

poverty, social exclusion and welfare in rural places

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definitional issues

- relative poverty
 - defined in terms of modal income levels or the ability of households to secure goods and services deemed as necessities by society
- social exclusion
 - “dynamic process of being shut out...from any of the social, economic or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society.” (Walker and Walker, 1997)
- problematic definitions
 - ‘elitist’ definitions - different understandings of poverty / social exclusion amongst the public and the poor / excluded
 - emphasise differences between poor / excluded and non-poor / included, and the commonalities between individuals experiencing poverty / social exclusion

the complexities of rural poverty

- urban discourses of poverty
- poverty within socially mixed rural communities
- the rural poor do not conform to (urban) stereotypes of poverty
- local denials of poverty
- poverty and social inclusion
- limited provision of welfare in rural places
- difficult to research → limited evidence base → problems for policy intervention



Arsyllfa Wledig Cymru

Wales Rural Observatory



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer
Datblygu Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe Investing in
Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



researching poverty, social exclusion and welfare in rural Wales

- spatial analyses of local income and unemployment data
- surveys of 4,000 households (2004, 2007, 2010)
- interviews with households living in poverty in different parts of rural Wales
- interviews with welfare agencies
- rural impacts of the recession

scale and geography of relative poverty in rural Wales

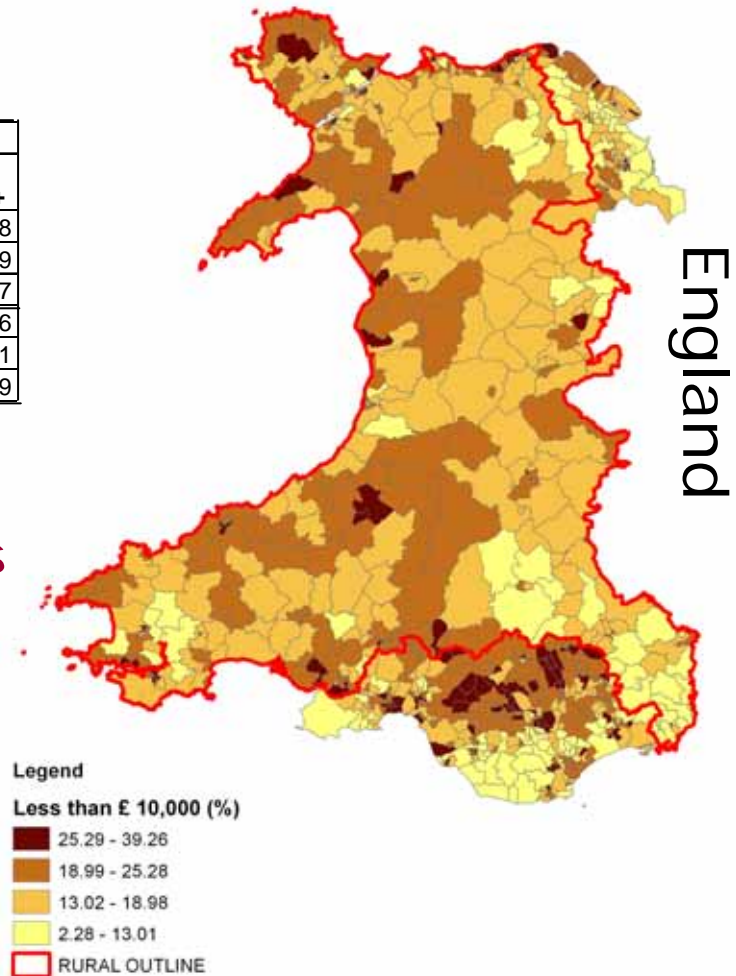
	2005					
Class	Code	<10k	10 to 20	20 to 30	30- 50	50+
Urban > 10k - Sparse	1	18.7	26.0	27.7	28.1	10.8
Town and Fringe - Sparse	2	18.4	25.7	27.6	28.5	10.9
Village, Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings - Sparse	3	16.1	22.6	26.4	30.8	13.7
Urban > 10k - Less Sparse	4	15.6	22.7	26.3	30.5	14.6
Town and Fringe - Less Sparse	5	15.3	22.4	26.1	30.6	15.1
Village, Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings - Less Sparse	6	12.2	18.0	23.1	32.3	21.9

Source: CACI

20 per cent of households in rural Wales
living in poverty (with incomes of less than 60%
national median income)

20 per cent in urban Wales

21 per cent in the industrial Valleys



profile of poor households in rural Wales

- household composition
 - 36% adult(s) of pensionable age
 - 28% working age adult(s) with no child(ren)
 - 24% working age couples with child(ren)
 - 12% working age adult with child(ren)
- economic activity
 - 74% economically inactive
 - 48% retired
 - 7% unemployed
 - 12% long-term sick or disabled
 - 7% other
 - 26% economically active
 - 12% full-time employee
 - 6% self-employed
 - 8% part-time employee
- housing tenure
 - 65% property 'owners'
- (im)mobilities
 - 35% lived at address less than 5 years, 33% more than 20 years
 - 32% did not own a car
 - 38% had a long-standing limiting illness
 - 66% did not have home access to the internet

standard of living and quality of life

- self description of household financial situation

	poor (%)	all (%)	affluent (%)
living comfortably on present income	23	42	74
coping on present income	45	43	22
finding it difficult on present income	18	10	2
finding it very difficult on present income	12	3	1

