



Rethinking rural &
Shrinking localities
through a
multidisciplinary
perspective

Hopefully some inspirations for your fieldwork...

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Rethinking the rural...

What is the rural? How do we approach it? How could we approach it?

- Commonly addressed through an urban – rural dualism
- Strongly framed through spatial imaginaries (individual & shared)
 - Romanticized, stigmatized, aspired, blamed,..
 - home, holidays, nature, pollution, decay,
- Place & Space as heterogenous multiplicities of becoming (Massey 2005)
- Matters of social cohesion & spatial justice



Rural in policy

- **Policies for rural areas**
 - Representation of rural in policy (needs, potentials, challenges,...)
 - Solutions (from within and beyond)
- **Rural politics**
 - Networks, peculiarities, limits
 - Rural lobbyism (for whom/what?)
- **Politicizing the rural**
 - Driver for populist party success, barrier to development
 - Resource



Rural and planning

- **Spatial planning in rural areas**
 - Planning aims, ideas and origins
 - Planning capacities and dependencies
 - Actors in planning
 - Considering depopulation/ageing
 - Policy alignment
- **Planning & investment nexus**
 - Who builds the planned infra
- **Participatory planning**
 - Potentials and pitfalls



Rural economies...

- **Spatial properties**
 - bioresource, geology, landscape,..
 - Human resources, skills, history, culture
- **Policy alignment**
 - (trans)national trends
 - Subsidy & support schemes
- **Commercial services**
 - Service provision/availability
 - Profitability
- **Branding**
 - Tourism, remote work, bioeconomy,...
 - Representations of localities/slogans!



LA IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

Rural and health

- Health provision in rural areas
 - Accessibility & reach
 - affordability, availability, accommodation, and acceptability
- E-Health
 - Policy, digital infrastructure
 - Digital literacy of residential groups
- Attracting health personal
 - Political campaigns
 - Bottom-up initiatives
 - Legal frameworks
- Lifestyles
 - Consumption habits/cultures
 - Access to goods



Rural and crime...

- **Rural crime**
 - Environmental, violent, planning,...
 - Governing crime
 - Victimization & prioritization
- **Security**
 - Policing & access
 - Responsibilisation
 - Feelings & quality of life
- **Farm crime**



Rural and religion...

- **Cultural & demographic changes**
 - Access to church services
 - Role of the church as service provider
 - New religions
- **Church infrastructure**
 - Challenges & potentials of alternative use
 - Maintenance of cultural heritage
 - Budgetary challenges



Rural and sports & events

- **Rural as a place for (sport) events**
 - Locality as curse & blessing
 - Finances
 - community
- **Rural population and sport**
 - Service access
 - Maintenance costs





Rural development to what end?