



Agrarian and landscape transitions in Britain

- Lecture -

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Understanding Urban and Rural Societies

BA (Hons) Sociology
BSc Geography

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2 Landscape

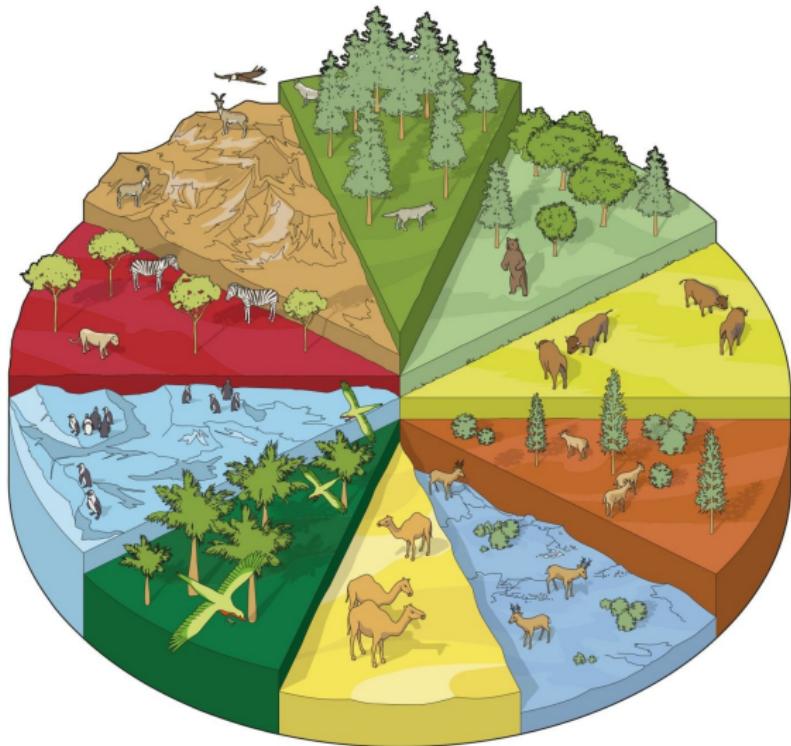
3 Agrarian transitions

4 Rural sociology

5 Conclusion

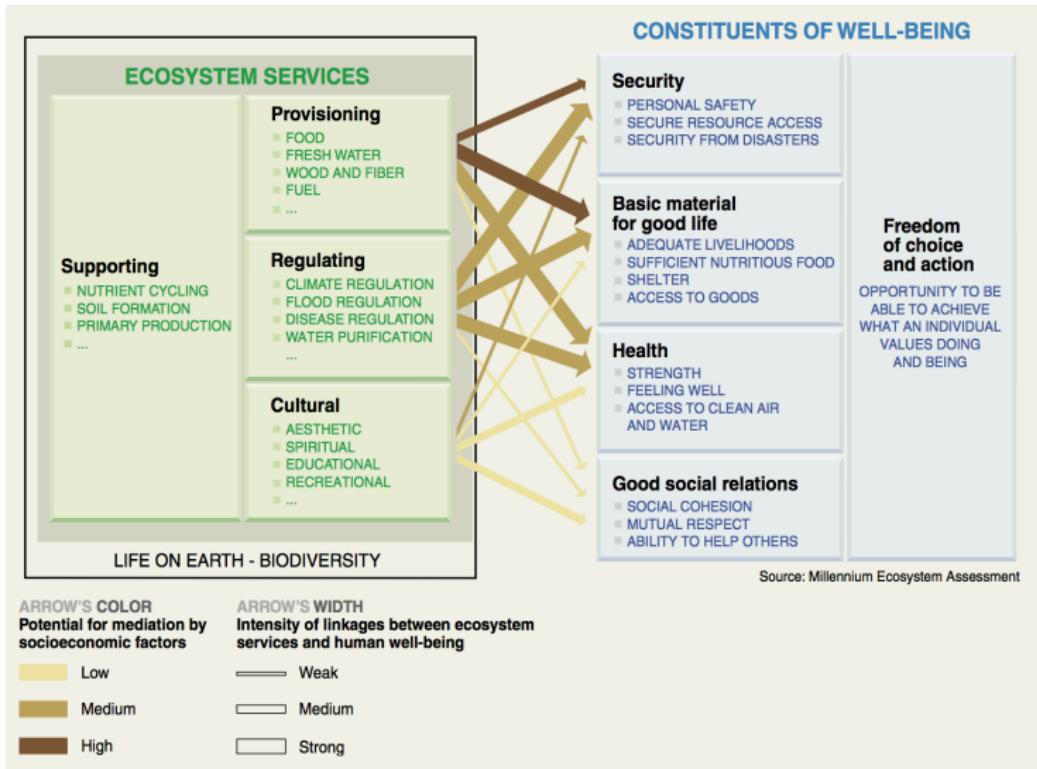
Reminder

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion



Reminder

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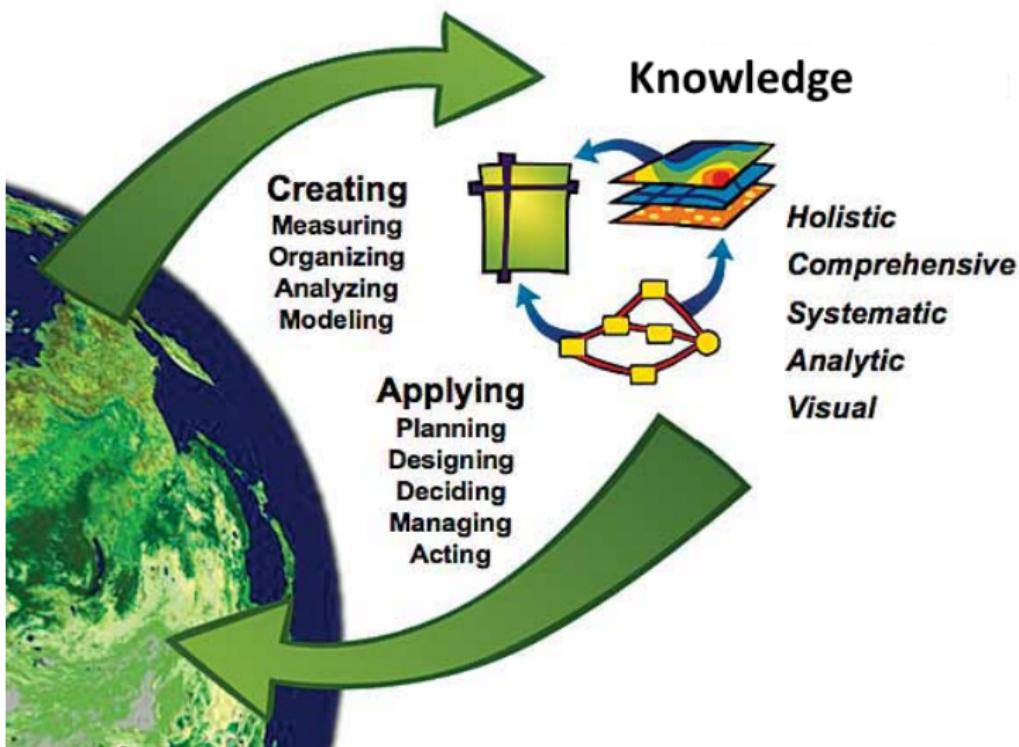
Defining rural spaces