- quality of life

	poor (%)	all (%)	affluent (%)
very good / good	86	92	98
neither good or bad	8	4	1
bad / very bad	6	3	1

- satisfaction with the local area as a place to live

	poor (%)	all (%)	affluent (%)
very satisfied / satisfied	90	92	95
neither satisfied / dissatisfied	3	2	1
dissatisfied / very dissatisfied	7	5	5

perceptions of place

- significant likes about local living

	poor (%)	all (%)
peace and quiet	49	53
scenery	30	27
pleasant environment	24	21
good location	20	20
friendly people / neighbours	15	13
community spirit	10	9
local facilities	10	10
closeness to nature	9	11

- significant dislikes about local living

	poor (%)	all (%)
nothing in particular	50	50
shops and other facilities	13	15
public transport	11	11
isolation / remoteness	5	5
quality of jobs	4	4

social inclusion and social capital

	poor %	all %	affluent %
people in my community look after each other	80	83	81
I feel safe living in my community	90	94	95
there is a strong sense of community in the place that I live	76	78	79
I consider myself to be a member of the local community	80	82	84
I speak to neighbours most days	64	58	80
I have provided care for a neighbour / friend	43	43	45

local denials of rural poverty

- local poverty was recognised by 38% of respondents in poor households....
- ...but by 43% of all respondents and 47% of those in affluent households
- groups of respondents in poor households least likely to recognise the presence of local poverty
 - older people (24% > 65 yrs)
 - longer-term residents (25% > 20 yrs; 53% < 5 years)
 - residents in smaller places (25% living in isolated properties)

welfare reform in the UK

- New Labour's welfare reform programme
 - New Deals for the unemployed
 - minimum wage and tax credits
 - eradication of child poverty by 2010
 - workfare
 - “Our economy and society are changing fast. Our welfare state must help us to these changes. It must focus its energy on tackling poverty and social exclusion. Society has a responsibility to support those unable to support themselves. It should help to support people in acquiring the new skills they need for the jobs in the future. It must help UK companies succeed in the new global economy.” (2006 Green Paper on welfare reform)
 - welfare devolution and privatisation
 - local flexibility and involvement of employment agencies

government sensitivities towards rural welfare issues in the UK

- “The broad features of disadvantage are similar wherever you live – financial exclusion, lack of skills, lack of affordable housing and limited social mobility. But the spatial characteristics that define rurality can create particular challenges and often imaginative, innovative and tailored delivery systems are required.”
(2006 Green Paper on welfare reform)
- “The vast majority of government expenditure is through national programmes that have an impact on rural and urban areas. An important aspects of policy development and monitoring is checking that these mainstream programmes take proper account of the needs of those living and working in the countryside. “
(Cabinet Office, 2000)
- ‘rural proofing’ of the potential impacts of national welfare policies

