is not 'local'. However, this fails to acknowledge opportunities for rural economies resulting from extralocal populations and capital, as in the case of counterurbanisation (see for example Stockdale *et al.* 2000; Bosworth and Atterton 2012). Research has demonstrated cases of selective and narrow interpretations of sustainability in policy discourses (for example in the UK: Taylor, 2008; Sturzaker and Shucksmith, 2011); however, it is characteristic in Ireland the emphasis placed on locality in conceptualizing sustainability in housing policy.

Secondly, a neo-endogenous perspective suggests that housing policy should be placed within multi-scalar and multi-sectoral governance arrangements. For example, the neo-endogenous thesis

connects housing (physical) development with wider rural development and economic regeneration strategies. It presents an opportunity to move from addressing housing needs outside of the wider rural development domain towards mainstreaming housing policy within rural development programmes (Scott and Murray 2009). Satsangi *et al.* (2010) also comment on the relationship between rural housing and rural economic development and suggest that economic regeneration strategies for fragile rural areas (for example such as the case with the RRS), should embrace housing concerns. Similarly, a neo-endogenous approach emphasizes the need to balance bottom-up (localism) decision-making with a top-down (regionalism) perspective within a multi-scalar framework, to ensure that local needs are balanced with wider strategic priorities and to ensure that local demands for housing are considered in the context of regional housing and labor markets and models of rural service provision.

Thirdly, a neo-endogenous perspective illustrates the rationale for exploring inclusive storylines of sustainable rural development. Within the domain of rural housing, the Irish case clearly identifies the need for housing policy to be evidence-based, in that it reflects the reality and diversity of rural mobility or, in times of recession, immobility. Gkartzios and Scott (2010) for example argue that the existing rural planning policy framework in Ireland could perhaps be more effective if it included a more nuanced understanding of rural housing mobilities and markets beyond the urban-generated and rural (or local) generated dichotomy, particularly considering the level of lateral migration (rural-to-rural) and the level of 'return-to-the-rural' relocations commonly identified during the period of the housing boom. Similarly, such policy categories need to move beyond dualistic taxonomies and allow for constant transformation. Furthermore, there is a challenge to explore how rurality is constructed as 'local', 'authentic', 'vernacular', or 'regulation-free' in the housing context. *Who* is 'local', *who* is authorized to identify and regulate 'local need' criteria, and *who* benefits from current approaches? A neo-endogenous approach to rural housing requires research to challenge how such representations are adopted by particular policy communities to further promote their own interests (see for example Sturzaker and Shucksmith 2011). In the Irish context, Scott (2012) explores how representations of (a selective) Irish rurality are purposely shaped and used by a prominent pro-housing rural lobby group, which campaigns to maintain current relaxed regulations. Further research is necessary to unveil how such constructions of rurality are further normalized within policy discourses. In this context, inclusive deliberative models of policy-making would enable rural stakeholders to explore various narratives of rural sustainable development while promoting active rural citizenship. Finally, a neo-endogenous approach to housing provides a rationale for inclusive models of housing supply, including the provision of social/affordable housing and mixed-

tenure in the rural context. While in Ireland and much of southern Europe, homeowner-occupation dominates rural housing markets (Allen *et al.* 2004), a neo-endogenous housing approach needs to challenge this monopoly of tenure and to contribute to the social and spatial balance of rural settlements through supporting affordable housing schemes, mixed tenure developments and community-led initiatives and ownership.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to connect rural development theory with rural housing policy and practice. We do this by considering housing policies under the prism of exogenous and endogenous models of rural development. Using Ireland as a case study, we argue that both exogenous and pseudo-endogenous approaches to housing development have been used and both have failed to secure the sustainable development of rural communities and rural economies. The exogenous approach for example, exemplified through the Rural Renewal Scheme, which subsidized housing construction in a remote rural region through tax breaks, has been associated with excess housing output and vacant dwellings, and has been criticized for being implemented in an uncharacteristic, for rural development practices in Europe, top-down fashion. At the same time, pseudo-endogenous policies that sought to prioritize local housing need, have also been criticized for being susceptible to manipulation and corruption, particularly in a system characterized by political opportunism and intense localism. Furthermore, decision-making in rural housing policy has been characterized by a 'muddling through' and incremental process rather than guided by wider policy priorities or an understanding of rural housing needs. We observe that these models of housing development operate in parallel, forming overlapping assemblages of rural policy. They are also rather unique to the rural context, as similar policies in urban areas were either implemented with significantly enhanced governance mechanisms (in the case of tax break policies) or non-existent (in the case of constructing 'local needs' in housing policies).