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion



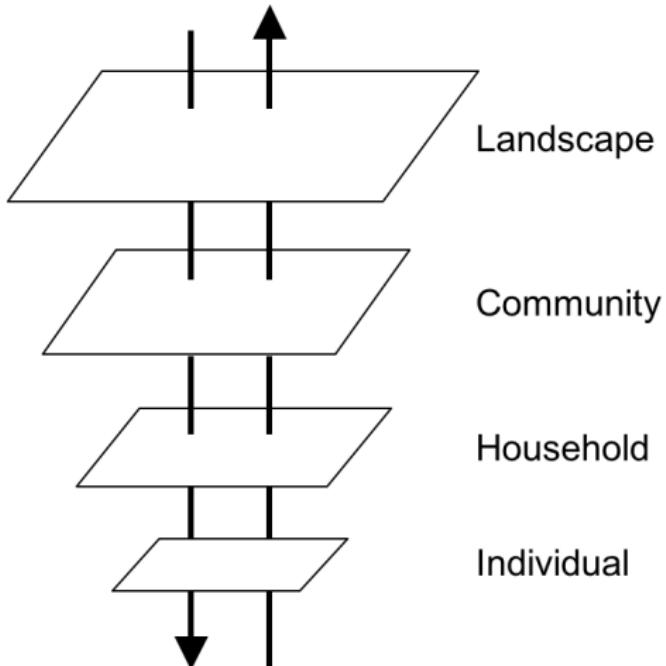
Approach

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Scales

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Definition

- From *Being* to *Being-in-the-World*
- “Landscapes: The Social Construction of Nature and the Environment” [Greider \(1994\)](#)
- An expanse of natural scenery that can be seen in a single view
- An extensive mental viewpoint; “the political landscape looks bleak without a change of administration”

Definition

- **Scientific definition** - Any combinations of ecological, environmental and geographical systems which are in equilibrium. Combinations of plants, animals, climate and geography which are only found in certain places and not elsewhere
- **Land management** - A contiguous area of land of any size which has common characteristics throughout its extents which distinguish it from other areas of land
- **Landscape character**
 - ▶ Forest, industrial, pastoral, polluted?
 - ▶ All land is part of one or more landscapes

Definition

Objectives

- Characterise the biophysical environment of rural settlements
- Highlight landscape units
- Draw a typology to make sense of the local area in a wider context
- Characterise the drivers of development for rural societies

Definition

Objectives

General approach

- General to specific
- Identify homogenous landscape units ◎Geomorphology ◎Vegetation
- Record observations: *carefully* and *objectively* ◎Toponymy
- Reformulate hypothesis and questions

Definition

Objectives

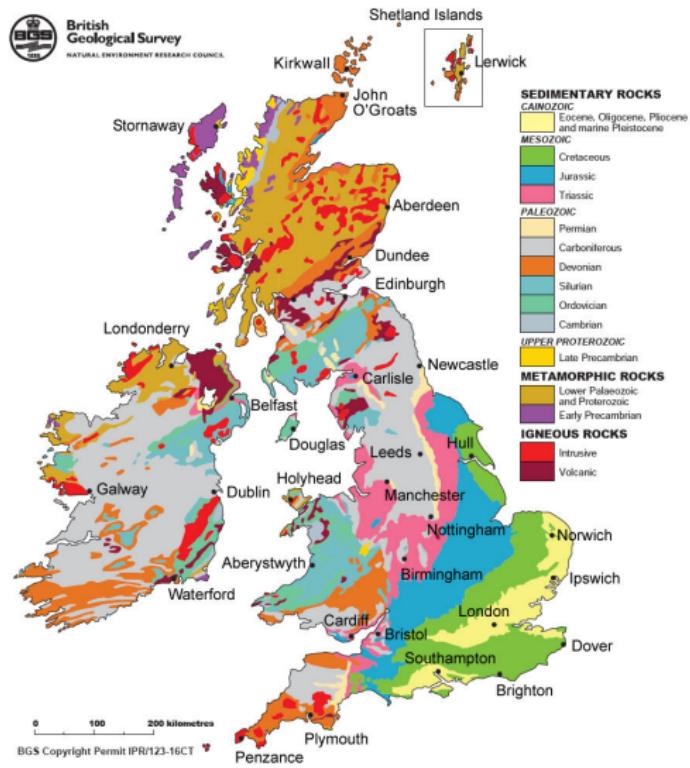
General approach

Methods

- Observation from high points
- Transects through each homogenous unit
- Cartography and aerial imagery
- Interviews

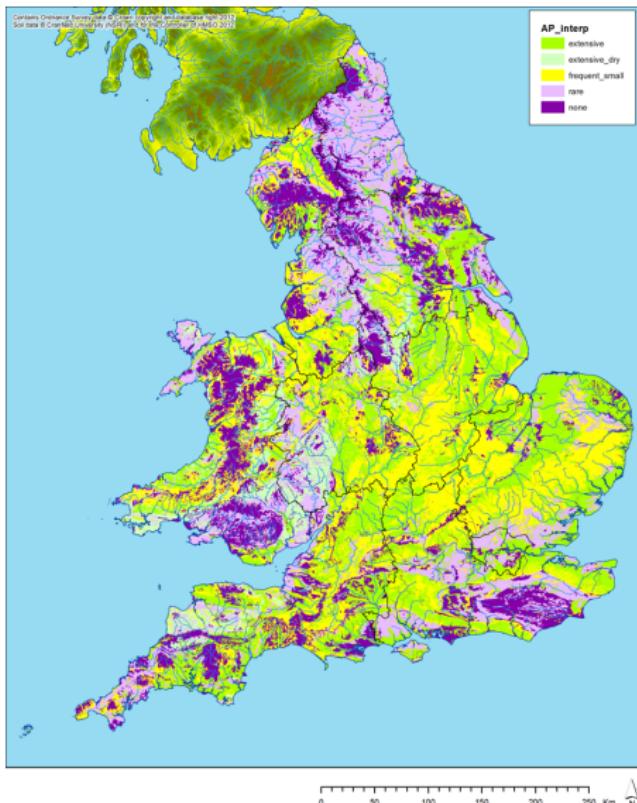
Geomorphology - Geology and soils

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Geomorphology - Geology and soils

