

<b>Institution:</b> Cardiff University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 16A
<b>Title of case study:</b> Creating evidence-based integrated rural policy in Wales
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>In the late 1990s the new Welsh Assembly Government publicly acknowledged a significant evidence gap in relation to rural policy. A Cardiff University team of rural researchers led by Terry Marsden and Paul Milbourne has since played a significant role in filling this gap. A major programme of longitudinal and place-based research has revealed the need for a more integrated approach to rural policy development. Key findings from this research have been used by the Welsh Government to develop more sustainable and integrated forms of rural policy, particularly in relation to anti-poverty and agri-food strategy. The research evidence has also influenced policy debates in the UK on agri-food, as well as negotiations between the Welsh Government and European Commission in relation to European objectives for rural development.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Research conducted by the Cardiff team over the past couple of decades has played a significant role in shaping international academic debates on <b>rural development</b> and <b>rural welfare</b>. In relation to the first theme, research has concentrated on integrated rural development (funded by several European Commission grants), sustainable development and communities (ESRC-funded) and agri-food regulation and governance (funded by ESRC, Chatham House, Welsh Government). This body of research has made significant empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions to academic understanding of rural development and agri-food systems. More than 60 comparative rural case studies from across Europe have been used to construct a more integrated and grounded theory of rural development. It has involved the construction of a conceptual model - the rural web - that incorporates a range of inter-related key domains, including institutional arrangements, market governance, endogeneity, sustainability novelty and social capital. This inter-relation of issues has also highlighted the need to refine EU and national level policy mechanisms to facilitate more integrated and sustainable forms of rural development. Research on food policy and regulation undertaken before and during the food price volatilities of 2007-8 has also provided the first fully integrated assessment of the global food crisis. The research has also demonstrated that an effective response to this crisis would need to integrate several policy fields including transport, energy, waste and water. Collectively, these projects have produced a series of agenda-setting journal articles, research monographs and edited books.</p> <p>A second strand of research has made major contributions to debates on rural welfare. Funded research has examined rural housing needs and homelessness (ESRC, Welsh Government, Joseph Rowntree Foundation) and rural poverty (ESRC, Welsh Government) in the UK. Other research funded by RCUK - through the New Dynamics of Ageing programme - has provided the first study of poverty amongst older people in rural Britain. Together, these projects have highlighted the statistical significance and uneven geographies of poverty and homelessness in rural Britain, as well as the prominence of older people within the rural poor population. This work has also demonstrated some distinctive features of rural poverty that perpetuate its cultural and political invisibility, including poor people's denials of poverty, the complex relations between community, nature and understandings of poverty, and the ways in which traditional paternalistic social structures continue to shape attitudes to welfare in rural areas, leading to a reluctance on the part of the poor and homeless to accept state support. Further research has examined the scalar politics of rural welfare provision, highlighting the role of local political discourse in resisting welfare provision and how the delivery of welfare services is bound up with complex coalitions of actors drawn from the public and voluntary sectors, and involving different spatial scales. This broad body of research has led to the production of a large number of significant publications on rural poverty, homelessness and welfare.</p> <p>These strands of research were led by Marsden (Professor, 1995-) and Milbourne (Professor, 1999-).</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>1. Van der Ploeg, J.D and <b>Marsden, T.K</b> (Eds.) (2008) <i>Unfolding Webs: The dynamics of</i></p>

- regional rural development. Royal van Gorcum: Assen. ISBN: 9789023244844
2. **Marsden, T.K** (Ed.) (2009) Sustainable Communities: Planning, participation and engagement. Emerald: Bingley. ISBN: 9780080453637
  3. **Marsden, T.K** (2003) The Condition of Rural Sustainability. Royal van Gorcum: Assen. ISBN: 9789023238812
  4. **Milbourne, P.** and Doheny, S. (2012) Older people and poverty in rural Britain: material hardships, cultural denials and social inclusions. Journal of Rural Studies 28 (4), pp. 389-397. URL:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.06.007>.
  5. Cloke, P, **Milbourne, P.** and Widdowfield, R. (2002) Rural Homelessness: issues, experiences and policy responses. The Policy Press: Bristol. ISBN: 9781861342843
  6. **Milbourne, P.** (2004) Rural Poverty: marginalisation and exclusion in Britain and the United States. Routledge: London. ISBN:100415205948
  7. **Milbourne, P.** (2010) (Ed.) Welfare Reform in Rural Places: comparative perspectives. Emerald: Bingley. ISBN: 9781849509183

All research outputs are available from the HEI on request.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research has influenced the Welsh Government in taking a more integrated approach to the development of rural policy. Ministers and their advisers are also better able to target policy on specific rural problems based on the detailed evidence and understanding provided by the Cardiff team. Other beneficiaries include a diverse range of policy, practitioner and community organisations in Wales, the UK and the EU, who have used Cardiff research findings in rural policy debates.