Both those approaches highlight the need for a hybrid model combining both exogenous and endogenous characteristics. In particular, a neo-endogenous housing approach is suggested whereby, first, local housing needs are addressed, but also balanced by competing for extralocal human and capital resources; second, housing policy is connected with wider rural social, economic and development policy through multi-scalar and multi-sectoral governance arrangements; and, third, through exploring and promoting inclusive storylines of sustainable rural development. The last can be achieved for example through aiming to connect physical housing development to

community and place; through supporting a diversity of tenure systems in rural areas that ensure an inclusive countryside; or through realizing and promoting processes in rural housing development that comprise genuine alternatives to neoliberalism, particularly in the current context of the economic crisis (see for example Shucksmith and Rønningen 2011). For example research is necessary in the Irish context to explore the role and potential of self-build housing development in resisting an increasingly neoliberalised property market and in contributing to rural social and spatial sustainability. The role of research and of rural sociologists is crucial here, not only in Ireland or internationally in their independent national contexts, but more importantly, in comparing and contrasting these experiences of rural policy through comparative international collaborations and research projects (see Lowe 2012). To facilitate and promote such future exchanges, we close this paper by suggesting a neo-endogenous model of rural development and housing (Table 3), drawing on the original work of Lowe *et al.* (1998).

Insert Table 3 here

Notes

¹ Launched in 1991, the LEADER Programme (Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpement de l'Economie Rurale) represented the EU's venture into participatory local rural development and has since been superseded by LEADER II (1994-1999) and LEADER + (2000-2006).

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Table 1: Exogenous model of rural development (Lowe *et al.* 1998, p. 7)

Key principle	Economies of scale and concentration
Dynamic force	Urban growth poles. The main forces of development conceived as emanating from outside rural areas
Function of rural areas	Food and other primary production for the expanding urban economy
Major rural area problems	Low productivity and peripherality
Focus of rural development	- Agricultural industrialization and specialization - Encouragement of labor and capital mobility

Table 2: Endogenous model of rural development (Lowe *et al.* 1998, p. 11)

Key principle	The specific resources of an area (natural, human and cultural) hold the key to its sustainable development
Dynamic force	Local initiative and enterprise
Function of rural areas	Diverse service economies
Major rural area problems	The limited capacity of areas and social groups to participate in economic and development activity
Focus of rural development	- Capacity building (skills, institutions and infrastructure) - Overcoming social exclusion

Table 3: A Neo-Endogenous model of rural development and housing (drawing on Lowe *et al.* 1998)

Key principle	Socio-spatial justice and balancing local needs while competing for extralocal people, resources, skills and capital
Dynamic force	Fostering a new urban-rural and local-global relationship through inclusive, multi-scalar and multi-sectoral governance arrangements
Function of rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustaining rural livelihoods, while maintaining natural capital - A mosaic of re-emerging productivist functions and consumerist uses (including housing, services)
Major rural area problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exclusive countrysides - Neoliberal deregulation versus policy apathy and lack of regulation - Climate change challenges - Economic crisis
Focus of rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Place-making and community wellbeing - Building resilient rural places - Coping with the new politics of austerity - Coping with emerging geographies of exclusion and (im)mobility triggered by economic crises - Realizing and valorizing alternatives to development (especially non neoliberal) in times of crisis
Focus of rural development research	International comparative analysis, dialogues and shared lessons (inclusive of, but not exclusive to the USA/EU contexts)

Figure 1: Example of ‘one-off’ house, Co. Tipperary



Figure 2: Example of dispersed rural housing landscape, Co. Clare