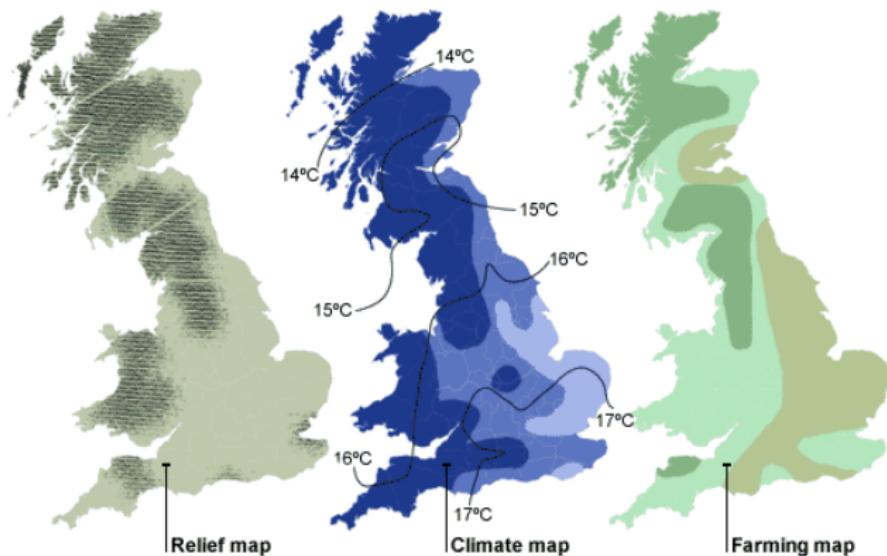
Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion



Geomorphology - Relief and Climate

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Relief, Climate and farming types in mainland Britain



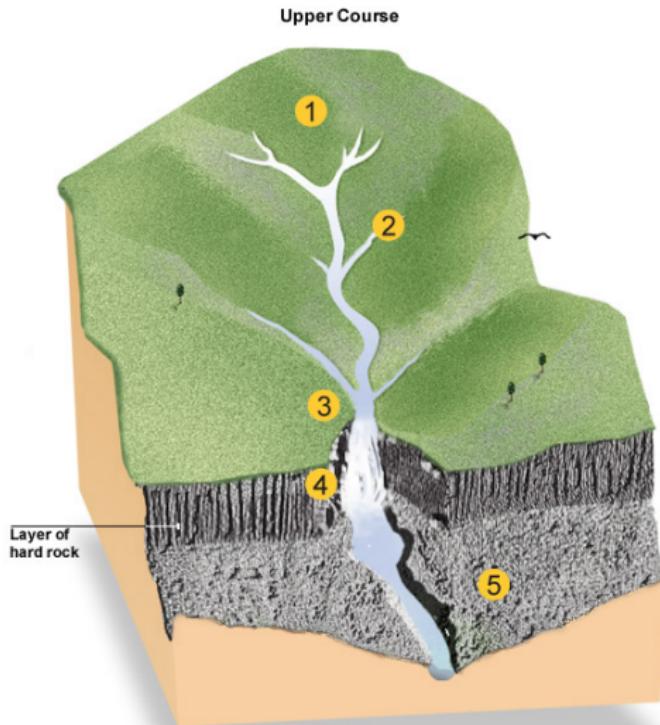
■ Land above 200m
■ Land below 200m

Precipitation
■ Over 1000mm
■ 750 - 1000mm
■ Under 750mm

■ Hill farming
■ Dairy or mixed farming
■ Arable farming

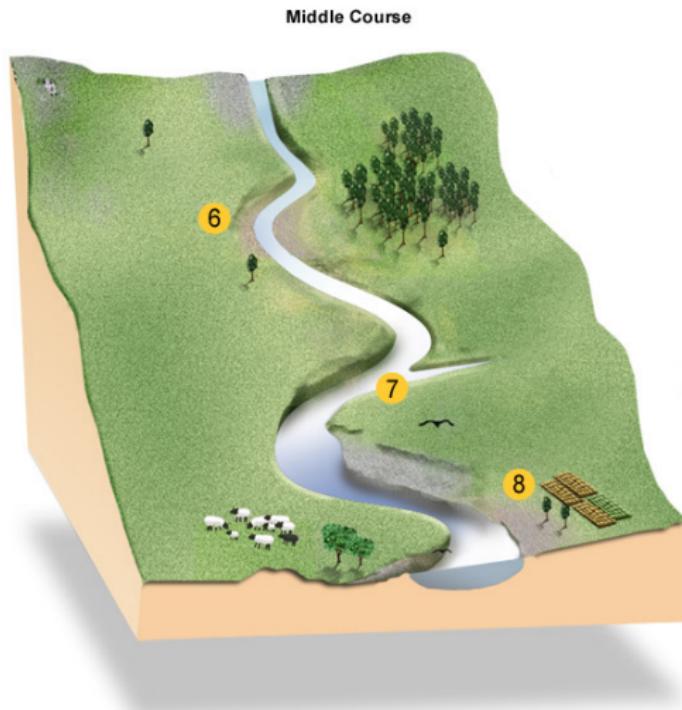
Geomorphology - Hydrography

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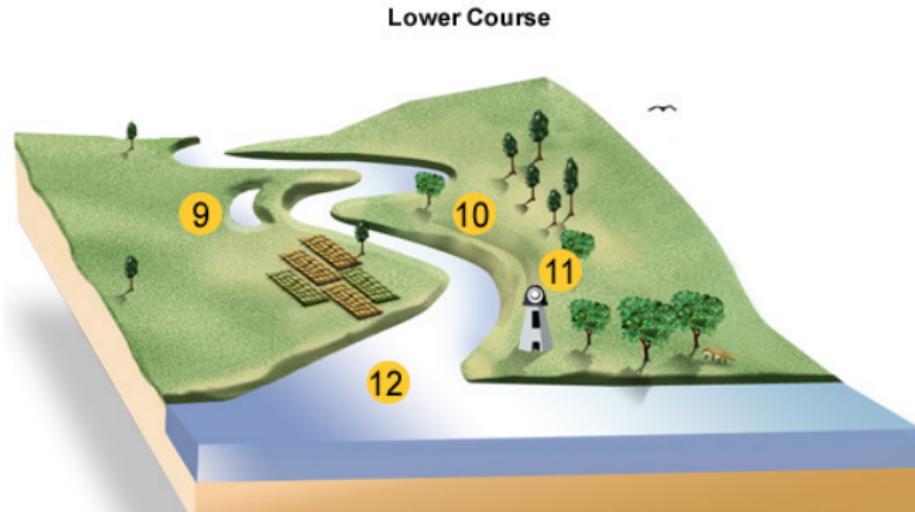
Geomorphology - Hydrography

