



Strategic Structure of Commuting Flows in Rural England and Wales

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Purpose of the analysis

- To use commuting flows as a guide to levels of interdependence between rural and urban areas, and within rural areas
- To assess differences in these levels between the members of the rural settlement classification
- To assess the strength of change over time in these flows between 1981 and 2001



Sources of data

- The 2001 Census offers fine grained data (Output Area scale) for first time compatible with rural settlement definitions– but at the ‘price’ of Small Cell Adjustment
- Effects unknown but certain that better to work with ‘aggregates’
- In addition, through ESRC’s CIDS service has been possible to estimate change between 1981 and 2001 – although only at 2003 Ward level.

Definitions

- Urban Areas
 - Metropolitan Areas
 - Greater London
 - West Midlands
 - Greater Manchester
 - West Yorkshire
 - Tyneside
 - Liverpool
 - Large Urban Areas > 250,000
 - Other Urban Areas > 10,000 and < 250,000
 - Market Towns 207 selected 'market towns'
- Rural Areas
 - Full rural settlement classification for Output Area analyses
 - Ward level classification for analysing change over time

Urban Destinations of commuters from Less Sparse Rural Areas (% of all employees)

	Town/Fringe	Village	Dispersed
Metro Urban	10.1	8.2	10.8
Large Urban	7.3	5.6	5.3
Other Urban	27.4	26.0	22.1
Market Towns	7.5	9.2	7.8
All Urban	52.3	48.9	46.0

Urban Destinations of commuters from Sparse Rural Areas (% of all employees)

	Town/Fringe	Village	Dispersed
Metro Urban	1.8	2.1	1.9
Large Urban	0.5	0.6	0.5
Other Urban	9.0	9.0	12.3
Market Towns	6.5	6.5	5.3
All Urban	17.8	23.9	20.0

Rural Destinations of commuters from Less Sparse Rural Areas (% of all employees)

	Town/Fringe	Village	Dispersed
LS Town/F	33.4	8.7	8.1
LS Village	7.8	35.7	7.4
LS Dispersed	5.7	5.7	37.5
S Town/F	0.3	0.4	0.4
S Village	0.3	0.4	0.3
S Dispersed	0.2	0.2	0.3
All Rural	47.7	51.1	54.0

Rural Destinations of commuters from Sparse Rural Areas (% of all employees)

	Town/Fringe	Village	Dispersed
LS Town/F	4.6	4.5	3.1
LS Village	3.7	3.6	2.4
LS Dispersed	2.3	2.9	2.2
S Town/F	55.9	13.4	13.2
S Village	8.3	44.5	7.7
S Dispersed	7.4	7.1	51.3
All Rural	82.2	76.1	80.0

Home Working in Urban and Rural Areas (% of all employees)

Rural Areas		Urban Areas	
LS Town/F	9.5	Metro Urban	8.0
LS Village	14.5	Large Urban	7.5
LS Dispersed	19.5	Other Urban	7.6
S Town/F	12.2	Market Towns	8.8
S Village	19.1		
S Dispersed	30.6		
All Rural	13.6	All Urban	7.8

Change in Commuting Structure, 1981 to 2001 (% change in share of commuters)

	From	LS Town	LS Village	S Town	S Village
To					
Metro Urban		12.0	20.1	60.8	85.3
Large Urban		13.1	20.2	107.4	21.5
Other Urban		17.6	15.4	67.5	71.1
Market Towns		26.6	11.0	62.4	43.4
LS Town		-25.1	15.8	32.9	12.0
LS Village		30.0	-22.9	53.7	18.2
S Town		76.8	63.0	-19.8	9.6
S Village		65.5	40.7	0.0	-26.1

Jobs in Rural Areas Filled by Urban In-commuters (%)

	1981	2001
LS Town/Fringe	28.8	40.2
LS Village/Disp.	31.4	43.9
S Town/Fringe	5.4	11.9
S Village/Disp.	9.5	16.0

Interim Conclusions

- Complex set of commuting patterns showing high levels of interdependence between urban and (some) rural areas
- ‘Inter-commuting’ is strengthening as increased mobility is reflected in ‘multi-directional’ commuting
- Urban/rural connections much more strongly expressed in less sparse areas
- As might be expected, sparse areas are still more ‘self-contained’ with weaker links to other areas

Related Analysis

- Existing analyses cover
 - Travel modes
 - Travel distances
 - Estimates of energy consumption
 - Regional breakdowns of commuting flows
- Further development (following discussion)
 - travel modes by occupation
 - case studies of market towns