#### Pathways to impact

In the early 2000s, the evidence gap in Welsh rural policy was addressed by the award to a Cardiff-led team (directed by Milbourne and including Marsden) of the first Wales Rural Observatory (WRO) grant (2003-07, £1.6M, funded by the Welsh Government). The team secured continued funding for the WRO from 2007 to 2013 (£2.45M, Welsh Government and European Commission). The WRO has applied Marsden's 'rural web' model of integrated policy development and Milbourne's insights into the nature of rural poverty to specific research themes requested by the Welsh Government. Commissioned research projects have investigated *inter alia* poverty, housing needs and homelessness, service provision in deep rural localities, the eco-economy and the impacts of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform on farm households. As a result of these activities, the Cardiff-led team has created Wales' first major evidential resource on social, economic and environmental change in rural areas, with the Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes stating at a recent WRO conference (22 March 2012, Cardiff) : "I know from personal experience how valuable the Rural Observatory has been in increasing our understanding of the needs of rural Wales."

The WRO regularly organises dissemination events for the Welsh Government and its partner organisations on its findings. The corpus of research that it has developed has attracted broad media coverage in Wales, featuring in the Western Mail, Daily Post, Farmers' Guardian, and on the BBC News website. Milbourne and Marsden have also directly disseminated their research to Ministers, Welsh Assembly Members and other policy-makers through frequent advice to Welsh and UK Government bodies. For example Milbourne's research on rural poverty in Wales resulted in an appointment to the Welsh Government's Financial Inclusion Steering Group (2009-12) and an invitation to present evidence to the National Assembly for Wales' Rural Development Sub-committee Inquiry into Poverty and Deprivation in Rural Wales (2008). He was also appointed in 2011 to the Wales Rural Development Programme Monitoring Committee, which oversees the implementation of European rural development policy in Wales (2013-20). Milbourne's research on rural housing and homelessness led to him being appointed as the academic consultant on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Commission on Rural Housing in Wales (2007-08)<sup>5,4</sup>, which led to the establishment by the Welsh Government of a network of Rural Housing Enablers to tackle rural housing needs across Wales. Marsden's work on integrated rural policy development resulted in him being invited to advise on the development of the new Welsh Future Generations Bill, and the new Environment and Sustainability Committee inquiry into Sustainable Land Management. He

was also invited to present research evidence from his research to the National Assembly for Wales' Rural Development Committee (RDP) on local and regional agri-food initiatives (2012), the Wales RDP Committee (2012) and the Welsh Government's CAP Reform Committee (2013).

### Impact on policy-making

The Welsh Government's Head of Rural Policy, Terri Thomas, has stated that "the work of the WRO has made a fundamental contribution to the development of rural policy within the Welsh Government in a number of ways. The reports that have been provided by WRO allow rural policy officials to... secure modifications to policy proposals to ensure the needs of rural areas are properly considered."<sup>5.1</sup> For example, the WRO's **Deep Rural Localities** project (2009) revealed the Welsh Government and local authorities needed to do more to deal with the specific problems of isolated communities in rural Wales. These problems included lack of broadband provision, an unresponsive public transport system and poor heating and energy use in rented properties. In a written statement on 15.12.09, the Minister for Rural Affairs acknowledged the importance of the researchers' application of a more integrated approach to tackling rural problems, stating that "Cabinet...has identified priority issues including community transport, broadband provision and wider rural proofing, and agreed to co-operate across portfolios...[The] findings provide the Government with a sound understanding of issues affecting deep rural areas and we will now develop a co-ordinated approach to address them."<sup>5.2</sup> In a later debate on rural communities (22.5.12), the First Minister was questioned on the Welsh Government's subsequent response to the research. He stated: "If you look at the "Deep Rural Localities" research, you will see that as a result of that, four community transport pilot projects were awarded money in order to take them forward...It has led to the development and expansion of interventions on ICT... and helped inform home energy efficiency programmes, and make them more relevant to rural dwellers. Crucially, it also raised awareness and understanding of the level, breadth and specific characteristics of rural poverty enabling WG to take due account of these factors when developing its Tackling Poverty Programme."<sup>5.3</sup>

Key findings from another WRO research project – on **CAP reform and farm households** – have also been influential in shaping the development of rural policy in Wales. Evidence from this research was used by the National Farmers Union in its written evidence to the UK Parliament's Welsh Select Affairs Committee's Inquiry into Broadband Services in Wales in May 2011.