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Geomorphology - Hydrography

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Vegetation and Animals

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Spontaneous vegetation

- Woodland
- Moorland
- Grassland
- Heath
- Wetland



Vegetation and Animals

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Spontaneous vegetation

Cultivated vegetation

- Permanent (trees, vines)
- Annual (grains, tubers)

Vegetation and Animals

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Spontaneous vegetation

Cultivated vegetation

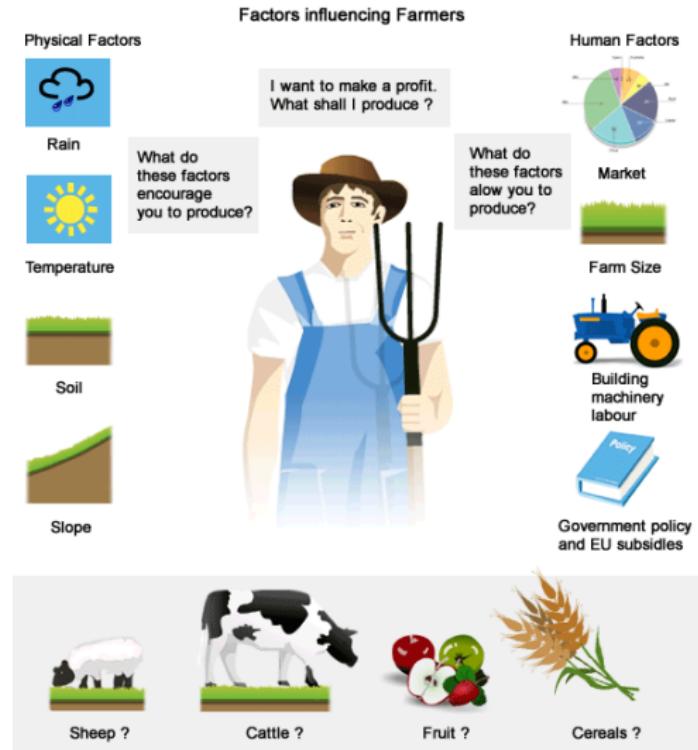
- Permanent (trees, vines)
- Annual (grains, tubers)

Animals

- Grazing
- Fodder

Human activities - Farming

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion



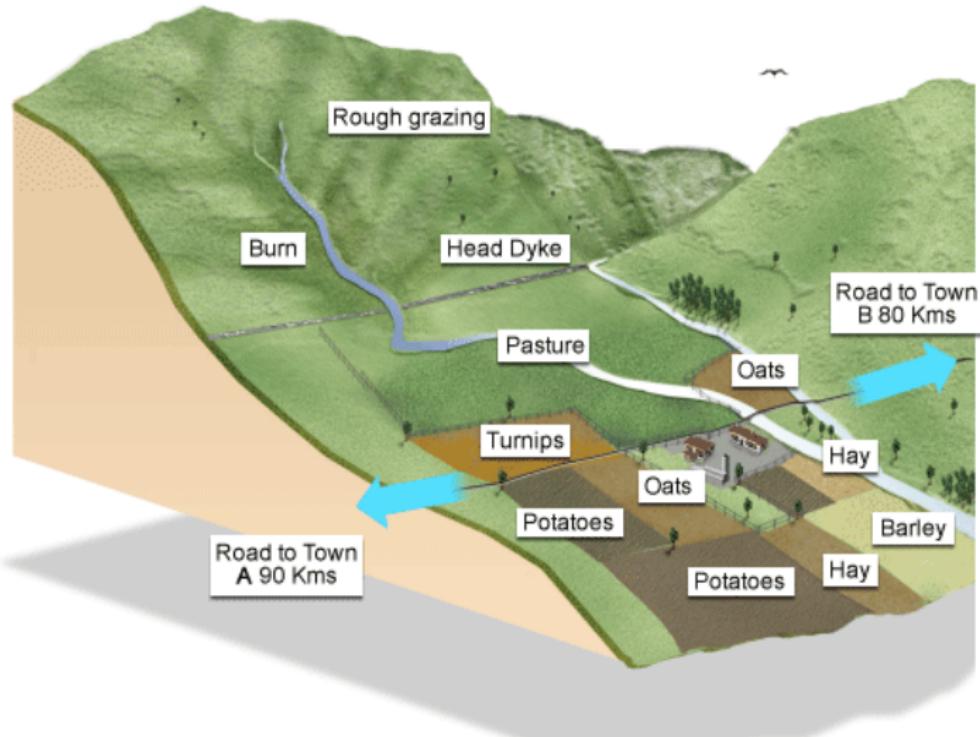
Human activities - Farming

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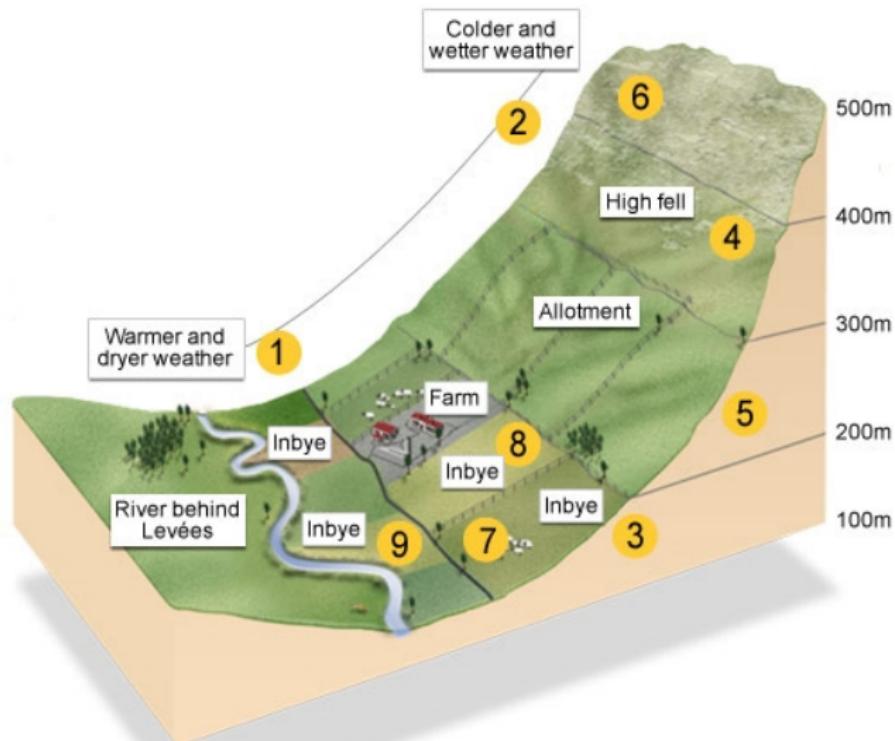
Human activities - Farming

