

Crime, Policing and Global Transformations in Rural Areas

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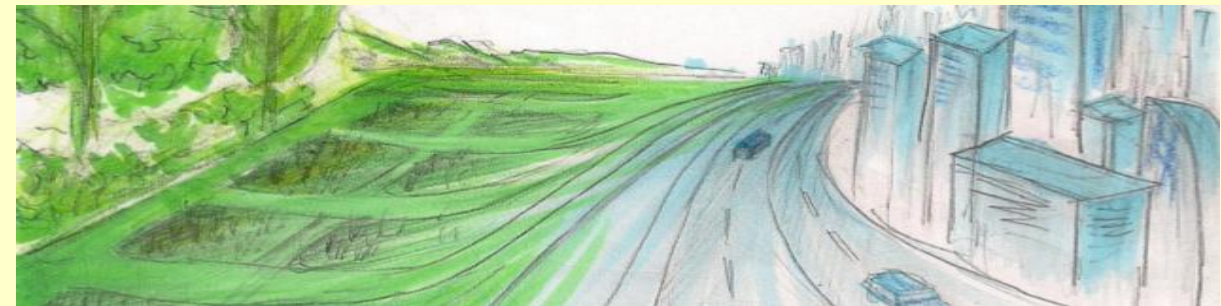
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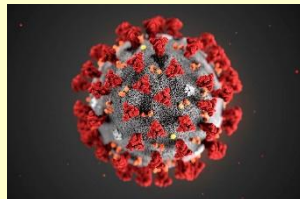
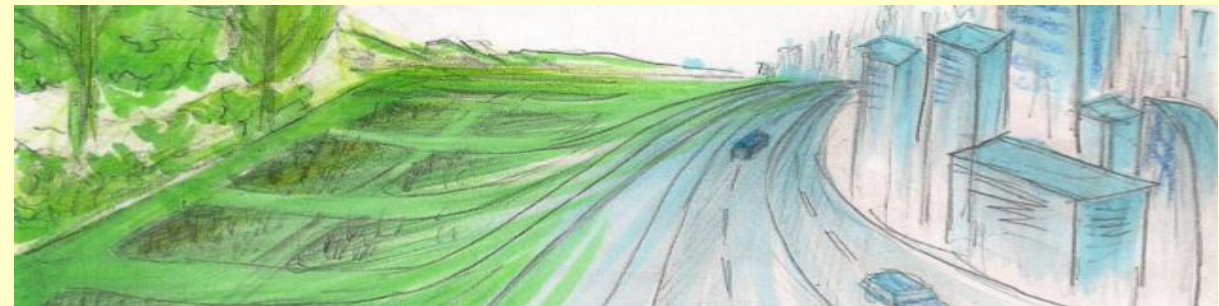
From Rural Community to Global Village: The Global Countryside

- Communities have traditionally been the focus of rural research
 - Rural space as bounded
- Globalisation is significant rural places (Woods 2007)
 - Greater connections
 - Hybrid countryside
- Rural space is hybrid, multi-scalar and inter-connected



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Global Crime and Rurality

- Growing Evidence of that Rural Crime is also global
 - Series and Organised Crime (Home Office, 2018) Hall)
- National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC 2018)
 - People-trafficking
 - Slavery
 - International Theft
 - 'County lines' drug dealing
 - Environmental Crimes

- Home Office (2018)



Beyond Property and Community?

NFU Rural Crime Report 2020



Agricultural vehicle theft

Cost to the UK 2019: £9.3m
Cost to the UK 2018: £7.4m



Thieves are increasingly cloning the identity of tractors to make detection more difficult.



Quad/ATV theft

Cost to the UK 2019: £3.1m
Cost to the UK 2018: £2.6m



Quads and ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles) have no registration plates and are easy to transport, making them an easy target.



Livestock theft

Cost to the UK 2019: £3.0m
Cost to the UK 2018: £2.8m



Stock stolen for slaughter is being processed outside of regulated abattoirs before illegally entering the food chain.



Land Rover Defender theft

Cost to the UK 2019: £2.1m
Cost to the UK 2018: £1.6m



The iconic Land Rover Defender remains highly desirable to thieves stealing whole vehicles or parts for the black market.



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Rural Affairs Strategy

Strengthening safe and prosperous communities

FARM MACHINERY, PLANT & VEHICLE THEFT (FMPV)

Including:

- Quad bikes and all-terrain vehicles
- Modern and vintage tractors
- Tools and equipment from outbuildings

Objectives: To reduce FMPV thefts and share intelligence and best practice. Promote wide scale use of security devices. Work with stakeholders.

LIVESTOCK OFFENCES

Including:

- Livestock theft
- Livestock worrying and attacks

Objectives: Reduce cases of livestock theft and worrying. Increase public awareness. Work to improve police and sentencing powers. Work with stakeholders.

FUEL THEFT

Including:

- Heating oil
- Diesel
- Petrol

Objectives: Reduce fuel theft that affects residents and businesses. Promote increased in security. Work with stakeholders.

EQUINE CRIME

Including:

- Horse trailer and horse box theft
- Horse theft
- Tack theft
- Fly grazing & Neglect

Objectives: Reduce equine crime. Improve collaboration between regions to reduce cross border equine crime. Encourage property marking. Work with stakeholders.

FLY TIPPING*

Including:

- Household and commercial waste
- Waste through organised criminality

Objectives: To collaborate with stakeholders to tackle this public priority.

POACHING**

Including:

Hare coursing, deer poaching/coursing, fish poaching. Anti-social behaviour; threatening behaviour and illegal gambling that can be seen alongside this activity.

Objectives: To increase the level of awareness of poaching and hare coursing as serious wildlife crimes and build better trust and relationships between law enforcement agencies and local communities, both leading to increase prevention activity, better quality intelligence, and enforcement success.



CRIME UNDER CORONAVIRUS



Rebecca
Davidson
Rural Affairs
Specialist

The COVID-19 lockdown resulted in an initial reduction in thefts overall. But keen to cash in on the crisis, criminals continued to target the countryside and there were spikes in crimes such as livestock rustling.

With farmers' minds focused on finding new ways to work safely while keeping the nation fed, the cost of livestock theft rose by nearly 15% year on year in April 2020 as rustlers took advantage of the high demand for food.

Farmers also had to deal with an influx of walkers on their land, and reports of dog attacks on farm animals also rose.

Incidents of fly-tipping waste increased in rural areas while local authority recycling centres were closed.

These crimes, compounded by the extra pressure of COVID-19, can seriously affect the wellbeing of farmers who work long hours and often in isolation.

Rural crime is like a wave as organised criminality spreads through our villages, farms and fells, affecting everyone in the countryside. Now, as the economic impact of the pandemic begins to bite, we are concerned that criminal activity could escalate – making it more important than ever that we work together to stem the tide.

Hidden Others, Hidden Communities (Philo 1992 – still!)



- Current work on migrant workers (Yarwood)
- Hidden Others
- Unseen and not included in 'rural communities'
- More likely to be victims of global rural crime
- More likely to be viewed as criminal or illegal



Research Agenda

- From local to global
 - Recognise global crime (often hidden)
- From bounded community to global village
 - Recognise others and other experiences of crime
- Continue exploring relationship between rurality, criminality and cultural threat
- International research co-operation
 - I welcome opportunities for collaboration!