rural impacts of welfare reform

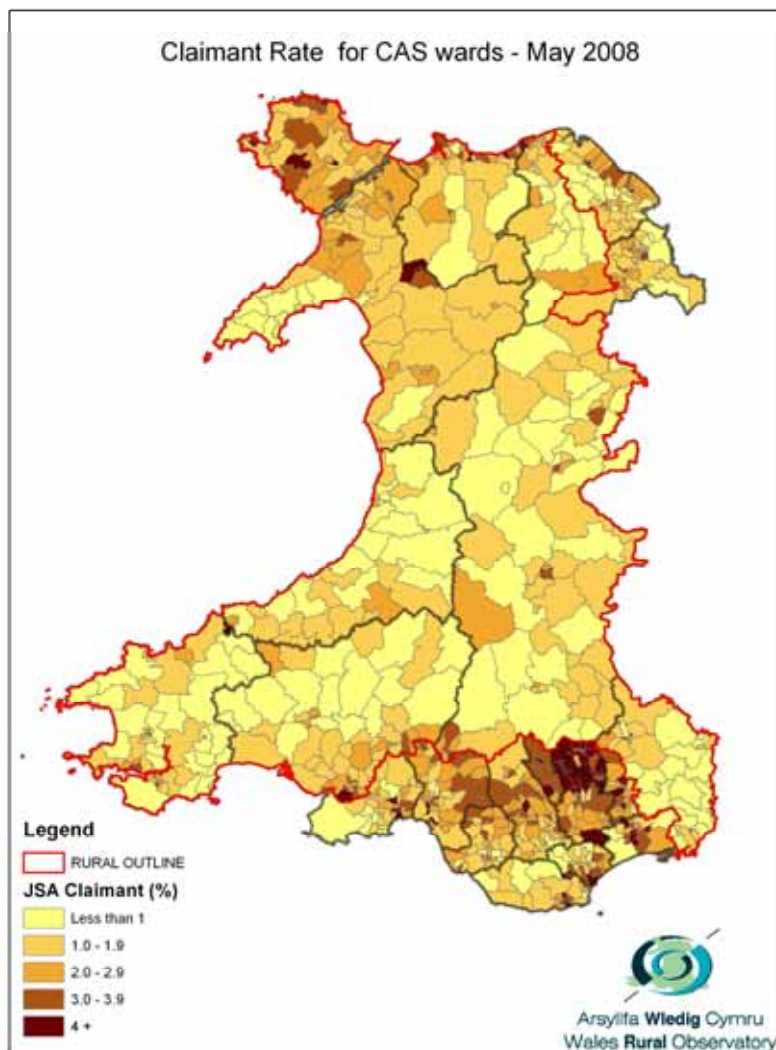
- limited research evidence on the actual impacts of national welfare reform in rural areas
 - *Job Seekers Allowance* - 38% reduction in claimants in rural England between 1999 and 2006 compared with 27% reduction in urban areas
 - *New Deal for Young People* – 47% of young people leaving the scheme in rural areas moved in to employment compared with 42% of urban participants
- research on rural impacts of workfare in the US
 - reductions in welfare caseloads
 - increase in poverty amongst working households
 - longer term impacts of welfare reform are dependent on structural responses to poverty to enable people to move beyond low-skill and low-paid local employment
 - benefits and problems associated with devolved welfare policy

rural impacts of the recession

- rising levels of unemployment and lower numbers of job vacancies in rural areas
- reduced / delayed rural impacts
 - increased significance of the public sector, agriculture and tourism
- impacts on areas of economic growth and decline, and on places of poverty and affluence
- creating new challenges for welfare policies
- leading to a new system of income redistribution and increased recognition of (rural) poverty

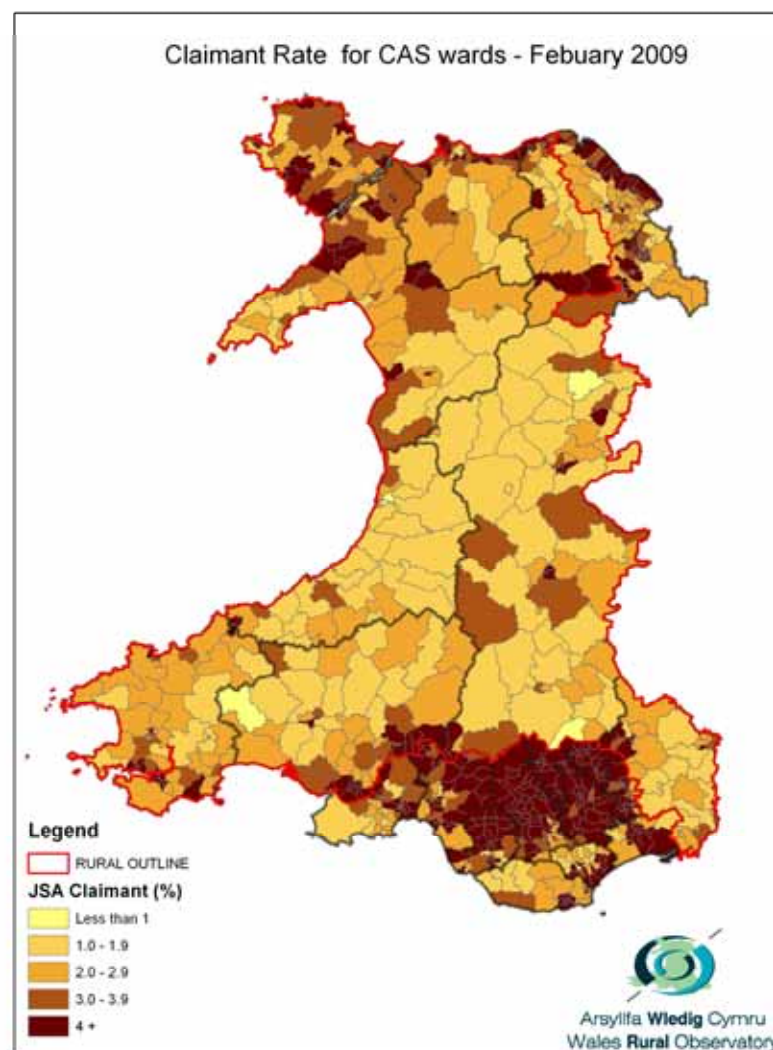
changing geography of unemployment in Wales

Proportion of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance and National Insurance credits at Jobcentre Plus local offices



Source: NOMIS

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