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Human activities - Farming

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion



Human activities - Industry

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Site

- Cost and size
- Type of site
- Flat greenfield/brownfield
- Existing or propose built factories
- High profile or hidden location

Human activities - Industry

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Site

Labour force

- Skilled/unskilled ratio
- Number needed

Human activities - Industry

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Site

Labour force

Transport links

- Distribution of finished goods
- Receiving raw materials
- Movement of persons (labour or tourism)

Human activities - Industry

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Site

Labour force

Transport links

Market and access to raw materials

- Access to customers
- Closeness can reduce transport costs
- Links with other firms for raw materials

Human activities - Industry

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Government Assistance

KEY

- Development areas
- Intermediate areas
- Selected assistance area
- Standard areas
- Major town



Infrastructures - Settlements

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Influences of Resources and Terrain

- 1. Altitude and Slope** - Little settlement occurs in upland areas
 - ▶ Cold, wet, windy
 - ▶ Remoteness and difficulty to build
- 2. Drainage** - Rivers attract settlement
 - ▶ Water, transport, food
 - ▶ Fertile soil alongside rivers for farming
 - ▶ Many towns developed at bridge points
- 3. Land Quality** - Fertile land attracts settlement

Infrastructures - Settlements

Introduction ► **Landscape** ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Influences of Resources and Terrain

Site features

- | <i>Before 1800</i> | |
|-----------------------|--|
| • Good defence | Hard to attack (e.g. hill top, island) |
| • Close to water | For water and fish supplies |
| • Close to woodland | For fuel, building materials and food |
| • On useful farmland | To provide food |
| • Flat land | Makes building easier |
| • Good communications | By road and river |

Infrastructures - Settlements

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Influences of Resources and Terrain

Site features

Before 1800

Site features

After 1800

- Close to resources As raw materials for industry (e.g. limestone or coal)
- Close to ports To transport raw materials or goods
- Faster communication As industry grew and developed (e.g. canals, railways and more recently, motorways and airports)
- Pleasant environment For larger number of retired people and hi-tech industries which wish to locate in attractive areas

Infrastructures - Settlements

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Influences of Resources and Terrain

Site features

Before 1800

Site features

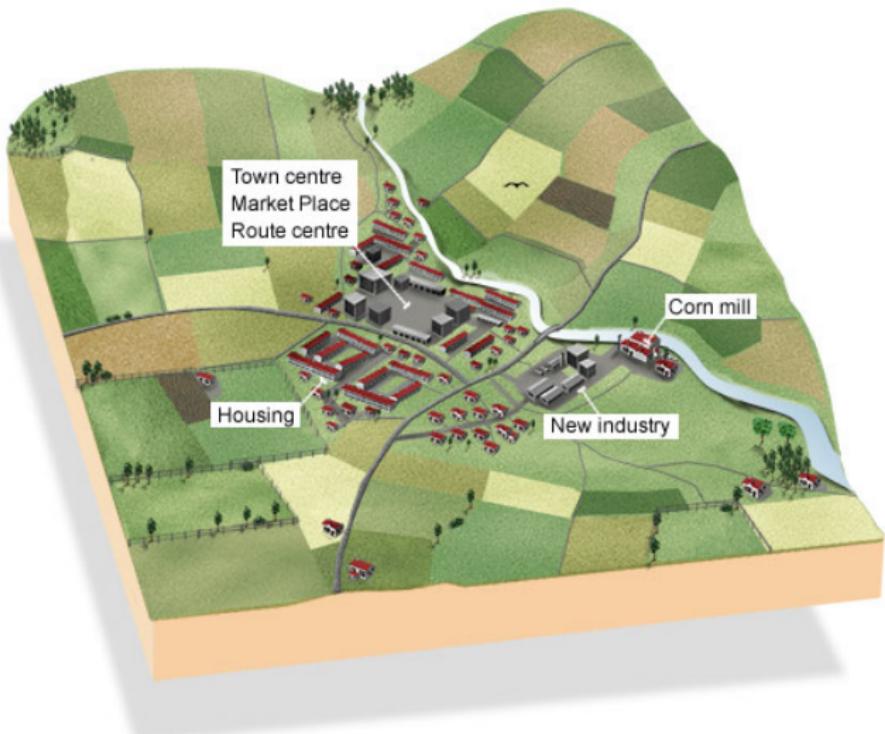
After 1800

Settlement function

- Market Town
- Port
- Industrial Town
- Resort

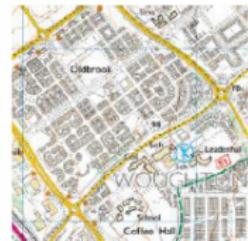
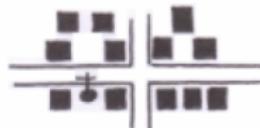
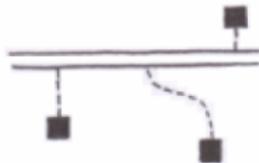
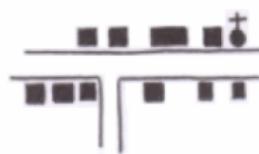
Infrastructures - Settlements

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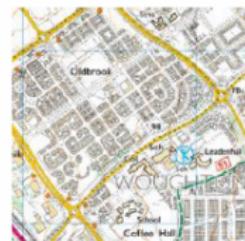
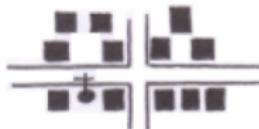
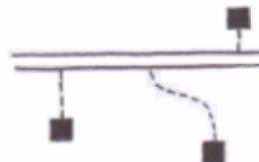
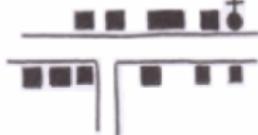
Infrastructures - Settlements

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Infrastructures - Settlements

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LINEAR

*along a road or valley or coastline (communication line)

DISPERSED

*isolated farms, often in areas of steep relief

NUCLEATED

*clustered round a water supply, or crossroads etc

PLANNED

*square, grid, found in new towns
e.g. Brasilia = aeroplane

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Analysis of change

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Landscapes do evolve

- Landscapes change over time
- **Natural selection** ↪ GB returning to its primeval forested state
- **Human selection** ↪ varied and changing landscapes
- **Landscape management** - intentional, professional attempt to manage that selection process

Analysis of change

Introduction ► Landscape ► **Dynamics** ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Landscapes do evolve

Objectives

- Links between the evolution of landscape units and social transformations of societies
- Links with the political/socio-economical contexts
 - ▶ Local
 - ▶ National
 - ▶ International
- Identify stable periods and crisis