In relation to European policy, Terri Thomas states that WRO research reports were used by the Welsh Government to argue with the European Commission for a specifically Welsh implementation of the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan and in negotiations over the 2014-2020 Plan. WRO work has also examined the likely impact of CAP reform on Welsh agriculture, adopting Marsden's concept of analysis by farm household. The research found that some 68 per cent of these households felt vulnerable in some way to the changes, with 10 per cent contemplating selling up. Thomas comments that "the reports from these studies have been invaluable in forming a picture of how the industry operate at a farm household – as opposed to farm business – level and helping officials to gauge the impact of the coming changes and the mitigating actions that are likely to be most effective."<sup>5.1</sup>

Research projects have also influenced Welsh policy on **sustainability, food and rural development**. Marsden was appointed as Special Advisor to the Welsh Assembly Sustainable Development Committee, providing advice on the merger of the three environmental bodies in Wales - Forestry Commission, Environmental Agency and Countryside Commission for Wales. His advocacy of a more integrated approach to land-based policy management led to the Committee establishing a new merged body Natural Resource Wales (April, 2013).<sup>5.7</sup>

The Cardiff team's research on **food policy and regulation** has been significant in developing new food policy in Wales and the UK. The Chatham House Food Supply project<sup>5.8</sup> initiated on the basis of Marsden's research developed four global food supply scenarios to understand the effects of food uncertainties on the EU/UK. The scenarios ranged from treating high food prices as a 'blip' to a permanent crisis in the world food supply. The report, co-authored by Marsden, reflected his research in calling for an integrated approach to securing the supply chain, building in

technological innovation, waste reduction and other strategies, rather than viewing the agricultural sector in isolation. The report received considerable UK media interest and led to a major international Chatham House conference in October 2008, which was attended by more than 150 national and international delegates from the food, financial and government sectors. The resulting Cabinet Office investigation of the global food crisis led to the UK Government's publication in 2008 of Food Matters: Towards a strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>5,9</sup>. The report acknowledged the uncertain range of potential future food scenarios and called for a more comprehensive food policy. This UK report resulted in the Cardiff team being commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake research to support the development of a 'radical' food strategy for Wales, entitled Food for Wales, Food from Wales 2010-2020<sup>5,10</sup>, which highlighted the significance of the agri-food sector to economic development policy in Wales and resulted in the establishment in 2012 of the Welsh Government's Food Industry Task Group.

### Impact on policy debate

Research findings from specific WRO projects have shaped diverse rural **policy debates** in Wales, having been used in briefings produced by Children in Wales, End Child Poverty Network Cymru, Woodland Trust Wales, House of Lords Research Service, and the Welsh Local Government Association. In 2008, Milbourne delivered the keynote paper at an EU policy conference on Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas in Budapest<sup>5,5</sup>. He highlighted the problems of denial among poor rural people and the difficulties of shaping policy response to the specific difficulties of rural poverty. This paper was later cited in a World Health Organisation (2010) report on Rural Poverty and Health in the WHO European Region<sup>5,6</sup> as evidence of the rural impacts of the global economic downturn.

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Testimony from Head of Rural Policy (Welsh Government) confirms use of the research in developing policy in deep rural areas and responding to CAP reform and the European Rural Development Plan.
2. <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2009/091215dra/?lang=en> confirms the Minister for Rural Affairs' response to the Deep Rural Localities Project
3. <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber-fourth-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=234342&ds=5/2012> quotes the First Minister's statement on response to the Deep Rural Localities Project
4. <http://www.irf.org.uk/publications/rural-housing-wales> confirms Milbourne's research input into detailing Welsh rural homelessness
5. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2150&langId=en> confirms the Milbourne presentation on Welsh rural poverty
6. World Health Organisation (2010) report on Rural Poverty and Health in the WHO European Region [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/130726/e94659.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/130726/e94659.pdf) cites Milbourne's research on UK rural poverty
7. National Assembly for Wales Plenary debate on the Environment and Sustainability Committees Report on the Single Body. Proceedings, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012. <http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/ielIssueDetails.aspx?Ild=2629&Opt=3> confirms the research's input into creating a single new land body for Wales.
8. <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Global%20Trends/bp0508food.pdf> confirms the influence of Marsden's research in outlining global food scenarios
9. [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/food/food\\_matters1.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/food/food_matters1.pdf) is the Cabinet Office response to the Chatham House food crisis scenarios
10. Food for Wales, Food from Wales 2010-2020 <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/101207foodforwalesfoodfromwalesen.pdf> is the new Welsh food strategy developed from Cardiff research

All testimony, documents and web pages saved as pdfs are available from the HEI on request.