Careful with mono-deterministic causes

Analysis of change

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Landscapes do evolve

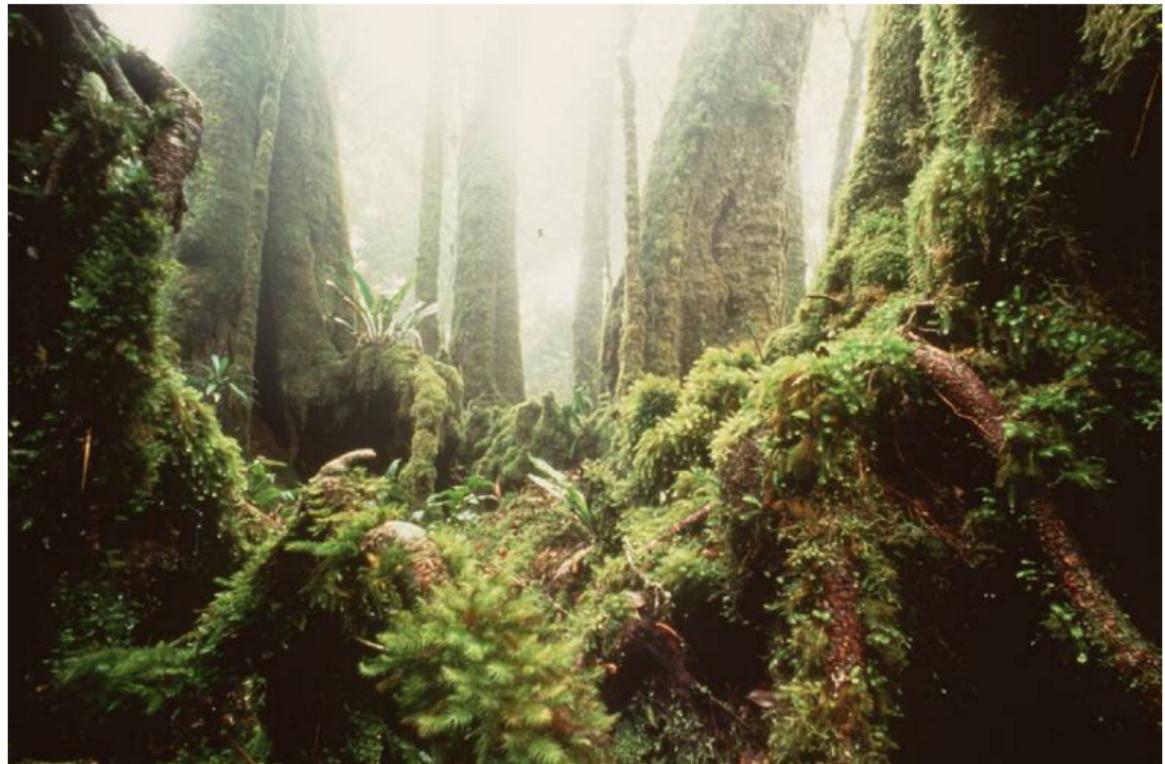
Objectives

Questions to answer

- Are the observed landscape units static?
- What are the dynamics of expansion/regression of vegetation?
- What are the technical and social changes at stake that have a **visible** impact on the landscape?
- How do human activities and social structures have shaped the landscape over time?
- What are the processes and events that led to the emergence of new systems?

Evolution of rural landscape of GB

Introduction ► Landscape ► **Dynamics** ► Sociology ► Conclusion



Evolution of rural landscape of GB

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Evolution of rural landscape of GB

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Evolution of rural landscape of GB

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Non-farming related activities

- Tourism
 - ▶ Renting out cottages as holiday homes
 - ▶ Offering bed and breakfast facilities
 - ▶ Providing camp and caravan sites
- Enterprise
 - ▶ Fishing
 - ▶ Educational tours
 - ▶ Cheese-making
 - ▶ Cafes and farm shops
 - ▶ Fruit picking
- Recreation/leisure
 - ▶ Adventure activities (quad biking and off-roading)
 - ▶ Paintball
 - ▶ Horse riding

Non-farming related activities

An increase in tourism

- **Increased incomes** ↪ investments in rural areas to improve local services and natural habitats
- **Impacts on landscape**
 - ▶ Stone walls damaged by people climbing over them
 - ▶ Footpath erosion, spoiling the scenery
 - ▶ Increased litter spoiling the look of the landscape
 - ▶ Tourist facilities (camp sites) detracting from the natural look of the countryside
 - ▶ Traffic congestion causing increased noise and air pollution in villages
 - ▶ Lakes and rivers used for water sports becoming polluted

New technology

Introduction ► Landscape ► **Dynamics** ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Machinery

Tractors, ploughs, combine harvesters and seed drills

- Positive

- ▶ Increased crop yield as work can be done faster and more efficiently
- ▶ Increased profit for the farmer
- ▶ Less physical work for people
- ▶ Fewer workers so less wages for farmer to pay
- ▶ Crops are harvested faster so they are fresher

- Negative

- ▶ Loss of animal habitats and shelter belts, as hedgerows were removed to increase field size, and accommodate large machinery
- ▶ Increase in noise pollution
- ▶ Fewer jobs available
- ▶ As people become unemployed they move away to find work, leading to rural depopulation
- ▶ Machines are expensive to buy and repairs can be costly

New technology

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Machinery

Tractors, ploughs, combine harvesters and seed drills

Chemicals

Fertilisers and pesticides

- Advantages
 - ▶ Increased crop yield as fertiliser makes crops grow better
 - ▶ Fewer plants being eaten by pests so more crops to sell
- Disadvantages
 - ▶ Increased river pollution due to chemical run-off
 - ▶ Polluted river water leads to problems such as algae bloom which starves the river of oxygen affecting wildlife

New technology

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Machinery

Tractors, ploughs, combine harvesters and seed drills

Chemicals

Fertilisers and pesticides

Organic farming

Crop rotation and manure

- Advantages
 - ▶ Chemical-free food grown to meet consumer demands
 - ▶ Decreased river pollution due to no chemical run-off
 - ▶ Wildlife in rivers is protected
- Disadvantages
 - ▶ More labour intensive it takes the farmer more time and effort to grow crops
 - ▶ Farmer needs to be more skilful, eg to cultivate poorer soils
 - ▶ Productivity is lower on organic farms

New technology

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Machinery

Tractors, ploughs, combine harvesters and seed drills

Chemicals

Fertilisers and pesticides

Organic farming

Crop rotation and manure

Irrigation equipment

Canals and sprinklers

Current government policy

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

Common Agricultural Policy

European Union

- **Aim** - Improving farmers' standard of living & Making the individual countries within the union more self-sufficient
- **Functioning** - Guaranteed prices for farmers which led to more cereal crops
- **Consequences**
 - ▶ More crops being grown ↵ overproduction (milk, butter, grain)
 - ▶ More land being used for arable farming
 - Woodlands cut down, Wetlands drained, Removal of hedgerows
 - Rural areas look less visually attractive and reduced the amount of wildlife (loss of animal habitats)
- **Policy amendment**
 - ▶ Encourage farmers to set-aside land
 - ▶ Quotas to limit the amount of certain items that farmers could produce

Current government policy

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Common Agricultural Policy

European Union

Environmental Stewardship Policy

- Subsidies and grants to restore natural habitats on farmers' land such as woodland and wetlands

Current government policy

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Common Agricultural Policy

European Union

Environmental Stewardship Policy

Environmentally Sensitive Areas & Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- Compensation to protect the area
- Restrictions on how the land can be used

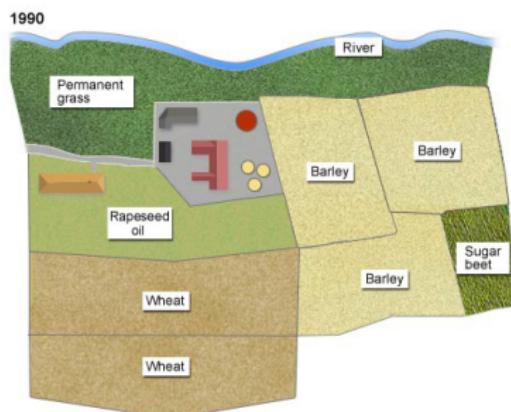
Current government policy

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	Farm house
	Farmworker's cottages
	Cow shed
	Hen house

50 dairy cows
100 sheep
100 hens
6 farmworkers
1 tractor
2 horses



	Farm house
	Holiday homes
	Cow shed
	Machinery sheds
	Pesticide store
	Grain silos

50 dairy cows
100 sheep
100 hens
6 farmworkers
1 tractor
2 horses

Depopulation

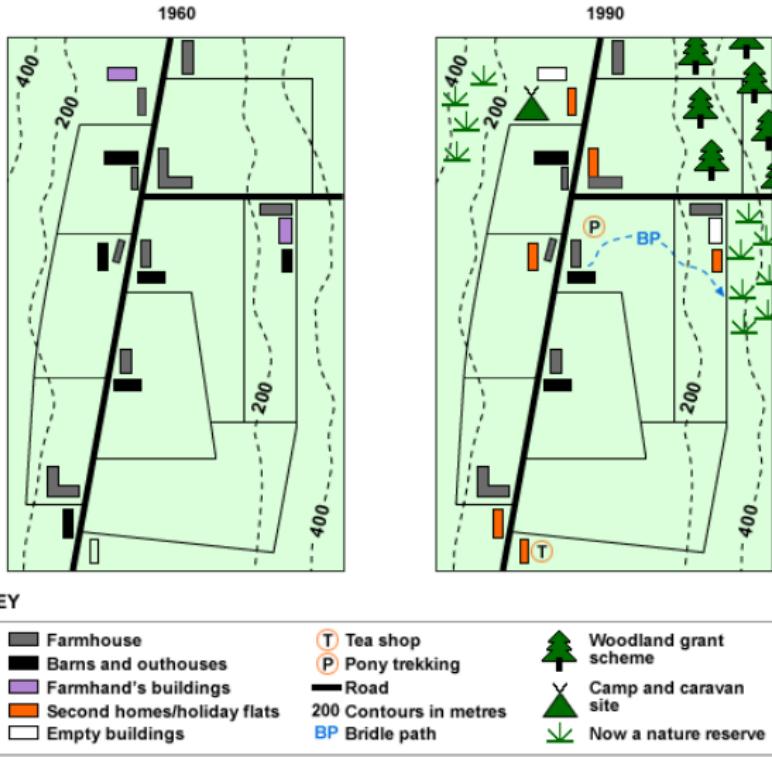
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Context

- Mechanisation and unemployment
- Population is “greying”
- Schools and shops closure
- Second home and price inflation

Depopulation

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Emergence of rural sociology

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Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft

⊗ Tönnies

Gemeinschaft	Gesellschaft
Community	Society/association/organisation
Real, organic life	Imaginary and mechanical structure
Intimate, private	Public life
Bound to it from birth	Mechanical
Organic	Exists in the realm of business, travel or sciences
Living organism	Transitory and superficial
Old	New as a name as well as a phenomenon
Pre-industrial	Post-industrial
	Responsible for the decline of “community”

Emergence of rural sociology

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Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft

⊗ Tönnies

Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

⊗ Durkheim

- **Mechanical solidarity**
 - Primitive societies
 - Based on common beliefs and consensus
 - Arising from collective consciousness
- **Organic solidarity**
 - Advanced (capitalist) societies
 - Interdependence of economic ties
 - Arising from differentiation and specialisation (modern economy)

Emergence of rural sociology

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Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft

⊗ Tönnies

Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

⊗ Durkheim

Capitalism and Rural Society

⊗ Weber

- Historical approach, decline of rural societies
- *"The constant proprietor of the soil, the landlord, is not an agriculturalist but a lessor; and the temporary owner of the estate, the tenant or lessee, is an entrepreneur capitalist like any other"*
- Capitalism: owning land = *"entrance fee into higher social stratum"*
- Rural community: aristocratically differentiated with mechanical solidarity, mutual protection
- Modern industrial societies: density of population, high value of land, differentiation of occupations

Emergence of rural sociology

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Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft

⊗**Tönnies**

Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

⊗**Durkheim**

Capitalism and Rural Society

⊗**Weber**

Tönnies' Legacy

- Not referring to social systems but to forms of human association
- **Gemeinschaft:** emotional cohesion, depth, continuity and fulfilment
- **Gesellschaft:** impersonal, contractual and rational aspects

Emergence of Rural Community Studies

⊗Williams

- Desire for security and certainty - *identity and authenticity*
- Rural seen as unproblematic environment - *a bucolic idyllic way of life, far removed from the pressures of capitalism*
- Centrality of family farming - *retrospective theorisation*
- **Main themes**
 - ▶ Gaining a clear picture of the place under enquiry
 - ▶ Defining the social structure of the community
 - ▶ Examining change and its perception
 - ▶ Loss of the traditional social order

Emergence of Rural Community Studies

®Williams

- Williams' village case study (1963)
 - ▶ Rural: villages with a primarily agricultural economy
 - ▶ Threat of depopulation and locale (village in agricultural context)
 - ▶ *Gemeinschaft* relationships and poorly developed class structure
- Littlejohn's village case study (1963)
 - ▶ Hierarchical class system
 - ▶ Impersonal relationships
 - ▶ Contractual employer-employee
 - ▶ Social change not a result of urbanism
 - ▶ Source of identification: social class

Emergence of Rural Community Studies

©Williams

The Critique of Community Studies

©Pahl

- Rarely multidisciplinary
- Unsystematic use of methods
- Largely descriptive
- Non-quantitative
- Inductive generalisations
- Non-comparable

Emergence of Rural Community Studies

④ Williams

The Critique of Community Studies

④ Pahl

- No sociological definition of any settlement type (or locality) can be formulated
- Concept of 'rural' and 'urban': not explanatory variables nor sociological categories
- Importance of social class for influencing social actors' experiences and life chances
- Disappearance of agriculture's economic dominance in rural areas
- '*Village in the mind*'

Community studies

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► **Sociology** ► Conclusion

Emergence of Rural Community Studies

④ Williams

The Critique of Community Studies

④ Pahl

The Critique of Pahl

④ Newby

- Agree with the importance of social structures
- Geographic location influence local social structure (constraints)
 - 'Tyranny of distance'
- Local social system where spatial factors have effects upon social relationships

Change in the English Village

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► **Sociology** ► Conclusion

The Deferential Thesis

✉ Newby

- Farm workers and farmers participate in a system of social control
- Farm worker's social relations with employers: pro-work attitude
- Critique of the penetration of the rural idyll into cultural imagination
- Paternalistic authority (landowners)

Change in the English Village

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► **Sociology** ► Conclusion

The Deferential Thesis

✉ Newby

The Occupational Community

✉ Newby

- Dependence upon a single industry and similar constraints (poverty)
- Isolated, self-contained community (separated from landowners)
- Fierce loyalty, own customs and traditions, sense of place
- Sense of identity, morality and certainty of acceptability
- Double-edge quality of the village
 - ▶ Security for some
 - ▶ Narrow and restrictive prison for others "*shackling the individualist by the vicious purveyance of gossip and innuendo*"
- Work-based status + Community-derived prestige

Change in the English Village

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► **Sociology** ► Conclusion

The Deferential Thesis

✉ Newby

The Occupational Community

✉ Newby

Newcomers and encapsulated community

✉ Newby

- Brought an urban middle-class lifestyle (use of urban amenities)
 - ▶ Countryside: aesthetic and recreational
 - ▶ Unappreciative of the farm workers' skills (lack of knowledge)
- New social division within the village: encapsulated community
 - ▶ Resistance to any intimate contact with commuters and second-home owners
 - ▶ Points of resentment: housing and the environment

Change in the English Village

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The Deferential Thesis

⊗Newby

The Occupational Community

⊗Newby

Newcomers and encapsulated community

⊗Newby

Absences in Newby's approach

⊗Newby

- Role and status of rural women, elderly and young people
- Deprived groups within rural areas and/or empowered consumer group
- Did not resolve the difficulties to define the rural

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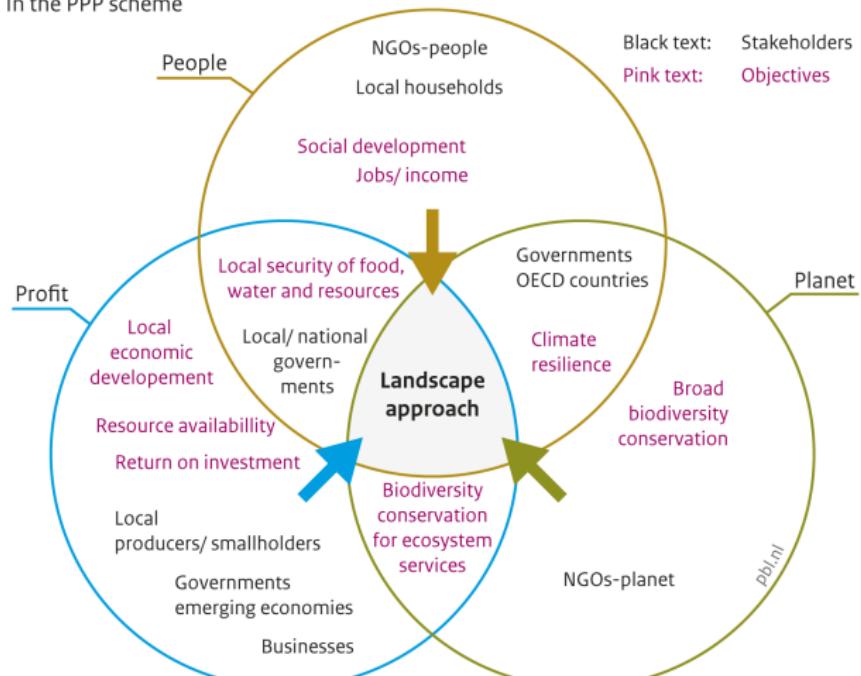
5 Conclusion

Landscape approach

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Overview of the stakeholders and objectives pursued in landscape approaches

In the PPP scheme



Source: PBL

www.pbl.nl

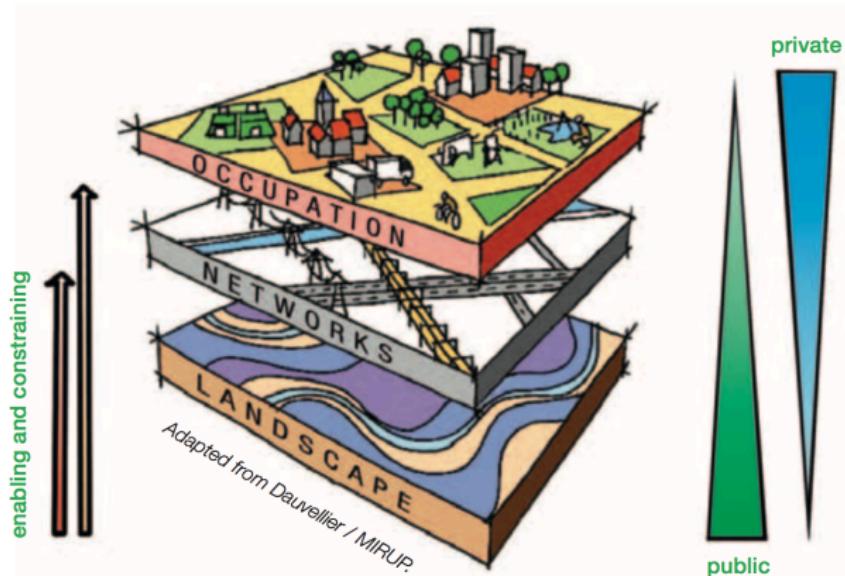
The Spatial Layer Approach

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

occupation
speed of change
10 - 25 years

networks
speed of change
25 - 100 years

landscape
speed of change
50 - 500 years



Perceptions of rural landscapes

Introduction ► Landscape ► Dynamics ► Sociology ► Conclusion

